The Leading Women: The Media Representation of Minor Party Leadership during the 2019 UK General Election

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
University of Strathclyde

Submitted September 2023

Abstract

This thesis analyses the media representation of Nicola Sturgeon, Jo Swinson, and Arlene Foster during the 2019 UK General Election. Each politician within this thesis was serving in a different political system enabling an expansive look at the representation of political leadership across the UK. I examined newspapers, Twitter, and the televised election debates to review the self-presentation and representation of these three female politicians in mediated spaces. Amongst my selection of media, I reviewed the personal Twitter accounts of these political women, their media representation in London-based, Scottish, and Northern Irish national publications, and the televised debates broadcasted on the BBC, ITV, STV, and Channel 4. I analysed these three forms of media by using a mixed methods approach combining content analysis and critical discourse analysis.

In this study, there were interesting differences between the three women in terms of explicitly gendered coverage: Foster's coverage was the least gendered, Swinson's the most. At the same time, the media representation of Sturgeon included gendered commentary that was positive in tone and used to present her as politically accomplished. The second prominent finding of the study was the variation in coverage between London-based, Scottish, and Northern Irish newspapers for each politician's media representation. In addition, each party leader held political positions in different countries of the UK, revealing expressions of banal nationalism within their self-presentation. Notably, the reference to national belonging was most impactful in my Foster and Northern Irish datasets. Foster's self-presentation and media representation were often focused on Northern Irish issues rather than the whole of the UK. Foster's prominence as a local figure in Northern Ireland and her constituency showed that various methods of analysis are needed to study politicians less prominent in a UK-wide election compared to political figures like Sturgeon and Swinson, who became a part of the national media agenda.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisors and convenor for their assistance in completing my thesis. Thank you for taking the time to engage with my work. I would also like to thank the University of Strathclyde library staff, who have been so helpful and patient in answering all my questions these past few years.

I want to extend a special thanks to Cherise Saywell and Mary O'Donnell for the invaluable support you gave me at the beginning and end of my PhD journey. Your expertise was immensely beneficial, and you both played an essential role in my growth as a writer.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my family and friends. Your support and encouragement have made these past few years much easier, and I am sincerely grateful.

Special thanks to Maisie Keogh, who has been so patient with me as I completed my thesis and understood the highs and lows of this journey. I would especially like to thank Miriam Hussain, Nikki Chung and Raman Kaur. I am grateful that we all became friends at the beginning of this experience. Your love and unwavering support have motivated me to persevere until the very end, and you will always be my Scottish family.

To my mom, you have always been my greatest source of support. I appreciate all the guidance, love, and encouragement you have given me. I will always be grateful to have you as my mom.

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Chapter 1: An Introduction into the Media Representation of Female Minor Party Leadership

The Origin of the Thesis

It may seem unusual that the interest in my thesis on media representation of female leadership within the UK political system started with the 2016 US Presidential Election. However, the 2016 election was fascinating because this was the first time a woman was running for president of the United States. Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign against celebrity businessman Donald Trump was a period in America where political voice, gender, and leadership qualities were questioned. As a citizen experiencing the election and watching the outcome, it was extraordinary and increased my interest in political communication and gender studies. Initially, I planned to research American politics for my thesis, particularly focusing on Clinton. However, by the time I started my research, many academics had drawn conclusions about the 2016 election (Cummings and Terrion, 2020; Bordo, 2017; Savoy, 2018). The abundance of prior research on this election left little information I could deduce about this period in American political history. Clinton has also been a prominent figure in American politics since the 1970s and, as I quickly discovered, a heavily researched figure among academics (Sheeler and Anderson, 2013; Jamieson, 1995; Lim, 2009; Carlin and Winfrey, 2009). Therefore, I turned my focus towards the events unfolding in the UK.

Coincidentally, the then UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, called a snap election as I was in the first year of my PhD. Before the 2019 UK General Election, Johnson had become Prime Minister following the Conservative leadership election in June 2019. A crucial part of Johnson's leadership campaign was to deliver a Brexit deal (Stewart, 2019), a task his predecessor, Theresa May, could not achieve. Following his successful leadership run, Johnson and his party sought an agreement with Parliament on a Brexit deal. However, an agreement was not achieved, and Johnson called a general election at the end of 2019. During this election, the two major parties were led by men, Johnson led the Conservative Party, and Jeremy Corbyn led the Labour Party. It was anticipated that either man would be the next PM because of the size of their parties. The 2019 UK General Election results saw Johnson win the largest majority since Margaret Thatcher in 1987, while Labour's poor election results led Corbyn to resign as Labour leader (Katkov and Chappell, 2019).

However, this was also a period in UK politics when women held leadership roles across different countries in the UK. Nicola Sturgeon was the leader of the Scottish National Party

(SNP), a Member of the Scottish Parliament and the First Minister of Scotland, Jo Swinson was a Member of Parliament and had recently been selected as the first female leader of the Liberal Democrats, and Arlene Foster was the leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), a Member of the Legislative Assembly and former First Minister of Northern Ireland. Other female leaders included Green co-leader Siân Berry, Mary Lou McDonald President of Sinn Féin, and Alliance Party leader and former Member of the European Parliament for Northern Ireland, Naomi Long. Sturgeon, Foster, McDonald, and Berry were not themselves standing for election in 2019, while Swinson was standing for re-election in East Dunbartonshire and Long was standing for election in Belfast East.

The election results showed a mix between successes and failures for these political women and their parties. Sturgeon and Long saw their parties gain seats in 2019: the SNP gained 13 and the Alliance Party gained one (*BBC News*, 2019b; *The Guardian*, 2019). However, parties led by women also saw losses. Swinson's party lost 10 seats, including her own and Foster's party lost two (*BBC News*, 2019b; *The Guardian*, 2019). Notably, the leaders of six parties in the UK during this period have all resigned since the election. This would include Sturgeon, Swinson, Foster, Johnson, Corbyn, Berry, Jonathan Bartley, then co-leader of the Green Party, Adam Price, then leader of Plaid Cymru and Nigel Farage, former leader of the Brexit Party, now known as Reform UK (British Electoral Politics, 2023a; British Electoral Politics, 2023b).

The Political Context

In the period leading up to the election, the presence of women in politics was growing within the UK. In the general election of 2015, 191 (29%) female MPs were elected (Cracknell, 2015), an increase from the 143 (22%) female MPs elected in 2010 (Cracknell, 2013). Women were also occupying leadership roles amongst minor parties, such as Leanne Wood, then leader of Plaid Cymru and Natalie Bennett, then leader of the Green Party. Both women started leading their parties in 2012. Likewise, Nicola Sturgeon led the SNP and was the First Minister of Scotland, a role she began in 2014. This election was the first-time female leaders "sought out media attention" and were heavily featured campaigning for their parties (Harmer, 2015 *also see* Perkins, 2015). One memorable moment of the 2015 election was Wood, Bennett, and Sturgeon embracing on stage at the *BBC Election Debate 2015*. Their attendance at the debate gave these three women a national platform to address voters and led to commentary stating, "it was the women wot won it" (Billington, 2015).

Female political leadership continued to increase during the 2017 UK General Election. The results of the 2017 election saw the largest number of women enter parliament; 208 (32%) female MPs were elected (Apostolova, 2017) and the UK was governed by its second female Prime Minister, Theresa May. Media outlets referred to the election as "historic" or "unprecedented" due to the number of elected women (Childs et al., 2017). Female political representation was also prevalent in other countries in the UK during the 2017 General Election. For example, 45 (35%) female MSPs, and along with Sturgeon, three additional women held leadership roles in the Scottish Parliament: Ruth Davidson for the Scottish Conservative Party (2011-2019), Kezia Dugdale for the Scottish Labour Party (2015-2017), and Maggie Chapman was the co-convenor of the Scottish Greens with Patrick Harvie (2013-2019) (Scottish Parliament Information Centre, 2021).

The Northern Irish Assembly consisted of 27 (30%) female MLAs and similar to Scotland, women occupied leadership roles (Russell, 2017:14-15). Arlene Foster had been leading the DUP since 2015 and shared the role of First Minister of Northern Ireland with Sinn Féin's Martin McGuinness since 2016. Importantly, Foster was Northern Ireland's and the DUP's first female leader and resided "over a legacy within her party that is less encouraging" of female political inclusion and has a "poor track record in selecting female candidates" (Whiting and Braniff, 2016:2). In addition, Mary Lou McDonald held the role of Vice President of Sinn Féin since 2009, and Naomi Long started leading the Alliance Party in 2016.

During the 2017 election, the DUP were marginal within media coverage, only accounting for "0.4% of media appearances in all items" (Deacon et al., 2017:10) and Foster, as the most prominent DUP politician, only appeared in "0.2% of news coverage" (Deacon et al., 2017:10). It was only after the election that the DUP became a part of the national conversation (Murphy and Evershed, 2020:456). Foster's party played an important role in supporting May's Brexit deal, having "negotiated a £1bn in spending for Northern Ireland as part of a first confidence and supply agreement" (Syal, 2019) with the Conservative Party. The result of the 2017 election saw May's party fail to reach a majority in the House of Commons, forcing the Conservatives to seek support from other parties. Foster and the DUP's political position after the 2017 election led to increased prominence within UK-national media coverage, continuing into early 2019 (Syal, 2019).

Female political leaders were also prominent on an international level. In 2019, Jacinda Ardern was serving as Prime Minister of New Zealand and Sanna Marin was elected as the Finnish Prime Minister. Additionally, countries such as Cuba, Bolivia, and Rwanda had equal or greater female representation in each country's parliament (Apap et al., 2019). On a national and global scale, women have become increasingly visible in the political sphere and a part of the mediated conversation on political leadership.

However, headlines describing the appointment of political women as record-breaking misconstrue the idea that women are rapidly overcoming inequality within government when progression is much slower. Notably, all three women in my study are no longer serving in their former positions. Numerical increases in representation only tell part of a story which is more nuanced and potentially contradictory. Therefore, the 2019 election offered an interesting context for examining political leadership in the media. I studied the leadership of minor parties in the hope of expanding the frame of reference for considering gender and political leadership. The exploration of multiple party leaders also enabled an analysis of media outlets across the UK that expand beyond the London-centrism that often characterises existing scholarship on media coverage of UK elections.

The Scope of my Research

My analysis examines the media representation of Nicola Sturgeon, Jo Swinson, and Arlene Foster across newspapers, Twitter, and televised election debates during the 2019 UK General Election. There are two ways in which the term "representation" is used in this thesis: political representation and media representation. Political representation is a key context for this thesis as discussed above. However, the thesis does not offer an investigation of gendered leadership. Instead, my focus is how women's political leadership is represented in the media. I examined Sturgeon, Swinson, and Foster due to their prominence within the UK political system and the size of their parties. The only devolved system which does not feature within this thesis is Wales. In 2019, the only female leader in Wales was Jane Dodds, Welsh Liberal Democrat leader. I excluded Dodds from this thesis because she represented a Welsh branch of a Westminster party I was already examining within my research. The political leadership of these three women also provided reasoning for selecting each one for analysis because each woman represented different party policies and beliefs. For example, Sturgeon was leading a nationalist party and a social democratic government. Foster's party was conservative and unionist, and she was not considered an advocate for progressive policies. Swinson had only

been a party leader for five months prior to the general election and the youngest party leader.

I selected newspapers, Twitter, and televised election debates to analyse Sturgeon, Swinson, and Foster's representation and self-presentation. During elections, newspapers are an influential traditional medium. They are considered an "important part of the political contest" as media outlets are inundated with political information, which enhances their editorial power to seek out the most newsworthy stories (Perloff, 1998:223, *also see* Ross and Byerly, 2004:60-61; Wolfsfeld, 2015:6). According to previous scholarship, media representation of female politicians has often been explicitly gendering and much of this work has focused on female leaders although – as my reference to Clinton at the start of this chapter suggests – women in the most prominent leadership positions have attracted disproportionate attention.

I questioned the type of coverage Sturgeon, Swinson, and Foster would receive across the UK news media. I conducted an analysis to determine if these three female leaders were portrayed in a gendered manner, as previous studies have suggested. I researched tabloid and quality, also known as broadsheet or compact, London-based, Scottish, and Northern Irish press to understand how these three party leaders were portrayed across the UK. A distinctive feature of my research is how it facilitates comparisons amongst different countries in the UK. It should be noted within the context of my thesis, London-based newspapers refer to publications located in London but with a UK-national audience.

The next medium I examined was Twitter because this platform enables politicians to spread their political messages more rapidly than traditional channels. It offers politicians more control over their presentation and citizens a more direct form of communication and engagement with political representatives (Engelmann et al., 2019:3570). Twitter has become a growing part of political communication, and each female leader in my study utilised a personal Twitter account separate from "official" Twitter profiles associated with their parties or roles during the election. I questioned how these three women presented themselves on Twitter, the information they shared with followers, and whether their self-presentation strategies aligned with their coverage in legacy media forms. It is important to mention that in July 2023, Twitter underwent a rebranding and is now referred to as X. However, for the purpose of this thesis, I will continue to use the term Twitter since the name change only occurred within the final months of completing my thesis.

The last medium I incorporated was the televised election debate. Televised debates are relatively new to the UK political process compared to other Western nations (Benoit and Benoit-Bryan, 2013: 464 *also see* Pattie and Johnston, 2011:147). Perhaps as a result of their relative newness, the form and structure of televised election debates in the UK is less fixed than, for instance, in the US context. During the 2019 UK election, broadcasters used a range of formats, with themed debates such as *The Channel 4 News Climate Debate* as well as more broad-ranging debates involving a range of party leaders and representatives, which made differing use of audience participation.

Since party leaders and other senior party members were in attendance at multiple debates it enabled an examination of various political leadership representations during the election. My debate dataset was the only occasion when I analysed male and female political participation side by side. Previous scholarship questioning whether men and women utilised different speech styles became of particular interest during my research. Examining all debate participants on stage expanded my understanding of gender dynamics in debate performance and how these female politicians adapted their political strategies to each debate. It should be noted that Arlene Foster was not present at any debates, including those broadcasted within Northern Ireland.

Research Aims

I utilised a mixed-methods approach by incorporating a content analysis and critical discourse analysis to answer each question. The overarching question of this thesis is the following: *Does the media representation of female political leaders from minor parties across the UK during an election challenge, complicate or confirm existing scholarship on representations of gendered political leadership?* I have also created three additional questions that I will examine as I complete each analysis.

I. *How were Nicola Sturgeon, Jo Swinson, and Arlene Foster represented in London-based, Scottish, and Northern Irish press during the 2019 UK General Election?*
II. *How did Nicola Sturgeon, Jo Swinson, and Arlene Foster present themselves on their personal Twitter accounts?*
III. *How did Nicola Sturgeon and Jo Swinson perform on the debate stage during the televised election debates of the 2019 UK General Election?*

Thus far, this chapter has presented the story behind my thesis topic, the motivation for researching this subject, and the political context during this period. I have also highlighted the three mediated platforms I am analysing. The remaining chapters of this thesis will present previous literature on this topic, my methodology, and the findings of my analysis. Before proceeding with the literature review, I have provided detail on the structure of the remaining chapters of this thesis.

Structure of the Thesis

In the next chapter, I divide the literature review into six sections discussing previous literature on: the private v the public sphere; the visibility of political women; media representation of female politicians; the self-representation of politicians on social media; the style and rhetoric of the political sphere, particularly regarding televised debate performances; and gender and political leadership. Scholarship that appears within this chapter will inform my understanding of media representation, political speech styles, the visibility of female politicians and who is traditionally considered fit for leadership in the mediated public sphere.

My first section establishes the traditional ideas on the private and public sphere, referring to motherhood and the domestic duties women are expected to fulfil. The following section will explore female political visibility, specifically discussing the visibility of political women across the UK. The next section reviews the findings from previous scholarship on a female politician's media representation, noting the explicitly gendered coverage female politicians have been subjected to in the press. In addition, I reference various forms of social media, how social media provides politicians with a less constricting method of political communication than traditional news media and the drawbacks of an online public presence. Next, I examine stereotypical male and female speech styles and behaviour by discussing the language used at televised election debates. The literature within this section explores how emotionality is connected to a woman's language and how specific metaphors in political speech reinforce the political sphere as an intrinsically masculine space. The final section explores gender and political leadership, noting how leadership traits are often associated with masculinity, causing women to be viewed as outsiders in political arenas.

This chapter argues that traditional scholarship suggests that women have historically been characterised by behaviour and qualities unsuitable for political participation. When women enter the political sphere, they are forced to adapt masculine and feminine traits while navigating newspaper coverage that is often gendering. As recent scholarship develops,

researchers continue to agree that female politicians are gendered in news articles. However, disagreements amongst scholarship suggest female politicians have more ability to present themselves without gendered constraints, especially on social media platforms that have fewer editorial barriers like traditional news media. As I analyse my data corpora, I will consider if my findings on the media representation of minor party leadership during an election correlate with prior scholarship.

The methodology of this thesis can be found in chapter three. I use a mixed methods approach by utilising content analysis and critical discourse analysis to evaluate quantitative and qualitative data. My content analysis allowed me to gather the patterns and absences within my analysis of newspapers, Twitter, and the televised election debates. However, I was able to divulge a greater understanding of the language and meaning within the text and images in my datasets by utilising a critical discourse analysis. In addition, my research questions situated within this chapter, demonstrate the structure of my analysis. I have an overarching question followed by three individual questions related to the analysis chapters for each form of media. Lastly, I note my process for gathering my datasets, what each dataset consists of, what data has been excluded, followed by the piloting process and coding procedure.

Following from the previous chapter, I will present the newspaper coverage analyses of Nicola Sturgeon, Jo Swinson, and Arlene Foster from London-based, Scottish, and Northern Irish publications. My research looks at the representation of these three women across tabloid and quality newspapers. My examination of their news coverage indicates male politicians, regardless of their position, play a dominant role in the news coverage of these female political leaders. Additionally, I note instances when these women are objectified and trivialised in articles and accompanying images. However, the gendering of female politicians is less explicit than previous scholars initially determined. My results showcase how the news media reinforces the idea that politics is a male space without making explicit references to gender.

Chapter five will analyse the self-presentation of Nicola Sturgeon, Jo Swinson, and Arlene Foster on their personal Twitter accounts. I present the differences and similarities between each female politician by analysing the topics they discuss, the male or female politicians they refer to, any references to their private life, tonal sentiment, and the visual content added to their posts. In addition, the findings within this chapter inform my concluding analysis of the differences and similarities between the self-presentation of these political women and their news media representation.

In the next chapter, I analyse the 2019 UK televised election debates, particularly focusing on Nicola Sturgeon and Jo Swinson's debate performances. In addition to both party leaders, I coded the performances of all politicians in attendance to capture how these two women interacted with their opponents. The data collection of male and female debate performances indicates that politicians do not follow a set speech style. Politicians engage in a rhetorical style that suits their message and campaign strategy. Chapter six establishes that a politician's party and experience play a greater role in their debate performance than gender.

In the seventh chapter, I combine the results of the three previous chapters in a comparative analysis that expands on the mediated representation of these political women within a wider scope. I demonstrate the importance of examining the media representation of minor party leadership by answering the overarching research question for this thesis. The chapter starts with a review of each female politician's self-presentation and media representation. Next, I explore the similarities and differences between the self-presentation of these women versus how they are represented in the news media. I found more instances when Nicola Sturgeon's presentation on Twitter aligned with her media representation. However, Jo Swinson's approach to present herself as prime ministerial and a better option to her opponents did not translate in the news media. Arlene Foster's minor presence on Twitter and absence at the televised debates made her appear as a marginal figure in the election compared to her prominent inclusion in the Northern Irish press.

The final chapter includes my concluding remarks on my contributions to political leadership and media representation of minor parties in the UK. I will be discussing the limitations of my thesis, reflecting on my findings, and making recommendations for future research. In conclusion, I discuss the current state of UK politics by reviewing Sturgeon's resignation speech and the private and emotional cost of becoming a political leader. The political landscape in the UK - as well as the positions of these three women - has changed across the course of this thesis. This serves as a reminder that UK political leadership can change rapidly. At the same time, the value of this kind of scholarship is that the study of political representation is an analysis of a moment in time and a reflection on political changes that inform our understanding of the UK political sphere.

Chapter 2. Gender, Representation and Political Leadership

Those in political leadership positions wield significant power within governments, yet the pursuit of power has traditionally been associated with masculinity. According to Huddy and Terkildsen (1993:121), women are often linked to attributes like warmth, kindness, and passivity, traits often considered less suitable for leadership roles (*also see* Okimote and Brescoll, 2010:923-924). Political women are forced to conform to these gendered stereotypes associated with political leadership or face criticism when they do not (Rudman and Phelan, 2008:64). Media coverage can help increase a politician's recognition and exposure to the public. However, there is often unequal representation of male and female politicians in news coverage. This chapter will begin by examining the critical literature on the private and public sphere, and the visibility of political women. I will also explore previous research on how female politicians are represented in both traditional and new media and discuss the language and behaviour utilised by politicians. In this chapter's final section, I will delve into previous studies that examine the relationship between gender and political leadership. I will provide a foundation for these discussions by first reviewing what previous literature has discovered regarding the private and public dichotomies and the barriers women must overcome to achieve positions of political power.

The Public v The Private Sphere
Historically, women have been assigned informal power within the home, while men have held sway in public life, where they are not required to demonstrate their "competence" or "justify" their place (Murray, 2014:520-521). The concept of separate spheres for men and women highlights the distinction between the public and private domains and who can access these spaces. Researchers have highlighted the widespread perception that the private sphere is a woman's "proper sphere" (Welter, 1966 *also see* Kerber, 1988:11). Kathleen H. Jamieson's book, *Beyond the Double Bind: Women and Leadership*, explains that "throughout history, women have been identified as bodies, not minds" (1995:53). She interpreted the ideology that, "the brain and the womb both require energy and since you cannot exercise both you must choose one over the other" (Jamieson, 1995:55). As women enter the political sphere their domestic duties do not cease to exist. A female politician is expected to continue household tasks and her governmental responsibilities, which is referred to as "double duty" (Thomas, 2002:347, *also see* Stalsburg, 2010:337; Sapiro,1982:266).

Female politicians with domestic responsibilities can be subjected to media questions on their ability to fulfil the two roles of a politician and mother (Cardo, 2021:44). Views on motherhood can deter women from running for public office and propose challenges for female candidates to reach the highest level of government (Joshi and Goehrung, 2020: 1-3 *also see* Jamieson, 1995). For example, female politicians can face criticism suggesting they are "bad mothers" or damaging their families due to their desire to enter the political arena (McCarver, 2011:28). Female politicians have delayed their entrance into politics like Hillary Clinton, who did not launch her first campaign for President of the United States until her daughter was older and more independent (Bordo, 2017). In contrast, her husband, Bill Clinton, became president during their daughter's teenage years (Bordo, 2017 *also see* Jamieson, 1995:49). The focus on a female politician's domestic life in the press and the potential criticism they can receive may serve as a deterrent for political women to share information about their family life with the public (Stalsburg, 2012:7 *also see* Bystrom et al., 2004).

By contrast, a growing trend seen in US politics known as "politicised motherhood" involves female politicians discussing their roles as wives and mothers rather than keeping this information private (Smith, 2017:197 *also see* Deason et al., 2015). However, political discourse "promotes a dominant mothering ideology that is biased on status characteristics" such as "white, married, middle class women" (Deason et al., 2015:134 *also see* Hays 1996; Johnston and Swanson 2006). Researchers Deason, Greenlee and Langner explore politicised motherhood in their work titled "Mothers on the Campaign Trail: Implications of Politicized Motherhood for Women in Politics". They argue that motherhood has been a significant factor in "American electoral politics" since 1980 with "both the Democrat and Republican parties" utilising the "rhetoric of motherhood to appeal to female voters" (Deason et al., 2015:134).

Notably, "the emphasis on motherhood" in the political sphere has "accelerated" with the presence of "high profile female politicians like Hillary Clinton, Sarah Palin, Wendy Davis, and Michelle Bachman, whose respective mothering roles have been the subject of debate, praise, and criticism" (Deason et al., 2015:134). In particular, Sarah Palin used her role as a mother to advance her Vice Presidential campaign in 2008. During Palin's campaign, she discussed her experience as a mother and suggested this was her reasoning for entering politics (Stalsburg, 2012:4). She created a "Mama Grizzly" persona that emphasised her "common sense and instinctual ability to perceive danger" in order to protect her children (Stalsburg, 2012:4). Palin received both praise and criticism from the press and voters for her ability to run for office and

care for her family (Stalsburg, 2012:6). News outlets questioned whether she would be a "good mother" to her children while fulfilling the duties of Vice President (McCaver, 2011:20).

Scholarship by Jessica Smith (2017) examines the politicisation of motherhood in a UK context. Interestingly, the increased mention of a politician's family has been mainly by male leaders (Smith, 2017:199). For example, during the 2015 UK General Election, David Cameron, then Conservative leader, and Ed Miliband, then Labour leader, made public appearances in their kitchens with their wives to portray the idea that they were "family men" (Cameron and Shaw 2016:75). Men can portray themselves as "family men", using their domestic roles to benefit their political careers (Cameron and Shaw, 2016:83). The "family man" trope often praises men for their capacity to juggle both their role as a father and their public obligations (Stalsburg, 2012:3). This stereotype highlights the different expectations placed on men and women who wish to participate in the public arena. In particular, men are often viewed as having two distinct statuses - one private and one public - and are judged differently in each sphere, whereas women are consistently seen as primarily private individuals (Carroll 1989:64 *also see* Elshtain, 1974).

However, in recent years, female politicians in the UK have also utilised motherhood as a part of their political presentation, such as Jo Swinson, former Liberal Democrat leader, who was the first MP to bring her infant child to the House of Commons in 2018 (*BBC News Scotland Politics*, 2018). Besides Swinson, UK Labour MP Stella Creasy also brought her child into parliament in 2021 (Bowden, 2021). Outside the UK, political women such as former Spanish MP Carolina Bescansa, Italian politician Licia Ronzulli or former New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern have all brought their children into a political setting (*BBC News Australia*, 2016; *BBC News Scotland Politics*, 2018; Wilkinson, 2018).

As explored in this section, women entering the political sphere have traditionally been considered "space invaders" (Verge and Pastor, 2017:26). The private sphere is often seen as a women's space, allowing women to be defined as a caregiver (Stalsburg, 2012:11 *also see* Cameron, 2020). As women enter politics, they can be met with criticism and scrutiny on whether they "deserve a greater presence in politics" (Murray, 2014:520-521). Even the intention to seek power, regardless of whether a woman attains any influence, will likely attract negative judgement about her character (Okimote and Brescoll, 2010:924-925). In the

section that follows, let us expand on the visibility of female politicians as they enter the political sphere.

The Visibility of Political Women

Prior scholarship points to the visibility of women in the political sphere as paramount to inspiring more women to enter public spaces. When a woman runs for public office, she encourages other women to run for election or become more engaged in political activism and discussion (Bonneau and Kanthak, 2018:3,6 *also see* Gilardi, 2015). Previous studies have highlighted that female politicians often bring new perspectives to government by focusing on health and reproductive rights, education, or women's equality (Cowper-Coles, 2021; Asiedu et al., 2018; Dodson, 2001; Ng and Muntaner, 2018) rather than "male issues" like " foreign policy and the economy" (Bystrom et al., 2004:18,179 *also see* Kahn, 1996).

For example, in March of 2022, UK senior Labour MPs launched a new campaign called The MotheRED campaign which sought to support mothers interested in standing for selection as a Labour candidate to overcome the barriers they face as a parent. The introduction of this campaign was due to growing concerns that the culture at Westminster deterred women with young children from standing in an election (Savage, 2022). Researchers, such as Ross (2002:191-192), have also suggested that more women attaining decision-making roles raise the standard of politics because women tend to be more collaborative on a cross-party basis and willing to listen to the needs of their constituents (Cowper-Coles, 2021:5,9). For example, in New Zealand, a cross-party group of female politicians was formed after the October 2020 elections, which work on "initiatives to increase women's representation and voice in politics" (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2021).

Although women have made progress in the UK and around the world towards achieving equal political systems, the rate of change remains slow, and most nations have not achieved gender equality within the political sphere (Apap et al., 2019). Efforts have been made to address this issue and accelerate the advancement of women in political representation. For example, 11 EU countries have implemented gender quotas for parliamentary elections (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2021). Amongst these countries, the "proportion of women members of parliament has grown three times faster" compared to countries without these quotas (European Institute for Gender, 2021).

Within the UK, gender imbalance continues in the Westminster political system; men continue to outnumber their female counterparts in the UK Parliament (Pannell, 2021). This is perhaps not surprising considering that the Westminster system has historically been male-dominated and is sometimes referred to as "the best gentlemen's club in the world" (Puwar, 2000:3). Scholars have acknowledged the "adversarial culture" at Westminster, particularly in the House of Commons where "heckling, jokes, insults, and non-verbal sounds" are acceptable behaviour (Hargrave and Blumenau, 2022:3; Charteris-Black, 2009).

Regardless of the male-dominated culture within the UK political systems, women have made advancements towards a gender-balanced government in recent years. According to a report in the House of Commons Library (Allen, 2020), the UK Parliament comprised 32% of women in 2017, meaning female MPs occupied 208 seats out of 650. That percentage rose to 34% in 2019, with women gaining 12 more seats (Allen, 2020), and rose again in the 2022 UK by-elections to 35%, where it currently remains (Pannell, 2021; Uberoi et al., 2023). In recent years, women have taken up prominent leadership roles throughout the UK. Nicola Sturgeon led the Scottish National Party (SNP) and served as the First Minister of Scotland for nine years. Mary Lou McDonald, the President of Sinn Féin, works alongside Michelle O'Neill, a former Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland and Vice President of Sinn Féin. Furthermore, in 2022, Liz Truss, a Conservative MP, became the third woman to hold the position of UK Prime Minister. Political parties in the UK, like the Labour Party, have also increased gender parity through the introduction of gender quotas, though the Conservative Party have struggled to increase their female participation (Wäckerle, 2021).

In terms of two of the UK's devolved parliaments, in Scotland, gender equality in political representation has not been achieved. Before devolution, Scottish politics was male dominant while women were marginalised (Mackay and Kenny, 2007:81). Devolution in Scotland offered an opportunity for a new institution to be "more open, inclusive and accountable" (Stirbu, 2011). Mackay and Kenny argue that "women's representation in the Scottish Parliament had great discursive and symbolic appeal" and following from devolution, "high numbers of women in parliament between 1999-2003 changed the traditional political agenda"(2007:91). Women's organisations such as "50/50 Campaign, Engender or Scottish Trade Union Congress Women's Committee" kept women's representation part of the political conversation (Mackay and Kenny, 2007:88), while the "adaption of party quotas from the 1990s onward has increased women's representation" in Scotland (Kenny and Mackay, 2014:871). However, they

have acknowledged that the percentage of women in politics "varies considerably depending upon the legislative arena" (Kenny and Mackay, 2014:871).

In Northern Ireland the political system and representation of women continue to be significantly impacted by the Troubles, the peace process, and the ongoing struggle between nationalism and unionism in the country. The Troubles can be viewed as a masculine-dominated political period in Northern Ireland's history; however, women played a visible role in the peace process (Cowell-Meyers, 2003:72,83). Scholarship has noted that "women participated in the Good Friday negotiations, as members of political party delegations, and notably as the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition" (Deiana, 2013:400). Despite women's contributions to the peace negotiations and the commitment to "women's full and equal political participation" in the new agreement, scholars have argued that women's political representation and inclusion has suffered setbacks (Deiana, 2013:405 *also see* Galligan, 2013). According to a study conducted by Whiting and Braniff (2016), the political parties in Northern Ireland did not support a more gender-balanced assembly. This was in contrast to the opinion of the general public, as "almost two-thirds" of respondents agreed that more women should be included in the assembly (Whiting and Braniff, 2016:1).

Researchers have associated a woman's style of politics, particularly those in leadership roles, with being more "democratic, cooperative, and inclusive" (Cowper-Coles, 2021:49, *also see* Adler, 1997; Childs, 2006; Eagly and Johnson, 2002, Holman, 2015). However, contemporary literature has recognised that the increase in female political participation does not necessarily lead to more collaborative politics or the implementation of feminist policies (Cowper-Coles, 2021:55 *also see* Dahlerup, 2018; Lovenduski, 2019). For example, in the UK, male and female politicians have recently worked to provide buffer zones around abortion clinics. Yet, two Conservative MPs, Kemi Badenoch, Women Equalities Minister and Home Secretary Suella Braverman, voted against the amendment (Dulieu, 2022). Intriguingly, an article published by European University Institute found that the "vast majority of European women who have had true executive power – party or government leaders – come from the right, starting with Margaret Thatcher" (Hermanin, 2022). Thatcher did little to advance female political representation, having appointed only one woman to her cabinet in the eleven years she was Prime Minister (Johnson, 2017:54, *also see* Lakhani, 2013). It is inaccurate to assume that all women share the same beliefs and opinions. This idea oversimplifies the diversity of women's

perspectives and reinforces stereotypes. Nonetheless, this does not lessen the need for continued representation of female politicians.

This section has explored the visibility of women in the political sphere, particularly focusing on a male-dominated culture within the UK political systems. A critical aspect of a politician's visibility in the public is reliant on their news coverage. Scholars have argued that the media coverage female politicians receive is often unequal in quality and quantity compared to male politicians (Vos, 2013:389-390 *also see*, Adcock, 2010; Niven, 2005). The news media can be a gatekeeper hindering a woman's representation by keeping her invisible in the press or trivialising her political success. Therefore, I will unpack the previous literature on media coverage by examining female politicians' representation, followed by the use of social media in the political sphere.

Media Representation of Female Politicians

Politics has been increasingly shaped by "communication patterns" because the relationship between politicians and the press is one of necessity (Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999:250). Politicians use the press to spread their political messages, and media outlets need political content to report. However, political communication scholars have identified an "increased intrusion of the media in the political process" known as "mediatisation" (Cohen et al., 2008:332-333). The mediatisation of politics has affected politicians because it permits the media power to enforce "rules, aims, production logic, and constraints" on political communicators (Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999:249). Critics have argued that the news media has "distorted the political process" by "turning politics into a market-like game"(Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999:248).

The increased mediatisation of political communication allows the news media to decide which stories are newsworthy based on "geographical proximity," "negative aspects," "elite status," and "superlativeness" (Bednarek and Caple, 2014:136). For a politician, their newsworthiness becomes dependent on their "political power" or "specific behavioural indicators, such as activity in parliament and communication skills" (Amsalem et al., 2018:2 *also see* Hopmann et al., 2012; Sheafer, 2001). Therefore, politicians "must negotiate with the media's preferred timing, formats, language", and even the "content" of their message to be considered newsworthy (Dayan and Katz, 1992 *also see* Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999:249, Cohen et al., 2008:332-333).

Research by feminist scholars has revealed that female politicians do not receive equal representation in the news media, "particularly in written press", as their male colleagues (Shor et al., 2015:961 *also see* Duncan et al., 1991; Greenwald 1990; Zoch and Turk 1998). According to Tuchman's research in 1978, women experience a type of "symbolic annihilation" due to "underrepresentation and trivialised representation" (McKay, 2017:42 *also see* Vos, 2013:391). Researchers have noted that "media producers contribute to the inequalities" of political women by documenting a "gender preference" amongst editors and journalists (Johnstonbaugh, 2018:1). For example, newsrooms across the UK are dominated by white men from high socioeconomic backgrounds, showing a lack of diversity among media professionals (Spilsbury, 2022).

Organisations such as Women in Journalism and Man Bites Dog conducted a study on the experiences and treatment of female journalists. They found that "only one in five (19%)" female journalists felt there was gender diversity in journalism (Women in Journalism and Man Bites Dog, 2021:9). A majority of women (70%) described journalism as a "macho and intimidating culture" (Women in Journalism and Man Bites Dog, 2021:9). Men occupy many senior roles, and "high status journalism specialism such as hard news, business, finance and politics remain male dominated" (Women in Journalism and Man Bites Dog, 2021:9,16). Therefore, political journalism often relies on a male perspective and may fail to address gender stereotypes and inequalities.

The "underrepresentation" of political women in the media "reinforces gendered (mis)perceptions" on who can occupy these positions (Rohrbach et al., 2020:694). For example, a study completed by O'Neill, Savigny, and Cann (2016) examined the representation of female politicians by analysing British press coverage from the last twenty years. They found an increase in the underrepresentation of political women in "the press compared to ten or twenty years ago", highlighting that women are "undermined by their decreased visibility and voice in the UK press" (O'Neill et al., 2016:304). These findings were also reflected in a study by Ross, Evans, Harrison, Shears, and Wadia (2013) which found gaps "in the amount of coverage of women candidates" during the 2010 UK General Election (2013:16-17 *also see* Rohrbach et al., 2020:694). For example, female politicians featured less in news reports about policy issues than male politicians (Ross et al., 2013:10 *also see* Rohrbach et al., 2020:696). Instead, political women appeared more frequently in opinion pieces focused on "the political

trajectories of individual candidates or their individual contributions to political life" (Ross et al., 2013:10).

Scholars have found that when women in politics are featured in the media, they are often discussed in terms of their personal lives or physical appearance rather than their political achievements (Verge and Pastor, 2017:28 *also see* Kahn, 1994). As mentioned in this chapter, a woman's association with the private sphere places her in the position of the caretaker. The news representation of women contributes to the formation of the "private, emotional, and subjective" realm in which women are often confined (Thompson, 2023 *also see* Global Media Monitoring Project, 2015). As a result, topics such as motherhood and domestic duties appear in the news coverage of political women (Swift, 2008:224 *also see* Braden, 1996). Reflecting on Heffernan and Wilgus' work, they suggest the media continuously informs society's views on motherhood, noting that the "media representations of motherhood constructs a moral landscape where certain choices and practices are deemed more appropriate than, and even morally superior to others" (2018:2).

An interview on *60 Minutes Australia* with then New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and her partner, Clarke Gayford, exemplifies how a female politician's domestic circumstances can become a topic of discussion. Ardern recently took office as PM and was pregnant with her first child. During the interview, journalist Charles Wooley asked Ardern the following questions: "What exactly is the date that baby's due" and "Why shouldn't a child be conceived during an election campaign" (Gil, 2018). In addition to commenting on her pregnancy, Wooley also made objectifying comments about Ardern's physical appearance. During the show's introduction, Wooley states he had "met a lot of prime ministers in [his] time," then adds, "But none so young, not too many so smart, and never one so attractive" (Gil, 2018). He added that he was "smitten" with her like the rest of New Zealand (Gil, 2018).

Drawing attention to a woman's physical appearance and characteristics is another way the press objectifies female politicians. Stories concentrating on a woman's physical attributes puts her in an objectified position where she is "treated primarily as a body valued for its use to other" (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997:174 *also see* Funk and Coker, 2016:459). Election coverage during the 2008 US Presidential Election exemplified this style of objectification, with reports commenting "on Palin's physical attractiveness while focusing on Clinton's dowdiness and cankles" (Mandell, 2015:63). According to Sheeler, being viewed as an object forces

women to cater to the male perspective by being attractive, dressing a certain way, and displaying sexual appeal (2010:37).

The objectification of a female politician has become a part of media practice to trivialise and reduce her agency and creditability (Nussbaum, 1995 *also see* Funk and Coker, 2016:456). For example, prior literature has referenced the "trivialisation and sexualisation" of female politicians by the news media after the 1997 UK General Election (Ross, Jansen, and Bürger, 2020:283). The number of women elected to "parliament doubled overnight"; however, the press referred to these newly elected women as "Blair's Babes" in news reports (Ross et al., 2020:283 *also see* Mavin et al., 2010). In addition, a study by Michela Insenga examined the representation of UK female MPs in the press. She found that the contributions of political women were undermined, and the "trivialisation of their image" limited their chances, in some cases, "irredeemable ways, to become leaders" (2014:189).

The trivialisation of female politicians correlates with prior research discussing the beauty queen metaphor. Kristina Sheeler defined this gendered metaphor in her work titled "Beauty Queens and Unruly Women in the Year of the Woman Governor: Jennifer Granholm and the Visibility of Leadership". Sheeler suggests the beauty queen metaphor "underscores women's femininity and attention to beauty and appearance" (Sheeler, 2000:22). The beauty queen represents the attractive, traditional woman that is either playing hostess or taking care of the children. In an example, Sheeler writes about US politician Jennifer Granholm and her run for Governor of Michigan in her study. The tough persona Granholm eluded during her campaign for Attorney General was replaced by the media's account of her as a beauty queen during her run for governor. Sheeler found that the press focused less on her career and more on Granholm's appearance. According to Sheeler, "She was objectified as a woman, a mother, and as a collection of body parts to be gazed on rather than a serious candidate" (2010:39).

The gendered reporting of Granholm reinforced "the dichotomy between attractiveness and intelligence" (Sheeler, 2010:41). Sheeler's reference to attractiveness and intelligence within her work mirrors Jamieson's concept of the femininity/competency double bind, which is described as the pressure for women to embody both masculine and feminine traits in order to be seen as capable (Jamieson, 1995:120-123). It is evident from previous literature that news media, particularly the press, has traditionally viewed female politicians through a "male-as-the-norm lens", resulting in gendered media representation (Rohrbach et al., 2020:694).

Contrary to these findings, some studies have found that there has been a move towards more "gendered-balanced representation" in media coverage (Rohrbach et al., 2020:696 *also see* Kittilson and Fridkin 2008; Heldman et al., 2005). For example, Banwart, Bystrom, and Robertson studied the newspaper coverage of male and female candidates "US Senate and state governorships during the 2000 election cycle" (2003:669). According to their research, male and female candidates were treated similarly during primary and general elections across various categories they analysed (Banwart et al., 2003:669-670).

Similar findings were discovered in Hayes and Lawless' (2015) study which examined local news coverage of "nearly 350 US House districts and nationally representative survey data" during the 2010 midterms. They found that both male and female politicians received equal mention of their gender and were "associated with the same traits and issues" (2015:107). Interestingly, many of the studies arguing that the media treatment of male and female politicians is equal comes from studies completed in the US and Canada (Aday and Devitt, 2001; Atkeson and Krebs, 2008; Everitt, 2003; Jalalzai, 2006). Numerous studies have recognised a discrepancy in media coverage between European and North American nations, highlighting that female politicians in European countries continue to be underrepresented in the media compared to their male counterparts (van der Pas, 2022, Hooghe et al., 2015; Lühiste and Banducci, 2016; Midtbø, 2011; Ross et al., 2013; Semetko and Boomgaarden, 2007). Therefore, let us now take a closer look at the media representation of female politicians in the UK.

A Closer Glance at the UK
Previous literature on UK media coverage of female politicians depicts an objectifying portrayal of political women that parallels the broader conversation on a female politician's media representation (Harmer, 2021; Insenga, 2014; Mavin et al., 2010). Researchers have recognised that "gender bias in UK election media coverage" is not a "new development" and has been "well documented" (Ross et al., 2013:5). For example, Loughborough University's 2015 UK General Election report on media coverage found female politicians "accounted for 14.3% of all politicians covered" (Deacon et al., 2015).

The report also noted that women were more frequently featured as "relatives of politicians" while the leaders of the major parties, such as David Cameron and Ed Miliband received the most media attention during the election (Deacon et al., 2015). Loughborough University's recent report of the 2019 UK General Election found similar findings stating "only five women"

made it into the top 20 list of most prominent politicians to attract media coverage (Deacon et al., 2019). Two of those women were party leaders Nicola Sturgeon and Jo Swinson and the remaining three women were Priti Patel, Angela Rayner and Diane Abbott. It is worth noting that although Patel, Rayner, and Abbott are prominent figures in British politics, they did not rank among the top 10 in election coverage.

UK political elections tend to be "leadership focused" (Lovenduski, 1997) and researchers have suggested, "women may be less recognised and reported because they are less likely to be a party leader" (Murphy and Rek, 2018:293). Additionally, the "gendered nature of the language" used to characterise politics presents a female politician as "intruding into implicitly male territory" (Adcock, 2010:146). According to Murphy and Rek, "contemporary media may disadvantage female candidates in British politics" and "contribute to other gender-based inequalities" in the political sphere (2018:292-293). Some scholars have even suggested that British newspapers may give more attention to the wife of a male politician than a female politician, which occurred during the 2015 UK General Election due to both major party leaders "promoting softer images of domestic settings" (Murphy and Rek, 2018:292 *also see* Wahl-Jorgensen, 2015; Campbell and Childs, 2010; Deacon et al., 2015). The UK media's portrayal of women reinforces the role of a politician as male and a female politician as "other" (Ross et al., 2013:7).

Moving away from the representation of politicians in Westminster, female political representation and leadership in Holyrood have "remained consistently higher than its UK counterpart", irrespective of setbacks such as the 2007 Scottish Parliament elections results (McKay, 2020:7 *also see* Mackay and Kenny, 2007). Nonetheless, researchers have recognised that the media coverage of female politicians is "linked to domesticity and appearance" (McKay, 2020:8 *also see* Higgins and McKay, 2016; Pedersen, 2018). For example, during the 2014 Scottish Independence referendum, "news coverage was disproportionately provided by male reporters and the female voice was largely underrepresented in the press" (Patrick, 2020:76). In 2015, the Scottish Parliament consisted of three female party leaders: Ruth Davidson for the Scottish Conservative Party, Kezia Dugdale for the Scottish Labour Party, and Nicola Sturgeon for the Scottish National Party (Pedersen, 2018:711). Despite this, the press continued to focus on these leaders' appearance and domestic circumstances, demonstrating how this coverage style affects political women at the highest level (Pedersen, 2018:711,713). The previous scholarship on Scottish political media representation aligns with literature in a UK-wide context.

In Northern Ireland, prior scholarship on political representation and gender is distinct due to the country's complex political environment. The impact of the Troubles and the division between nationalism and unionism significantly influenced the Northern Irish press, and much previous literature has focused on this topic. Scholarship has noted that Northern Ireland has three "indigenous daily newspapers: the unionist News Letter, the nationalist Irish News, and the Belfast Telegraph, once considered a moderate unionist paper" (Baker, 2018:94). During the Troubles, media attention was focused on the violence, particularly on the violence committed by the IRA, while the British army was depicted as "above the fray-brave" and "largely inactive except as a rather superior kind of Boy Scout Troop" (Condit and Cottle, 1997:285). As previously noted, women have been a part of Northern Ireland's political history. However, due to the influence of masculinity within the conflict, media coverage of female politicians has been less prevalent compared to their male counterparts.

Despite previous studies suggesting that female politicians are portrayed differently in the media, some researchers argue that there is no significant difference in how political women are covered compared to their male counterparts. Researchers Hayes and Lawless suggest "the twenty-first-century political landscape is far more equitable", noting women do not face a "systematically biased campaign environment" (2016:6). They arrived at these conclusions from their study of the 2010 Connecticut's 4th and California's 47th congressional district elections in the United States. Democratic incumbents Jim Hines in Connecticut and Loretta Sanchez in California ran against male Republican candidates. These researchers examined Sanchez's campaign coverage versus her male counterpart, Van Tran. They found minimal articles discussing either candidate's personality traits. Instead, 36% of Sanchez's coverage and 35% of Tran's coverage was devoted to election issues (Hayes and Lawless, 2016:13). Hayes and Lawless believe "men and women have little reason to campaign differently, the media has little reason to report them differently, and voters have no reason to evaluate them based on gender" (2016:6).

Hayes and Lawless provide a conflicting viewpoint on a female politician's media representation, widening the scope of how scholars evaluate this topic. In relation to my thesis, neither researcher examined politicians in leadership positions or the UK political system. However, within a UK political context, researchers support similar claims by Hayes and Lawless. Cameron and Shaw's book, *Gender, Power and Political Speech: Women and*

Language in the 2015 UK General Election, determined that "male and female politicians received broadly comparable treatment" at the televised election debates (2016:82).

More recently, Daphne J. van der Pas' study on the newspaper coverage of female politicians during "one entire legislative term" in Germany, Spain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and the UK (van der Pas, 2022:1485)"found that the UK was the only clear case of equal media attention to male and female MPs" compared to other European nations (2022:1488 *also see* Hallin and Mancini, 2004). Interestingly, van der Pas found "politicians with similar pasts and equal positions differ by gender in levels of media attention in Germany, France and the Netherlands" while "Spain and Italy showed a difference in visibility between male and female politicians"; however, her marginal findings were not "statistically significant" (2022:1487,1488). Her finding demonstrates a possible shift towards more equitable news reporting in the UK for politicians. Thus far, this section has examined prior scholarship exploring how female politicians are gendered within media coverage through a lack of visibility or trivialisation. Let us review the literature on the self-presentation of politicians on social media.

The Self-Presentation of Politicians on Social Media

The growth of new media has quickly become a way for individuals to communicate and gather information (Valenzuela et al., 2019:802 *also see* Newman et al. 2017; Boulianne 2019; Skoric et al., 2016). New media provides information that is instant and accessible to everyone, "allowing people to act as both the transmitters and producers" (Rajendran and Thesinghraja, 2014:609). The increase in online communication is a growing medium for political use and has forced traditional media outlets to contend for an "audience's attention and engagement" (Peifer and Meisinger, 2021:828). According to Professor Diana Owen, "new media has transformed the political media system" by "facilitating the production, dissemination, and exchange of political content on platforms and networks that accommodate interaction and collaboration" (2018:113).

Researchers have noted that the "emergences of online platforms such as Twitter and Facebook" have created an appealing option for "campaigning politicians or those in government" looking to share their messages (Ellis, 2018:4 *also see* McNair, 2011:86). Scholars have determined that "platforms like Facebook and Twitter enable candidates to directly reach out to voters, mobilise supporters and influence the public agenda" (Stier et al., 2018:50).

Politicians like Barack Obama, the 44th President of the US, was successful in implementing social media as a part of his election strategy. Obama's 2008 US Presidential campaign utilised "advanced digital media to network, collaborate and community-build" by targeting specific audiences (Owen, 2018:116). Obama demonstrated that "social media can incite voter support and generate significant campaign funding" (Walker et al., 2017:276 *also see* Tumulty, 2007, Davies, 2014).

There are many forms of social media; however, politicians most commonly use Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (Dixon, 2022). Facebook can enhance a political party's campaign by targeting key demographics while providing voters with a new source of information to which they can "share" to others or add a "comment" (Dommett and Temple 2017:191-192). Facebook attracts politicians, particularly from "minor parties", because of the "unmediated and mostly unmoderated nature of the communication between politicians and citizens" (Ross and Bürger, 2014:53). In Ross and Bürger's study of New Zealand Members of Parliament's Facebook behaviours, they found politicians felt Facebook had a more diverse audience than Twitter and provided a method of contact for "individuals who would not otherwise make contact via more traditional means" (2014:54-55). For example, US politician Michele Bachmann utilised Facebook to stream videos of herself and "created an iPhone app" to update her supporters during the 2010 US Presidential Election (Gelber, 2011:2,11). Within the UK, politicians have incorporated social media into their party's election campaigns. For example, in 2015 and 2017, the Conservative Party used more targeted Facebook advertising focused on anti-Labour rhetoric in both elections (Margetts, 2017:387). Scholars have noted the digital campaigns during the 2017 election "normalised Facebook advertising" and enabled parties to more effectively target voters than previous databases allowed before the introduction of social media (Dommett and Temple 2017:198).

