



uOttawa

L'Université canadienne
Canada's university

Making Sense of Negative Campaigning in Canadian Federal Elections

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Master's degree in Political Science

School of Political Studies

Faculty of Social Science

University of Ottawa

© Reza Arash, Ottawa, Canada, 2019

Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES	IV
LEGEND.....	IV
LIST OF FIGURES.....	V
ABSTRACT	VI
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	VI
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1. LITERATURE REVIEW	5
1.1. WHAT IS A NEGATIVE CAMPAIGN?.....	5
1.2. EFFECTS OF NEGATIVE CAMPAIGNS?	7
1.2.1. Theoretical Arguments	7
1.2.2. Demobilizing Effects.....	11
1.2.3. Damaging Effects	15
1.3. PARTY STRATEGY IN ADOPTING NEGATIVE CAMPAIGNS.....	19
1.3.1. General Theme	19
1.3.2. Who Attacks Who?.....	22
1.4. NEGATIVE CAMPAIGNING IN THE CANADIAN CONTEXT	32
1.4.1. Historical Examples.....	32
2. THEORY AND HYPOTHESES.....	39
3. METHODOLOGY	44
3.1. DATA COLLECTION	44
3.2. LIMITATION OF THE DATA.....	46
3.3. MODELS	47
4. RESULTS.....	50
4.1. GENERAL FINDINGS	50
4.2. CPC’S NEGATIVE BEHAVIOUR.....	53
4.3. LPC’S NEGATIVE BEHAVIOUR.....	57
4.4. NDP’S NEGATIVE BEHAVIOUR	61
4.5. TESTING THE HYPOTHESES	64
4.5.1. H1(a): The Incumbent Effect – Being the Target.....	64
4.5.2. H1(b): The Incumbent Effect – Attacking Behaviour	65

4.5.3. H1(c): Party Organization Effect.....	65
4.5.4. H1(d): Personalization of Politics Factor	66
4.5.5. H1(e): Ideological Proximity Factor	66
4.5.6. H2(a): Front-Runner Effect	67
4.5.7. H2(b): Challenger’s Strategy.....	68
4.5.8. H2(c): The Third Party in Poll and its Implication for Negativity	69
4.5.9. H2(d): Minority Government Factor	69
4.5.10. H3: Negative Personalization.....	76
5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS.....	81
5.1. CLEAR RESULTS	81
5.2. PROBLEMATIC RESULTS.....	82
6. CONCLUSION	84
6.1. REFLECT BACK ON THEORIES	84
6.2. IMPLICATIONS FOR CANADIAN POLITICS.....	87
7. BIBLIOGRAPHY	89
9. APPENDIX	97
9.1 SAMPLE OF CODING	97
9.1.1 Sample of Coding from the Conservative Party Press Release on August 12, 2015	97
9.1.2. Sample of Coding from the Liberal Party Press Release on August 4, 2015	98
9.2. CAMPAIGN NEGATIVITY AND LEADERS’ POPULARITY RATE	99
9.2.1. Proportion of Negative Attacks Against Trudeau and LPC	99
9.2.2. Proportion of Negative Attacks Against Mulcair and NDP	100
9.2.3. Proportion of Negative Attacks Against Harper and CPC	101

List of Tables

Table 1: Effects of Federal Voting Intention for Parties on the amount of Negativity each Party and its Leader Received	73
Table 2: Regression Model for Vote Intention and Parties' Attack Behaviour.....	74
Table 3: Regression Model for the Effects of Leaders' Popularity Rate on	79
Table 4: Regression Model for the Effects of Leaders' Popularity Rate on	79

Legend

CPC – Conservative Party of Canada

LPC – Liberal Party of Canada

NDP – New Democratic Party

PPC – People's Party of Canada

CPT – CBC Poll Tracker

List of Figures

Figure 1: Number of Parties' Press Releases During the 2015 Campaign	50
Figure 2: Parties' Distribution of the Total Attacks Conducted During the 2015 Campaign.....	51
Figure 3: Distribution of the Total Number of Attacks each Leaders/Parties Received During ..	52
Figure 4: Federal Voting Intention During the 2015 campaign.....	52
Figure 5: CPC's Distribution Attacks Against Others	54
Figure 6: CPC's Negative Behavior Against Leaders	55
Figure 7: CPC's Negative Behaviour Against Parties	55
Figure 8: CPC's Negative Behaviour Against Trudeau and LPC	56
Figure 9: CPC's Negative Behaviour Against Mulcair and NDP	57
Figure 10: LPC's Distribution of Negative Attacks	58
Figure 11: LPC's Negative Behaviour Against Leaders	59
Figure 12: LPC's Negative Behaviour Against Parties	59
Figure 13: LPC's Negative Behaviour Against Harper and CPC	60
Figure 14: LPC's Negative Behaviour Against Mulcair and NDP	60
Figure 15: NDP's Distribution of Attacks	61
Figure 16: NDP's Negative Behaviour Against Leaders	62
Figure 17: NDP's Negative Behaviour Against Parties	62
Figure 18: NDP's Negative Behaviour Against Harper and CPC.....	63
Figure 19: NDP's Negative Behaviour Against Mulcair and NDP	64
Figure 20: CPC's Status in the Polls and Proportion of Daily Attacks it Received	71
Figure 21: LPC's Status in the polls and Proportion of daily Attacks Against LPC and Trudeau	72
Figure 22: NDP's Status in the Polls and Proportion of Attacks Against NDP and Mulcair.....	72
Figure 23: Vote Intention for CPC and its Negative Behaviour	74
Figure 24: Vote Intention for NDP and its Negative Behaviour	75
Figure 25: Vote Intention for LPC and its Negative Behaviour	75
Figure 26: Leaders' Popularity Rate.....	76
Figure 27: Correlation Between Trudeau's Popularity Rate and Attacks Against Trudeau and LPC	77
Figure 28: Correlation Between Mulcair's Popularity Rate and Attacks Against Mulcair and NDP.....	78
Figure 29: Correlation Between Harper's Popularity Rate and Attacks Against Harper and CPC	78

Abstract

In recent years, negativity has become a dominant theme in the political campaign. However, there are no comprehensive studies to measure the amount of negativity and to examine how parties and candidates adopt these negative strategies, particularly in the Canadian context. Although some studies have focused on a particular aspect of negative campaigning in a Canadian election, the question remains of how and to what extent parties adopt negative strategies in an election. In this thesis, I have collected and analyzed parties' press releases in the 2015 federal election to examine and explain negativity in parties' political campaigns. I have tested my results according to five primary theories of negative campaigning, including competitive positioning, ideological proximity, party organization, coalition or minority effect, and negative personalization, to see if these theories apply in the Canadian context. My results indicate that the 2015 federal campaign was a highly negative one, and most of the negative attacks have been directed towards the leader of the Conservative Party, Stephen Harper, while the Conservative Party published the least amount of negative attacks during the campaign. I also found that the Liberal Party has published the most negative statements during the campaign. My results also show that one of the influential factors in shaping parties' negative campaign strategies is the other parties' status in public opinion polls, particularly the federal voting intention factor. Although the results show that most of the attacks in the 2015 campaign targeted leaders of parties, I did not find enough support in my models to verify the negative personalization theory. The overall findings of this thesis show that Canadian elections are moving toward a presidential-style campaign, similar to the United States, by becoming more negative and more personalized, which can have significant implications for Canadian democracy.

Acknowledgments

A major part of this thesis relies on the data from CBC Poll Tracker, which is gathered and aggregated during the 2015 election by Éric Grenier. I would like thank him for making this information public and accessible.

Reading and coding of 668 press releases was a time-consuming, diligent, and complicated process. I would like to thank Sally Momen Zadeh for helping me through gathering and verifying the dataset.

Throughout my master and writing of my thesis, my best friend, Saba Siadat, helped me with her great comments and inputs, and I am very grateful for all of her incredible supports in this journey.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my supervisor professor Stockemer, who patiently and attentively guided me through my whole master. His office was always open whenever I ran into trouble or had a question about my thesis or data. Professor Stockemer has always been accommodating and supportive, and this thesis could not be done without his incredible and thoughtful comments which I did very much appreciate.

Conducting a research and writing a thesis are stressful and solitary tasks and having compassionate and caring people around is a crucial part of successfully overcoming this period. I would like to thank my family who kindly adopted to my schedule and life style and helped me to keep moving forward during the last year.

Introduction

The role of mass media has dramatically changed the way citizens perceive political campaigns. Since public opinion is mainly affected and shaped through messages and images that mass media projects, campaigns' strategies have become the cornerstone of electoral studies. As a result, professional advertising, focus groups and public opinion polling have gained more prominent place in recent campaigns.¹ The majority of studies show that electorates' exposure to media advertisement affect their political knowledge about the candidates, issues raised in the campaign, their interest in the elections, and their voting preferences.² A negative campaign, which is generally defined as attacking or criticizing opponents instead of defending one's agenda, has attracted much attention in recent years.³ More than 75% of the U.S congressional general elections and 87% of the U.S presidential elections ads that have been aired since 2006 are negative.⁴ This increase in the level of negativity in political campaigns is due to the fact that negative campaigns have become the primary means for conveying political messages.⁵ At the same time, there has been a significant rise in the literature focusing on the effects of negative campaigning, although

¹ Hansen, Kasper M., and Rasmus Tue Pedersen. "Negative Campaigning in a Multiparty System." *Scandinavian Political Studies* 31, no. 4 (2008): 408–27.

² Atkin, Charles, and Gary Heald. "Effects of Political Advertising." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 40, no. 2 (1976): 216-28.

³ Mayer, William G. "In Defense of Negative Campaigning." *Political Science Quarterly* 111, no. 3 (1996): 437–55.

⁴ Motta, Matthew P., and Erika Franklin Fowler. "The Content and Effect of Political Advertising in U.S. Campaigns." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, December 22, 2016.

⁵ Lau, Richard, and Ivy Rovner. "Negative Campaigning." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12 (2009): 285-306.

mostly related to the U.S politics.⁶ Scholars have discussed and debated two primary areas of negative campaigning; first, the effectiveness of campaign communication in general, and negative attacks in particular, on voting behavior and vote intention.⁷ They have studied the impact of negative campaigns on elections, and how citizens view, perceive, evaluate, and respond to a negative message.⁸ The second area of studies focuses on the dynamic of parties' (candidates) strategic decision to go negative against the others.⁹ The goal of these inquiries is to explain why and when parties (candidates) decide to go negative and which party (candidate) would be most likely to be attacked. Majority of these studies are conducted in or about the United States' elections, applying rational choice theory to understand the dynamic behind adopting variety of strategies. In parliamentary systems with more than two major parties, designing and

⁶ Roy, Jason, and Christopher Alcantara. "Fighting Fire with Fire: The Implications of (Not) Going Negative in a Multiparty Election Campaign." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 49, no. 03 (September 2016): 473–97.

⁷ Ansolabehere, Stephen. *Going Negative: How Attack Ads Shrink and Polarize the Electorate*. Free Press, 1995. &

Carraro, Luciana, and Luigi Castelli. "The Implicit and Explicit Effects of Negative Political Campaigns: Is the Source Really Blamed?: Negative Campaigns." *Political Psychology* 31, no. 4 (July 12, 2010): 617–45.

Fiske, Susan T. "Attention and Weight in Person Perception: The Impact of Negative and Extreme Behavior." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 38, no. 6 (1980): 889–906.

Fridkin, Kim L., and Patrick Kenney. "Variability in Citizens' Reactions to Different Types of Negative Campaigns: Negative Campaigning." *American Journal of Political Science* 55, no. 2 (April 2011): 307–25.

⁸ Sides, John. "Do Voters Perceive Negative Campaigns as Informative Campaigns?" *American Politics Research* 38, no. 3 (May 1, 2010): 502–30.

⁹ Skaperdas, Stergios, and Bernard Grofman. "Modeling Negative Campaigning." *The American Political Science Review* 89, no. 1 (1995): 49. &

Dolezal, Martin, Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik, and Wolfgang C Müller. "Who Will Attack the Competitors? How Political Parties Resolve Strategic and Collective Action Dilemmas in Negative Campaigning." *Party Politics* 23, no. 6 (November 2017): 666–79.

implementing negative campaign strategies becomes more complicated than presidential and two-party systems. Although some studies address campaign strategic decision-making in parliamentary systems,¹⁰ a very limited amount of research exists in the Canadian literature that focuses on negative campaigning, and neither of them has tested the current theories of parties' negative campaign strategy. This research will contribute to the current literature by examining and analyzing five main theories on negative campaign, including competitive positioning, ideological proximity, minority or coalition effects, party organization, and negative personalization theory, and filling the gap in the literature through evaluating and testing these theories for the first time, in a Canadian federal election. In my thesis, I will present the dynamic of three major parties' negative campaign strategies in 2015 Canadian Federal Elections, by adopting three sets of hypotheses to the abovementioned theories to see if they can explain strategic behavior of the three main federal parties. I will use polls from CBC Poll Tracker¹¹ and NANOS¹² that have been conducted during the 2015 federal election, as well as the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party, and New Democratic Party press releases that have been published throughout the campaign. The dataset which is created for this research through a content analysis of these press

¹⁰ Elmelund-Præstekær, Christian. "Beyond American Negativity: Toward a General Understanding of the Determinants of Negative Campaigning." *European Political Science Review* 2, no. 01 (March 2010): 137.

Hansen and Pedersen, "Negative Campaigning in a Multiparty System." (2008): 408–27.

Walter, Annemarie. "Choosing the Enemy: Attack Behaviour in a Multiparty System." *Party Politics* 20, no. 3 (May 1, 2014): 311–23.

¹¹ "CBC News: Election 2015 Roundup." Accessed April 1, 2019.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news2/interactives/results-2015/>.

¹² "Nanos Data Portal > Weekly > Ballot > Preferred PM > Nanos Index | Nanos Research." Accessed April 1, 2018. <http://www.nanosresearch.com/data>

releases also was done for the first time and can help further research in this field, and thus contributes to the exiting literature on studying negative campaigning. The goal is to describe and explain how, when, and against whom parties adopt negative campaigns in a Canadian federal election by comparing and contrasting the amount of negativity in each party press releases and its targets.

In the first chapter, I will define a negative campaign and provide an overview of its effects on elections. Also, I will present variety of studies that have addressed how parties or candidates form their negative campaign strategies in presidential and parliamentary systems. The first chapter ends with an overview of limited studies that have addressed negativity in Canadian political campaigns, as well as looking at possible patterns and expectations in parties' negative strategies based on conclusions of existing studies on negative campaigning in Canada and around the world. Chapter two will briefly explain the general theoretical framework of this study and present possible hypotheses in the Canadian context. Chapter three describes the methodology for conducting this research by looking at my coding technique, data aggregation, and data limitations, and discusses the reasons for choosing these methods. Chapter four presents the results, including the negative campaign behavior of three major parties in the 2015 federal election by looking at the amount of negativity in each party's press releases, their targets, and any significant pattern in their strategies. The final chapters will start with a discussion of results and a brief analysis about different types of results, and end with the conclusion chapter which presents an overview of major finding along with their implications for Canadian elections, and some suggestions for further research.

1. Literature Review

1.1. What is a Negative Campaign?

In contrast to positive campaigns that “focus on their sponsors” and present the brands of their producers, a negative campaign is a campaign that focuses on a candidate’s/party’s opponent.¹³ Whether it is called as “a mudslinging” or “attacking” message¹⁴, negative campaigns essentially focus “on the weakness and faults of the opposition: the mistakes they have made, the flaws in their character or performance, the bad policies they would pursue.”¹⁵ In other words, in a negative campaign, a candidate/party “attacks the other candidate personally, the issues for which the other candidate stands, or the party of the other candidate.”¹⁶ Therefore, negative campaigns aim to “diminish positive affect for their target, the opposing candidate.”¹⁷ Geer argues that the nature of both positive and negative campaign is the same, regardless of their directional differences, since both use “propagandistic” tactics to support a claim.¹⁸ However, the negative one reflects more of reality, since it is more documented and supported by evidences.¹⁹ There are some variations in negative campaigning in which if it is a baseless and untruthful attack directed

¹³ Lau and Rovner. "Negative Campaigning." (2009)

¹⁴ Stewart, Charles J. “Voter Perception of Mud-slinging in Political Communication.” *Central States Speech Journal* 26, no. 4 (December 1, 1975): 279–86.

¹⁵ Mayer, “In Defense of Negative Campaigning.” (1996): 440-441.

¹⁶ Surlin, Stuart H., and Thomas F. Gordon. “How Values Affect Attitudes Toward Direct Reference Political Advertising.” *Journalism Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (1977): 93.

¹⁷ Lau, Richard R., Lee Sigelman, and Ivy Brown Rovner. “The Effects of Negative Political Campaigns: A Meta-Analytic Reassessment.” *Journal of Politics* 69, no. 4 (2007): 1180.

¹⁸ Geer, John Gray. *In Defense of Negativity Attack Ads in Presidential Campaigns*. Studies in Communication, Media, and Public Opinion. Chicago, Ill.; London, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.

¹⁹ Geer, “*In Defense of Negativity*” 2006.

towards personal life or political views of an opponent, it is usually considered as “false and deceptive ads,” while if it is based on relevant and well-founded critical evaluation of an opponent it is called “negative campaigning.”²⁰ In a different typology, negative political advertisements can be divided into three main categories: first, “implicative” ones that comprise of vague mentions of opponents, but do not include direct attacks against opponents.²¹ The second type is “comparative” type, which includes negative messages that explicitly present comparisons between candidates or parties.²² The third type, which has become the dominant type in the 21 century, is “the assaultive” attack, which targets “the opponent’s character, motives, associates, or actions, usually with little or no comparison to the originator of the advertisement.”²³ Lau and Pomper, in their evaluation of effects of negative campaign in U.S Senate elections, differentiate between “person based” and “issue based” negative messages in a campaign, and try to explain how this difference can influence the electorate.²⁴ I will discuss integration of these definitions and categories for the purpose of this research in the next chapter.

²⁰ Wright, William A. "Negative Campaigning." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 24, no. 1 (1993): 103-13.

²¹ Johnson-Cartee, Karen S., Author, and Copeland, Gary. *Negative Political Advertising : Coming of Age*. Communication (Hillsdale, N.J.). Hillsdale, N.J.: Taylor and Francis, 1991., 17

²² Johnson-Cartee and Copeland, “*Negative Political Advertising*” 1991. 17

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Lau, R. R., & Pomper, G. M. (2001). Effects of negative campaigning on turnout in U.S. Senate Elections, 1988–1998. *The Journal of Politics*, 63, 804–819.

1.2. Effects of Negative Campaigns?

1.2.1. Theoretical Arguments

Negative messages have become a salient part of voters' campaign evaluation, since the majority of media broadcast their news and stories with more negative tones than positive ones.²⁵ The main theory behind the application of negative messages and negative campaigns is a psychological one and is based on the concept of "negativity bias." Kahneman argues that animals and humans' brains are "designed to give priority to bad news," since negativity can make individuals to engage in "loss aversion" to avoid potential dangers and threats.²⁶ As a result, negativity persuades the human brain to identify phenomena as instantly threatening, even if there is no real threat or "purely symbolic threats."²⁷ In fact, the negativity bias "refers to the greater weight given to negative information relative to equally extreme and equally likely positive information in various judgement and information processing tasks."²⁸ In experimental studies of negativity bias, Ito et al. find that psychophysiological reactions to negative information are much more significant than positive information, and "people are more reactive and attentive to negative news than they are to positive news."²⁹ Therefore, negative messages are more likely to attract people's attention to the campaign, and with getting people's attention, political campaign

²⁵ Ansolabehere, "Going Negative" 1995.

²⁶ Kahneman, Daniel. 2011. *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. Toronto: Penguin Canada. 300-301

²⁷ Kahneman, "Thinking, Fast and Slow" 300-301.

²⁸ Meffert, Michael F., Sungeun Chung, Amber J. Joiner, Leah Waks, and Jennifer Garst. "The Effects of Negativity and Motivated Information Processing during a Political Campaign. (Voter Behavior)." *Journal of Communication* 56, no. 1 (2006): 29

²⁹ Soroka, Stuart, and Stephen McAdams. "News, Politics, and Negativity." *Political Communication* 32, no. 1 (2015): 2.

strategists believe that the possibility of persuading people will also increase.³⁰ Therefore, it is expected in elections that “voters will predominantly select, process, and recall negative information independent of the candidate.”³¹ In fact, negative messages can lead to more “arousal” and “higher attention levels” of voters than positive image.³² As a result, negative campaigns act as the primary mechanism for framing, shaping, and directing voters’ perceptions of parties or candidates. In addition, factors, such as party identification, voter sophistication, and electoral volatility can change the intensity of negative campaigns’ effects on the electorate.

Even though it is agreed upon among all scholars of political campaign that negativity has become a critical part of any campaign and is playing a considerable role in elections outcomes, there is no consensus on how voters absorb and process negative messages. For example, Meffert et al. argue that primary assumption of many studies on the effects of negative campaigns is that “voters are passive recipients of information,” who are the “victims of negativity.”³³ They explain that voters have an active role in deciding to “ignore political information altogether” or to “examine both positive and negative information about political candidates in the media.”³⁴ In

³⁰ Martin, Paul S. “Inside the Black Box of Negative Campaign Effects: Three Reasons Why Negative Campaigns Mobilize.” *Political Psychology* 25, no. 4 (August 2004): 545–62.

Fiske, “Attention and Weight in Person Perception”: (1980): 889–906.

³¹ Meffert, Michael F., Sungeun Chung, Amber J. Joiner, Leah Waks, and Jennifer Garst. “The Effects of Negativity and Motivated Information Processing during a Political Campaign.(Voter Behavior).” *Journal of Communication* 56, no. 1 (2006): 32

³² Martin, “Inside the Black Box of Negative Campaign Effects,” 548.

Cacioppo, J. T., Gardner, W. L., & Berntson, G. G. (1997). Beyond bipolar conceptualizations and measures: The case of attitudes and evaluative space. *Personality and Social Psychology review*, 1, 3–25.

