Julia Gillard, Leadership and the Media:

Gendered Framings of the 'Sexism and Misogyny' Speech

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Abstract

This article analyses Australian media portrayals of former Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard's 'sexism and misogyny' speech to parliament in October 2012. Our analysis reveals that coverage of the speech comprised three principal gendered framings: strategic attack, uncontrolled emotional outpouring, and hypocrisy. We argue that these framings demonstrate the role the media plays as a gendered mediator, perpetuating the double gender bind that constrains women political leaders, as they negotiate the demand to demonstrate masculine leadership attributes without tarnishing the feminine qualities expected of them. In this instance, gendered media framings: limited the saliency of Gillard's speech; curtailed calls for wider introspection on Australian political culture; and further disassociated women from political leadership.

Introduction[i]

On 9 October 2012, Australia's first female Prime Minister Julia Gillard responded to a question by Leader of the Opposition Tony Abbott during parliamentary questions with a rousing fifteen-minute speech drawing attention to the opposition's double standards on sexism and misogyny. The speech quickly attracted international attention, going viral on social media, being reported in international press, and receiving praise from world leaders including US President Obama. As several commentators noted, far from being a mere fifteen minutes of fame, Gillard's speech elevated her to the status of global feminist icon (e.g. Sholl 2013).

As coverage around the world acknowledged, the speech was remarkable for a number of reasons. Foremost amongst these was that Gillard called the Opposition Leader and his Party out on their sexism and misogyny for the first time in her premiership, having previously been reluctant to risk being perceived as acting for women. This reluctance appears vindicated by the negative national media coverage the speech received. In contrast to the domestic media backlash, praise from abroad came from politicians and news outlets across the political spectrum, as well as on social media platforms. The UK's *The Spectator* noted that there was 'much to admire' in Gillard's speech (Massie 2012). And, in the US, *Salon* and *Jezebel* raved about the speech's 'badass' lessons for US politicians (Morrissey 2012; Lennard 2012). Gillard's speech also made headlines in Canada, South Africa, and India, amongst others. In Australia, however, coverage generally dismissed Gillard's motivations along with the delivery of the speech. In the mainstream domestic media, the speech was framed as a hypocritical distraction that had arisen due either to the tactics of diversion or personal weakness in coping with sustained attack.

The disparity between the international and domestic reception is, as Anna Goldsworthy (2013) draws attention to, a result of context, with the broader cultural context of international coverage contrasting the latter's political and electoral context. The (party) political context in which Gillard's speech played out was one in which both Labor and the Liberal party were far from above rebuke on the issue of sexism and misogyny, as documented by Anne Summers (2013). Here, we do not attempt to establish the validity of Gillard's claims. Rather, this article explores the portrayal of the speech in the domestic Australian media, highlighting its role in the cycle of sexism and misogyny that has come to characterise Australian politics.

To explore these domestic media portrayals, the article is structured in two halves. In the first half, we introduce literature on gender, political leadership and the media, in order to situate the article and its analysis. Here we make our (secondary) theoretical contribution though three principal arguments which are underpinned by an understanding of the media as a gendered mediator: (i) gender is prescriptive and refers to the management of activities and actions normatively constructed as appropriate for each sex category; (ii) institutions rely on sex categorizations for legitimacy, yet it is the individual who is held accountable for failing to do gender properly; and (iii) women in leadership roles face a gender double bind in demonstrating traditional 'masculine' leadership qualities without compromising the 'feminine' qualities they are expected to embody and to which they are held accountable. In the second half of the article we make our (primary) empirical contribution, analysing media framings of Julia Gillard's recent and therefore as yet under-studied sexism and misogyny speech. Using computer-aided discourse analysis

of two hundred articles from five of Australia's largest newspapers in the three weeks following Gillard's speech, we argue that newspaper coverage was dominated by three principal framings. In the Australian media, the speech was framed as a strategic attack, as an uncontrolled emotional outburst, and as hypocrisy. Each of these, we argue, represents a gendered framing. These framings can usefully be understood through the role the media plays as a gendered mediator, holding Gillard to account for failing to comply with stereotyped gender expectations incompatible with (equally stereotyped visions of) a leadership role.