Social media platforms, like Instagram, are visually based and can be used for "self-presentation and branding", with pictures of a "campaign rally or family photos" (Brands et al., 2021:2017, *also see* Pereira Caldeira, 2021:9). Politicians use Instagram to curate their political message with creative images that have "greater success at grabbing viewers' attention, conveying emotions, and changing political behaviour" (Parmelee and Roman, 2019:1 *also see* Brader, 2005; Graber, 1996). For example, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau used Instagram to promote his political campaign in 2015. Trudeau used Instagram to create and maintain a positive image with visual rhetoric and storytelling, emphasising a "youthful, well-

groomed, and positive person at ease in every personal or public situation" (Lalancette and Raynauld, 2019:916). A second visual-based platform is Snapchat, which is commonly more popular among young people (Alhabash and Ma, 2017:2 *also see* Duncan, 2016; Lang, 2015; Matthews, 2014). Snapchat allows users to send and receive time-sensitive photos and videos, which expire upon viewing (Alhabash and Ma, 2017:2 *also see* Stec, 2023). Former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn was an active social media user on platforms like Instagram or Snapchat during the 2017 UK General Election, which helped him gain the attention of a younger voting audience (Margetts, 2017:387).

Twitter has become the social network of choice for politicians and journalists alike due to "offline media normalising Twitter as source material" (Walker et al., 2017:275 *also see* Newman, 2010). Politicians have noted that tweets are more likely to be published by a journalist than posts from other forms of social media (Ross and Bürger, 2014:55). Traditional and online media have become a hybrid system where social media covers the events offline and traditional media reports on the events occurring online (Guomundsson and Sverrisson, 2019:1-2). As more politicians engage on Twitter, it raises questions about how they use this form of social media, particularly during election periods. A study completed by Graham, Jackson, and Broersma on the politician's Twitter use during the 2010 UK General Election found the "interactive and participatory nature of social media" has forced politicians to adapt to these "communicative spaces" (2013:694). They discovered that "slightly more than two-thirds of the candidates' tweets were used to give updates from the campaign trail, promote themselves or party members and critique opponents" (Graham et al., 2013:708).

The most evident example of a politician utilising Twitter to spread campaign messages is prolific political tweeter, former US President Donald Trump. During the 2016 US Presidential election, Trump utilised his account to promote himself, degrade his opponents, and at times, spread misinformation which gained him significant news coverage (Francia, 2018:444-445 *also see* Coe and Griffin, 2020; Luu, 2016). Trump utilised Twitter to "stoke fear and impugn marginalised groups" while "shaping a media agenda"(Coe and Griffin, 2020:4 *also see* Ott and Dickinson, 2019; Wells et al., 2016). Trump's controversial and combative tweets allowed him free media exposure, keeping him in the public eye (Francia, 2018:444-446). Researchers believe his use of divisive tweets to gain media attention helped Trump win the 2016 election, especially since his opponents did not engage in the same online behaviour (Francia, 2018:445-446 *also see* Coe and Griffin, 2020).

A Personalised Online Presence and the Drawbacks for Female Politicians

As a part of the increased use of social media, politicians have begun "presenting aspects of their personal lives" with followers (Colliander et al., 2017:277 *also see* Kruikemeier, 2014). Research completed by Schwanholz, Graham, and Stoll (2018) found an increase in the personalisation of Twitter accounts during election campaigns, with politicians disclosing information about their private or personal life (Schwanholz et al., 2018:150 *also see* Jackson and Lilleker, 2011). Similar findings were discovered in Graham, Jackson, and Broersma's study, which suggests that social media "represents a semi-public, semi-private space for self-presentation" (2018:137-139). Politicians face "maintaining a professional persona" online versus sharing aspects of their private life (Colliander, 2017:277).

Previous research has indicated that social media provides political women with the chance to circumvent traditional media and control their public persona (Tsichla et al., 2021:7 *also see* Yarchi and Samuel-Azran, 2018). This is particularly advantageous for women in politics. Research shows that female politicians are more active on social media than their male counterparts, and they tend to use these platforms more frequently to express criticism towards their opponents (Evans et al., 2014 *also see* McGregor et al., 2016:4). However, scholars have recognised that there is a discrepancy between the online campaigning experiences of male and female politicians (McGregor et al., 2016 *also see* Tsichla et al., 2021:6).

In a study completed by McGregor, Lawrence and Cardona (2016) on the self-personalisation of male and female politicians during the 2014 US gubernatorial election, male politicians overall engaged in "more personalisation on social media than their female counterparts". However, their study revealed a lack of uniformity amongst political women (McGregor et al., 2016:15). Some female politicians saw "an advantage" to personalising their social media, particularly in "competitive races", while other women did not (McGregor et al., 2016:15). Interestingly, they acknowledge that "the political uses of social media are still evolving", therefore many findings regarding social media use are "likely to be partially contingent on individual candidates' comfort with these new media forms" and its "emerging norms" (McGregor et al., 2016:16).

A factor to consider when analysing a politician's social media use and comfort with the platforms is online harassment. Research completed by Amnesty International argued that

"violence and abuse against women" are "not limited to any one social media platform" (Amnesty International, 2018,pp.7-8). However, Twitter is one of the "largest social media" companies globally, encouraging users to engage in conversations or share their thoughts with others (Amnesty International, 2018, p.8). The "open and public" interactions on Twitter allow "violent and abusive content" to be sent rapidly across the platform (Amnesty International, 2018, p.8). All politicians can experience online abuse, but for a female politician, "negative gender stereotypes against women also influence the way individuals communicate online" (Dhrodia, 2018:381). Prior research on the social media abuse of female politicians has indicated that all women, including politicians at the highest level, can be subjected to online threats. The more well-known a politician is, the more abuse they are likely to receive (Ward and McLoughlin, 2020:63). Women will often receive abuse that is "sexist" or "an online threat of violence", which can "reference the women's body" (Dhrodia 2018:381,368).

Interestingly, when examining online threats towards UK politicians, men receive more abuse than women (Ward and McLoughlin, 2020:63 *also see* Gorrell et al., 2018). These findings from previous bodies of work do not discount that female politicians are "more likely to be subjected to online stalking and sexual harassment" (Gorrell et al., 2018:603). Social media abuse can have adverse psychological and physically damaging effects towards targeted women, deter them from entering the political sphere (Dhrodia 2018:368) and silence their public participation (Amnesty International, 2018, p.16). For example, in 2016, a right-wing nationalist killed Labour MP Jo Cox after she was abused online (Binns, 2018:34), and more recently, a study by BBC Shared Data Unit found Labour Deputy Leader Angela Rayner received the highest amount (4%) of "toxic tweets" over a six-week period when analysing over 130,000 tweets that mentioned their list of 10 MPs (Sweeney, 2022).

It has been well documented in news coverage that UK politicians such as Diane Abbott have received online abuse (Southern and Harmer, 2019:188). In July 2017, UK Labour MP Diane Abbott commented that she rarely uses Twitter due to the "terrible" abuse she receives (Amnesty International, 2018, p.17). It is important to recognise that while Abbott experiences sexist abuse, her prominence as a black British woman in public life means her abuse is also racist (Dhrodia 2018:384). Therefore, it's crucial to recognise the intersectionality present in social media abuse. Studies have found that online attacks are "aimed disproportionately at women, and in particular at women of colour or those advocating explicitly feminist messages" (Banet-Weiser and Miltner, 2016 *also see* Southern and Harmer, 2019:191). For example,

Claudia Webbe, an Independent MP, revealed to the *Evening Standard* that she had received "'horrific violent misogynistic and racist' online abuse including death threats, trolling, threats of rape and lynching" and added she fears for her safety daily (Sleigh, 2021).

Southern and Harmer's work in *Online Othering; Exploring Digital Violence and Discrimination on the Web* examined "the way that women politicians are othered and discriminated against on Twitter" (2019:194). They specifically analysed tweets sent to MPs with "two or more characteristics traditionally underrepresented in parliament" (Southern and Harmer, 2019:194). The study found evidence of online abuse that targeted individuals based on both their gender and race. Interestingly, they also recognised the presence of more subtle forms of discrimination, which, aimed to discredit a politician's "intelligence, qualifications, and credentials" in a less obvious way than explicit abuse (Southern and Harmer, 2019:206).

Additionally, they discovered posts that praised the politicians in a "problematic" manner that reinforced their perceived difference from traditional "political representatives" (Southern and Harmer, 2019:196). Previous studies have shown that social media can be invaluable for politicians to reach voters directly without the filter of traditional media. However, politicians must navigate a potentially hostile and unregulated space as they attempt to progress their political careers. Within this section, it is evident there is a link between a politician's speech and behaviour with their self-presentation. As a result, I will investigate past research on female politicians' speech styles and behaviour.

The Style and Rhetoric of the Political Sphere

Language can hold great significance within the political sphere and illustrate the agency a politician holds because, as Wodak says in *The Discourse of Politics in Action*, "language is not powerful on its own; it gains power by the use powerful people make of it" (2009:35). Men have traditionally dominated political spaces and dictated the expected language and behaviour. For political women, ideologies centre on the concept that women use language differently than men (Cameron and Shaw, 2016:5). Early scholarship from the 1980s and 1990s suggests female politicians use more personal and communicative language, while men are more dominant and less sympathetic (Bate and Bowker, 1997; Wood, 1994; Tannen, 1990). The difference between male and female communication styles is referred to as the different voice ideology, initially discussed in Carol Gilligan's book *In a Different Voice* (1982 *also see* Cameron and Shaw, 2016:5).

Gilligan describes the different voice as a contrast between "male and female voices", highlighting a "distinction between the two modes of thought" and interpretation rather than a characteristic of gender (1982:2). The different voice ideology reappears in the work of Campbell, who suggests an existence of a feminine style of rhetoric. Campbell's (1989) analysis of speeches and written work during the early women's rights movement from the 1840s to the start of the twentieth century reiterates the historical belief that public speaking has been seen as a solely masculine activity. Campbell argues that women have adopted a feminine style, characterised as "personal in tone, relying heavily on personal experience, and inviting the audience to participate" (Kaml, 2000:60 *also see* Campbell, 1989).

Researcher Sarah Childs revisited the different voice ideology in her work by examining female Labour MPs who entered the House of Commons in 1997. Childs uncovered claims that men and women prefer to communicate differently, claiming "women prefer less combative and aggressive" speech styles, instead "collaborating with others and communicating on a personal level" (Childs, 2004:5,6 *also see* Cameron and Shaw, 2016:3). In contrast, men tend to interact with "aggressive arguments, point-scoring tactics, and self-promotion" (Childs, 2004:5,6 *also see* Cameron and Shaw, 2016:5,7). Men have historically dominated political spaces enabling male politicians to dictate the rules of political speech (Shaw, 2000:402). Childs discovered that the behaviour of MPs in the House of Commons led female politicians to perceive their effectiveness would be limited due to a women's style of speech being seen as less valued (2004:10).

In a prior work by Shaw, she found from two datasets, "one from 1998 to 2001" and the second "from 2009 to 2011" that female MPs in UK Parliamentary debates in the House of Commons "very rarely made illegal challenges such as interrupting a speaker from a sitting position" (Shaw, 2000; Shaw, 2020 *also see* Cameron and Shaw, 2016:31). Rule-breaking in the House of Commons is depicted as a "masculine gladiatorial" style of communication and men are seen as courageous and confident for making jokes or insults (Charteris-Black, 2009:145). Rule-breaking amongst men contributes to feminine styles of rhetoric being evaluated negatively within a political system. As long as women are seen as "interlopers" within the government, their contributions in comparison to men will "not be considered equal in value" (Cameron and Shaw, 2016:13,15).

One quality associated with female speech styles and behaviour hindering political women is the connotations between women and emotionality. Women are seen as "emotional", and their emotional responses are viewed as "overblown or negatively evaluated" (Huston-Comeaux and Kelly 2002:2). Any suggestion of "emotional instability" from a female politician, such as crying or becoming visibly angry can negatively affect politicians (Brooks, 2011:597). In addition, women are believed to use more intensifiers in their speech to reflect their emotional involvement compared to men (McMillan et al., 1977:554 *also see* Fuchs, 2017). Researchers Huston-Comeaux and Kelly suggest "gendered emotional stereotypes appear to have many potential consequences" when "women's emotional expressions" are evaluated, forcing female politicians to navigate their emotional displays carefully (2002:2).

Charteris-Black (2009:157) infers that political woman "avoid language that is gendered" in order to not overuse a feminine rhetoric style. For example, UK MPs Harriet Harman and Margaret Beckett avoided using "hyperboles" in their debate style to avoid sounding "overly emotional" (Charteris-Black 2009:155). During the 2017 UK General Election, Theresa May struggled to display the "appropriate" (Shield, 2005:7) emotional response. May attempted to exert a "militaristic and masculine strength", often using the campaign slogan "strong and stable leadership" (Crines, 2017:74 *also see* Savigny, 2017:81). She displayed her agentic traits in her speech and behaviour since these qualities are deemed necessary for leadership (Bauer, 2015:692). However, May's presentation and speech style aligned more with masculine traits leading to criticism that suggested she was not sensitive enough.

Male politicians are not restricted by speech and emotion like women. Men communicate emotional displays that associate themselves with "power or status", and are expected to be in "control, competent and strong" (Brescoll, 2016:419-420). Male politicians can display emotion without the same gendered assumptions that affect women, allowing men to show they have emotion without being emotional (Shields, 2005 *also see* Brescoll, 2016:419-420). Claiming that women are more emotional or sensitive than men is a matter of cultural stereotypes rather than identifying a difference between gender (Fischer, 1993:306). Emotional displays are not solely reserved for women. For example, former US President Donald Trump often made news headlines for his policies and behaviour. However, the news media referred to him as "having a tantrum", "poorly behaved toddler", or "angry" (Chait, 2019:1). All of these terms showcase an individual that is emotionally expressive beyond what is traditionally expected of politicians occupying a leadership position, yet none of these terms are gendered.

Another factor contributing to the gendering of political speech is metaphors. Metaphors originate from different cultural values and attitudes held by a community that becomes universal knowledge (Deignan, 2003:255 *also see* Rodríguez, 2009:78). George Lakoff and Mark Johnson suggest that metaphors impact not only our language but our actions and thoughts (1980:3). In contemporary politics, gendered metaphors have become inescapable for women in power. The use of gendered metaphors in political discourse, such as the sports or war trope, is more commonly associated with masculinity. These tropes are often reserved for men because it reinforces the notion of heroic masculinity within political discourse. It is common to see these tropes during election periods with terminology such as "team player" (Howe, 1988:89), "neck and neck", "game-changer" (Vieth, 2015:3) or "the battle for Number 10" (Coates, 2022).

As seen above, Theresa May utilised similar rhetoric during her 2017 UK General Election campaign. Politicians such as Hillary Clinton have also used this style of language. During Clinton's 2008 US Presidential campaign, she told a crowd of people:

> "If I'm your nominee, you'll never have to be worried that I will be knocked out of the ring because I do have the strength and experience to lead this country and I am ready to go toe to toe with Senator McCain whenever and wherever he desires" (Sheeler and Anderson, 2013:97).

 Sheeler and Anderson argue this style of speech evolved from her earlier campaign language which was described as "second-wave feminist rhetoric of conversation and collaboration" (2013:96). As election campaigning continued, the "demand for a hotly contested primary" and the "Republican opposition" forced Clinton to change her language, striking a balance between stereotyped masculine and feminine rhetoric (Sheeler and Anderson, 2013:97).

The association of women's language with emotionality and gendered metaphors contributed to the idea that masculine language is the norm in political spaces. Male characteristics benefit politicians because scholars have discovered a voting preference for those politicians who demonstrate these qualities (Grebelsky-Lichtman, 2016:275). In accommodating these biases, women implement masculine communication styles to adapt to their political environment because a "woman who wishes to reach" the highest levels of politics "must adjust herself to

masculine norms and behavioural codes" (Grebelsky-Lichtman, 2016:276 *also see* Bystrom et al., 2004; Coyle, 2009). For example, Margaret Thatcher was instructed to change the pitch of her voice to "accentuate its huskiness and eliminate its shrillness" (Charteris-Black, 2005:87).

The need for female politicians to adapt to a masculine environment correlates with Jamieson's work on the double bind. She describes how women must distinguish between being feminine and masculine. Jamieson notes, "This double bind draws energy from our tendency to think in dichotomies characterised as masculine or feminine and then set in a hierarchical relation to one another with the masculine thought superior and the feminine inferior" (1995:121). Although much of the literature within this section was published in the 20th century, the scholarship demonstrates a historical association between traditional gender stereotypes and male and female speech styles. However, as research has advanced, some scholars have criticised the "different voice" discourse. In the next section, I will delve into this further.

Televised Election Debates
Returning to Cameron and Shaw's (2016) study of politicians' rhetoric at the 2015 televised debates, the authors exemplified various speech styles and the gendered adaption politicians adhere to in a political space. Televised debates are a "personality-centred, conflictual, and spontaneous" event that allows voters to form impressions of a politician (Hart and Jarvis, 1997:1096 *also see* Cho, 2009). In a debate setting, disorderly behaviour, such as speaking out of turn or using "non-debate like" speech, has become a facet of political debates (Cameron and Shaw, 2016:30). Masculine language is typically seen as dominant compared to feminine language (Roberts and Utych, 2020:47). Male politicians will traditionally take longer speaking turns and make aggressive moves in debates allowing them to appear as the more powerful candidate compared to a female politician (Edelsky and Adams, 1990 *also see* Cameron and Shaw 2016:30). Intriguingly, Banwart and McKinney's study on non-presidential US debates found gendered adaptiveness amongst debate participants (2005:370). Gendered adaptiveness is a "willingness to combine the traditionally masculine norms of adversarial debate with feminine communication styles which help construct authenticity and build rapport with the viewer at home" (Cameron and Shaw, 2016:74).

Cameron and Shaw's analysis of *The ITV Leaders' Debate* and the *BBC Election Debate 2015* found no distinct difference in the linguistic behaviour of male and female politicians. In

attendance at the ITV and BBC debates were minor party leaders Nicola Sturgeon, SNP leader, Green Party leader Natalie Bennett and Plaid Cymru leader Leanne Wood. Along with these three women, four men attended the ITV debate: Nigel Farage, party leader of UKIP; Conservative Party leader David Cameron; Liberal Democrat Party leader Nick Clegg; and Labour Party leader Ed Miliband. At the BBC debate, the same politicians were in attendance, with the exception of Cameron and Clegg, who did not attend. These debates provided a platform for party leaders to interact directly and challenge one another. There were three ways politicians were allocated speaking turns: an invitation from the moderator, participants could nominate another politician to speak by addressing them directly, or politicians could take an uninvited speaking turn (Cameron and Shaw, 2016:35).

According to research by Cameron and Shaw, Sturgeon and Farage had the most extended speaking turns in the ITV debate. Cameron, Clegg, and Miliband followed closely behind, while Bennett and Wood had fewer speaking turns compared to the other MPs. It is also pertinent to note Cameron and Miliband were allocated more speaking turns by the moderator as major party leaders. Miliband had the most speaking turns at the BBC debate, followed by Sturgeon and Farage. Wood and Bennett had noticeably fewer speaking turns compared to the other MPs. Interestingly, Sturgeon, Wood, and Bennett each displayed "masculine" communication styles during their debate performances. During the BBC debate, Sturgeon broke debate rules by frequently speaking after the moderator had ended her turn or using humour to make political attacks on her opponents, such as Farage. Wood also targeted Farage and was the only politician to use a speaking turn to challenge an opponent (Cameron and Shaw, 2016:66). Bennett employed rule-breaking behaviour by shouting to attain a speaking turn. Regardless of the length of speaking time, each female leader was willing to engage in masculine rhetorical styles on the debate stage.

Cameron and Shaw (2016:38) suggested that Sturgeon, Farage, Wood, and Bennett leading less significant political parties meant their speaking time was cut short. Their findings adhere to the idea that politicians do not use a set speech style based on gendered assumptions of rhetoric. Instead, a politician's role and political party affect their access to greater speaking time more than their gender. Interestingly, recent scholarship from Dai and Wang discovered women have more ability to follow their "authentic gender identities" (2021:2) and show feminine traits. In their analysis of gender in constructing diplomatic speeches, Dai and Wang suggest "female politicians are not as strictly strained by male dominance in politics" (2021:7)

and are not bound to adapt their gender to accommodate their political environment. It is evident from this section that earlier research tended to separate rhetoric styles by masculine and feminine traits. However, contemporary scholarship has challenged this finding, suggesting there is no distinction between the communication styles of male and female politicians. The analysis between language and gender in the political sphere has raised questions I intend to research on the ways female politicians utilise speech, particularly in times of elections.

Gender and Political Leadership

Leadership has become a "universal and inescapable" part of society (Blondel, 1987:1-2), existing in formal and informal organisations. Political leadership is a claim to authority where elected officials can exercise power over a group. Researchers have identified that, historically, leadership traits include the ability to be "self-reliant, assertive, or competitive" (Rudman and Phelan, 2008:63). However, women are rarely described as "having leadership skills" like their male counterparts (Okimote and Brescoll, 2010:924), with research highlighting that women are perceived to be "sympathetic and passive" while men are described as "tough, aggressive, and assertive" (Huddy and Terkilden, 1993:120-121 *also see* Schneider and Bos, 2014).

Prior scholars have argued that the relationship between "female gender roles and typical leader roles" tends to create "prejudice toward women leaders" in the following ways: "a less favourable evaluation of a women's potential for leadership" and "women leaders because agentic behaviours are perceived as less desirable in women than in men" (Bligh et al., 2012:564 *also see* Eagly and Karau, 2002). Regardless of their positions, political women are placed within a double bind of "femininity/competence" (Jamieson, 1995:121). As described in an earlier section, Jamieson defines the femininity/competence double bind as the evaluation of a woman's ability to "deviate from the female norms of femininity" while displaying "masculine norms of competence" (1995:121). In Emily Harmer's book *Women, Media, and Elections: Representation and Marginalization in British Politics*, she echoes Jamieson's work about the femininity/competence double bind. According to Harmer, this double bind links a "good leader" with "masculine qualities", while women who exhibit masculine characteristics risk going against "gender norms" (2021:123).

The long-established idea that authority and leadership remain exclusively for men asserts politics as a "man's game" (Verge and Pastor, 2017:28), hindering the progression of female

political participation. Studies by feminist scholars have revealed that throughout history, men have "dominated politics", resulting in the idea that effective leadership is associated with masculine traits (Harmer, 2021:123). This concept allows men to "easily embody the ideal of leadership" due to the "cultural association" between leadership and masculinity (Harmer 2021:123 *also see* Campus, 2013; Conroy, 2015). In the UK, the political sphere has been heavily influenced by the standards of behaviour set by "white, middle-aged, and middle-class men" (Harmer, 2021:4 *also see* King et al., 2018). Researchers have found that women are "less likely to be recruited than men" for political positions, noting that political parties tend to recruit individuals similar to themselves (Boyle and Meyer, 2018:3 *also see* Cheng and Tavits, 2011:461). This discovery aligns with the perception of Westminster as an "old boy's network" that "resembles the male-dominated elite public schools and Oxbridge colleges" (Puwar, 2000:1-2).

Additionally, the way political leaders are portrayed in the media strengthens the idea that only men possess the qualities of a leader. News coverage often leans towards a "masculine narrative" (Rakow and Kranich, 1991:8) where "masculine imagery" is used to create a story that depicts politics in "stereotypically masculine terms" that exclude women (Gidengil and Everitt, 2003:210-211). Repeatedly portraying men as having leadership traits reinforces the link between masculinity and leadership and impacts a political leader's electoral success (Aaldering and van der Pas, 2020:914, 927).

Previous research has shown that the media tends to highlight the personal characteristics, physical attributes, and domestic roles of female political leaders in their news coverage (Wagner et al., 2019:144-145). In a study completed by Wagner, Trimble and Sampert, they examined "the Globe and Mail newspaper on 10 women and 17 men seeking the leadership of Canadian political parties since 1975" (2019:141). They found that "women candidates were subjected to more negative and gendered assessments of other communication skills and political acumen" while their male counterparts "received complimentary coverage of their leadership strengths and muted attention to their leadership weaknesses" (Wagner et. al, 2019:155).

Reflecting once more on Harmer's work, she discovered that women in leadership receive more negative newspaper coverage than other women in politics. However, she argues the

coverage tends to be less focused on their "appearance and family life" and more on their "personalities" and "gendered assumptions" about their leadership abilities (2021:154-155). Contradicting these scholars, Vos proposed that women may receive the same coverage as men "when both aim for or already have, the same political position," such as in the "German election in 2005, when Angela Merkel and Gerhard Schröder were equal in terms of media visibility" (2013:392 *also see* Semetko and Boomgaarden, 2007).

It is important to acknowledge that female party leaders tend to receive more media coverage due to their novelty and newsworthiness in the political arena than other female politicians (Trimble, 2007:974 *also see* Deacon and Harmer, 2019; Ross and Comrie, 2012). For example, journalists did not consider Theresa May important enough within parliament "to take to lunch" until she became PM (Cowley and Kavanagh, 2018:48). Politicians with "high institutional positions" are considered newsworthy because they hold "formal political power in society" (Vos, 2016:740). Harmer claims when a woman leads a political party during a campaign, the news coverage often focuses only on her, which can be disadvantageous for other women politicians who are already underrepresented (2021:154-155). Although having women in leadership roles is a step towards gender equality in politics, it does not necessarily benefit all women politicians equally (Harmer, 2021:155).

In a study completed by Minna Cowper-Coles, she indicated that "race, religion, ethnicity and class can interact with cultural contexts to mean certain groups face increased difficulties in terms of their representation" (2021:31). Scholars have exemplified these intersectional barriers, such as Trimble, Raphael, Sampert, Wagner and Gerrits (2015), who found that the Canadian news media present a "view of political leaders as white and male" and negatively evaluated anyone not meeting this standard (*also see* Cowper-Coles, 2021:31-32). Alternatively, Joshi and Och's (2014) analysis of "women's representation in 16 countries across Asia" found "working class women and those who have average levels of education are severely underrepresented" (*also see* Cowper-Coles, 2020:31-32). Scholars have observed that a "one size fits all" approach does not always work regarding women's political representation (Scola, 2006). Therefore, it is important to acknowledge how "intersectional dynamics" affect how political women are perceived in the political sphere and mediated spaces (Hancock, 2009 *also see* Cowper-Coles, 2021:31).

Conclusion

In conclusion, prior literature has argued that women are not traditionally associated with political participation or leadership positions and political spaces are often dominated by masculine norms, language, and rules. This ideology forces women to adapt their communication and behavioural styles to attain political positions which maintains their status as interlopers in the political sphere. However, recent studies indicate that there has been a change in how female politicians present themselves, their language style, and how they are portrayed in the news media. Importantly, the emergence of social media has significantly impacted how politicians interact with their constituents and share their messages.

It is evident that scholars have varying opinions on how female politicians are depicted in mediated spaces and there has been a tendency to think of female political representation in oversimplified terms. However, recent scholarship has complicated this belief, and my work contributes to that complication by analysing the media representation of minor party leaders who are not competing for the same role during an election. The next chapter will provide the methodology, and key questions that arose from completing my literature review, followed by three analyses of the representation of political women in mediated spaces and a final comparative analysis chapter. The first analysis will explore the newspaper coverage of Nicola Sturgeon, Jo Swinson, and Arlene Foster, followed by an analysis of their Twitter accounts and an examination of the televised election debates.

Chapter 3. A Mixed Methods Approach to Analysing Female Political Leaders in Electoral Discourse

This study evaluated the representation of three prominent female politicians during the 2019 UK General Election within three forms of media. This project gathered data on First Minister and Leader of the Scottish National Party Nicola Sturgeon MSP, Leader of the Liberal Democrats Jo Swinson MP, and Leader of the Democratic Unionist Party Arlene Foster MLA. These party leaders were high-profile figures in British politics during the election. Swinson was the only politician of the three women campaigning to be the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

Researchers have found that when a woman runs for office, particularly in high-level positions in government, she can become a novelty (O'Regan and Stambough, 2011:99), which can "generate relatively high media capital" due to her appearance seen as "unexpected" in an election (McKay, 2019:43). Increased media attention is given to those "politicians with more political power" because they appear "more relevant"; therefore, journalists often choose "party leaders or ministers for news sources" (Vos, 2013:392). My research focused on the representation of female minor party leaders in election coverage by analysing how these women were represented in mediated spaces, building on previous scholarship about female political representation.

I collected data from three forms of media as a way of fulfilling my research aims. I analysed election coverage from print newspaper articles, tweets from the personal accounts of each politician, and televised election debates. Print media is an evaluation of representation the politician has minimal control over, while Twitter allows for an analysis of a politician's self-presentation on a mediated platform. Televised debates are a form of "first-hand representation that is tangible to the public in a mediated space" (Higgins, 2008:53; *also see* McNair et al., 2002:31). According to McKay (2017:76), including multiple forms of media allow for "added dimension" in a study. McKay (2017) writes, "Interrogating these media in this way leads us to reveal whether or not they fulfil the normative expectations of the public sphere in different or similar ways" (*also see* Higgins, 2008; Habermas, 1989).

I gathered this data using a mixed methods approach combining content analysis and critical discourse analysis. Content analysis is a method that enables researchers to find patterns within the text. This method "reveals the purposes, motives, and other characteristics of

communicators as they are presumably reflected in the content" (Richardson, 2007:16; *also see* Berelson, 1952:264). The aim is to produce "a big picture" within a large collection of text by presenting trends, patterns, and absences (Deacon et al., 2010:119). Schreier (2012:80) suggests when dealing with large amounts of data, researchers can reduce the dataset by creating a coding schedule that breaks down their dataset by source or topic. However, content analysis is not an "exploratory method", making it ineffective when "exposing aesthetic or rhetorical nuances within texts" (Deacon et al., 2010:119,123). Therefore, I conducted a critical discourse analysis to gain a deeper understanding of the messages communicated through election discourse in the media.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is described as an "analysis of dialectical relations between discourse and other objects, elements or moments" (Fairclough, 2010:4). Critical discourse analysts are interested in the way "language or discourse are used to achieve social goals and the part this plays in social maintenance and change" (Bloor and Bloor, 2013:2). As Fairclough notes, this form of analysis focuses on "what is wrong within a society" and how to alleviate those wrongs from a "normative standpoint" (2010:7). "Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory" (Richardson, 2007:27), which makes CDA useful for investigating the relationship between "the text and its social conditions, ideologies and power relations" (2007:27). In the upcoming sections of this chapter, I will provide a more detailed explanation of my methodology. Thus far, I have introduced the political figures in my thesis, the media I analysed, and my research approach for completing this study. In the following section, I will cover the research questions and provide information about each dataset. This will include details about the coding schedule, piloting phase, and analysis approach for each medium.

Key Questions

In the literature review, I examined prior scholarship that found the qualities associated with politics are often "masculine traits" such as "power, authority, and assertiveness" (Campus, 2013:10-11). This belief supports the theory that men are more suited for political roles than women, reserving the political arena as a masculine space (Celis et al., 2013:6). Researchers have found a disparity in media coverage between male and female politicians. They have observed that a female politician's gender is often emphasised more than their male colleagues, and journalists undermine a woman's political participation by focusing on their physical appearance and private life (Bystrom et al., 2004:215). Through previous research on the representation of women in politics in the media, I have identified three main themes that

have influenced my research questions. These include the portrayal of politics as a male-dominated sphere, how gender impacts media coverage, and the rhetorical and behavioural styles adopted by politicians. My research aims allowed for a more comprehensive analysis of each theme in relation to these female politician's self-presentation and media portrayal by constructing questions that analysed their language and actions. I have an overarching question and three individual sub-questions that guide the analysis. My design structure was divided by medium to analyse how the representation of these political women varied depending on the media platform.

My overarching research question:
Does the media representation of female political leaders from minor parties across the UK during an election challenge, complicate or confirm existing scholarship on representations of gendered political leadership?

Additional research question for each analysis:

   I.   *How were Nicola Sturgeon, Jo Swinson, and Arlene Foster represented in London-based, Scottish, and Northern Irish press during the 2019 UK General Election?*
   II. *How did Nicola Sturgeon, Jo Swinson, and Arlene Foster present themselves on their personal Twitter accounts?*
   III. *How did Nicola Sturgeon and Jo Swinson perform on the debate stage during the televised election debates of the 2019 UK General Election?*

Datasets

I completed my data collection for the newspaper, Twitter, and televised election debates during the official election period, November 6th to December 12th, 2019 (General Election 2019 timetable, 2019) and the following two months after the elections. Within this section, I will discuss what consists of each dataset by first considering the newspaper corpus.

Newspaper Dataset

Newspaper coverage can be a "significant source of information" for the public during election periods" (Bystrom et al., 2004:174). However, previous research has noted that female politicians, including women in leadership roles, have not always received equal media coverage compared to their male counterparts (Adcock, 2010; Niven, 2005; Harmer, 2021). Scholarship have observed the representation of female politicians in the press is often

focused on their physical appearance and domestic circumstances rather than women's "policy positions" (Ross et al., 2013;6 *also see* O'Neill et al., 2016:295). Importantly, the ways in which political women are portrayed and underrepresented within newspaper coverage "serves to discourage" female political participation (O'Neill and Savigny, 2014:7). Therefore, I intended to discover if my findings correlated with previous studies or if my analysis of these three female politicians challenged existing literature.

For this thesis, I will examine the newspaper coverage of Sturgeon, Swinson, and Foster using a corpus of 2,408 articles. Although previous studies often analyse the press, I will expand on this prior research by analysing London-based, Scottish, and Northern Irish newspapers, capturing a range of geographical locations among national publications in the UK. I wanted to include quality (also known as broadsheet) and tabloid newspaper formats and varying political affiliations when reviewing the media representation of these political women. By considering different newspaper formats and political affiliations, I can identify whether the portrayal of female politicians is influenced by these factors. It should be noted that the words "quality" and "tabloid" are the popular usage terms I will be utilising throughout this thesis when referencing publication style. Fifteen national publications were selected for this analysis. The London-based titles I have included are as follows; *The Guardian, The Times, The Daily Mail, The Sun, The Daily Mirror, The Metro,* and *The Daily Telegraph*. The Scottish-based titles I have included are as follows; *The Scottish Sun, The Daily Record, The Herald, The Scotsman,* and *The National*. The Northern Irish-based titles I have included are as follows; *Belfast Telegraph, The Irish News,* and *News Letter* (See Table 3.01).

All London-based publications were selected based on previous studies completed by Ofcom UK News Consumption Report 2019 and Loughborough University's General Election 2019 report. These reports provided an extensive list of London-based publications, while Ofcom UK News detailed circulation and readership figures. Based on the Ofcom UK News report, I excluded *The London Standard, The I, The Daily Express, The Daily Star,* and *The Financial Times* because their overall print weekly readership was under 2,500,000 and each publication was 10% or under of the daily publications used for news consumptions in 2019.

It was imperative to include Scottish and Northern Irish titles because both countries in the UK produce national newspapers that report on UK-wide news and issues that affect the devolved country. I wanted to investigate if Scottish and Northern Irish titles presented a distinct view of

female political representation in comparison to London-based press. In addition, an analysis of Scottish and Northern Irish media will enable an extensive review of Sturgeon's and Foster's media representation since both women held leadership roles in their respective countries. I determined which Scottish and Northern Irish newspapers would be included in this thesis based on their publication format, political affiliation, support for either unionism or nationalism, and whether the publication was a national UK paper.

Publication	Circulation Figures (average per issue)	Political Endorsement	Nationalist V. Unionist	Style of Newspaper
The Guardian	133,412	Labour Party	Not applicable	Quality
The Times	370,005	Conservative Party	Not applicable	Quality
The Daily Mail	1,141,178	Conservative Party	Not applicable	Tabloid
The Sun (excluding The Scottish Sun)	1,059,968	Conservative Party	Not applicable	Tabloid
The Daily Mirror	451,386	Labour Party	Not applicable	Tabloid
The Metro	1,422,283	No political endorsement	Not applicable	Tabloid
The Daily Telegraph	371,817	Conservative Party	Not applicable	Quality
The Scottish Sun	155,884	Scottish National Party	Did not support Scottish Independence in 2014	Tabloid
The Daily Record	104,906	Labour Party	Did not support Scottish Independence in 2014	Tabloid
The Herald	22,901	No political endorsement	Did not support Scottish Independence in 2014	Quality
The Scotsman	14,417	No political endorsement	Did not support Scottish Independence in 2014	Quality
The National	9,101	Scottish National Party	Supports Scottish Independence	Quality
Belfast Telegraph	31,340	No political endorsement	Unionist newspaper	Quality
The Irish News	30,985	No political endorsement	Irish nationalist newspaper	Quality
News Letter	11,076	No political endorsement	Unionist newspaper	Tabloid

Table 3.01. The table above shows the circulation figures in December 2019, political endorsements, nationalist v. unionist support, and the publication style for 15 publications. Six publications have been highlighted in yellow because the timeframe of their circulation figures varies due to a lack of updated information from the publications on the Audit Bureau of Circulation. The timeframe for *The Scotsman,* the *Belfast Telegraph, The Irish News,* and the *News Letter* is July to December 2019, and the timeframe for *The Herald* and *The National* is January to December 2018.

The newspaper dataset included article styles such as news, features, opinions and commentary, letters to the editor, editorial and leading articles, interviews, sketches, teasers,

and briefings. I refer back to Higgins' work (2006) on the political public sphere in the Scottish press when considering article types to include in this thesis. He references two types of discourse in coverage: "informative" and "evaluative" (Higgins, 2006:31). According to Higgins, "news and feature coverage" are considered "informative discourse types" (2006:31) which provide details about an event or "background information and personal reflections on the people involved" (Higgins, 2006:32). Opinion pieces and editorials are considered "evaluative coverage" and offer a subjective assessment of present events or issues (Higgins, 2006:32-33). Significantly, Higgins argues that "opinion pieces, editorial columns, feature items and news stories remain an adequate reflection of newsroom practice and newspaper content that should help inform forthcoming analyses" (Higgins, 2006:33 *also see* Dekavalla, 2016). Therefore, I included "informative" and "evaluative" types of discourse within my analysis. However, I also added interviews, sketches, teasers, and briefings to account for various article styles in my newspaper corpus.

In my thesis, I analysed articles about the election or those addressing election-related topics when any of the three political women were mentioned. I used the Nexis database to perform keyword searches which included the full names of the politicians "Nicola Sturgeon", "Jo Swinson", and "Arlene Foster" in order to export articles. All articles that included one or more keywords between November 6th to December 12th, 2019, were exported from the Nexis database, totalling 2,012. According to Weaver and Bimber, Nexis "is the most widely used news archive in the social sciences" (2008:516). Nexis allows users to narrow their search by publication title, time frame, location, and publication style. I implemented a time frame when collecting data based on the election period when politicians were campaigning. I narrowed my search by setting the publication language to English, the publication type to newspapers, and the publication name to one of the selected newspapers for this project. This narrow search gave me a more manageable selection of articles to extract from Nexis.

I cross-checked my material against the hard copy version of the newspaper (Dekavalla, 2011:323). This process had to be completed because Nexis is a text-based archive and "loses the visual dimension of news" (Deacon, 2007:10). My research included a visual analysis to uncover all aspects of female political representation. Hansen and Cottle wrote that "analysing the symbolism or capacity to combine, condense and convey social meaning within visual analysis moves us beyond the pursuit of direct news distortion" (1998:199). All newspaper images, regardless of the subject in the picture, were collected for analysis from the hard copy

version of the article. In order to gather this data, I utilised the newspaper archives at the University of Strathclyde, The National Library of Scotland, and The British Library. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I was delayed in gathering the newspaper images until February 2022.

Nexis is a valuable tool, yet it comes with limitations, specifically intra-archive relatability. According to Deacon, he referred to inconsistencies in the results for identical keyword searches conducted by using different pathways (2007:16). In addition, it was possible to find duplicated items or "false positives" in a report (Deacon, 2007:17). Nexis will create duplications of national newspapers with multiple versions. For example, I treated *The Sun* and its sister editions, *The Scottish Sun* as two distinct publications. Therefore, I separated articles that appeared in the Scottish version from the London-based edition. I manually separated the publications at a later stage to mitigate the inconsistencies identified above.

Excluded Data

After gathering the initial data from Nexis, I excluded five types of articles from this thesis: non-election coverage, live blogs, duplications, quizzes, and articles where the politician was tagged in another article headline. Nexis retrieves all articles a politician appears in, even if they are not featured in the body text of the article. Therefore, any news reports that only mentioned a politician in the headline of another advertised article in the text were excluded. Quizzes and non-election coverage were excluded because they lacked political commentary about the politicians. Live blogs were the final article type to be excluded from my dataset. Live blogging is defined as "conventional news articles on the web" (Thurman and Walters, 2013:83), and since live blogs are produced on a digital platform as a function of multimedia, they are not accessible in print media.

I excluded duplicated articles for publications that had printed the same article in multiple editions. However, as noted above, I treated *The Sun* and *The Scottish Sun* as distinct publications, the only instance in this thesis where a publication with multiple versions is separated into two distinct papers. I chose to separate these newspapers because *The Scottish Sun* is one of Scotland's most read publications (*Media release: New PAMCo figures reveal The Scottish Sun reaches 2.7m readers a month, and TNL 1.3m*, 2022), and the circulation figure of *The Scottish Sun* during December 2019 was the highest compared to other London-based publications with multiple versions. If the same article was duplicated in both papers, it was counted separately for each publication. Importantly, when both publications wrote about

similar topics, the articles varied by journalist, length, and word choices, showing a distinction between their specific readerships.

Twitter Dataset

It has been observed by McNair (2011:86) that the increased use of online social networks has opened another channel for politicians to campaign and communicate messages with constituents that are less mediated (*also see* Ellis, 2018:4). Additionally, Twitter has become the preferred social media network for politicians (Ross and Bürger, 2014:48). Therefore, I included Twitter as a part of my data collection to observe how these political women communicated their messages during an election period. My Twitter dataset comprised of 766 original tweets, retweets, and quote tweets (formerly known as retweets with a comment) from the verified accounts of Sturgeon (@NicolaSturgeon), Swinson (@joswinson), and Foster (@DUPleader). As noted in the introduction chapter, I will continue to refer to this social media platform as Twitter, regardless of its name change in July 2023.

I selected each Twitter profile because it was a personal account linked to the politicians rather than a government-operated account. By analysing the personal Twitter accounts of each female politician, I could examine their personalised messages that provided a more intimate reflection of the politician's presentation. Sturgeon and Swinson used their names as a part of their Twitter handle and added personal or private information to the profile section of their accounts. For example, Sturgeon referred to her love of books, while Swinson noted that she was a runner. However, Foster's Twitter handle deviated from this personalised format. Unlike Sturgeon and Swinson, Foster chose @DUPleader rather than using her name as her Twitter handle, and she did not share any personal information on her profile. Instead, she kept her account focused on her role as a politician. Throughout this analysis, it was unclear whether Foster's Twitter was a personal account or a designated DUP leader's account. However, after her resignation as DUP leader in 2021, Foster changed her Twitter handle to @ArleneFosterUK while keeping the same account active. She also personalised her account by writing in her profile section, "Mum of three great kids" (Foster, 2023).

I exported the Twitter analytics for Sturgeon, Swinson, and Foster using Twitonomy (See Figure 3.01). This tool allows users to export the analytics of any account, including tweets, retweets, replies, mentions and hashtags. Sturgeon was the most active Twitter user out of all three politicians, tweeting an average of 12 times per day, followed by Swinson, who posted an average of 8 times per day. The most inactive politician out of the three women was Foster,

who only tweeted an average of two times per day. I collected 764 tweets from all three accounts of these female politicians by taking screenshots of all their posts. I compiled tweets published between November 6th to December 12th, 2019. I began collecting tweets from Sturgeon's account on January 13th and completed this task on January 20th, 2020. Following the collection of Sturgeon's tweets, I continued gathering Foster's Twitter posts which was completed between the dates of January 24th to January 26th, 2020. Lastly, I compiled Swinson's tweets between January 27th to January 30th, 2020. It should be noted that tweets deleted before the collection period were not included in this thesis.
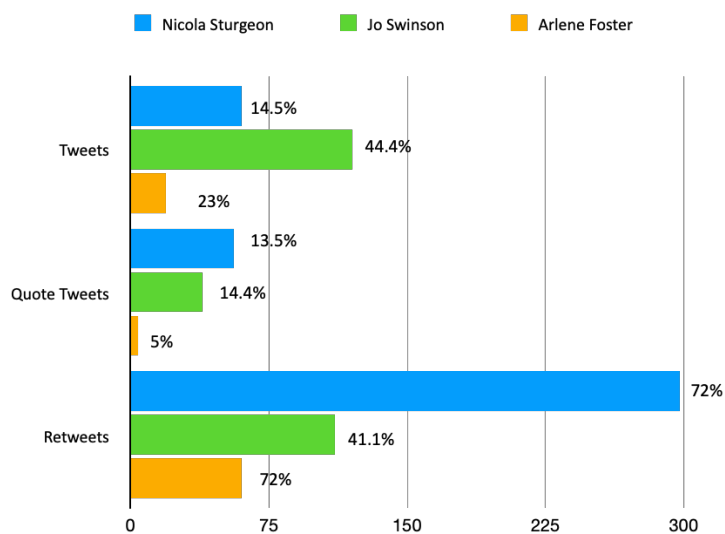
Figure 3.01. This figure shows the number of tweets, quote tweets, and retweets each politician accumulated between November 6th to December 12th, 2019. Percentage=type of tweet totals/total number of tweets for individual politicians.

All original tweets, retweets, and quote tweets, regardless of the topic, were analysed to understand how each politician portrays themselves on Twitter. No tweets were excluded from my dataset and all elements of a post were coded including hashtags, mentions, replies, photos, videos, and GIFs or graphics. Several scholars have noted the "importance of the visual to understand social media" by arguing "image's increasing imbrication in self-representation, storytelling, affect, and the creation of publics in digital media ecologies" (Pearce et al., 2018:166). Therefore, additional imagery posted on Twitter was of equal value to code alongside the linguistic choices.

	Nicola Sturgeon	Jo Swinson	Arlene Foster
Number of followers (during the election)	1,058,278 followers	173,362 followers	77,865 followers
Average number of tweets per day	12 times per day	8 times per day	2 times per day
Total number of tweets (including retweets)	414	286	82

Table 3.02. This table depicts the Twitter analytics for each politician between November 6th to December 12th, 2019. This information was collected from Twitonomy and the individual accounts of each politician.

Televised Election Debate Dataset

Televised debates allow voters to view candidates side by side, discussing similar issues (Benoit et al., 2010:335) and with elections becoming "leader-dominated", it gives the public a chance to evaluate rival policies (Coleman, 1998:185). Seven debates were selected for this analysis that were broadcast on ITV and STV, BBC, and Channel Four News. Each debate was selected because either Sturgeon or Swinson was in attendance (See Table 3.03). Foster did not participate in any debates during the election including those aired in Northern Ireland, such as *NI Leaders' Debate* (*BBC*, 10 December 2019) *or The UTV Election Debate* (*UTV*, 8 December 2019) -and so does not appear in the debate analysis. The televised debates I have included for this project are as follows; *The Channel 4 Climate Debate, BBC Election Debate 2019, The ITV Election Debate, The STV Leaders' Debate, Britain Decides: The Everything but Brexit Debate, Question Time Under 30s Special,* and *Scotland Leaders' Debate* (See Table 3.03).

I recorded three debates live, two debates were recorded using BBC iPlayer, and STV News studio provided me with a copy of *The STV Leaders' Debate*. I analysed all the debate participants on stage due to multiple party representatives standing in place for party leaders. By analysing all the politicians on stage, I could determine how Sturgeon and Swinson interacted with their opponents and identify any similarities or differences in the performance of male and female politicians. However, the performance of Sturgeon and Swinson during each debate remained the key focus of my analysis.

	The Channel 4 News Climate Debate	BBC Election Debate 2019	The ITV Election Debate	The STV Leaders' Debate	Britain Decides: The Everything But Brexit Debate	Question Time: 2019 Under 30s Special	Scotland Leaders' Debate
Channel	Channel 4	BBC One	ITV	STV	Channel 4	BBC One	BBC One
Host	Krishnan Guru-Murthy	Nick Robinson	Julie Etchingham	Colin MacKay	Cathy Newman	Emma Barnett	Sarah Smith
Participants	N. Sturgeon *(SNP)*, J. Swinson *(Liberal Democrats)*, J. Corbyn *(Labour)*, S. Berry *(Greens)*, and A. Price *(Plaid Cymru)*	N. Sturgeon *(SNP)*, J. Swinson *(Liberal Democrats)*, R. Long-Bailey *(Labour)*, R. Sunak *(Conservatives)*, R. Tice *(Brexit)*, C. Lucas *(Greens)*, and A. Price *(Plaid Cymru)*	N. Sturgeon *(SNP)*, J. Swinson *(Liberal Democrats)*, R. Burgon *(Labour)*, R. Sunak *(Conservatives)*, N. Farage *(Brexit)*, S. Berry *(Greens)*, and A. Price *(Plaid Cymru)*	N. Sturgeon *(SNP)*, R. Leonard *(Scottish Labour)*, J. Carlaw *(Scottish Conservatives)*, and W. Rennie *(Scottish Liberal Democrats)*	P. Whitford *(SNP)*, J. Swinson *(Liberal Democrats)*, A. Rayner *(Labour)*, J. Bartley *(Greens)*, and A. Price *(Plaid Cymru)*	H. Yousaf *(SNP)*, J. Swinson *(Liberal Democrats)*, A. Rayner *(Labour)*, R. Jenrick *(Conservatives)*, N. Farage *(Brexit)*, J. Bartley *(Greens)*, and A. Price *(Plaid Cymru)*	N. Sturgeon *(SNP)*, R. Leonard *(Scottish Labour)*, J. Carlaw *(Scottish Conservatives)*, and W. Rennie *(Scottish Liberal Democrats)*
Date of Debate	November 28th, 2019	November 29th, 2019	December 1st, 2019	December 3rd, 2019	December 8th, 2019	December 9th, 2019	December 10th, 2019
Studio Audience	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Running Time of Debate	59m	90m	120m	59m	90m	90m	59m
Format of the Debate	The host asked questions to the politicians individually before proceeding to open debate. The debate followed this format throughout the remaining allocated time.	The host selected audience members with pre-selected questions to ask the politicians. The host also asked follow-up questions to the politicians.	The host asked questions to the politicians individually before proceeding to open debate. The debate followed this format throughout the remaining allocated time.	The host asked questions to the politicians individually before proceeding to open debate. Each politician was given short intervals to question their opponents.	The host selected audience members with pre-selected questions to ask the politicians. The host also asked follow-up questions to the politicians.	The host selected audience members with questions to ask the politicians. The host also asked follow-up questions to the politicians.	The host selected audience members with questions to ask the politicians. The host also asked follow-up questions to the politicians.