³³ Meffert et al. “The Effects of Negativity and Motivated Information Processing During a Political Campaign.” 28.

other words, voters can also transform “raw” political messages based on their “motivations and pre-existing preferences.”³⁵ These findings have crucial implications in studying campaign communications. First of all, although voters are more attracted to negative messages, these attractions do not automatically translate to persuasion. In fact, while voters usually choose more negative messages and take more time to process negative information, they try to “convert [any] incongruent negative information into support for a [their] pre-existing preference.”³⁶ Also, as mentioned, depending on the level of political sophistication of voters and “a voter’s level of fundamental political knowledge,” negative messages can, in fact, have a reverse effect and “strengthen the evaluation of the candidate who is the target of a negative campaign.”³⁷ Thus, we can conclude with some level of certainty that voters’ reactions to the negative attacks are multifaceted.

Overall, the main effects of negative campaigning on the electorate can be summarized in two primary arguments. First, some studies argue that campaigns have very little influence on elections’ outcomes, and the results of the elections can be predicted by designing a model based on “fundamentals,” such as “state of economy, distribution of partisans in the electorate, and ideological location of the candidates.”³⁸ According to this theory, campaigns, in general, and negative campaigns, in particular, have little effects on the electoral politics, and these

³⁴ Meffert et al. “The Effects of Negativity and Motivated Information Processing During a Political Campaign.” 28.

³⁵ Ibid, 28.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Jacobson, Gary C. “How Do Campaigns Matter?,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 18, no. 1 (May 11, 2015): 33.

“fundamentals” are the primary driver of voters’ preferences. The second argument is that “voters respond in systemic and intelligible ways to specific campaign events,” and campaigns “enlighten” voters and enable them to make a connection between the state of economy and candidates’ competence in elections.³⁹ Geer argues that “the practice of democracy requires negativity of candidates,” since “the give and take of democratic politics demand that we know both the good and bad points of candidates and their political goals.”⁴⁰ As a result, campaigns can help voters to learn more about candidates’ “qualifications, traits, and issue positions.”⁴¹ Although the evidence does not support the idea that “campaigns can alter voters’ basic predispositions,” they can induce “voters to frame the choice.”⁴² From a different perspective, Geer argues that negative campaigns can make candidates’ and parties’ policies more transparent, showing their deficiencies, and presenting their consequential problems, and as a result, make them more “honest” in their campaigns.⁴³ In addition, in a competitive election, using negative campaign becomes more relevant, since voters see their votes as a significant determinant of an election, and become more engage in the process of the election.⁴⁴ Through conducting a data analyses on the 2006 U.S Senate campaigns , Fridkin snd Kenney argue that “uncivil and relevant” messages “strongly influence citizens’ evaluations of candidates,” and the effects are more significant particularly for voters who “who have limited tolerance” for negative political campaigns.⁴⁵ These types of attacks can

³⁹ Jacobson, *How Do Campaigns Matter*, 34.

⁴⁰ Geer, “*In Defense of Negativity*” 6.

⁴¹ Jacobson, *How Do Campaigns Matter*, 39.

⁴² Ibid, 40.

⁴³ Geer, “*In Defense of Negativity*” 6.

⁴⁴ Dolezal, Martin “Who Will Attack the Competitors? How Political Parties Resolve Strategic and Collective Action Dilemmas in Negative Campaigning” 23, no. 6 (November 1, 2017): 666–79.

⁴⁵ Fridkin, Kim L., and Patrick Kenney. “Variability in Citizens’ Reactions to Different Types of Negative Campaigns: Negative Campaigning.” *American Journal of Political Science* 55, no. 2 (2011): 322.

deviate voters from a supporter of the opponent to a passive citizen who does not participate in politics at all, which in some systems can translate to a victory for the attacking party or candidate.

While adopting negative attacks can bring some benefits to their sponsors, their application is usually not without side-effects. Two primary negative consequences of negative campaigns will be discussed in the next two sections; first, demobilizing effects which can lead to low turnouts in elections, and therefore, damages the democratic structure of the political system; second, damaging effects, which brings harms of negative attacks to their sponsors. For this research, although I briefly examine the studies that look at demobilizing effects, the main focus will be on the damaging effects, because of its significance in determining parties' campaign strategies. The damaging effects, as will be explained, can become more complicated in multiparty systems.

1.2.2. Demobilizing Effects

As we discussed in the previous section, since voters remember negative messages more than positive ones and are paying more attention to negativity in general, their electoral decisions are highly influenced by negative campaigns. One of the main arguments about negative campaign is that it leads to decline of voter turnout and level of political efficacy within voters.⁴⁶ Although it is very complex or almost impossible to make a general claim about the effects of negative

⁴⁶ Ansolabehere and Iyengar, "Going negative" 1995.

Ansolabehere, Stephen D., Shanto Iyengar, and Adam Simon. "Replicating Experiments Using Aggregate and Survey Data: The Case of Negative Advertising and Turnout." *The American Political Science Review* 93, no. 4 (1999): 901–9.

Ansolabehere, S., Iyengar, S., Simon, A., & Valentino, N. "Does attack advertising demobilize the electorate? *American Political Science Review*, 88, (1994): 829–838.

campaigns, it is highly agreed upon that different types of methodologies can bring about opposite findings. Survey research usually ends up in finding negative campaigns as a factor that encourages turnout, while experimental research concludes that negative campaigns eventually discourage turnout.⁴⁷ The difference is caused by what Ansolabehere and Iyengar identify as “severe bias” in survey data that results from measurement error. Through conducting several laboratory experimental studies on presidential, gubernatorial, and congressional elections in the United States, Ansolabehere and Iyengar record some evidence that show “attack advertising” lowers levels of political efficacy, and as a result eventually leads to lower voter turnout.⁴⁸ To test this hypothesis, by using aggregate turnout data from the 1992 Senate elections, they show that NES survey data also support their experimental results. On the other hand, other scholars argue that negative campaigns do, in fact, stimulate voters’ participations in an election.⁴⁹ For example, Goldstein and Freedman generate estimates of probability for voters who were exposed to positive and negative political advertising by using ad-tracking data from the 1996 U.S presidential election and the 1996 National Election Study. Their results show that those who were exposed to negative political advertisement were more likely to vote, and therefore, conclude that negative campaigns stimulate turnout.⁵⁰ To evaluate both sides of the argument, Yanna Krupnikov, by using experimental and observational data, found that the timing of exposure to a negative attack can be

⁴⁷ Martin, “Inside the Black Box of Negative Campaign Effects” 545.

⁴⁸ Ansolabehere et al., “Replicating Experiments Using Aggregate and Survey Data” 901–9.

⁴⁹ Goldstein, K., & Freedman, P. (2002). Campaign advertising and voter turnout: New evidence for a stimulation effect. *The Journal of Politics*, 64, 721–740.

Wattenberg, M. P., & Briars, C. L. (1999). Negative campaign advertising: Demobilizer or mobilizer? *American Political Science Review*, 93, 891–899.

Martin, “Inside the Black Box of Negative Campaign Effects” 545–562.

⁵⁰ Hernández-Huerta, Víctor A. “Negative Advertisements and Voter Turnout: The Evidence from Mexico.” *Colombia Internacional* 92 (October 1, 2017): 135–56.

a crucial factor in voters' intention to participate in an election.⁵¹ She argues that effects of negative campaigning depend on whether voters have been exposed to these messages before or after they make their choice. Krupnikov argues that voters who are exposed to negative messages while evaluating candidates are more likely to make their choice and turn out and vote than "those who are exposed to little or no negativity during that same time in the choice process."⁵² On the other hand, if voters have already made their decisions and chosen their preferred candidates, negative campaigns can create demobilizing effects. Since voters are more likely to pay more attention to new information about their candidates, they are more likely to be exposed to any negative messages against their preferred candidates.⁵³ Although at first, voters may try to find positive information about their selected candidates to approve their initial decisions,⁵⁴ they will eventually "become more responsive to information that is incongruent or suggests something negative about their chosen candidate."⁵⁵ One reason for this is that over a period of time voters "perceive the incongruent information to be of higher quality."⁵⁶ Redlawsk et al. in their experimental studies found that if people were systematic exposed to incongruent information for a long period of time, their candidate evaluations will decrease significantly.⁵⁷ Recall from previous section, that negative information, in general, is more memorable, and also assuming that over time voters pay

⁵¹ Krupnikov, Yanna. "How Negativity Can Increase and Decrease Voter Turnout: The Effect of Timing." *Political Communication* 31, no. 3 (July 3, 2014): 446–66.

⁵² Krupnikov, "How Negativity Can Increase and Decrease Voter Turnout" 448.

⁵³ Meffert et al. "The Effects of Negativity and Motivated Information Processing During a Political Campaign." 27–51.

⁵⁴ Redlawsk, David P., Andrew J. W. Civettini, and Karen M. Emmerson. "The Affective Tipping Point: Do Motivated Reasoners Ever 'Get It'? The Affective Tipping Point." *Political Psychology* 31, no. 4 (July 12, 2010): 563–93.

⁵⁵ Krupnikov, "How Negativity Can Increase and Decrease Voter Turnout" 449.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 449.

⁵⁷ Redlawsk et al., "The Affective Tipping Point" 563–93.

more attention to negative messages about their selected candidates, as Krupnikov argues, “negativity will eventually lead to declining evaluations of the chosen candidate.”⁵⁸ Voters’ exposure to negative messages about their chosen candidates, makes them less confident in their candidate evaluation, and therefore forces them to change their decision. Even though they can theoretically switch to the opposing candidate, based on their initial decision that includes “the rejection of the unselected alternative,” the possibility of switching vote becomes significantly low.⁵⁹ In addition, according to Blais in his study of changes in voters’ decisions, in final days of campaigns the possibility of switching votes is highly unlikely.⁶⁰ As a result, the only option is to refrain from voting, and it means lower overall turnout.⁶¹ Finally, in a different approach, Lau, Sigelman, Heldman, and Babbitt in their meta-analytic studies of the effects of negative campaign by looking at 111 studies published before 2006, find “no general support for the hypothesis that negative campaigning depresses voter turnout.”⁶² In his recent study of effects of negative campaigns in Mexico, Hernández-Huerta shows that structure of a political system can have a significant role in measure and intensity of negative messages’ effects on the electorate.⁶³ For example, in Mexican multi-party system, he did not find any significant result that can show the effects of negative campaign on turnout, because of the existence of solid party systems. So far,

⁵⁸ Krupnikov, “How Negativity Can Increase and Decrease Voter Turnout” 449.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 449.

⁶⁰ Blais, Andre. “How Many Voters Change Their Minds in the Month Preceding an Election?” *Political Science and Politics* 37, no. 4 (2004): 801–3.

⁶¹ Krupnikov, Yanna. “When Does Negativity Demobilize? Tracing the Conditional Effect of Negative Campaigning on Voter Turnout: When Does Negativity Demobilize?” *American Journal of Political Science* 55, no. 4 (October 2011): 797–813.

⁶² Lau, Sigelman, and Rovner. “The Effects of Negative Political Campaigns” 1184.

⁶³ Hernández-Huerta, “Negative Advertisements and Voter Turnout” 135–56.

we have discussed the consequential effects of negative campaigns on voters as a stimulating or discouraging factor. The next section explains another possible effect of adopting negative attacks that directs towards their sponsors.

1.2.3. Damaging Effects

While negative campaigns can weaken the opposition, they don't come without consequences for their supporters. The Republican Congressional Campaign Committee sponsored a comprehensive study of the effects of negative political advertisement on television in 1979. Based on the conclusion of this study, negative political campaigns can have three damaging effects: the boomerang, the victim syndrome, and the double impairment effect.⁶⁴ Garramone defines boomerang or backlash effects as unintended consequence of adopting negative messages that can lead to "more negative feelings toward the sponsor, rather than toward the target."⁶⁵ She also argue that negative attacks can produce "victim syndrome" in which when voters see an attack as "unfair" and "unjustified," they feel more positively toward the target of the attack.⁶⁶ Finally, Merritt by using telephone survey in California in 1984, finds that negative political campaigns can have a double effect. According to her study, negative messages can have negative consequences both for their sponsors and their targets, and they can have more damaging effects for their supporter than their target when they are used by "a minority party candidate."⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Johnson-Cartee and Copeland "Negative Political Advertising: Coming of Age." 1991.

⁶⁵ M. Garramone, Gina. *Voter Response to Negative Political Ads*. Vol. 61, 1984. 251.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 251.

⁶⁷ Merritt, Sharyne. "Negative Political Advertising: Some Empirical Findings." *Journal of Advertising* 13, no. 3 (October 1984): 27–38.

However, Johnson-Cartee and Copeland, through conducting a series of telephone surveys, find no statistically significant evidence to support these three effects.⁶⁸ But at the same time their findings show that voters make a distinction between “issue-based” and “personal-based” attacks in which they see the former as “fair comment” while perceive the later as “unfair” and see it unfavorably.⁶⁹

On the other hand, more recent studies show that negative messages are not beneficial for their sponsor. According to Mackie et al., and based on their two experimental studies, voters’ evaluation of the target is always positive, and their evaluation of the source of the attack is always negative, regardless of the strength or the quality of the message.⁷⁰ However, in their experimental studies on effectiveness of different types of negative messages, Budesheim et al. show that ideological affiliation of participants, as well as existence of a justification for negative message, shape voters’ information processing. Their result show that participants in the source’s political in-group, do in fact, evaluate quality of the source’s message about the target, and therefore it is important for participants to see a justification for a negative attack.⁷¹ Therefore, based on both studies, negative attacks not only are incapable of influencing their target’s supporters, but also may create dissatisfaction inside their source’s camp. Through looking at implicit and explicit effects of negative campaigns by running different experiments in Italy, Carraro and Castelli

⁶⁸ Johnson-Cartee, Karen S., and Gary Copeland. “Southern Voters’ Reaction to Negative Political Ads in 1986 Election.” *Journalism Quarterly* 66, no. 4 (December 1989): 888–986.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 892.

⁷⁰ Mackie, Diane M., Leila T. Worth, Arlene G. Asuncion, and Reis, Harry T. “Processing of Persuasive In-Group Messages.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 58, no. 5 (1990): 812–22.

⁷¹ Budesheim, Thomas Lee, David A. Houston, and Stephen J. DePaola. “Persuasiveness of In-Group and Out-Group Political Messages: The Case of Negative Political Campaigning.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 70, no. 3 (1996): 523-34.

conclude that negative campaigns while “lead to evaluating more negatively the interpersonal qualities of the source, but at the same time they increase the perceived competence of [its] candidate.”⁷² Their results also show that in addition to possible boomerang effects of a personal attack in an explicit level, “the reliance on negative messages was associated with more negative spontaneous affective responses toward the source, but also with a spontaneous conformity to such a source,” in an implicit level.⁷³ Other factors also can influence the severity of backlash effects. For instance, Krupnikov and Bauer suggest that gender plays a significant role in determining the boomerang effects.⁷⁴ By conducting an experimental analysis in the U.S, they find that female candidates get higher backlash effects compare to the male candidates.⁷⁵

By looking at findings from various studies, the question remains that why do candidates and political parties still choose negative campaigns as their primary campaign strategies? The answer lies in the contradictory results in real life. For example, although it was George W. Bush who adapted negative attacks as his primary strategy during the 2004 US presidential election, where John Kerry mainly focused on positive campaigning, it was Bush who won the election eventually.⁷⁶ Similar result happened in a multiparty political system in Italy, when Silvio Berlusconi and his coalition won the election while constantly attacking the Democratic candidate,

⁷² Carraro and Castelli, “The Implicit and Explicit Effects of Negative Political Campaigns” 620.

⁷³ Ibid, 617.

⁷⁴ Krupnikov, Yanna, and Nichole M. Bauer. “The Relationship Between Campaign Negativity, Gender and Campaign Context.” *Political Behavior* 36, no. 1 (March 2014): 167-188.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 176.

⁷⁶ Carraro, Luciana, Luigi Castelli, Ioana Breazu, Giulia Campomizzi, Antonella Cerruto, Massimiliano Mariani, and Ivano Toto. “Just Ignore or Counterattack? On the Effects of Different Strategies for Dealing with Political Attacks: Responding to Political Attacks.” *European Journal of Social Psychology* 42, no. 6 (October 2012): 789–97.

Walter Veltroni, who did not launch a counterattack towards his opponents.⁷⁷ Drew Westen tries to provide an answer to this contradiction by looking at the frequent choice of Democratic candidates in the United States to avoid direct confrontation with their opponents once they are attacked. Westen argues that focusing on positive messages is “deleterious” for Democratic candidates, and instead works in favor of Republican candidates.⁷⁸ The reason is that ignoring an attack portrays a weak and vulnerable leader, in voters’ eyes, who should not be followed, while any effort to counterattack “may foster the perceived strength of the candidate.”⁷⁹ In their three experimental studies in Italy, Carraro and Castelli evaluate this issue. Their results, interestingly, show that while candidates who rely on negative campaigns are evaluated negatively by participants, but at the same time, they are seen as more reliable choices in leading independent tasks compared to candidates who merely focus on positive campaign.⁸⁰ The overall conclusion from all of these studies is that negative campaigning cannot be avoided in elections, and in fact, has to be considered seriously by parties, candidates, and strategists. The question for campaign strategists is how and in what context do negative campaigns achieve their goals? Therefore, a cost-benefit analysis is required to understand which parties, when, and how should attack their opponents, in order to minimize the damage to themselves. In the following sections, I will go over the main arguments on how parties or candidates adopt negative strategies, and what issues they face in each case.

⁷⁷ Carraro et al., “Just Ignore or Counterattack?” 789–97.

⁷⁸ Westen, Drew. *The Political Brain: The Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2007.

⁷⁹ Carraro et al., “Just Ignore or Counterattack?” 790.

⁸⁰ Carraro, Luciana, and Luigi Castelli. “The Implicit and Explicit Effects of Negative Political Campaigns: Is the Source Really Blamed?: Negative Campaigns.” *Political Psychology* 31, no. 4 (July 12, 2010): 617–45.

1.3. Party Strategy in Adopting Negative Campaigns

1.3.1. General Theme

Majority, if not all, of attacks in a political campaign are framed towards other parties/candidates' past personal events or political performance instead of evaluating their future platform and plans.⁸¹ The reason is that gathering evidence and attacking future proposals, which can be unclear and abstract, is much harder than focusing on something that has already happened and might have been partially revealed by the media. This tactic can make any negative attack more solid and effective, since any attack, at least in theory, should be based on existing evidence and concrete records. However, in reality, many attacks are conducted without any solid proof or evidence and are only comprised of random allegations about an opponent. Many of these types of attacks as we discussed in the previous section, may attract more attention at the beginning, but can backfire against their sponsors as soon as their credibility starts to diminish. As a result, the dilemma still exists for parties' campaign strategists on how to escape any possible damage caused by attacking their opponents. By using an experiment from a large geographically representative sample of U.S adults, Brooks and Murov measure "how sponsorship influences ad effectiveness," and find that negative ads that are sponsored with "unknown independent groups are more effective" than those that are sponsored by candidates.⁸² As a result, in order to achieve this goal, in a two-party system, such as the United States, parties or candidates use "outside groups" who are not formally tied to a candidate or party to carry out the attacks.⁸³ But in multiparty systems

⁸¹ Geer, *"In Defense of Negativity"* 2006.

⁸² Deborah Brooks and Michael Murov, "Assessing Accountability in a Post-Citizens United Era: The Effects of Attack Ad Sponsorship by Unknown Independent Groups," *American Politics Research* 40, no. 3 (2012): 385

⁸³ Brooks and Murov, "Assessing Accountability in a Post-Citizens United Era" 383–418.

the cost-benefit equation is not simple as in a two-party system in which costs of an attack and its benefits, even if it is initiated by an independent source, can go to an unpredictable side. Also, since there is a possibility of forming a minority or coalition government, negative attacks may result in “policy and office costs, as targeted (prospective) coalition partners may be less willing to cooperate,” after the election.⁸⁴ Dolezal et al., by analyzing around 8000 press releases issued by over 600 individual politicians during four election campaigns in Austria, provide an explanation and a solution for party strategists to deal with this dilemma. According to their study, in multiparty systems, conducting negative attacks are delegated to “party floor leaders and general secretaries,” and party leaders and cabinet members are less likely to adopt negative messages in their political campaigns in order to increase the effectiveness of the attack and also avoid any direct backlash.⁸⁵ Therefore, party leaders who are the primary faces of parties in public and also the main negotiators for future coalitions, remain outside of “the dirty work.”

The complication in adopting negative campaign strategies can also be intertwined to understanding which party is more likely to be the target of an attack, and in multi-party systems, choosing the target can be a very challenging task. Since voters have more choices in multi-party systems, conducting a negative campaign and its effects can be much more complex than a two-party system. While in two-party elections negative campaign will have a positive or negative impact on the attacker or the target, in multi-party elections, voters’ behaviour, campaigns’ impacts, and party strategies can be very intertwined. As I mentioned, it will not be clear that by attacking a party or a candidate, the attacker will get the benefit, or experience the backlash effects

⁸⁴ Dolezal, Ennser-Jedenastik, and Müller, “Who Will Attack the Competitors?” 666–8.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

of the attack. Parties and candidates in multiparty systems face hard choices when selecting their campaign tones. While parties see negative messages as essential parts of their campaign and as a tool that can publicize their competitors' weaknesses,⁸⁶ they do not want to be blamed for the attack. But the backlash effects of negative campaigning in multiparty systems may not be as clear as in the two-party systems. Davide Morisi in studying 2015 U.K General Election in Scotland finds that negative attacks, particularly on "divisive issues, can lead to both electoral gains and losses depending on voters' identification with such issues."⁸⁷ Therefore, if parties or candidates run their negative campaigns on issues such as abortion, gay rights, or immigration, "they might activate voters' sense of identification with these issues and either gain or lose electoral support, depending on the stance taken by both voters and parties on these topics."⁸⁸ Therefore, party identification can play a major role in how negative campaigns influence voters. This conclusion is confirmed by other studies which look at electoral volatility as a trigger factor for negativity in campaigns. Through studying the level of negativity in Turkish elections, Toros finds that parties employ negative attacks more frequently in a volatile electorate to deviate swing votes from other opponents.⁸⁹ The reason is that electoral volatility can reduce level of party identification among voters, and therefore, increase the number of swing votes in each election.⁹⁰ As a result, there are more floating votes to be grabbed by parties who then become more willing to apply negative

⁸⁶ Dolezal, Ennser-Jedenastik, and Müller, "Who Will Attack the Competitors?" 666–8

⁸⁷ Morisi, Davide. "When Campaigns Can Backfire: National Identities and Support for Parties in the 2015 U.K. General Election in Scotland." *Political Research Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (December 2018): 895.