Gender, political leadership and the media

In this section we outline our understanding of gender, as well as its relation to (political) institutions, and the role of the media, which are prerequisites for an analysis of the gendered media coverage of Julia Gillard's misogyny speech. We also develop the crucial notion of the gender double bind, which is mobilised in our subsequent empirical analysis, as well as noting Australia's history of gendered expectations for women politicians.

First, it is important to outline how we approach the notion of gender. Drawing on West and Zimmerman's (1987) definition, we understand gender not as something that an individual *is* but rather something they *do*. Gender is, for example, brought into existence through recurrent interactions with others; it is the management of activities and actions normatively conceptualised as appropriate for each sex category. Gender is, therefore, a constructed idea and ideal, which emerges from social processes of interaction, and which in turn, helps to structure those interactions.

Second, the construction of gender categories, norms, and relations helps to underpin (political) institutions. Individuals 'doing gender appropriately' (acting in accordance with essentialised gender stereotypes) support (political) institutions by helping to 'sustain, reproduce and render legitimate' institutional structures based on sex categories (West & Zimmerman 1987: 146). Should the individual fail to do gender properly, it will be that individual and not the institution which is held accountable (ibid). Unpacking this relationship is a complex but necessary task, given that institutions co-constitute and perpetuate wider societal inequalities (Acker, 2009: 202) by helping to entrench gender categories and norms.

Third, it is necessary to consider the media's role in the (re)production of gender norms. We argue that the media serves a dual role in both prescribing gender normativity and in acting as a gendered mediator denoting (and disciplining) certain qualities as appropriate for each gender. This role – as a gendered mediator – has significant implications for women political leaders, as the media serve to reproduce the gender double bind that the ambiguous identity of 'women leaders' generates. Jamieson (1995) defines the gender double bind as the disjuncture between how women are perceived performing leadership roles and the expectation of how they should act as a woman. The result is that women leaders are more likely to have their gender presented as a hindrance to their ability to perform certain (and particularly leadership) roles than men (Jamieson 1995; Meeks 2012: 177).

The qualities traditionally associated with leadership, such as assertiveness and authority, tend to be read very differently depending on whether they are displayed by men or women (Heilman 2004: 416). These traditional leadership qualities are

power-seeking, agential and gendered as masculine, which means that women doing leadership 'too well' face repercussions. They might, for example, risk these qualities being framed negatively as 'bitter, quarrelsome and selfish' (Schnurr 2008: 556). In order for women leaders to be seen to 'do gender well' they are required to embrace communal characteristics constructed outside of (and often in opposition to) the role of a leader (Mavin, Bryans, and Cunningham 2010: 563). Qualities frequently associated with women and femininity, such as communality, compassion and empathy, are not associated with leadership and do not imbue the individual with agency. As Hall and Donaghue (2012: 4) note, when taking into account the political context, the task of balancing gendered expectations to ameliorate the effect of ambition becomes far more difficult. Women leaders must therefore seek to find an acceptable balance between masculine and feminine traits; of ambition and more caring qualities in order to perform their role 'acceptably'. This forces women politicians to become 'bilingual' in mastering the masculine and feminine demands they face (Campus 2013: 116). It is this entrapment of the double bind that we mobilize in our exploration of media framings of Gillard's speech.

As well as shaping perceptions of politics, the media therefore plays a crucial role in mediating gender norms and reinforcing the double bind. Far from being neutral, the media is highly gendered: it reinforces the norm of politicians as men and portrays women politicians as novel exceptions (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Ross 1996: 112). A number of studies have highlighted this role of the media as a gendered mediator. Gidengil and Everitt's (2003) study of the 1993 and 1997 Canadian elections found that media coverage of women politicians was significantly less likely to draw on neutral verbs than coverage of male politicians. The verbs employed to describe the

actions of women politicians over-emphasised their combativeness and certain verbs were only used to describe women (2003: 227). They argue that 'As novelties [women politician's]…words and actions are subject to more analysis and interpretation, and their combative displays attract disproportionate attention' (2003: 228). Bystrom, Robertson and Banwart (2001) have also argued that women politicians are understood and framed as novelties in media coverage. Their analysis of media portrayals of Canadian political candidates found that even when women received positive coverage it still tended to centre on their gender and therefore the unusualness of their ambiguous ('adopted') identity. Studies such as these demonstrate the role of the media in reinforcing our understandings of 'appropriate' gender roles, making the speeches and actions of women visible in part through the supporting frame of women politicians' novelty (Jamieson, 1995: 172).