Table 3.03. The table provides general information for all seven debates in this thesis.

Coding Schedule

A coding guide was created for each medium that was distinct in its design. Each guide was constructed with the possibility of a cross-analysis. Multiple reports and literature were adapted when creating these guides that will be discussed in this section. Let us now evaluate each coding guide's design, starting with the newspaper coding schedule.

Newspaper Coding Schedule

My literature review revealed that political women can be absent, misrepresented, and trivialised in the press (McKay, 2017; Rohrbach et al., 2020; O'Neill et al., 2016). As a result of these findings, I created a guide to examine how female politicians were represented in the media during the election. By doing so, I could determine whether Sturgeon, Swinson, and Foster's coverage in the press were consistent with previous studies on female political representation. The newspaper coding guide was modelled after Fiona McKay's work

(2017:372-378) and the Global Media Monitoring Project's (GMMP) news media coding schedule. I designed my newspaper coding schedule after both bodies of work because their coding guides examined the presence of women in newspaper coverage. These coding frameworks analysed the presence of women in the news and determined if this coverage was gendering. However, McKay's coding schedule examined the representation of Scottish politicians during the 2014 Independence Referendum, while GMMP's coding guide explores women in the news more broadly. I made modifications to the original designs in order to answer my research questions. Each newspaper article was given a unique number to be identifiable during the coding process and a full copy of the newspaper coding schedule can be found in Appendix 1.

My coding schedule determined the physical characteristics and private life of a politician by coding references to physical features, age, marital status, and children. Additionally, I coded the function of a politician in the press by determining whether they were the main, key, or minor actor within an article. A main actor was the subject of the story, while a key actor played a significant role in the article but was not the main focus—for example, a politician responding or commenting on another politician or election issue would be coded key actor. A minor actor was any politician who was not the central focus of the article nor requested for comment. In addition, as a part of my coding schedule, I indicated all instances when male politicians appeared in the same articles as the three female politicians.

A final body of research that influenced my coding design was the Loughborough University General Election 2019 report. One aspect of the report I utilised was their selection of election topics. Loughborough University compiled prominent issues discussed during each week of the election and provided percentages on the frequency in which each item was present depending on the week. Based on those percentages, I determined which article topics received the most news coverage throughout the election and implemented those topics into my guide. I coded 21 article topics to determine the types of media coverage female politicians appeared in during an election (See Appendix 1).

An additional part of my coding guide was article type which was initially adapted from McKay's (2017:104) framework that included news, features, opinion/comments, editorial/leader, letters to the editor, and other. However, after looking at my dataset, I expanded my categories to include interviews, sketches, briefings, and teasers. Finally, the coding schedule analysed the images that were included in the articles by coding the subject of

the image and their political party, position, and gender. As well as other individuals or objects that appeared in the picture.

The guide underwent a piloting process in order to be refined. A coder and I tested a total of 42 articles from different publications and article types. Three separate coding sessions took place with the same coder, allowing for corrections after completing each coding session. A significant improvement made to this guide was the exclusion of tone. Initially, I intended to code the tone of an article due to previous research citing "UK female politicians received more negative press compared to men in several recent election cycles" (McKay, 2017:177; *also see* O'Neill and Savigny, 2014). Studies completed by McKay and Loughborough University also utilised tone or aspects of negative and positive press in their work. However, coding for tone proposed a challenge because of the subjective nature of tonal sentiment. Within an article, multiple tones became present, forcing me to choose which tone to record. Secondly, it was challenging to indicate the tone of the article when a politician played a minor role or if the overall tone of the article was negative but made a positive comment about the politician.

A final modification to my coding schedule was removing questions that coded gendered language. Initially, I intended to code any patronising language found within the text from a selected list of words. However, many articles I coded during the pilot stage did not have explicit examples. According to Plemenitaš, sexist speech can appear in more subtle and at times "seemingly positive words for desirable feminine traits such as sassy, bubbly, or ladylike" (2017:209). She argues, that "indirect expressions can be considered part of a wider discriminatory framework which gives rise to overt gendered slurs" (2017:209). Therefore, I determined this question was more appropriate for my critical discourse analysis of the newspaper corpus.

Twitter Coding Schedule
It has been suggested that understanding how politicians adapt their messages on different platforms can "generate deeper insights into how social media shapes political communication" (Stier et al., 2018:51). Therefore, adaptions were made to the guide in order to examine a politician's Twitter presentation and how politicians navigated their personal and public life on a digital platform. As with the newspaper coding schedule, my Twitter coding guide was also modelled after McKay's work (2017). A full copy of the Twitter coding schedule can be found in Appendix 2. I adopted aspects of McKay's guide, such as coding any mention of a politician's physical appearance or references to gender, age, or private life to cross-compare with the newspaper dataset. Another part of McKay's guide I adopted was coding for retweets.

I coded the accounts these women retweeted, the retweeter's handle, and the gender of the retweeter. Additionally, my coding schedule noted any mention of political parties or additional politicians including those from the same and opposing political parties. I coded their gender and any descriptors added to the post as well. Lastly, I identified whether members of the public, organisations, media outlets, journalists, celebrities/prominent figures, and current/prominent politicians were mentioned in a tweet.

As previously noted, the Loughborough University general election report provided valuable newspaper article topics that were also used as tweet topics in this guide. The Loughborough University report coded the official Twitter accounts of the main political parties and four party leaders. Their study researched attack and supportive tweets and political party agendas on Twitter. However, the Loughborough University report only collected original tweets, excluding retweets. Notably, GMMP's (Global Media Monitoring Project, 2020b) coding structure was beneficial for examining retweets. In GMMP's coding schedule, retweets of tweets from the same media house were coded but they excluded retweets of tweets from other news providers. I made adaptations from their structure to include all retweets a politician posted on her account.

Another study that shaped my research design for Twitter was Fountaine, Ross and Comrie's work titled "Across the great divide: gender, Twitter, and elections in New Zealand and the United Kingdom". These researchers refer to European studies that suggest social media will "mainly benefit a select group of more professional and motivated candidates who know how to exploit the opportunities offered by social media" (Fountaine et al., 2019:227). Their analysis was instrumental when considering which parts of the tweet to code. I adapted their work on "structural content", which they identified as the additional elements of a tweet such as weblinks, mentions, topic content, and tone (Fountaine et al., 2019:230-236). I added similar categories in my framework: "comment only, comment plus weblink, comment plus photo, comment plus weblink and photo, comment plus video" (2019:231). However, based on my dataset, I added comment plus weblink and video and comment plus GIF or graphic. I also coded if the tweeter, additional politicians, members of the public, or children were present in any visual elements of the post.

Another useful aspect of Fountaine, Ross and Comrie's work particularly was their study on tone of a tweet. They analysed language by breaking down tone across parties and countries, investigating tweets that used words which conveyed various tonal sentiments (Fountaine et

al., 2019:234). Unlike the newspaper coding schedule, it was possible to include tonal sentiment within the Twitter coding guide because I was only analysing short statements; a tweeter only has 280 characters per tweet. A more focused message made codifying the direct words of the tweeter less subjective. The study of tone allowed me to analyse further the type of language these female politicians employed when they had greater control over their mediated message.

I analysed whether a tweet was supportive/positive, critical/negative, mixed, or neutral. Tweets and quote tweets were coded as supportive/positive if the tweeter was explicitly approving of a person, issue, political party, or business. Critical/negative tweets followed the same format, except the tweeter was explicitly disapproving of a person, issue, political party, or business. Mixed tone included a politician showing both positive and negative tonal sentiment, such as Swinson posting about her support for the Liberal Democrats while stating the voters must stop Brexit and Boris Johnson. McKay's (2017) work on tonal sentiment in tweets also influenced my examination of tone in a tweet. She included humour and sarcastic remarks as mixed tone, which I adapted in my coding framework (McKay, 2017:382-383). Swinson and Sturgeon used humour and sarcasm at the expense of opposing politicians. McKay suggests humour is mixed tone because it is positive for the tweeter making the humour response but negative for the politician it is directed towards (2017:382-383).

During this piloting stage, a coder and I analysed 31 tweets. All three politician's Twitter accounts were examined, including tweets, quote tweets, and retweets. A point of refinement was deciding when to code retweets. Retweeting is an important feature tweeters use to spread the news (Rudat et al., 2014:133) or actively engage with other users or content (Simply Measured, 2014:7). However, unlike a tweet, which is the words of the tweeter, "a retweet is a repost of a tweet sent by another user" (Simply Measured, 2014:7). Several scholars have described retweeting on Twitter as the "filtering and selection of information" that can be redistributed to a broader audience (Engelmann et al., 2019:3572). However, I decided not to code retweets for questions 9 to 18 on my coding guide. These questions focused on the tone of the post and whether any other politicians were mentioned or tagged. I chose to exclude retweets for these questions because I wanted to examine the word choices of the politician, and I could not do that within the retweet.

A final modification made to the coding guide was the inclusion of similar questions seen in the newspaper guide. Earlier drafts of my Twitter coding schedule would not have allowed cross-

comparison amongst media. The ability to complete comparative research for this study was an essential aspect of my thesis. As a part of my refinements, I redrafted the coding schedule to ensure that a cross-comparison was possible by adapting aspects of McKay's guide. Through the Twitter coding schedule, I gained insight into how these three female politicians presented themselves on their accounts, the personal information they shared, and the recurring Twitter profiles that appeared on their feeds. Having reviewed the key aspects of the Twitter coding schedule, let us now consider the design and refinement of the televised election debate coding guide.

Televised Election Debate Coding Schedule

A pre-existing coding schedule was not used to construct my debate coding guide, yet previous studies significantly influenced the creation of my design, particularly Cameron and Shaw's (2016) study on gendered media representation and women's political speech. Cameron and Shaw's book analysed the 2015 UK General Election, specifically focusing on *The ITV Leaders' Debate* and *BBC Election Debate 2015*. They examined "rhetorical features of the language used in texts to show how certain understandings on gender, language, and politics may be recirculated and naturalised through patterns of linguistic choice" (Cameron and Shaw, 2016:23). I designed my coding guide to incorporate the debate performances of all politicians on stage, drawing from Cameron and Shaw's research on language.

I formulated questions that would capture the debate style used by male and female politicians during their performances. For example, I coded the number of allocated and uninvited speaking turns, the length of time a politician spoke and those who posed or answered questions. This meant I could examine similarities and differences between male and female politicians on the debate stage. In all my coding guides, I created a note section to include observations about the politician's language and behaviour. This section was particularly useful for the debate coding framework because it provided a space to write observations suitable for a discourse analysis. A full copy of the coding schedule can be found in Appendix 3 and coding results for each debate can be found in Appendix 4.

The coding schedule underwent a piloting phase that allowed for further refinement. A coder and I piloted two debates: *The Channel Four Climate Debate* and *The BBC Election Debate*. These debates were selected for piloting because they were broadcasted on different TV channels, had a variety of debate participants, and one included a studio audience while the other did not. In earlier drafts of this coding schedule, there was a lack of clarity or assurance

that it would provide valuable information during my analysis. For example, I initially referenced any physical attributes about the politicians that was mentioned during the debate to cross-compare with the newspaper and Twitter guides. However, comments on a politician's physical appearance are rarely discussed in a debate format.

As I modified this coding guide, it became evident that a cross-comparison between the debates and the Twitter and newspaper coding schedules would be challenging. The only question that remained throughout all three coding schedules was a reference to the politician's personal life, which was an aspect of the datasets I could expand on within my analysis chapters. An additional modification made to the guide was the removal of repetitive questions that did not serve my analysis, such as identifying if the politician received an allocated speaking turn with either yes or no, followed by a second question with instructions to write down the amount of allocated speaking turns the politician received. It was unnecessary to ask both questions and by combining them, I clarified and simplified the coding procedure. In summary, I have demonstrated how I constructed each coding schedule and the bodies of work which influenced my designs. The following section will discuss the critical discourse analysis for each medium in my thesis.

Critical Discourse Analysis

After completing the content analysis and discovering the emerging themes within my datasets, I was then able to determine how I would approach my critical discourse analysis (CDA). Researchers have identified that the word "critical" means "denaturalising the language to reveal the kinds of ideas, absences, and taken-for-granted assumptions in the text (Machin and Mayr, 2012:5). Therefore, a critical analysis of "linguistic elements reveal the connections between language, power, and ideology" (Machin and Mayr, 2012:5, *also see* Fairclough, 1989:5). I incorporated CDA within my methodological approach since powerful participants can evoke their authority through "language choice by choosing to accept or reject a contribution" (Smith, 2013:21). Analysing the rhetoric used by political leaders is crucial because they occupy two levels of agency. Firstly, they have agency to speak, and attention is placed on political leaders when they do. Secondly, political leaders are seen to have instrumental power exercised over them. They have responsibilities they are accountable for and are judged as political actors placing them in a realm of discursive power. Therefore, it is important not only to look at what they say but how their rhetoric is made meaningful. As a result, my study focuses on female political leadership and explores the impact of language, power, and ideology on women in the political sphere.

An essential body of work that has supported my understanding of CDA was Norman Fairclough's book titled *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* in which he describes a "three-dimensional conception of discourse" (Fairclough, 2010:132). Fairclough explains that discourse is seen as "a language text, spoken or written, discourse practice (text production and text interpretation), and sociocultural practice" (2010:132). Angela Smith reflects on Fairclough's work noting the first component is "text or discourse, including micro texts such as vocabulary or syntax and macro levels of text structure" (Smith, 2013:19). The second component is the relationship between "discourse practices and discourse convention". This stage looks at how text is "constructed, interpreted and distributed" (Smith, 2013:19). Fairclough refers to this as the "orders of discourse" (*also see* Smith, 2013:20). The third component focuses on the "relation of discourse to power and ideology" (Smith, 2013:20).

A feature of this discourse analysis is the link between sociocultural practice and text in mediated discourse. Similar to previous scholarship, I will consider microstructures such as "lexicalization, hyperbole, modality, irony, consensus, and metaphors" (Abbas and Obied, 2023:625). Microstructures are defined "as semantic local structures or specific structures that represent the meaning of words and sentences" (Abbas and Obied, 2023:625 *also see* van Dijk, 1980:10). This concept will support my analysis of the selected rhetoric within each medium and determine the power and social relationships in discourse between these female politicians and mediated space. Throughout this section, I will expand on my critical analysis of the newspaper, Twitter, and televised election debate datasets and the visual component of each corpus.

Newspaper Critical Discourse Analysis

As part of my analysis of the newspaper dataset, I examined the language used to identify these political women and uncover "representative strategies" within the text (Fowler, 1999; van Dijk, 1993; Fairclough, 2003:145, *also see* Machin and Mayr, 2012:77). Machin and Mayr describe representative strategies as "a communicator having a range of choices available to them for deciding how they wish to represent individuals and groups of people who in CDA are often termed as 'social actors' or 'participants'" (2012:77). The linguistic choices made within these representative strategies can highlight or exclude certain aspects of someone's identity (Machin and Mayr, 2012:77). For example, in a prior study, Fowler argues that "categorisation

by vocabulary is an integral part of the reproduction of ideology in the newspapers", which can lead to "discriminatory naming practices" of marginal social groups (1991:84 *also see* Santaemilia-Ruiz and Maruenda-Bataller, 2013:3). There is a range of ways a person can be identified, making naming references in news discourse significant (Richardson, 2007:49). Therefore, one aspect of language I have researched was the naming practices utilised in the newspaper dataset. I was intrigued by how newspapers would address politicians, such as by their formal titles or nicknames.

I analysed another representative strategy called overlexicalisation, which aims to capture the "social conventions and expectations" reflected in the newspaper datasets of female politicians (Teo, 2000:21). Researchers have described overlexicalisation as the combination of "synonymous words and phrases" (Deacon et al., 2010:156) that allow for a "sense of over completeness" (Machin and Mayr, 2012:37). Peter Teo's research on racism in Australian newspapers was an informative body of work that supported my understanding of representative strategies of language within the text. He examined overlexicalisation to determine how a Vietnamese gang in Australia was described in news discourse (Teo, 2000:7,20). For example, Australian newspapers "constructed a profile" of the gang members as "kids" to "emphasise their youthfulness" by referring to them as "youth" or "juveniles" in articles (Teo, 2000:21). Similarly, I analysed overlexicalisation presented within the text, such as "female politician" or "male politician" to determine whether publications drew attention to the politician's gender. Observing the overlexicalisation in an article was particularly crucial for female politicians since politics is often seen as a man's space, placing a woman outside the political sphere (Erikson and Verge, 2020:6 *also see* Puwar, 2004).

Since all three women in my dataset were party leaders, I was interested in the agency they were given as a part of their representation. My analysis of the press also reviewed the authoritative language used in the articles featuring these three women. For this portion of the analysis, I adapted a study by Caldas-Coulthard (1992) which examined representative speech and stylistic efforts in factual and fictional text. Caldas-Coulthard provided details on quoting verbs, which are word choices that can create an impression or tell the reader the mood, attitude, or character of the individual involved (*also see* Machin and Mayr, 2012:58). Caldas-Coulthard found that an interviewer has the "power to start the interaction with a question, determine the conversation topic, and end the interaction" (1992:71). This gives "authorial choice" to reporters to select words that are "not only stylistic but ideological" (Caldas-Coulthard, 1992:77).

As part of a qualitative analysis, I reviewed the impressions journalists created about a politician with their specific rhetorical choices. In addition, I studied how the presence of metaphors and popular culture references contributed to the view point of the politician. Metaphors are defined as "a signifier (word) applied to a signified (object or process) to which it is not conventionally applicable or appropriate" (Deacon et al.,2010:147). According to Richardson, certain metaphors are associated with journalism, such as the sports and war metaphors (2007:66) discussed in my literature review. This style of rhetoric became a part of the critical analysis of my newspaper dataset.

I also examined popular culture references, defined as "the ways in which people make sense of world politics" through "the knowledge and understanding created" when interacting "with the realm of the popular" (Rowley, 2010:309). Interestingly, scholars have noted how the modern lexicon "culture" is given an intellectual valence, associated with "the arts" while "popular is vulgar, widespread, something enjoyed or participated in by the masses" (Bezio, 2018:1). Researcher Kristin Bezio argues, "the addition of popular to culture reduces the term from the pinnacle of artistic creation to something shallow" (Bezio, 2018:1).

However, "the notion of popularity" leads researchers to explore the relationship between popular culture and leadership since a "leader requires followers" just like "popular culture requires an audience" (Bezio, 2018:2). According to John Street, the "use of popular culture promotes politicians and their parties" and is "commonplace for British newspapers" to review political parties in the same format as entertainment (Street, 2000:77). Therefore, I analysed the presence of popular culture references within the newspaper dataset of these three politicians and utilised a CDA approach to uncover the meaning behind the references publications included in their articles. This section has explained the CDA approach I have undertaken to review the language styles within the newspaper dataset and whether these rhetorical choices continued to reinforce politics as a male space or undermine female political leadership. Moving forward, I will now consider the approach utilised in my Twitter dataset.

Twitter Critical Discourse Analysis

As a part of my critical discourse analysis of the Twitter dataset, I explored how language was used as a part of Sturgeon's, Swinson's, and Foster's self-presentation on their Twitter accounts. I was particularly interested in the style of language they used to describe themselves and their opponents. Prior scholars have noted that "language is a natural function of human interaction" and "it is helpful to understand how language is used", especially on a platform like Twitter where there are space limitations (Shammari, 2021:135). My dataset

revealed that the evocation of banal nationalism was a significant theme. In order to explore this theme, I analysed the use of personal pronouns found within original tweets and quote tweets, as both tweet styles consisted of the direct words of the politicians. Pronouns such as "us, we, and them" can align groups or encourage individuals against a particular idea (Machin and Mayr, 2012:84).

Personal pronouns allow "text producers to evoke their ideas as being our ideas while creating a collective other" (Machin and Mayr, 2012:84 *also see* Oktar, 2001; Eriksson and Aronsson, 2005). Researchers have reflected on van Dijk's concept of "positive self-presentation", which creates in-groups with personal pronouns like "us or we" (Masroor et al., 2019:5). Terms such as "them or they" establish an out-group creating a "negative other-presentation" (Masroor et al., 2019:5 *also see* van Dijk, 1998). In addition, the personal pronoun "I" shows "dominance and authority" and is linked to showing "esteem in oneself" or "empowerment" (Masroor et al., 2019:11 *also see* Håkansson, 2012). The use of personal pronouns to form in-groups and out-groups can create polarisation amongst groups. Polarisation is a strategy that "aligns differences in a society to be one dimension" and emerges when "there is an opposition or competition between two parties" (Abbas and Obied, 2023:620 *also see* van Dijk, 2000:49).

Polarisation within this style of language enabled a critical examination of tone within my Twitter dataset. Researchers have noted that "the tone politicians use on Twitter to spread messages has attracted special interest as a way to shape public opinion" (Torregrosa et al., 2023:4). According to researchers, "Tone, emotions, and the presence or absence of populist rhetoric are interrelated strategies inserted in wider narratives and supported by frames" (Torregrosa et al., 2023:5). As previously noted, I coded the tone of tweets as a part of my content analysis. Therefore, I utilised that data to examine when politicians would use specific language and whether certain politicians, political parties or election issues affected the tone of a tweet. Having provided details on my approach to critically analysing the Twitter dataset, I will now discuss the televised election debates.

Televised Election Debate Discourse Analysis
The completion of a discourse analysis for the televised election debates enables researchers to focus on "the actual uses of language as a representation in different social categories" (Deacon et al., 2010:150-152). Therefore, I examined the linguistic choices of the politicians on stage by studying gender communication styles and the use of personalisation in a politician's

debate performance. As part of my debate analysis, I evaluated the language and behavioural style of male and female politicians, which was influenced particularly by the work of Cameron and Shaw. Their research refers to Carol Gilligan's (1982) different voice ideology, which suggests that men and women communicate in distinct behavioural styles (Cameron and Shaw, 2016:5-6).

However, their findings suggest a lack of "clear-cut, and clearly gender-based, differences" in male and female speech, noting the "adversarial move" politicians like Nicola Sturgeon were willing to make at the 2015 UK debates (Cameron and Shaw, 2016:61,113). Banwart and McKinny's work (2005) also reflected on the distinction of a male and female rhetoric style. Their findings suggested male and female debate styles share more similarities but found evidence of "gendered adaptiveness" occurring in "campaign debates for both female and male candidates"(Banwart and McKinny, 2005:370). Therefore, my evaluation of male and female politicians' language and behavioural style aimed to discover whether gendered adaptiveness appeared within my debate dataset.

Another valuable study that influenced my debate discourse analysis was Drake and Higgins' work (2012) on televised debates during the 2010 UK General Election. They reviewed politicians' performative techniques by comparing David Cameron and Gordon Brown's debate performances. As a part of my analysis, I studied the use of personal pronouns similarly to other media within this thesis. Drake and Higgins suggest, "personal pronouns play an important role in aligning the relationships between the politicians and various formations of audience and public" (2012:384). I was interested in whether politicians would personalise their debate performances or align themselves with other groups. In addition, Machin and Mayr's description of individualism versus collectivism suggested how participants are considered, either as individuals or as part of a collective group (2012:80). Therefore, examining the use of personal pronouns was another way to determine the personalisation within a politician's debate strategies, especially noting the groups they aligned themselves with and any personal information they shared to create these impressions.

A final body of work was the research of Grebelsky-Lichtman. She analysed the televised political debates during Israeli election campaigns over a 16-year period by exploring the verbal and nonverbal communication. Within her examination of verbal communication, she discussed "challenging speech acts" which include "accusation, rejection, refusal, disagreement, complaint, rebuke, warning, and threats" (Grebelsky-Lichtman, 2016:370). I

incorporated her research within my critical analysis by observing the instances when politicians challenged or rebuked an opponent or political party. As well as the rhetorical choices made by politicians, the non-verbal elements of a debate were essential to capture. Grebelsky-Lichtman's work on nonverbal communication, particularly observing a politician's "gestures, postures, and facial expressions", was useful for my visual analysis (2016:370). Therefore, let us now turn to the critical analysis for my visual dataset.

Visual Critical Discourse Analysis

Throughout my newspaper, Twitter and televised election debate analysis chapters, I examined the visual elements of each medium. Text involves other "modes of representation in addition to language", such as "images and other linguistic signifying elements" (Talbot, 2007:10). Prior scholarship has noted that "audiences process visuals faster and more efficiently than written text", "visuals contain more information than other symbol forms" (Schill, 2012:121). Accordingly, I completed a critical visual analysis to evaluate each politician's self-presentation and media representation.

A significant body of work that supported my analysis of non-verbal behaviour at the televised election debates was "The Visual Image and the Political Image: A Review of Visual Communication Research in the Field of Political Communication" by Dan Schill. This study referenced how "visual communication" is part of a politician's presentation, and the "visual imagery" helps the politician tell a story and "get their points across" (Schill, 2012:121). As part of my critical analysis of the visual components of the debates, I examined the facial expressions and gestures of the politicians on stage. According to prior scholarship, "facial expressions and gestures communicate emotions across cultures" that indicate the "emotion state and behavioural intent of the communicator", which can influence viewers (Schill, 2012:124, 127 *also see* Ekman, 1982; Grebelsky-Lichtman, 2016). My examination of non-verbal behaviour at the debates enabled a more expansive analysis of a politicians self-presentation. Additionally, I examined salience which is defined as "certain features in a composition that are made to stand out or draw our attention to foreground certain meaning" (Machin and Mayr, 2012:54). As a part of the critical analysis, I examined the studio design, the position of the politicians on stage, their clothing, the host, and the studio audience.

A body of work that was beneficial in the analysis of visual elements in the newspaper and Twitter datasets was Jewitt and Oyama's book, *Visual Meaning: a Social Semiotic Approach*. Within their work, they reference Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) description of "visual

syntactic patterns in terms of their function of relating visual participants to each other in meaningful ways". There are two types of patterns: "narrative representations" and "conceptual patterns" (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001:141). Narrative representations relate to the "unfolding of actions, events, or processes of change", also defined as the "doings and happenings", while conceptual patterns represent participants in a more "generalized, stable or timeless essences" (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001:141). It can be thought of as "being something" rather than "doing something" (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001:141). As part of my visual critical analysis, I examined narrative representations and conceptual patterns in the image data collection by specifically reviewing the subjects in the image, the subject's action, the background, salience, and the inclusion of graphics to create meaning within a photo.

An additional aspect of Jewitt and Oyama's research I adapted was their description of how different angles in an image can depict "symbolic power" (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001:135 *also see* Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996:135-153). Their findings led to an analysis of the subjects' gaze and pose to determine the self-presentation and media representation of these three female politicians. Similar to the debates, I examined the non-verbal behaviour of the politicians, explicitly noting the differences and similarities between the photos they shared on Twitter with the images found in newspaper articles.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the quantitative and qualitative research that facilitated my analysis of Sturgeon's, Swinson's, and Foster's self-presentation and representation within a mediated space. As noted in the introduction chapter, my research topic changed from the original proposal and my research is now centred on minority party leadership exploring political figures and media beyond my initial intentions. As the research topic is explored, the chosen methods will reveal new insight into female political representation during election periods. The following analysis will draw on the following corpora of data: London-based, Scottish, and Northern Irish newspapers and attached images; the Twitter accounts of Sturgeon, Swinson, and Foster and the visual elements; and lastly, the televised election debates. We begin by examining the impact of the newspaper corpus in the next chapter.

Chapter 4. Reinforcing the Male Political Sphere in London-based, Scottish, and Northern Irish Newspapers during the 2019 UK General Election

This chapter will present the findings of the content and critical discourse analysis (CDA) for the newspaper dataset for London-based, Scottish, and Northern Irish press during the 2019 UK General Election. My newspaper corpus is compiled of 2,408 articles: London-based (1,085), Scottish (1,166), and Northern Irish (157) with articles gathered by completing a name search for Nicola Sturgeon, Jo Swinson, and Arlene Foster and specifying the publications and dates on the Nexis database. Articles were only coded if they referenced the 2019 UK General Election or provided information pertinent to know during an election, such as the political record of the politician or her party. All images accompanying an article were also coded for this analysis. Refer to the methodology chapter for more information on the data collection process.

Total Number of Articles	Nicola Sturgeon	Jo Swinson	Arlene Foster
London-Based Newspapers	483	553	49
Scottish Newspapers	841	316	9
Northern Irish Newspapers	9	23	125
Combined Total	1,333	892	183

Table 4.04. The table shows each politician's combined total and the number of articles in each newspaper location.

My corpus included 15 newspapers, seven tabloids, and eight quality publications, also known as broadsheet or compact. I examined three quality and four tabloid London-based publications, four Conservative supporting (*The Daily Mail, The Sun, The Times, and The Daily Telegraph*) and two Labour supporting (*The Guardian and The Daily Mirror*). *The Metro* was the only London-based newspaper that did not endorse a political party. The Scottish press included two quality newspapers, *The Herald* and *The Scotsman* neither of which endorsed a political party. Two tabloid publications were included – *The Daily Record* endorsed the Labour Party, and *The Scottish Sun* endorsed the Scottish National Party (SNP). *The National* was the final Scottish publication included, also endorsing the SNP. *The National* is a compact publication, which is a quality-style newspaper printed in tabloid format. Lastly, the Northern Irish press consisted of two quality and one tabloid newspapers. None of the publications explicitly supported a political party during the election. However, the *Belfast Telegraph* and

the *News Letter* are considered unionist publications, while *The Irish News* is regarded as an Irish nationalist paper (See Table 3.01).

The newspaper dataset included 1,428 images. It should be noted the total calculation (1,428) does not include the photos coded multiple times for each politician. An article that included more than one of the politicians in an image was coded separately for each present politician. For example, if one image included Sturgeon and Swinson, I coded their presence separately, and the picture was added to both their individual totals. However, the single image was only added to my total calculation of all images once. The individual totals for each politician include 993 images in the Sturgeon dataset, 577 in the Swinson dataset, and 167 in the Foster dataset. As anticipated, many photos captured politicians engaging in campaign events or press appearances, at a debate, being interviewed by a journalist, or interacting with the public. Images ranged from posed photos and headshots to informal and impromptu images.

I utilised the University of Strathclyde Library, the National Library of Scotland, and The British Library archives to gather images. Nexis does not include images in the article database, nor did all the publications in the dataset indicate if an image was attached. The seven publications which did not make an indication included: *The Guardian, The Daily Mail, The Herald, The National, The Scotsman, The Irish News*, and the *News Letter*, while the remaining eight did: *The Sun, The Daily Mirror, The Times, The Daily Telegraph, The Metro*, *The Daily Record, The Scottish Sun,* and the *Belfast Telegraph*.

As discussed in the methodology chapter, I examined if these three women played a main, key or minor role within an article. My analysis found that Sturgeon, Swinson, and Foster predominately functioned in minor roles within all election coverage (See Figure 4.02). In determining the function of each politician, I adopted the terminology used by Fiona McKay (2017) in her study of media representation and gender during the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum. Intriguingly, I came across some noteworthy discoveries within my newspaper corpus.

In the Foster dataset, there was no significant difference in her role as a minor, key, or main actor in London-based publications. However, there was a more substantial difference between her function as a main or key actor than a minor actor in the Scottish and Northern Irish press. Following this pattern, in the Sturgeon and Swinson dataset, there was less disparity between the instances when they appeared as a main or key actor in the London-

based or Scottish press than when they appeared as minor actors. Notably, even when I specifically looked for their presence in an article, these political women often functioning as minor actors demonstrates their limited prominence in newspaper coverage.
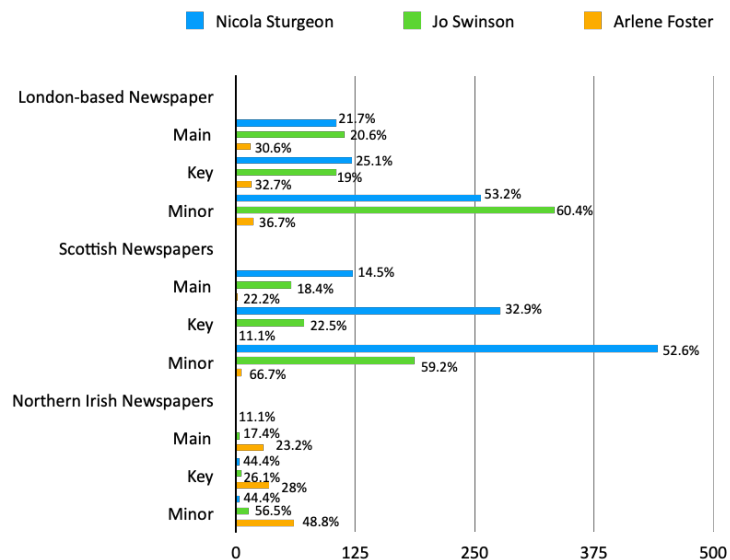
Figure 4.02. The figure shows the function each politician played in London-based, Scottish, and Northern Irish press. Percentage=function/ total of each politician's London-based, Scottish, or Northern Irish coverage.

Another interesting aspect of the Foster dataset was the rarity in which she was mentioned alongside Sturgeon or Swinson. Sturgeon and Swinson were present in 299 articles together (126 London-based, 170 Scottish and three in Northern Ireland) but there were only three articles where all three women appeared together, two in *The Guardian* and one in *The Daily Mail*. Foster's marginal inclusion within election reporting amongst the press showed how Northern Irish politicians are not always prominent fixtures in wider UK media discourses. Having identified the initial statistics in my newspaper dataset, I will now discuss the news media's representation of these three women by examining the prominent election topics, the presence of additional politicians, and explicit gendered references in my newspaper corpus.

Election Topics in the News Media

The most reoccurring topic for all three politicians in the newspaper corpus was Campaign/Election, followed by Electoral Process. An article coded as Campaign/Election included opinions or news reports about the politician's leadership ability, an overview of their political career, personal information, or general election commentary. This category was found in a range of article types, but the most common were opinion pieces, features, letters to the editor, or news articles. Articles coded as Electoral Process discussed tactical voting, party pacts, internal party divisions, disinformation, the threat to electoral integrity, and

election polls. Electoral Process became an important topic, especially with the possibility of coalitions forming amongst the minor and major parties in the UK government.

As discussed in the methodology chapter, my coding framework included 21 article topics modified from the Loughborough University General Election 2019 report and McKay's coding framework (2017). Interestingly, my analysis echoed similar findings from Loughborough University's study on election topics where they found that Electoral Process was the most recurring topic in TV and press coverage during the election. In comparison, Electoral Process was my second most prominent election topic despite the category appearing in less than 15% of the Swinson and Foster datasets and 8.3% of the articles featuring Sturgeon. The marginal percentages of the Electoral Process indicate that Campaign/Election was significantly more common than other topics in my newspaper corpus. Notably, the discussion on Electoral Process led to reports presenting these political women as "kingmakers" in potential party pacts with the major parties. Later in this chapter, I will examine the portrayal of these female leaders in the press as political influencers during the election.

There were marginal differences amongst the most prominent topics in the Sturgeon Scottish and London-based coverage. Notably, Sturgeon was only present in nine articles from Northern Irish publications which did not lead to a meaningful analysis. Campaign/Election, Scottish Independence/Devolution, Election Process, and Debates remained the top four topics in her Scottish and London-based coverage. The research on articles featuring Sturgeon revealed that 31.4% of the Scottish press reported on Campaign/Election, with slight variation in the London-based articles.
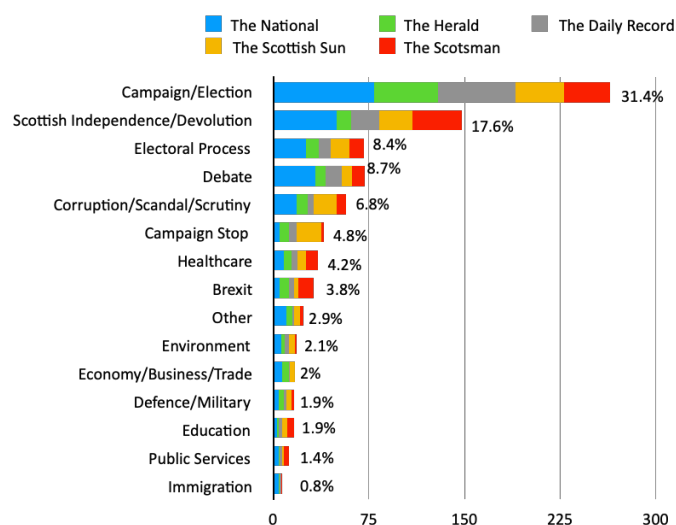
Figure 4.03. The figure shows the most prominent topics in the Scottish newspaper coverage of Nicola Sturgeon. Six categories have been removed because the topics only appeared in 10 articles. Percentage=total amount for each article topic/total of the Sturgeon Scottish coverage dataset.

The second most frequent article topic was Scottish Independence, appearing in the Scottish press 148 (17.6%) times, with slight variation in the London-based newspapers. This finding was expected due to a mandate for a second Scottish Independence referendum that was part of the SNP's manifesto (Scottish National Party, 2019). The graph above shows the prominent topics to appear in the Sturgeon Scottish newspaper dataset (See Figure 4.03). I chose to add the topics from the Scottish newspapers because this geographical location was Sturgeon's largest dataset. Six categories were removed from Figure 4.03 because they did not reach more than 2%: Crime and Law/Order, Austerity, Employment, Taxation, Stormont/Northern Irish Assembly, and Unionism.
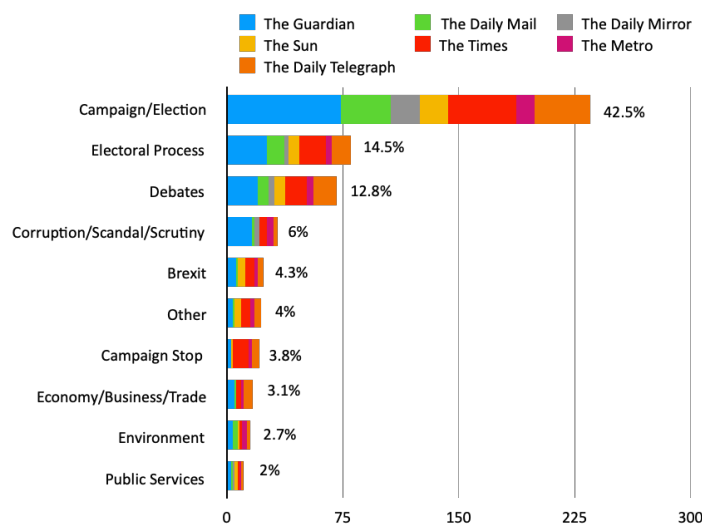
Figure 4.04. The figure shows the prominent topics in the London-based newspaper coverage of Jo Swinson. Eleven categories have been removed because the topics only appeared in 16 articles. Percentage=total amount for each article topic/total of the Swinson London-based coverage dataset.

Swinson's most recurrent topic was Campaign/Election. This category was featured in her London-based (42.5%), Scottish (38%) and Northern Irish (34.8%) news coverage. There were similarities between the London-based and Scottish press, with Campaign/Election, Electoral Process, Debates, and Corruption/Scandal/Scrutiny appearing most often in her dataset. Swinson frequently appeared in London-based publications because she led a UK-wide campaign regardless of her constituency being in East Dunbartonshire. Therefore, Figure 4.04 includes the topics for London-based newspapers because this was the location where her dataset was the largest. Within Figure 4.04, 11 categories which did not reach more than 2% for any of the topics were removed from the graph: Healthcare, Defence/Military, Crime and Law/Order, Austerity, Immigration, Employment, Education, Scottish Independence/Devolution, Taxation, Stormont/Northern Irish Assembly, and Unionism.

Swinson also appeared in articles discussing her debate performances and exclusion from the *Johnson V Corbyn: The ITV Debate,* which accounted for 13.5% of her total election coverage

for all newspapers. The press commenting on the debates offered insight into the differences in which Swinson's debate exclusion was being reported. For example, *The National* was critical towards Swinson for not demanding Sturgeon also be included in the debate, unlike *The Guardian*, which solely focused on reporting the news surrounding Swinson's exclusion from the ITV debate. *The National* stated, "However, unlike their leader Jo Swinson's "self-centred" approach, the SNP are arguing for the inclusion of other parties next week, ahead of what may be "the most important" election of our lifetimes" (Young, 2019). This criticism was to be expected since *The National* is an SNP-supporting newspaper.
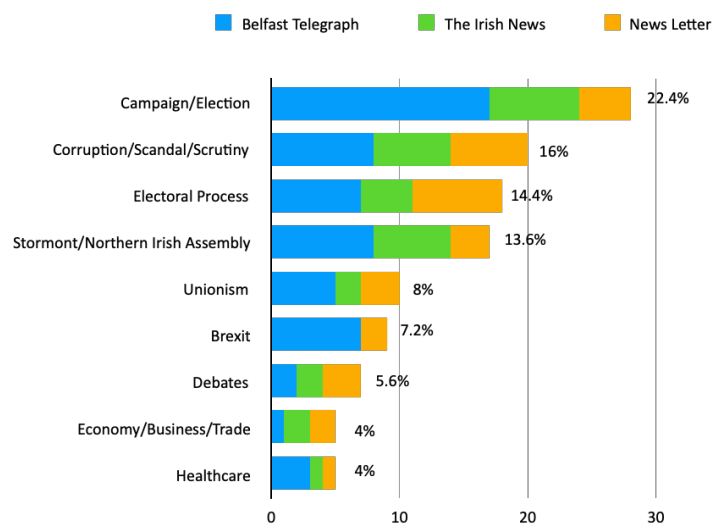
Figure 4.05. The figure shows the prominent topics in the Northern Irish newspaper coverage of Arlene Foster. Twelve categories have been removed because the topics only appeared in six articles. Percentage=total amount for each article topic/total of the Foster Northern Irish coverage dataset.

Although Foster's newspaper dataset was smaller than Sturgeon's and Swinson's, the articles she appeared in covered a broader range of topics. The figure above includes topics from Northern Irish newspapers because this was the geographical location with the largest newspaper dataset for Foster. Figure 4.05 indicates Campaign/Election (22.4%) as the most reoccurring topic, followed by Corruption/Scandal/ Scrutiny (16%) and Stormont/Northern Irish Assembly (14.4%). Twelve categories which did not reach more than 4% for any of the topics were removed from the graph: Campaign Stops, Defence/Military, Crime and Law/Order, Environment, Public Service, Austerity, Immigration, Employment, Education, Scottish Independence/Devolution, Taxation, and Other.

The London-based dataset had no significant topic variation from the Northern Irish coverage, and with only nine (5%) articles in the Scottish dataset, a meaningful analysis could not be completed. As expected, topics such as Corruption/Scandal/Scrutiny and Stormont/Northern Irish Assembly were most prominent in the Foster dataset. The immobility of Stormont was a

critical issue as it affected Northern Ireland's devolved system, while articles commenting on the DUP and party opponents as a part of Corruption/Scandal/Scrutiny were also unsurprisingly common during the election due to ongoing disagreements between unionist and nationalist parties. These categories acknowledged the impact of self-governance in Northern Ireland similarly to the topics in the Sturgeon Scottish dataset. Having analysed the election topics that were most prevalent within the newspaper corpus, I will next examine the politicians who are most prominent in my dataset.

Presence of the Politicians

By analysing the presence of additional male and female politicians in each article, it became clear male politicians played a prominent role in more than two-thirds of election coverage for Sturgeon and Swinson. This finding was expected, given that men led the two largest UK political parties during this period. In contrast, less than half the coverage included an additional female politician. One reason male politicians may have had a more substantial representation in the Sturgeon articles could be the discussion of a potential coalition between the SNP and Labour. Additionally, Swinson frequently commented on her male opponents, which may have contributed to a greater presence of male politicians in her dataset. Interestingly, male politicians were the most prominent in the Foster dataset at 91.8%, whereas additional female politicians appeared in 80.3%. The higher percentage of other female politicians in the Foster dataset could have been due to three Northern Irish women holding leadership roles during this period.

Further examination of male politicians indicated that Johnson and Corbyn appeared in over half of the same articles as Sturgeon and Swinson. Both men were campaigning for Prime Minister, and British election coverage "tends to give most attention to party leaders, with a particular focus on those who are potential prime ministers" (Cameron and Shaw, 2016:81). Johnson appeared in 60.8% of articles featuring Sturgeon and 70.3% of articles featuring Swinson. In comparison, Corbyn was included in 55.7% of the Sturgeon dataset and 62.8% of the Swinson dataset. Regardless of the frequent inclusion of Johnson and Corbyn in the newspaper corpus, both party leaders were more likely to appear as minor actors in the articles featuring these political women.

In the Foster dataset, Johnson and Corbyn were not included as frequently as Northern Irish politicians, with Johnson being present in 35% of the articles featuring Foster and Corbyn in 20.2%. It was expected that Foster would appear in more articles with Northern Irish

politicians because she was more likely to comment on DUP candidates and her political party opponents. The Northern Irish articles featuring Foster included an array of prominent Northern Irish politicians who were running for re-election, such as Nigel Dodds (23%), John Finucane (16.9%), and Steve Aiken (15.3%). I had anticipated more Scottish male politicians would appear in the Sturgeon newspaper coverage, but this was not the case. For example, Jackson Carlaw, then acting Scottish Conservative leader, appeared in 13.5% of Sturgeon's newspaper dataset which was minimal in comparison to Johnson's and Corbyn's inclusion. Carlaw's presence in the Sturgeon dataset may have been marginal because he represented a comparatively weak opposing party to Sturgeon and the SNP.

Top 20 Male Politicians	Total Number of Appearances	Top 20 Male Politicians (continued)	Total Number of Appearances
Boris Johnson	1,494 (62%)	Michael Grove	96 (3.9%)
Jeremy Corbyn	1,326 (55.1%)	Tony Blair	83 (3.4%)
Nigel Farage	315 (13.1%)	Jacob Rees-Mogg	81 (3.3%)
Donald Trump	234 (9.7%)	Dominic Rabb	70 (2.9%)
Jackson Carlaw	207 (8.6%)	Alex Salmond	67 (2.8%)
John McDonnell	159 (6.6%)	Adam Price	66 (2.7%)
Richard Leonard	143 (5.9%)	Nick Clegg	61 (2.5%)
David Cameron	127 (5.3%)	Gordon Brown	59 (2.4%)
Willie Rennie	122 (5.1%)	Sajid Javid	54 (2.2%)
Ian Blackford	104 (4.3%)	Nigel Dodds	54 (2.2%)

Table 4.05. The table shows the top 20 male politicians that appeared in the newspaper corpus. Percentage=total number of appearances/total number of articles in the newspaper corpus.

The significant presence of men in the election coverage of these three female party leaders highlighted how male politicians are always a prominent fixture of political reporting. Table 4.05 indicates the top 20 male politicians to appear in the articles of these female party leaders. As mentioned above, Johnson and Corbyn were the most prominent male politicians in my newspaper corpus, mirroring the Loughborough University 2019 report. Interestingly, the Loughborough University 2019 report found gaps between the prominence of Johnson and Corbyn and the other politicians, both male and female (Deacon et al., 2019), similar to the significant gap I found between Johnson's and Corbyn's presence and other male politicians (See Table 4.05). This finding demonstrates the focus publications place on major party leaders and potential Prime Minister candidates during elections.

Additional Female Politicians

Returning briefly to political leadership, six women were party leaders during the election, and all led minor parties. In addition to Sturgeon, Swinson, and Foster, this included Siân Berry (Green Party), Naomi Long (Alliance Party), and Mary Lou McDonald (Sinn Féin). In addition, both the Liberal Democrats and the Green Party had women leading devolved sections of these parties, which included Jane Dodds (Welsh Liberal Democrats) and Lorna Slater (Scottish Green Party). As mentioned above, the articles featuring Foster included considerably more additional female politicians than Sturgeon or Swinson. Mary Lou McDonald's party is one of the largest in Northern Ireland and a direct opponent of the DUP, and Naomi Long from the Alliance Party was running for re-election, and both received dedicated coverage from the news media due to their prominence in Northern Ireland. Other female politicians, such as Michelle O'Neill from Sinn Féin, Claire Hanna from the Social Democratic and Labour Party, and DUP candidate Emma Little-Pengelly, were all reoccurring political figures that appeared in the Foster dataset.

Although several women were in leadership positions, my newspaper dataset showed that female politicians had less coverage than their male counterparts. Only 45.2% of articles featured other female politicians, while male politicians appeared in 88.7% of articles. Additional female politicians were often present in quality publications such as *The National, The Times*, or *The Guardian* and functioned as minor actors or linked to a specific article topic, such as former Prime Minister Theresa May, who was often included in articles that referenced Brexit. The analysis also found that party leaders such as Berry appeared most frequently as a minor actor in the articles featuring Sturgeon and Swinson. She was included in 2.1% of the Sturgeon articles and 3.2% of the Swinson articles. Meanwhile, McDonald (13.1%) and Long (8.7%) were key actors in the Foster articles due to their opposition to her party. Interestingly, the top female politicians to appear in over 2% of the newspaper coverage for these female leaders were Theresa May (8.7%), Ruth Davidson (3.9%), and Margaret Thatcher (2.3%). Importantly, these were small percentages and neither May nor Davidson ran for re-election, and Thatcher is deceased. Loughborough University's report (Deacon et al., 2019) also found the presence of female politicians was marginal in election coverage, with only Sturgeon, Swinson, Priti Patel, Diane Abbott, and Angela Rayner making the top 20 list of prominent campaigners.

The analysis demonstrates how marginal the presence of female politicians was within the dataset in comparison to their male counterparts. The critical discourse analysis (CDA) will explore further how the press perpetuated the notion of politics being a male-dominated sphere by consistently positioning female politicians alongside their male counterparts. The politicians who appeared the most in the coverage of Sturgeon, Swinson, and Foster have been examined in this section and in the following section, I will analyse the language used in the news media to trivialise these three female politicians.

The Gendered Representation of Politicians in the News Media
A part of my research was determining if Sturgeon, Swinson, and Foster received gendered coverage throughout the election. Several former researchers, such as McKay (2017), Cameron (2016), Campus (2013), and Norris (1997), have discussed the type of gendered coverage female politicians can receive in the press. Their work aided my discovery of critical social practices to identify in my analysis, such as naming practices, private life references and references to physical appearance. My findings indicated that publications included relatively minimal explicitly gendering language to describe these female politicians.

Identifying Naming Practices in the News Media
Researchers have noted that a name can "distinguish or identify an object or person" and be "allied with power" by conveying "strengths and limitations" (Santaemilia and Maruenda, 2013:4). Journalists referring to female politicians with informal names can infantilise them and detract from their "power and legitimacy" (Uscinski and Goren, 2011:886 *also see* Han and Heldman, 2007; Cowan and Kasen, 1984; Slobin et al.,1968). I found instances where these political women were referred to by their first name or nickname. However, this was a marginal finding within my newspaper corpus. The table below shows how marginal this practice was, with Sturgeon being the only politician referred to by a nickname (See Table 4.06).