⁸⁸ Morisi, "When Campaigns Can Backfire" 895.

⁸⁹ Toros, Emre. "Negative Campaigning in Turkish Elections" *Turkish Studies* 16, no. 4 (October 2, 2015): 487–509.

⁹⁰ Hazama, Yasushi. *Electoral Volatility in Turkey: Cleavages Vs. The Economy*. Chiba: Institute of Developing Economies, 2007.

tactics in an election. In terms of demobilizing effects, it has been argued that negative political campaign does not have a significant effect in a multi-party system due to the existence of a “fairly strong institutionalization of the party system.”⁹¹ By having historically rooted political parties, along with presence of more than two choices in multiparty systems, voters can still have a choice to participate in politics, even when they decide to abandon their initial parties.

1.3.2. Who Attacks Who?

One of the most crucial parts of any studies revolving around negative campaigns is to understand the conditions in which a candidate or party decides to go negative against others. As discussed in the previous section, negative campaigns are not without costs for the attackers, and these costs can become more complicated and unpredictable when there is a parliamentary multiparty system in place. Campaign strategists constantly use cost-benefit analysis to understand when to adopt positive or negative tactics. However, this cost-benefit analysis in multiparty systems is also different from that of a two-party system. By attacking the main opponent in a two-party system, any decline in vote share of the other candidate or party is considered beneficial for the attacking candidate or party, and it is not necessary to attract those votes, though preferable.⁹² In fact, in a two-party system, if an attacking party is only able to persuade its opponent’s voters not to vote, this decline in votes can lead to the victory of the attacking party, since voters do not have any alternative option to vote for.⁹³ However, this equation is not as simple in a multiparty

⁹¹ Hernández-Huerta, “Negative Advertisements and Voter Turnout” 153.

⁹² Walter, “Choosing the Enemy: Attack Behaviour in a Multiparty System.” 311–23.

system. While attackers may absorb all the backlash effects of conducting negative campaign, they may not be the one who acquires the benefit of it, due to the existence of other major parties and candidates in the race.⁹⁴ Also, unlike two-party systems, multi-party systems often deal with having a minority or coalition government, and therefore in addition to possible backlash effects, parties have to consider working with others to form a government.⁹⁵ As a result, if a negative campaign against possible partners goes beyond reasonable policy issues, and becomes too personal in its content and too dirty in its tone, it can significantly jeopardize a party's ability to form a government after the election, in case it requires other parties' support to obtain the majority of the parliament.⁹⁶ In fact, while in a two-party system the main focus is on "vote-seeking behaviour," in a multi-party system there should be an equilibrium between vote seeking and government formation strategies; note that winning more seats than the other parties does not necessarily guaranty formation of government.⁹⁷ By looking at all of the studies that present a theory, or test one, to explain why and which parties are the initiator, or the target of an attack, we can summarize them into the following five main categories.

⁹³ Walter, "Choosing the Enemy: Attack Behaviour in a Multiparty System." 311–23.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Walter, Annemarie S. "Negative Campaigning in Western Europe: Similar or Different?" *Political Studies* 62, no. 1_suppl (April 2014): 42–60.

Hansen, Kasper, and Pedersen. "Negative Campaigning in a Multiparty System." 408–27.

Elmelund-Præstekær, "Negative Campaigning in a Multiparty System." 27–39.

⁹⁶ Elmelund-Præstekær, Christian. "Beyond American Negativity: Toward a General Understanding of the Determinants of Negative Campaigning." *European Political Science Review* 2, no. 01 (March 2010): 137-156.

⁹⁷ Müller, Wolfgang C., and Kaare Strom. *Policy, Office, or Votes?: How Political Parties in Western Europe Make Hard Decisions*. Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics. Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

1.3.2.1. Incumbents, Front-runners, and Challengers' Strategy

One of the common grounds between two-party and multi-party systems is “the competitive positioning” theory which argues that candidates and parties who are front-runners are more likely to be attacked than parties that are behind in the polls.⁹⁸ Haynes and Rhine by collecting data from three national newspapers, one national news program, and 19 state newspapers examine attack politics in 1992 Democratic nomination race in the U.S.⁹⁹ They did find statistically significant support for the competitive positioning theory in all of its variations, including the frontrunner and runner-up’s attack behaviours. Therefore, while Walter argues that “saliency and valence” only contribute in positive campaigns,¹⁰⁰ these attributes of a candidate and party can significantly increase the possibility of being the target of negative attacks. Through conducting a series of thought experiments within professional political campaign consultants in the U.S, Theilmann and Wilhite show that runner-up parties are more likely to adopt negative campaign strategies than the front-runners.¹⁰¹ The reason is that parties who have a lead on the polls, are less likely to risk their position by attacking others, for the fear of having possible backlash effects.¹⁰² By focusing on the Denmark’s 2005 general elections, Hansen and Pedersen show that initiating a negative attack by front-runners can also provide a base for the others to respond to the attack negatively, and not to

⁹⁸ Skaperdas and Grofman, “Modeling Negative Campaigning.” 53–55.

⁹⁹ Haynes, Audrey A., and Staci L. Rhine. “Attack Politics in Presidential Nomination Campaigns: An Examination of the Frequency and Determinants of Intermediated Negative Messages against Opponents.” *Political Research Quarterly* 51, no. 3 (1998): 691–721.

¹⁰⁰ Walter, “Choosing the Enemy: Attack Behaviour in a Multiparty System.” 311–23.

¹⁰¹ Theilmann, John, and Allen Wilhite. “Campaign Tactics and the Decision to Attack.” *The Journal of Politics* 60, no. 4 (1998): 1050–62.

Damore, David F. “Candidate Strategy and the Decision to Go Negative.” *Political Research Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (2002): 669–85.

¹⁰² Skaperdas and Grofman, “Modeling Negative Campaigning.” 53–55.

be blamed for it.¹⁰³ As a result, front-runners usually try to avoid starting a fight with their opponents, and mostly emphasize their positive messages.

By conducting a statistical test in non-US settings, Walter suggests that incumbent-challenger dichotomy, the dynamic between governing party and others, particularly with the one in the best position to take the government, can be a significant factor in framing the attack behaviour in an election.¹⁰⁴ Her results from content analysis of data on negative campaigning from ten Dutch Parliamentary elections between 1981 and 2010 show that challengers in a two-party system or multi-party system always direct most of their negative campaigning towards the one who is in power, and has the “government status.”¹⁰⁵ The main reason, as explained by Hale et al. in their content analysis of randomly chosen four hundred twenty ads produced between 1984 and 1994 in the U.S. Senate campaigns, is that in order to divert the votes from the governing party, challengers have to make a case that the current government is bad for the country for a variety of reasons, and thus, have to frame their negative message primarily toward the incumbent.¹⁰⁶ On the other hand, the party who is in power, should focus its campaign primarily on its past performance and its accomplishments, and therefore, defending its record while being in the office. This simply means that the party with the government status has to emphasize on positive messages of its achievements, instead of attacking other parties. The challengers, however, do not have concrete records of governing, and thus, have to provide only abstract and

¹⁰³ Hansen, Kasper, and Pedersen. “Negative Campaigning in a Multiparty System.” 408–27.

¹⁰⁴ Walter, “Choosing the Enemy: Attack Behaviour in a Multiparty System.” 311–23.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 311–23.

¹⁰⁶ Hale, Jon F., Jeffrey C. Fox, and Rick Farmer. “Negative Advertisements in U.S. Senate Campaigns: The Influence of Campaign Context.” *Social Science Quarterly* 77, no. 2 (1996): 329–43.

future promises to present themselves.¹⁰⁷ As a result, challengers, by essence of not being in the government, are in an attacking position to criticize the government's policies, performance, and legislative records. As a consequential result of above-mentioned theories, the weakest candidate or party is the least likely one to be attacked by others. However, as I will explain in the next section, in some circumstances, even minor parties can play a significant role in shaping campaign strategies.

1.3.2.2. Ideological and Issue Proximity and Negative Campaigning

Another influential factor in determining the target of attacks is the theory of “ideological or issue proximity” which argues that parties who have a better chance of winning more seats will focus on eliminating opponents who have the same ideological stands and are close to their positions on critical issues.¹⁰⁸ Since these parties are competing for getting the appeal of the same voters, they have to differentiate themselves from the others, mostly through adapting negative tactics. However, this theory may not always be applicable to a two-party presidential system. By using tracking data from the 2004 and 2008 U.S. presidential nomination campaigns and detailed polling data from each state, Ridout and Holland show that candidates do not attack “the same ideological base as their opponents,” since they need the same base for the general election, if they succeed in the primary.¹⁰⁹ Thus, the timing of an attack become a crucial factor in launching an attack. On the other hand, in a multiparty system, while it has usually been the case that parties

¹⁰⁷ Trent, Judith S. *Political Campaign Communication: Principles and Practices*. Eighth edition. Communication, Media, and Politics. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.

¹⁰⁸ Downs, Anthony. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper, 1957.

¹⁰⁹ Ridout, Travis N., and Jenny L. Holland. “Candidate Strategies in the Presidential Nomination Campaign.” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (December 2010): 627.

with higher possibility of winning more seats are the target of negative attacks, smaller parties could also become the target if they are ideologically proximate to the bigger parties and their share of votes can easily be taken.¹¹⁰

In examining attack behaviour in Dutch Parliamentary elections, Walter argues that in multi-party systems, smaller parties are more likely to target the party that is ideologically far from them.¹¹¹ Elmelund-Præstekær also finds similar results when analyzing the tone of the Danish parties' election campaign. His findings show that parties who are ideologically extreme, whether on the right or left side of the political spectrum, are more likely to go negative, particularly against the other side of the spectrum.¹¹² By moving away from the center, it can be expected that the parties have more disagreement on policies adopted by the others; in particular, mainstream parties. Thus, the possibility of adopting more critical or negative evaluation of other parties' platforms and candidates will increase.¹¹³ In addition, these far right or left parties may regard themselves as primary opposition forces against the existing political establishment,¹¹⁴ and consequently, adopt more negative tones in any political campaign to consolidate their identity for the electorate. With this strategy, these extreme parties try to attract voters that oppose to their opponents, by presenting themselves as the real alternative for a change.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ Walter, "Choosing the Enemy: Attack Behaviour in a Multiparty System." 311–23.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Elmelund-Præstekær, "Beyond American Negativity" 137.

¹¹³ Ibid, 137.

¹¹⁴ Sartori, Giovanni. *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*. Cambridge [Eng.]: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

¹¹⁵ Walter, "Choosing the Enemy: Attack Behaviour in a Multiparty System." 311–23.

1.3.2.3. Party Organization and Party Identification

The size of a party, its organizational ability and party identification can also be elements that affect the party's strategy for going negative against others. Although rarely examined, limited number of studies find that parties with more solid membership programs and voters' affiliation are more inclined to use negative tactics.¹¹⁶ Since established parties are capable of attaching "voters more closely to the party" and developing "a stronger sense of party identification among [their] voters,"¹¹⁷ they feel more comfortable employing negative attacks without having to fear significant backlash effects. Voters who identify themselves clearly with a party, look at the party as a "brand," and relate themselves to it as loyal customers.¹¹⁸ As a result, parties with a higher degree of voters' affiliation do not need to provide details of their future plans and programs for governing the country, rather they only represent general trends of their brand, and consequently, are able to use more of their campaign resources towards attacking others.¹¹⁹ In their comprehensive analysis of electoral behaviour in the U.S, Campbell et al explain that having more loyal voters also encourages parties to go negative against others and present their opponents as a potential danger, and therefore, provide necessary fuel for their loyal voters to spread their voices and defend their stands.¹²⁰ In fact, these parties use negative attacks as a tool to create more party identification, based on the in-group and out-group tendencies of voters.¹²¹ As a result, by lunching

¹¹⁶ Elmelund-Præstekær, "Beyond American Negativity" 143.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 143.

¹¹⁸ Muller, Wolfgang C. "Political Parties in Parliamentary Democracies: Making Delegation and Accountability Work." *European Journal of Political Research* 37, no. 3 (May 2000): 309–33.

¹¹⁹ Elmelund-Præstekær, "Beyond American Negativity" 143.

¹²⁰ Campbell, A., P. Converse, W. Miller and D. Stokes (1960), *The American Voter*, Chicago, IL, USA: University of Chicago Press.

an attack, large parties can mobilize a large number of grassroots volunteers in a campaign. On the other hand, the logical inference of this theory is that parties without strong organizational capacity and party identification among voters have to provide more details of their policies, platforms, and positions on issues, and thus, have to allocate more of their time and resources to positive campaign.

1.3.2.4. Minority or Coalition Governments and Campaign Strategy

In their cross-national comparative studies of political advertisement, Kaid and Holtz-Bacha explain how political systems can affect the design and structure of political campaigns.¹²² One of the main differences between elections' outcomes in two-party and multi-party systems is the possibility of forming a minority or coalition government after the election in multi-party systems.¹²³ To study negative campaigning in Scandinavian countries, Hansen and Pedersen conduct content analysis of six major newspapers during the 2005 Danish General election to measure the negativity in the campaign. They find that negative campaign is not as significant in Denmark as it is in the U.S, and one of the major explanations for this difference, among other things, is that having a majority government in Denmark is usually an exception.¹²⁴ While it may seem unrelated to the campaign, since it will happen after the election, in fact, how parties campaign during an election can have significant consequences for their future partnership. Considering any possible future coalition or supporting votes for forming a minority government,

¹²¹ Ruscher, Janet B. *Prejudiced Communication: A Social Psychological Perspective*. New York: Guilford Press, 2001.

¹²² Kaid, Lynda Lee, and Christina Holtz-Bacha. *The SAGE Handbook of Political Advertising*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications, 2006.

¹²³ Hansen, Kasper, and Pedersen. "Negative Campaigning in a Multiparty System." 408–27.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

parties try to avoid attacking their potential partners.¹²⁵ Through systematic content analysis of 10 parliamentary election campaigns in the Netherlands between 1981 and 2010, Walter and Van Der Brug identify the “office-seeking” strategy of parties as one of the primary factors that contributes in framing negative political campaigns in multiparty systems. In fact, based on their findings, office-seeking factor acts as an inter-party variation in determining negative campaigning within multiparty systems. This factor can also be integrated to other variables in determining the amount of negativity in a political campaign. Toros, through studying Turkish Parliamentary elections, finds that higher fractionalization of the political systems, which means existence of higher number of effective parties, can contribute to a decline in the number of negative attacks in an election.¹²⁶ By having more influential political parties, the possibility of forming a coalition government will increase, and therefore, it will affect the level of negativity that parties will adopt during their political campaigns.¹²⁷ Since in a two-party system there is no need for taking into account the possibility of any future coalition, office-seeking and fractionalization factors only affect multiparty systems.

1.3.2.5. Mass Media and Presidentialisation or Personalisation of Politics

While, traditionally, in parliamentary systems parties have played the main role in electoral politics, with the emergence of mass media this role has been started to fade away and transferred to party leaders. This transformation has been called presidentialisation or personalization of

¹²⁵ Walter, Annemarie S, and Wouter van der Brug. “When the Gloves Come off: Inter-Party Variation in Negative Campaigning in Dutch Elections, 1981–2010.” *Acta Politica* 48, no. 4 (October 2013): 367–88.

¹²⁶ Toros, “Negative Campaigning in Turkish Elections” 487–509.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

politics by many scholars who argue that similar to a two-party presidential system, such as the United States', party leaders in multi-party systems are becoming the forefront of parties' representation in the public.¹²⁸ In his case study of Britain, Mughan finds that Britain Parliamentary elections have become more presidential, since party leaders get a separate identity than their parties for voters and also become more prominent on media and campaigns.¹²⁹ In their cross-national comparative studies of Presidentialisation theory, Poguntke and Webb identify "personalization of the electoral process" as one of three main factors contributing to the Presidentialisation.¹³⁰ This transformation is particularly caused by "internationalization of modern politics" that eventually led to an "executive bias" within political systems, and also "the mediatization of politics" that enables party leaders to "bypass their party machines and appeal directly to voters."¹³¹ Therefore, apart from internal procedural changes that could strengthen the role of the party leaders, it is the media that plays a very crucial function in the emergence and consolidation of this phenomenon. By conducting a historical comparative analysis of Israel' elections between 1949-2003, Rahat and Sheaffer argue that the presentation and representation of politics in the media is mainly done by emphasizing on politicians rather than their parties.¹³² In response to demand and coverage of the media, parties themselves also choose to design their campaigns mostly about their leaders' personalities and characters which intensifies the focus of

¹²⁸ Mughan, Anthony. *Media and the Presidentialization of Parliamentary Elections*. Basingstoke ; New York: Palgrave, 2000.

¹²⁹ Mughan, "Media and the Presidentialization of Parliamentary Elections." 2000.

¹³⁰ Poguntke, Thomas, Webb, Paul D, and European Consortium for Political Research. *The Presidentialization of Politics: A Comparative Study of Modern Democracies*. Comparative Politics. Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online Monographs, Oxford University Press, 2005.

¹³¹ Poguntke and Webb, "The Presidentialization of Politics," 2005.

¹³² Rahat, Gideon, and Tamir Sheaffer. "The Personalization(s) of Politics: Israel, 1949–2003." *Political Communication* 24, no. 1 (January 29, 2007): 65–80.

the media on party leaders.¹³³ Whether it is the media that contributes to personal representation of politics, or parties who focus more on their leaders to appeal to voters, the immediate consequence is that party leaders will be the primary targets of negative attack as well.¹³⁴ Also, since negative campaigns primarily target party leaders, it can be expected to see more personal-based attacks than issue-based attacks in multi-party systems.¹³⁵ For campaign strategists, therefore, a significant result is to focus their positive or negative messages on party leaders. As a result, personalization of politics has to be considered at least as an equal factor amongst the others, if not the most important, in shaping parties' negative campaign strategies.

1.4. Negative Campaigning in the Canadian Context

1.4.1. Historical Examples

Similar to other representative democracies, Canadian elections are also mainly driven by media and party advertisements. As a result, political campaigns have become the major factor in electoral success and failure. In order to understand the relationship between campaign news and voting intention, Soroka et al conducted a manual content analysis of 2004 and 2006 Canadian federal elections' media coverage of parties and leaders.¹³⁶ Their results show that media content and public opinion are positively correlated, and also there is a possibility to predict voting

¹³³ McAllistar, I. (2007) 'The Personalization of Politics', in R. J. Dalton and H. Klingemann (eds), *Oxford Handbook of Political Behaviour*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 571–88.

¹³⁴ Pruyers, Scott, and William Cross. "Research Note: 'Negative' Personalization: Party Leaders and Party Strategy." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 49, no. 03 (September 2016): 539–58.

¹³⁵ Walter, Annemarie S. "Negative Campaigning in Western Europe: Similar or Different?" *Political Studies* 62, no. 1_suppl (April 2014): 42–60.

¹³⁶ Soroka, Stuart, Marc André Bodet, Lori Young, and Blake Andrew. "Campaign News and Vote Intentions." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 19, no. 4 (November 2009): 359–76.

intentions by measuring the tone in media content. The bottom line is that campaigns matter in Canadian elections, and thus, similar to other western democracies, they have to be investigated to see whether or not negative campaigning also has a particular place in Canadian political campaigns. As we have already witnessed, so far, U.S. scholars have been interested in studying the effects of negative campaigning, party strategies, and voters' information processing. Also, as I mentioned in previous sections, studying political campaign communication, and in particular, negative campaigning is rarely done in a multiparty setting. Canada is not an exception to this trend, and in fact, research on this topic in Canadian federal elections can hardly be found. Although academic research on negative campaigning in Canada is very limited, it is common knowledge among candidates and party strategists that negative attacks are effective and crucial for electoral success.¹³⁷ Tom Flanagan in his book by explaining how the Canadian political campaigns work argues that although new forms of advertising did not exist in the past, negativity has being widely used in speeches and partisan newspapers in Canadian elections. He provides a historical example of negative campaigning in which John A. Macdonald accused Wilfrid Laurier of "veiled treason" when Laurier proposed his free trade program with the United States in the 1891 election.¹³⁸ Working as the Conservative Party of Canada's national campaign manager in 2004 and senior communication advisor from 2005 to 2006, Flanagan explains how CPC's negative campaign strategies were developed from "whimsical ads" such as "Carousel" and "Cookie Jar" in 2004, to more direct attacks against Paul Martin in 2006.¹³⁹ The use of negative

¹³⁷ Flanagan, Thomas author. *Winning Power: Canadian Campaigning in the Twenty-First Century*. Montreal Quebec: McGill Queen's University Press, 2014.

¹³⁸ Flanagan, "Winning Power" 144.

tactics is not limited to the CPC, but in fact, evidence show that other parties also see negative campaigning as an effective tool to win an election.¹⁴⁰ Even though negative campaigning has gained a significant portion of every elections in Canada, the lack of relevant research in the subject in Canadian context is problematic, since rules and patterns that can be found in the U.S. elections may not be applied to our multiparty system. In the following sections, I will briefly go over some of the important and rare studies on negative campaigning that focus on the Canadian context.

1.4.2. Academic Studies

Soroka and McAdams conduct a series of experimental studies using psychophysiological methods to capture reactions of participants to negative content of major English-language Canadian broadcasters and Toronto Film Festival. Their results show that “participants react more strongly to negative than to positive news content,” since negative messages are “more arousing and attention grabbing.”¹⁴¹ By analyzing data collected from an online voting experiment, Roy and Alcantara try to understand how voters react to a positive or negative message, and how the tone of a message can affect a candidate’s vote share during the campaign.¹⁴² Their results show that candidates who use negative tactics gain more attention, but do not get more vote share, because of the existence of other alternative parties. However, while their research provides a good platform for studying the effects of tone of campaigns, based on the nature of experimental study,

¹³⁹ Flanagan, Thomas. *Harper’s Team behind the Scenes in the Conservative Rise to Power*. 2nd ed. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009.