A growing and complementary body of literature has also begun to draw attention to a prevalent media focus on the appearance and personal traits of women politicians. Devitt's (2002: 457) study of media coverage of the 1998 gubernational elections in the United States finds a stark contrast between the preoccupation of the media with the appearance of and personal traits of women political leaders, rather than policy positions, and the coverage given to male political leaders (Devitt 2002: 457). This finding is reinforced by Kahn (1994) in her study of US Senate races between 1982 and 1988. Kahn found that despite the fact that women candidates spoke more about issues than male counterparts, media coverage was biased against them, giving inordinate focus to their personal traits (Kahn, 1994:169).

Disproportionate media focus on the personal traits of women politicians has important implications when considered in the context of the double bind and the expression of emotion. The expression of emotion(s) and how this is perceived by the media is a concern for both men and women; there are obvious implications of and for being associated with 'the other' gender. Politicians' concern with expressing emotions considered 'appropriate' for each gender, however, has the effect of intensifying the pre-existing gender imbalance (Lakoff 2003: 163). In particular, women political leaders face a double bind when expressing anger because they are viewed as out of control. For men, expressions of anger are an indicator of power, but in contrast, for women, they are an indicator of powerlessness (Campus 2013: 58-9). Instead, in order to 'do gender well', women must be 'sensitive and tender-hearted' (Campus 2013: 58) but not to the extent that they appear overemotional and by extension unbalanced. Overly emotional responses by women of any sort are subject to ridicule because they are seen as indicative of an inability to handle the pressure associated with their role (Cantor and Bernay 1992: 217 cited in Campus 2013: 58).

The specific expectations placed upon women politicians provide the context for media framings of their actions, which is most apparent when these expectations are confounded. One prominent – and inaccurate – misconception is that women will 'clean up parliamentary politics' (Eveline and Booth 1997: 107). This stereotype has a long history in Australian politics and is therefore particularly problematic for Australian women leaders. Australian suffragists nurtured the idea for obvious instrumental gain. For example, in 1903, the first suffragist to stand for the Senate, Viva Goldstein, responded to media outcry by justifying her candidacy based on 'women's superior morality' (ibid). Nurturing the association between women

bringing change to the traditional political system, by cleaning up (the corrupt, male) political arena, places an increased expectation on women's capacity to enact change. If and when this goes unrealised, women leaders are held more sharply to account than their peers.

A second further complicating expectation of women leaders, deriving in part from media portrayals, is a presumption that women (by virtue of their gender) will act for other women. Yet, Childs' (2004) study of women MPs in the UK parliament found women politicians often remain silent on gender issues because of a concern that their actions will be easily dismissed if they are perceived as 'acting like (and for) women' (Childs 2004: 14). The gap between the expectation that women politicians will act for their gender and the reality that they may actively distance themselves from doing so can confound media expectations. A 'failure' to act for women, combined with the 'failure' to clean up politics through the demonstration of superior morality, can accentuate media criticism of women politicians precisely because of their gender and the associated expectations of gender norms and relations that derive from this constructed category. This was certainly the case in Australia, as Rayner (2013) has argued. From the 'unseemly ambition' demonstrated in 'knifing' Kevin Rudd, to her unwillingness to apologise for choices in her personal life, Gillard's role as a *real* female leader came under challenge from conservative critics (Rayner 2013). Progressives likewise found fault with Gillard's reluctance to speak up for perceived 'women's issues' (ibid.). For Rayner (2013), Gillard's prime ministership style was characterised as 'post-gendered', which, for the most part, sought to downplay or ignore her gender, thereby neutralising its political potency. Of course, demanding

more of Gillard precisely because she was a 'woman leader' shows just how 'skewed … perspectives on power and gender' still are in Australia (and elsewhere).

Media representations of Julia Gillard's 'sexism and misogyny' speech

In this section we analyse the portrayal of Gillard's infamous 'sexism and misogyny' speech in the Australian media. The speech can be situated in a variety of contexts. As the below analysis reveals, the selection of the context in which to locate the speech influences its meaning and significance. The three most prominent contexts within which the speech was located were: the long- to medium-term sexism of the Liberal Party and its leader, located more broadly within Australian (political) culture; the unfolding Peter Slipper scandal; and the immediate accusations of sexism from Tony Abbott, given Gillard's decision to defend Slipper.