Informal naming practices would appear in tabloid-style newspapers. These references were added throughout the body text or headlines such as, "Nic's putting all her rivals in the shade; Brexmas election as UK's hit by dark period of turmoil outlook's sunny for nats" (Nicoll, 2019, p.12,13). I also discovered readers incorporated these references in Letters to the Editor. For example, "Nicola is a star, and may she continue to shine for a long time. Her love of Scotland and all its people is palpable" (*The National*, 2019b) or "Nicola should accept the true vote of the British people, or she'll end up like Salmond – dumped" (*The Scottish Sun*, 2019, p.38).

Both readers using "Nicola" indicated how the public felt a familiarity and intimacy with her. This familiarity with Sturgeon was particularly noticeable in the second quote when the reader referred to Sturgeon by her given name while mentioning former First Minister Alex Salmond by his last name. The use of Alex Salmond's surname was a more formal naming practice that gave him a level of authority and seriousness over Sturgeon while she was being berated over her party's core belief.

	Nicola Sturgeon	Jo Swinson	Arlene Foster
London-based Newspaper			
First Name	4 (0.8%)	18 (3.3%)	5 (10.2%)
Nickname	4 (0.8%)	1 (0.2%)	-
Scottish Newspapers			
First Name	25 (3.0%)	22 (6.9%)	-
Nickname	38 (4.5%)	-	-
Northern Irish Newspapers			
First Name	-	-	4 (3.2%)
Nickname	-	-	-

Table 4.06. The table shows the number of articles that referenced the politician by a first name or nickname. Percentage=first name or nickname/total of each politician's London-based, Scottish, or Northern Irish coverage.

Identifying Physical Features, Age, and Gender in the News Media

Former studies have suggested that a female politician's physical appearance, fashion choices, and domestic circumstances are a significant focus for the media (Mavin et al., 2010:557). Therefore, my research examined the references to a politician's physical features, age, and gender. In contrast to previous research, my analysis found that less than 5% of the articles featuring Sturgeon and Swinson included these references, while the Foster dataset only consisted of one example (See Table 4.07). In the Foster election coverage, the *News Letter* included the quote of a reader who wrote, "at least she can always claim to have been the first female (Joint) leader of Northern Ireland, and perhaps even the last" (*News Letter,* 2019). Interestingly, this statement was written by a reader in a Letter to the Editor rather than by a journalist.

In comparison to the Foster dataset, the Sturgeon election coverage included more references to gender. Interestingly, this type of gendered language was more prevalent from the quotes and comments of opposing parties rather than journalists. For example, one phrase that reappeared was "Tell her again" (Smith, 2019, p.17). This phrase became part of the Scottish

Conservative campaign to counter support for a second Scottish Independence referendum. This slogan led to Ruth Davidson stating in *The Scotsman*, "In terms of the people that don't like her [Nicola Sturgeon], it has got harder. It's gone from that woman to that bloody woman, to that effing woman, and that's where we're at now" (Davidson, 2019b).

	Nicola Sturgeon	Jo Swinson	Arlene Foster
London-based Newspaper			
Physical Appearance	3 (0.6%)	24 (4.3%)	-
References to Age	-	10 (1.8%)	-
Explicit References to Gender	11 (2.3%)	11 (2.0%)	-
Scottish Newspapers			
Physical Appearance	2 (0.2%)	6 (1.9%)	-
References to Age	1 (0.1%)	10 (3.2%)	-
Explicit References to Gender	20 (2.4%)	16 (5.1%)	-
Northern Irish Newspapers			
Physical Appearance	-	-	-
References to Age	-	-	-
Explicit References to Gender	-	-	1 (0.8%)

Table 4.07. The table shows the number of articles that referenced the politician's physical appearance, age, or made explicit references to gender. Percentage=physical appearance, reference to age, or explicit references to gender/total of each politician's London-based, Scottish, or Northern Irish coverage.

Sturgeon's physical features and age were only mentioned in six articles (0.5% of the Sturgeon dataset), primarily in tabloid-style newspapers. All these references objectified Sturgeon, yet it is important to note that there were gendered references utilised to praise Sturgeon including the following: "Nicola Sturgeon looking slim in a powder blue suit accessorised by an Apple watch" (Tominey, 2019, p.6) or "Ms Sturgeon also showed she could cut the mustard, using balls of wool the same hue as her coat" (McAulay, 2019, p.3). Interestingly, these quotes showcase how newspapers would portray Sturgeon as skilled and capable, while still focusing on her clothing and appearance.

The Swinson dataset included the most references to her physical appearance and age compared to the Sturgeon and Foster coverage. There were 34 articles (3.8% of the Swinson dataset) that mentioned the "bossy" (Vine, 2019) tone of her voice, her clothing choices, her

body, and youth or inexperience. Notably, nearly a third (n=10) of these were in just one publication: *The Daily Mail*. Later portions of this chapter will specifically examine the gendering commentary found in the Swinson dataset, but now let us shift our focus towards the private life references included in the newspaper dataset.

Identifying Private Life References in the News Media

The ideology surrounding family life has often portrayed men as the primary "providers and protectors" of their families (Adams, 2011:224). This has led to the perception that male qualities are necessary to occupy the public sphere. Women are traditionally likened to the "domesticated, caring and nurturing social roles" (Puwar, 2000) that keep them in the private sphere. As a part of my research, I analysed the instances when a publication would reference the politician's immediate family, such as a spouse, children, or parents. Articles featuring Sturgeon and Swinson included more private life references than the Foster articles (See Table 4.08), but overall, this was a marginal media practice. It was notable that, while the numbers remain small, there were more references to Foster's parents than those of the other women due to Foster challenging "Sinn Féin to condemn the IRA's attempts to kill her father and DUP deputy leader Nigel Dodds during the Troubles" (*The Irish News*, 2019).

	Nicola Sturgeon	Jo Swinson	Arlene Foster
London-based Newspaper			
Marriage/Partner	1 (0.2%)	5 (0.9%)	-
Children	-	11 (2%)	1 (2%)
Parents	-	4 (0.7%)	2 (4.1%)
Scottish Newspapers			
Marriage/Partner	9 (1.1%)	2 (0.6%)	-
Children	-	2 (0.6%)	-
Parents	4 (0.5%)	-	4 (44.4%)
Northern Irish Newspapers			
Marriage/Partner	-	-	-
Children	-	-	-
Parents	-	-	9 (7.2%)

Table 4.08. The table shows the number of articles that referenced the politician's spouse, children, and parents. Percentage=marriage/partner, children, or parents/total of each politician's London-based, Scottish, or Northern Irish coverage.

A noteworthy discovery from the newspaper corpus revealed that Swinson was referred to as a mother in several publications. The press utilised Swinson's motherhood status as a

descriptor with examples like, "Swinson, a 39-year-old mother of two boys" (Woods, 2019, p.22), "She's a hardworking mum of two young kids so she knows what it's like to juggle parenthood and a career" (Roberts, 2019, p.25), or "with a baby and five-year old to juggle on the campaign trail while her husband is away on business" (Sylvester and Thomson, 2019, pp.40-41).

Although the number of references was small, Swinson's domestic circumstances were most frequently mentioned in London-based newspapers. Interestingly, rather than separating herself from this label, Swinson would discuss her family life in interviews with the press, such as in *The Daily Mail*. Journalist York Membery asked Swinson what her favourite part of Scotland was, to which she replied, "Last summer, I visited the far north of Scotland with my husband, Duncan, and our children" (Membery, 2019). Importantly, not all references to Swinson's domestic circumstances were trivialising but it serves as a reminder to readers of Swinson's household duties in the private realm, which was not apparent in the datasets of Sturgeon or Foster.

In this section, it has been demonstrated that concerns which have dominated much existing discussion on media representation of women politicians, such as informal naming practices, an emphasis on physicality and the private or domestic realm, were a minority practice within my dataset. However, this does not mean gender was irrelevant to the coverage. Male politicians continued to be visible figures within the articles featuring these political women, while other female politicians were not as present in my newspaper corpus.

An important point to consider from this analysis is the possible differences in how news outlets based in London, Scotland, and Northern Ireland depicted these three women. It was expected that Sturgeon would be most frequently represented in Scottish press, Swinson in London-based press, and Foster in Northern Irish press, and this was reflected in the data. In general, my quantitative data showed no significant variation in the representation of Swinson or Foster across the three locations analysed in my study. However, there was variation in the Sturgeon dataset, with London-based newspapers presenting her as an accomplished politician and Scottish publications addressing Sturgeon in a more familiar tone. In a later chapter of this thesis, I will revisit these findings by discussing any alignment and disparities between these female politicians' media representation and self-presentation. The initial discoveries from my newspaper dataset have been discussed in the section and I will

now examine these topics in more critical detail by focusing on politics as a male-dominated space and the trivialisation of politicians, specifically Jo Swinson.

A Critical Analysis of the Newspaper Corpus

The content analysis allowed initial patterns and themes to emerge. However, certain limitations with this methodology prevented me from thoroughly examining these findings, so I conducted a critical discourse analysis to review the newspaper corpus. In the first section, I explore how the political sphere is presented as male-dominated, evident through instances where these political women are placed alongside men. The next section analyses the gendered references that trivialised female politicians, particularly focusing on their physical appearance and characteristics. Following this, I decided to examine the Swinson dataset more closely as it contained the most gendered references within the newspaper corpus. In this section, I have included the most illustrative examples to demonstrate the themes found in the content analysis, even though multiple examples showed these initial patterns within my newspaper corpus. Let us begin by examining how politics was portrayed as a male-dominated sphere within the newspaper articles.

The Political Sphere as a Male Space

The news media portrays the political arena as male dominated, and former studies have found that the UK political system is still primarily occupied by men (Lambert, 2020), which can create a perception that a female politician is an outsider in the political sphere (Krook, 2017:76). This finding became more evident during my research when male politicians were often mentioned in the same articles as Sturgeon, Swinson, and Foster. These women were positioned alongside male politicians in text and images, irrespective of the man's position in government. Let us consider how these women were situated next to men by reviewing examples from my newspaper corpus.

The Daily Telegraph published an article on December 7, 2019 (See Image 4.01) that provided an intriguing insight into how women in politics were positioned in relation to men. This article is a full page, regular column entitled "Wildlife" by Guy Kelly. The title of the article is "Rocking around the ballot box" and is comprised of three horizontally arranged sections. From top to bottom these are "The Cheerleaders", "The Family Vote", and "The Right-Hand Men". Above each section are the political party logos for the Conservative Party, the Labour Party, and the Liberal Democrats. Traditionally, broadsheet newspapers tend to avoid "the personal"; however, researchers have identified the increased tabloidisation of "stories and styles" in

broadsheet publications like *The Daily Telegraph*, which places the personal in the centre, blurring the "boundaries between news and entertainment" (Mateos-Aparicio Martin-Albo and de Gregorio-Godeo 2013:235 *also see* Greer and McLaughlin, 2018:207). Kelly's article exemplifies the blurred lines between news and entertainment due to the writing style, language, and images.

Image 4.01. The image is of an article published in *The Daily Telegraph* on December 7, 2019.

The opening text outlines what the readers can anticipate from the article and is accompanied by an image of Johnson and Corbyn in the top right corner. The photo was taken during a debate, as a TV studio can be seen in the background. This is the only image in the article that shows any surroundings. Johnson and Corbyn are shaking hands. Corbyn is smiling and facing the camera while Johnson faces the audience and places his hand on Corbyn's back. The way they are positioned makes it seem like they are amicable opponents rather than adversaries. The act of shaking hands between political candidates is often a choreographed performance that serves as a visual representation of the election and political contest.

In the first section, called "The Cheerleader", there are four images displayed in each column. Each image represents a political supporter of four Westminster parties: The Labour Party, The Green Party, The Conservative Party, and the Liberal Democrats. In each photo, the background has been removed, and only the upper body of the supporters is visible. Some of the pictures were taken spontaneously, while others were posed. It is interesting to note that all of the supporters are male celebrities who have gained notoriety through their respective

careers. The only party leader to appear with a supporter is Corbyn, who gives the camera a thumbs-up while posing next to British rapper Stormzy.

Thus far, readers are presented with a visual depiction of only male politicians and supporters, giving the impression that political participation is primarily for men. The inclusion of these male supporters in particular, emphasises their notoriety and possible influence as celebrities. The article consistently placed authority and recognition on the male figures, while women were only portrayed as spouses. For example, Swinson first appears in the section titled "Family Vote" where she is pictured with her husband, Duncan Hames. As before, the background has been removed, and the image has been cropped. The editing within this photo draws attention to Hames who is looking at Swinson, but his body is facing forward, allowing the camera to capture him touching his wife's arm. However, Swinson does not appear to be making physical contact with her husband. Her body is turned slightly away from the camera, providing only a side profile of her face.

It is worth noting that this picture is a cropped version of a photograph that originally appeared in a *The Daily Telegraph* article published on December 3, 2019 (See Image 4.02). The photo in the December 3 article was given more context and clearly shows Swinson and Hames attending a party conference. In this picture, Swinson and Hames reach for one another and make physical contact. Hames is positioned with the audience of applauding party members, while Swinson smiles and greets her husband. It is evident that Swinson is the main focal point, while Hames appears as a supporting figure. The editorial decision to eliminate the background and crop part of the image altered how Swinson and Hames were portrayed. In addition, in Kelly's article, Swinson and Hames take up one column, while the remaining three columns in the section are dedicated to Johnson and Corbyn. Between Swinson's limited number of photos and space, the article juxtaposed Corbyn and Johnson against Swinson.

Image 4.02. The image on the left is from an article published on December 7, 2019, and the image on the right is from an article published on December 3, 2019, in *The Daily Telegraph*.

This same section also includes images of Johnson and Corbyn. Corbyn is photographed with his wife, Laura Alvarez. In the image, Corbyn and Alvarez have their arms around one another, and their bodies are facing the camera. However, Corbyn has his head turned to the side to kiss Alvarez on the head, which creates the impression that she is his junior. Notably, Kelly's commentary on Alvarez, discussed later in this section, reflects a similar sentiment. Johnson is pictured on his own in an oddly cropped photograph, where the person standing next to him, along with his right arm, appears to have been removed. The effect makes Johnson look more prime ministerial than the informal photos of Swinson and Corbyn with their spouses. It is also particularly noticeable that Johnson looks unusually well-groomed as his hair is combed and his suit jacket is buttoned. The final images in the last section are the political advisors for the major parties, Dominic Cummings and Seumas Milne. Cumming is sneering and has his hand up to his ear while Milne is shouting. The position of the image is set side by side, and the editorial cropping makes it seem that Milne is shouting into Cumming's ear. The placement of the photos suggests both men are competing against one another, asserting the idea of a political contest.

Throughout the article, it is evident that men are consistently featured in the political arena at every level. The text and images further reinforce this concept as Kelly highlights the authority or prestige of the men featured in this article by referencing their titles, careers, or education. For example, Alan Sugar is referred to as Lord, indicating a person who has received a peerage, while the article noted that Cummings and Milne both went to the University of Oxford. One instance that perfectly demonstrates how Kelly discusses the men in this article is his text about Hames. Hames is the subject of the text and special attention is placed on his physical appearance and career. The language used indicates Hames is a sex symbol by calling him "Dunc the Hunk" and stating, "If you saw a profile like that on Tinder, you couldn't resist". However, while Hames is sexualised for his physical appearance, there is an emphasis on his profession. The text states he is a "trained accountant, ex-MP, and now head of policy at Transparency International UK". Notably, readers are given more detail about his profession than the other featured spouses, presenting Hames with status.

An interesting aspect of the article was the use of language that included animal and sports metaphors with animal references often associated with women and sports with men. In one such example, Kelly references a battle and boxing in the article's final section when he wrote "Cummings versus Milne", "battle behind the war", "In the blue corner", or "In the red corner". Boxing references remind readers that "politics is not always a team sport" and

projects an image of "toughness" and "direct confrontation between two parties" (Howe, 1988:93-94). The chosen language and imagery in the section strengthens how combative behaviour broadly "establishes and regulates power relations" (Bucy and Grabe, 2008:2). These metaphors "represent the values of hegemonic masculinity as desirable and essential for social order" (Flussberg et al., 2018:4 *also see* Jansen and Sabo, 1994:1,10).

Another example of political commentators utilising the sports metaphor was in a political sketch by Quentin Letts published in *The Times*. Firstly, the article's title was "Knockabout drama left audience punch drunk" in reference to the interactive audience who challenged and, at times, condemned the politicians. Letts continued to use sports metaphors to describe the performance of the politicians in attendance. For example, Letts wrote that Corbyn was "beaten up over Brexit" and the tempo of Sturgeon's performance "dropped like a shot partridge", or "she was a busy operator in the ring". In addition, Letts utilised phrases such as Ms Swinson "batting third" or "Then Boris. Cheers and boos as he came lumbering on". Women are not often associated with war or competition, according to Jansen and Sabo (1994:9) but Letts incorporates these confrontational metaphors in context to Sturgeon and Swinson. This finding suggests that these metaphors are a part of political reporting and are used to describe election events regardless of the politician's gender. Nonetheless, this writing style depicts politics as a competition between assertive players, reinforcing the idea of politics as a masculine space, even when women are involved.

Referring back to Kelly's column, as previously stated, the women in the article were the only individuals likened to animals. Johnson's partner, Carrie Symonds, was equated to her Jack Russell, Dilyn, and Corbyn's wife, Laura Alvarez, to a lesser spotted woodpecker, constructing a gendered narrative around both women. For example, during the election, the press and politicians criticised and questioned Johnson for his unconventional family life. In his column, Kelly referred to Symonds as a Jack Russell, suggesting Johnson would no longer be interested in her after the election, similar to someone losing interest in a new Christmas gift after the holidays. Kelly utilises this reference further and calls Symonds "Boris Johnson's First Girlfriend (absolutely only in name)" as a way of mentioning Johnson's promiscuity. Johnson remains the focus of the text and in the position of power, while Symonds is reduced to a helpless, out-of-depth partner that could be forgotten. The reference to Alvarez as a lesser spotted woodpecker reduces her to an unnoticeable political spouse. Kelly emphasises Alvarez's insignificant presence by drawing upon Corbyn's past romantic relationships. He writes, "Even

when it comes to marriage, Corbyn is for the many, not the few" and lists Corbyn's former partners, implicating that Alvarez is one of Corbyn's many former wives. Furthermore, Kelly suggests Alvarez is naive when he writes that she is "20 years his junior" regarding the age gap between her and Corbyn. The idea that she is naive is further supported by Corbyn's body language, as previously discussed in the image of Corbyn and Alvarez.

According to former research, there are "socially acceptable heterosexual roles within the traditional gendered pairing of marriage", placing "the wife in the role of caretaker and the husband as the breadwinner" (Mandell, 2015:60-61). The prime minister's spouse will traditionally remain behind the scenes (Stanyer, 2007:74 *also see* Higgins and Smith, 2013:199). The media will then focus less on the career or status of the political spouse and grant more attention to the "traditionally, passive and decorative spouse" (Higgins and Smith, 2013:199). Interestingly, Johnson and Corbyn's partners were reduced to inexperienced and powerless women, while Swinson's husband was given more attention and agency, illustrating how women are gendered in the public sphere, and men are shown as having more influence and presence in political spaces.

However, there is an important aspect to consider about the language Kelly uses within the article. The article portrays men as constant political participants, but it demonstrates that men can also be subjected to ridicule as their female counterparts. For example, in the first section of this article, Kelly teases that Lord Alan Sugar is the "only 'celebrity' Tory backer" and mocks Sugar's celebrity status, suggesting he is not well known. In the second section, Kelly continues to taunt the men within the article, referring to Hames as "Mr Jo Swinson". Traditionally, "Mr" does not reveal a man's marital status compared to a woman's status but using Swinson's name as part of the title immediately identified Hames' marital status. The unconventional use of "Mr" added comedic value and irony within the text. In the same section, Kelly also ridicules Corbyn when he suggests Diane Abbott's relationship with Corbyn was comparable to serving a prison sentence, using the phrase a "12-year stretch."

In the final section, Kelly uses popular culture to describe how Cummings and Milne control the political presentation for both Johnson and Corbyn. He refers to Cummings as "Geppetto to Boris's Pinocchio", which also references Johnson's habit of lying. Milne is called "the Rod Hull to Corbyn's Emu"—referring to comedian Rod Hull and his puppet. Corbyn is likened to a comedic, mute puppet that appeared on children's television. Both references suggest these

men are "pulling the strings" behind the scenes for Johnson and Corbyn's political campaigns. The text is intended to be humorous and tease the individuals mentioned in the article but, importantly, it is an example that men are not exempt from this kind of ridicule. However, there is a gendered component within the text that places women outside political participation because they are either too vulnerable or inexperienced, which is not present in the commentary of the men in this article.

An additional example demonstrating how the press reinforced political spaces as male-dominated was in a briefing by Andrew Sparrow published in *The Guardian*. In the article, Sparrow rarely mentioned any female politicians or provided details about their campaigning efforts. For example, Sparrow wrote about the performance of Sturgeon, Swinson, Johnson, and Corbyn during the *BBC Question Time Leaders Special 2019*. The summary of Sturgeon and Swinson's performances was brief, consisting of only five sentences for Sturgeon and one for Swinson. Sparrow used the opening introductory text to praise Sturgeon's performance stating, "Sturgeon probably had the best night", and in the summary of her performance he noted she has had years of political experience. He also referred to the potential coalition with Corbyn's party and that a second Scottish independence referendum would be a part of any deal (Sparrow, 2019b). However, the report on Swinson's performance was reduce to one sentence stating, "She had a dismal half hour-undoubtedly her worst of the campaign" (Sparrow, 2019b) and lacked any detail about her performance or interaction with the audience.

Unlike Sturgeon and Swinson, two paragraphs were dedicated to Johnson and Corbyn's performances at the *BBC Question Time Leaders Special*. Sparrow provided more detail on the topics these men discussed, a critique of their presentation, and political history. Apart from Sturgeon and Swinson, the only other female politician who was included was Labour MP Ruth Smeeth. However, she was only mentioned because Corbyn was questioned during the programme about his failure to protect Smeeth from a heckler during a press conference. The rest of the briefing is dedicated to the actions of male politicians. Sparrow included five election bullet points which were each a sentence long. All five points mentioned the campaign acts of Corbyn, John McDonnell, Labour Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Farage, Brexit leader and Adam Price, Plaid Cymru leader. Interestingly, each point focused on an election issue traditionally considered a "male issue", such as the economy, Brexit, or British sovereignty. Sparrow also chose language that demonstrated the authority men held.

For example, he wrote, "John McDonnell rejected" or "The Plaid Cymru leader, Adam Price struck a defiant note" (Sparrow, 2019b). However, the only female politician in which their action was described was Sturgeon, and the verb used to comment on her actions was "said". The difference in language choices exemplified how the women in this article did not hold the same authority as the men.

Foster also appeared in election coverage alongside men, as expected due to the significant presence of male politicians in her dataset. In one such example, Foster appeared in an opinion piece published in *The Guardian* by Aditya Chakrabortty. The article focused on the ways Johnson replicated far-right leaders around the world, such as former US President Donald Trump. Chakrabortty primarily wrote about male politicians, including those not in leadership positions, such as Conservative MPs Steve Baker or John Redwood. Only the actions and behaviours of men were discussed in greater detail, and the article quoted Michael Jacobs, a former adviser to Gordon Brown.

Foster was only mentioned once in a brief sentence which stated, "His fellow panellists - including John Redwood, Arlene Foster and Mark Francois - did not protest but merely nodded in assent" (Chakrabortty, 2019). This sentence was in reference to Johnson continuing to "attack the country's institutions" if he was re-elected (Chakrabortty, 2019). Foster was depicted as a follower agreeing with Johnson's policies like his Conservative Party peers. Only two additional women were mentioned in the article: Margaret Thatcher and American Senator Elizabeth Warren. All the women in this article played a minor role, and details about their actions, policies, and opinions were not provided. Instead, men like Johnson and Trump were the focal point, as Chakrabortty described in length the destructive policies of these two men and the Labour Party's manifesto.

A notable aspect of these examples is that they are not straightforward news pieces. However, I did find instances within my newspaper dataset where male politicians were asked to comment on the election, or their campaigns were discussed in greater detail than the political women in this thesis. For example, journalist Kieran Andrews' wrote a news report published in *The Times* about Sturgeon's desire to hold a second Scottish Independence referendum and her warning on the dangers of Boris Johnson staying in government. However, the majority of the article included comments from her male counterparts rather than any commentary from Sturgeon. Andrews quoted Johnson at the Scottish Conservative Manifesto launch in Fife and then interim Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw about Sturgeon's desire for a second

Scottish Independence referendum. The article's structure prioritises the perspectives of male politicians and shows how men are presented as holding a significant amount of political power and notoriety within the press, which results in their opinions receiving more attention. Next, I will analyse how the news media portrayed Sturgeon and Swinson as background political influencers during the election, specifically focusing on the potential coalition between Sturgeon and Corbyn.

Politicians as Background Influencers

Throughout the election, publications would report on the possible coalitions or support these female politicians would offer to either the Conservative or the Labour parties. Since minor parties carry less influence, they can "behave as kingmakers" (Ishihara and Miura, 2017:260) and enact their agenda and influence on major parties (Molineaux and Skilling, 2014:33). Within my newspaper dataset, I found articles discussing the influence Sturgeon and Swinson held if a majority was not reached amongst the Conservatives or Labour. However, the coverage was most prominent within the Sturgeon dataset as Conservative-leaning publications and party opponents used this opportunity to discuss how an SNP-Labour coalition would devastate the UK with two referendums in the following year (Nelson, 2019, p.20).

Johnson would comment on this possible coalition and refer to it as the "Sturgeon-Corbyn alliance" (Sparrow, 2019a) or "yoke mates of destruction" (Macnab, 2019). The term yoke refers to tethering animals or people together, and yoke is an echo of the term woke, defined as an awareness of social and political issues. Johnson's use of yoke mates attached Sturgeon and Corbyn together, insisting both politicians would destroy the UK. In addition, the Conservative Party pushed the narrative of a damaging coalition between Sturgeon and Corbyn on their Twitter account (See Image 4.03). The Conservative Party repurposed an image from a 2015 UK General Election advert of Alex Salmond and Ed Miliband where Salmond looked down at Miliband, who was peering out of his pocket with a surprised expression. In the replicated picture, Sturgeon is also looking down and smiling at a miniature Corbyn, who is peeking out of her jacket pocket. The image suggests Corbyn is literally and metaphorically "in her pocket" and willing to do as she requests (Hunt, 2019).

Image 4.03. Both images appeared on The Conservative Party Twitter account. The image on the left was posted on November 22, 2019, and the image on the right was posted on March 9, 2015.

Publications used this commentary and momentum around a potential party pact to identify Sturgeon as a kingmaker. In one such example, a feature writer and columnist for *The Herald*, Drew Allan, wrote how the Conservative Party used the "threat" of a Corbyn-Sturgeon party pact to win votes (Allan, 2019, p.17).

> "First, there is a tactical problem. Much as Mr Corbyn cannot enter Downing Street without Ms Sturgeon, she cannot keep Mr Johnson out of office unless she puts Mr Corbyn in, and she has been crystal clear that she will take any steps necessary to avoid Mr Johnson being PM. Labour appears to be presuming, with some justification, that with Ms Sturgeon as kingmaker, there is only one person she will crown" (Allan, 2019, p.17).

Sturgeon's prominence in this election became entwined with who she would elevate to Prime Minister. In the example above, the journalist's linguistic choices situated Sturgeon in a position of power. For example, "there is only one person she will crown", "she has been crystal clear", or "to avoid Mr Johnson being PM" are all phrases that positioned her as a political influencer able to impact who would become the next Prime Minister. In comparison, Corbyn and his party are depicted without authority or knowledge of who the SNP would support, particularly with the phrase "Labour appears to be presuming" (Allan, 2019, p.17).

Despite Sturgeon's notable role in the article as a background influencer in the election, Allan draws upon the competition and rivalry between Johnson and Corbyn. As seen in a previous example, the sports metaphor can "establish a framework by which political figures and parties" can be seen as playing a "game" and emphasise the competitive nature of political contests (Vieth, 2015:2 *also see* Hawkins and Salazar, 2020). Journalists utilise this style of rhetoric to keep elections exciting and easier to grasp for voters (Gidengil and Everitt, 1999:51 *also see* Vieth, 2015:2). Allan does just this with terms such as "if Mr Corbyn plays hardball",

"electoral equivalent of going all in at poker", or "winner-takes-all" (Allan, 2019, p.17). It is emphasised by using a sports metaphor that the primary political figures are Johnson and Corbyn, while Sturgeon is a supporting figure aiding Corbyn in his efforts to become Prime Minister.

Publications insisted Swinson and her party could also have an influence on who would become Prime Minister. However, Swinson denied this role by reaffirming she was campaigning for Prime Minister and would never enter a coalition with either the Conservative or Labour parties. She only agreed to enter a coalition with the minor Remain parties, but in my dataset, this party pact was only reported in *The Herald*, *The National*, *The Guardian*, and *The Times*. Notably, when the Swinson articles highlighted her position as a kingmaker, Swinson was compared to former Liberal Democrat leader Nick Clegg with commentary such as, "She says she is campaigning to be PM, but behind the scenes, the party accepts it might have to be kingmaker, as Nick Clegg was in 2010" (Bartlett, 2019, p.9).

During the 2010 UK General Election, publications described Clegg as "Britain's new kingmaker" (Underhill, 2010), writing, "Labour and the Tories attempted to woo his party" (Savage, 2010). Like Swinson, Clegg denied his role as kingmaker, suggesting British voters were in that position (Gimson, 2010). Nonetheless, after the 2010 election, the Liberal Democrats joined a coalition government with the Conservatives. Interestingly, conversations from political opponents, publications, and voters about the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition led to Swinson apologising for the failings of her male predecessors (*The Daily Mirror*, 2019b, p.7).

Male politicians from minor parties, such as Brexit Party leader Nigel Farage, also occupied the role of kingmaker. News reports and party opponents discussed a potential coalition between the Brexit and the Conservative parties. In one such example, *The Scottish Sun* reported on Labour and SNP politicians branding a Farage and Johnson coalition as the "Trump alliance" or the "hard-right alliance" (Musson, 2019, p.4,5 *also see* Glaze and Crerar, 2019, p.8,9), named after former US President Donald Trump because he insisted that Farage and Johnson work together. Liberal-supporting publications and political parties used the relationship between these three men to discourage the public from voting for either party. Political opponents of the Conservative Party suggested the NHS would become a bargaining chip during Brexit negotiations to dissuade voters from supporting Johnson's party (Jarvis, 2019a). Consequently,

it was unsurprising that Trump was among the top five (9.7%) male politicians to appear in the newspaper dataset (See Table 4.05).

Farage was referred to as a possible background influencer because he stood down candidates to not split the vote between his party and the Conservatives. However, Farage's decision led to commentary stating he was a "bottler" or making a "U-turn" for not standing against Johnson's party as he originally intended (Musson, 2019, p.4,5). The term bottler reappeared again during the *Question Time Under 30s Special* debate when host Emma Barrett stated Farage "bottled it" when he stood down candidates. Interestingly, Sturgeon suggested Farage was "pulling the strings" for Johnson's Conservative Party (Devlin, Swinford, and Andrews, 2019, p.1,2), while Swinson claimed, "the Conservative Party are the Brexit Party now" (Glaze and Crerar, 2019, p.8,9). The commentary on the outcome of a possible coalition between these two conservative leaders was often from Farage's political opponents rather than publications as seen in the Sturgeon dataset. Nonetheless, reports of Farage in this position of influence over the Conservatives paralleled how commentators wrote about Sturgeon's sway over the Labour Party. Therefore, with both male and female politicians being described as kingmakers in this election, it suggests that this practice was not based on gender.

This section has analysed the presence of male politicians in the same election coverage as these political women. These female leaders were situated in relation to men, and their political influence was often discussed in terms of how they could help elevate male politicians to higher leadership positions. Although this section briefly noted instances when men were mocked, undermined, or portrayed as background political figures within the articles, it does not imply that gender is irrelevant to the newspaper coverage. The following section will examine the language utilised in my dataset, which gendered and trivialised these political women.

The Trivialisation of Politicians During the Election

Prior researchers have extensively examined the gendered media coverage of female politicians, noting the news media often focused more on a female politician's appearance and domestic circumstances than their policies (Cameron and Shaw, 2016:80, *also see* Carlin and Winfrey, 2009; Lawless, 2009; Mäkelä et al., 2015; Meeks 2012, 2013; Semetko and Boomgaarden, 2007). These previous studies have informed my analysis of the trivialisation of these three political women. As noted in my content analysis, I found minimal instances when Sturgeon, Swinson, and Foster were gendered within my newspaper corpus. Although this

language was a marginal practice in my dataset, it does not make this rhetoric irrelevant to explore it in more detail and I will review the explicit examples of gendered commentary in this section.

I found these examples primarily in the coverage of Sturgeon and Swinson and all examples are from opinion pieces or feature articles because they demonstrate how explicit gendered commentary can appear in today's newspapers. I observed that the use of trivialising language in news reports was mostly limited to quotes from politicians or the general public rather than journalists. This discovery suggests a shift towards less trivialising language in news reports which has yet to appear in opinion pieces. Therefore, to demonstrate the trivialising language within editorials and columns, let us explore an article from *The Daily Mail* by columnist Henry Deedes.

The Daily Mail article discussed Sturgeon, Swinson, Corbyn, and Johnson's appearances and presentations at the *BBC Question Time Leaders Special 2019*. Regarding Sturgeon, Deedes (2019) wrote, "Nicola Sturgeon was next off the conveyor belt, sporting more hairspray than a glam rocker and flashing the crowd that lemon-sucking smile". His comments about Sturgeon suggested she overemphasised her femininity, and he drew upon the emotional labour placed on women to always appear happy and friendly. These remarks are paralleled with comments made about Swinson's intelligence and emotions. He wrote, "Those saucer-sized peepers of hers flame like Roman candles, but there appears to be nothing going on behind them" or "Swinson looked on the verge of losing her rag" (Deedes, 2019).

Interestingly, his statements criticising Sturgeon and Swinson's emotional displays placed emotional labour on both women that were not put on Johnson or Corbyn. Women are believed to show more emotion than men, apart from "masculine emotions" such as "anger" and "pride" (Brescoll, 2016:415). A woman's anger is seen as an internal characteristic, whereas a man's anger is from an external cause (Brescoll and Uhlmann, 2008:269). The emotional display of "happiness is often seen as a sign of dominance and is suitable for incumbents" (Masch et al., 2021:213), and as Brescoll noted, happiness is an approved emotion women can display (2016:419). According to Koo, "female stereotypes align with the communal roles in which women are generally expected to serve" or "make others feel more comfortable and relaxed" (2022:187), and researchers have noted that a smile reinforces these gendered stereotypes (Trimble et al., 2019:142). A female politician's smile contributes to the

objectification of a woman's body "in a way that privileges the leader's image over the substance of political action" (Campus, 2013:7). Therefore, women may feel more pressure than male politicians to display emotions of happiness to conform to female stereotypes (Koo, 2022:186, 207 *also see* Brescoll, 2016:416).

As well as commenting on Sturgeon and Swinson, Deedes also wrote about Corbyn's and Johnson's performance at the *BBC Question Time Leaders Special 2019.* Deedes critiqued Corbyn's appearance by referencing ways the Labour leader looked unprofessional. He wrote that Corbyn looked "like a dog's breakfast as usual. His shoes were scuffed and his trouser hem needed taking up a couple of inches", his suit was "hanging from his frame" and "Unlike Tuesday's ITV debate, his specs had at least this time benefited from a squirt of Windolene". The language used to describe Corbyn presents him as an unkempt candidate who is not equipped to take on the role of Prime Minister and can only manage menial tasks*.* For Johnson, Deedes does not mention his physical appearance but instead commented on his demeanour, writing, "plodding to the stage in that peculiar gait more befitting a man at least 30 years his senior", "Boris flapped and flailed like an eccentric geography teacher" or "He stammered, he guffawed" (Deedes, 2019). Johnson's slow pace on stage and stuttering during his performance suggest that he may have appeared older than his actual age and could not answer questions clearly. The focus on old age and demeanour calls upon a politician's mental capacity to perform the duties of a Prime Minister.

Deedes' description of Johnson and Corbyn exemplified how male politicians can also be belittled in newspaper coverage. Throughout my examination of the newspaper dataset, I found instances when Corbyn, in particular, was trivialised in the articles featuring these three women. For example, *The Daily Telegraph* columnist Lisa Armstrong criticised Corbyn's appearance and compared him to former Labour leader Michael Foot in an article about how political leaders dressed during the election. Armstrong stated, "Michael Foot was doomed politically the moment he stepped out in that faux-humble donkey jacket. Jeremy Corbyn's wonky glasses on the ITV debate attracted hilarity (admittedly the bar is low this election)" (Armstrong, 2019, p.28).

As mentioned earlier in this section, there have been extensive studies on how female politicians' appearances have been trivialised (Cameron and Shaw, 2016:80 *also see* Bystrom et al., 2004:177; Kahn, 1994). However, remarks about the appearance and manner of male

politicians demonstrate that dismissive commentary can also affect men just as much as women. Nonetheless, while no politicians are immune from objectifying reporting, male politicians do not have the same "historical legacy and stereotypes attached to them" as women (McKay, 2017:5). Referring back to Deedes' column showcases how neither Johnson nor Corbyn are gendered within the article in the same way as Sturgeon and Swinson. The focus on Johnson's demeanour and Corbyn's appearance does not call upon the same emotional labour that is a part of Sturgeon's and Swinson's representation.

Popular Culture in News Discourse

Another feature of my dataset included popular culture lexicon within a political context to trivialise politicians. Language and communication styles can influence how people interact "culturally and materially" in society (Laing, 2021:3,25). As "culture becomes part of our lived experience", it also emerges in politics (Street et al., 2013:3). In Deedes' *Daily Mail* article, I found instances when popular culture was mentioned, such as the inclusion of actresses, television programmes, and films. These references were used to sensationalise Deedes' opinions on the politician's performances and the programme, but they also serve as cultural reference points that can entertain readers.

One such example is when Deedes discussed the programme, he wrote, "As entertainment goes, it lacked the glamour of Joan Collins and Linda Evans clawing each other's eyes out over the chaise longue" or "I'm not normally a Question Time viewer. Usually more of an Any Questions? man" (Deedes, 2019). For context, Collins and Evans were actresses on the television programme *Dynasty* from the 1980s, and within this TV series, both Collins and Evans characters fought over a man. The use of these popular culture references was a gendered approach Deedes used to compare a catfight on a TV series to the *BBC Question Time Leaders Special 2019.*

In addition, Deedes (2019) used popular culture references to sexualise programme host Fiona Bruce by referring to her appearance as "a sexy extra from the Starship Enterprise", minimising her authority as the host and even commented on an audience member who Deedes called "a hirsute Chewbacca lookalike" due to the audience member's appearance. Popular culture references were also used to describe Jo Swinson's demeanour. Deedes compared Swinson's behaviour to actor Christian Bale's character in the film American Psycho, who displayed "intense friendliness" that came across as "lifeless energy". Interestingly, there were other

instances where popular culture references were used in publications to belittle Swinson. For example, *The Daily Mail* columnist Amanda Platell employed popular cultural references to comment on Swinson's body and campaign progress when she wrote:

> "Lib Dem leader Jo Swinson's puerile student politics and Stop-Brexit message have sent her party's poll ratings plummeting from 26 to 14 per cent and still falling. And those frocks! They may hug her hour-glass figure, but the only resemblance to Jessica Rabbit is her toothy smile" (Platell, 2019).

From the start of the quote, Platell minimised Swinson by labelling her policies as "student politics", which reduced Swinson to a juvenile or an inexperienced politician. Patell's popular culture reference to the cartoon character Jessica Rabbit sexualised Swinson's appearance, subjecting her to the role of an object. Another example of this style of commentary was found in *The Daily Telegraph* by journalist Allison Pearson. She employed popular culture references that sexualised Swinson by suggesting the kind of clothing Swinson should wear for her body type.

Pearson mentioned television hosts Trinny Woodall and Susannah Constantine, who would give wardrobe advice to women seeking to rekindle a troubled relationship. The premise of the show suggested that women must dress in a particular style to attract attention or affection from a partner. The reference to this television programme correlated with the fashion advice Pearson was giving Swinson on how to flaunt her body. Thus far, it has been shown that female politicians continue to be objectified within the press, especially Swinson, who received more trivialising media coverage from publications across the UK than her female counterparts. In the following section, I will explore further how Swinson's looks, characteristics, and inexperience were objectified in her newspaper dataset.

The Objectification of Jo Swinson

According to prior scholarship, a woman's appearance has been used to make determinations about her character and credibility to be a politician (Sanghvi and Hodges, 2015: 1677 *also see* Mandziuk, 2008; Eagly and Karau, 2002). Throughout this chapter, I have noted that the gendering of Sturgeon, Swinson, and Foster was a marginal finding. However, the differences between the trivialising coverage Swinson received and that of her female counterparts were particularly noticeable. In the content analysis, I found instances when publications referred to

Swinson as "bossy", "schoolmarmish", or "being like a headgirl" (Morris, 2019) and fixated on her vocals, clothing choices or "mild" manner (Deacon, 2019, p.9).

In one such example, *The Daily Telegraph* journalist Lisa Armstrong wrote about Swinson's appearance at the *BBC Question Time Leaders Special 2019*. Interestingly, the article began with Armstrong describing how she did not want to give female politicians "more grief" for what they chose to wear but undermined her statement by writing an entire article about how politicians, particularly women, dress. At the start of the article, Armstrong patronised Swinson by stating, "Poor Jo Swinson. She didn't have an easy time on that Question Time leaders' debate" (2019, p.28). The language and tone of the sentence discounted Swinson, making her appear as a politician to pity. Armstrong then turned her attention towards Swinson's appearance stating,

> "She wasn't bad, but that ill-fitting dress ("old-fashioned bank teller" and "superannuated weather reader" are two descriptions I've heard a lot this week) was. And she's got to ditch those earrings," said a millennial" (Armstrong, 2019, p.28).

Armstrong's description of Swinson's appearance exemplifies how female politicians continue to receive gendering press coverage. The only instance when Armstrong praised Swinson's appearance, was when she was styled by a magazine: "see how great Swinson looked when styled by a professional for the pages of Grazia" (Armstrong, 2019, p.28). Interestingly, Armstrong also referred to Sturgeon's appearance, but the tone was more positive toward Sturgeon. Armstrong wrote:

> "Love them or loathe them, Angela Merkel and Nicola Sturgeon's uniforms of, in the former's case, trouser suits of many colours, and in the latter's, dresses and matching jackets, represent consistency and a sense of resolution. Having got their staples right, they can, like their suit-wearing male counterparts, get on with concentrating on other things" (Armstrong, 2019, p.28).

The text placed importance on Sturgeon's physical appearance, using her clothing choices as evidence of her competent leadership and aligning her with other female world leaders like Merkel. Armstrong's focus on Sturgeon's appearance was gendering, but it does not compare to the type of objectifying and minimising coverage Swinson received in the press. Researchers

such as McKay (2019:43) noted that Sturgeon was at the "forefront of electoral coverage, while Swinson faced scrutiny" during the election.

Another example of publications objectifying and undermining Swinson's credibility was published in *The Scottish Sun* by Chris Musson and Craig Paton. They wrote about Swinson's claim that she could be the next Prime Minister and her campaign stop in Glasgow. The article included an image of Swinson with clown makeup and green hair superimposed on her face. A generic photo filled in the background depriving the image of context. Swinson is wearing bright clothing, and her arms are raised above her head. The article links Swinson's animated facial expression and body position with the text at the top of the page, which reads, "Lib Dem Aims High Despite Slump".

Image 4.04. An article published in *The Scottish Sun* on November 23, 2019.

The word Joker is seen to the side of Swinson on the left page, and "Jo" is highlighted in gold. *The Scottish Sun's* use of Joker comes from a comment made by SNP politician Pete Wishart, who suggested Swinson was "either a joker or delusional" for thinking it was electorally possible that she could be the next PM (Musson and Patton, 2019, p.8,9). Notably, the gold colouring in the word "Jo" and in the pie chart on the right page match her party's colour. The three images of Swinson at the top left corner show her with Scottish Liberal Democrat leader Willie Rennie on the campaign trail. The absence of editorial changes in these images distinguishes them from the primary image of Swinson, which was altered to portray her as foolish. Instead, Swinson is photographed performing typical campaign acts, such as engaging with voters at a campaign stop and waving from her campaign bus. Interestingly, the third photo of Swinson reinforces her unpopularity. Within the article, Musson and Paton wrote about the heckling Swinson received at her campaign stop in Glasgow, specifically from a

University of Strathclyde student who challenged and criticised Swinson and her party manifesto. The Strathclyde student was particularly critical of the Liberal Democrats' role in the 2010 coalition with the Conservative Party and felt the Liberal Democrats' manifesto was not strong enough to end austerity. The interaction between Swinson, Rennie, and the student was also reported in multiple media outlets such as *The National*, *The Guardian* and *The Daily Record.*

The bottom of the article includes pictures of Johnson and Corbyn. Each photo is deprived of context, but both men look polished, and the pictures are uncluttered. Both men are wearing light blue shirts and appear informal, Corbyn in an open neck shirt, and Johnson is not wearing a jacket. Despite their clothing choices appearing informal, they still projected a sense of professionalism and the better-qualified candidates. Swinson's appearance was presented as a clueless politician juxtaposed against Johnson and Corbyn but interestingly, the language within the article was not necessarily belittling Swinson like the images and graphics. Nonetheless, This example demonstrates how publications like *The Scottish Sun* mocked and trivialised Swinson not only in the text but also through visual elements.

A second example of Swinson's objectification in images is a picture published in *The Sun*. In the article, she acknowledged the sexist coverage and fashion advice she received during the election. Swinson stated, "I'm not short of people telling me that I should speak differently or wear different shoes or wear different earrings. Somebody suggested that I should wear lower cut tops" (Gutteridge, 2019, p.9). However, *The Sun* undermined Swinson's comment by titling the article "Jo Cleavage Advice" and using a photo focused on her chest (See Image 4.05). The picture below appeared to be an impromptu photo that she was not prepared to take. Swinson is photographed removing her jacket while the angle and cropping of the photo are fixated on her breasts. She takes up nearly all the space within the picture, and her bright orange shirt makes her the most noticeable figure in the image. Racks of clothing can be seen in the background, suggesting she is making a campaign stop at a clothing store.

Campaign trail . . Jo last week

Image 4.05. The image was attached to an article published in *The Sun* on December 10, 2019.

Objectifying commentary about a female politician's appearance is not a new finding. Trivialising media coverage of political women can perpetuate harmful "attitudes" and "social views" towards women (Funk and Coker, 2016:458 *also see* Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997) and the sexualisation of women reduces their political power and erodes their creditability (Funk and Coker, 2016). For Swinson, publications discounted and undermined her political abilities and policies, presenting her as a fool.

However, it is possible that Swinson's age and inexperience as a party leader affected her election coverage. Swinson was the first female and youngest Liberal Democrat party leader during the 2019 UK General Election (*BBC News*, 2019c). Publications referenced her age, albeit on minimal occasions, to describe Swinson (See Table 4.07) and published commentary suggesting she was too naive and inexperienced to lead her party. For example, in *The Daily Mail*, Lembit Opik, Liberal Democrat MP for Montgomeryshire in Wales from 1997 to 2010 and Leader of the Welsh Liberal Democrats from 2001 to 2007, stated, "Jo is too young and has not developed emotional gravitas, that is the big problem" (Walters, 2019).

In the article, Opik claimed Swinson "is hectoring and tries to replace her lack of gravitas with a whingeing attitude" (Walters, 2019). The suggestion that Swinson was "lacking in emotional gravitas" undermined her competence as a leader, and the words "hectoring" and "whingeing" are gendered terms used to trivialise Swinson's voice and mannerisms (Walters, 2019 *also see* Morris, 2019; Deacon, 2019, p.9). Opik's commentary alluded to the emotional behaviour female politicians are forced to display to be considered serious leaders while exemplifying the sexist criticism women receive when they overly assert their career ambitions. As well, Opik positioned Swinson adjacent to Johnson and Corbyn, similar to *The Scottish Sun* article seen

above (Image 4.04) and contradicted her campaign message as the better option than either man by stating, "Whether or not you like Boris Johnson or Jeremy Corbyn, no one says they are too inexperienced to be prime minister".

Publications not only referenced Swinson's age, but also described her as a mother (See Table 4.08). References to motherhood were minimal in the Swinson dataset; however, *The Herald* journalist Mark Smith provides an explicit example of how motherhood is represented in a feature article. Smith's article was published in the first week of the election and was an introduction to Swinson, listing her age, family circumstances, hometown, education, and political presentation. Many of the points Smith referenced were expected due to the article's structure and topic. However, what was most interesting from the text was Smith's description of Swinson's role as a mother. He wrote:

> "Even so, it remains a tougher job for women, especially those who have a young family. Long and unpredictable hours make even the most careerist or conscientious feel pangs of maternal guilt. Should Swinson become Prime Minister, she will be the first leader to step into Number 10 as the mother of a toddler and primary school age child. To date, such a scenario is the stuff of the Danish TV series Borgen, not British reality. From what I have seen of this indefatigable and steely 39-year-old, however, I have no doubt she would take that in her stride" (Smith, 2019, p.15).

Smith begins the paragraph by assigning the caretaker role to women. He adds that mothers focusing on their careers may experience "maternal guilt" for not prioritising their families. The text exemplifies the double bind placed on women to choose between motherhood or a career, known as the Womb/Brain double bind. In Kathleen Jamieson's book, she described how this double bind implied women cannot exercise the brain and the womb simultaneously, forcing women to choose (1995:55). Smith then explains that Swinson would be the first Prime Minister with "a toddler and primary school age child", reminding readers of her domestic duties at home. He compares this occurrence to the Danish TV series *Borgen*, highlighting the unbelievable probability of this scenario happening in UK politics. The text in this paragraph was a fascinating example of how female politicians with young children are still portrayed as the primary caregivers in the home, regardless of their career. Importantly, these examples demonstrate how personal and private information about Swinson could have contributed to the gendering coverage she received, creating obstacles

that did not burden her political counterparts. This is particularly evident when considering that the age or domestic circumstances of Sturgeon or Foster were not used to describe either politician.

Conclusion

This chapter provided the key findings for the newspaper dataset by demonstrating how these three political women were represented in election coverage. I discovered that female politicians continue to receive gendering coverage within the press. The Swinson newspaper dataset demonstrated this finding best due to publications objectifying, and at times sexualising, her clothing, physical features, and mannerisms. The news media's portrayal of Swinson is consistent with previous studies that have revealed a female politician's representation in the media can often objectify her physical appearance and characteristics, negatively impacting her position in the political sphere.

Swinson may have experienced more trivialising news coverage than her female counterparts due to her age and limited experience as a party leader. Furthermore, Swinson's earlier campaign remarks about her ability to become the next Prime Minister and her desire to stop Brexit were not well received by voters and political commentators. This led to reports that she was foolish or too inexperienced for the role of party leader. However, as I continued to examine the other women in this thesis, my data complicated what earlier scholars discovered about the media representation of female politicians and, instead, aligned with recent literature. I uncovered fewer examples of gendering coverage in the Sturgeon and Foster datasets, which could have been due to their extensive political experience. Additionally, I found instances when male politicians were mocked and undermined, contrary to a simplified view that female politicians are trivialised more than men. The exploration of these findings suggests that the election coverage of female politicians is not as simplistic as earlier scholarship once suggested, and multiple factors must be considered when examining a politician's election coverage.