¹⁴⁰ Roy, Jason, and Christopher Alcantara. “Fighting Fire with Fire: The Implications of (Not) Going Negative in a Multiparty Election Campaign.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 49, no. 03 (September 2016): 473–97.

¹⁴¹ Soroka and McAdams. “News, Politics, and Negativity.” 16.

¹⁴² Roy and Alcantara, “Fighting Fire with Fire” 473–97.

their results may not be accurate and reliable due to the issue of external validity. They created an artificial election environment and use online samples as their subjects, which isolated their subjects from receiving real campaign communications with all of its complexities. To evaluate the effects of negative campaigning in a Canadian context, Haddock and Zanna conduct content analysis of 110 university students' open-ended affective responses and stereotypic beliefs during the 1993 federal election. Their results show that participants had more positive evaluation of Jean Chretien, who was the target of the CPC's attacks, than Kim Campbell who sponsored the attacks, and therefore, support the backlash effect theory in a Canadian federal election.¹⁴³

In a different effort, Pruyers and Cross, by using the concept of negative personalization, try to bridge between negative campaigning and personalization of politics to understand how parties adopt negative campaign strategies.¹⁴⁴ Through empirical study of televised advertisement and party press releases in Ontario provincial elections in 2011 and 2014, they show that parties and candidates are attacking an opposing party leader more than an opposing party. Also, their results support their assumption that negative personalization is a "calculated decision" within parties, in which "party leaders who are popular experience the least negative personalization while relatively unpopular leaders experience the most."¹⁴⁵ A good example of this theory was very limited attack against Andrea Horwath, leader of Ontario NDP, in 2011 and 2014, since she was the most likable leader among others, while McGuinty, Wynne and Hudak were constantly

¹⁴³ Haddock, Geoffrey, and Mark P. Zanna. "Impact of Negative Advertising on Evaluations of Political Candidates: The 1993 Canadian Federal Election." *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 19, no. 2 (1997): 205-23.

¹⁴⁴ Pruyers and Cross, "Negative Personalization" 539-58.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 553.

primary targets of negative campaigning in the same elections.¹⁴⁶ This study suffers from two main issues; first, it was conducted in a specific provincial setting and in two similar elections that may limit the external validity of the research. Thus, finding similar patterns in federal or other provincial elections may not be possible, due to the unique political sphere in each province. Second, Pruysers and Cross did not test or provide any statistical model to support their hypotheses, so that the study remains only at the level of simple quantifiable data and cannot be generalized to other cases.

1.2. What Remains to be Explored

Based on what we have explored so far, it is clear now that political campaigns have become the corner stone of every electoral democracies around the globe. Whether in a two-party presidential system or a multiparty parliamentary system, elections are primarily driven through media coverage of political campaigns. With the evolution of means of communications and introduction of social media, political parties try to adopt the most effective techniques to attract and persuade voters to vote for their candidates. Based on several studies we have seen, negative campaigning has become a crucial and inseparable part of any campaign, and it can determine the fate of a candidate or party in an election. To recall briefly the *raison d'être* behind negative campaigning, people are generally more responsive to negative messages than positive ones, and consequently, negative campaigns are more effective than positive campaigns, according to negativity bias theory. But at the same time, we witnessed theories that see negative campaigning as a demobilizing factor in elections or tactics that can have serious consequences for their

¹⁴⁶ Pruysers and Cross, “Negative Personalization” 539–58.

sponsors. To avoid these negative effects, campaigns' strategists consider a variety of factors before adapting negative messages. In the previous section, I summarized all of the arguments in five main categories. First, competitive positioning theory which explains effects of being an incumbent, a front-runner, or a challenger in targeting or being the target of negative campaigns. Second, ideological proximity theory that argues for the importance of ideological stance of parties in shaping negative campaign strategies. Third, theories that focus on the role of party organization and party identification in parties' decision-making strategies in a campaign. Forth category, which is exclusive to multiparty systems, looks at the possibility of having a minority or coalition government after an election, and how this factor can shape the tone and intensity of campaign messages. The final and fifth category, personalization or presidentialisation of politics, which is highly affected by introduction of mass media, and particularly social media in covering political messages. As a result, political leaders gain more prominent roles in elections, and thus, become the center of positive and negative campaigns.

However, as discussed it in detail in the previous sections, while there have been numerous studies in the U.S, there is a lack of a comprehensive research on negative campaigning in multiparty settings, and particularly in the Canadian context. This gap is much more noticeable when studying how parties frame their negative campaigning behaviours, particularly at the federal level. Therefore, in order to understand the logic behind the application of negative campaigning, it is imperative to have a cohesive, complete, and quantifiable picture of negativity in parties' campaign strategies in a Canadian federal election. To achieve this, in the following chapters, I will test applicability of abovementioned five primary arguments in explaining parties' negative campaign behaviours in the 2015 Canadian federal election. By creating a dataset that is gathered and coded manually, I will make empirical contribution to the current literature on negative

campaigning, and through adopting these the five main theories to the parties' negative behaviour in the 2015 campaign, I will present a unique and comprehensive platform for studying negative campaigning in Canadian federal elections for the first time.

2. Theory and Hypotheses

Based on the theories that I presented in the previous chapter, there are different forms of factors that are considered to be influential in parties' negative campaign behavior. I categorize the hypotheses for this research in three primary groups. The first group deals with constant variables, such as the government status and party membership number during the campaign. The second group deals with hypotheses that include federal voting intention as a dynamic variable. The third group is affected by leaders' popularity rate. I will explain and present theories of negative campaigning in the form of abovementioned hypotheses.

According to the incumbent or government status theory, the expectation is that the incumbent should be the primary target of negative attacks in the 2015 federal election. Therefore, the number of attacks against the governing party or the incumbent has to be higher compared to the others.

Hypothesis 1(a): The governing party/incumbent is the primary target of negative campaigning.

Also, as we have already seen in the literature review the governing party is less likely to attack the others, since it usually focuses more on defending its records and presenting its accomplishments than attacking others.

Hypothesis 1(b): The number of attacks that the governing party initiates is lower compared to the others.

It should be noted that, in the absence of extreme parties in the 2015 federal election, this research cannot determine if extreme parties tend to attack each other, similar to the pattern we saw in some European countries. However, because of the emergence of People's Party of Canada on September 2018, it may be possible to capture some relevant data, particularly by looking at the NDP-PPC attack behavior or PPC-Green ideological competition, in the next federal election.

Based on our third main theme of parties' campaign behaviors, which was looking at the role of party organization in adopting negativity, it is expected to see parties with more members be more inclined to use negative tactics. The argument was that established parties are capable of attaching their voters more closely to the party, and as a result, creating a stronger sense of party identification among their supporters, and recruiting more volunteers for the campaign which enables them to adopt more negative attacks without having to fear significant backlash effects among the voters.

Hypothesis 1(c): parties with more members are more likely to use negative tactics during the election.

As I discussed in the first chapter, one of the major effects of mass media in modern electoral democracies is the personalization or presidentialisation of politics. According to this theory, party leaders have become the center of parties' representation in public, and consequently, the main target of negative campaigns. Therefore, I expect to see that attacks against party leaders are significantly more than an attack against parties.

Hypothesis 1(d): Party leaders are the main targets of negativity during a campaign compared to the parties.

According to "ideological or issue proximity" theory, parties who have a better chance of winning more seats will focus on eliminating opponents who have the same ideological stands and are closer to their positions on critical issues. Since these parties are competing for getting the appeal of the same voters, they have to differentiate themselves from the others, mostly through adapting negative tactics. Therefore, by adopting this theory to the Canadian political spectrum,

we can draw some expectations in our research. Since the Liberal Party is known as the middle party, it should treat both CPC and the NDP with the same strategy.

Hypothesis 1(e): The party in the middle of political spectrum attacks both parties on its left and right equally.

The first five hypotheses, all are dealing with constant variables. The second group, as I mentioned, deals with dynamic variables. The first sub-group is expected to be affected by fluctuation in federal voting intention numbers during the campaign. According to the competitive positioning theory, particularly when the incumbent party is not the front-runner in an election, I expect to see more attacks are directed towards the front-runner after the incumbent.

Hypothesis 2(a): A non-incumbent front-runner is the second primary target of negative campaigning.

On the other hand, I am expecting to see the challenger, the party who is in the position of replacing the government, initiate the most attacks. Therefore, I can measure to see if the party who is in the second place in the polls, is the one who is running the most negative campaign.

Hypothesis 2(b): The challenger is more likely to use negative strategies.

The final consequential outcome of these two hypotheses are that the party who is in the third or fourth place in the polls should receive the least number of negative attacks.

Hypothesis 2(c): The party and the leader in the third place in the polls are least likely to be attacked by others.

As we have seen in chapter one, the possibility of forming a minority or coalition government affects the way parties frame their negative campaign strategies. According to this theory, office-seeking factor plays a significant role in parties' campaign behavior in which by

considering any possible future coalition or supporting votes for forming a minority government, they try to avoid attacking their potential partners. Although forming a coalition government was and is very unlikely in the Canadian federal system, minority governments have always been very common in Canadian politics. Also, since the second-place party carries the title of the official opposition, it is the third party that will play a significant role in forming a minority government in Canada. Therefore, I expect to see the front-runner party being more cautious in applying negative tactics against the third-place party in an election.

Hypothesis 2(d): The first-ranked party in the polls is less likely to attack the third-place party in the polls during the election.

According to negative personalization theory, parties' negative behavior is shaped through a calculated strategy. If a party leader is unpopular in the polls, it is expected to see a higher number of attacks directed toward her/him than her/his party, while if she/he is popular, the number of attacks against her/him should be lower than her/his party. Therefore, I expect to see in my results that fluctuation in a leader's popularity rate is a significant factor in determining other parties' negative behavior. Two possible hypotheses can be drawn from negative personalization theory:

Hypothesis 3(a): If a leader's popularity rate increases/decreases in the polls, the number of attacks against her/him declines/rises. (negative correlation)

Hypothesis 3(b): If a leader's popularity rate increases/decreases in the polls, the number of attacks against her/his party rises/declines. (positive correlation)

Even though I have several hypotheses to test and evaluate based on my dataset, it should be mentioned that not all of them are going to be tested statistically, due to the nature of the

hypotheses. In some cases, a simple and clear result may support a hypothesis, while in others a statistical model is required to support a correlation. In the next chapter, I will explain in details data collection, and methods of coding and organizing my raw data. Then, I will explain the rationale behind using time-series analysis to test some of our hypotheses.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data Collection

This research is essentially based on, first, content analysis, and second, a quantitative approach in coding and creating a dataset that can provide a quantifiable measure of the amount of negativity in the 2015 federal election. To collect the raw data, I used parties' press releases during 2015 campaign, starting from August 1st to October 19th. Although it is well known that other forms of political communication exist to convey messages to the electorate, I choose press releases because they are the primary and official records of parties' campaign strategies. All other forms of political campaign communication are influenced heavily and, in most cases, directly by what the parties publish during a campaign. Therefore, TV ads, social media outputs, and candidates' speeches are aligned with what has been already published officially by the parties during the campaign. Thus, for this research, I have collected all the official press releases of three major parties and conducted manual content analysis of each news release in order to create a quantifiable dataset, including the number of attack each party has conducted against the leaders of the other two parties, as well as the parties.

As we discussed in the beginning of the first chapter, there are different definitions for explaining the nature of negative campaigns. In all of those definitions and typologies, the main focus of a negative message is on an opponent's personal characteristics, ideological preferences, and political affiliations. Thus, despite the fact that we can find a variety of definitions, particularly from the voters' point of view, negative campaigning is understood as a directional phenomenon which simply includes any form of attack or criticism from a candidate or party towards their

opponents.¹⁴⁷ Also, while it has been argued that each definition of negative campaign can result in a different outcome when measuring its impact on the voters' perceptions of candidates, for the purpose of this research, since I focus primarily on the party strategy side of the debate, or the supply-side, I adopt the directional definition of negative campaigning. As a result, I incorporate all of these forms of negative messages into one main category and consider them as a negative attack when counting negative messages in each press release. Therefore, whether a political message is targeting personal, ideological, or political standpoints of a party/candidate, by using different levels of negative tones, from a formal critical comment to a mudslinging statement toward an opponent, all are regarded as a negative attack in this study.

Based on this method, I count every single attack in each press release, and add them up, to calculate the number of negative statements against other candidates or parties in a press release. For example, if in a CPC press release, in more than one sentence, there is a criticism or an attack toward other leaders or parties, each sentence counts as one negative attack. Also, to capture the difference between attacks against the leaders and the parties, if there is direct mention of a party leader's first or last name in a statement, it is considered as a negative attack against a leader. For example, if in a single press release, there are two criticisms against the LPC's leader, Justin Trudeau, but in one sentence he is called "Justin" alone, and in a different sentence he is called "Trudeau," the number of attacks in this press release is counted as two against the LPC's Leader. Appendix 1 is a simple illustration of analyzing and coding of part of the CPC's press release on August 12, 2015 that shows two attacks against Justin Trudeau, the leader of the LPC, one attack

¹⁴⁷ Surlin, Stuart H., and Thomas F. Gordon. "How Values Affect Attitudes Toward Direct Reference Political Advertising." *Journalism Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (March 1977): 89–98.

against Thomas Mulcair, leader of the NDP, and one attack against the NDP. Appendix1(b) is another example of coding, but in a more complex version in which pronouns, names, and multiple attacks have been used by the LPC on August 4th, 2015. Also, since the unit of analysis for this study is days of the campaign, in case of having more than one press release in each day, number of attacks in each press release is added to others to obtain the overall number of negative messages per day. Thus, if there are two attacks in one release and three in another on the same day, I count five attacks on that day. Also, to make better sense of data, I calculated the proportion of attacks against each party or leader per day by dividing the number of attacks per day against each case by the total number of attacks that a party published per day.

3.2. Limitation of the Data

Since two primary factors in our analysis, which act as independent variables, are voting intention for parties and party leaders' popularity, I use publicly available polls to create my dataset. In order to track the federal voting intentions, I use CBC Poll Tracker¹⁴⁸ which aggregates all publicly polling data during the election, including Nanos Research, EKOS Research, Léger, Ipsos, Angus Reid Institute, Abacus data, and Forum Research. Although this is the most comprehensive dataset for the polls during the 2015 Election, it does not include polling results of every single day of campaign. To fill this gap, I use the average of +/-1 day which reflects the closest estimate possible, considering little possible fluctuation in a day, particularly at the beginning of the campaign. For capturing the second crucial factor, party leaders' popularity, I use

¹⁴⁸ "CBC News: Election 2015 Roundup." Accessed April 1, 2019.
<https://www.cbc.ca/news2/interactives/results-2015/>.

Nanos Research¹⁴⁹ data, since it is the most consistent and available data about the leaders' popularity during campaign. However, unfortunately, these data are only available on a weekly basis. In order to align my dataset with this weekly leaders' popularity rate, I aggregated all the attacks per week, and used the total number and proportion in a week. This, essentially, means that my dataset became smaller, and the total number of observations decreased to 33, which limited the possibility of using some of the statistical methods to measure the accuracy of the model. The other possible issue with the dataset rises from the fact that data collection has been conducted manually. Contextual analysis of parties' press releases means that the determination of negativity in every single sentence has been done subjectively, and thus, is open to a certain degree of interpretation, particularly in complex context. Therefore, we should expect to see some limited degree of variation in coding and outputs if the coding would have been conducted by someone else. Furthermore, during reviewing my data, I noticed that parties have removed some of their press releases of the 2015 campaign from their websites or relocate them to somewhere else. Also, there were a few cases that the content of the releases has been modified from its original version. These changes may have a small impact on the replicability of my data, since other researchers cannot access some of the content anymore.

3.3. Models

While in this research, I analyze the dynamic of parties' negative strategies by looking at the five main categories of strategic behaviour presented in the previous chapter, in most cases the primary independent variables are the federal voting intention for the parties and party leaders'

¹⁴⁹ "Nanos Data Portal > Weekly > Ballot > Preferred PM > Nanos Index | Nanos Research." Accessed April 1, 2018. <http://www.nanosresearch.com/data>

popularity rate during the 2015 campaign. Although in most cases, I will present a descriptive analysis of the results, to measure the influence of leaders' popularity rate on negative campaign strategies, I use panel study of three parties over the eleven weeks of the campaign. To capture effects of a poll's results, we always deal with a time-lag, between the time of the publication of the results and change in parties' campaign behaviour. Also, as Blais and Boyer argue, a message can have a direct or an indirect impact on its receivers, and therefore, to capture all direct and indirect effects of exposure of parties' campaign strategist to the polls, it is assumed that there is at least a one-day time lag between the result of polls and their influence on the party's negative campaign strategy. For example, the result of polls on July 31st, 2015 was expected to influence the party's negative strategies, at the soonest, on August 1st, 2015. However, due to the lack of enough data that includes daily leaders' popularity rate, I had to use weekly available polls. This means that we expect to see a weekly time lag between the results of the poll, and its effects on parties' negative behaviour. Therefore, the results of the poll on July 31st should affect the average amount of negativity in its following week, from August 1st to August 7th.

I started with descriptive analysis of the data, and then present possible correlations between results of the polls and parties' campaign behaviour. As I mentioned in the previous section, for measuring the effects of leaders' popularity rate and federal voting intentions on parties' negative campaign strategies, I used statistical models based on the total proportion of attacks each party and its leader received each day and week during the 2015 campaign. Also, to measure the effects of our time lag in this study, variable "date" is defined as a time-series based on panel of three leaders and three parties. I did use regression models by adopting proportion of daily and weekly attacks against a party and its leader together, against a leader, and against a party. However, because my two independent variables, federal voting intention and leader's popularity rate are

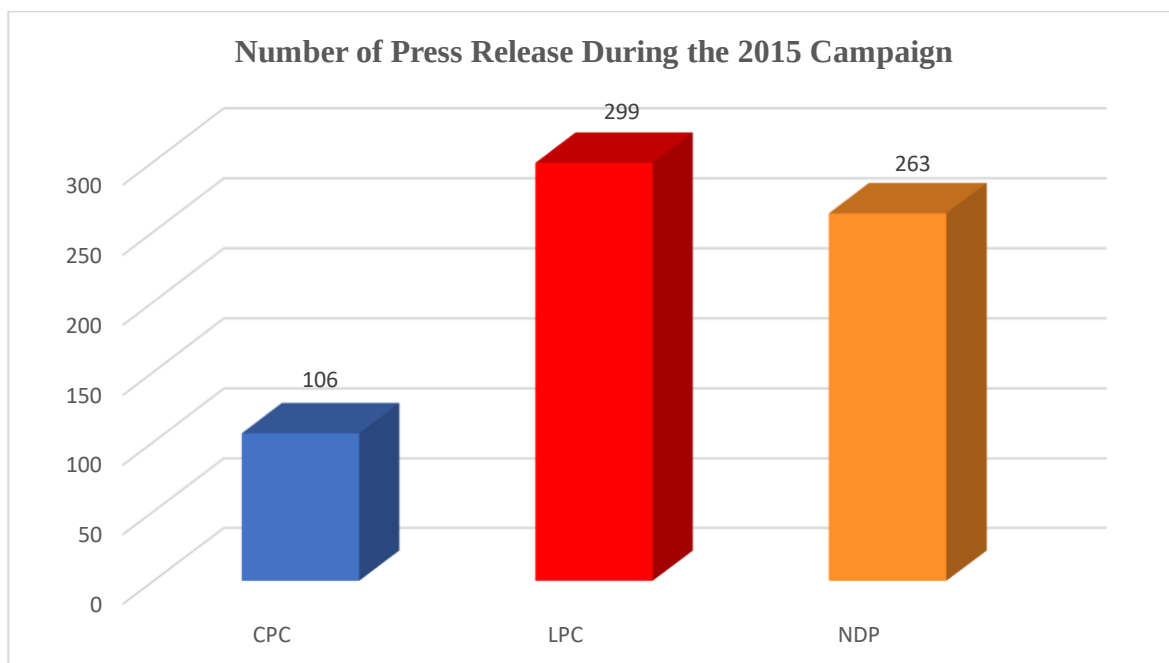
highly correlated, I tested the impact of them in separated models. Also, since other factors, such as party membership numbers and government status remained constant throughout the study, I did not put them into the model. I tested all regression models for possible autocorrelation, because of the time lag in the data. To test the existence of any autocorrelation error in each model, I used manual error prediction in Stata, and then analyzed them to see if they have statistically significant impacts on each model. To detect heteroscedasticity in our models, I use Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg and White's tests in Stata.

4. Results

4.1. General Findings

During the 2015 federal election campaign from August 1st to October 18th, parties published a total number of 668 press releases, 523 of them include at least one attack against other parties or leaders. From the total number of press releases, CPC published 106, NDP 263, and LPC 299. Figure 1 shows the distribution of press releases during the election.