To analyse media coverage of Gillard's speech we used LexisNexis software to search for and select a range of relevant newspaper articles. First, our search criteria specified that articles must mention both the terms 'Gillard' and 'sexism'. These were chosen to narrow the range of articles for analysis and ensure a specificity of focus in the content of the article. All articles making reference to these key search terms were included in the dataset. Second, articles were selected from five Australian newspapers: *The Australian*, *The Courier Mail*, *The Herald Sun*, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and *The West Australian*. This range was chosen for a number of reasons: they cover a range of tabloid and broadsheet formats; Australia's three major newspaper publishing houses are represented; and a good geographical diversity is evident; as are local and national newspapers. Most importantly, the principal reason for their inclusion is that these newspapers are five of Australia's

most widely distributed and read news publications, with local newspaper circulations between 200,000 and 515,000, and national newspaper circulations (*The Australian*) of approximately 135,000. Put simply, these newspapers comprise five of Australia's most important and influential media outlets. Third, the selection of articles for inclusion in the dataset was limited to the end of October 2012, meaning that we analyse Australian newspaper coverage in the three and a half weeks following Julia Gillard's 'sexism and misogyny' speech in parliament. Two further points are important to note. First, although differences in style are evident between newspapers, in keeping with their format and readership, gendered framings were consistent across all of the newspapers, alluding to the pervasiveness of the ideas and culture underpinning them. Second, while important critiques and counter-narratives were certainly offered through social media platforms and even 'halfway' media sites such as ABC's 'The Drum' and the *Sydney Morning Herald*'s 'Daily Life', this article analyses framings in five of Australia's most pervasive and dominant mainstream media sources. These newspapers play an important role in setting the media agenda and tone, reaching and influencing a particularly large swathe of the Australian population.

We use discourse analysis to study gendered media framings of Gillard's speech. Articles were inductively analysed, using hierarchical coding of key frames and the discursive nodal points that comprised them. All speeches were coded, despite saturation being reached (i.e. no new frames and nodes discovered) prior to completing the analysis of the dataset. Approximately 60,000 words of coded material was generated from one hundred and ninety-six articles. Our particular approach to 'doing' discourse analysis blends insights from across the social sciences.

We view language as 'culturally embedded' (see Holland 2010; 2013), inspired by the likes of Norman Fairclough (1995; 2000; 2003). This means that we look beyond the analysis of the text itself, to explore the connections texts have with each other and broader operations of power within society. Crucially, media narratives reflect and construct prevalent cultural trends and commonplace understandings. We make use of the notion of 'framing', common in Cultural and Media Studies and most explicitly theorised in Politics and International Relations by Michael Barnett (1999), in order to make sense of the particular slants, themes and language invoked in media coverage. Framing acknowledges the social construction of the world, denying that newspaper coverage is mere reflection of an external reality, but rather helps to constitute the world it appears to only describe. Frames are particular schemas; manners of linguistically packaging a topic to encourage specific interpretations whilst discouraging others. They help to shape the construction of an issue. Incorporating a gender sensitive critique of this framing allows us to unpack its construction (e.g. Lombardo and Meier 2008; Ferree 2008).

As Ferree (2008) argues, framing accounts for both structure and agency. It is the process of articulating politics, through the (re)production of particular interests and identities, as well as problems and their policy solutions. Frames matter since they support organisational structures as they become institutionalised; they shape the contours of political possibility (Ferree 2008; Holland 2013). This approach then enables us to explore the ways in which certain actors with specific agendas represent a particular issue – in this instance, Gillard's speech on sexism and misogyny. To unpack these framings, we followed three principal steps. First, media coverage was read and coded for principal nodal points, such as 'anger', which were then placed

within broader organising schema, such as 'emotion' (Holland 2013: 41). Second, in order to understand how these discursive markers work, we explored the relationships between them. 'Anger' and 'emotion', for example, support and mutually reinforce each other, while 'strategy' suggests an alternative frame centred on political gain. Third, we considered how these nodes, within broader frames, drew upon wider socio-political discourses. Our focus here is on longstanding gendered narratives pertaining to the issue of women in positions of leadership. For example, recurrent portrayals of Gillard's 'anger' in media coverage draw upon longstanding, culturally embedded discourses presenting an essentialised view of female emotionality. Finally, we also attempted to consider alternatives and the silenced voices that have been drowned out by dominant framings, as part of the process of questioning their naturalisation.