Nonetheless, this marginal finding does not suggest that gender is irrelevant to the newspaper dataset, nor should the instances when these female leaders were subjected to gendered reporting be overlooked. Male politicians continue to be consistent and prevalent figures of political reporting, regardless of their position in government. If the news media continuously situates female politicians alongside multiple men and presents politics as a male-dominated space, it reinforces the idea that politics is masculine, regardless of women's leadership roles in government.

Chapter 5. The Self-Presentation of Female Politicians on Twitter during the 2019 UK General Election

This chapter will present the findings of the qualitative and quantitative analysis for the Twitter accounts of Nicola Sturgeon, Jo Swinson, and Arlene Foster. My Twitter corpus includes 766 posts: 197 original tweets, 100 quote tweets, and 469 retweets. There were 900 pieces of visual content included in my dataset, either in the form of a photo, video, weblink, and GIFs or graphic. All original tweets, quote tweets, retweets and visual content were coded. However, there were specific categories where retweets were not coded, and I will indicate those instances throughout this chapter. Refer to the methodology chapter for more information on the data collection process.

Sturgeon was by far the most prolific Twitter user, posting content more regularly than Swinson or Foster (Table 5.09). Most of Sturgeon's posts were retweets, similar to Foster's account. However, Foster utilised Twitter far less than either Sturgeon or Swinson. Swinson's Twitter account displayed a mix of original tweets and retweets at similar frequencies, highlighting the diversity of tweet styles on her profile. Throughout the election all three women utilised their Twitter accounts differently to present themselves, promote their political parties, and dismiss their opponents. I will present the deviations between their accounts by reviewing the topics they discussed, the male or female politicians they referred to, references to their private life, tonal sentiment, the language they utilised and visual content added to their posts.

	Nicola Sturgeon	Jo Swinson	Arlene Foster
Tweets	60 (14.5%)	120 (44.4%)	19 (23%)
Quote Tweets	56 (13.5%)	39 (14.4%)	4 (5%)
Retweets	298 (72%)	111 (41.1%)	60 (72%)
Total Number of Tweets	414	270	83

Table 5.09. The table shows the amounts and percentages for original tweets, quote tweets, and retweets each politician posted during the election. Percentage= total number of tweet type/total number of each politician's tweets.

Topics

I codified all topics posted on each politician's account to capture the content they were discussing online. There were 24 topics included in my coding framework and all original tweets, quote tweets, and retweets were examined in this category. I specifically included

retweets for this section of the analysis because they are a part of the politician's Twitter profile. A politician retweeting a specific topic shows them engaging in a form of alignment and participating in a "speech act that can only be performed online" (Marsili, 2020:3). The amount and percentages of 15 topics that appeared most often on the Twitter accounts of these political women are shown in Table 5.10. I noticed a common trend in the topics that Sturgeon and Swinson tweeted or retweeted as I analysed their profiles. In comparison, the majority of Foster's original tweets or quote tweets were about campaign stops, commentary, promotions, and non-election tweets or engagements and there was more topic variety within her retweets. Nine topics which did not reach more than 2% for any of their Twitter accounts were removed from the chart: Defence/Military, Crime and Law/Order, Austerity, Immigration, Employment, Corruption/Scandal/Scrutiny, Taxation, Unionism, and Other. I had anticipated that these nine topics would have a greater presence on each politician's Twitter account due to the policies and manifesto pledges of each female politician's party; however, that was not the case.

	Nicola Sturgeon	Jo Swinson	Arlene Foster
Electoral Process	14 (3.4%)	8 (3%)	1 (1.2%)
Campaign Commentary	37 (8.9%)	45 (16.7%)	7 (8.4%)
Brexit	9 (2.2%)	37 (13.7%)	0 (0.0%)
Economy/Business/Trade	4 (0.9%)	7 (2.6%)	1 (1.2%)
Healthcare	8 (1.9%)	14 (5.2%)	5 (6%)
Environment	8 (1.9%)	18 (6.7%)	1 (1.2%)
Public Services	1 (0.2%)	21 (7.8%	1 (1.2%)
Education	4 (0.9%)	5 (1.9%)	2 (2.4%)
Scottish Independence/Devolution	7 (1.7%)	1 (0.4%)	0 (0.0%)
Stormont/Northern Irish Assembly	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (3.6%)
Debates	18 (4.3%)	15 (5.6%)	1 (1.2%)
Campaign Promotions	102 (24.6%)	41 (15.2%)	17 (21%)
Campaign Stop	103 (24.9%)	26 (9.6%)	13 (15.7%)
Non-election Tweets	36 (8.7%)	18 (6.7%)	22 (26.5%)
Non-election Engagements	43 (10.4%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (8.4%)

Table 5.10. The table shows the amounts and percentages of the topics that appeared on the Twitter accounts of each politician. Nine topics have been removed because they did not reach more than 2% for any account. Percentage=topic/total number of each politician's tweets.

My analysis of these three politicians' Twitter accounts uncovered that they frequently posted about campaigning rather than specific election topics. Campaign Promotions were tweets politicians used to promote themselves, their party, or party members, such as: "Polls are now

open in #GE19. Vote @theSNP to lock Tories out, escape Brexit and put Scotland's future in Scotland's hands" (Sturgeon, 2019s). Campaign Stop referred to a place or an event these female leaders or party members attended, such as, "Great #GE19 visits with @AlynSmith in Stirling today to @PerthshirePrese and @bOunceT_OT -thanks to all for the lovely welcome" (Sturgeon, 2019h). During the election, Campaign Promotions and Campaign Stop were the most frequently discussed topics on Sturgeon's Twitter but she also commented on issues like Brexit, the NHS, and climate change. Although these topics appeared in fewer posts on her account, including issues that affected the entirety of the UK allowed Sturgeon to reassert herself in the UK-wide election agenda effectively.

Swinson's most frequent Twitter topic was Campaign Commentary. Tweets were coded as Campaign Commentary when a post by a celebrity, politician, or news outlet supported or commented on information about a politician, their political record, or political party. Swinson presented herself as a better alternative to Boris Johnson and Jeremy Corbyn from the early weeks of the election and utilised her Twitter account to discuss the failings of her major party opponents. For example, in a quote tweet about Johnson, she stated, "He was sacked twice for lying. So when he says he has never lied, he's literally lying" (Swinson, 2019g).

As a Scottish MP in Westminster, Swinson was campaigning in the entirety of the UK, discussing UK-wide issues during the election. Therefore, it was unsurprising to find Swinson discussing her concerns for Brexit and the UK's place in the EU, yet she received critical media coverage throughout the election due to her absence in her East Dunbartonshire constituency (Ferguson, 2019). Swinson did not share posts about her constituency until the final weeks of the election. Compared to Sturgeon, there are obvious differences in the political strategies both Scottish politicians utilised during the election. In one tweet, Swinson wrote, "Since being re-elected in 2017, I have knocked on countless doors to listen to what people in East Dunbartonshire think. #EastDunbartonshire #GE2019" (Swinson, 2019l). The tweet was accompanied by an image of her speaking to a voter on their doorstep which showed Swinson in the foreground, while only the resident's back was visible as the photo was taken from behind her shoulders. It is worth noting that the picture was a professional image taken by a media agency and lacked personalisation. Swinson's absence in her constituency was a flaw her SNP opponent, Amy Callaghan, who later won the seat from Swinson, capitalised on while campaigning.

Tweet 5.01. Arlene Foster tweeted about the DUP delivering funds to the NHS on November 14, 2019.

Foster's Twitter content was far less focused on the election than Sturgeon or Swinson's accounts. Non-election tweets comprised more than a quarter of her content during this period, varying from Northern Irish sports and national pride to more explicitly political tweets about the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Foster used her account to promote Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) candidates at campaign stops. However, unlike Sturgeon and Swinson, this was predominantly during the final weeks of the election. Foster's post that referenced the general election primarily discussed Northern Irish concerns affecting the country, such as the immobility of Stormont or the NHS (See Tweet 5.01). She did not comment on the broader issues affecting the UK or lend her support to any candidates running for Prime Minister.

Additional Politicians

I determined the gender of the other politicians included in Sturgeon, Swinson, and Foster's original tweets and quote tweets. Retweets were not coded for this portion of the analysis because I was examining the instances additional politicians were mentioned by name or tagged in a tweet composed by these political women. Sturgeon engaged with various party candidates and international politicians. It was unsurprising to find there was a total of 20 male and 18 female SNP candidates to appear in her account since Sturgeon attended multiple campaign stops and often promoted her party. Sturgeon's inclusion of prominent politicians from foreign governments set her apart from Swinson and Foster. She included two female leaders who were leading their respective countries during this time, New Zealand PM Jacinda Ardern and Finland PM Sanna Marin.

Sturgeon's inclusion of these women was used to present herself as a progressive female politician by interacting with other progressive women who promoted the same political message. These specific posts put Sturgeon and Scotland on the world stage alongside internationally recognised and open-minded female politicians. In one such example, she quote tweeted Sky News' tweet stating, ""Ms Marin, from the dominant Social Democrats, will head a centre-left coalition of five parties - all of which are led by women"- good luck to Finland's new PM and government" (Sturgeon, 2019o). Sturgeon also posted about her attendance at the British-Irish Council summit, where she met with Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and First Minister of Wales Mark Drakeford to discuss shared interests. As the head of a devolved government, this type of political engagement was expected to be covered on Sturgeon's Twitter account.

In relation to the election, Sturgeon made references to politicians in the UK. She mentioned or tagged Johnson 19 times and, on one occasion, included Corbyn and Nigel Farage, the Brexit Party leader, each in a single tweet. I had anticipated Sturgeon would comment on the Scottish leaders of the major and minor parties and their political campaigns, such as serving Leader of the Scottish Conservative Party, Jackson Carlaw, Leader of the Scottish Labour Party, Richard Leonard, and Leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats Willie Rennie. I expected this outcome due to her position as First Minister of Scotland and Leader of the Scottish National Party; however, she did not comment on any of them.

In contrast, Swinson used her platform to focus on opposing party leaders running against her. Swinson exceeded Sturgeon's references of major party candidates by mentioning or tagging Johnson 31 times and Corbyn 15 times. Swinson only posted about additional parties when she quote tweeted the United to Remain (@unitetoremain) account in reference to the Remain Alliance with the Green Party and Plaid Cymru. Swinson primarily focused her posts on party opponents, like Sajid Javid, Chancellor of the Exchequer, who she included in a quote tweet pictured below (See Tweet 5.02). Swinson used sarcastic language to mock Javid and ensure her followers would understand the irony of her word choice.

Tweet 5.02. Jo Swinson quote tweeted a sarcastic response to Sajid Javid's statement on December 5, 2019.

Swinson also included politicians from foreign governments in her tweets, such as then US President Donald Trump. She tweeted or posted visual content about Trump five times while retweeting two additional tweets that mentioned him. Interestingly, Swinson does not promote Liberal Democrat party candidates as frequently as Sturgeon or Foster promoted their party candidates. She only tagged one other Liberal Democrat MP, Rob Castell, who was not seeking re-election in Beaconsfield. Castell appeared on *BBC Radio Sussex* with Labour Councillor for Wish, Bella Sankey, and Joe Miller, Conservative candidate for Brighton Kemptown. All three politicians competed in a rap battle and rapped lyrics that supported their parties. Swinson quote tweeted *BBC Radio Sussex's* post of the rap battle and tagged Castell when she praised him for his performance (Swinson, 2019m). Swinson quote tweeting the media outlet rather than Castell in this instance aligns with her pattern of engaging with media organisations rather than members of her party on Twitter.

Foster was the outlier, as she did not engage with additional politicians as often as Sturgeon or Swinson. Foster does not reference any opposing party leaders on her Twitter account, which was particularly interesting due to the commentary she made to the press about Johnson and Corbyn. Foster made a statement to the news media that Johnson had "betrayed Unionist voters in Northern Ireland" (O'Carroll, 2019) over the EU deal that would introduce trade barriers down the Irish Sea. The article suggested this was a contradiction to the personal promise he made a year ago. Foster received national news coverage for her comment, yet she never addressed her statement about the Prime Minister on her Twitter account.

In addition, Foster commented in the press on her disdain for Corbyn and willingness to work with the Labour Party if he was not the leader (*The Daily Mirror*, 2019a, p.9), but she never addressed her statement on Twitter. Instead, she retweeted DUP politician Little-Pengelly who attacked the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) for suggesting they would support Corbyn and his party (Little-Pengelly, 2019). Foster primarily focused her tweets on same party candidates and promoting their campaigns. She mentioned or tagged seven male and five female DUP candidates on her account. In the marginal instances when Foster tweeted about opposing or prominent politicians, they were often conservative unionist politicians or heads of government she referenced during Remembrance Sunday.

Retweets
As a part of my analysis, I examined the accounts these political women retweeted during the election and found a clear variation among the content politicians retweeted. It is important to

note that retweets are considered a "redistribution" of information to a wider audience (Engelmann et al., 2019:3572). It has been argued whether retweets are considered endorsements, with some users attempting to make this separation between tweets and retweets by adding a notice to their profiles that retweets are not endorsements. Notably, this statement was not added to the profiles of Sturgeon, Swinson, and Foster at the time of the election.

According to previous work, "there is no consensus regarding the interpretation of a retweet", yet researchers have suggested that people tend only to spread content that aligns with their views (Guerrero-Solé, 2018:2). I had anticipated these politicians would retweet women more than men, especially since Sturgeon and Swinson presented as progressive female leaders. However, Sturgeon retweeted more men (37% of all retweets, n=111) than women (31%,n=92), possibly due to the 31 men who were standing as SNP candidates compared to 18 women (Davidson, 2019c). Her remaining retweets were often from members of the SNP Communications team or the SNP Twitter account. She also retweeted businesses and media outlets that posted about her election appearances and campaign stops. It is worth noting that she retweeted Scottish media 22 times and London-based news outlets 38 times without showing any particular preference for one news organisation over another.

Sturgeon's retweets included content that supported her image as a relatable, progressive leader who identifies as Scottish. In other examples, Sturgeon emphasised her national belonging and pride for Scotland when she retweeted the Scotland National Team after the women's football team beat Albania or when she retweeted Susan Aitken, Leader of Glasgow City Council, who posted about Glasgow's ranking as a "cultural and creative 'centre' of the UK" (Aitken, 2019). At times, Sturgeon retweeted organisations or journalists who posted about her personal interests. For example, she retweeted Tom Gatti, an executive editor for *The News Statesman*, who tweeted an article about the books of the year. Sturgeon retweeting this content aligned with one of her interests, in this case reading, which she regularly mentioned to her followers. Sturgeon's inclusion of personal interests, evoking a sense of pride for Scotland, and promoting SNP politicians were prevalent themes that reappeared consistently on her account. In later sections of this chapter, I will review more tweets that exemplify how she presented her personal interest and evoked national belonging on her profile.

Foster also retweeted more men than women. She retweeted 24 men (40% of all retweets) and 13 women (21.7% of all retweets), who were predominately DUP candidates. Male candidates outnumbered female candidates, with 15 men and only two women running for election (*BBC News*, 2019a). Instead, Foster's retweets of DUP politicians reinforced her pro-union message or attacked party opponents like Sinn Féin. For example, Foster retweeted DUP candidate for Upper Bann Clara Lockhart, who posted a photo of John O'Dowd's campaign sign covering a World War II memorial. In the tweet, Lockhart said:

> "Shameful desecration of the war memorial in Lurgan by those who offer nothing and want to create tension. This commemorates British and Irish men who gave their lives to allow us the freedoms we enjoy today. Is this an insight into the shared future we keep hearing about?" (Lockhart, 2019).

Remembrance Sunday is connected to the values and traditions of the DUP, whose main objective is to preserve unionism in Northern Ireland. Any desecration of a war memorial would be against the DUP's beliefs, while the language utilised in her tweet hinted towards the long-standing conflict between DUP unionists and Sinn Féin nationalists. As well as retweeting DUP candidates and the DUP Twitter account, Foster also retweeted Northern Irish news accounts such as the *Belfast Telegraph*, UTV, or *BBC Talkback* specifically when they reported on DUP candidates or policies.

Unlike her female counterparts, Swinson did not promote other Liberal Democrat candidates. Notably, there were 600 Liberal Democrat candidates running for election, of which 171 were women (McDonald, 2019). Swinson only retweeted her party candidates on eight occasions. Instead, Swinson typically retweeted accounts affiliated with the Liberal Democrat party and news outlets that covered her campaign or party policies. She retweeted women 18 times (16.2% of all retweets) and men 19 times (17.1% of all retweets) who were predominantly journalists, editors, or TV presenters. Swinson only retweeted London-based news accounts, such as *BBC Politics* or *The Guardian*, which she did on 22 occasions (20% of all her retweets) and she often retweeted media that was more politically liberal, apart from one occasion when she retweeted *The Evening Standard*, a conservative tabloid.

Images
Researchers have argued that social media images "play a pivotal role" in capturing the "platform's vernacular" and emphasises the "visual intelligence" an image holds within a

"cultural context" (Pearce et al., 2018:165 *also see* DeLuca, 2006; Stafford, 1998). Therefore, all forms of visual content in original tweets, quote tweets, and retweets for each politician were coded for this portion of the analysis. I coded these visual elements in all posts because this content was redistributed to Twitter followers by the politicians, and many of these shared visual elements included these political women or election-related events. I discovered that Sturgeon was the only politician who posted a substantial number of images strategically used to appeal to her followers (See Figure 5.06). After examining her original tweets, quote tweets, and retweets, I found a total of 421 images. Multiple photos were often added to one tweet showcasing the political events Sturgeon attended. She was pictured participating in activities on the campaign trail, such as taking a selfie or speaking to the public which importantly, these activities enabled voters to view Sturgeon as an accessible political figure.
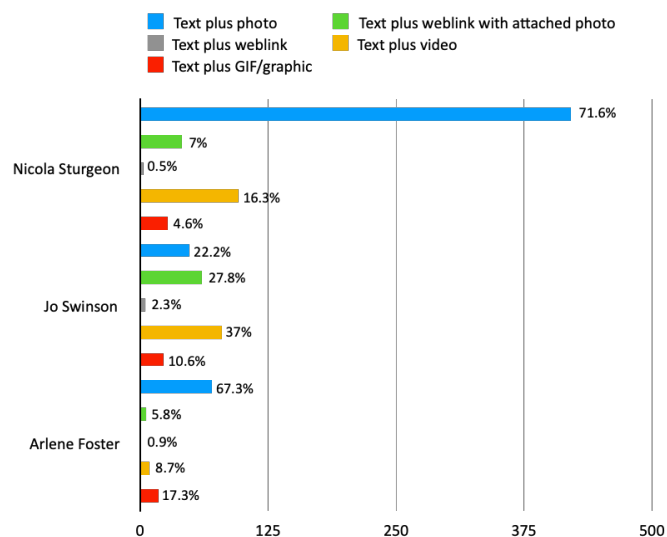
Figure 5.06. The figure shows the amounts and percentages of visual elements each politician posted. These findings were gathered from original tweets, quote tweets, and retweets for each politician. Percentage=number of visual elements for one category/total number of all visual elements for the politician.

Photos were an important social media tool Sturgeon used when presenting herself on Twitter. Meeks highlights that politicians who incorporate photos on their Twitter accounts present themselves as "more authentic in their personalisation and interactive efforts" (2016:305). Twitter conducted their own analysis and found a "35% increase in retweets for tweets with photos versus tweets without photos" (Meek, 2016:306 *also see* Rogers, 2014). Of all three politicians, 71.6% of the posts on Sturgeon's account included an image, giving followers more detail about her public role and personal interests. Sturgeon was the only politician who shared images of her personal interest or family members.

Tweet 5.03. Nicola Sturgeon retweeted her husband, Peter Murrell on December 12, 2019.

These images of Sturgeon's private life and personal interests enabled followers to view her in a more personalised way. For example, on nine occasions, Sturgeon posted photos of her bookshelf and the books she was reading; in three instances, she retweeted a picture of herself and her husband, Peter Murrell, on polling day (See Tweet 5.03); and twice she retweeted an image of her mother, Joan Sturgeon, at a campaign stop (Robertson, 2019). Sturgeon is engaging in expected election activities in these three examples, however, by including her family members in both events, she appears more relatable to her Twitter followers. According to prior literature, what was once private for those occupying public office has now become the most "relevant basis for judgement" to discern if a person is suitable for the role (Renshon, 1992:567 *also see* Wojdynski and Riffe, 2011:207).

Another feature of the images on Sturgeon's profile was the varied photo quality. Some images were taken by a professional, while others seemed like impromptu pictures or captured by a camera phone. Sturgeon often added multiple photos to a single post that lacked professional staging or had a cluttered background. She included this same informality in her Twitter profile picture by opting for a close-up photo of herself from an event rather than a professional headshot. The tweet below of her campaign stop at Aberdeen, Kemnay, and Inverurie exemplifies Sturgeon's staged informality she displayed on her profile (See Tweet 5.04).

Tweet 5.04. Nicola Sturgeon tweeted about a campaign stop on December 7, 2019.

All the images in the tweet appeared as an impromptu photo opportunity that was not taken by a professional photographer. Sturgeon is either participating in an activity or engaging with voters. Noticeably, she appears to be smiling or laughing with the public in each image. This informality presented within the pictures above was also demonstrated with her language choices such as "fun day" or "fantastic", which is more colloquial, and a style of daily rhetoric the general public would ordinarily use. The combination of Sturgeon's joyful appearance and casual language reinforced her approachable self-presentation. In the tweet, Sturgeon also tagged four SNP politicians as part of her campaigning efforts to support them and used hashtags such as #VoteSNP or #GE19 to increase her engagement with Twitter users and SNP supporters. Interestingly, the only politician she did not tag was Boris Johnson, and thus deliberately reduced her engagement with him, nor did she draw attention to his name.

One intriguing element of Sturgeon's profile was the presence of children or young people in campaign photos. Specifically, out of all the images shared, 91 photos (representing 22% of the total number of images), three videos, and three weblinks with an attached photo showcased Sturgeon interacting with children or young people. The images of Sturgeon with children or young people were often close-up shots or selfies that captured her holding a baby or interacting with a child. Children are a part of the "daily experiences for many voters, and as a result, can be symbolically powerful" (Sherr, 1999:47) in the political world. For example, children have become more of a deliberate "campaign prop" when conveying a certain message about the candidate or their opponent and a "tool to appeal to rational and emotional audiences" (Scandura, 2018:5,8).

Tweet 5.05. Nicola Sturgeon quote tweeted about a campaign stop on December 9, 2019.

The tweet above exemplifies Sturgeon's interaction with children at a nursery in Rutherglen (See Tweet 5.05). Sturgeon maintained a staged informality in the quality of her photo selection. In the tweet, she was seen sitting close to the children, and making Christmas crafts together. Sturgeon maintained her focus on the children and did not look directly at the camera. She was wearing a red Santa hat, despite her formal clothing, and was positioned in the centre of both photos, which drew attention to her interaction with the children. These photos gave followers another close-up view of her campaign behaviour, while her inclusion of a Santa Clause emoji showed her awareness of the platform's features. The images and emoji within the post generated a sense of charisma that aligned with Sturgeon's self-presentation.

In contrast, Swinson, posted just seven images (2.6% of all her shared images) with children or young people, along with two videos and four weblinks with an attached photo. Swinson's account featured photos of her interacting with children at a primary school or day care, assisting them with their classwork or playing games together. It was clear that these images were taken by a media agency, similar to other photos on her account. Foster shared only one such image of her holding a baby and standing with a member of the public (1.2% of all her shared images). The picture was not taken by a professional photographer.

Foster incorporated a similar style to Sturgeon by including images on her profile which were informal. However, unlike Sturgeon, Foster did not post images about her personal interests or private life. Instead, she concentrated on her public-facing role and political party. For example, Foster tweeted images of herself performing tasks expected of politicians, such as speaking to constituents, giving a speech, or canvassing. However, these images regularly lacked any formal

staging and were not taken by a professional photographer. Only her profile picture looked like a professional headshot staged for her account.

Tweet 5.06. Arlene Foster supported Emma Little-Pengelly at a campaign stop on December 12, 2019.

It is worth mentioning that Foster's profile featured images that endorsed DUP and unionist ideals, much like the content of her tweets and retweets. In the tweet above, Foster was campaigning for DUP politician, Emma Little-Pengelly and similar to other photos on her account, the picture was blurry, poorly lit, and had a cluttered background. As a result, it looked like it was taken in the spur of the moment. In the photo, Foster can be seen wearing a Union Jack flag scarf which correlated with her direct plea to pro-union voters in the text. Interestingly, her appearance in the scarf was also mentioned in *The Guardian*, "Arlene Foster, the leader of the Democratic Unionist party, wore a Union Jack flag scarf to cast her vote" (Addley, 2019). Foster's choice to wear blue and red clothing or a Union Jack scarf demonstrated her strong commitment to unionism and how she used her appearance to reinforce her pro-union stance.

Swinson used her image selection to highlight her public-facing persona on her account. However, she posted professional photos that appeared more posed and did not post images depicting her engagement with the general public like Sturgeon did on her account. Instead, Swinson included more weblinks of news reports or staged videos and images of her campaigning or commenting on her opponents. She maintained a visible formality, even in her profile picture, using a professional photo rather than a personal image. The photo below exemplifies how Swinson maintained a staged appearance on her account (See Tweet 5.07). In the picture, she is conversing with a staff member at Bridge House Care Centre. However, the photo appears more posed than an intimate view of one of her campaign stops. Swinson is in

the foreground while only the back of the staff member is visible. Swinson becomes the focus of the image due to her bright clothing and the position of each individual in the picture.

Tweet 5.07. Jo Swinson tweeted about a campaign stop on December 3, 2019.

Tone

Researchers have acknowledged the importance of tone in political campaigns and the effects negative messaging can have on the voting body (Brie and Dufresne, 2018:499). According to Herrnson and Lucas (2006:69), gender stereotypes can influence how men and women shape their media tactics and choose their campaign topics to gain more votes. I determined that Sturgeon, Swinson, and Foster predominantly composed media messages that were supportive/positive. My thesis analysed the tone of original tweets and quote tweets but excluded retweets because the author of the retweet was not one of the political women in this study. I found eight occasions when Sturgeon used critical/negative tonal sentiment to criticise policies or politicians, primarily Johnson. Otherwise, Sturgeon's tweets were predominantly supportive/positive in their tonal sentiment which was unsurprising as they centred around SNP candidates and campaign stops. Sturgeon used informal language such as "star performer" (Sturgeon, 2019n) or "fab candidate" (Sturgeon, 2019p) to express her approval. As seen in Tweet 5.04, Sturgeon's informal language was a regular practice she employed to present herself as an approachable politician.
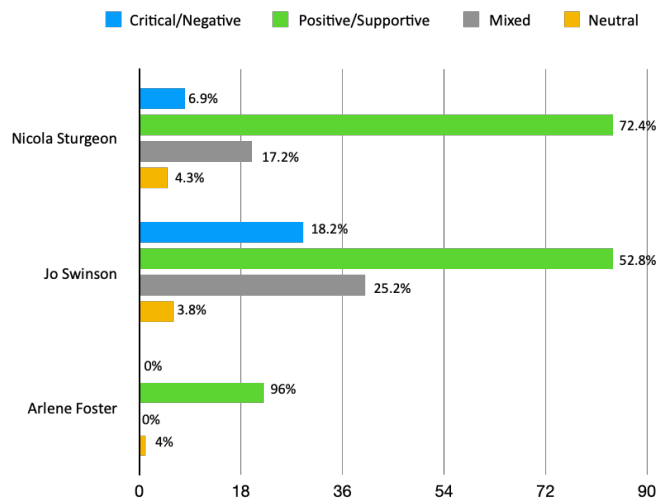
Figure 5.07. This figure shows the tone each politician used on their Twitter account. Percentage=tone of tweet/total number of each politician's tweets and quote tweets.

Foster maintained a supportive/positive tonal sentiment on her Twitter account throughout the election. None of her tweets were critical/negative or mixed towards a politician or policy. However, Foster did post one neutral tweet stating:

> "#WeWillRememberThem In remembrance of those who gave their today for our tomorrow, I will lay a wreath in Enniskillen this morning alongside Prime Minister @LeoVaradkar and Northern Ireland Secretary of State @JulianSmithUK #RemembranceSunday" (Foster, 2019b).

Foster's tweet about Remembrance Sunday captured the political ritual members of government take part in as "coordinated social interactions" (Marx, 2019:314). Remembrance Sunday has become a habitual event intended to "commemorate the human costs of participation in war", linking this history to the traditions and rhetoric of the DUP (Haight et al., 2021:36).

The majority of Swinson's tweets were also positive, specifically when she promoted Liberal Democrat policies or her campaign, but she did post a substantial number of critical/negative tweets, totalling 29 out of 159 (18.2%). Similar to Sturgeon, Swinson's critical/negative tweets predominantly attacked Johnson. The tweet below exemplifies how Swinson used negative campaign messaging to critique her party opponents (See Tweet 5.08).

Tweet 5.08. Jo Swinson tweeted about Boris Johnson on December 10, 2019.

The post includes an article from *The Independent* discussing how Johnson misled voters over the impact of the Brexit deal in Northern Ireland. In her text, Swinson is highly critical of Johnson by suggesting he is "dangerous" and a "treacherous villain" and makes a direct plea to her followers to stop Brexit and Johnson with the use of "#StopBoris" or "#StopBrexit". Swinson's word choices mirrored the photo attached to the weblink. In the image, Johnson appeared to be creeping from the edge of the image and casting a shadow which supported Swinson's description of Johnson as villainous.

In another such example, Swinson commented on *The Johnson V Corbyn: The ITV Debate*, criticising her exclusion from the debate and the performance of her opponents while promoting her party and campaign message. It had been expected that Swinson would comment on the debate, especially since she disagreed with her exclusion. She wrote:

> "The voice of Remain was shut out of #ITVDebate tonight. You heard nothing new from two backwards looking parties, both of whom want to deliver Brexit. You can choose differently. On 12 December, vote Liberal Democrat to stop Brexit and build a brighter future". (Swinson, 2019d)

The text was accompanied by a video of Swinson reiterating a similar message. She was wearing a bright magenta dress and standing in front of a yellow background with the Liberal Democrat party logo positioned to her right. Swinson used this opportunity to emphasise her party as the voice of Remain and continued critiquing the Conservative and Labour party

policies. There is an incentive for politicians to be negative in their campaign messaging since negativity attracts more attention (Brie and Dufresne, 2018:497) In a prior study by Evans and Clark, they found the tweets of female politicians consisted of more negative "attack-style" messaging and discussion about "policy issues" than their male counterparts (2016:327). Female politicians engaging in negative campaigning counters "gender stereotypes because negative campaigning is perceived as an aggressive tactic", and women are traditionally not associated with this type of behaviour (Evans and Clark, 2016:333).

Swinson broke gendered stereotypes by being verbally assertive about her political message and acknowledging that Johnson was a danger the UK could not afford. An interesting point of comparison was how Swinson utilised reports of Johnson's Northern Irish Brexit deal to comment on his incompetence, which, as noted above, Foster never discussed on her Twitter account. Swinson constantly took advantage of negative reporting about her opponents to expose their lack of qualifications while presenting herself as the better alternative to the major party leaders. However, prior studies have suggested that "women that initiate in aggressive and forceful attacks are viewed as unfeminine, shrill, and vicious" (Wadsworth et al., 1987:115 *also see* Kahn and Gordon, 1997:64), which interestingly paralleled the criticism Swinson received from newspapers.

In addition to negatively attacking their opponents, Sturgeon and Swinson used mixed tonal sentiment to highlight the faults of opposition parties while arguing how their parties would provide better solutions. Humour was a critical aspect of mixed tonal sentiment that was coded in this analysis. Online political humour can be used to "persuade people to identify with a particular politician or ridiculing an opponent" (Shifman et al., 2007:467 *also see* Speier 1998; Yarwood, 2001). A tweet was coded mixed tone when a politician mocked an opponent because it showed a positive evaluation of the politician using humour and a negative evaluation of the politician that the response was directed towards. Sturgeon posted 20 mixed tweets, with six negatively evaluating either Johnson or Corbyn. For example, she used humour responses towards Johnson, twice tweeting the emoji " 🐥 " to suggest he was a chicken for not attending an interview with journalist Andrew Neil or the BBC leaders debate (Sturgeon, 2019k; Sturgeon, 2019l). Additionally, she also quote tweeted the SNP's post that called Johnson "too much of a feartie to debate Nicola Sturgeon", which reemphasised her criticism of Johnson (See Tweet 5.09). Sturgeon quote tweeting the SNP party account with an emoji exemplified the humour and informality she included as a part of her self-presentation. The humour in the

retweet was directed towards a Scottish audience due to the text emphasising a need for Scottish Independence and the use of the Scottish colloquialism, "feartie" which conveys a casual and familiar tone in Sturgeon's self-presentation. This use of colloquial language helps to establish a sense of closeness by incorporating "informal and conversational" elements, according to Nordquist (2019).

Tweet 5.09. Nicola Sturgeon quote tweeted the Scottish National Party's official Twitter account about Boris Johnson on November 19, 2019.

The visual element in the retweet shows a confident Sturgeon ready to debate an absent Johnson. Sturgeon is outlined in bold and standing at the podium wearing a bright pink jacket that draws the viewer's attention, while Johnson's place on stage is filled with a puff of smoke. The puff of smoke in place of Johnson aligns with the SNP's use of the phrases "feartie" and "he's running scared" because it suggests Johnson is too cowardly to debate Sturgeon. Additionally, Sturgeon is smiling and leaning against the podium in a relaxed position, which was a pose seen during the televised election debates. The tweet focused on Sturgeon, enabling her to stand out visually from her opponent and emphasised the message that the SNP wanted to convey about Johnson's shortcomings. Each element of the tweet contributed to this critical message and urged people to vote for the SNP as the better option.

Swinson also utilised a mixed tone to highlight the failings of Corbyn and Johnson while promoting the Liberal Democrats' strengths. In the Swinson dataset, nine tweets about Corbyn and 15 about Johnson were coded as mixed tone. The language in these tweets was sarcastic, which is described by Fairclough as "conversationalisation" (2010:98). This style of language is

exemplified in her quote tweet when she stated, "What on *earth* will people who don't want Boris Johnson and Jeremy Corbyn do? 🤷‍♀️" (Swinson, 2019a). Noticeably, both politicians used emojis to highlight the humour and mocking tone of their tweets. Emojis are "picture characters" (Pavalanathan and Eisenstein, 2015:1) that can enhance the "expressivity" and "sentiment value" of text (Ayvaz and Shiha, 2017:361). Sturgeon and Swinson's use of emojis in their Twitter posts showed that they understood how to utilise digital tools and features when communicating their message online.

Explicit References to Gender and Age

One distinct aspect of Swinson's Twitter account was her references to gender and age. She was the only politician among the three women who referenced these topics. In the newspaper analysis, I determined that age became a topic of discussion in reference to Swinson's political abilities and as a descriptor. However, on her Twitter account, Swinson only acknowledged her age when historian Dan Snow called her "young" (The History Guy, 2019) in his tweet, leading her to quote tweet him in response by stating, "Very kind @thehistoryguy. I think 39 is 'politics young' rather than actual young, but I'll take it!" (Swinson, 2019e). Swinson's age became synonymous with inexperience in the press, yet she rarely challenged comments that correlated her age with naivety.

Swinson included references to gender and gendered references as a part of her self-presentation. She made seven references to gender primarily by using the hashtags #girlyswot or #DebateHer. Swinson posted tweets that included #DebateHer due to her exclusion from the *Johnson V Corbyn: The ITV Debate*, while #girlyswot was utilised to counter negative media criticism. A girly swot is a term used to describe "a diligent and clever young woman" (Green, 2019). She used #girlyswot to give the term a positive connotation as opposed to the negative way in which Johnson used it to insult former PM David Cameron (Walker, 2019). Swinson addressed the gendering coverage she received by retweeting Girlguiding, who shared an article about the "sexist coverage" and descriptions being used to describe Swinson, such as "bossy" or "head girl" (Girlguiding, 2019).

Swinson acknowledging reports about her gender and behaviour paralleled a similar tactic Hilary Clinton utilised during the 2016 US Presidential election. During the US election, Donald Trump referred to Clinton as a "nasty woman", while the press suggested her behaviour was "aggressive and inappropriate" (Cummings and Terrion, 2020:11). The media asserted that Clinton was not likeable or warm with voters by making "assessments on her nonverbal cues

and immediacy behaviours" (Cummings and Terrion, 2020:8). However, Clinton rebranded the term "nasty woman", and it became "synonymous with being a feminist or a strong, powerful, and successful woman" (Smirnova, 2018:10). Swinson also mentioned Clinton's gender by tweeting "#ImWithHer" (Swinson, 2019b) after Clinton told BBC News that Johnson should publicly release the report detailing Russia's interference in UK democracy. Notably, both Swinson's campaign strategy and media treatment mirrored Clinton's representation in 2016.

Swinson also referred to gender when mentioning UK politicians or campaign issues. For example, when she was criticising Johnson, she wrote, "This man isn't someone that our sons can look up to, that our daughters can have faith in. Boris Johnson is *not* fit to be Prime Minister" (Swinson, 2019h). Swinson's language within this tweet stressed that Johnson was not a reliable or trustworthy male political figure, making him unfit for leadership. However, she personalised this tweet with the phrase our sons and daughters, explicitly addressing parents and situating herself on their side.

Tweet 5.10. Jo Swinson quote tweeted about the Conservative Party's Brexit deal on December 7, 2019.

In a final example, Swinson made a gendered reference with her quote tweet criticising the Conservative Party's Brexit deal (See Tweet 5.10). Interestingly, Swinson's gendered reference was her acknowledgement that she was playing into gendered stereotypes by commenting on the domestic sphere. Women are often associated with "domesticity" and the private realms of the home (Kerber, 1988:11 *also see* Welter,1966) and this ideology places women "metaphorically in the nursery or the kitchen" (Jamieson, 1995:16). Swinson mentioning proper cooking practices positioned her in the private sphere and reminded her followers of the domesticity of womanhood.

Private Life and Personal Activities

I examined whether these three female politicians incorporated their personal interests and private life within their original tweets, quote tweets, and retweets to promote themselves and their political parties. Retweets were reviewed within this category to fully capture the instances when the politician's private life was visible to followers. My research discovered that Sturgeon made more references to her personal interests, while Swinson shared more posts about her private life. However, Foster maintained a formal presentation by orienting her tweets and images about the election or her public duties as DUP party leader rather than tweeting about her family or interests.

Tweet 5.11. Nicola Sturgeon tweeted a photo of her home bookshelf on November 24, 2019.

Sturgeon frequently shared her personal interests as a part of her self-presentation, giving followers a more intimate view of her hobbies and interests. For example, on 14 occasions, Sturgeon shared the activities she enjoyed and on her profile she stated "Loves 📚" to indicate her love of reading. Sturgeon's inclusion of her personal interests outside of her public-facing role was entwined with the evoking of Scotland as a nation state separate from the rest of the UK. For example, the books Sturgeon posted were often by female or Scottish authors (See Tweet 5.11). In her post below, Sturgeon responded to Danny Wallace's request to view the W section of her home bookshelf. She replied, "gives me a chance to showcase another two great Scottish writers". Sturgeon used this opportunity to promote Scottish culture and identity.

Sturgeon also utilised her profile to remind followers of her home and constituency, such as in a tweet stating, "Home in Glasgow after a fantastic #GE19 campaign" (Sturgeon, 2019r).

In another example, she mentioned her constituency in order to fulfil the role necessary of politicians during a crisis: in this case, a building that had collapsed due to a fire. In response, Sturgeon quote tweeted *Heart Scotland News'* report of the collapsed building by writing, "Dreadful news for affected residents and businesses in Pollokshields-any constituents who need assistance, please email or call my office" (Sturgeon, 2019c).

In comparison, Swinson was willing to share information about her private life on her account, albeit these posts were marginal. Women are "traditionally and stereotypically the primary caregiver" (Meeks, 2016:305), which may discourage female politicians from discussing their family life in order to avoid being confined to the private sphere. Swinson, however, made two references to her children and one about her hometown. For example, she mentioned her son, Andrew, in a tweet, "Wishing everyone a lovely St Andrew's Day! ✖ (though in our house, most days feel like Andrew's day… 😊" (Swinson, 2019i). Interestingly, Swinson's references to her private life cultivated a self-presentation that was relatable to followers, particularly to parents. Unlike Sturgeon, Swinson rarely discussed her interest, having only added to the biography section of her profile that she is a runner. Otherwise, she focused her Twitter content on the election and her role as the Liberal Democrat party leader.

Language and the Evoking of Banal Nationalism

Nationalism is seen as a "force which creates nation-states or threatens the stability of existing states" (Billig, 1995:43). Ronald Rogowski (1985 *also see* Billig, 1995:43) defined nationalism as "the striving" of individuals "for territorial autonomy, unity and independence". Billig constructed the term "banal nationalism" to illustrate the "reproduction of nationalism in existing states" (1995 *also see* Paasi, 2015:22). Politicians utilised banal nationalism in their linguistic choices because it creates "national identities that become a form of life which is lived daily in nation-states" (Billig, 1995 *also see* Paasi, 2015:22). Sturgeon used a technique Billig (1995) described as "flagging the homeland", which is "where participation in a national collective" becomes part of the "daily routines, as well as the habits of language" (*also see* Higgins, 2004:634). Through these routines and language practices, individuals can join the "inclusive us" (*also see* Higgins, 2004:634). For instance, when Sturgeon referenced her personal life, she shared aspects of her cultural and locational identity in a way that engaged national belonging. An example included her tweet stating:

"📚 I do like @Beathhigh - but just to prove there's no favouritism when it comes to brilliant Scottish writers 😂 there's lots of @valmcdermid @cbrookmyre Ali Smith, Iain Banks, Muriel Sparks etc too. @BookWeekScot #ridge" (Sturgeon, 2019j).

Sturgeon's tweet was a response to her media appearance on the *Sophy Ridge on Sunday* show. A viewer commented on the number of Ian Rankin books she had on her bookshelf and Sturgeon replied with the above post. In this example, Sturgeon utilised her Twitter to promote Scottish writers and culture while employing banal nationalism. Sturgeon provided an "everyday representation of nation-building" (Billig, 1995) by reinforcing her cultural identity through personal activities. Sturgeon used her media appearance to engage with Twitter followers rather than the television programme or presenter. She used #ridge in her tweet instead of tagging the television programme or presenter's Twitter accounts. A hashtag functions differently than tagging accounts as a way of increasing engagement with Twitter followers because the hashtag can be searched on the platform.

Sturgeon also shared information about non-election events to nation-build by representing Scotland as a sovereign state and presenting herself as the leader of a nation. For example, she posted about the UNICEF reception at the Scottish Parliament and a meeting with the National Economic Forum. Additionally, she either quote tweeted or retweeted seven times about the British-Irish Council summit. Sturgeon's post about this summit, especially her retweet of the First Minister's account, detailed her representing Scotland's interests and affirming Scotland as a nation-state with language like "represented Scotland" (ScotGovFM, 2019).

Similar to Sturgeon, Foster evoked banal nationalism in her tweets but did this in a more localised way by focusing on activities in her Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency. For example, Foster tweeted about the *BBC Breakfast* show broadcasting live from Enniskillen (See Tweet 5.12). In her post she included language that drew attention to her constituency and Northern Ireland. Foster used phrases such as "showcasing our island town" (Foster, 2019e) or #proudofNI, which she utilised on three separate occasions. In addition, Foster tagged *BBC Breakfast* in her tweet and included screenshots of the programme highlighting Enniskillen.

Tweet 5.12. Arlene Foster tweeted about her constituency's appearance on the *BBC Breakfast* show on December 3, 2019.

Foster drew attention to local landmarks and spoke directly to her constituents while encouraging a national pride for Northern Ireland. Her pride in Northern Ireland became entwined with her self-presentation enabling Foster to address residents who live in the country. Interestingly, Foster tagged *BBC Breakfast* rather than adding a hashtag like Sturgeon did in the tweet noted above and all four images clearly show the BBC logo in the top left corner of the image. The BBC is a national broadcaster and has been a permanent fixture in British media and culture for decades. Therefore, as leader of a political party that celebrates being British, Foster mentioning the BBC in a tweet was unsurprising.

Foster's tweets of her speaking to constituents, giving a speech, or canvassing consistently emphasised her pride and national identity. For example, in the tweet below, Foster posted about a speaking event she attended in her constituency to raise funds for charity (See Tweet 5.13). In the tweet, she includes the #proudofNI, abbreviates her constituency to F&ST, and mentions locations and shops that would be familiar to her constituents. Foster's clothing choices and the bunting behind her match the Union Jack flag colours and the start of the phrase "we will remember" is also seen on the wall behind Foster and the speakers. In the bottom right photo, World War II memorabilia can be seen on the walls indicating that Foster was speaking to a pro-union audience. Foster utilised both language and images to create a feeling of belonging to the union, which played a significant role in how she presented herself.

Tweet 5.13. Arlene Foster tweeted about her attendance at a local cafe on November 16, 2019.

Studies suggest that nations can provide individuals with a "sentimental attachment to their homeland" and a "motivation to gain their national identification" (Druckman, 1994:63). Within a nation, there's "unnoticed, routine flagging that reproduces the nation differently from the "hot nationalism" of warfare or, more recently, significant political or sporting events" (Bowes and Bairner, 2019:532). Popović and Bjelica note that a "national sports team may represent an entire nation and foster a sense of national pride amongst members of a given nation" (2014:32). Sturgeon and Foster both used national sport teams or sporting events to evoke a sense of pride and patriotism for one's country.

Sturgeon created feelings of national belonging by tweeting about Scottish national sports teams, such as Scotland men's national football team, when she posted, "Well done @ScotlandNT 🏴󠁧󠁢󠁳󠁣󠁴󠁿" (Sturgeon, 2019f) after their victory over Cyprus. In the post, she included the Saltire emoji, which was used as another form of national identification for Scotland. Sturgeon also retweeted the Scotland women's national football team's post of player Erin Cuthbert's post-game interview. Similar to Sturgeon, Foster engaged with sporting events, teams and individuals such as Northern Ireland's men's national football team or Carl Frampton MBE, a former professional boxer from Belfast to display her patriotism through tweets and retweets. As a result, she generated feelings of "responsibility and pride" towards the "in-group or one's country" (Mummendey et al., 2001:160). For example, she tweeted:

> "Michael O'Neill encouraged people from across NI to feel proud & passionate about our National football team. Thank you for the legacy you leave & I wish you well in this new chapter of your career. An end of an era but the memory of #Euro2016 will live long into the memory! 💚" (Foster, 2019a).

Foster created an in-group using phrases such as "people from across NI" and "our National football team". The language in this tweet creates a feeling of national pride and calls upon the shared memories of people from Northern Ireland.

Sturgeon's and Foster's linguistic choices are essential tools they use to create feelings of national identity and form in-groups and out-groups. Membership in a group leads individuals to favour that group and view other individuals as less worthy in comparison (Druckman,1994:48). Tajfel (1981,1982) advanced the "social identity theory" explaining in-group bias which states that "people's self-evaluations are shaped in part by their group memberships so that viewing their group in positive terms enhances their self-esteem" (*also see* Druckman, 1994:48). Sturgeon created these in-groups when responding to a critical comment Corbyn made about her and the SNP by writing:

> "Desperate stuff from Labour-I was in primary school in 1979. I'll never support Tories
> in power. But Labour would have big questions to answer if they give up a chance at
> the UK government in order to block Scotland's right to choose our own future"
> (Sturgeon, 2019d).

Language analysts have discovered the use of first-person pronouns is "one of the most useful tools for persuasion" (Mang-Benza and Hunberger, 2020:520 *also see* Petersoo, 2007:420). First-person pronouns can aid in the conceptualisation of group identity and coalitions (Wodak and Chilton, 2005:30 *also see* Hamed and Behnam, 2020:224). Sturgeon implemented phrases such as "our country" or "help us escape the Brexit mess and put Scotland's future in Scotland's hands" (Sturgeon, 2019a; Sturgeon, 2019b) in her text to continually promote feelings of a Scottish identity and strengthen the notion that the out-group is the Westminster political system.

Foster's use of first-person pronouns exemplified her promotion of unionist parties and candidates. She wrote, "Casting my vote for Tom Elliott in FST. I believe in unionists working together, and I believe in representation. Wishing Tom and all the DUP candidates every success today. #GE2019 🗳️ X" (Foster, 2019f). Within this example, Foster utilised local knowledge by abbreviating Fermanagh and South Tyrone to FST, which speaks to a local audience on the importance of voting for a unionist candidate. Foster continued to reinforce the importance of preserving unionism in Northern Ireland with her posts, including four critical retweets that addressed attacks carried out by the IRA during the Troubles. One retweet

from On This Day The IRA account stated, "Serving & Former Westminster MPs murdered by PIRA #Election2019 #vote2019 #GE2019" (On This Day PIRA, 2019). Interestingly, this tweet emphasised that multiple Westminster MPs were murdered while connecting the tweet to the election with hashtags. This rhetoric reminded Northern Irish voters of the importance of preserving the union and past political conflict.

Swinson also established national belonging but, rather than nation-build within the UK, she created in-groups between the British citizens that identify as European. She presented herself as an internationalist and stated in the biography section of her profile that she is Scottish, British, and European. Evoking a sense of belonging within the EU was a part of Swinson's political strategy to differentiate from the major parties. The message to stop Brexit was reiterated in the campaign slogan of her political party. As seen throughout this chapter, Swinson declared that the Liberal Democrats were the party of remain and highlighted the benefits of remaining in the European Union (EU) on her Twitter account. Swinson evoked banal nationalism with terms like "our relationship" and "our neighbours and allies", pictured below. Terms such as "neighbours and allies" create a feeling of local community, while the personal pronoun "our" generates feelings of unity amongst British citizens who identify as European. Additionally, in the quote tweet, Swinson engages with a well-known BBC journalist, Norman Smith, once again paralleling the individuals Swinson regularly reposted on her account.

Tweet 5.14) Jo Swinson quote tweeted about the Freedom of Movement on November 14, 2019.

In another example, she highlighted the damage Brexit would cause to communities across the whole of the UK by tweeting:

> "Brexit will damage the livelihoods of people, families and communities across the whole United Kingdom. Every vote for @LibDems is a vote to #StopBrexit. Together, we can build a #BrighterFuture. Join the fight to Stop Brexit now > libdems.org.uk/exit-brexit" (Swinson, 2019f).