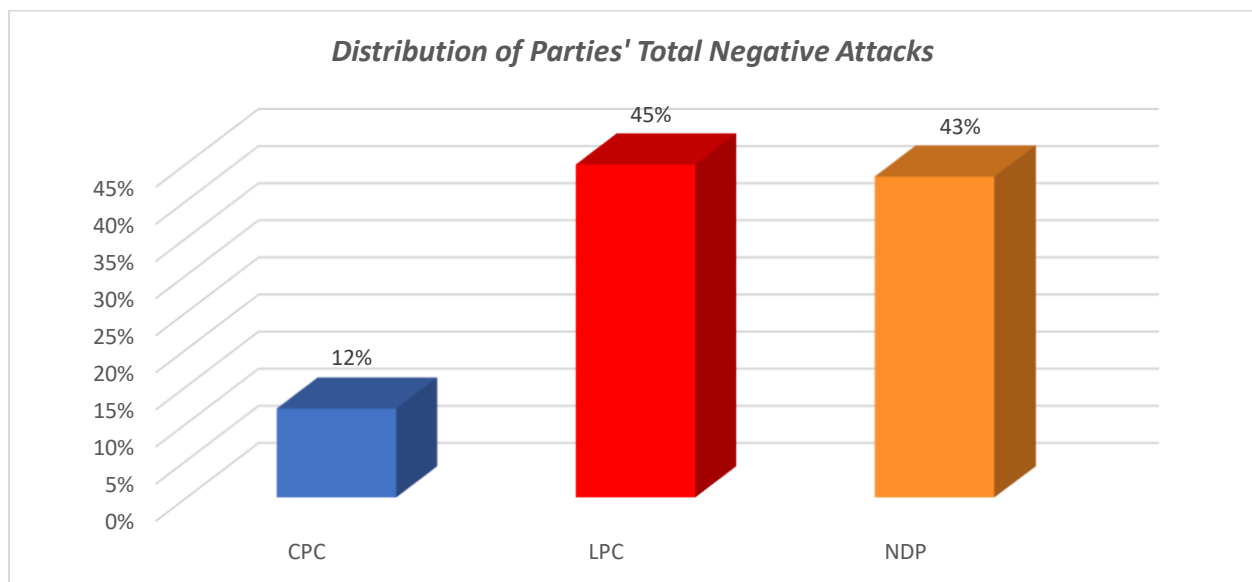
Figure 1: Number of Parties' Press Releases During the 2015 Campaign



In terms of adopting negative strategies, LPC using 1650 negative statements (an average of 5.5 attacks per release) against others, ranked the first, followed by NDP with 1590 (an average of 6 attacks per release), and CPC with total of 440 attacks (an average of 4.1 attacks per release). Figure 4 shows distribution of the number of attacks that each party adopted during the campaign. In terms of ranking the targets of all attacks in the election, Stephen Harper ranked first by being

targeted 1197 times by NDP and LPC, followed by Thomas Mulcair with 609 attacks from CPC and LPC, and Justin Trudeau with the total of 526 attacks from CPC and NDP. Also, CPC received the highest number of attacks, 455, followed by LPC, 382, and NDP, 342. Figure 2 shows the distribution of attacks between parties and/or their leaders.

Figure 2: Parties' Distribution of the Total Attacks Conducted During the 2015 Campaign



In order to analyze the dynamic of parties' negative campaign strategies, I collected the data from CBC Poll Tracker¹⁵⁰ which shows that CPC started the campaign with 31.2% in the polls and ended with 30.9%. LPC started the campaign with 27.6% and ended with 37.2%, while NDP began as the front-runner with 31.6% and finished as the third party with 21.7%. Figure 4 shows the fluctuation of federal voting intention during the 2015 campaign.

¹⁵⁰ "CBC News: Election 2015 Roundup." <https://www.cbc.ca/news2/interactives/results-2015/>

Figure 3: Distribution of the Total Number of Attacks each Leaders/Parties Received During

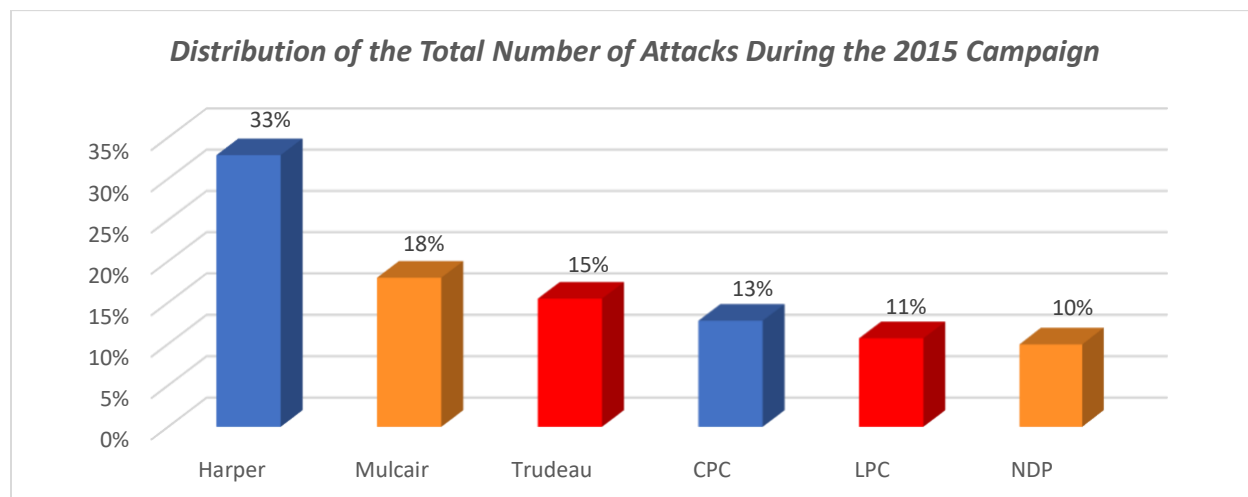
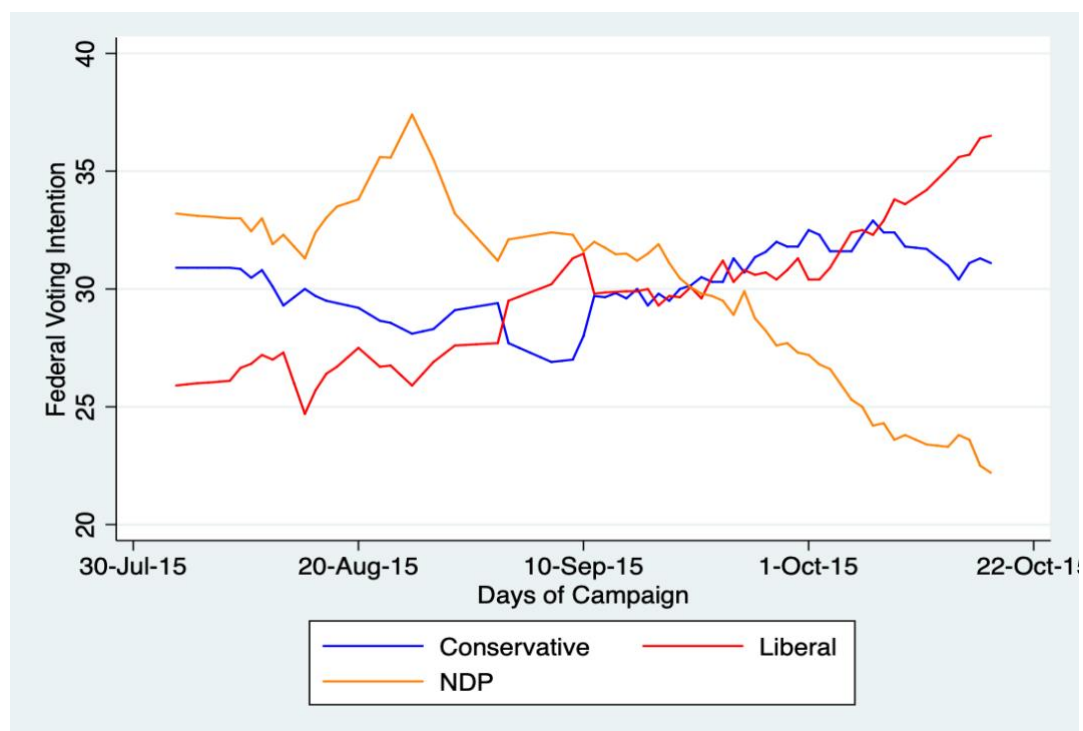


Figure 4: Federal Voting Intention During the 2015 campaign

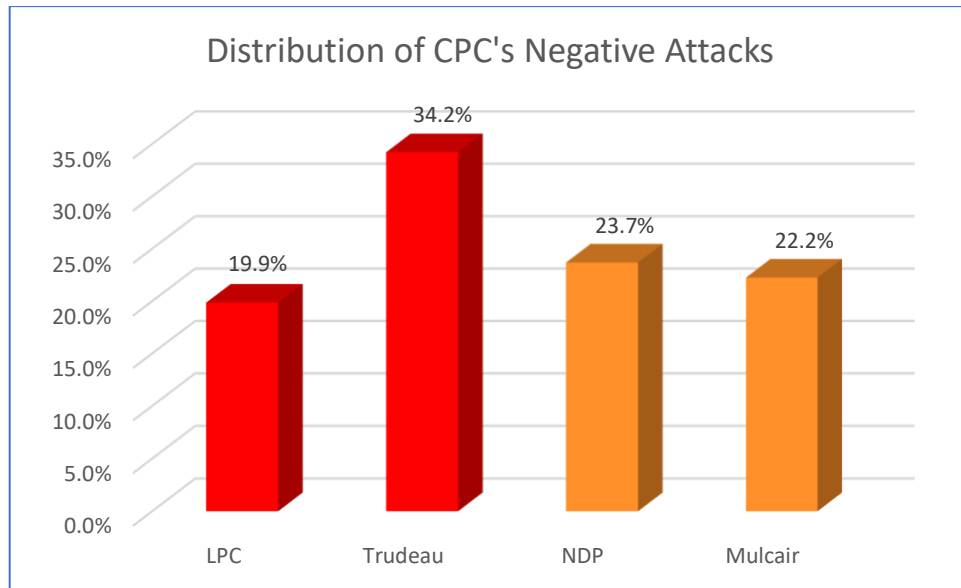


Our immediate results show that the 2015 federal election was highly influenced by campaign negativity. Almost 80% of everything that parties published during the campaign, including any congratulatory statements regarding historical events or celebratory days, such as ethnic groups new years and religious holidays, which was mostly done in a regular public communication statement, and not particularly for the campaign, include at least one attack. We can also clearly see in Figure 1 LPC was the most active party in terms of publishing news and attacking others at the same time, while CPC as the incumbent published significantly lower number of news releases, and consequently conducted the least numbers of attacks. With a significant difference, Stephen Harper, the Prime Minister at the time and the leader of the CPC received the most attacks. In the following sections, I present each party's negative strategies in more details, and find some patterns for how negativity is adopted in a Canadian federal election.

4.2. CPC's Negative Behaviour

During the eighty days of the 2015 campaign, CPC conducted 83 negative attacks against LPC, while it attacked Justin Trudeau 143 times. The number of attacks against NDP was 99 and 93 against Thomas Mulcair. Figure 5 illustrates the distribution of CPC's negative campaign against others. By calculating daily, weekly, and the overall proportion of attacks directed towards parties and leaders, I find the following results; CPC directed 34% of their attacks against Justin Trudeau, followed by 24% against NDP, 22% against Thomas Mulcair, and 19% against LPC.

Figure 5: CPC's Distribution Attacks Against Others



However, these attacks were dynamic during the campaign, where in the first five weeks of the campaign, CPC published 59 attacks against NDP and 58 attacks against Mulcair, while they attacked LPC only 18 times and Trudeau 42 times. Figure 6 shows the dynamic of CPC's negative attacks during the campaign towards LPC and NDP, and figure 7 shows the distribution of attacks targeted towards Trudeau and Mulcair. CPC changed its approach from the sixth week of the campaign to its end, putting more emphasis on the LPC and particularly on Trudeau, while dropping its attacks to NDP and Mulcair to almost zero in the final week of the campaign. In terms of CPC's campaign's approach towards parties and leaders, they started the campaign by attacking leaders throughout the first five weeks, and then included parties in their negative campaign strategies.

Figure 6: CPC's Negative Behavior Against Leaders

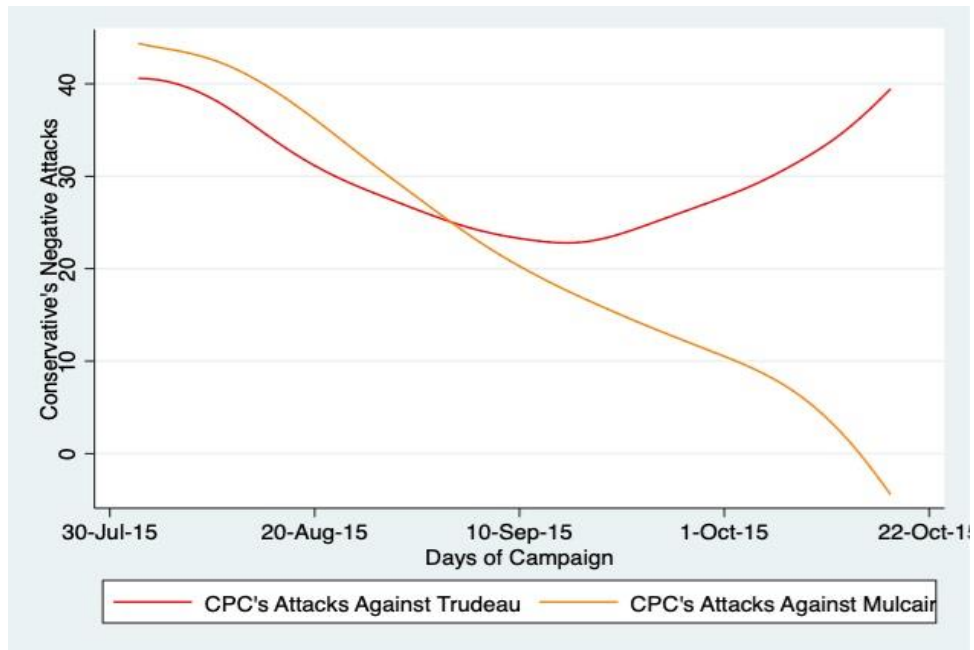
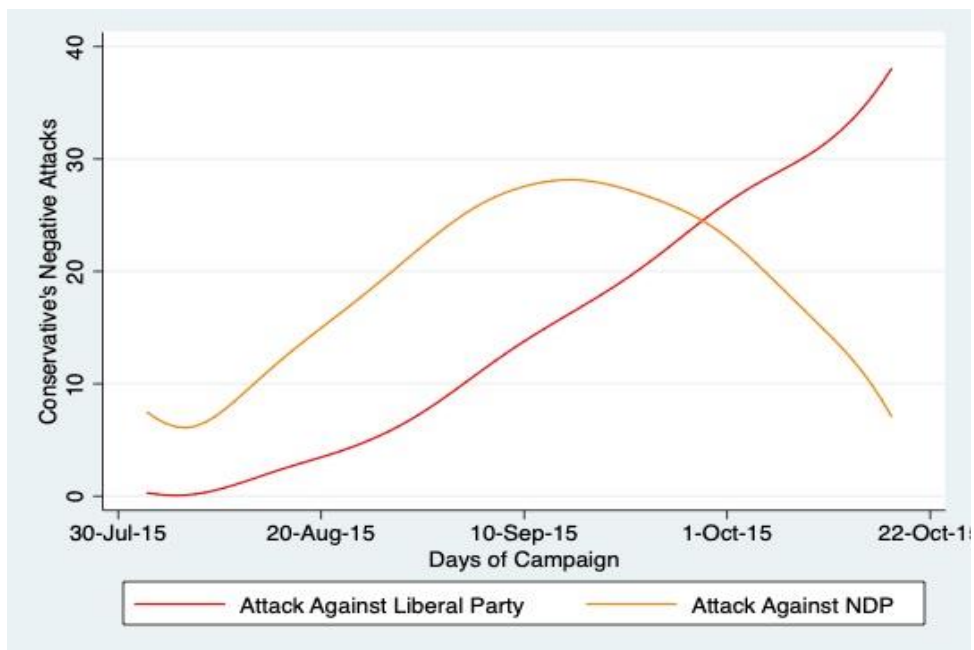


Figure 7: CPC's Negative Behaviour Against Parties



However, as mentioned before, CPC apparently dropped its focus from NDP and Mulcair in the last three weeks of the campaign. Figure 8 and 9 are illustrations of CPC's comparative negative strategy towards the two other parties and their leaders. Note that from the overall number of 106 news releases that were published during the campaign, 27 of them do not include any sort of attack against others, though these were mainly general public statements. Also, in 4 days within 80 days of the campaign, CPC did not publish anything. The total press release ratio per day for CPC was 1.3, which makes it the least active party among the three.

Figure 8: CPC's Negative Behaviour Against Trudeau and LPC

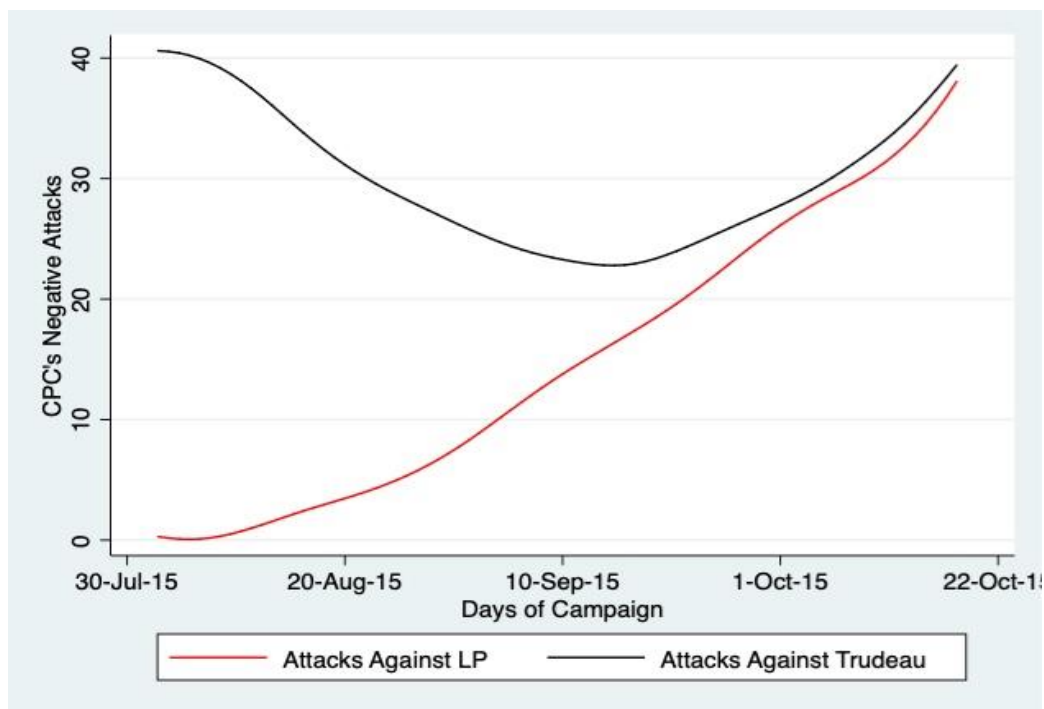
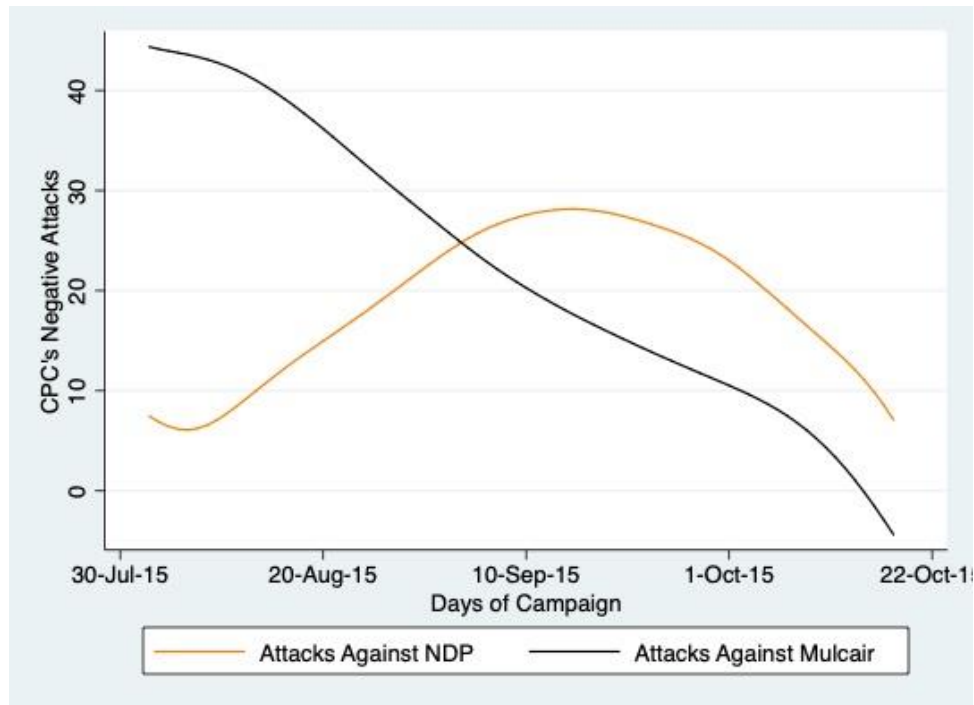


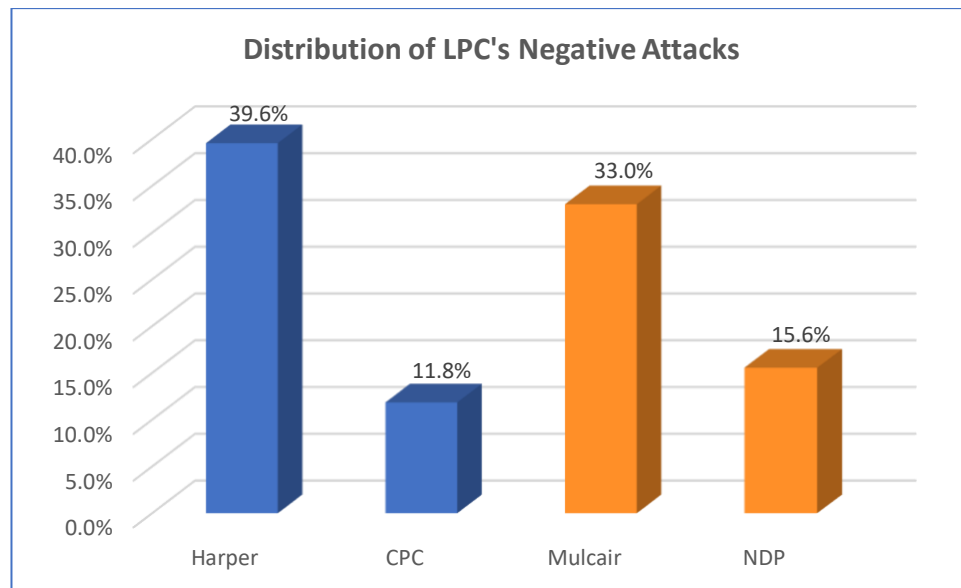
Figure 9: CPC's Negative Behaviour Against Mulcair and NDP



4.3. LPC's Negative Behaviour

LPC was the most active party during the campaign by publishing 299 news releases in 80 days, which gives the ratio of 3.7 news releases per day. There was no day without a release from LPC. From the total number of 299, LPC released 87 news releases that included no attacks. LPC's main target, with significantly higher number of attacks compared to others, was Stephen Harper with the total of 618 attacks, while CPC received only 185. A similar pattern exists against NDP, though with a smaller gap. During the campaign, NDP was attacked 243 times in total while Thomas Mulcair was targeted 516 times. Therefore, in total, LPC focused primarily on leaders of other parties by dedicating around 40% of their total negativity to Stephen Harper and 33% to Mulcair, while 15% of their attacks were against NDP and 12% against CPC. Figure 10 shows the distribution of LPC's negative campaigning.