Our analysis reveals that three principal framings – strategy, uncontrolled emotional outpouring, and hypocrisy – are apparent in Australian media reporting on Gillard's 'sexism and misogyny' speech. These framings of Gillard's speech appear on the surface to be contradictory but speak to the complexity of unpacking and challenging gendered narratives, which serve to disassociate women from power.

Framing Gillard's speech as a strategic attack

There are two distinct but interrelated and overlapping components to the framing of Gillard's speech as a strategic attack, which demonstrate the media's role as a gendered mediator. First, Australian newspapers repeatedly portrayed Gillard's speech as an instrumental move, by a calculating politician, for political gain. Second, journalists frequently suggested (implicitly and explicitly) that the speech

was 'an attack', as opposed to (for instance) a defensive manoeuvre, a response, or an attempt to draw attention to an important issue. Both of these framings are important for two principal reasons. First, they help to narrow the possible range of public responses to the speech, by folding it within wider politicking, party political infighting, and more general attempts to win voter support. They delegitimise the notion that this was: a genuine, spontaneous, and heartfelt speech; worthy of initiating a broader inquiry into political culture or social inequality; or that it was warranted. And they disarm the substance of Gillard's speech, which sought to call out the sexism and misogyny directed at her, through the framing of the speech as a calculated manoeuvre for political gain. Second, this presents Gillard as both ambitious and aggressive, (re)producing the gender bind whereby women leaders are negatively associated with 'masculine' leadership qualities (Jamieson 1995; Meeks 2012: 177). This occurs through the disassociation of her stance with the plight of other women, on the one hand. And, it simultaneously portrays both her gender identity and her leadership identity in a negative light; she is failing to do gender well and failing the specific demands placed on being a woman leader due to the tensions of a media reproduced double bind.

Journalists made frequent mention of Gillard as the leader of the 'handbag hit squad', framing Gillard's actions as confounding gendered expectations of how she should act as a woman. *The Australian* reported Kelly O'Dwyer's memorable line that female Labor members of parliament 'put down their handbags and took up their sandbags' (Kerr 2012). This description of Gillard's speech as requiring her to cast aside her femininity to take up an aggressive (and masculine) stance, frames the nature of the delivery of Gillard's speech as illegitimate for a woman. The delivery of the speech

by Gillard was not out of sync with the adversarial nature of Australian parliamentary politics, however, the gendered framing of the speech which contends that Gillard had to cast aside her femininity to take up an aggressive (masculine prescribed) stance, renders Gillard's delivery of the speech as unacceptable and delegitimises her message. Charles Waterstreet (2012) describes how Gillard 'with her head glowing red, full of fire and ire, her big guns blazing' fired 'every bullet … into the head and heart of Abbott'. Her final lines, he insisted, 'delivered the fatal one-two punches to the hapless jaw of Abbott'. Such appeals to martial language are certainly not unusual in descriptions of political debate and electoral campaigns. However, the association of martial language with women politicians has entirely different connotations than for men. Indeed, Waterstreet is unlikely to have found it necessary to comment on the delivery of a speech in this manner by a male politician in the masculine political arena. By commenting on Gillard's delivery in this way, Waterstreet (2012) serves to implicitly reinforce the notion that Gillard is an outsider performing a role beyond her gender remit.

Portraying the speech as 'an attack' through the use of martial language fits within the overarching framing of the speech as part of a wider 'gender war'. Within this overarching narrative, Gillard's speech was framed as either the first 'attack' in a long battle and one of many 'broadsides' (*Herald Sun* 2012), her own response to Tony Abbott's own persistent attacks (e.g. *Courier Mail* 2012), or evidence of the party leaders attacking each other (Scott 2012a). Of these three, the first prevailed. By far and away the predominant portrayal of Gillard's speech was as a 'gender-based declaration of war' (Oakes 2012). Overall, in Australia, this gender war was not viewed (positively) as a legitimate challenge to the sexism and misogyny prevalent in

Australian politics but (negatively) as a unilateral attack on Tony Abbott, the Liberal Party, and men as a whole. Indeed, the explicit side-lining of the speech and the issue (as an irrelevant distraction from the real business of Australian politics) complemented and reinforced the broader dismissal of the notion of a woman leader.