Her emphasis on "people, families and communities across the whole United Kingdom" added a level of personalisation that her Twitter followers may have found relatable. Swinson paired this phrase with "Brexit will damage", to address the negative effects Brexit could have on British communities. However, within this tweet, Swinson suggested voting for her political party was the solution to ending Brexit turmoil with campaign slogans like #BrighterFuture or #StopBrexit and emphasised the importance of working together to remain in the EU. Swinson's rhetorical choices were used to construct a national identity that positioned the UK as an ally to the EU rather than igniting feelings of patriotism towards one's country. Her use of inclusive pronouns functioned differently from Sturgeon and Foster, who both used this language to reinforce a national identity and sense of belonging within the countries they held political positions.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided the key findings from the Twitter dataset by highlighting each female politician's distinct approach to presenting themselves online. Social media platforms are designed for sharing personal information. Therefore, politicians must determine how much personal information they want to share on their platforms. My literature review revealed that the increased use of social media has led politicians to personalise their accounts. Yet, researchers have found no distinct way female politicians use social media, as evident in my findings. Sturgeon, Swinson, and Foster each used different political strategies to present themselves and their party policies on Twitter.

Sturgeon and Foster emulated an informal presentation through text and images. However, Sturgeon's informal presentation was a part of her political strategy, while Foster's presentation was not as curated or personal. Importantly, neither female leader included information about their private life to their followers. Their reluctance to mention their domestic circumstances on Twitter could be due to the amount of online abuse female politicians experience, which has been well-documented in recent studies.

In contrast, Swinson attempted to present in a personalised and, at times, humorous style similar to Sturgeon's, but her presentation was more formal and ministerial. However, Swinson was willing to share aspects of her domestic circumstances with her followers, albeit on minimal occasions. Swinson may have mentioned her private life as a way to separate herself from her male opponents. Importantly, Swinson was the only politician in this thesis running

for re-election. Therefore, she may have felt it was necessary to differentiate and criticise her opponents more so than Sturgeon or Foster. Swinson's negative commentary about Johnson and Corbyn aligned with prior work discussed in my literature review that uncovered how female politicians use social media more often to express criticism.

Having completed the analysis for Twitter and the newspapers, it is evident how the political presentation of these three female politicians varied from their media representation. Twitter has become an important part of political participation to engage with followers on a broader platform, especially since the language, tone, and topics politicians present on Twitter can deviate from their representation in legacy media. In a later chapter of this thesis, I will look at the differences and similarities between how these political women presented themselves compared to how they were represented in the press. Before reviewing these variances, I will first discuss another relatively new form of campaign performance within the UK: televised election debates.

Chapter 6. Rethinking Gender and Debate Performances in the 2019 UK General Election

This chapter will present the findings of my televised election debate dataset compiled of seven debates: *The Channel 4 News Climate Debate, BBC Election Debate 2019, The ITV Election Debate, Britain Decides: The Everything But Brexit Debate, The STV Leaders' Debate, Question Time: 2019 Under 30s Special,* and *Scotland Leaders' Debate* (See Table 6.11). Three of these debates were broadcast on the BBC, two on Channel 4 and two on ITV/STV. Nicola Sturgeon and Jo Swinson attended five debates, while Arlene Foster was not present at any debates, including those broadcasted in Northern Ireland. My main objective was to analyse the debate performances of Sturgeon and Swinson. However, I codified all politicians on stage to enable a study of gendered interaction.

Name of Debate	Channel	Host	Participants	Date of Debate	Studio Audience
The Channel 4 News Climate Debate	Channel 4	Krishnan Guru-Murthy	N. Sturgeon *(SNP)*, J. Swinson *(Liberal Democrats)*, J. Corbyn *(Labour)*, S. Berry *(Greens)*, and A. Price *(Plaid Cymru)*	November 28th, 2019	No
BBC Election Debate 2019	BBC One	Nick Robinson	N. Sturgeon *(SNP)*, J. Swinson *(Liberal Democrats*), R. Long-Bailey *(Labour)*, R. Sunak *(Conservatives)*, R. Tice *(Brexit)*, C. Lucas *(Greens)*, and A. Price *(Plaid Cymru)*	November 29th, 2019	Yes
The ITV Election Debate	ITV	Julie Etchingham	N. Sturgeon *(SNP)*, J. Swinson *(Liberal Democrats)*, R. Burgon *(Labour)*, R. Sunak *(Conservatives)*, N. Farage *(Brexit)*, S. Berry *(Greens)*, and A. Price *(Plaid Cymru)*	December 1st, 2019	Yes
The STV Leaders' Debate	STV	Colin MacKay	N. Sturgeon *(SNP)*, W. Rennie *(Scottish Liberal Democrats)*, R. Leonard *(Scottish Labour)*, and J. Carlaw *(Scottish Conservatives)*	December 3rd, 2019	No
Britain Decides: The Everything But Brexit Debate	Channel 4	Cathy Newman	P. Whitford *(SNP)*, J. Swinson *(Liberal Democrats)*, A. Rayner *(Labour)*, J. Bartley *(Greens)*, and A. Price *(Plaid Cymru)*	December 8th, 2019	Yes
Question Time: 2019 Under 30s Special	BBC One	Emma Barnett	H. Yousaf *(SNP)*, J. Swinson *(Liberal Democrats)*, A. Rayner *(Labour)*, R. Jenrick *(Conservatives)*, N. Farage *(Brexit)*, J. Bartley *(Greens)*, and A. Price *(Plaid Cymru)*	December 9th, 2019	Yes
Scotland Leaders' Debate	BBC One	Sarah Smith	N. Sturgeon *(SNP)*, W. Rennie *(Scottish Liberal Democrats)*, R. Leonard *(Scottish Labour)*, and J. Carlaw *(Scottish Conservatives)*	December 10th, 2019	Yes

Table 6.11. The table includes information about all seven debates.

A coding guide was created using Cameron and Shaw's (2016) book as a starting point; in it they examined male and female political debate performances at the *ITV Leaders' Debate and*

BBC Election Debate in 2015. I adapted aspects of their work within my research, such as analysing allocated and uninvited speaking turns, calculating who spoke the longest, and examining those who posed or answered questions. For more details on each debate refer to Appendix 4.

Many countries have a long-standing history and tradition of televised election debates (Benoit and Benoit-Bryan, 2013:464), enabling researchers to argue that debates have become an essential part of democracy (Blais and Perrella, 2008:451). Golden and Berquist defined debates as "electronic media events" (1981:132 *also see* The Racine Group, 2002:208) allowing voters to "form impressions on a candidate's leadership qualities, ability to withstand pressure and draws attention to their charism and personal styles" (Grebelsky-Lichtman, 2016:363). However, the UK does not have the same established history with televised election debates as other countries.

The 2010 UK General Election was the first time party leaders agreed to debate one another, and only since that election have debates become a fixture of UK election campaigns (Pattie and Johnston, 2011:147). Debates in the UK are "not regulated but rather negotiated by political parties and broadcasters" (Anstead, 2019:95). For example, in 2010, ITV hosted a three-party debate with then Labour leader and Prime Minister Gordon Brown, David Cameron, then leader of the Conservative Party, and Nick Clegg, then leader of the Liberal Democrats. In 2015, a seven-party debate including party leaders was broadcasted, and in 2019, multiple two-party debates between Boris Johnson and Jeremy Corbyn aired along with seven-party debates that included leaders and party representatives.

The debates in 2019 showed greater flexibility in the debate format and how party leaders chose to engage. Some leaders attended multiple debates, while Johnson was notably absent. His absence became a significant topic of discussion amongst his opponents, like Swinson and Angela Rayner, Labour MP. Both politicians criticised Johnson and the Conservative Party for failing to attend multiple debates, including *The Channel 4 News Climate Debate* or *Britain Decides: The Everything But Brexit Debate* in my dataset. There were also references to Johnson's absence in my Twitter dataset when Sturgeon retweeted the Scottish National Party's tweet that referred to Johnson as a "feartie" (The SNP, 2019) for not attending the ITV debate.

Johnson only debated against Corbyn at the *Johnson V. Corbyn: The ITV Debate* (*ITV*, 19 November 2019) and the *Prime Ministerial Debate* (*BBC One*, 6 December 2019). The press depicted these debates as "head-to-heads" between the two main parties. The game-oriented representation of debates puts greater focus on the party leader creating a "horse race campaign" (Katz and Feldman, 1962 *also see* Schrott, 1990:569). Sturgeon and Swinson suggested their exclusion from the two-party ITV debate was unfair and took court action against the broadcaster, which resulted in lost cases for both parties (Davidson, 2019a). Instead of an invitation to the debate, ITV hosted a live interview segment with Sturgeon, Swinson, Nigel Farage, leader of the Brexit Party, and Siân Berry, co-leader of the Green Party that aired after the *Johnson V. Corbyn: The ITV Debate*. During the segment, Nina Hossain, the lead presenter on *ITV Lunchtime News*, interviewed each politician.

Regardless, Swinson continually discussed her exclusion from the debates on her Twitter account and in the press. She branded the broadcaster's decision as either "sexist, scared or both" and cited Clegg's inclusion in the 2010 debate (*Sky News*, 2019). During the ITV head-to-head between Johnson and Corbyn, Swinson live-tweeted her reaction to their performances and used #DebateHer, as discussed in my Twitter analysis chapter. Additionally, a *Sky Leaders Debate* was proposed that would have included Swinson, Johnson, and Corbyn. Swinson agreed to debate both Johnson and Corbyn, but neither major party leader agreed to participate, resulting in the debate's cancellation.

Notably, Sturgeon was still not invited to the proposed *Sky Leaders Debate*, which led to commentary in *The National* criticising Swinson for not protesting the inclusion of all minor Westminster parties rather than just her own (Young, 2019). Johnson and Corbyn attended the fewest debates in my dataset compared with minor party leaders. Sturgeon, Swinson, and Adam Price, leader of Plaid Cymru, participated in the most debates, each attending five and the remaining party leaders, Farage, Berry, and her Green Party co-leader, Jonathan Bartley, attended two debates. The news media shaping the election as a two-party race meant minor party leaders would have different media exposure, making televised debates a critical event to increase their prominence amongst voters.

The Question Time Leaders Special was the only occasion when Johnson, Corbyn, Sturgeon, and Swinson attended the same televised event (*BBC One*, 22 November 2019). However, the politicians were not debating one another, so I excluded the election special from my debate

dataset. I only analysed debates that included Sturgeon or Swinson and where the participants debated one another. Although this programme was not in my dataset, it is important to discuss the events that happened at the leader's special as it provides context for the debating styles of Sturgeon and Swinson at later debates discussed in this chapter.

Each politician was given 30 minutes to respond to questions and comments from a studio audience. Regular Question Time host Fiona Bruce moderated the event for two hours as the studio audience questioned or commented on each politician's record. There was a focus on the interaction between the audience and politicians, which was expected given the set-up of Question Time as "a site that provides the rehearsal of political debates between citizens, bringing politicians and policymakers to account for their conduct" (Higgins, 2008:55). Corbyn was the first politician to face the audience, followed by Sturgeon, Swinson, and Johnson. Along with answering questions about their political history, the politicians commented on their opponent's political record and failings. However, Corbyn made one critical comment about the Conservative Party without naming individuals, unlike his opponents who directly critiqued party leaders. Corbyn may have refrained from directly attacking opponents due to his manifesto pledge to "heal the harmful division" in the country (The Labour Party, 2019).

A noticeable debate and rhetorical style emerged from Sturgeon and Swinson's performances at the Question Time Special. Sturgeon presented herself as a progressive and approachable politician using the entire stage to walk around and engage with the audience. An evident part of her debate performance was the humorous remarks she made at the expense of her opponents. At times, audience members laughed or clapped in agreement when Sturgeon mocked Johnson or Corbyn. According to researchers, "The use of humour that invokes an audience response can serve as an expression of support and approval for a politician", which reinforced her self-representation as relatable (Stewart, 2015 *also see* Verhulsdonk et al., 2021:2). Sturgeon emphasised her party's progressive policies and her successes as First Minister. Her assertion on these achievements highlighted Sturgeon's authority and long-standing political career.

During Swinson's debate performance, she was highly critical of Johnson and Corbyn and incorporated her campaign message as a pro-European and internationalist politician, which was repeated in many media events. She did not include personal stories or private life references in the *Question Time Leaders Special*. Private life references were an interesting

feature of Swinson's performance at later debates, which suggests she developed her strategy as the election progressed. This chapter will examine the debate performance of both female politicians, their interactions with other debate participants, the discussions on gender and the rhetoric used in these debates but first, I will discuss each debate in my dataset for context before examining these themes further.

The Televised Election Debates

In my dataset, the first televised election debate to air was *The Channel 4 News Climate Debate*, which focused solely on the climate emergency. Host Krishnan Guru-Murthy, lead presenter on the Channel 4 News programme, moderated the debate and posed questions to Adam Price (Plaid Cymru), Siân Berry (co-leader of the Green Party), Nicola Sturgeon (Scottish National Party), Jo Swinson (Liberal Democrats), and Jeremy Corbyn (Labour Party). Of the participants, only Swinson and Corbyn were standing as candidates in the 2019 election. Notably, Farage and Johnson were not in attendance despite being invited and their positions on stage were replaced with two ice sculptures of a globe and their party logos. Their absence became a talking point amongst their opponents as evidence of their lack of dedication to tackling climate change. Johnson's absence was also covered in the press, particularly when Stanley Johnson, Boris Johnson's father and Michael Gove, Conservative MP, went to the Channel 4 News studio ready to debate in place of the Prime Minister. The broadcaster turned away both men, leading to more press coverage about Johnson's absence and the Conservative Party threatening to remove "Channel 4's broadcasting remit" (Waterson, 2019).

The party leaders were allocated time to make an opening statement before Guru-Murthy questioned them on their climate policies. Each politician was asked six questions about carbon-neutral targets, food consumption, transportation, sustainable housing, biodiversity targets, and personal climate resolutions. Guru-Murthy posed questions and guided the discussion with follow-up questions and comments about the politician's policies. There was no allocated time for closing statements.

Instead of an audience, three female academics were in the studio listening to the debate. In the last 10 minutes of the programme, Guru-Murthy questioned these three women on policy areas and pledges made by the debate panel that matched their specialisations while the politicians listened to the academics commenting on the effectiveness of their climate policies. Each academic was presented as a leading researcher in her field and held a leadership role at a

prestigious university: Dr Emily Shuckburgh led Cambridge University's Cambridge Zero, Professor Rebecca Willis was part of Lancaster University's Environment Centre, and Professor Nathalie Seddon was the director of Oxford University's Nature-based Solutions Initiative. Women are still less likely to appear as experts in the news media than their male counterparts; however, there has been a "shift in media organisations diversifying their expert pools" (Global Media Monitoring Project, 2020a:4-5). The female academics in attendance at the Channel 4 debate exemplified the shift media organisations are making when selecting experts.

Image 6.06. The image shows *The Channel 4 News Climate Debate*.

The stage setup was a formal debate display, with politicians standing opposite the host and in a curved row behind a podium (See Image 6.06). The studio appeared more compact and intimate than the other debate stages in my dataset. Around the studio were images depicting climate disasters, and on the floor was a printed image of the earth's weather pattern with #ClimateDebate. Along with the melting ice sculptures, the visual imagery signified a warming planet and the urgency of this issue. Behind the politicians was a glass wall allowing viewers to see Channel 4 News journalists working at their desks at the London headquarters, which created a feeling of openness and transparent reporting.

The next debate in my dataset was the *BBC Election Debate 2019*, hosted by Nick Robinson, former political editor for the BBC and ITV, but at the time of the election, presenter of *BBC Radio 4's Today* programme. Party leaders from the Scottish National Party (Nicola Sturgeon), the Liberal Democrats (Jo Swinson), and Plaid Cymru (Adam Price) were present and party members represented other parties: Rebecca Long-Bailey, Shadow Secretary of State for Business and Industrial Strategy and Labour MP for Salford and Eccles; Rishi Sunak, Chief Secretary to the Treasury and Conservative MP for Richmond; MEP for the East of England

Richard Tice for the Brexit Party; and Caroline Lucas Green MP for Brighton Pavilion, and former co-leader. Along with Swinson, Long-Bailey, Sunak, and Lucas were running for re-election.

Image 6.07. The image shows *The BBC Election Debate 2019.*

Each politician could make an opening and closing statement. Members of the studio audience asked 10 pre-selected questions, and each politician responded uninterrupted. Robinson guided the discussion to an open debate amongst the politicians. During the midway point of the debate, the host changed the discussion structure by asking for short answers to two questions submitted by social media users. Debate topics ranged from security issues, economic policies, Brexit, climate change, the NHS, immigration, and Donald Trump. The politicians stood behind a podium with the BBC logo affixed to the front and arranged in a curved position; they faced the host and studio audience. *The BBC Election Debate* logo was reflected on the stage, while multi-coloured hexagons appeared in the background (See Image 6.07). The stage setup and format of the debate were formal, providing viewers with a conventional and familiar televised debate structure.

The ITV Election Debate followed a similar format to *The BBC Election Debate 2019*. Julie Etchingham, presenter of the *ITV News at Ten* and the current affairs programme *Tonight*, hosted the ITV debate and questioned party leaders and party members for two hours. Once again, Labour and the Conservatives did not send leaders: Labour was represented by Richard Burgon, Shadow Secretary of State for Justice, Shadow Lord Chancellor, and an MP for Leeds East and the Conservatives were again represented by Rishi Sunak. The Scottish National Party (Nicola Sturgeon), the Liberal Democrats (Jo Swinson), Plaid Cymru (Adam Price), the Brexit Party (Nigel Farage), and the Green Party (Siân Berry) all sent party leaders. Besides Swinson and Sunak, Burgon was the only other politician campaigning for re-election at the debate.

Etchingham allocated debate participants time to make an opening and closing statement. Audience members read pre-selected questions, and Etchingham gave each politician 45 seconds to respond uninterrupted before the discussion moved into an open debate. Each politician was asked five questions on topics ranging from security issues, Brexit, the special relationship with the US, spending pledges, and the uncooperativeness of politicians. Etchingham also asked follow-up questions about the politician's responses and policies during the open debate period. As with the other debates in my dataset, this was an opportunity for minor party leaders to scrutinise the performance of major parties who have been in government. The studio background comprised dark blue and black shapes and the ITV logo was projected onto panels around the studio. The stage design was similar to the *Johnson V. Corbyn: The ITV Debate* set-up, establishing a recognisable brand for ITV with colours, font selection, and a logo. Each politician stood behind a podium, facing Etchingham and the audience.

Politicians from the minor Westminster parties questioned Sunak's and Burgon's policies more than other debaters. Sunak was questioned a total of five times between Sturgeon and Burgon, while Swinson, Price, Farage, and Sunak asked Burgon a total of seven questions. Distinctively, the Plaid Cymru leader was critical of the Welsh Labour Party, the governing party in Wales and used the debates to challenge Labour politicians on their record. For example, Price and Burgon engaged in a discussion on the handling of the NHS in Wales where Price stated, "Richard, the most imminent threat to the NHS in Wales at the moment is not Trump, it's your party" (*The ITV Election Debate*, 2019).

Image 6.08. The image shows *The ITV Election Debate*.

Following *The ITV Election Debate* was the first Scottish leaders' debate. Colin MacKay, political editor for STV, hosted *The STV Leaders' Debate*. Scottish leaders from the Scottish National Party (Nicola Sturgeon), the Scottish Labour Party (Richard Leonard), the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party (Jackson Carlaw), and the Scottish Liberal Democrats (Willie Rennie) were in attendance. None of the politicians on stage were running for election (all were MSPs). The format of the debate varied from other debates in my dataset. Each politician was allocated one minute to make an opening statement, followed by prepared questions from MacKay. The politicians engaged in an open debate period, where they challenged one another. During the open debate, questions arose on public services and spending pledges, austerity and the 2010-2015 coalition between the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, Brexit, and a second Scottish Independence referendum. After 20 minutes, MacKay brought the open debate to a close, and each politician was allocated two and a half minutes to cross-examine their opponents. Each leader first questioned Carlaw, followed by Rennie, Leonard, and Sturgeon. Once the cross-examination period ended, MacKay allocated 30 seconds to each politician for closing statements.

Image 6.09. The image shows *The STV Leaders' Debate.*

Each politician stood behind a clear podium and in a curved row, along with MacKay. The podium made the politicians more visible than traditional debate set-ups in my dataset. The only other occasion when politicians were in line with the host was during the *BBC Scotland Leaders' Debate*. However, the STV debate did not have a studio audience and gave more agency to the politicians to hold their opponents to account. The stage set-up followed STV branding, using a triangle in their logo and as part of the studio design. For example, the STV logo was visible on the floor, while triangles made up the background and podium design. The colours of each party were incorporated on the podium logos and in the background.

The next debate to air was the *Britain Decides: The Everything But Brexit Debate* on Channel 4, hosted by Cathy Newman, Channel 4 News presenter. This debate focused on election issues such as healthcare, education, terrorism and public safety, climate change, the economy, poverty, and political trust. Brexit did not feature in any prompted questions during this debate. Jo Swinson (Liberal Democrats), Adam Price (Plaid Cymru), Jonathan Bartley (co-leader of the Green Party and a councillor for St Leonard's ward), Philippa Whitford (Scottish National Party MP for Central Ayrshire and Spokesperson for Health and Social Care) and Angela Rayner (Shadow Secretary of State for Education and a Labour MP for Ashton-under-Lyne) were all in attendance. Along with Swinson, Whitford, Rayner, and Bartley were all candidates in the 2019 election.

The Conservative and Brexit parties chose not to attend. Similar to the climate debate, Channel 4 left two open podiums on stage to represent these parties. Newman provided information on the Conservative and Brexit policies during each topic discussion. Their absence did not receive the same coverage in the press as the climate debate, which could have been due to the empty podiums appearing less sensational than melting ice sculptures and Gove and Johnson's father, Stanley Johnson, volunteering to debate in place of the PM. However, Rayner and Swinson used the absence of the Conservatives to criticise their unwillingness to face scrutiny.

Image 6.10. The image shows the *Britain Decides: The Everything But Brexit Debate.*

Politicians were not allocated time to make opening or closing statements; instead, Newman began questioning the politicians on various policy areas. In addition, audience members were called upon to read out pre-selected questions or make additional comments. Newman selected politicians to answer a question before proceeding to an open debate period. Bartley's engagement with Newman was a point of interest during the debate. He struggled for speaking

time, repeatedly protesting to her about his lack of speaking opportunities. Notably, he was often allocated fewer speaking turns during both his debate performances than his opponents.

The politicians stood behind a grey podium with the Channel 4 logo affixed to the top right corner. All the politicians were facing the host and studio audience, and gold lights illuminated the stage and podiums. Newman was positioned near the audience rather than on stage with the politicians (See Image 6.10). The studio lighting illuminated Newman and the audience in blue, contrasting with the brightly lit stage of panellists. This set-up aligned the host and audience as a team facing off with the politicians on stage. The Channel 4 logo, colour scheme and font were seen around the studio, including #C4Debate. There were screens behind the politicians, which projected images of a nurse, a police officer, the British flag, a train with people travelling, wind turbines, and British pounds.

The Question Time: 2019 Under 30s Special was the first UK televised election debate with a studio audience aged 18 to 30. Audience members were given more opportunities to comment on or question the panel. As politicians spoke, the camera often panned to the audience to catch their reactions. Emma Barnett, a presenter for the BBC's flagship news and current affairs programme, *Newsnight*, moderated the debate. Party leaders in attendance at the Question Time Special were Jo Swinson (Liberal Democrats), Jonathan Bartley (Green Party), Nigel Farage (Brexit Party), and Adam Price (Plaid Cymru). Party members represented other parties: Angela Rayner (Labour Party), Humza Yousaf, Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Veterans and a Scottish National Party MSP for Glasgow Pollok, and Robert Jenrick, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and a Conservative MP for Newark. Besides Swinson, Bartley, and Rayner, Jenrick was the only other candidate on stage running for re-election.

Image 6.11. The image shows the *Question Time: 2019 Under 30s Special.*

Politicians were not allocated time to make opening or closing statements; instead, Barnett allowed the audience to question the panel. Five pre-selected questions were posed at the debate relating to: a disproportionate electoral system, Brexit, climate change, lack of political trust, and affordable housing. Barnett also chose audience members to comment or ask additional follow-up questions. Politicians and audience members engaged in discussions, keeping the debate interactive. Politicians were seated without a podium or table in front of them. The lack of a table or desk differed from the usual Question Time format, leaving the politicians more exposed. The stage was shaped like a Q, and the politicians faced the audience and host. The background included the words Question Time in large text and multi-coloured shapes. Interestingly, the host referred to the ages of younger politicians on stage when introducing them, such as Jenrick, the youngest minister in Johnson's cabinet or Swinson, who became an MP at 25. Barnett referencing the age of politicians was possibly due to the young audience in attendance.

The final debate in my dataset was the *Scotland Leaders' Debate,* which was the last debate of the election and the second debate reserved for politicians serving in the Scottish Parliament. Sarah Smith, Scotland Editor for the BBC, and the studio audience questioned party leaders from the Scottish National Party (Nicola Sturgeon), the Scottish Labour Party (Richard Leonard), the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party (Jackson Carlaw), and the Scottish Liberal Democrats (Willie Rennie). As with the *STV Leaders' Debate*, none of the politicians on stage were running for re-election.

Image 6.12. The image shows the *Scotland Leaders' Debate.*

At the start of the debate, Smith emphasised the authority to question the politicians on their record rested with the audience members by stating, "Right, this is about the audience asking

questions, not me" (*Scotland Leaders' Debate*, 2019). Smith selected five audience members to read questions which covered the mistrust in politics, Scottish Independence, the potential outcomes of a hung parliament, spending plans, and climate change. Politicians answered each question uninterrupted before Smith guided the discussion to an open debate. Smith continued selecting audience members to ask follow-up questions or make comments during the open debate period. Smith asked two quick-fire round questions that social media users submitted. The debate concluded with closing statements allocated to each politician. The background of the studio was black, with coloured lights that had a dripping effect and changed to represent the party colours of each politician. The panel stood behind a podium with the BBC logo affixed to the front. Smith and the politicians were in line with one another and facing the audience, which aligned Smith's position on stage with the politicians.

This section has provided context for the 2019 televised election debates. The background information gives readers a clear understanding of the stage setup, participants, and the conversations held at these debates. These detailed descriptions will inform later discussions on the themes and debate styles of the politicians. Each debate description indicated that, irrespective of various debate structures and a politician's position on stage, there were marginal differences in a participant's language and debate tactics, and all incorporated a strategy that showcased their policies and presented their party as the best choice for voters. Discernibly, the size of the political party, the politician's government position, and their chosen debate strategy had a greater effect on the coded categories for this analysis. The following sections will analyse the themes that emerged from these debates more thoroughly, but first, I will focus on the debate performances of Sturgeon and Swinson.

Analysing the Debate Performances of Nicola Sturgeon and Jo Swinson
Former research has argued that linguistic norms and practices "silence" or impose "hyper-controlled language" onto women while men have more freedom to "break the communicative rules" (Kay, 2020:155). These rhetorical standards have led the "British Houses of Parliament to be defined by the norms, values, and linguistic practices of white middle-class men" (Talbot, 2010:186 *also see* Kay, 2020:154), forcing female politicians to adapt to their political environment by displaying both masculine and feminine speech styles. In determining if these historical ideas of female voice were evident within my research, I incorporated Cameron and Shaw's work on the "different voice" ideology, initially discussed by Carol Gilligan (1982).

The "different voice" is defined as "the belief that women have a distinctive style of communication" (Cameron and Shaw, 2016:5). A feminine rhetorical style includes "anecdotal evidence such as domestic metaphors, emotional appeals to motherhood and avoiding confrontational or direct refutations" (Campbell, 1998:5 *also see* Manning, 2006:110). In contrast, a male rhetorical style is assertive, antagonistic, and willing to break the conventional rules of political speaking (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993:120-122 *also see* Harmer et al., 2017). I found that conventional ideology on political voice is more complex than previous research may have deduced (Coates, 2004:126 *also see* Graddol and Swann, 1989:13,28; Ohala, 1984; Shaw 2002:29). This finding parallels Cameron and Shaw's deduction on political speech in a debate setting, which indicates male and female politicians used both assertive and passive speech styles.

Both Sturgeon and Swinson included language that showcased their effectiveness as political leaders rather than aligning with a speech style based on gender. I found more instances when Sturgeon was confrontational, aligning her performance with stereotypical assumptions of masculine rhetoric. Sturgeon broke debate rules when she spoke out of turn or continued to speak after her turn had ended. She posed questions to her opponents or commented on their policies, often challenging the Conservative Party. For example, Extract 1 shows Sturgeon continuing to speak at *The Channel 4 News Climate Debate* until her point was completed, even after Guru-Murthy brought her speaking turn to an end (See Extract 1, Lines 8-9).

Extract 1

Nicola Sturgeon (NS): I don't actually think it is helping the planet that much for us to all be	1
squabbling with each other here this is something we should actually be trying to find united	
and common purpose on. Now I am proud of the fact that Scotland is leading the way, the UN	
recognises us as a world leader, COP will be in Glasgow next year, and we should be agreeing	
that Scotland, the UK should be leading the world and then we should be putting pressure on	
other countries because right now the world is not on track to limit temperature raises to 1.5	
degrees, let's not [inaudible] with each other.	7
Krishnan Guru-Murthy (KGM): ⌈Ok, we've, we've heard, we've heard your ambitions⌉	8
NS: and make sure that we focus⌊on the ambitions that we need too. ⌋	9

(*Channel 4*, 2019)

Initially, in Extract 1, Guru-Murthy gave Sturgeon a speaking turn, which she used to highlight Scotland's environmental progress. In her opening sentence, she addressed Corbyn, Price,

Swinson, and Berry, suggesting it is not helpful for us to argue over climate policies. She incorporated the colloquial phrase squabbling when speaking to her opponents, which made the disagreement between the politicians seem trivial (*The Channel 4 Climate Debate*, 2019). After addressing the other politicians on stage, she called attention to Scotland's positive action, using personal pronouns "we" and "our" to represent Scotland rather than her opponents. As she continued to speak, Guru-Murthy began to talk over her to bring her speaking turn to an end, but she continued to speak over him, not stopping until she finished her final thought.

Another part of Sturgeon's political strategy was to present herself as a progressive, approachable, and efficient politician and align herself with politicians and political parties she considered progressive. Therefore, it was unsurprising Sturgeon sought to associate herself with politicians like Price, since their parties shared many similarities. Sturgeon vocalised her support for him on three occasions at the climate and ITV debates by stating, "I agree with Adam" regarding his policies or commentary on Johnson. At the BBC debate, she again compared herself with Price, stating, "Like Adam, I have been campaigning for what I believe in for all of my life" (*BBC Election Debate 2019*, 2019). Extract 2 exemplified Sturgeon's additional positive interaction with another left-leaning political party, the Greens.

Extract 2

NS: You know, I haven't been talking here tonight about things that I am simply promising,	1
I am the only one here in government. The things I'm talking about are the things we are doing.	
We have got to do more, but we are doing these things.	3
KGM: Ok, we have got to leave it there.	4
Siân Berry (SB): Green is holding you to account on that in the parliament.	5
NS: Well [inaudible]	6
SB: You're doing a good job.	7
KGM: Thank you all very much indeed.	8
NS: Thank you, [inaudible]	9

(*Channel 4*, 2019)

The exchange between these women started with Siân Berry challenging Sturgeon and indicating the Greens would hold her party to account. Berry then praised Sturgeon for the work she was doing, and Sturgeon responded favourably. Throughout Sturgeon's debate performances, she emphasised her progressive, forward-thinking style and willingness to form progressive alliances. According to Tang and John, "politicians sharing their beliefs and attitudes" can put "a particular emphasis on their own positions to distance themselves from the opponent" (1999 *also see* Albalat-Mascarell and Carrio-Pastor, 2019:95). Sturgeon sought to establish gaps between the Conservative Party, the Brexit Party, and the Liberal Democrats because she deemed them less progressive. Noticeably, Sturgeon put distance between her and Swinson, criticising the Liberal Democrats for the 2010-2015 coalition with the Conservatives. The Liberal Democrats' participation in the coalition forced Swinson to apologise and present progressive ideas to dissociate with the right-wing parties. However, this became increasingly difficult for Swinson since her opponents criticised her and her party's involvement.

Sturgeon continued to employ this strategy by establishing gaps between herself and the other Scottish party leaders. A central talking point in the Scottish leaders' debate was the possibility of a second Scottish Independence referendum. Sturgeon stressed the importance of her policy by describing how Scotland has been treated poorly by Westminster governments. Sturgeon's pro-independence stance led to negative comments and critical questions from Rennie and Carlaw about the success of an independent Scotland. Interestingly, when conversations about Scottish Independence arose, Sturgeon repeatedly demonstrated that she was not imposing her policies on anyone but following the will of the Scottish people, unlike her opponents. Her language choice reiterated how she differed from the opposition. Sturgeon repeatedly used the phrase "these guys" at the *STV Leaders Debate* to separate herself from the male leaders on stage and their views on Scottish Independence.

During Sturgeon's debate performances, she emphasised her leadership position by stating her title and her government's achievements, reminding voters of her political experience. For example, at the *STV Leaders' Debate*, Carlaw asked Sturgeon whether healthcare or education would be her priority. Sturgeon responded, "these are all priorities, each and every one of them that I focus on every day as First Minister" (*STV Leaders' Debate*, 2019). Sturgeon would also highlight her party's power and influence by utilising her speaking opportunities to position her party as kingmakers. Campaign phrases seen in press interviews and on her Twitter account were repeated at the debates, such as "we might hold the balance of power"

(*BBC Election Debate 2019*, 2019) or "if the SNP hold the balance of power" (*The ITV Election Debate*, 2019). She often used first-person pronouns when sharing her opinions or the political record of her party. For example, at The Channel 4 News Climate Debate, she stated:

> "I have not been talking here tonight about the things I am promising. I am the only one here in government. The things I am talking about are the things we are doing, we have got to do more, but we are doing these things" (*The Channel 4 News Climate Debate*, 2019).

Sturgeon commenting on the "political self" to note "past and present achievements" (Albalat-Mascarell and Carrio-Pastor, 2019:96) varied from Swinson, who used personal pronouns such as "us" or "we" to represent her party's promises.

Sturgeon's body posture on stage was another part of her strategy to present as an approachable politician. Sturgeon used hand motions when she spoke to stress her points or smiled when her opponents were mocked, particularly when she was the person making the joke. She would lean on the podium in a relaxed position, as seen in a campaign video posted by the SNP Twitter account or turn her entire body to face the person speaking. Her body posture showed a detached amusement and confidence in her debating skills. Examples of Sturgeon's relaxed body position can be seen in the BBC and ITV debates (See Image 6.13). The image on the left depicted Sturgeon at the BBC debate leaning on the podium and looking towards Sunak to question his position on a No Deal Brexit. The image on the right was during the ITV debate. Sturgeon turned her body to face Swinson, who was speaking. The camera was initially focused on Swinson, but as she responded to the question and criticised the major parties, the camera panned to Sturgeon, Sunak, Farage, and Burgon to capture their reactions.

Image 6.13. The image on the left is from *The BBC Election Debate 2019* and the image on the right is from *The ITV Debate.*

Sturgeon's use of humour was a crucial aspect of her performance during the debates, and it was also evident in her self-presentation on Twitter. Her humorous approach was previously showcased in the 2015 *ITV Leaders' Debate* (Cameron and Shaw, 2016:67-68). According to prior work, "Humour is an effective tool for politicians to either make themselves more accessible to the public or their opponents less attractive, especially on television" (Stewart, 2011:202) but previous research has claimed that "women as a group lack a sense of humour"; instead, women "value cooperative, intimacy-enhancing speech styles" (Crawford, 2003:1416).

However, Sturgeon's wit contradicts previous ideas about humour and gender. Sturgeon's humorous remarks were another tactic to present as a personable and sociable politician while providing a clear division between her and right-wing parties on stage. Sturgeon challenged the Conservative and Brexit party representatives and denounced their manifesto plans. For example, during the BBC debate, Sturgeon continuously mocked Tice and made wisecracks or witty comments about his party's role in Brexit, such as when the politicians were asked what they would say to Donald Trump in 30 seconds (See Extract 3).

Extract 3

Nick Robinson (NR): You are more than welcome to stay here for another hour	1
and a half afterwards, but we haven't got time while we are on air at least. Let's	
move to our last question and it comes from Trevor Morgan. Where is Trevor Morgan?	3
Audience Member (Trevor Morgan): Good evening, [uh] Donald Trump has	4
recently confirmed his visit to the UK, if you had 30 seconds with him, what would you say?	5
NR: And you have only got 30 seconds each to answer this at the most. Nicola Sturgeon.	6
NS: Please stand down.	7
NR: Ok. Caroline Lucas, what would you say to Donald Trump?	8
Caroline Lucas (CL): [um] I would say to him, look at the US states that are	9
actually moving in the right direction on climate change. It is good for the economy,	
as well as good for the environment, get your act together and get back into	
the Paris Agreement.	12
NR: Rishi Sunak.	13
Rishi Sunak (RS): Happy Thanksgiving.	14

NR: Rebecca Long-Bailey.   15

Rebecca Long-Bailey (RLB): I am a good Catholic, so I won't say in public what I probably   16
would say to him but the most important point I would make is about the climate emergency
and how he needs to change his position there is a real climate emergency and if
we don't take action now, we're not going to leave a world or a future for our children.   19

NR: Richard Tice.   20

Richard Tice (RT): Let's get a quick trade deal done.   21

NS: And here is our NHS, is what he would say.   22

RT: OH NONSENSE. STOP THIS SCAREMONGERING, IT'S PATHETIC.   23
Just lying to the British people continually.   24

NS: Oh, I- I think you've got form on that.   25

NR: Adam Price.   26

RT: Extraordinary!   27

Adam Price (AP): Resign and take Boris with you.   28

NR: Jo   ⌐ Swinson. ⌐   29

Jo Swinson (JS): ⌊ Well, I ⌋ could congratulate him on getting his wish which was of course for
him to have Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage come together, but of course that is not going to be
any good for our country. So, I would like to tell him that the British public still have a chance to
stop him getting what he wants.   33

(*BBC*, 2019)

Sturgeon broke conventional debate rules by taking an uninvited speaking turn and speaking

for less than 30 seconds to express her point. Tice became visibly irritated by her comments

and, at one point, turned his entire body in her direction before facing forward. He used

theatrical hand motions and maintained his gaze towards Sturgeon. At the same time, Sturgeon

was smiling, leaning over the podium in a relaxed position that was slightly turned in his

direction. After making a joke, she looked down briefly and then up towards the audience,

continuing to smile (See Image 6.14). The other politicians on stage went for more practical

responses using their full allocated time or, in Sunak's case, safe answers that would not cause

controversy.

Image 6.14. The images depict the exchange between Richard Tice and Nicola Sturgeon at *The BBC Election Debate 2019.*

Price was the only other politician to use humour and spoke for less than the allocated time. Similar to Sturgeon, Price incorporated humour into his debate performances (See Extract 3, Line 28). For example, during the Britain Decides debate, Price used sarcastic humour to ridicule Johnson, stating, "When I was an MP, I introduced a bill to parliament to make lying by politicians a criminal offence; Boris Johnson probably didn't sign that one, I wonder why" (*Britain Decides: The Everything But Brexit Debate*, 2019). Interestingly, both male and female politicians use satirical humour to highlight their policies or opinions. Therefore, this approach was not considered a gendered practice.

Despite Swinson's efforts, she did not have the same commanding effect or favourable exchanges with her party opponents as Sturgeon. Swinson attempted to present herself as cooperative and personable; however, her debate strategy differed from Sturgeon's more self-assured approach. Swinson frequently followed debate rules, such as ending her speaking turn when requested and not speaking out of turn. Swinson would stop talking in the middle of a sentence when her turn was ended or quietly finish her sentence and comply with the instructions she was given.

Extract 4 exemplified an instance when Swinson obeyed debate rules and immediately stopped talking when directed to. She began by agreeing with Price on his renewable energy policy. Swinson continued to speak about the UK's environmental successes and utilised personal pronouns, which aligned her with the public. Interestingly, Swinson did not appear to be done speaking, but Guru-Murthy cut her off in the middle of her sentence to allocate a speaking turn to Sturgeon. Swinson stopped talking rather than continuing to speak as Sturgeon does in Extract 1. When Swinson was allocated speaking turns, she often stood upright and addressed the audience, or when an audience member asked a question, she looked directly at them and used their name to foster a more personalised response.

Extract 4

JS: Absolutely Adam, I whole heartly agree. This is an opportunity for us as   1
a country to take a real lead and if you look at what the great success story has been in
the last few years if we were having this debate six, seven years ago people were saying,
renewables they are really expensive they won't be so reliable, there was no offshore wind.
We are now in the UK a leader, world leader in offshore wind it is now the cheapest way to
generate electricity because of the support for that industry that was put in by the Liberal
Democrats when we were running the climate change department it has created a great
British industry. It is cutting energy bills, that is a great example of what we need to do=   8

KGM: =Briefly if you will   9
Nicola Sturgeon, I know you are trying to get in.   10

(*Channel 4,* 2019)

A notable feature of Swinson's debate performance was her position on stage. The BBC, ITV, and both Channel 4 debates positioned her at the end of the row. Many of the open debate exchanges were happening amongst Labour and Conservative politicians standing more centre stage. Swinson's position forced her to lean over the podium when others were talking or speak loudly to take part in the open debate (See Image 6.15 and Extract 7, Line 30).

Image 6.15. The image on the left is from *The ITV Election Debate* and the image on the right is from the *Britain Decides: The Everything But Brexit Debate*.

As noted above, Swinson used personal pronouns such as "us" or "we" to discuss her party's policies. For example, when asked about her position on Brexit at the BBC debate, Swinson stated, "you know, we are in an election, Liberal Democrats are absolutely standing to stop Brexit, we have led the campaign for a people's vote, and we want to stop Brexit" (*BBC Election Debate 2019*, 2019). When Swinson utilised the reflexive "I", she focused on her opinions, thoughts, and personal references (Extract 3, Line 30), known as the "individual self" (Albalat-Mascarell and Carrio-Pastor, 2019:96).

However, she still engaged in, albeit less than Sturgeon, combative speech and debate rule-breaking behaviour. This behaviour was most evident during the Question Time Special, possibly due to the programme's format, which has a less conventional debate structure since the discussion is often between "elected officials and an audience" (Kay, 2020:152). Question Time has been described as a broadcast that provides the public with "raw political discourse" and politicians "direct access to people" (McNair, 2011:76). Out of all Swinson's debate appearances, Question Time was the media event when she took the most uninvited speaking turns (See Appendix 4) and engaged in heated exchanges with opponents over policy issues. One example was her disagreement with Farage over her Brexit position and the misinformation spread during the EU referendum. Noticeably, this was the only debate where Swinson was positioned centre stage in the seating arrangement.

Extract 5

JS: I just want-I just want to point out that Angela has sat there and told us the most   1
amazing amount of fudge. Because the gentleman in the back said, look what is the difference
between customs union, single market and remain. Well, a key difference, is that we would be
having the single market regulations, but we would lose our voice on them. And the basic bottom
line is there isn't a Brexit deal that protects jobs, that is good for our economy. And people that are
trying to say that that is the case, are trying to peddle something that is simply not true and
        then we wonder why there is a problem with trust in politics.   7

Nigel Farage (NF) : We had this debate in the referendum.   8
We argued this at the referendum. I think we will be better off; you think we will be worse off. What
we think is irrelevant. The country voted and your party, I remember the late Paddy Ashdown saying
we will respect the voters; we will implement the result and you have broken your word.   11

JS: Nigel, Nigel DON'T YOU TALK, DON'T YOU, DON'T YOU TALK   12
NF: You have broken your word, very simple.   13

JS: ABOUT WHAT PEOPLE SAID DURING THE REFERENDUM ALL OF THE LIES ABOUT TURKEY   14
NF: Broken your word.   15
JS: BEING ABOUT TO JOIN THE EU.   16
NF: You've told those lies for 50 years.   17

JS: YOU STOOD IN FRONT OF THAT BREAKING POINT POSTER TO STOKE RACISM   18
    AND DIVISION AND I WILL TAKE NO LECTURES FROM YOU ABOUT YOUR BEHAVIOUR
    IN THE REFERENDUM.   20
NF: You've told those lies, European army, you've lied for 50 years   21
    about this, all the way through.   22

(*BBC*, 2019)

Swinson began her speaking turn by highlighting how Labour's Brexit policy could not be better than remaining in the EU. However, before she finished her sentence, Farage interjected by talking over her. Farage quickly transitioned the personal pronoun "we" to represent himself and his political counterparts. He criticised Swinson's Brexit policy, suggesting she had broken her party's promise. At this point in the exchange, Swinson turned her body to face Farage, shouting and pointing her finger at him. She condemned Farage's behaviour, noting that he lied during the referendum. Swinson raised her voice considerably to be heard over Farage, who continued to speak. The exchange shows Swinson would confront and criticise her opponents. Yet, Swinson was not always effective in challenging the opposition due to her accommodating behaviour and a lack of command when speaking. Having examined Sturgeon and Swinson's debate performances, I will next analyse specific aspects of my debate dataset, such as the additional politicians on stage and the interaction between these political women and their debate opponents.

Analysing the 2019 Televised Election Debates

In this chapter, I have discussed the different debate formats that were used during the 2019 UK election debates, noting the various politicians who participated. In addition to examining Sturgeon and Swinson's debate performances, I gathered the analytical data from the debate corpus to examine the performance of other politicians on stage and their interaction with Sturgeon and Swinson. I analysed speaking turns, length of speaking time, who posed questions to opponents, who was questioned by an opponent, and any references to a politician's private life. Throughout my analysis, I found that the Conservative and Labour party politicians were allocated the most speaking turns, even when those politicians on stage were not leaders. It was expected the Conservative and Labour representatives would be allocated more opportunities to speak. The only occasions when Conservative and Labour representatives did not speak for longer periods was during the *Scotland Leaders' Debate* and the *Channel 4 News Climate Debate*.

Sturgeon was allocated more speaking opportunities than her minor party opponents. The SNP are Scotland's largest and Westminster's third largest party. Therefore, it was unsurprising Sturgeon was allocated more speaking turns than her minor party opponents, allowing her to speak for an additional three to four minutes longer than her opponents. Amongst the other Westminster minor party leaders and representatives, marginal differences were discovered

between their speech duration and allocated and uninvited speaking turns, which did not enable a meaningful analysis.

At both Scottish leaders' debates, there were marginal differences amongst many of the coded categories for Carlaw, Leonard, and Rennie. Carlaw and Leonard posed more questions to their opponents than Rennie, and Leonard was often asked a question. This finding was expected since Carlaw and Leonard lead the Scottish branches of the two major parties in Westminster. Both men defended their Westminster party leaders while challenging one another for past failures. Likewise, Carlaw and Rennie often challenged Sturgeon on her political record in government and the prospect of a second Scottish Independence referendum. Having reviewed the initial observations of the televised election debates, let us now explore the themes that emerged from my dataset, starting with the clothing choices of male and female politicians on stage.

The Clothing Choices of the Politicians

Sturgeon, Swinson, Rayner, and Whitford wore brightly coloured dresses, skirts, and jackets during their debate performances. The colour of their outfits set them apart from their suit-wearing male counterparts and Berry, Lucas, and Long-Bailey, who wore dark clothes. Male and female politicians also wore colours or logo pins to align with their party, such as Labour politicians wearing red or Price wearing a Plaid Cymru pin. Men often wore black and blue suits, as seen in many of the above images. The plain suit is a gendered convention seen in politics and business (Flicker, 2013:206) and has become the expected clothing choice for male politicians. However, Bartley was the only man who did not wear the conventional suit jacket and tie (Images 6.10 and 6.11). His clothing style at the Question Time Special and Channel 4's Britain Decides debate was partly relaxed and informal, setting him apart from his opponents.

Dresses and skirts were the primary clothing choice for many female politicians. However, the Question Time Special was the only time Swinson wore trousers. It was noticeable how Swinson and Rayner kept their legs crossed when seated, while some of their male counterparts had their legs spread apart (See Image 6.11). The news media has framed female politicians as decorative and sexualised their appearance with front covers like the *Daily Mail's* "Who Won Leg-it!" (Bearak, 2017) or, more recently, *The Mail on Sunday's* comparison of Rayner to "Sharon Stone's infamous scene in the 1992 film 'Basic Instinct" (Lawless, 2022). Objectifying commentary can "erode a woman candidate's credibility" (Kahn and Goldenberg 1991 *also see* Funk and Coker, 2016:460) and put the focus on her body. Since there was

nothing to block the view of Swinson's legs at the Question Time Special, trousers may have felt like a better clothing option to avoid the objectification of her body.

Image 6.16. The image on the left is the *Daily Mail's* "Who Won Leg-it!" published on March 28, 2017, and the image on the right is *The Mail on Sunday's* article comparing Angela Rayner to Sharon Stone in the film Basic Instinct, published on April 24, 2022.

Personal and Private Life References

A strategy politicians included in their performances was using personal stories or private information to connect with the audience. For example, when politicians discussed the climate emergency at *The Channel 4 News Climate Debate*, they often referenced children or the future. Former researchers have noted that people use the "language of family in their everyday lives" (Edwards et al., 2012:735). Therefore, it is unsurprising that politicians repeat "family words" such as "family, child, parent, or kid" to relate to voters (Cienki, 2005:32-33).

Swinson combined personal anecdotes to promote her policies by referencing her family and sharing the personal stories of others. For instance, she did just this at the climate debate when she stated, "So I think about my childhood and those birds you would see in the garden, I think about bringing my children up, I want them to be able to see that kind of wildlife" (*The Channel 4 News Climate Debate*, 2019). Later in the election, Swinson again referred to her children when discussing child poverty. She stated at the *Britain Decides: The Everything But Brexit Debate*, "my son came home from school, and he was telling me this new thing where 10 minutes before school starts, a quarter to nine in the morning, they get free bagels" (*Britain Decides: The Everything But Brexit Debate*, 2019). Swinson used this personalised introduction about her family's first-hand experience with school meals to discuss the Liberal Democrats' free school meals policy and their plans to put more money into universal credit.

However, the use of personal anecdotes was not confined to female leaders. Price made the most private life references at three of the debates he attended, including 10 individual references. Sunak and Swinson each made seven individual references. Sunak made these references at all debates he attended, while Swinson referred to her private life at three debates. Both Price and Sunak referenced their children, partners, and parents; however, Price wove these personal details to showcase his personality, relatability and even his vulnerability. His strategy could have been potentially risky due to the audience of mixed voters and viewers watching at home, but he shared his sexuality as a gay man at the ITV debate and indicated he struggled with his mental health during the Britain Decides debate.

References about family and children enabled politicians to present as relatable, "warm, and approachable" to voters (Greenwood and Coker, 2016:168). Whilst male politicians have traditionally been able to use their families to situate themselves into the family man trope, my findings suggest this concept is more complex. The family man is the patriarch, "portraying men as strong leaders, protecting the country in the same way they protect their wives and children" (Harmer, 2015:83). However, neither Sunak nor Price encompassed the conventional ideals of the nuclear family. The feminisation of gay men would prevent Price from embodying the patriarch role (Falomir-Pichastor et al., 2019:208), while Sunak's marriage into a wealthier family than his own would exclude him from the role of patriarch. Sunak is married to Akshata Murty, whose father co-founded the Indian multi-national IT company Infosys Limited. Akshata Murty's family has considerable wealth that surpasses Sunak's privileged background and the personal wealth he had before his marriage.