Figure 10: LPC's Distribution of Negative Attacks



In terms of focus of LPC's negative campaign, while they attacked both CPC and NDP almost with the same proportion in the first nine weeks of the campaign, and even in some days, NDP became the main target of their negative tactics, in the last two weeks of the campaign, CPC received almost twice the number of attacks as NDP. LPC chose the same pattern for attacking party leaders, where in the first nine weeks of the campaign, they conducted an average of 55 weekly attacks against Mulcair and 53 attacks against Harper. However, in the last two weeks, the number of attacks against Harper almost doubled the number of attacks against Mulcair. Figure 11 and 12 shows LPC's negative behaviour over the 80 days of the campaign. Also, by comparing the dynamic of adopting negativity during the campaign between leaders and parties, it appears that LPC treated both leaders and both parties almost the same way during the campaign. Only in the final two weeks of the campaign, LPC did lose interest in attacking NDP and Mulcair. Figure 13 and 14 illustrate LPC's negativity development during the 11 weeks of campaign.

Figure 11: LPC's Negative Behaviour Against Leaders

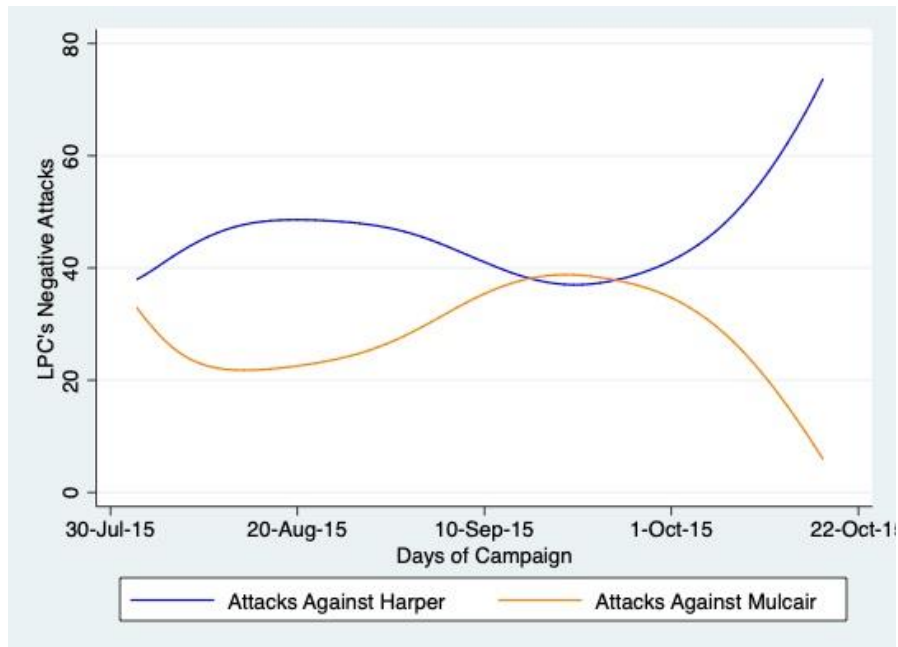


Figure 12: LPC's Negative Behaviour Against Parties

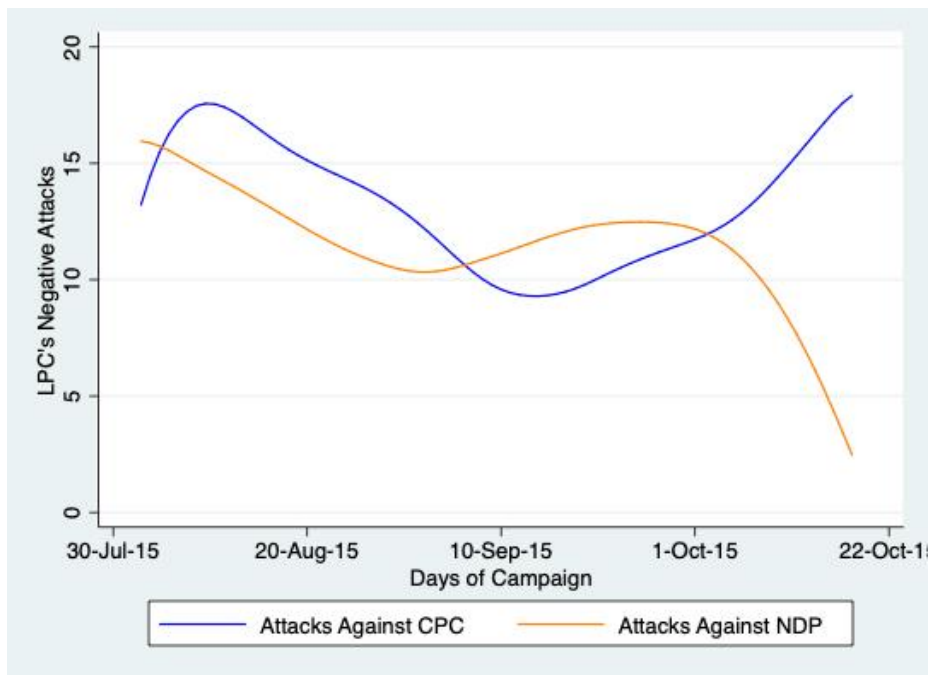


Figure 13: LPC's Negative Behaviour Against Harper and CPC

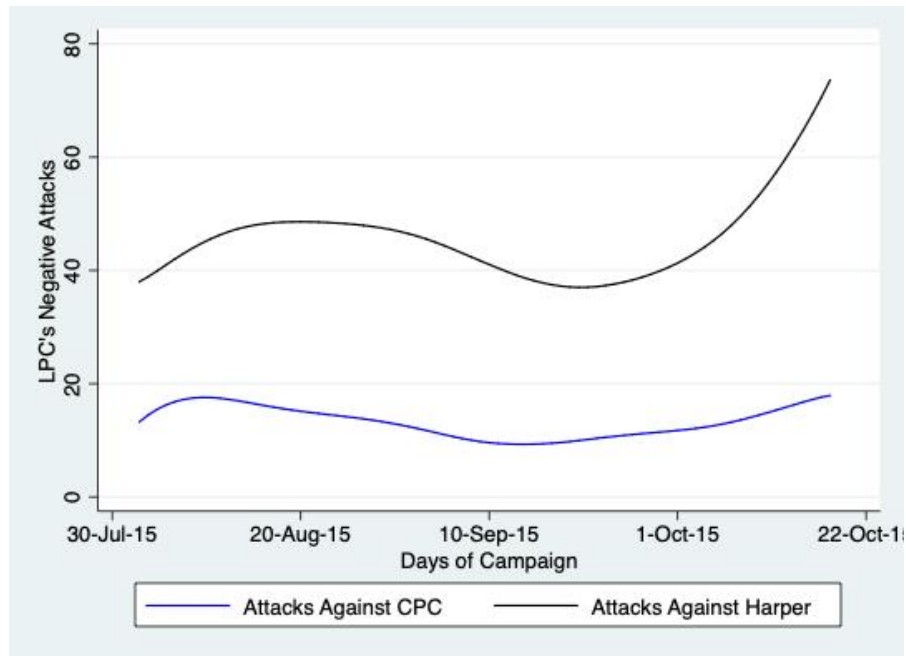
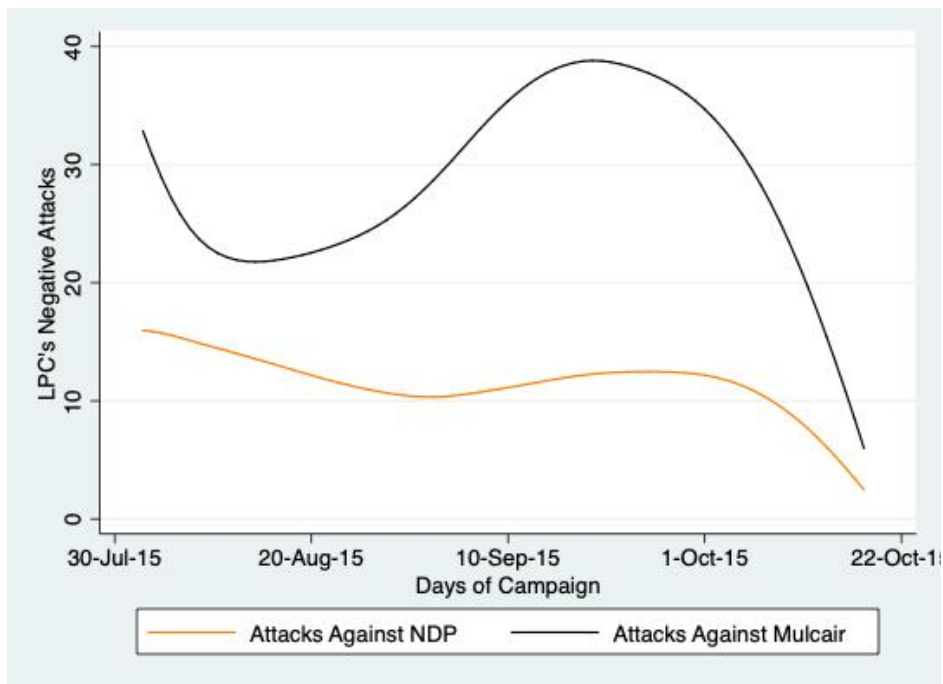


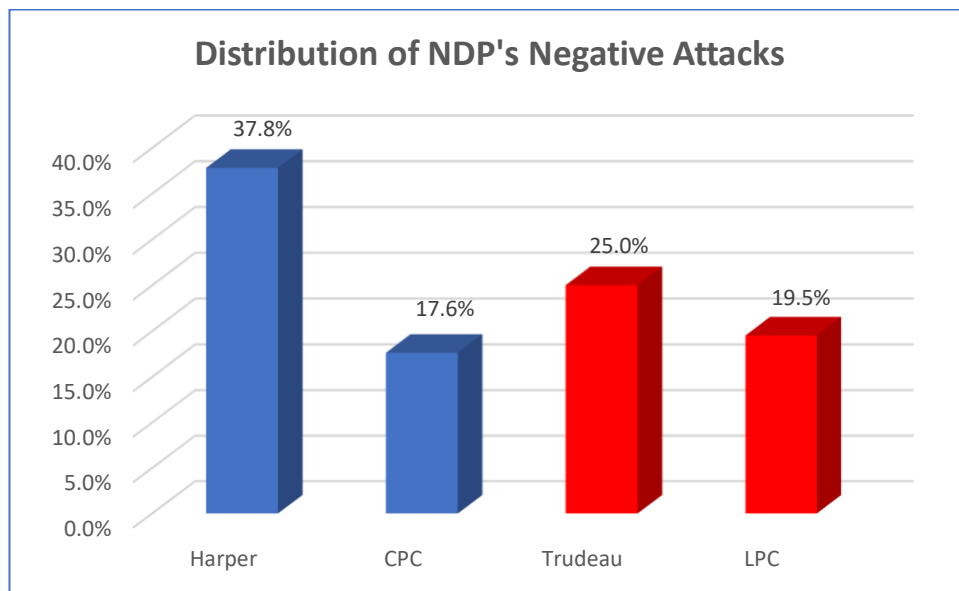
Figure 14: LPC's Negative Behaviour Against Mulcair and NDP



4.4. NDP's Negative Behaviour

NDP also followed the same pattern as LPC by primarily targeting Harper and conducting 579 number of attacks against him during the campaign. The number of attacks against Trudeau was 383, followed by 299 against LPC, and finally 270 against CPC. Figure 15 is an illustration of NDP's number of attacks.

Figure 15: NDP's Distribution of Attacks



By calculating weekly proportion of NDP's negative campaigning it becomes clear that in the first five weeks of the campaign, Harper was the primary target, and attacks against Trudeau and LPC were limited in comparison. The same strategy has been applied for targeting the parties, though not in that extent. During the first five weeks, Harper received 175 attacks, followed by CPC, which received 101 attacks. Trudeau, LPC were targeted 65 and 60 times, respectively, during the same time period. From the Sixth week, the number of attacks against Trudeau and LPC increased significantly to 366 against Trudeau and 243 against LPC, and CPC became NDP's last target with 170 attacks, during the same time period. Figure 16 and 17 show how NDP's negative strategies developed during the course of campaign.

Figure 16: NDP's Negative Behaviour Against Leaders

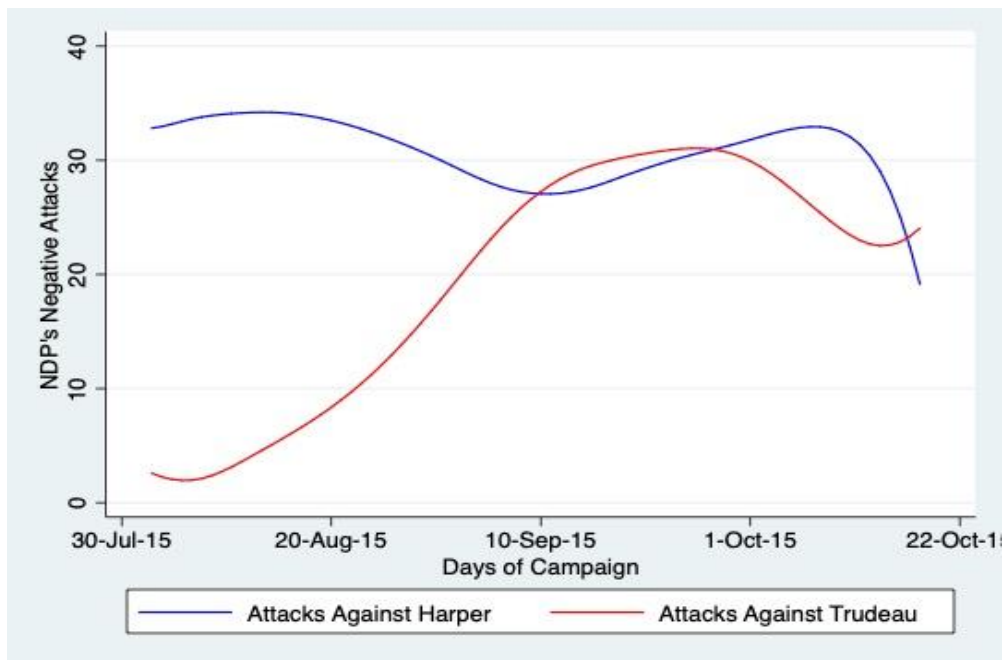
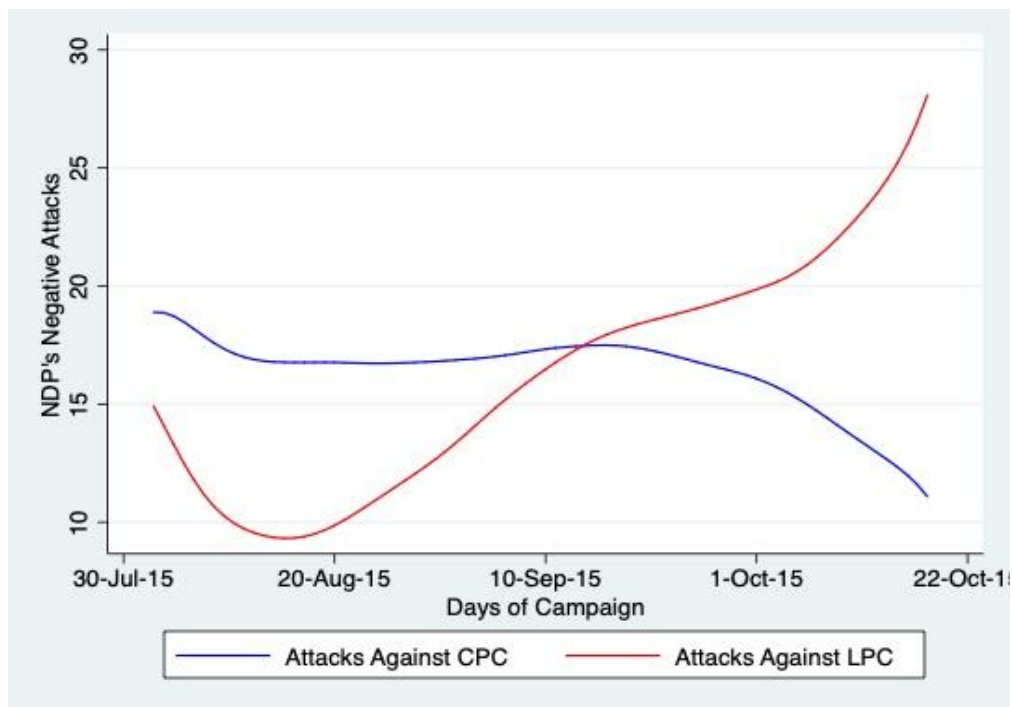


Figure 17: NDP's Negative Behaviour Against Parties



Finally, by comparing the dynamic of NDP's attacks against leaders and parties, the results show that Harper consistently received higher number of attacks during the campaign than CPC. However, as mentioned, number of attacks against Trudeau and LPC were almost the same in the beginning of the campaign, with slightly higher number of attacks against LPC compared to Trudeau in the first two weeks. This trend then changed suddenly, and more emphasis was put on Trudeau as the main target. Figure 18 and 19 shows these comparative results.

Figure 18: NDP's Negative Behaviour Against Harper and CPC

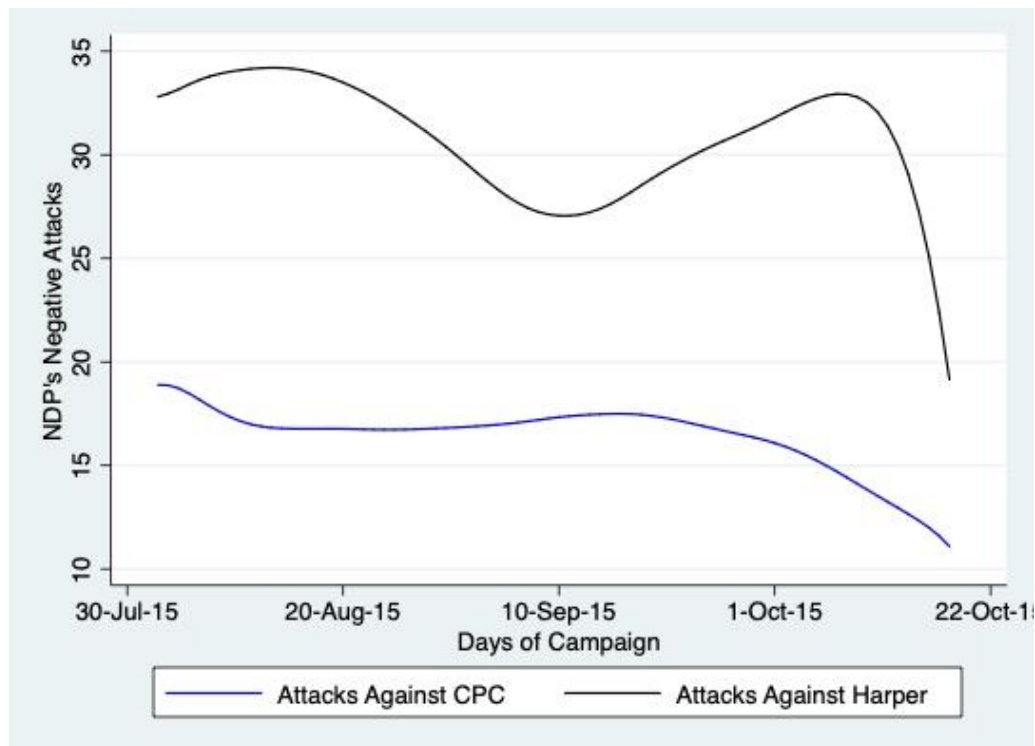
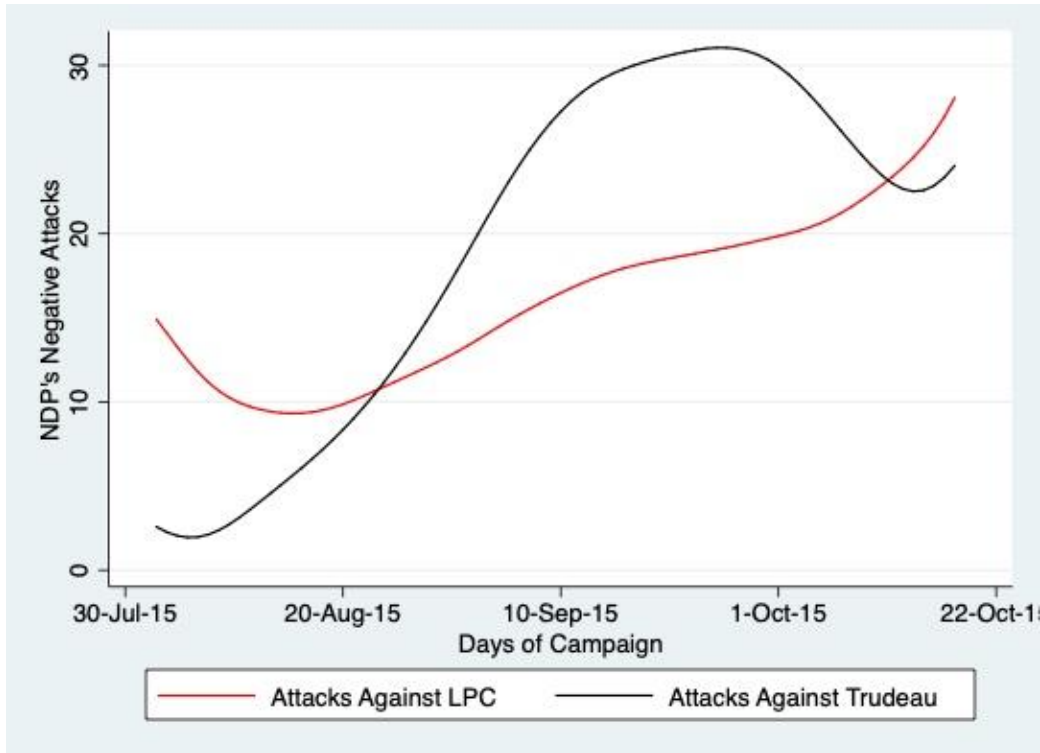


Figure 19: NDP's Negative Behaviour Against Mulcair and NDP



4.5. Testing the Hypotheses

4.5.1. H1(a): The Incumbent Effect – Being the Target

According to our first hypothesis, the governing party and its leader should receive the most attacks in an election. Since in 2015 federal election, CPC was the governing party and Harper was the Prime Minister, our results should indicate that they receive the highest number of attacks during the campaign. The results show that Harper, by receiving the total number of 1209 attacks and 33% of all of negative attacks in the election, ranked first among others, and CPC received the total number of 471 attacks and 13% of all negativity. Therefore, our data strongly support the first hypothesis.