Broadening out from specific assertions of 'an attack' within a more general 'gender war', Australian newspapers also invested considerable effort in highlighting the instrumental nature of the speech in making an issue of gender. It was, many commentators noted, a strategic move, designed to win electoral support. In the *Herald Sun*, Susie O'Brien (2012) was blunt in her assertion that Gillard was 'trying to exploit the gender gap with her world famous "misogyny" speech to Parliament'. Accompanying framings in the *Sydney Morning Herald* included that Gillard had played the 'misogynist card' (Coorey and Maley 2012) at an 'opportunistic' moment (Peatling 2012), despite its inaccuracy (Sheehan 2012b). Accusing Gillard of playing the 'gender card' or 'misogynist card' served to disarm the veracity of her claim and, as Goldsworth (2013:226) notes, acts as a 'silencing term, through which female grievance can be reduced to phatic noise'. Framings in *The Australian* followed suit. Gillard was accused of achieving 'tactical gain' (Young 2012a) through the 'deceit of hiding behind one's sex' (Nash 2012). In this respect, once again, the media's framing of the speech reinforced the double bind, as Gillard was both chastised for bringing up the 'soft gender issue' but also for doing so apparently for strategic gain.

For many journalists then, 'the speech was part of a deliberate, tested strategy of capitalising on the Coalition's relative unpopularity with women'; it was, very simply, 'part of a [wider] plan' (Taylor 2012). However, the framing of the speech in *The*

Australian went further in denying Gillard political agency completely in contending that 'the gender debate was fuelled deliberately by Labor as a political strategy to focus on the Opposition Leader's perceived vulnerability' (*The Australian* 2012a). Here we see a more advanced gendered framing, with Gillard's agency completely removed from the equation along with the notion that Gillard as an individual woman could be motivated by ambition or possess agential qualities. Here, rather, her gender is something that the Labor Party as a (masculine) whole have exploited; they have preyed on her vulnerability as a woman in order to serve their own legitimately masculine ambition. Reports frequently (and often gleefully) noted that the 'delusional political strategy' failed to win the support for which it was intended (Shanahan 2012).

Framing Gillard's speech as an uncontrolled emotion outburst

The second principal media framing of Gillard's 'sexism and misogyny' speech in the Australian press focussed upon the prime minister's apparent uncontrolled emotion and was inherently gendered. It drew on the longstanding gendered stereotype of female hysteria, whereby Gillard was seen to have suffered either emotional excess and an associated loss of control or a form of (female) psychological disorder characterised by the conversion of emotional stress into physical symptoms. Gillard is presented as having lost control of her emotions (whether this was actually the case is questionable) in media coverage which drew on negative gender stereotypes and framed Gillard as incapable of handling the pressure of political office and leadership because she is a woman. This framing was comprised of a number of subtly different layers, which built up from notions of understandable anger and outrage, to uncontrollable outburst, and inevitable (female) emotional outpouring. For some it

was sufficient to note the performance as 'explosive' (Maiden 2012), for others it was indicative she was 'clearly fed up' (McCullough in McCullough et al 2012). Either way, reports noted that it was the manifestation of frustration that had 'been building for many, many, many years'; it was a 'dam waiting to burst' (Johnston in McCullough et al 2012). In *The Courier Mail*, the film *Network* was invoked to compare the prime minister to Peter Finch's character encouraging viewers to go to the window to shout, 'I'm as mad as hell, and I'm not going to take this any more!' (Atkins 2012). The 'emotional speech' (Scott 2012b), the newspaper reported, was 'sizzling' and 'blistering' (Atkins 2012). Her anger was 'what stood out' as 'she almost quivered with rage' when delivering her 'vitriol' (Oakes 2013). The rhetorical tropes of mounting pressure and emotional venting were clearly mined, for example, by Maley (2012), who reported that, 'Her voice trembled as she exorcised two years' worth of rage'. In complete contrast to instrumental framings, portrayed as an hysterical outburst, the speech became 'raw emotion' (Legge 2012) in in its purest form.