However, for Sunak, family and ethnicity became an important aspect of his political debate performance as proof that his party has not created a hostile environment. He referenced his ethnicity, religion, and his parent's immigration story to connect with voters and ensure that the Conservative immigration policy was fair. For example, Sunak incorporated this practice during conversations about immigration at the BBC debate when a studio audience member asked if UK immigration laws should treat EU and non-EU citizens equally. Sunak's response was the following:

> "Good evening, Mahesh, I am the son of immigrants. My parents came here 60 years ago, and I am a British Asian. I swore my oath as an MP on the Bhagwad Gita which is the Hindu holy scripture. So, I am living proof that this is a welcoming, meritocratic, and tolerant country. But it is also right that we control our borders and after we

leave the EU we can introduce an Australian points-based system which will allow us to decide who comes here on the basis of what they have to offer, and as you said, not on the basis of what country they happen to come from. I don't think that's right and that is why we must get Brexit done and introduce this new system because the alternative is unlimited, uncontrolled immigration that treats different people from different countries differently and that is simply not fair" (*BBC Election Debate 2019,* 2019).

Sunak began by providing a personal narrative of his family's immigration story and how he identified as British Asian. The opening lines of his statement included the personal pronoun "I", which emphasised his ethnicity, religion, and family background. His narrative was utilised as proof that a Conservative-led UK government are welcoming and tolerant. However, Sunak then started discussing the Conservative immigration policy and the importance of completing Brexit when he switched between an inclusive pronoun to a subject position invested in the nation. The personal pronoun "we" represented the nation with phrases like "after we leave the EU" and his party when he stated, "that is why we must get Brexit done" (*BBC Election Debate 2019,* 2019). Sunak completed his statement by indicating that without this new policy, Britain's immigration system would not treat people fairly. His response presented the Conservative Party as the only party capable of instilling an impartial immigration system. Sunak's private life references progressed Conservative policies rather than showcasing his authenticity like Price.

Sunak's focus on his family history reappeared in the 2022 Conservative Leadership Elections. Sunak utilised similar language and personal pronouns, as seen in the above quote in his campaign promotion videos and leadership debate performances. During the leadership election, Sunak emphasised the opportunities his family and the UK gave him, specifically noting his connection to the NHS. Sunak reused his origin story to persuade voters he was relatable and the most qualified person to lead the country out of a cost-of-living crisis rather than convince voters the Conservative Party's immigration plans are fair. As a privately educated multimillionaire, Sunak needed to convince Conservative voters he understood the everyday challenges of the public. Sunak did not win the leadership election initially, but when Liz Truss resigned after 45 days, he assumed the role.

Evoking Banal Nationalism

I discovered politicians used language that evoked feelings of national pride and belonging in my debate dataset. The nation is established by "ideological habits" (Billig, 1995:74) and everyday reminders of nationhood. These reminders of the nation create an "imagined political community" rooted in a particular place (Billig, 1995:6,38). Politicians incorporated personal pronouns to align themselves with the nation and the British people. Personal pronouns are crucial to political speech because they show how the speaker self-identifies (Lenard, 2016:166). For example, Swinson used similar phrases on her Twitter account and during her debate performances, such as "our closest allies", "our family of nations", or "our neighbours" (*The BBC Election Debate 2019*, 2019; *The ITV Election Debate*, 2019).

Swinson used family words and personal pronouns to address the audience directly and constructed a sense of belonging to the UK. However, her identity as British and European became intertwined with her political beliefs and policies and she continually referred to the EU as "our neighbours" or "our allies" (Chapter 5, Tweet 5.14). As noted in the Twitter analysis chapter, terminology such as neighbour or allies creates a sense of local community and belonging. According to Wills, the Conservatives, Labour, and Liberal Democrats have, in past elections, adopted localism within their political agendas (2015:188). Localism in political discourse brings "geographical understanding about scale and place" and clarifies "decentralisation, participation, and community" in politics (Clarke and Cochrane, 2013:11). Swinson's word choices were a precise way she presented herself as internationalist, inclusive, and dedicated to maintaining unity amongst the four nations of the UK.

In contrast to Swinson, Farage used the personal pronoun "our" to only represent British citizens. For example, at the ITV debate, Berry commented on EU citizens working in the NHS and in response, Farage stated, "isn't that terrible, why aren't we training our own people" (*The ITV Election Debate*, 2019). Nationalist thinking convinces "us the nation" that we have a "unique identity" compared to "them the foreigners from who 'we' identify ourselves as different" (Billig, 1995:61). Farage's language became less banal and more closely exemplified hot nationalism. His use of personal pronouns stoked division between British citizens and immigrants, making clear in-groups and out-groups. The difference in Swinson's and Farage's use of inclusive and exclusive pronouns revealed the boundaries they set between in-groups and out-groups (Petersoo, 2007:420 *also see* Riggins, 1997:8).

Sturgeon evoking banal nationalism within her debate performance drew parallels to her language on Twitter. She used her debate performances to emphasise that the Scottish people have an independent identity from the rest of the country, such as in Extract 7 (Line 59) when she stated, "people in this country, people in Scotland have a big choice to make". Sturgeon's self-identification as Scottish over British is part of her party's ideology and a political strategy to nation-build Scotland as its own state. National identities are a "connection between a group of people to a particular geographical place" that "contrast from other group identities" (Miller, 1995:25). National identity is a dominant feature of the SNP, with most party members identifying themselves as "Scottish not British" (Mitchell et al., 2011:103-104). For example, SNP politicians Yousaf and Whitford continued to evoke a sense of Scottish identity with their language choices during their debate performances. At the Question Time Special, Yousaf was asked if two referendums were what the British people wanted, to which he replied:

> "I am telling you it is what the Scottish people want and Michael to answer your question and I think the gentlemen in the same row as you. Look Scotland voted overwhelmingly to stay within the European Union. 62% not a small margin, a pretty hefty margin. Scotland voted to stay in the European Union, we are going to get dragged out. Now out of all the nations in this so-called partnership of equals, Scotland is frankly the only one that is getting shafted. England voted to leave, you're going to leave, Wales voted to leave, they're going to leave, Northern Ireland voted to remain, they get a differentiated deal, Scotland votes to stay and we are going to get dragged out. That is completely anti-democratic (*The Question Time: 2019 Under 30s Special,* 2019).

Researchers have found that personal pronouns can "evoke nationalistic emotions" (Kaewrungruang and Yaoharee, 2018:88) by emphasising in-groups and out-groups. For SNP politicians, the in-group becomes Scotland, while the out-group becomes the Westminster political system. This distinction between groups was evident when Yousaf referred to Scotland as the personal pronoun "we" when he stated, "we are going to get dragged out", compared to personal pronouns "they" or "you're" to represent the rest of the UK (*The Question Time: 2019 Under 30s Special,* 2019).

Another way Sturgeon utilised her debate performances to flag the homeland was by emphasising the successes of Scotland. As noted in the previous section, Sturgeon highlighted the accomplishments of Scotland, particularly at *The Channel 4 News Climate Debate*. At the

debate, she included language that stressed Scotland was a progressive country in its own right, such as, "Scotland is already leading the way", "the UN recognises us as a world leader", or "Scotland is one of the most renewable rich countries in the world" (*The Channel 4 News Climate Debate*, 2019). She strategically positioned Scotland on a global platform by identifying her party's achievements as the successes of the nation.

Sturgeon's performance in the debate was similar to that of Price. Both politicians shared many commonalities, such as their desire for independence for their countries, progressive political policies, and similar rhetorical choices. Price incorporated language that identified Wales as a separate nation and its people with a Welsh identity. For example, at the BBC debate, which was held in Cardiff, Wales, he stated, "Croeso y Cymru, welcome to Wales," and proceeded to highlight the potential of the country (*BBC Election Debate 2019*, 2019). Within Price's opening statement he included the Welsh language and phrases such as "we are a country with great potential, rich in talent and resources", "Labour and the Tories will, of course, blame each other, but the truth is neither of them are the solution to our problems, they are our problem's source", or "the new hope will never come from Westminster, it can only come from us that live in Wales"(*BBC Election Debate 2019*, 2019).

The correlation between the language and meaning incorporated in Sturgeon and Price's debate performances was noticeable. As seen in the phrases above, Price used similar tactics as Sturgeon, such as employing personal pronouns to pair himself with the Welsh nation and create a separation between Wales and Westminster. Throughout my data analysis, banal nationalism has featured in the political speech of multiple politicians on the debate stage. The evoking of banal nationalism emphasises a politician's political beliefs or policies and often prompts a feeling of unity, which is part of the conventional political message emphasising harmony and camaraderie (Bani-Khaled and Azzam, 2021:47 *also see* Billig, 1995:75). Since multiple politicians evoked nationalist language, it was evident that banal nationalism played a critical role in this election and was not an explicitly gendered practice.

A Different Voice

Throughout this analysis, I was particularly interested in whether female politicians engaged in stereotypical masculine speech styles. I found that Sturgeon and Swinson were willing to employ aggressive rhetorical techniques. However, these female politicians were not the only ones on the debate stage who incorporated this language into their debate performances.

Rayner was another female politician who engaged in aggressive speech tactics. She took an average of 20.5 uninvited speaking turns despite only attending two debates. Significantly, at the Britain Decides debate, Rayner took nearly half of all the total uninvited speaking turns by the politicians on stage. An interesting point of comparison was between Sturgeon's and Rayner's readiness to take more uninvited speaking turns than their opponents. Sturgeon and Rayner challenging the host for additional speaking time gave them longer speaking durations at the debates, with Sturgeon speaking for an average of 11m 83s and Rayner for an average of 11m 75s.

Sturgeon's and Rayner's challenge for more speaking turns paralleled with Brexit Party politicians Farage and Tice. When I analysed the debates these men attended, Farage and Tice consistently took the most uninvited speaking turns, with the exception of the Question Time Special. Farage took an average of 16 uninvited speaking turns, enabling him to speak for longer periods than his minor party opponents like Plaid Cymru or the Green Party and mirrored a similar speaking duration average to Rayner and Sturgeon. Tice only attended *The BBC Election Debate 2019*, but unlike Farage, Tice's attempt for extra speaking time did not accumulate to a significantly longer speaking duration than his minor party opponents.

My findings correlated with Banwart and McKinney's (2005:360) study, which found "no significant differences between female and male candidates' use of 'negative attacks'". Instead, they concluded that politicians in televised debates utilise a "strategy of gendered adaptiveness" (2005:353, 360 *also see* Maier and Renner, 2018:437). Extract 6 demonstrates the variation in debate styles male and female politicians utilise when confronting opponents. In the extract, Rayner adapted her language and vocal pitch to challenge Farage when the Brexit Party leader raised his voice in disagreement with his opponents.

Extract 6

Emma Barnett (EB): Can I ask you about this, we were talking about alliances before.   1
The Green position is for a people's vote (…) not to revoke (...) Article 50. Which is why
Caroline Lucas, your only MP, you're hoping to boost numbers, now a candidate of course.
She described the Lib Dem policy, you got into bed with the Lib Dems for this election,
as arrogant, cynical, and self-indulgent. How can you stomach sacrificing potential Green votes
when you are doing something with your own Brexit policy you don't agree with?   6

Jonathan Bartley (JB): She also dropped the F-bomb in that phrase as well.   7

EB: She did but it's pre-watershed, it's watershed and I am not going to do that.   8

JB: Look where there is- we are the least tribal party. Where there is common ground, we 9
are always going to work with other parties to try and find a way forward. We believe we
need a better form of politics. And of course, we don't agree with (uh) the Lib Dems on loads
of things. We stood up proudly against austerity in 2015 when even Labour compromised.
We've unequivocally stood up for migrants and refugees when other parties have compromised
and that horrible rhetoric that came out in the referendum, that scaremongering. And Nigel,
you standing in front of that breaking point poster was the lowest point in my life in politics.   15

JS: Can you address it?   16

NF: Yep-yeah. No, the truth can be horrible can't it.   17

Angela Rayner (AR): That ⌈wasn't the truth though Nigel.⌉ That wasn't the truth.   18
JS: ⌈THAT IS NOT THE TRUTH.   ⌉   19

NF: IT WAS A PHOTOGRAPH=   20

JB: =REALLY   21

AR: Are you going to apologise that wasn't the truth⌈and you know it wasn't the truth.⌉   22

NF: ⌊I can't apologise for the truth.⌋   23

NF: You've- you've ⌈I know you wouldn't support   24

AR: ⌊That wasn't the truth though Nigel, they were not refugees   25

NF: NO, YOU'RE RIGHT-YOU'RE RIGHT, THANK YOU! They were not refugees,   26
thank you. The Labour Party, the Labour supporter, you have just-you
have just-you have just   28

AR: YOU WERE TRYING TO DOG-WHISTLE RACISM AND YOU'RE A DISGRACE,   29
YOU'RE A DISGRACE FOR IT. YOU'RE A DISGRACE FOR DOG-WHISTLING RACISM.
APOLOGISE FOR IT, APOLOGISE. STOP PEDDLING HATE-STOP PEDDLING HATE
IN OUR COUNTRY.   32

(*BBC*, 2019)

The extract begins with a posed question to Bartley about his party's Remain alliance with the
Liberal Democrats. Bartley shifts the focus onto Farage's behaviour during the Brexit
referendum, but rather than continuing to challenge his behaviour, it is the women on stage
who confront Farage. Swinson and Rayner call on him to explain and apologise for his actions
during the Brexit referendum. Rayner took an uninvited speaking turn and was combative with

Farage by raising her voice and denouncing his behaviour. In Image 6.17, the second and third images show Rayner turning her body to point her finger at him. Farage does the same in response, and they both look as though they are battling one another. This finding highlights that politicians do not constrain themselves to gendered ideas of political speech. Politicians sought ways to increase their speaking durations and restate their campaign message, regardless of gender or political position.

Image 6.17. The images depict the exchange between Angela Rayner and Nigel Farage at the *Question Time: 2019 Under 30s Special.*

Challenging Aggressive Political Behaviour and Elitist Culture

During the BBC and ITV debates, a significant debate topic was the UK's relationship with the US and Donald Trump. The questions about Trump led to a discussion about his relationship with Johnson and Farage and the style of politics these men emulated. Party opponents suggested the Conservative and Brexit party leaders tried to mimic Trump's populist and transgressive political style. Research by Shaw (2019) has drawn comparisons with Johnson's performance to former US President Donald Trump where both used an "overtly hyper-masculine version of adversarial interactional dominance" (Shaw, 2019:113). Sturgeon and Swinson used this opportunity to warn voters of the threat these men posed to the UK. For example, Swinson capitalised during her allocated speaking periods to condemn the political style of Johnson, Farage, and Trump. In her opening statement at the ITV debate, Swinson emphasised how all three men would destroy the country and described the nightmare that would descend on Britain with these men in power when she stated:

> "Boris Johnson can't be bothered to talk to you tonight, he is leaving it to his cheerleader, Nigel Farage. And if they win on the 12th of December, you lose. Boris Johnson will start years of Brexit talks, stitch-up deals with Donald Trump, pick on people weaker than himself and stoke division in our country. And that is why Nigel Farage is happy to help him win" (*The ITV Election Debate*, 2019).

Swinson used phrases in her opening statement that depicted Johnson as a bully and a neglectful politician. She continuously vilified Johnson throughout the election, such as when she described Johnson as a "deceitful, treacherous villain" on her Twitter account (Jo Swinson, 2019o). Swinson then turned her attention to Farage, suggesting he was a cheerleader for Johnson (*The ITV Election Debate*, 2019), which presents him as a side-line supporter, removing his agency as a party leader. Next, Swinson utilised the rest of her opening statement to present her party as the better option to what she calls the "Farage-Johnson-Trump nightmare" (*The ITV Election Debate*, 2019). She incorporates personal pronouns in her statement to strategically align herself with the public while separating herself from these three men. She stated:

> "I am determined to stop them. We deserve better than the Farage-Johnson-Trump nightmare. Their plans for Brexit are not only about our place in Europe, there about the kind of country we are. I love our country, our United Kingdom, open, fair, and generous. We are stronger working with our friends than standing alone, tackling the climate crisis, helping the vulnerable, celebrating the richness of our diversity. If you want that brighter future, vote Liberal Democrat" (*The ITV Election Debate*, 2019).

Swinson switched between the personal pronoun "I", which represented herself when she said, "I am determined to stop them", to the personal pronoun "we", which represented herself and the nation. The personal pronoun "I" was incorporated to make claims about her effectiveness and determination as a political leader. Her switch to "we" formed an in-group between her and the British public, while Johnson, Farage, and Trump are referred to as "their" or "them", making them the out-group in the quote.

Later in the debate, Sturgeon also emphasised how the policies and attitudes of these men were not what the UK needed, calling them the "Trump-Johnson-Farage axis" (*The ITV Election Debate*, 2019). Similar to Swinson, she utilised phrasing that separated this trio from herself. However, instead of creating in-groups and out-groups between the British public and these men, she incorporated the people of Scotland as a separate group from the rest of the UK. Extract 7 exemplified the conversation between panellists when asked if the relationship with the US should become more or less special.

Extract 7

Julie Etchingham (JE): So, the question went to the heart of whether the special   1
relationship should become more or less special. Nigel Farage, clear and very vocal concerns
about the character of Donald Trump which have been raised by some on this platform,
Jo Swinson initially raised them in her opening statement. How do you respond
directly to that and are you comfortable being his friend?   5

NF: Well Obama brought in the so-called Muslim ban, but no one criticised him. He   6
was the one that named the seven countries for a total stop on anyone coming into America
should come from, Trump implemented it. And so, these -these really in many cases are very,
very false arguments. Look Donald Trump's style is very American, it may not be to everybody's
taste but just think about this he is our most important friend in the world and at a time- at a time
in huge global uncertainty we should think about not just trade with America but security and
making sure that NATO is not destroyed by the European Union. These things really matter.
And can I just say the biggest lie of this entire election campaign is that Trump wants to buy the
NHS. He does not and he will say so, I'm sure this week when he is here.   14

JE: We are going to talk ⎡about that very ⎤shortly but Jo Swinson you wanted to come in on that.   15
NF: ⎣I'm sure we will.⎦   16

JS: Look, Nigel, you know, you've just tried to defend Donald Trump. You know, you're   17
saying these things aren't what he said when we have all seen the footage of him talking and
boasting about sexually assaulting women.   19

NF: Are we talking about Obama⎡and you're-you're so-called Muslim ban.   ⎤   20
JS: ⎣No, no answer the point on Trump.   ⎦   21
Have you seen the footage of him⎡boasting about sexually assaulting women?⎤   22
NF: ⎣I HAVE-I HAVE   ⎦   23
AND IT WAS CRASS, IT WAS CRUDE, AND IT WAS WRONG, AND MEN SAY DREADFUL   24
THINGS SOMETIMES. But the point here is=   25

JS: =Oh, so it's just alright then.   26
NF: NO, THEY DO, THEY DO⎡ but if all of us   ⎤if all of us were called out for what we tell   27
NS: ⎣Some men in particular.⎦   28

NF: on a night out after a drink.   29

JS: OH, I'M SORRY IS THAT WHAT YOU DO ON A NIGHT OUT AFTER A DRINK, IS THAT WHAT   30
YOU DO ON A NIGHT OUT AFTER A DRINK NIGEL?   31

NF: I'm sure you've lived the purest life of anybody and never said a word wrong   32

about anything anywhere.   33

JS: OH, C'MON IT'S NOT PURITY TOO   34

JE: Nicola Sturgeon.   35

SB: What about those rallies when they are saying send her home,   36

American-born [um] congress woman. What about those rallies where they are shouting

send her home?   38

NF: Listen, American politics is in fact more divided in many ways than our politics   39

but all these false claims. You may not like him but he is president of the USA and that

relationship matters.   41

SB: That doesn't seem very American to me.   42

JE: Ok. Thank you, Nicola Sturgeon   43

NF: You are all so anti-American that you are prepared to put your hatred for Trump against   44

JE: Nigel Farage can we just bring in Nicola Sturgeon?   45

NF: our national interest and that is a big mistake.   46

JE: Thank you, Nicola Sturgeon.   47

NS: Well, Donald-Donald Trump amongst many other things demonises immigrants so it   48

is no wonder Nigel Farage really likes him=   49

NF: =Just like Obama before him.   50

NS: Well no.   51

NF: Just like Obama, Obama brought in the ban. You never attacked Obama=   52

JE: =Mr Farage.   53

NS: The fact of the matter is there is a trend today in politics of strong man politics.   54

NF: You never attacked Obama. Not once, not once.   55

NS: We've got Nigel Farage, Boris Johnson, and Donald Trump. That in my view is not   56
what the UK or any part of it needs. Donald Trump's attitudes I think are wrong and they are
dangerous and then Boris Johnson, we 've got somebody who is trying to be like him. That, I think,
is the wrong way to go and people in this country, people in Scotland have a big choice to make.
Are we going to allow our future to be dominated and decided by the Trump-Johnson-Farage axis
or are we going to choose something much better for the future for this generation and those
that come after it?   62

(*ITV*, 2019)

All the women on stage criticised Trump's behaviour and questioned Farage about his friendship with the former President (See Extract 7, Lines 17-19, 36-38, 56-62). Farage showcased his aggressive style of politics by raising his voice combatively, taking uninvited speaking turns, and continually speaking over the other politicians. He interrupted his opponents, blamed other political parties or immigration for the current state of Britain, and defended Trump's policies and rhetoric. On multiple occasions, Etchingham attempted to end Farage's speaking turn to allocate time to Sturgeon (See Extract 7, Lines 43, 45, 47). Sturgeon remained quiet as Farage continued to speak rather than interrupt or talk over him. In other debates in my dataset, Sturgeon would interject (See Extract 3, Line 22) when other opponents were speaking, suggesting she allowed Farage to continue talking and display his hyper-masculine style that she was denouncing. Price was the only male politician who contributed to the open debate about Trump's and Johnson's behaviour; neither the Conservative nor Labour representatives at the ITV debate participated in this discussion.

My analysis of the debates found that gendered elements of political performance are based on the circumstances and communicative interests of male and female politicians. According to former research, we "create, affirm, and learn what it is to be masculine or feminine" through social performances (Harmer et al., 2017:963). Interestingly, conversations about the contentious style of politics Johnson, Farage, and Trump emulated made gender a topic of discussion, leading the opposition to challenge a political style that would strengthen the idea of politics as a space for hostile men.

Not only was the misogynistic and antagonistic behaviour of these political men mentioned in a debate setting, but there were also references to the elitist culture in Westminster, known as the "old boys club". The old boys club is described as an elite group for men with a built-in network because of their education and background (Watters, 2016:108). Researchers have

noted that "male-dominated networks" reveal an "in-group bias and limited admission of outsiders such as women" (Stockemer et al., 2020:316). The in-group bias allows men to gatekeep, selecting candidates similar to the established members of the group. During the 2015 ITV debate, Sturgeon referenced "the old boy network at Westminster" to create a "negative allusion of her opponents" (Cameron and Shaw, 2016:75). At the Question Time Special, criticism for the old boys network reappeared when Price talked about the culture at Westminster. He said:

> "There is a deep dysfunction at the heart of our democracy. Brexit if you like had brought it to the [inaudible], it's thrown it into sharper relief, but it was always there. I mean when I got elected to Westminster in 2001, I could not believe what I saw, you know men in tights opening doors for you, you know it felt like a gentlemen's club, and I use my words very advisedly" (*The Question Time Under 30s Special*, 2019).

Price depicted an overtly masculine culture at Westminster that promotes exclusivity and membership to a network based on a person's class. Price's working-class upbringing makes the statement even more impactful because his father was a minor in a small Welsh village, which would traditionally exclude Price from this elite political network. The old boys club keeps men like Johnson, Farage, and Trump in positions of power and creates obstacles for political outsiders who do not meet the demands of the exclusive network.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided the key findings for the televised election debate corpus by examining the performances of each politician in attendance. I discovered that stereotypical ideas on male and female speech styles are more complex in the political sphere than previous researchers inferred. Instead, my findings align with recent scholarship, which has disputed the notion that a politician's speech is restricted by gender. Within my analysis, a politician's position in government, political experience, and debate strategy had a greater effect on their debate performance than their gender. However, similarly to the findings within the newspaper analysis, gender is not irrelevant to the debate dataset. Through discussions on the behaviour and political style of Johnson, Farage, and Trump, gender became a debate topic. This led to a further conversation that revealed how the atmosphere at Westminster reinforces the notion of politics as a male space. These discussions correlate with the work of previous researchers, who have exposed the male-dominated culture and elite networks in UK politics.

During their debate performances, Sturgeon and Swinson utilised both stereotypically masculine and feminine speech styles as a part of their debate strategies. As an accomplished political debater, Sturgeon successfully presented her campaign message, earned significant speaking time, and challenged her opponents. Meanwhile, Swinson's attempts to gain additional speaking turns, challenge her opponents, and personalise her presentation with narratives was not as successful as Sturgeon's performance. Swinson may have struggled to hold the same authority on the debate stage as Sturgeon because she had not been a party leader for as long as Sturgeon when the election was held. In the next chapter of my thesis, I will complete a comparative analysis of each medium. By highlighting the commonalities and differences of each medium, I aim to showcase the importance of examining minor party leadership within legacy and new media during an election.

Chapter 7. A Comparative Analysis of the Self-presentation and Media Representation for Nicola Sturgeon, Jo Swinson, and Arlene Foster during the 2019 UK General Election

This thesis has advanced the scholarship on gender, media representation, and political leadership by examining the representation of Nicola Sturgeon, Jo Swinson, and Arlene Foster during the 2019 UK General Election. The political leadership of minor parties can be overlooked, with a focus often on major parties during election periods. Throughout my research, I attempted to answer whether the media representation of female political leaders from minor parties in the UK challenged, complicated, or confirmed what previous literature has determined on the representation of gendered political leadership. In this chapter, I will draw conclusions on the self-presentation and media representation of these three political women based on my analysis of newspaper articles, Twitter, and televised election debates. However, I will begin by reviewing the findings on the self-presentation and media representation of these three female politicians.

As stated in the introduction, I was interested in how each woman presented themselves during the election and whether that representation aligned with their portrayal in the press. I argued that Sturgeon demonstrated her success as a leader, her party's political influence in the election and her ability to relate to voters on both her Twitter account and at the televised election debates. Specifically, she presented herself as an approachable and progressive female world leader, aligning herself with politicians like Finnish PM Sanna Marin and New Zealand PM Jacinda Ardern on Twitter or Plaid Cymru leader Adam Price at the televised debates to reinforce this message.

Sturgeon showcased her accomplishments and assertiveness as a political leader at the debates when she took uninvited speaking turns or highlighted her party's political success, echoing the content she posted on her Twitter account. Sturgeon's use of language was critical to her self-presentation, particularly her use of humorous remarks to mock her opponents which she employed throughout the election. Sturgeon's campaign focused on a better future for Scotland; however, she inserted herself into the UK-wide agenda, discussing issues such as Brexit, the NHS and the Conservative government's record.

Researchers have acknowledged the gendering of Sturgeon by the press is "complex" (Higgins and McKay, 2016:16). She has been portrayed in the Scottish media as a "shrew nippy sweetie" to "a more rounded inhabitant of both the domestic and political realms, enjoying typically feminine preoccupations such as clothes shopping" (Higgins and McKay, 2016:22). Scholarly work on Sturgeon has often focused on her media representation during the Scottish Independence referendum (McKay, 2017; Edwards, 2016) or the early years of her political leadership (Higgins and McKay, 2016; Torrance, 2015). My examination of Sturgeon explored her media representation during a period when she was already an established political leader and Scottish Independence was not the electoral focus. The variation in the coverage of Sturgeon in the newspaper dataset showed that the media representation aligned with specific aspects of her self-presentation according to the location of the newspaper.

Swinson's political strategy was to present herself as a capable female politician with leadership abilities fit for the position of prime minister. As a part of her self-presentation, Swinson consistently utilised family words and personal stories to promote her party. For example, she employed rhetoric such as "our neighbours" or "our allies" (Chapter 5, Tweet 5.14) that evoked a sense of community and belonging within the UK and the EU. Swinson also attempted to present herself as authoritative and assertive, specifically at the televised debates. However, she struggled to hold the same authority as Sturgeon on the debate stage; her attempts to gain additional speaking time were not always upheld, and she often complied when asked to end her speaking turn by a host. Interestingly, when Sturgeon was absent from a debate, Swinson took more uninvited speaking turns or spoke for extended periods. For example, Swinson took more uninvited speaking turns at the *Question Time: 2019 Under 30s Special* than at any of her other debate appearances, and at the *Britain Decides: The Everything But Brexit Debate*, the host allocated her more speaking turns than her opponents (See Appendix 4). Sturgeon is an experienced and talented communicator, and her absence at both debates left a gap that other minor party leaders, like Swinson, were able to fill.

As mentioned throughout this thesis, Swinson was the only party leader running for re-election and presented herself as a potential candidate for Prime Minister. Scholars suggested that Swinson's strategy to "aim for 10 Downing Street and attempt to overturn the result of the 2016 referendum" became unpopular amongst voters (Sloman, 2020:40). In addition, Swinson's self-presentation "as a more individualised political persona that focused on her campaign message" led to disapproval amongst voters and the press (Osei-Appiah, 2019:84).

The election coverage Swinson received was not only critical in tone but often explicitly gendering of her appearance and mannerisms, with ageism and sexism playing a significant role.

Foster's self-presentation was focused on her role as a politician, the issues affecting Northern Ireland and her support for unionism rather than statements about her personal interest or family. Her Twitter posts ranged from patriotic tweets and the events she attended as an MLA to canvassing for DUP candidates and promoting her party's policies. Foster's minimal engagement on Twitter and absence at the televised election debates did not produce sufficient data to make more impactful deductions about her self-presentation. However, I observed similarities between the Foster newspaper and Twitter datasets, particularly their focus on issues related to Northern Ireland.

In summary, there was a consistency in Sturgeon's representation and self-presentation that was not seen in the Swinson dataset, whilst the Foster dataset suggested that the leadership of minor parties is not as dependent on either social media or UK-wide news representation. Two themes emerged while examining all three analysis chapters: the role of the personal and the difference between a politician's media representation and self-presentation. Before discussing each theme, it should be noted that throughout these two sections, Sturgeon's and Swinson's representation in the Northern Irish press will not be cross-compared to their self-presentation, nor will Foster's self-presentation and representation in the Scottish news media. The marginal references to Sturgeon and Swinson in Northern Irish publications and Foster in Scottish publications did not amount to sufficient data to make meaningful conclusions. Having acknowledged this aspect of my data collection and reviewed the findings from the previous chapters, let us now explore the role of the personal in the representation of Sturgeon, Swinson, and Foster.

The Role of the Personal

My examination of prior scholarship indicated that the personalisation of politics has created an increased interest in the private life of politicians amongst the public, which encourages the news media to adapt their journalist practices (Smith, 2017:196; Wojdynski and Riffe, 2011:208). As a part of this study, I was interested in how a politician's private life and personal interest would be reflected in the self-presentation and media representation of these three political women and questioned whether my findings would mirror the work of

prior scholars of this topic. My analysis accumulated mixed results between the three political women in this study.

Sturgeon provided little information about her family life on Twitter or at the televised debates. She only mentioned her childhood once during her debate performance at *The Channel 4 News Climate Debate* without mentioning specific family members, and on Twitter glimpses of her family life appeared in retweeted photos of her husband on election day (Chapter 5, Tweet 5.03) or her mother at a campaign stop (Robertson, 2019). However, these posts were used to promote SNP candidates and were originally posted by the SNP party Chief Executive or a staff member's Twitter accounts rather than a curated tweet from Sturgeon.

The press rarely reported on Sturgeon's private life, reflecting the infrequency with which she mentioned her family life (Chapter 4, Table 4.08). The most common instance of publications referring to her family was during press interviews. For example, in an interview with *The National*, journalist Tom Jarvis asked Sturgeon if she considered her and her husband, Peter Murrell, "a power couple," to which she replied, "That's not how we would see ourselves" (Jarvis, 2019b). Sturgeon then described her home life with Murrell, stating, "He would probably tell you he is the one who keeps me on the go, doing the cooking and the cleaning" (Jarvis, 2019b). Interestingly, Sturgeon separated herself from the domestic duties of the home to ensure she presented as a capable leader not burdened by the domestic realm, paralleling with her self-presentation on Twitter and at the televised election debates.

Foster seldom mentioned her domestic circumstances or personal interests and hobbies. However, there were instances when publications, predominately in Northern Ireland, referred to Foster's family. This was due to Foster urging political rival Sinn Féin to condemn the assassination attempt on her father during the Troubles. Significantly, the inclusion of Foster's father emphasised how she and her family were entwined with the political conflict that has plagued the country for 30 years. The only instance when Foster's children were mentioned was in an article published by *The Times Magazine*, which reported the sexist online abuse directed at female politicians. Foster acknowledged that she, too, had experienced online abuse by stating:

"Social media is incredibly personal. If you walk down the street people wouldn't say what they say online or use the same language ... And it would be easier if they did,

because you could engage with them," she said. "When I was growing up [in Northern Ireland] we had the Troubles, but it wasn't continuous sexist, revolting, personal abuse like this. It's tough for my children. I don't think it scares them like we were scared by the IRA, but it really upsets them" (Sylvester and Thomson, 2019a, pp.34-35, 50-55).

Once more, Foster's statement about the effects online abuse has had on her and her children was interwoven with her political beliefs and support for unionism as she used this opportunity to denounce the IRA. Interestingly, Foster's comment provided insight into why she was not an avid Twitter user and the lack of personal information on her profile.

My analysis of Swinson found that her private life was mentioned more often in all media forms than Sturgeon and Foster. Swinson attempted to make her policies and campaign messages more relatable by referencing her role as a mother and wife on Twitter, at the televised debates, and in the press. For example, Swinson referred to her son in a tweet, "Wishing everyone a lovely St Andrew's Day! 🏴󠁧󠁢󠁳󠁣󠁴󠁿 (though in our house, most days feel like Andrew's day...😉(Swinson, 2019i) and at the televised debates, where she made private life references on eight occasions (See Appendix 4). In the press, Swinson discussed her domestic circumstances when being interviewed. For example, *The Daily Telegraph* journalist Judith Woods interviewed Swinson about her campaign and how she organised her busy schedule. Swinson then mentioned her home life, stating:

"My husband, Duncan, is amazing at running things at home, but he works full time. I'm better at shopping for presents, but he's a great cook. I'm more on the fish fingers end of the spectrum, so that's our division of domestic labour - except, in my case, it's not getting done" (Woods, 2019, p.22).

Swinson's statement indicated a clear division of domestic duties between her and her husband, separating her from traditional gendered tasks such as cooking. In another example, she mentioned her family in an interview with *The Metro*. She was asked, "You have a young family; what sort of change is needed in the workplace to help mothers and fathers juggle the pressures of work and family?" (Taylor and Lougher, 2019, pp.6,7). Swinson expressed her delight in receiving this question and noted the importance of "mothers and fathers" playing "their full role as parents" before explaining her policy for parents in the workplace. Similar to the statement above, Swinson used this opportunity to emphasise the "division of domestic

labour" is shared between men and women to further her campaign strategy as a progressive politician.

Previous research suggested women are often defined by their role as mothers and expected to exhibit "maternal" qualities, while men are not typically associated with fatherhood to the same extent (Stalsburg, 2012:10-11; Cameron, 2020). Therefore, political women are "torn between highlighting their experience as mothers and emphasising their masculine traits, obscuring signs of their femininity" (Kürschner, 2011:4). Interestingly, the press began utilising Swinson's role as a mother as a descriptor, which was demonstrated in Chapter 4 with examples such as "Swinson, a 39-year-old mother of two boys" (Woods, 2019, p.22) or "with a baby and five-year-old to juggle on the campaign trail while her husband is away on business" (Sylvester and Thomson, 2019, pp.40-41).

The responsibility of child care was associated with Swinson, and it was expected that she would juggle parenthood and her political responsibilities, linking to the "double duty" placed on female politicians (Thomas, 2002:347, *also see* Stalsburg, 2010:337; Sapiro, 1982:266). In a notable comparison, Sylvester and Thomson's statement paralleled the language used in Guy Kelly's *Telegraph Magazine* article, which was examined extensively in the newspaper analysis chapter. In the article, Kelly paid particular attention to her husband's career, positioning him in the public sphere like Sylvester and Thomson do when they write, "her husband is away on business". Meanwhile, Swinson's domestic responsibilities are highlighted in both instances, placing her in the private sphere.

It is evident that Swinson's attempt to incorporate her family life, at times, aligned with her representation in the media as "a hardworking mum of two young kids" (Roberts, 2019, p.25). However, as noted in the newspaper chapter, it also reminded voters of her domestic duties, placing her in the private sphere of the home and one way publications described Swinson. In contrast, Sturgeon and Foster did not make commentary that removed them from the public sphere, which aligned with their media representation. The following section will address the differences between these female politician's self-presentation and their media representation in various publications across the UK, particularly analysing the gendered coverage they received.

Exploring the Disparities between Sturgeon's, Swinson's, and Foster's Representation in Mediated Spaces

The analysis of gender and political leadership in various mediated spaces revealed similarities and differences between the representation of female politicians and their self-presentation in mediated spaces. In this section, I will examine how publications from distinct locations around the UK depicted these women and whether it aligned with their self-presentation. As previously stated, Sturgeon used her Twitter account and televised debate performances to highlight her leadership capabilities and the SNP's achievements (Sturgeon, 2019e; *The Channel 4 News Climate Debate*, 2019), which was echoed in the press. However, variations appeared when examining the differences between her Scottish and London-based media representation with her self-presentation.

London-based publications repeatedly acknowledged Sturgeon's efficiency and accomplishments as a politician, and she was the subject of the article 105 times (21.7%), which was more than in Scottish or Northern Irish publications. London-based publications highlighting her political success placed Sturgeon on a pedestal as an aspirational politician and this style of reporting often became more prominent after Sturgeon took part in a televised debate. The press portraying Sturgeon as an accomplished and competent politician aligned with how she presented herself. Surprisingly, more evident examples of this alignment were found in opinion pieces in *The Daily Telegraph* that have adopted a tabloidized style of writing similar to tabloid newspapers like *The Daily Mail*.

Both publications produced articles discussed in the newspaper analysis that depicted Sturgeon as an accomplished politician. For example, *The Daily Telegraph* columnist Lisa Armstrong paired Sturgeon with former German Chancellor Angela Merkel due to their political record and clothing (2019, p.28), while *The Daily Mail* columnist Henry Deedes commented on Sturgeon's performance at the *General Election 2019: Question Time Leaders Special*, calling her an "accomplished politician, watertight" (2019). Journalists comparing Sturgeon to female world leaders and highlighting her effectiveness aligned with her self-presentation as a party leader with an accomplished political record. The alignment between Sturgeon's self-presentation and representation in London-based press reinforced her successful political career to voters on a national platform.

Along with praising her political abilities, London-based press also applauded her appearance. In these instances, the gendering of Sturgeon's appearance was less critical or explicit than

Swinson's coverage. In the newspaper analysis chapter, I provided evidence of how the gendering of Sturgeon was, at times, positive in tone with quotes like, "Nicola Sturgeon looking slim in a powder blue suit accessorised by an Apple watch" (Tominey, 2019, p.6) or "Ms Sturgeon also showed she could cut the mustard, using balls of wool the same hue as her coat" (McAulay, 2019, p.3). However, this does not suggest London-based publications were not critical of Sturgeon's policies or trivialised her physical appearance. For example, Conservative-leaning news media would criticise Sturgeon over a possible coalition with the Labour Party (*The Daily Mail*, 2019a), her argument for Scottish independence (*The Sun*, 2019a, p.9), and objectify her physical appearance (Deedes, 2019). Although London-based publications praised Sturgeon's political performance matching her self-presentation, her appearance was trivialised, even if the tone of the sentence was positive.

The Scottish press did not give Sturgeon the same admiration as London-based publications. Instead, the press reported on Sturgeon's campaign, challenges between party opponents, and her political record. An interesting aspect of Sturgeon's representation in the Scottish press was the use of informal naming practices. As noted in the newspaper analysis chapter, informal naming practices appeared in tabloid-style newspapers, and voters or politicians often referred to Sturgeon by her given name. For example, in two Letters to the Editor mentioned in the newspaper analysis chapter, a *Scottish Sun* reader wrote, "Nicola should accept the true vote of the British people, or she'll end up like Salmond – dumped" (*The Scottish Sun*, 2019, p.38) or in *The Daily Record,* "Amazing lady, keep up the good work Nicola" (*The Daily Record*, 2019, p.36).

The informality in the way each reader addressed Sturgeon matched the relatability she presented to her Twitter followers. This finding suggests the personalisation of politics has created a perception that voters have a closer relationship with politicians without having met them. It also demonstrates the subtle ways in which female politicians are gendered in the press. It became clear that Sturgeon's self-presentation was portrayed differently, with the Scottish press aligning with her representation as familiar and informal and London-based media aligning with her presentation as an accomplished politician distinct from her opponents. Despite this discrepancy, there were similarities among Scotland and London-based publications that differed from Sturgeon's self-presentation, such as the objectification of her appearance and mannerisms within the UK national media.

As previously noted, Foster's use of Twitter to highlight Northern Irish issues and preserve unionism aligned with her newspaper coverage, specifically within publications in Northern Ireland, which often reported on the immobility of Stormont or the lack of cooperation between the DUP and Sinn Féin. London-based and Scottish publications also regularly focused on Northern Irish issues when including Foster in their election coverage. In one such example, Foster made comments to the media that she would be willing to work with the Labour Party if Jeremy Corbyn were not the leader (*The Daily Mirror*, 2019a, p.9), while in another example, she criticised Johnson's Brexit plan, which sought to put a border down the Irish Sea (*The Sun*, 2019b, p.2). Foster spoke about her opponents more freely on traditional media platforms rather than on her Twitter account. Instead, on Twitter she retweeted DUP politicians who attacked the opposition, like Emma Little-Pengelly, who posted a tweet attacking Corbyn and the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) and Carla Lockhart, who attacked Sinn Féin.

Foster's upbringing during the Troubles and her leadership of the DUP have entwined her self-presentation and media representation with the national conflict. The political friction between unionist and nationalist parties was more prevalent in Foster's self-presentation and media representation than references about her gender or commentary that objectified her appearance or mannerisms. As noted in the newspaper chapter, publications rarely included trivialising statements about her appearance or domestic life, aligning with her self-presentation.

Contrary to Sturgeon and Foster, the various publications, regardless of location, did not align with Swinson's self-presentation. Instead, a commonality amongst all publications in this thesis was that they contained articles which objectified Swinson. As argued in the newspaper analysis chapter, the gendered coverage of Swinson mirrored traditional scholarly findings on political women in the media. Swinson's appearance, clothing choices, and mannerisms were trivialised and attempts to present herself as a potential candidate for prime minister were met with belittling coverage. There was a specific emphasis on Swinson's voice, with publications, often London-based, insisting she sounded "bossy" (Vine, 2019). The trivialisation of her vocals paralleled with prior scholarship associating women's assertiveness with the gendered metaphor "the bitch" (Anderson, 1999:616). This gendered metaphor is synonymous with terms such as "uppity", "vocal", or "pushy" and reinforces negative stereotypes about women in power (Anderson, 1999:602).

Scottish publications like *The Scottish Sun* also referenced Swinson's vocals in a way that questioned her Scottish identity. For example, the journalist suggested she did not sound like an "MP for East Dunbartonshire" (*The Scottish Sun*, 2019, pp.10,11), which challenged how removed Swinson was from her Scottish constituency as an MP in Westminster. Interestingly, Scottish publications reiterated that Swinson was born in Scotland with statements like "from Milngavie" (Smith, 2019a, p.15). Swinson does acknowledge her Scottish roots in the news media (Lavelle and Musson, 2019, pp. 10,11) and on Twitter by identifying herself as "Scottish". However, these occurrences were minimal compared to Sturgeon, who, as the First Minister of Scotland, consistently displayed her Scottish identity through her personal interests and party policies.

Another objectifying aspect of the Swinson newspaper dataset was the references to her physical appearance. The newspaper analysis chapter highlighted that Scottish and London-based publications objectified Swinson's appearance and mannerisms through comments and images. For example, *The Scottish Sun* published an article that referred to Swinson as a "joker" and digitally altered her image with clown makeup and green hair (Musson and Patton, 2019, p.8,9), while *The Daily Telegraph* columnist Allison Pearson challenged Swinson's assertions that she received sexist fashion advice by writing, "I strongly suspect the advice was not sexist but sartorial" (Pearson, 2019, p.23). Pearson's column remarked on Swinson's appearance and clothing choices, sexualising her body and undermining Swinson's claims. Pearson gave the impression that Swinson took herself too seriously while Musson and Patton took it a step further and presented her as the Joker. Both articles exemplified how the press coverage of Swinson contradicted the relatable and professional self-presentation she was aspiring to during her campaign.

Swinson acknowledged the objectifying news coverage she received throughout the election. On Twitter, she used hashtags, such as #girlyswot, #DebateHer or #ImWithHer, to engage with election events and reclaim a trivialising narrative depicting her as a "bossy woman". For example, the hashtag #girlyswot was employed to oppose any assertion that Swinson was overbearing, while #DebateHer was a part of her Twitter engagement during the *Johnson V Corbyn: The ITV Debate*, which excluded her party. By acknowledging her gender and condemning the sexist abuse she experienced, Swinson attempted to rebrand her portrayal and instead present herself as a feminist and forward-thinking politician.

The connection between age and political capabilities was an important part of Swinson's media representation. There were minimal instances within the dataset when she commented on her age, or the connotations publications and political commentators drew about her age and ability to lead. For example, Swinson only acknowledged her age after Twitter user historian Dan Snow tweeted that Swinson was "young" (The History Guy, 2019), to which she replied, "I think 39 is politics young rather than actual young" (Swinson, 2019e). Ageism is often thought of as a negative stereotype towards older people, like when the news media questioned whether Hillary Clinton was too old to be president during the 2016 US Presidential election (Raynor, 2015:58) or the portrayal of Corbyn as a "magic grandpa" (McKinstry, 2019). However, ageism can also affect young people, who may face negative stereotypes, such as being "undervalued", "belittled", or seen as "incompetent" due to their age (de la Fuente-Núñez et al., 2021:1,7).

London-based and Scottish publications often mentioned Swinson's age, using it to describe her or suggest she lacked political experience. For example, in *The National* (2019a), a reader stated, "in her infinite stupidity and drawing from the shallow wells of her experience to date, Swinson declares the other two main UK parties are not fit to govern", or in *The Daily Mail* former Liberal Democrat politician Lembit Opik stated, "Jo is too young and has not developed emotional gravitas, that is the big problem" (Walters, 2019). The suggestion that Swinson has "shallow wells of experience to date" or was "lacking in emotional gravitas" undermined her self-presentation as a competent politician. Even when publications were not explicitly critical of Swinson's inexperience, articles presented Swinson as juvenile with statements like "Ms Swinson is a ground-breaking politician, the "baby of the House" when, at 25, she was first elected in 2005" (Wade, 2019, p.8). Phrases like "the baby of the House" continued to portray Swinson as inexperienced and juvenile. Interestingly, Swinson rarely challenged publications or journalists who commented on her age as she did over the sexist media treatment about her gender.

The ageism in the Swinson newspaper dataset was one of the most pronounced ways publications belittled her political ambitions. Yet, this coverage was also gendering, particularly when considering how Rishi Sunak's age as the "youngest Prime Minister in modern political history" was reported in the press (*ITV News*, 2022). During the 2019 UK General Election, Sunak was Chief Secretary to the Treasury and had only participated in two televised debates in Johnson's absence. Since the election, Sunak has risen to the position of Prime Minister,

which was considered record-breaking because he is the youngest as well as the first Prime Minister of Asian descent. Publications reported on his premiership as "youthful", "momentous", or "a piece of history in the making" (Dickson, 2023 *also see* Jones and Tesia, 2022). However, unlike Swinson, the press did not associate Sunak's age with inexperience. Instead, publications questioned if his extreme wealth and privileged upbringing would prevent him from understanding the daily challenges of the public during a cost-of-living crisis (Gilchrist, 2022). Scottish and London-based publications paired Swinson's age with naivety and a lack of leadership qualifications, while Sturgeon's and Foster's political experience were never questioned. Despite Swinson's efforts to present herself as a viable candidate alongside Johnson and Corbyn, the press failed to acknowledge her competence as a party leader and instead made dismissive comments that weakened her political credibility.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a comparative analysis of each medium within the thesis. It is clear that Sturgeon's presentation on Twitter and at the televised election debates more closely aligned with her representation in the press as an accomplished and approachable political figure than her female counterparts. She successfully communicated her party's political message and accomplishments while sharing aspects of her personality with voters and legacy media. Her successes in the election may have been due to her years of experience as a party leader and First Minister of Scotland. Importantly, Sturgeon was not running for re-election, nor was the electoral focus on Scottish Independence. These factors allowed Sturgeon to focus her campaigning efforts on SNP candidates and assert her government's position as a political influencer.

Unlike Sturgeon, Swinson's presentation as professional and prime ministerial did not reflect the news coverage she received. Her campaigning efforts were not as successful as Sturgeon's, possibly due to her political strategy and lack of experience. For example, her claim that she could be the next Prime Minister was considered foolish, and voters felt her plan to stop Brexit was undemocratic. Swinson starting the election with such remarks set her campaign off to a poor start. Swinson also personalised her presentation differently to Sturgeon by sharing private life information rather than only personal interest. Swinson's inclusion of her family paralleled a US political trend known as politicised motherhood, which was discussed in the literature review. Interestingly, the information she shared became a part of Swinson's coverage and identity, potentially in ways she had not intended. Importantly, Swinson was

new to her role as party leader, one of the youngest party leaders during the election, and the only politician in this thesis running for re-election. Her focus on her constituency seat and her party's interests may have affected her media coverage and political presentation.

Finally, Foster's election coverage, particularly in Northern Ireland, was in line with her self-presentation that lacked personalisation and focused on Northern Irish issues. Similar to Sturgeon, Foster's age and political experience was never questioned, nor was she campaigning for re-election. This allowed Foster to focus on her public duties, DUP candidates, and the inaction within Stormont. Notably, publications did not report on Foster as extensively as her female counterparts due to her marginal status in the election. Having discussed the comparative findings from my analysis, I will conclude this thesis in the following chapter by highlighting my contributions to knowledge and suggesting recommendations for future research.

Chapter 8. The Conclusion

At the start of my thesis, I did not initially grasp the complexity of examining multiple forms of media and politicians from the Scottish, Northern Irish, and Westminster political systems. Studying the minor party leadership of female politicians within the UK has allowed me to make meaningful contributions to knowledge on understudied party leaders and expand on the vast body of work discussing the representation of leadership in the news media. The culmination of my comparative analysis of each media platform has determined that my findings complicate what earlier scholarship has found on the media representation of political women.