4.5.2. H1(b): The Incumbent Effect – Attacking Behaviour

According to this hypothesis, the incumbent should use the least number of attacks against others. Therefore, we should see that CPC has published the least number of attacks compared to the others. Our results indicate that CPC not only released significantly lower number of attacks, i.e. 440 attacks in total, but also published only 106 news releases, which is less than half of the others'. Therefore, our data strongly supports this hypothesis.

4.5.3. H1(c): Party Organization Effect

According to this hypothesis, I expect to see the party with more members to adapt more negative tactics against others than those with fewer members. As mentioned in chapter four, one major problem with testing this hypothesis is that parties usually do not publish their membership records transparently. One way to capture these numbers is to look at the number of eligible party members at the time of their leadership race. However, it should be noted that since the leadership races for these three parties took place in different times, they should not be treated as the most accurate indicator for this research. Following the death of Jack Layton, NDP leadership election was held on March 24, 2012 with 128,351 eligible voting members.¹⁵¹ LPC had its leadership election on April 14, 2013 where 294,200 eligible members and supporters participated.¹⁵² Finally, the official eligible members in CPC leadership election which was held on May 27, 2017 were 259,010.¹⁵³ Keeping in mind that the time-gap between these numbers is significant, I expect to

¹⁵¹ Meagan Fitzpatrick · CBC News · Posted:, 2012 2:10 PM ET | Last Updated: February 21, and 2012. "NDP Membership Hits Record Ahead of Convention | CBC News." CBC, February 21, 2012. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/ndp-membership-hits-record-ahead-of-convention-1.1144606>.

¹⁵² "300,000 Eligible to Vote in Federal Liberal Leadership Race: Party." <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/300000-eligible-to-vote-in-federal-liberal-leadership-race-party/article9336372/>.

see LPC is using the highest number of attacks during the 2015 election, considering its higher number of members. Our results show that LPC with total number of 1650 attacks ranked the first followed by NDP with 1590 and CPC with 440. Therefore, although our data supports the hypothesis for the LPC, it did not for CPC and NDP.

4.5.4. H1(d): Personalization of Politics Factor

According to this hypothesis, our results should indicate higher number of attacks against the party leaders compared to the number of attacks against their parties. By looking at the total number of attacks each party and leader received during the 2015 campaign, it becomes clear that leaders were the primary targets. Harper with receiving 1209 attacks compared to 471 against CPC, Trudeau with 569 attacks compared to 393 against LPC, and Mulcair with 672 attacks compare to 366 against NDP. The overall proportion of negative messages against leaders throughout the campaign was 66% which was two times higher than amount of negativity against parties.

4.5.5. H1(e): Ideological Proximity Factor

According to this hypothesis and considering the location of each party in Canadian political spectrum, we expect to see in our results that LPC targeting both CPC and NDP in the same way, while CPC and NDP adopt different approaches towards their competitors. Our results show that LPC attacked CPC and Harper 824 times and targeted NDP and Mulcair 826 times during the campaign. LPC and Trudeau were targeted 734 times, and CPC and Harper were

153 Éric Grenier · CBC News · Posted: 2017 7:19 PM ET | Last Updated: April 25, and 2017. “259,010 Eligible to Vote in Conservative Leadership Race | CBC News.” CBC, April 25, 2017. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/conservative-membership-numbers-1.4085442>.

attacked 856 times by NDP. CPC focused more on LPC and Trudeau by conducting 228 attacks against them than on against NDP and Mulcair with 212 attacks. Therefore, our results do not support our hypothesis completely, although it can support it in explaining both CPC and LPC attack behaviour.

4.5.6. H2(a): Front-Runner Effect

According to CBC Poll Tracker (CPT) data, NDP was leading in the polls by an average of 32.9% until September 19, 2015, a month before the election day. Since then NDP started falling and remained as the third party in the competition, although in very close competition with others with 0.1 to 2% difference with others, for the following week. Considering a +/-3 percent margin of error in the data, NDP's fall wasn't significant until September 26th, when they dropped to 28.2% in the CPT results. Therefore, according to the front-runner hypothesis, I expect to see NDP and Mulcair as the second main target of negative attacks in the first eight weeks of the campaign, since they were considered as the de facto replacement for the government. Our results show that CPC attacked Mulcair 77 times in the first eight weeks of the campaign, while targeted Trudeau 69 times during the same time period. As for targeted parties, NDP was targeted 103 times, whereas LPC was targeted only 47 times. Looking at the LPC's negative behaviour, Mulcair and NDP were targeted 414 and 169 times, respectively, while Harper and CPC were attacked 446 and 116 times, respectively. These numbers changed significantly in the last three weeks of the campaign. During this time period, CPC attacked Mulcair 12 times and NDP 20 times, while it targeted Trudeau 69 times and LPC 43 times. LPC also adopted the same strategy by targeting Mulcair 169 times compared to targeting Harper 178 times. It also attacked NDP 74 times compared to CPC with 84 attacks. NDP itself followed the same path. In the first eight weeks of

the campaign, NDP conducted an average of 32 attacks per week against Trudeau and 21 against LPC. However, with the rise of LPC in the polls, NDP's attack behaviour changed to run an average of 57 attacks per week against Trudeau and 43 against LPC. Thus, we can conclude that our data supports the second hypothesis, although with a slightly weaker support than the first one, particularly when analyzing LPC's negative behaviour.

4.5.7. H2(b): Challenger's Strategy

Based on this hypothesis, the challenger party should apply the most attacks compare to the incumbent. Our results indicate that LPC with the total number of 1650 attacks against others ranked the first followed by NDP with 1590 attacks. Since LPC and NDP saw themselves as the main challenger, they both used more negative tactics than the incumbent. However, while NDP did 856 attacks against CPC and Harper, and 734 against LPC and Trudeau, LPC dedicated almost an equal overall amount of negative attacks towards both parties and their leader, 824 against Harper and CPC, and 826 against Mulcair and NDP. This variation may be the result of the LPC's particular position in the campaign. Since the LPC saw itself as the challenger for both the CPC and NDP, it did adopt the same strategy until the last two weeks of the campaign when became the front-runner in the race. Another interesting result from our data is that while LPC and CPC have applied a consistent amount of negative attacks during the campaign, NDP's negativity rate almost tripled in the last three weeks, when they lost their leading position in the polls. This is also, as explained in the previous section, can be the result of NDP's positioning in the polls. While it was the front-runner, it did focus on the incumbent, and in the last three weeks, when it lost its lead, adopt more negative behaviour. Therefore, as data shows, a party's competitive position in the polls can change its negative strategies during a campaign.

4.5.8. H2(c): The Third Party in Poll and its Implication for Negativity

As I discussed in the chapter two, the consequential implication of competitive positioning theory is that the third ranked party in the polls should receive lower amount of negative attacks compared to the others. The initial results indicate that CPC and Harper by receiving 1680 attacks ranked first, followed by NDP and Mulcair with total of 1038 attacks, and LPC and Trudeau with 962 attacks. Therefore, as we expected, the incumbent received the most attacks, followed by the partial front-runner of the campaign. Another interesting point to notice is that in the first four weeks of the campaign LPC was struggling in the third place, and only started to compete with CPC for the second place in the beginning of September 2015. During the first four weeks of the campaign, LPC and Trudeau were targeted only 118 times, both from CPC and NDP. However, since then the number of attacks raised more than seven times, to 844 attacks. NDP also experienced a similar pattern in the last two weeks of the campaign, when they dropped to the third place in the polls. While NDP was attacked 902 times in the first nine weeks of the campaign, it was targeted only 136 times in the last two weeks. During the last week of the campaign, CPC attacked NDP just once, and there was no attack against Mulcair, while it targeted LPC 23 and Trudeau 42 times, respectively. Similarly, LPC targeted Harper 87 times and CPC 57 times during the last two weeks of campaign, while it targeted Mulcair only 33 times and NDP 15 times during the same period.

4.5.9. H2(d): Minority Government Factor

In the Canadian parliamentary system, the party who wins the most seats in an election tries to form the government. If this party wins the majority of the seats, it can form the government

without negotiating with other parties. However, if no party gets the majority of seats, based on constitutional conventions, the party with the most seats, with the help of other party(ies), forms a minority government. The second party with the most seats, then, becomes the official opposition. Although there is no legal issue with forming a coalition government, it has never been exercised in the Canadian system. According to minority government hypothesis, the possibility of forming a minority government can affect parties' negative campaign behaviour during an election. Therefore, it is expected that the incumbent and/or the front-runner avoid heavily attacking the third party that may become their partner in forming the future government. By looking at the results, it is clear that LPC remained constantly in the third place for the first five weeks of the campaign, and then started to compete with CPC for the second place until the eighth week when it surpassed NDP. During the first five weeks of the campaign, CPC conducted a total number of 60 attacks against LPC and Trudeau with an average of 15 attacks per week, and NDP attacked LPC 125 times with an average of 25 attacks per week. From the sixth to the ninth week, CPC increased its negativity against LPC and Trudeau by targeting them 94 times with an average of 23.5 attacks a week, and NDP did the same by directing 400 attacks against LPC with an average of 100 per week. In the last two weeks, when LPC was leading in the polls, CPC hit a record by conducting an average of 37 attacks per week and NDP reached to 104.5 attacks. Consequently, when NDP and Mulcair fell into the third place in the ninth week of campaign, they received a total number of 32 attacks from CPC with a weekly average of 10, and 243 from LPC with an average of 80 attacks per week. This is significant when considering that the number of attacks that CPC conducted against Mulcair and NDP in the first eight weeks of the campaign was 180 with an average of 22.5 a week, and LPC attacked them 583 times with an average of 73 attacks per week. Therefore, all parties were less interested in attacking the third-place party, either

because of the possibility of forming a future minority government with the help of them, or because they thought the third party is going out of the race and spending time and resources for more attacks are useless.

To statistically capture the effects of voting intention on parties' negative campaign behaviour, I aligned the aggregated daily attacks with my daily polls. Also, I calculated the proportion of attacks that were directed towards a leader or party during the same day. The time lag, therefore, is a day to capture and measure the effect of our independent variable, federal voting intention on our dependent variable, proportion of daily negative attacks against a party and its leader. Therefore, we expect to see that fluctuations in a party's voting intention in day one affects other parties' negative behaviour in the next day. I ran two different models to examine parties' attack behaviour. First, I measured possible correlation between the total daily proportion of negative attacks a party and its leader received and the previous day voting intention polls. Figure 20 to 22 illustrate these correlations.

Figure 20: CPC's Status in the Polls and Proportion of Daily Attacks it Received

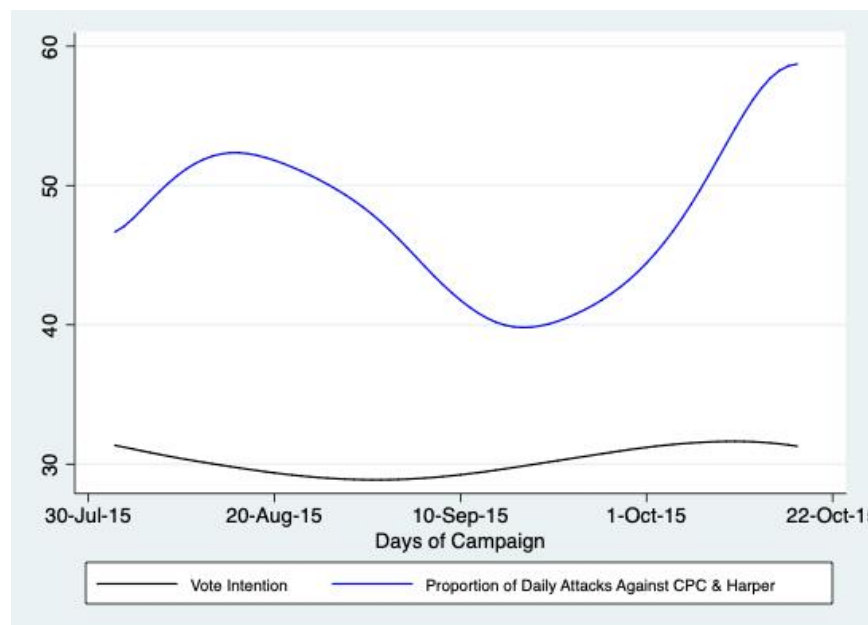


Figure 21: LPC's Status in the polls and Proportion of daily Attacks Against LPC and Trudeau

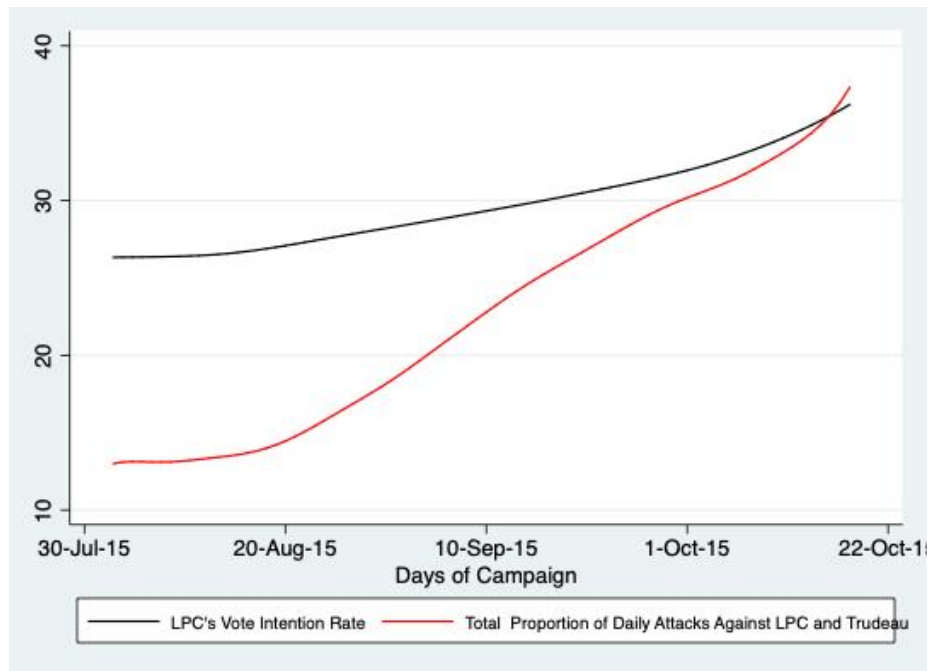
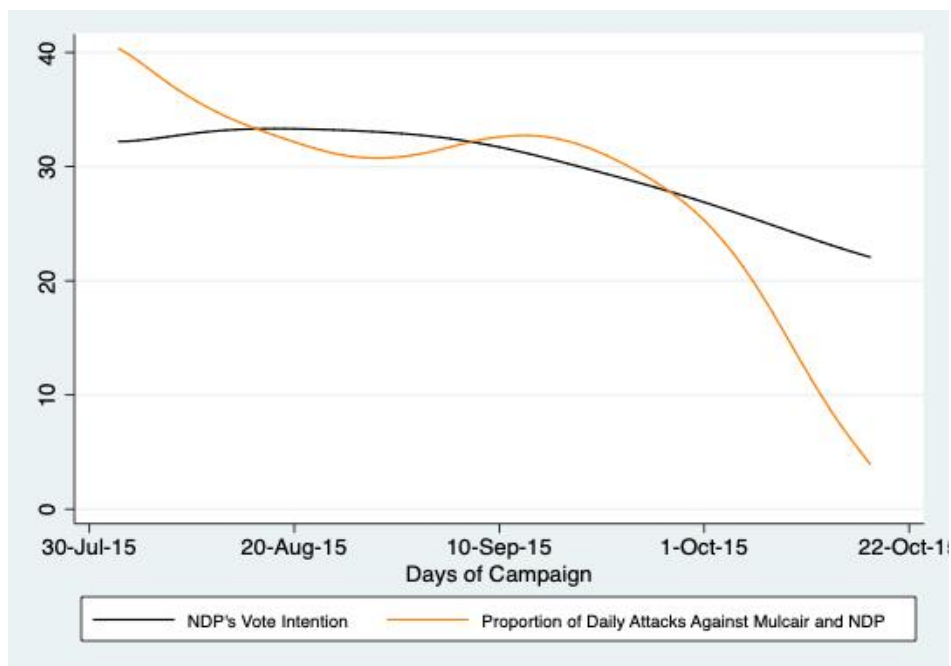


Figure 22: NDP's Status in the Polls and Proportion of Attacks Against NDP and Mulcair



Our results show that there is a moderate correlation (0.47) between LPC's voting intention rate and the amount of negativity it received each day. The result for NDP is also moderate (0.27) and for CPC this correlation is weak (0.01). The basic regression model was run for all three parties with panel study of variable "party." My models show that voting intention for NDP and LPC has a weak to moderate impact on the other parties' negative behaviour, while for CPC is not statistically significant. Table 1 illustrates the result of the model.

Table 1: Effects of Federal Voting Intention for Parties on
the amount of Negativity each Party and its Leader Received

	<i>Proportion of Daily Attacks Received</i>		
	CPC	NDP	LPC
<i>Federal Voting Intention for Parties</i>	0.158 (0.09)	1.572 (2.48) *	2.702 (4.68) **
<i>_Cons</i>	42.403 (0.84)	-18.564 (0.96)	-57.370 (3.35) **
<i>R²</i>	0.00	0.07	0.22
<i>N</i>	78	78	78

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

The second model, focuses on the effects of a party's status in the polls and its own negative behaviour. Figure 23 to 25 illustrate the correlation between these two variables. The initial results show that there is a weak to moderate negative correlation between these variables, which means that by increasing the voting intention index in the polls, parties become adopt less negative approach. On the other hand, a decline in the polls also means adopting more negative messages in a party's press release. I conducted a similar regression as the previous one for testing these correlations. The model is statistically significant for LPC and NDP, while it is not for CPC. Table 2 presents the results of the regression.

Table 2: Regression Model for Vote Intention and Parties' Attack Behaviour

	<i>Proportion of Daily Attacks</i>		
<i>Federal Voting Intention for Parties</i>	CPC	NDP	LPC
	-0.685 (0.66)	-2.106 (2.80) **	-2.749 (2.88) **
_Cons	34.370 (1.10)	100.177 (4.36) **	128.593 (4.54) **
R²	0.01	0.09	0.10
N	78	78	78

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

The interesting implication of both models is that CPC's attack behaviour and LPC and NDP's negative strategies against CPC are not influenced by CPC's position in the polls. The reason may explain by the fact that CPC was the incumbent, and its negative behaviour and other parties' negative strategies framed accordingly.