In the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Paul Sheehan lamented that Australians had witnessed the transformation of 'Robotic Julia' into 'Furious Julia, whose "tone is vicious" as she unleashes a 'spritz of acid rain' (Sheehan 2012a). The media acted as a gendered mediator through their framing of her delivery as driven by (female) emotion(s). Gillard was framed as having lost control of any rational façade she had put on and pretended. In this framing, her speech on misogyny saw her stripped back to an emotional feminine self, as she exposed her true nature as reactive, emotional, irrational, and ultimately unsuitable for and incapable of leadership. The irony of the article's tone was not lost on the *Herald Sun*'s James Campbell (2012), who,

reflecting on the 'visceral' reaction the speech engendered, noted that it was Sheehan not Gillard who was delivering a 'hyper-ventilated response'. In The Australian, George Megalogenis (2012) coined the much-noted passion and emotion as 'Julia Gillard's "I had a scream"' speech (Megalogenis 2012). It was, as numerous commentators noted, in a strikingly easy dismissal, simply 'shrill' (e.g. Kenny 2012), and by extension the content of the speech could legitimately be ignored. Framed as a 'tirade of rare vintage' – a 'rant … long in the fermenting' – the speech was reduced to the moment the prime minister 'snapped', rather than a defiant stance against sexism (*The West Australian* 2012b). It became 'splendid diatribe': good television, but a poor platform for policy (ibid.).

Framing Gillard's speech as hypocrisy

Framings of Gillard's 'sexism and misogyny' speech as hypocrisy frequently developed the notion that it was an instrumental performance: a 'charade' (*The West Australian* 2012a). For domestic commentators, the speech occurred against the backdrop of Speaker Peter Slipper's own sexist and misogynist behaviour. Having sent crude and demeaning text messages to colleagues, most infamously comparing female genitalia to shellfish, the Liberal Party were calling for Slipper's resignation. But negotiating a razor-thin majority in parliament, Gillard was forced to support the Speaker of the House. It was Slipper's behaviour which was the catalyst to put sexism and misogyny onto the agenda in parliament and the topic of Abbott's initial words aimed in Gillard's direction. The irony must have seemed rich to have Abbott accuse Gillard's government of supporting sexism, given the mounting instances the prime minister was able to reel off, detailing when she had been attacked along gender lines. Yet, for the Australian media, and in particular those covering the

minutiae of parliamentary politics in Canberra every day, the irony was all Gillard's. Supporting Slipper by taking a stance against sexism smacked of hypocrisy of the highest order.

Gillard's defence of Slipper preoccupied most Australian journalists. '[S]he displayed double standards in strongly accusing the Opposition Leader of sexism while defending the Speaker's own vile misogyny … Any gains the Prime Minister made from the strength of her rhetoric were eroded by the weakness of her principles' (Fagan 2012). The result, it was suggested, was that it came 'across as hypocritical and contrived, a cynical attempt to deflect attention from the Opposition's attacks on her Government's failings' (Devine 2012). Within parliament, Tony Abbott and Leader of the Green Party Christine Milne were also quick to point out hypocrisy. For Abbott, Gillard's was 'a Government … only too ready to detect sexism, to detect misogyny no less, until they find it in one of their own supporters, until they find it in someone upon whom this Prime Minister relies to survive in her job. Then of course no fault can be found, no evil dare be spoken'. 'Well', he reflected, 'the Australian public are not mugs' (cited in Scott 2012b). For Senator Milne, while good, Gillard's speech was ultimately 'undermined by the context in which it was made' (Peatling 2012). This is particularly salient in the Australian case where sexism and misogyny were prevalent in politics on both sides (Johnson 2012); no consideration was given to the idea that sexism in Australian politics had reached a point where Gillard had no choice but to act (Sawer 2013). Gillard's speech could have been framed as a time for politicians on both sides to reflect on and begin to address the endemic sexism and misogyny they perpetuate. Instead, Gillard was arguably held to a higher standard; falling victim to the long propagated myth that 'women will clean up parliamentary

politics' (Eveline and Booth 1997, 107) that is particularly problematic when coupled with an understanding that women politicians are often reluctant to be perceived to act for women (Childs 2004; Rayner 2013). The result of this quandary is a framing of Gillard as a hypocrite because she had avoided addressing the issue for so long (when as a woman she was by extension of her gender expected to do so), expediently ignoring a nuanced understanding of why this was the case.