Female political leaders within this study navigated a male-dominated political environment whilst continuing to receive gendering coverage within the press. Yet, the gendering of these female politicians was less frequent and often subtle. Instead of an overly simplified viewpoint on female political representation, I suggested the gendering of female politicians operates on a scale. Swinson received objectifying coverage that was explicit and mirrored the findings of traditional scholarship, while more subtle and infrequent forms of trivialisation appeared in the newspaper coverage of Sturgeon and Foster. Consequently, future studies may consider the subtle forms of trivialisation that appear in legacy news media.

A second finding I observed was that political women adopt diverse methods to present themselves that do not always conform to traditional gender norms. The language and behaviour of these female politicians were not solely masculine or feminine. In addition, some politicians' self-presentation can align with their representation in the press, while others may experience greater discrepancies. Social media has become an integral part of political practice and a way for politicians to communicate with the public directly. At the same time, televised election debates are still a relatively new practice within the UK that has become a regular feature of election periods. These findings have raised questions for future scholars to explore how new media affects the political process and how politicians and traditional news sources interact with these digital platforms and broadcast debates.

Another noteworthy finding from my thesis revealed the minimal conclusions I could make from the Northern Irish and Foster datasets. Foster was a much more localised figure than Sturgeon or Swinson, with her press and social media representation focused on Northern Irish issues. Although the datasets for the Northern Irish newspaper coverage and Foster were

limited, it does not suggest that the Northern Irish press should be excluded from a study of political leadership in national elections or diminish Foster's significance during the election. Instead, the Northern Irish newspaper and Foster datasets indicate that a different approach may be necessary to fully assess national newspapers concentrated on localised issues and how the press portrays politicians not actively present online or politically focused on UK-wide election topics during a national election.

In order to gain a better understanding of the representation of female politicians in Northern Irish coverage, scholars may consider a further analysis on less prominent minor party leaders. My thesis only examined three female party leaders during this period, yet multiple women held leadership positions across the UK. Analysing less prominent minor party leaders in the UK, particularly in Northern Ireland, could expand on existing knowledge about the media representation of female political leadership and led to the adaptation of new approaches to studying political women.

Due to the scope of my research, I was unable to make systematic comparisons between male and female politicians. However, my data did allow for a limited comparison between male and female politicians at the televised election debates by arguing that male and female politicians used a variety of debate strategies rather than employing a debate performance based on gender. Additionally, within my newspaper dataset, there were similarities between these three political women and the male politicians who appeared in the same articles. For example, male politicians, like Farage, were portrayed as political influencers while, at times, men, such as Corbyn, were criticised in the press for their appearance and mannerisms. Nonetheless, it is critical to remember that the trivialisation of these male politicians was never gendering.

To provide a more comprehensive understanding of these marginal findings, scholars may consider examining the political performances and media coverage of male politicians, particularly men not leading major parties or in leadership positions. For example, Sunak was not a prominent political figure during this period and only appeared in a minimal amount of election coverage (Deacon et al., 2019). However, future researchers may analyse Sunak's Conservative leadership campaign and current premiership, specifically focusing on the use of his origin story in both the 2019 televised election debates and his 2022 Conservative leadership campaign.

Before concluding this thesis, it is important to acknowledge that the UK political landscape has changed since I began this project. Politics is rapidly evolving, specifically in regard to the three female politicians in this thesis who are no longer party leaders. Following Swinson's resignation after the election, Ed Davey became leader of the Liberal Democrats. Edwin Poots replaced Foster as the DUP leader in Northern Ireland for 21 days before announcing his resignation in 2021. Jeffery Donaldson now leads the DUP. Sturgeon resigned as First Minister and was succeeded by Humza Yousaf in 2023. There have also been two Prime Ministers since Johnson was elected, one a woman and the second being the first Prime Minister from an ethnic minority background and the youngest. In addition, party leaders in Westminster and the Scottish Parliament have changed since the election.

Therefore, it would be remiss not to discuss Sturgeon's resignation speech as a reflection of the rapid change and potentially hostile political climate in the UK. On February 15 2023, Sturgeon gave her resignation speech where she emphasised two critical reasons she was stepping down from her position: the polarising and brutality of political discourse and the intersection between her public and private life. Sturgeon's resignation came four weeks after New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's resigned, in which Ardern also cited similar reasons for leaving her position.

In Sturgeon's speech, she highlighted her desire to be "Nicola Sturgeon the person, the human being" rather than "the politician" (*The Spectator*, 2023) and described the difficulties public life has had on her family. The personalisation of politics, especially on social media, has driven the public's desire to know more private information about politicians, leading to more personalised political strategies (Schwanholz et al., 2018:150 *also see* Jackson and Lilleker, 2011). Sturgeon's comments reflected on the challenges of fulfilling a public role and how her position interfered with her private life. Her speech also stressed the emotional labour female politicians are placed under daily and the ruthlessness of political discourse when people disagree with their decisions.

Misogynistic abuse towards women in politics, particularly ethnic minority women, has become a flagrant problem, and for some this abuse is paramount enough to keep women out of the political sphere (Lehr and Bechrakis, 2018). According to Julios, the public interest in online abuse of female MPs is often focused on more severe cases, "whereas more subtle forms of threatening and offensive behaviour often go unnoticed" (2023). Harmer and

Southern's recent study on "tweets sent to Westminster female MPs revealed that "digital microaggressions" can be as harmful to democratic participation as more direct forms of abuse" (2021 *also see* Julios, 2023). Interestingly, the brutality and sexist abuse Sturgeon experienced in the months leading up to her resignation mirrored the social media threats women were experiencing during the 2019 election. Researchers considered the 2019 UK General Election the "nastiest" campaign for online harassment (Compassion in Politics, 2021; House of Commons Women and Equalities, 2022), with a total of 18 female MPs stepping down due to the misogynistic abuse they received online as the source of their departure (Perraudin and Murphy, 2019).

It is clear from the examination of these three political women that politics is constantly changing. In recent years, UK political leaders have come and gone in shorter intervals. The events that have unfolded since the 2019 UK General Election have shown that any study of leadership is a study of a moment in time. By analysing the media representation of female politicians during elections, researchers can gain insight into the rapid shifts in politics and the significance of future political events.

Chapter 9. Appendices

Appendix 1

Newspaper Coding Schedule

The Unit of Analysis
The unit of analysis is newspaper articles. Coders will read through each article and write down the data accordingly. The data that will be recorded is textual and numerical. The questions will indicate when a coder should write an answer or match the correct category with the corresponding number. The three main subjects of this analysis are Nicola Sturgeon, Jo Swinson, and Arlene Foster.

1. Article Number
Write the article number. Each article will be given a number that can be found at the top right corner of each Nexis copy.

2. Title of the Article
Write the title of the article as it appears on the Nexis copy. If there is no title put "no headline".

3. Title of Newspaper
Write the number that corresponds with the correct title. The list below shows all possible newspapers.
1. The Guardian
2. The Daily Mail
3. The Sun
4. The Daily Mirror
5. The Times
6. The Daily Telegraph
7. The Metro
8. The Scottish Sun
9. The Herald
10. The Scotsman
11. The National
12. The Daily Record
13. Belfast Telegraph
14. News Letter
15. The Irish News

4. Week of the Media Coverage
Indicate the election week the article was produced. Each date can be found at the top of each Nexis copy.

1. Week One = November 6 to November 10
2. Week Two = November 11 to November 17
3. Week Three = November 18 to November 24
4. Week Four = November 25 to December 1
5. Week Five = December 2 to December 8
6. Week Six = December 9 to December 12

[Week One and Week Six do not amount to full weeks, meaning Monday to Sunday. The reasoning for this is the campaign period started on November 6th and ended on December 12th, 2019.]

5. Word Count

Write the word count of the article as shown on the Nexis copy. This information can be found at the top of the article. If there is no word count provided put "not given".

6. Gender of Reporter(s)

Write down the gender of the reporter(s) if you can make an inference based on their name. The name of the reporter(s) can be found within the article, in the reporter's online profile, or from their social media accounts. If the name does not allow you to make an inference mark "not known". If there is more than one reporter, and they are both males, put "male". Repeat this action if both reporters are female. If the reporters are male and female put "both". If you can only indicate the gender for one reporter, but not a second reporter within an article put "not known". Only put "non-binary" if that is how the reporter self-identifies.

1.   Male (including trans men)
2.   Female (including trans women)
3.   Non-binary
4.   Both
5.   Not known

7. Type of Article

Only code articles that reference the 2019 UK General Election or provide information that would be pertinent to know during an election. Election coverage could appear in nine categories. **News**-defined as articles that cover general news, events, or issues. The articles are factual and may list names, dates, and places in a formal tone. **Features**- defined as articles that explore a news topic more in-depth. These articles have a more opinionated and less conventional format, often taking the point of view of the author. **Opinion/Commentary**-defined as the personal thoughts of a guest or celebrity writer. These forms of writing share the opinion of the writer by informing or entertaining a reader. **Editorial/Leading Article**-these articles are usually written by a senior reporter and often express the viewpoints of the publication. This style of writing establishes an institutional voice that is often in the first-person plural "we think". The byline may be "The Sun Says" or "The Guardian View". **Letters to the Editor**-these are letters written to the publication, usually by readers. **Interviews**-defined as a set of questions asked by a journalist to an interviewee. On some occasions, the interview questions will be written out in the article for readers to see. **Sketch**-defined as a type of writing where a sketch writer will mock members of the UK's political class. It has been described as "verbal cartooning" and is satirical. **Briefings**-defined as short updates on current events that highlight general news occurring during that day or week. **Teaser**-defined as a short article or headline usually on the front page of a newspaper that will promote a news article or feature. **Other**-this category should only be used as a last resort and explain your reasoning if used.

1.   News
2.   Features
3.   Opinion/Commentary
4.   Editorial/Leading Article
5.   Letters to the Editor
6.   Interviews

7.   Sketch
8.   Briefings
9.   Teaser
10.   Other

[Nexis may provide the article type. This may be used for guidance in some instances when distinguishing between features, sketches, opinions, and editorial pieces. However, the coding guide should be used to identify article types.]

8. Topic of Article
[There are 21 topics that can be selected for this category. An article may mention multiple topics, but the coder should decide which topic is most prominent and only select one. I have defined 12 of those topics in greater detail to provide more clarity to the coder. All other topics on the list should be clear to identify in an article without a definition.]

Select the correct number that corresponds with the topic discussed in the article. **Electoral Process**-defined as articles about tactical voting, party pacts, internal party divisions, the misinformation of electoral integrity, etc. **Campaign/Election**-defined as articles commentating on a politician or their political party by a celebrity, former politician, columnist, or news outlet. The article may discuss personal information about the politician, opinions on the politician's leadership ability, or an overview of their political career. These articles can be supportive, critical, or neutral in tone and may take the form of a feature, opinion, or commentary piece. **Campaign Stops**-defined as a designated campaign stop the politician makes during the election. Coders should only use this category if the campaign stop was the subject of the article. **Economy/Business/Trade**-defined as articles that refer to economic growth, trade after Brexit, or the economic policy of a political party. **Defence/Military**-defined as articles discussing national security, war, or terrorism. **Crime and Law/Order**-includes any articles discussing police presence, knife crime, or community safety. **Austerity**-coders should use this category if the article is directly discussing austerity or what a political party has done to cause austerity. **Public Services**-any articles about poverty, homelessness, the housing crisis, broadband, etc. **Corruption/Scandal/Scrutiny**-defined as any article about politicians or political parties engaging in corruption, scandal, or being scrutinised. An example includes articles about the anti-Semitic accusations against the Labour Party. **Taxation**-defined as articles that refer to income tax, national insurance, or comparing tax internationally. **Debates**-any articles advertising a debate or commentating on the debate performance of the politician. **Other**-this category should only be used as a last resort and explain your reasoning for using this category.

1.   Electoral Process
2.   Campaign/Election
3.   Campaign Stops
4.   Brexit
5.   Economy/Business/Trade
6.   Healthcare
7.   Defence/Military
8.   Crime and Law/Order
9.   Environment
10.   Public Services
11.   Austerity
12.   Immigration
13.   Employment

14.   Education
15.   Scottish Independence/Devolution
16.   Corruption/Scandal/Scrutiny
17.   Taxation
18.   Stormont/Northern Irish Assembly
19.   Unionism
20.   Debates
21.   Other

n.b) The remaining questions (9 to 20) in this guide should be answered in regard to Nicola Sturgeon, Jo Swinson, and Arlene Foster. There may be instances where these women appear in the same article. Coders will need to complete the questions multiple times to account for each of these three female politicians within a single article.

9. Reference to Private Life
Indicate if there is a reference to Sturgeon's, Swinson's, or Foster's private life within the article. "Other" should be used only as a last resort and you should explain your reasoning for using this category. If there is no reference to the private life or personal interest of the politician, put "no reference".

1.   Parents
2.   Children
3.   Marriage/Partner
4.   Extended family
5.   A politician's childhood
6.   Hometown
7.   Personal hobbies or interest
8.   Other
9.   No reference

10. Function of the Politician in an Article
Determine the prominence of Sturgeon, Swinson, and Foster within each article. Coders will use three categories to indicate the function of the politician within the article. Politicians should be coded as "main actor" when they are the subject of the story. For politicians that play a significant role but are not the main focus of an article put "key actor". Examples of these types of articles include a politician giving a response or commenting about another politician or issue. Politicians coded as "minor actor" are not the central focus of the article or asked to comment.

1.   Main actor
2.   Key actor
3.   Minor actor

11. Presence of Male Politician(s)
Write down the correct corresponding number of male politicians that appear in an article with either Sturgeon, Swinson, or Foster. If a male politician appears in an article that is not listed below, put "other" and specify which politician was mentioned. If the article mentions a male politician who is no longer serving in government put "former politician" and write down their name in the same provided. If multiple male politicians appear in an article, make an indication of all present politicians. If there is no mention of any male politicians in the article put "none mentioned".

1. Boris Johnson
2. Jeremy Corbyn
3. Nigel Farage
4. Adam Price
5. Jonathan Bartley
6. John McDonnell
7. Michael Gove
8. Sajid Javid
9. Chuka Umunna
10. Matt Hancock
11. Dominic Rabb
12. Richard Leonard
13. Willie Rennie
14. Jackson Carlaw
15. Donald Trump
16. Former politician
17. Other
18. None mentioned

11a. What is the function of the male politician(s) in the article?
Determine the prominence the male politician has within the article. Coders should be using the same coding structure as question 10. If multiple male politicians appear in the article they should be coded individually.

1. Main actor
2. Key actor
3. Minor actor

12. Presence of any additional female politician(s) within the article?
Write down the correct corresponding number of female politicians that appear in an article with either Sturgeon, Swinson, or Foster. If a female politician appears in an article that is not listed below, put "other" and specify which politician was mentioned. If more than one additional female politician appears in an article, make an indication of all present politicians. If the article mentions an additional female politician who is no longer serving in government put "former politician". If there is no mention of any additional female politicians in the article put "none mentioned".

1. Angela Rayner
2. Priti Patel
3. Diane Abbott
4. Luciana Berger
5. Dawn Butler
6. Rebecca Long-Bailey
7. Michelle O'Neill
8. Mary Lou McDonald
9. Siân Berry
10. Caroline Lucas
11. Emily Thornberry
12. Heidi Allen
13. Nicky Morgan
14. Amber Rudd

15.	Theresa May
16.	Hillary Clinton
17.	Former politician
18.	Other
19.	None mentioned

12a. What is the function of the additional female politician(s) in the article?
Determined the prominence the additional female politician has within the article. Coders should be using the same coding structure as question 10. If multiple female politicians appear in the article they should be coded individually.

1.	Main actor
2.	Key actor
3.	Minor actor

13. Type of Reference to Physical Appearance
Select the correct corresponding number with the physical appearance that was referenced in the article about Sturgeon, Swinson, or Foster. Examples might be, "her dress really showed off her figure" or "looks like she got a new hairdo". If the article makes multiple references to a politician's physical appearance, note all instances. If her physical appearance is not mentioned put "no reference".

1.	Body
2.	Weight
3.	Height
4.	Facial features
5.	Vocals
6.	Hair
7.	Makeup
8.	Clothing
9.	Personal style
10.	No reference

14. Type of Reference to Age
Indicate when Sturgeon's, Swinson's, or Foster's age was referenced in the article. If the article references the substantial number of years a politician has been in politics, this should be coded as "reference to substantial years of experience". Examples include articles referring to the politician as "outdated, old-fashioned, or a dinosaur" or "experienced or a seasoned politician". If the article references the minimal number of years a politician has worked, this should be coded as "reference to minimal years of experience". Examples include any article that refers to the politician as "inexperienced" or "young", "new", or "fresh". Make an indication for all references, including approvals, disapprovals, or neutral comments about the politician's age or experience. Reference to numerical age should only be used if the article states the politician's age. Coders should put "no reference" if there is no reference to age.

1.	Reference to substantial years of experience
2.	Reference to minimal years of experience
3.	Reference to numerical age
4.	No reference

15. Is there a reference to given name, surname, nickname, or title?
Code how Sturgeon, Swinson, and Foster are referred to by name in the article. Articles that write the first name only of the politician should be coded as "reference to given name". Articles that only reference the politician by their surname should be coded as "reference to surname". Articles that refer to the politician by their full name such as Nicola Sturgeon or Arlene Foster should be coded as "reference to full name". Articles that include any nicknames for the politician should be marked as "reference to nickname". Examples of nicknames include Nic or Nippy Nicola. Articles that include the politician's position in government should be coded as "reference to title". Examples include First Minister, Lib Dem Leader, DUP Leader, or SNP Leader. "No reference" includes articles that do not refer to one of the four categories above. If an article uses more than one of the listed categories, a coder should indicate all references to name that were used.

1.   Reference to title
2.   Reference to given name
3.   Reference to surname
4.   Reference to full name
5.   Reference to nickname
6.   No reference

16. Is there a reference to children?
Code all references to children in the article. This would include references to the politician's children, a politician not having children, or the politician interacting with children in the article. Make an indication for all references including approvals, disapprovals, or neutral comments made about the politician. If a child is not referenced in the article put "no reference".

1.   Reference
2.   No reference

17. Is there a reference to sexuality or sexual orientation?
Code if there is a reference to Sturgeon's, Swinson's, or Foster's sexual orientation.

1.   Reference
2.   No reference

18. Is there a reference to sex or sexual language?
Code if the article uses sexual language or references sex in regard to Sturgeon, Swinson, or Foster. Sexual language would include any reference to female genitalia, male genitalia, the act of sexual intercourse, and intimate body hair and breasts. Examples of this type of language could be "her breasts were on display in that low-cut top" or "who wouldn't want to get in bed with her?".

1.   Reference
2.   No reference

19. Is there a reference to marital/relationship status?
Code if the article refers to Sturgeon's, Swinson's, or Foster's spouse or marriage. Examples could include "Nicola Sturgeon and her husband" or "Swinson's partner".

1.   Reference
2.   No reference

20. Is there an explicit reference to gender?
Code if there is a reference to Sturgeon's, Swinson's, or Foster's gender or if their gender becomes the focus of an article. Indicate if gender is used as a descriptor or label for the politician such as "female politician", or "first female party leader". Code if the politician is described as a specific gendered noun such as "the wife of", "the mother of" or "she's the first woman to lead her party".

1.   Reference
2.   No reference

21. Does this article warrant further analysis?
An article warrants further analysis if it clearly sustains or challenges the explicit gendered references found in the text. For example, if the female politician is the subject of the article without the presence of a male politician or if the text explicitly references physical attributes or private information about the politicians. Coders should put "yes" for further analysis and "no" if there is no further action that needs to be taken.

1. Yes
2. No

22. Mention of politician x2
If an article includes more than one politician, go back and repeat questions 9 to 20 for the second politician mentioned.

23. Mention of politician x3
If an article includes all three politicians go back and repeat questions 9 to 20 for the remaining politicians that have not been coded.

Images
n.b) Coders should answer the following questions based on all the politicians that appear in the image(s).

24. Is there an image used in the article?
Indicate whether an image was used in the print publication. This information can be found on the Nexis copy by looking at the bottom of the article in the section marked "graphic". I will also indicate which articles have images attached to them by making a note on the top left corner of the Nexis copy. For articles that do not have an image put "no".

1. Yes
3. No

n.b) If no image accompanies the article, stop after question 24. If more than one image accompanies the article, coders must complete questions 25 to 31 for each image that is printed with the article.

25. What type of shot was used?
Code the type of shot that was used. **Close-up**-defined as a shot that shows the most detail, usually of the face, eyes, and neck. **Medium**-defined as a shot from medium distances. It will

show equal space between the subject and the background. **Long**-defined as a wide shot that shows the subject and its surroundings.

1. Close-up
2. Medium
3. Long

26. Is there a caption along with the image?
Code if the image has a caption describing who is in the image and their actions. This can be found in small print, traditionally, below the photo.

1. No caption
2. Caption

27. Is there a party leader present in the image?
Match the correct corresponding number with the party leader that is visibly present in the image. If multiple party leaders are present indicate all politicians that are present in the image. If there is no image of a party leader put "not applicable".

1.   Boris Johnson
2.   Jeremy Corbyn
3.   Jo Swinson
4.   Nicola Sturgeon
5.   Arlene Foster
6.   Siân Berry
7.   Jonathan Bartley
8.   Nigel Farage
9.   Adam Price
10.   Jackson Carlaw
11.   Richard Leonard
12.   Willie Rennie
13.   Mary Lou McDonald
14.   Not applicable

28. Is there an additional politician(s) in the image?
Indicate if an additional politician is present in the image. If there are multiple additional politicians in the image, make an indication of each politician. If there is not an additional politician present in the image put, "not applicable".

1.   Yes
2.   No
3.   Not applicable

28a. What is the gender of the additional politician(s) present in the image?
Indicate the gender of the additional politician in the image. If there are multiple additional politicians in the image, make an indication of each politician's gender. If there is not an additional politician present in the image put, "not applicable".

1.   Male (including trans men)
2.   Female (including trans women)

3. Non-binary
4. Not known
5. Not applicable

28b. What political party is the additional politician(s) from?
Indicate the political party the additional politician represents. If there are multiple politicians in the image, make an indication of all the political parties that are represented. If there is not an additional politician present in the image, put "not applicable".

1. Conservative Party
2. Labour Party
3. Liberal Democrats
4. Scottish National Party
5. Green Party
6. Plaid Cymru
7. Democratic Unionist Party
8. Sinn Féin
9. Alliance Party
10. Social Democratic and Labour Party
11. Not applicable

29. Describe the action or task happening in the image?
Write down the action or task happening within the image. For example, this could be a politician being interviewed, posing for a photo, or speaking to the public.

30. Is there a reference to Nicola Sturgeon's, Jo Swinson's, or Arlene Foster's private life or personal interest in the image?
Indicate if there is a reference to Sturgeon's, Swinson's, or Foster's private life or personal interest within the image. "Other" should be used only as a last resort and you should explain your reasoning for using this category. If there is no reference to the private life or personal interest of the politician, put "no reference".

1. Parents
2. Children
3. Marriage/Partner
4. Extended family
5. A politician's childhood
6. Hometown
7. Personal hobbies or interest
8. Other
9. No reference

31. Is the media, a business, or the public present in the image?
Match the correct corresponding number with the category that is present in the image. Put **organisation** if a charity, business, or school is present in the image. Anytime a journalist appears in the photo, put **journalist**. This would include journalists who are interviewing the politician, questioning politicians at a campaign stop, or hosting a debate. **Members of the public** include any person or group of people at a rally, speech, campaign stop, etc. A coder should put **children or young people** anytime children appear in the photo. This would include times when the politician is speaking or taking a picture with children or holding a baby. The only time **inanimate object** should be used is if there is an object in the image that is not living

and the focal point of the image such as a photo of a ballot box. **Current/prominent politicians** include current politicians in foreign governments and former politicians who held leadership roles, such as David Cameron, Donald Trump, Ed Miliband, Nick Clegg, Theresa May, and Hillary Clinton. **Celebrities/prominent figures** include a person who is famous or has wide public recognition, such as a sports star or entertainer. If a coder can identify more than one subject in the image than they should make an indication. **Other** should only be used as a last resort and explain your reasoning for using this category.

1. Organisation
2. Journalist
3. Members of the public
4. Children or young people
5. Inanimate object
6. Current/prominent politicians
7. Celebrities/prominent figures
8. Other

Appendix 2

Twitter Coding Schedule

The Unit of Analysis
The unit of analysis is the tweet. Each coder will read through the tweet and record the data accordingly. Each tweet comes from the accounts of either Nicola Sturgeon, Jo Swinson, or Arlene Foster during the election period. The data that will be recorded is textual and numerical. Coders will be asked to match the correct category to the corresponding number and will be instructed when to code tweets, quote tweets and retweets. I have created a Twitter dictionary of terms below this guide to reference while coding.

[Coders should only complete questions 1 to 9 and 19 to 24 for retweets. All questions should be completed for tweets and quote tweets.]

1. Tweet Number
Each tweet will have a number allocated to it and coders should enter the correct tweet number. All tweets, retweets, and quote tweets for that day will be numbered chronologically. For example, if Arlene Foster tweeted four times on November 10th, the first tweet posted that day would marked as AF-Nov10-1, while the last tweet posted that day would be marked as AF-Nov10-4.

2. Is this a tweet, retweet, or quote tweet?
Indicate if this is a tweet created by the politician (original tweet), if the politician retweeted another account but added a comment (quote tweet), or if they retweeted another account (retweet). If a coder is unclear about the terminology, they should refer to the Twitter dictionary created at the end of this guide.

1.   Original tweet
2.   Retweet
3.   Quote tweet

3. Week of the Tweet
Indicate the election week the tweet was posted. The date can be found on the tweet.

1. Week One = November 6 to November 10
2. Week Two = November 11 to November 17
3. Week Three = November 18 to November 24
4. Week Four = November 25 to December 1
5. Week Five = December 2 to December 8
6. Week Six = December 9 to December 12

[Week One and Week Six do not amount to full weeks, meaning Monday to Sunday. The reasoning for this is the campaign period started on November 6th and ended on December 12th, 2019.]

4. Tweeter's Name
Enter the full name of the account that posted the tweet, retweet, or quote tweet. For this category, coders will either put Nicola Sturgeon, Jo Swinson, or Arlene Foster because these are the only Twitter accounts being analysed.

5. Name of Retweeted Account

Enter the full name of the account that was retweeted by Sturgeon, Swinson, or Foster. For example, if Swinson retweeted an article from The Guardian, a coder would put The Guardian.

6. Handle of Retweeted Account

Enter the handle name of the account that was retweeted by Sturgeon, Swinson, or Foster. For example, if Sturgeon retweeted Peter Murrell, a coder would put @PeterMurrell.

7. Gender of Retweeted Account

If you can infer, indicate the gender of the account holder Sturgeon, Swinson, or Foster retweeted. This may be done by looking at the name of the account, their profile picture, pronouns provided in their Twitter profile, or gendered titles such as Mr, Miss, Ms, and Mrs. If the coder cannot determine a gender put "not known". If a news organisation, business, charity, or school were retweeted put "not applicable".

1.   Male (including trans men)
2.   Female (including trans women)
3.   Non-binary
4.   Not known
5.   Not applicable

8. Topic of Tweet

[There are 24 topics that can be selected for this category. I have defined 14 of those topics in greater detail to provide more clarity to the coder. All other topics on the list should be clear to identify in a tweet without a definition.]

Match the correct tweet topic with the corresponding number. **Electoral Process**- tweets about tactical voting, party pacts, internal party divisions, the misinformation of electoral integrity, etc. **Economy/Business/Trade**-any tweets that refer to economic growth, trade after Brexit or the economic policy of a political party. **Taxation**-defined as tweets that refer to income tax, national insurance, or comparing tax internationally. **Corruption/Scandal/ Scrutiny**-are any tweets about politicians or political parties engaging in corruption, scandal, or avoiding scrutiny. A tweeter could be defending their political record against an accusation or could be accusing another party or politician of a scandal. Examples include tweets about anti-Semitic accusations against the Labour Party or the SNP's record with prolonged hospital wait times. **Defence/Military**-defined as tweets discussing national security, war, or terrorism. **Crime and Law/Order**-includes any tweets discussing police presence, knife crime, or community safety. **Public Services**-any tweets about poverty, homelessness, the housing crisis, broadband, etc. should be coded as public services. **Campaign Stops**-any campaign stops the politician makes for herself or other members of her party. **Campaign Promotions**-any tweets that are promoting the politician, her party, or party members. Examples include "voting Liberal Democrat is the only way to lock Boris Johnson out" or "Vote DUP to get the NI assembly working again". Promotions could include retweets from celebrities, former politicians, or news outlets supporting the politician or her party. **Austerity**-coders should use this category if the tweet is directly discussing austerity or what a political party has done to cause austerity. **Campaign Commentary**-defined as tweets commentating or supporting a politician, her party's political record, or her leadership ability by a celebrity, politician, or news outlet. Coders should also indicate if the tweeter was commentating on another political party, their policies, or a politician's leadership ability during the election. **Non-election Engagements**-any activity the politician takes part in as a part of her role. These tweets are not related to the election. **Non-election Tweets**-any tweet not associated with the election.

Examples may include post about the tweeter's private life, personal activities, or her general thoughts and opinions. **Other**-should only be used as a last resort and explain your reasoning for using this category. All other topics should be clear when coding.

1.   Electoral Process
2.   Campaign Commentary
3.   Campaign Stops
4.   Brexit
5.   Economy/Business/Trade
6.   Healthcare
7.   Defence/Military
8.   Crime and Law/Order
9.   Environment
10.   Public Services
11.   Austerity
12.   Immigration
13.   Employment
14.   Education
15.   Scottish Independence/Devolution
16.   Corruption/ Scandal/Scrutiny
17.   Taxation
18.   Stormont/Northern Irish Assembly
19.   Unionism
20.   Debates
21.   Campaign Promotions
22.   Non-election Tweets
23.   Non-election Engagements
24.   Other

9. Reference to Private Life
Code if there is a reference to Sturgeon's, Swinson's, or Foster's private life. This would include a reference to their family, marriage, personal interest, or hobbies, etc. Coders should analyse tweets, retweets, and quote tweets. "Other" should only be used as a last resort and you should explain your reasoning for using this category. If there is no reference to the private life of the politician put "no reference".

1.   Parents
2.   Children
3.   Marriage/Partner
4.   Extended family
5.   Politician's childhood
6.   Hometown
7.   Personal hobbies or interest
8.   Other
9.   No reference

n.b) Retweets will not be coded for question 10 to 18. Coders should mark all answers for retweets as "not applicable".

10. Tone
Indicate whether the tweet was supportive/positive, critical/negative, mixed, or neutral in tone. Code the tone as "supportive/positive" if the tweet is explicitly approving of their party, party members, a new policy, the reporting style of a news organisation, etc. One way to help determine a positive tone is the use of language such as great, brilliant, strong, smart, etc. Code the tone as "critical/negative" if the tweet is explicitly disapproving of a politician's behaviour, a political party's policies, a news programme's broadcast, etc. Coders should select "mixed" if both positive and negative evaluations are present in the tweet. An example includes Sturgeon tweeting about the lack of originality in the Labour's policy and how the SNP have already put that policy into practice. If the tweeter uses sarcasm or makes a joke at the expense of another politician code as mixed. Put "neutral" if the tone of the tweet is neutral and if you cannot determine the tone put "not known".

1. Supportive/Positive
2. Critical/Negative
3. Neutral
4. Mixed
5. Not known

[For quote tweets, coders should only be determining the tone of the comment written by Sturgeon, Swinson, or Foster, not the retweeted material itself.]

11. Is there a mention or a reply in the tweet?
Indicate when Sturgeon, Swinson or Foster mentions or replies to another politician, member of the public, charity or business, news organisation, or journalist in one of their tweets. A mention is defined as a tweeter including another account's handle in a tweet. For example, "I feel that @NicolaSturgeon and I should…" would be identified as a "mention". A reply is when a tweeter writes directly to the account user by using their handle first in a tweet such as "@LibDems I am not impressed". This should be marked as a "reply". If the tweet does not include a mention or reply put "not applicable".

1. Mention
2. Reply
3. Not applicable

[To be considered a mention or a reply, the tweeter must tag another account user in their post by using their Twitter handle. The @ symbol must be in front of the account user's name to signify they have been tagged within the tweeter's post.]

12. Is there a party leader present in the tweet?
Match the correct corresponding number with the party leader that was present in the tweet or quote tweet. Coders should include mentions, replies, or posts when the party leader is included, regardless of whether the politician is tagged within the tweet. Coders should note that any form of the politician's name should be coded, such as their full name, given name, surname, nickname, hashtags, and Twitter handle. If the tweeter does not mention a party leader put "none mentioned".

1. Boris Johnson
2. Jeremy Corbyn
3. Jo Swinson
4. Nicola Sturgeon

5.   Arlene Foster
6.   Siân Berry
7.   Jonathan Bartley
8.   Nigel Farage
9.   Adam Price
10.   Jackson Carlaw
11.   Richard Leonard
12.   Willie Rennie
13.   Mary Lou McDonald
14.   None mentioned

13. Is a political party present in the tweet?

Indicate if Sturgeon, Swinson, or Foster included a political party within her tweet or quote tweet. Coders should indicate if the tweeter posted about their party or an opposing political party. This would consist of political parties that were mentioned, replied to, or left untagged within a post. All nicknames, abbreviations, and hashtags for the political party, such as "#Tories" or "#SNP", should be included. If the tweeter includes a government account in her tweet, put "government account". This would include the following accounts: Scottish Parliament, Scottish Government, First Minister of Scotland, UK Prime Minister, UK Parliament, House of Commons, or The Northern Ireland Assembly. If the tweeter does not mention a political party, put "none mentioned".

1.   Same political party
2.   Opposing political party
3.   Government account
4.   None mentioned

14. Is a party member present in the tweet?

Indicate if Sturgeon, Swinson, or Foster included a party member in the tweet or quote tweet. This would include same party members and opposing party members that have been mentioned, replied to, or left untagged within a post. For example, "Amy Callaghan will make a great MP" would be coded even though she has not been tagged. All hashtags that include the party member's name should be coded. If the tweeter does not mention a party member, put "none mentioned".

1.   Same political party member
2.   Opposing political party member
3.   None mentioned

14a. What is the gender of the party member present in the tweet?

Indicate the gender of the party member present in the tweet or quote tweet. If there is more than one party member in a post, coders should indicate the gender for each political party member present within the tweet.

1.   Male (including trans men)
2.   Female (including trans women)
3.   Non-binary
4.   Not known

15. Is the media, a business, or the public present in the tweet?
Match the correct corresponding number with the category that was present in the tweet or quote tweet. Any mentions, replies, or untagged organisations or individuals should all be coded. Coders put **organisation** if a charity, business, or school is present in the tweet. Put **media outlet** if a news organisation is present and anytime a journalist appears in the tweet, put **journalist**. **Celebrities/prominent figures** include a person who is famous or has wide public recognition, such as a sports star or entertainer. **Current/prominent politicians** include current politicians in foreign governments and former politicians who held leadership roles, such as David Cameron, Donald Trump, Ed Miliband, Nick Clegg, Theresa May, and Hillary Clinton. **Members of the public** include any person or group of people at a rally, speech, campaign stop, etc. If Sturgeon, Swinson, or Foster does not mention any of the following categories put **none mentioned**. Code hashtags that include any of the following categories mentioned above.

1. Members of the public
2. Organisation
3. Media outlet
4. Journalist
5. Celebrities/prominent figures
6. Current/prominent politicians
7. None mentioned

16. Reference to Age
A coder should indicate if Sturgeon, Swinson, or Foster referred to age, either about themselves or another politician. If the tweet references the substantial number of years a politician has been working, this should be coded as "reference to substantial years of experience". For example, a tweet may refer to a politician as "outdated or old fashioned" or "experienced or a seasoned politician". If the tweet references the minimal number of years a politician has worked, this should be coded as "reference to minimal years of experience". For example, a tweet may refer to a politician as "inexperienced" or "young", "new", or "fresh". Make an indication for all references, including approvals, disapprovals, or neutral comments made about a politician's age or experience. "Reference to numerical age" should only be referenced if the tweet states the age of a politician. Coders should put "no reference" if there is no reference to age.

1. Reference to substantial years of experience
2. Reference to minimal years of experience
3. Reference to numerical age
4. No reference

17. Reference to given name, surname, full name, nickname, or title
Indicate how Sturgeon, Swinson or Foster refer to other politicians in a post. Coders should not include any Twitter handles in a post as a reference to name. Tweets that include the given name of a politician should be coded as "reference to given name". Tweets that reference a politician by their surname should be coded as "reference to surname". Tweets that include the nickname of a politician should be marked as "reference to nickname". Examples of nicknames include Nic, Jezza, or BoJo. Tweets that refer to the politician by their full name such as Nicola Sturgeon or Arlene Foster should be coded as "reference to full name". Tweets that include a politician's position in government should be coded as "reference to title". Examples include First Minister, Lib Dem Leader, or DUP Leader. "No reference" includes tweets that do not refer to one of the four categories above. If a tweet uses more than one of

the listed categories, a coder should indicate all references to name that were used. Code hashtags that include any of the following categories mentioned above.

1. Reference to title
2. Reference to given name
3. Reference to surname
4. Reference to full name
5. Reference to nickname
6. No reference

18. Explicit reference to gender
Code if Sturgeon, Swinson, or Foster references the gender of a politician or their own gender within the tweet. Indicate if gender is used as a descriptor or a label for a politician such as "female politician", or "first female party leader". Code if the tweeter uses a specific gendered noun such as "the wife of", "the father of" or "she's the first woman". Code hashtags that used gendered specific references.

1. Reference
2. No Reference

19. What is the structural content of the tweet?
Indicate if additional visual elements were posted along with the tweet, retweet, or quote tweet. All forms of media that are added to a tweet should be coded. "Comment only" should be used for posts that do not have a visual element attached to the tweet.

1. Comment only
2. Comment plus weblink
3. Comment plus photo
4. Comment plus weblink and photo
5. Comment plus video
6. Comment plus weblink and video
7. Comment plus GIF or graphic

[As mentioned above all post including tweets, quote tweets and retweets should be coded for questions 19 to 24. If the coder has selected "comment only" because the tweet does not have any visual elements, they should stop after question 19].

19a. Are there multiple visual elements in the tweet?
Indicate if there is more than one image, video, or link posted in the tweet, retweet, or quote tweet.

1. Yes
2. No

n.b) If multiple visual elements are posted in a single tweet, questions 20 to 24 should be repeated for each additional visual element.

20. Is the tweeter in the visual element?
Indicate if the Twitter account holder is in the visual element.

1. Yes
2. No

21. Is there a reference to the tweeter's private life in the visual element?

Indicate if the visual element shows aspects of the tweeter's private life. For example, a favourite hobby, children, or partner.

1. Yes
2. No

22. Is there a party leader present in the visual element?

Match the correct corresponding number with the party leader that was present in the visual element. If a party leader is not included in the visual elements put "not applicable".

1. Boris Johnson
2. Jeremy Corbyn
3. Jo Swinson
4. Nicola Sturgeon
5. Arlene Foster
6. Siân Berry
7. Jonathan Bartley
8. Nigel Farage
9. Adam Price
10. Jackson Carlaw
11. Richard Leonard
12. Willie Rennie
13. Mary Lou McDonald
14. Not applicable

23. Is there a party member present in the visual element?

Indicate if a party member was present in the visual elements of the tweet, retweet, or quote tweet. Coders should indicate if members of the same political party or an opposing political party to the tweeter were present in the visual elements. If a political party member is not included in the visual elements put "not applicable".

1. Same political party member
2. Opposing political party member
3. Not applicable

24. Is the media, a business, or the public present in the visual element?

Match the correct corresponding number with the category that was present in the visual element. Coders should indicate if the visual element was present in tweets, retweets, or quote tweets. Put **organisation** if a charity, business, or school was present in a tweet. Indicate if a **journalist** was present in the tweet, for example, a video clip of Andrew Marr interviewing Boris Johnson. **Celebrities/prominent figures** include a person who is famous or has wide public recognition, such as a sports star or entertainer. **Current/prominent politicians** include current politicians in foreign governments and former politicians who held leadership roles, such as David Cameron, Donald Trump, Ed Miliband, Nick Clegg, Theresa May, and Hillary Clinton. **Members of the public** is any person or group of people at a rally, speech, campaign stop, etc. and **children and young people** should be coded as its own category. This would include times when the politician is speaking or taking a picture with children or holding a

baby. The only time **inanimate object** should be used if the object is not living and the focal point of the visual element. Coders should put **other** as a last resort and specify what is in the visual element. If there is more than one category present in the visual element, coders should make an indication.

1. Member of the public
2. Organisation
3. Journalist
4. Celebrities/prominent figures
5. Current/prominent politicians
6. Children or young people
7. Inanimate object
8. Other

Twitter Dictionary

Original Tweet or Tweet-defined as a post made by the Twitter account holder.

Quote Tweet-when a Twitter account holder re-posts the same tweet from another Twitter account but writes additional comments along with the post. This creates a new post on their account with the retweeted material.

Retweet-when the Twitter account holder will re-post the same tweet from another Twitter account. It will be specified on the post that it is a retweet.

Tweeter-is the Twitter account holder who is responsible for posting tweets, retweets, or quote tweets. For this analysis, the tweeter will either be Nicola Sturgeon, Jo Swinson, or Arlene Foster.

Tweeter's name-the tweeter's name will be at the top of the account and state the name of the profile. The account will often be of a given name and surname. However, that is not always the case depending on the account.

Tweeter's handle-the tweeter's handle will come after the name and will start with @ symbol. Handles are often the name of a person or organisation, but that is not always the case depending on the Twitter account.

Mentions-when a Twitter account includes another person or organisation in their tweet. These types of tweets will include the handle of another account at any point in the post and the account must be tagged.

Replies-when a Twitter account replies directly to another account by tagging the other account with their handle. The other account is often tagged at the beginning of a post and will create a series of tweets called a thread.

Hashtags-a combination of words or letters that are promoting a message to gain more viewership on Twitter. A hashtag will always include the # symbol. Examples include #VoteSNP, #StopBrexit, or #GE19.

Appendix 3

Televised Election Debate Coding Schedule

Unit of Analysis
The unit of analysis is the televised election debates. Coders will watch each recorded debate and enter the data accordingly. The data that will be documented is textual and numerical. All politicians at each debate should be coded separately regardless of their political position.

1. Name of Debate
Write the full name of the debate. This should be indicated at the beginning of each debate.

2. Channel
Write the name of the channel the debate aired on. This should be indicated at the beginning of each debate.

3. **Host**
Write the full name of the host. The host of the debate should introduce him or herself within the first few minutes of the debate.

4. Participants in the Debate
Write the full name of each participant of the debate and the political parties they are representing.

5. Date of Debate
Write the date the debate aired on television. All the debates being analysed aired between November 28th to December 10th, 2019.

6. Length of the Debate
Write down the official length of the debate. Coders should be entering numerical data such as "90 minutes".

7. Is there a live studio audience at the debate?
Indicate if there was a live studio audience watching the debate during the broadcasting. Coders should select "yes" or "no" for this question.

1.   Yes
2.   No

8. Who is asking questions to the politicians?
Indicate if the host or studio audience questioned the politicians.

1. Host
2. Studio audience

n.b) It should be noted that multiple politicians attended each televised election debate and coders will need to repeat questions 9 to 15 for each politician in attendance.

9. How many allocated speaking turns does the politician receive?
Write down the number of allocated speaking turns the politician received. All speaking turns will be allocated by the host.

10. How many uninvited speaking turns does the politician take?
Write down the number of times the politician took a speaking turn that was not allocated by the host.

11. How often does the host indicate the speaking turn of the politician has ended?
Write down the number of times the host ends the speaking turn of the politician.

12. How frequently was a question directed to the politician by another debate participant?
Write down the number of times the politician directed a question to another debate participant.

13. How frequently does the politician direct a question to another debate participant?
Write down the number of times the politician directed a question to another debate participant.

14. How long did the politician speak for during the debate?
Write down the number of times the politician spoke for during the debate. This would include allocated or uninvited speaking turns.

15. Is the politician's private life referenced during the debate?
Write down the number of times the politician's private life is mentioned during the debate.

Appendix 4

The Channel Four News Climate Debate

	Nicola Sturgeon	Jo Swinson	Jeremy Corbyn	Siân Berry	Adam Price
Political Party	The Scottish National Party	The Liberal Democrats	The Labour Party	Green Party of England and Wales	Plaid Cymru
Allocated Speaking Turns	10	8	10	9	8
Uninvited Speaking Turns	4	0	5	3	2
Speaking Turn Ended by Host	2	1	1	2	2
Question Direct to Politician	0	0	2	0	0
Directed a Question to a Debate Opponent	1	0	0	0	1
Personal or Private References	1	3	0	0	3
Total Time Speaking	9m 4s 96ms	6m 59s 11ms	10m 22s 78ms	7m 23s 2ms	6m 58s 92ms

BBC Election Debate 2019

	Nicola Sturgeon	Jo Swinson	Rebecca Long-Bailey	Rishi Sunak	Caroline Lucas	Adam Price	Richard Tice
Political Party	The Scottish National Party	The Liberal Democrats	The Labour Party	The Conservative Party	Green Party of England and Wales	Plaid Cymru	The Brexit Party
Allocated Speaking Turns	15	14	20	23	13	13	13
Uninvited Speaking Turns	10	5	9	2	6	1	14
Speaking Turn Ended by Host	5	2	3	4	4	1	3
Question Direct to Politician	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Directed a Question to a Debate Opponent	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Personal or Private References	0	2	1	3	0	2	2
Total Time Speaking	9m 36s 88ms	9m 39s 90ms	13m 29s 14ms	11m 25s 58ms	8m 27s 63ms	8m 33s 40ms	8m 48s 20ms

The ITV Election Debate

	Nicola Sturgeon	Jo Swinson	Richard Burgon	Rishi Sunak	Siân Berry	Adam Price	Nigel Farage
Political Party	The Scottish National Party	The Liberal Democrats	The Labour Party	The Conservative Party	Green Party of England and Wales	Plaid Cymru	The Brexit Party
Allocated Speaking Turns	15	14	27	28	13	13	14
Uninvited Speaking Turns	13	7	5	4	7	3	17
Speaking Turn Ended by Host	4	2	7	5	5	1	3
Question Direct to Politician	1	0	7	5	1	0	1
Directed a Question to a Debate Opponent	2	1	0	3	1	3	3
Personal or Private References	0	0	0	4	0	3	0
Total Time Speaking	13m 17s 60ms	10m 21s 34ms	16m 40s 81ms	16m 53s 48ms	9m 43s 23ms	10m 16s 98ms	12m 6s 80ms

The STV Leaders' Debate

	Nicola Sturgeon	Jackson Carlaw	Richard Leonard	Willie Rennie
Political Party	The Scottish National Party	The Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party	The Scottish Labour Party	The Scottish Liberal Democrats
Allocated Speaking Turns	11	11	12	12
Uninvited Speaking Turns	11	5	1	7
Speaking Turn Ended by Host	6	2	2	5
Question Direct to Politician	7	5	9	5
Directed a Question to a Debate Opponent	7	8	7	4
Personal or Private References	0	1	0	0
Total Time Speaking	15m 14s 93ms	12m 27s 17ms	12m 45s 79ms	11m 8s 42ms

Britain Decides: The Everything But Brexit Debate

	Philippa Whitford	Jo Swinson	Angela Rayner	Jonathan Bartley	Adam Price
Political Party	The Scottish National Party	The Liberal Democrats	The Labour Party	Green Party of England and Wales	Plaid Cymru
Allocated Speaking Turns	8	10	8	6	9
Uninvited Speaking Turns	9	4	15	5	3
Speaking Turn Ended by Host	5	8	9	5	5
Question Direct to Politician	1	0	2	0	0
Directed a Question to a Debate Opponent	0	0	1	0	2
Personal or Private References	3	2	4	4	2
Total Time Speaking	12m 43s 31ms	13m 5s 58ms	14m 1s 12ms	8m 58s 67ms	10m 53s 42ms

Question Time: 2019 Under 30s Special

	Humza Yousaf	Jo Swinson	Angela Rayner	Robert Jenrick	Jonathan Bartley	Adam Price	Nigel Farage
Political Party	The Scottish National Party	The Liberal Democrats	The Labour Party	The Conservative Party	Green Party of England and Wales	Plaid Cymru	The Brexit Party
Allocated Speaking Turns	7	7	6	10	6	7	6
Uninvited Speaking Turns	5	11	26	7	2	1	15
Speaking Turn Ended by Host	2	1	3	7	0	1	4
Question Direct to Politician	1	5	0	1	0	0	1
Directed a Question to a Debate Opponent	1	2	0	0	1	0	0
Personal or Private References	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Total Time Speaking	8m 2s 47ms	8m 45s 67ms	9m 49s 25ms	12m 16s 84ms	6m 0s 45ms	6m 6s 90ms	9m 25s 71ms

Scotland Leaders' Debate

	Nicola Sturgeon	Jackson Carlaw	Richard Leonard	Willie Rennie
Political Party	The Scottish National Party	The Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party	The Scottish Labour Party	The Scottish Liberal Democrats
Allocated Speaking Turns	13	9	10	10
Uninvited Speaking Turns	11	8	4	3
Speaking Turn Ended by Host	4	3	3	4
Question Direct to Politician	1	0	0	0
Directed a Question to a Debate Opponent	0	1	0	0
Personal or Private References	0	0	0	1
Total Time Speaking	12m 45s 11ms	8m 50s 11ms	9m 36s 81ms	9m 9s 12ms

Chapter 10. Bibliography

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Foster, A. (2019b) '#WeWillRememberThem In remembrance of those who gave their today for our tomorrow, I will lay a wreath in Enniskillen this morning alongside Irish Prime Minister @LeoVaradkar and Northern Ireland Secretary of State @JulianSmithUK #RemembranceSunday.' [Twitter] 10 November. Available at: https://twitter.com/arlenefosteruk/status/1193483080016809985 (Accessed: 26 January 2020).

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Foster, A. (2019e) 'Fermanagh looking fabulous as ever! Great to have @BBCBreakfast broadcast live from Enniskillen this morning, showcasing our island town. #proudofNI.' [Twitter] 3 December. Available at: https://twitter.com/arlenefosteruk/status/1201826120619966464 (Accessed: 24 January 2020).

Foster, A. (2019f) 'Casting my vote for Tom Elliott in FST. I believe in unionists working together and I believe in representation. Wishing Tom and all the DUP candidates every success today. #GE2019 🗳️X.' [Twitter] 12 December. Available at: https://twitter.com/ArleneFosterUK/status/1205075751214747650 (Accessed: 24 January 2020).

Foster, A. (2019g) 'If you are in South Belfast make sure you cast your vote for @little_pengelly. We need every pro-union voter to unite around the DUP and maximise the influence Northern Ireland can have in Westminster. Vote 🗳️X @duponline #GE2019.' [Twitter] 12 December. Available at:

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