In summary, three principal framings structured Australian media reporting of Gillard's 'sexism and misogyny' speech. First, Australian newspapers reported the speech as a strategic move and an instrumental attack on Tony Abbott and his Liberal Party. This was realised through the gendered framing of Gillard as a tactical outsider motivated by personal ambition, a leadership quality which is associated negatively when identified with women working within a masculine characterised space (Okimoto and Brescoll 2010; Heilman et al 2004). Second, and seemingly conversely[ii], the Australian media made use of a gendered narrative of uncontrolled emotional outpouring, whereby Gillard was portrayed as having finally lost control of her emotions (and an associated veneer of tranquillity), following sustained abuse. The suggestions that a woman politician was acting on emotion, rather than responding rationally (as a leader), served to devalue Gillard's argument by associating her actions with perceptions of women's mood swings. Moreover, it disassociated her as a person and as a politician from the possibility of embodying 'traditionally understood' leadership qualities. Third, and extremely frequently, Australian newspapers reported that the speech was an act of hypocrisy on the part of Prime Minister Julia Gillard and/or her Labor Party. This latter framing relied upon an understanding of the speech's immediate and localised political context, which

influenced the gendered domestic media framings, and resulted in a noticeable difference between national and international coverage. While western media coverage beyond Australia had different concerns, the Australian media acted as a gendered mediator, holding Gillard to account for performing her gender inappropriately through the framing of the speech as strategic attack, as uncontrolled emotional outburst, and as hypocrisy.

Conclusion

This article has contributed to a broad, interdisciplinary, and growing literature, which shows how the media acts as a gendered mediator, reproducing the double bind that women leaders face (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross 1996; Gidengil and Everitt 2003; Kahn 1994; Goodyear-Grant 2013). Our analysis has demonstrated that the Australian media played an important and troubling role in October 2012 by holding Gillard to account for failing to do her gender 'appropriately' and serving to denaturalise the association of women and politics. Our analysis of the response of the media to Gillard's misogyny speech has drawn out three key points to support this contention: Gillard's speech was framed in the Australian media as an act of uncontrolled emotional outpouring, hypocrisy and/or instrumentality. The impact of these framings was fourfold.

First, these dominant framings undermined the substance of the speech's message, removing the legitimacy of Gillard's challenge to the sexism and misogyny on display by Tony Abbott and his Opposition Party. Second, by undermining her message, these framings also prevented the speech from acting as a rallying cry for a wider process of introspection into the gendered Australian political landscape. Third, far from

normalising the notion of a woman in charge, these framings cast Gillard an outsider and a novel exception. This was achieved implicitly and explicitly through the reproduction of the double bind that constrains women leaders. The reproduction of this bind highlights the tension – and impossibility – of their identity as a 'woman leader' rather than naturalising their position as a leader who happens to be a woman. Gillard was held to a higher standard, expected to have 'cleaned up politics' and acted for women because of her gender. Fourth, the media's role as a gendered mediator served to disassociate all women – rather than just Julia Gillard – from the possibility of legitimately occupying a position of political leadership. The media served its role as a gendered mediator effectively, reinforcing the notion that a woman's place is not in the 'boxing ring' of Australian politics.

Perhaps it was in Gillard's final month in office the following year that the role of the media as a gendered mediator reached its apogee. However, it is reasonable to suggest that Gillard faced sustained gendered coverage in the Australian media throughout her prime ministership (e.g. Young 2012b), which implicitly and explicitly questioned the possibility she could operate as a 'woman leader'. Our article has shown that this was certainly the case in October 2012, in media framings of her 'sexism and misogyny' speech, which came from a variety of national and local newspapers (whether Murdoch, Fairfax, or Seven West Media owned). This, of course, has important implications for the election and representation of women in (Australian) politics. On leaving office Gillard expressed her hope that perhaps her leadership might make it easier for the next woman and the woman after that. We argue that the role of the media, as a gendered mediator, must be taken seriously and challenged as part of the quest for the substantive representation of women. Lacking

knowledge of and concern for the immediate political context of Australian politics, international media coverage gave notably different coverage of Gillard's speech, and that at least is an encouraging starting point.

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[i] We would like to thank two anonymous reviewers and the editor for their detailed and helpful feedback, which has helped us to produce a stronger article.

[ii] Framing Gillard as both rationally strategic and emotionally hysterical appears inconsistent when read without a gendered sensitive understanding of narrative construction. The two framings speak to the complexity of gendered narratives which often on the surface appear contradictory, making them difficult to unpack and challenge. Both points serve to disassociate Gillard from competency in her leadership role, in different but mutually reinforcing ways.