Figure 23: Vote Intention for CPC and its Negative Behaviour

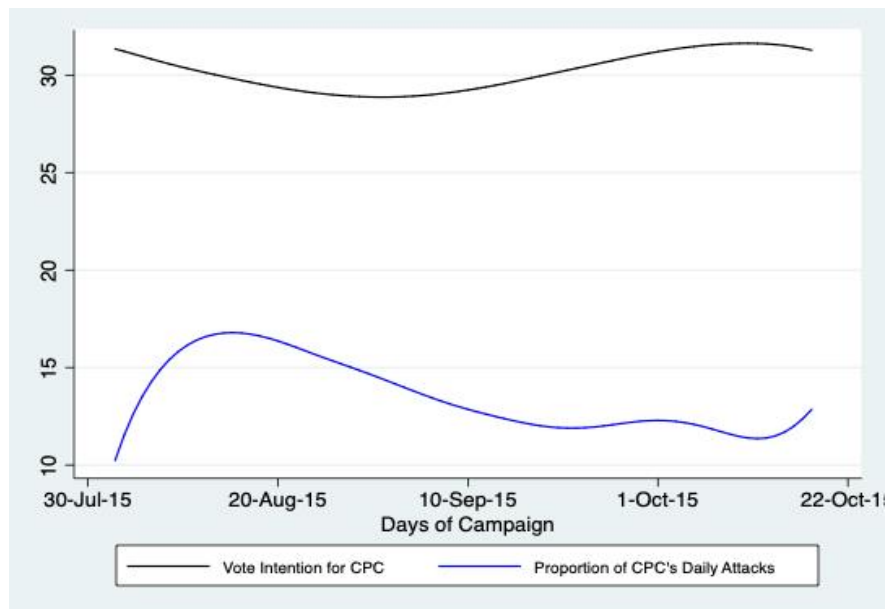


Figure 24: Vote Intention for NDP and its Negative Behaviour

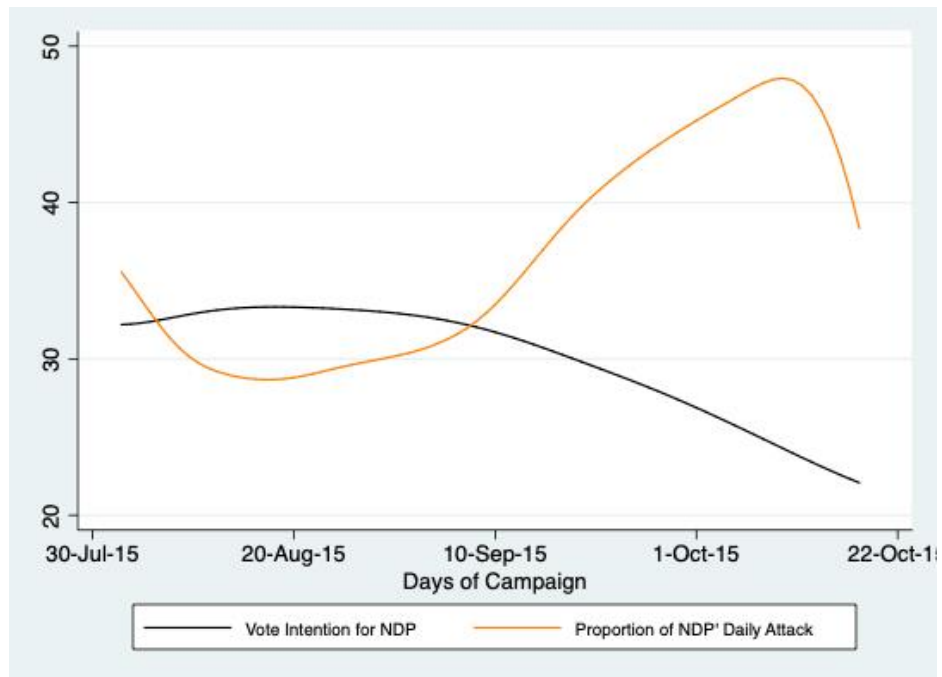
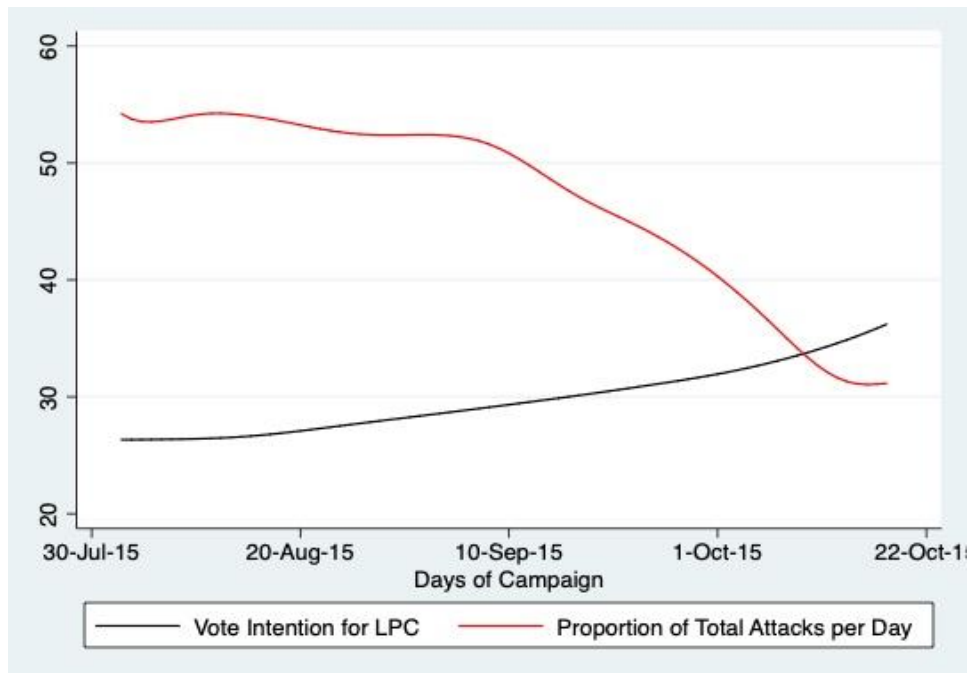


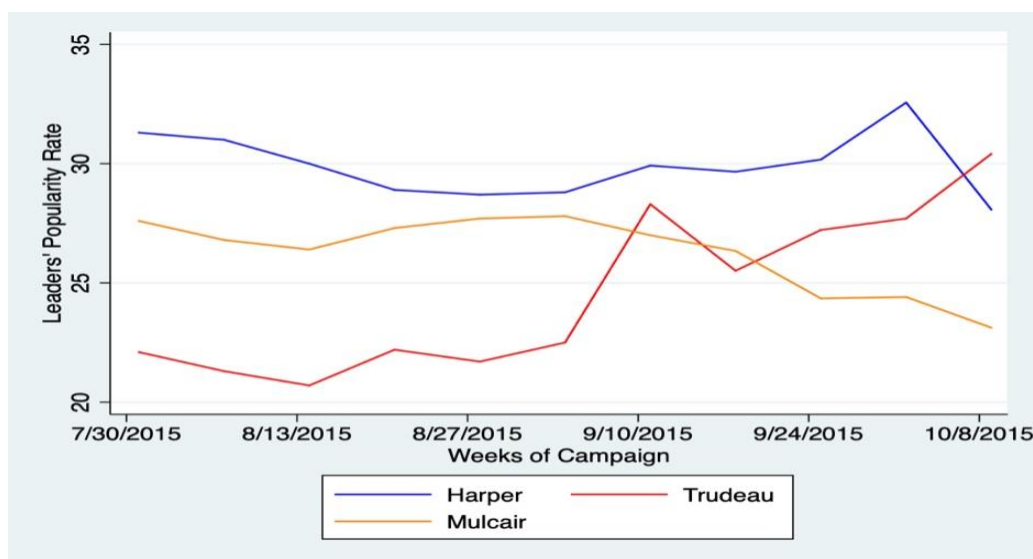
Figure 25: Vote Intention for LPC and its Negative Behaviour



4.5.10. H3: Negative Personalization

Negative Personalization theory suggests that a party leader's popularity rate is a significant indicator of other parties' negative campaign strategies. As I explained in methodology chapter, due to lack of consistent data on tracking leaders' popularity rate, I only used NANOS' data which provides weekly results. Figure 20 shows the fluctuation of leaders' popularity rate during the 2015 campaign.

Figure 26: Leaders' Popularity Rate



To capture the effects of popularity rate more accurately I align my data with NANOS weekly polls, I aggregated my findings on a weekly basis, and calculated the proportion of attacks that were directed towards a leader or party during the same week. The time lag, therefore, is a week to capture and measure the effect of our independent variable, leaders' popularity rate, on our dependent variable, proportion of weekly negative attacks against a party and its leader. Therefore, we expect to see that fluctuations in a leader's popularity rate in week one affects other parties' negative behaviour in week two. Table 3 to 5 illustrate the proportion of attacks against each party along with NANOS weekly leaders' popularity rate.

To start with the test, I measured possible correlation between our independent and dependent variables. Figure 27 to 29 illustrate these correlations. Our results show that there is a strong correlation (0.77) between Trudeau's popularity rate and the amount of negativity he receives each week. The result for Harper is moderate (0.38) and for Mulcair this correlation is weak (0.17). The correlation results for the effects of leaders' popularity rate on negative behaviour against parties show a moderate correlation (0.45) between Trudeau's popularity rate and the amount of negativity LPC receives each week. The result for Harper is weak (0.07) and for Mulcair this correlation is a weak negative one (-0.14). The basic regression model was run for all three leaders. I applied Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg test for finding possible heteroskedasticity in my data. Also, I conducted a manual test for finding any possible autocorrelation in data. In both cases, the results show that there is no autocorrelation and heteroskedasticity in the model. Table 6 and 7 show the results of my model for three leaders.

Figure 27: Correlation Between Trudeau's Popularity Rate and Attacks Against Trudeau and LPC

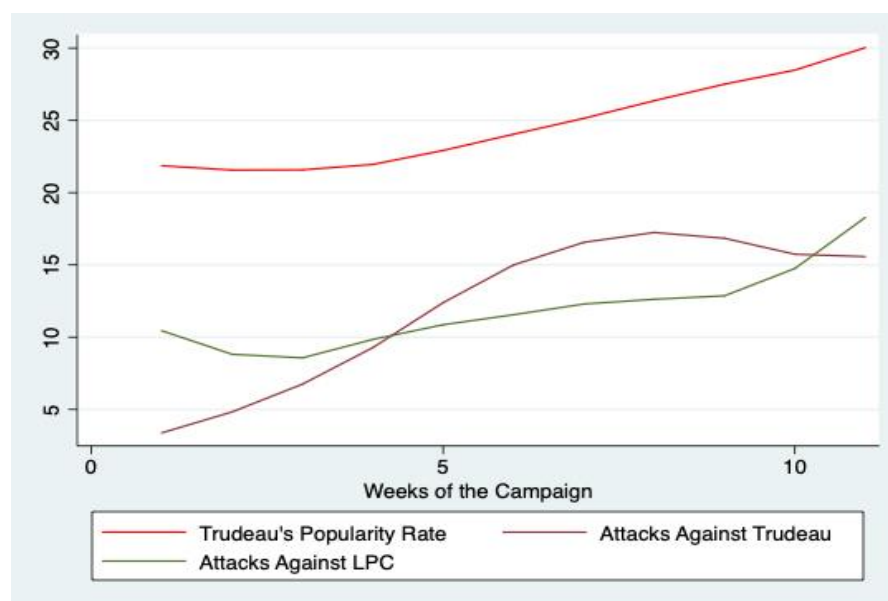


Figure 28: Correlation Between Mulcair's Popularity Rate and Attacks Against Mulcair and NDP

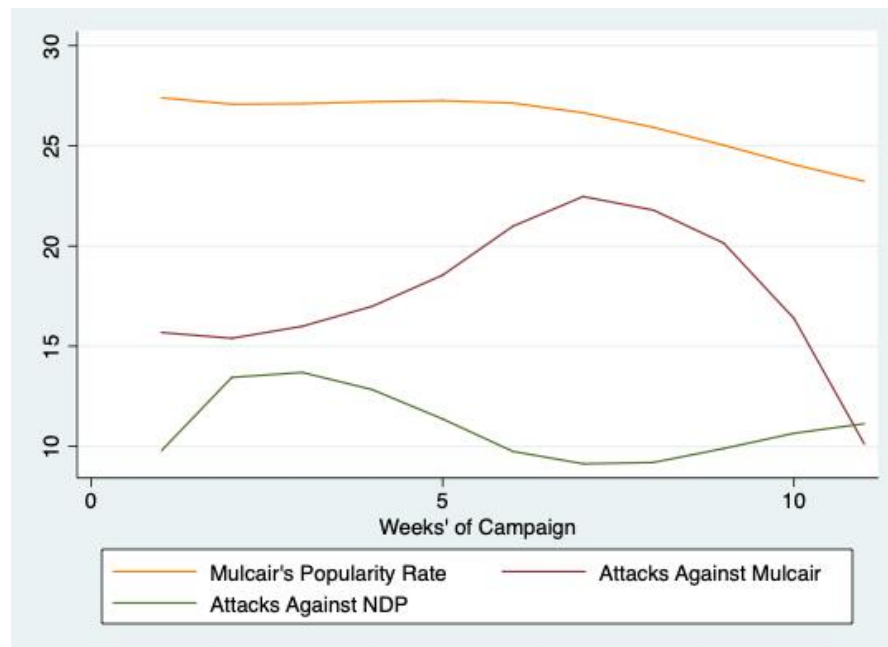


Figure 29: Correlation Between Harper's Popularity Rate and Attacks Against Harper and CPC

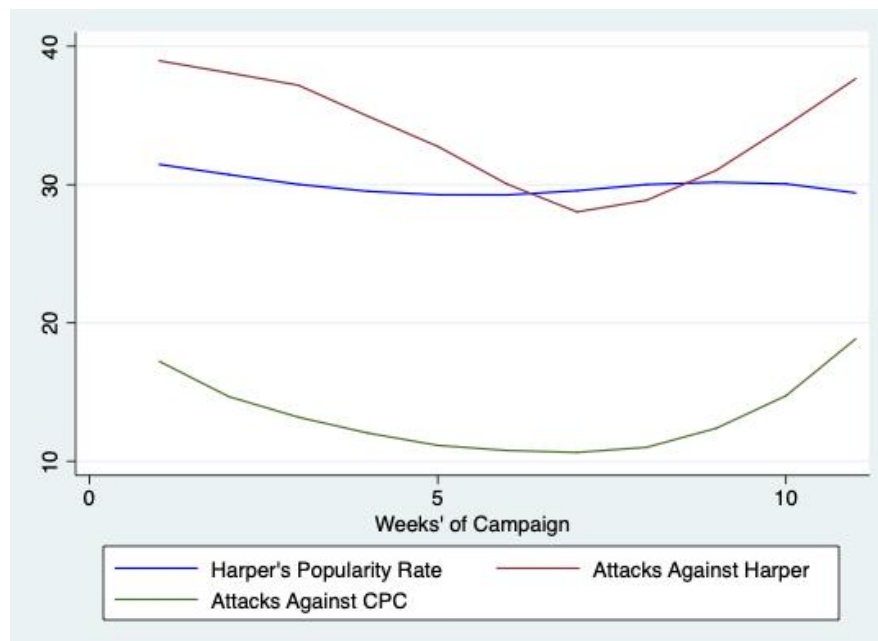


Table 3: Regression Model for the Effects of Leaders' Popularity Rate on Parties' Negative Campaign Strategies against Leaders

	<i>Proportion of Daily Attacks Received</i>
	<i>Proportion of Weekly Attacks Against Leaders</i>
<i>Leaders' Popularity Rate</i>	1.464 (2.90) **
<i>(0b) Harper</i>	0.000
<i>(1) Mulcair</i>	-9.690 (2.95) **
<i>(2) Trudeau</i>	-13.073 (3.40) **
<i>_Cons</i>	-10.451 (0.69)
<i>R²</i>	0.71
<i>N</i>	33

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Table 4: Regression Model for the Effects of Leaders' Popularity Rate on Parties' Negative Campaign Strategies against Parties

	<i>Proportion of Daily Attacks Received</i>
	<i>Proportion of Weekly Attacks Against Parties</i>
<i>Leaders' Popularity Rate</i>	0.425 (1.23)
<i>(0b) Harper</i>	0.000
<i>(1) Mulcair</i>	0.068 (0.03)
<i>(2) Trudeau</i>	1.016 (0.39)
<i>_Cons</i>	0.005 (0.00)
<i>R²</i>	0.07
<i>N</i>	33

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

The results confirm a statistically significant support for the correlation between leaders' popularity rate and attacks against leaders of the parties. However, this correlation is a positive one which means an increase in a leaders' popularity rate contributed to higher number of attacks against him. This effect is contradictory to what has been suggested in negative personalization theory. Also, my second model did not find any statistically significant support for the effects of leaders' popularity rate and number of attacks against a party, which is again at odd with what I expect from negative personalization theory.

5. Discussion of Results

5.1. Clear Results

By looking at our results and tests, some clear patterns are observed; first, CPC as the incumbent and governing party initiated the least amount of negative tactics with issuing only 12% of the overall negativity in the campaign. Also, Harper as the Prime Minister and the leader of CPC received the most attacks during the campaign with receiving 33% of all negativity in the campaign. The statistical models also confirm these results, since they show no significant support for the effects of Harper's popularity rate and CPC's voting intention factor on LPC's and NDP's negative behaviour. These two clear results strongly support the incumbent hypothesis. The second important finding was that the primary targets of negative campaigns were leaders of parties, with a significant difference. From the total number of attacks that were directed towards CPC and Harper, 71% of them were targeted toward Harper and only 29% toward CPC. The same patterns exist for the other two parties in which Trudeau's share was 59%, while LPC received 41%, and 65% of attacks targeted Mulcair, while only 35% targeted NDP. Therefore, our results strongly support the personalization hypothesis.

With some degree of consideration, we can see that the results also strongly support the second group of hypotheses. Since for almost first two months of the campaign, both CPC and NDP were seen as the possible winners, and LPC was behind, in the third place, parties' negative strategies were designed accordingly. LPC received lower amount of negative attacks, while both CPC and NDP were the main targets. Attention to LPC and Trudeau only became significant around mid-September when LPC started showing a stronger position in the polls for the first time. At the same time, focus on NDP and Mulcair shifted as soon as NDP lost its front-runner status. It should be noted again that attacks against Harper and CPC remained almost constant throughout

the campaign. This may be due to two primary reasons; first, as it was mentioned, CPC was the incumbent. The second reason is due to the fact that unlike LPC and NDP, CPC never experienced a consistent third place in the polls. During the campaign, LPC dropped to 24.7% in the polls on August 17, 2015, and was consistently the third party until September 2nd. NDP, after losing its lead in the polls, fell from 37.4% to 21.7% in the day before the election, and was consistently the third party since September 21st. The lowest point that CPC dropped to in the polls was 27% on September 6th, after only five days of being the third party. Apart from this incident, CPC experienced little fluctuation in the campaign with maintaining an average of 30% in the polls during the campaign. On the contrary, LPC was leading in the polls only for the last 12 days, and therefore, escaped being the main target of negativity in the campaign. On the other hand, as we saw both CPC and LPC focused primarily on NDP, and both NDP and LPC on CPC for conducting their negative attacks, and therefore CPC and NDP and their leaders received significant amount of negative attacks in the first 60 days of the campaign.

5.2. Problematic Results

Although the initial results provide some degree of support for ideological proximity and party organization theory, due to lack of accurate data and presence of other strong factors, such as voting intention, it is not possible to make a general conclusion for these theories. It is true that LPC as the middle party attacked both CPC and NDP in the same pattern, but I cannot conclude that it was only due to its ideological and issue proximity to these parties. As I have discussed in the previous section, this strategy might be due to the fact that LPC saw both CPC and NDP as the front-runners in the race, and therefore targeted them both with the same intensity. Also, since the data show that the number of attacks against the third party in the polls was lower than the other

two, it may be explained through minority government effect. Since until the very end of the campaign, no party reached to a clear point for winning a majority, the third party in the polls was seen as a major player in forming a future minority government. However, as we have seen, it can also be a result of the first two leading parties' natural tendency to invest most of their time and energy to their primary competitors. For party organization factor, as I have discussed before, the main barrier to strongly support this theory is lack of access to real-time and accurate membership numbers of parties during the election. Although the results partially support this hypothesis, synchronized data is required to test and verify the current results.

As for the last hypothesis, negative personalization theory, I identified some issues. First, since the federal voting intention and leaders' popularity rate are highly correlated, according to our correlation test in Stata, it is very difficult to consider one as the primary factor for determining other parties' negative strategies. Thus, for building any statistical model, one of these variables has to be removed from the model in order to measure the other. Second, as I mentioned before, due to the fact that there are no polls that presents leaders' popularity rate on a daily basis, the number of observations for testing the model became very limited. The results of our test only support the theory about the effects of leaders' popularity rate on attacks against leaders, and not for the parties. Thus, there should be other factors in shaping parties negative campaign strategies that have more influence than leaders' popularity rate.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Reflect Back on Theories

The primary purpose of this thesis was to address the current gap in the literature about parties' negative campaign behavior. As I noted in the first chapter, majority of studies that deal with negative campaigning are conducted in and about the U.S elections. However, the two-party presidential system of American politics creates a different atmosphere for designing and implementing negativity. In a multi-party parliamentary system, strategic decisions of parties about when, against whom, and to what extent to go negative are affected by more complex factors than the U.S two-party system. Through examining major studies around the world on negative campaigning in multi-party systems, I summarized them into five main areas and then tested them against my dataset from parties' press releases during the 2015 federal election. To perform these tests, I created a unique dataset by coding all parties' press releases during the 2015 campaign.

As suggested by majority of the literature, and as a common theme between two-party and multi-party systems, the status and competitive position of a party in an election can be a significant factor in parties' negative campaign strategies. The primary expectation was to see the majority of attacks directed to the incumbent or party with the government status. As expected, Harper and CPC were the main target of negative attacks during the 2015 campaign. Also, as expected, CPC was the party who ran the least negative campaign compared to the others. In addition, according to the front-runner and challenger theory, I expected to see a pattern in the amount of parties' attacks against others according to their place in the polls. My descriptive and statistical results both show significant supports for the role of federal voting intention factor in parties' negative behavior. Our results also indicate that a non-incumbent front-runner is a second primary target of negative attacks by others.

According to the second group of studies conducted within Europe and the U.S, ideological proximity also plays a major role in adopting negative strategies. Although this thesis finds partial support for this theory, I cannot confirm the significance of the effects of this factor for the following reasons. First, in the absence of a major federal party who adapts a radical or extreme right or left position, there is no way to test the amount of negativity, its targets, and its dynamic in the 2015 federal election. Second, all three major parties in the 2015 election were mostly located in the middle of political spectrum, considering CPC as middle-right, LPC in the middle, and NDP under Mulcair was more of middle-left party. Therefore, as I found relevant support for explaining LPC's attacking behaviour, CPC's and NDP's negative strategies cannot be explained through ideological proximity theory.

Third, as suggested by some European and American studies, parties with stronger organizational capacity, such as higher number of members are more flexible to adopt negative behavior. Thus, I expected to see a party with more members to use more attacks than others in the 2015 election. While my results show that LPC with the higher number of members had the greatest number of attacks during the campaign, I cannot make a general conclusion on the significance of this factor. The primary reason is that party membership numbers is a constant factor in an election, and therefore cannot explain the dynamic of attack behaviour during the campaign. Also, parties do not provide real-time membership numbers to the public, and therefore, the only way to access this number is to look at the number of eligible voters in parties' leadership race. However, as I mentioned in chapter three, these data are not collected at the same time and cannot be used as synchronized information in this thesis.

Fourth, as one of the main and exclusive features of multi-party systems, the possibility of forming a minority or coalition government after an election can shape how parties adopt their

negative strategies towards their future partners. This factor was determined as a critical element in many European studies, considering coalition governments have become common in the European parliaments. As for the Canadian context, although we have never had a coalition government, the formation of minority government has always been a possibility. As a result, particularly in the recent years, the front-runner party has considered getting the support of the third party for forming the government, and therefore, designed and adopted its negative campaign accordingly. Thus, the expectation is to see the third party in the polls, getting the least amount of attacks, from both incumbent and the challenger. Even though my results support this theory, it cannot confirm that it was the sole reason for explaining the parties' attack behavior.

The final theory I tested has two main parts; first, the personalization or presidentialisation of politics in multi-party systems which makes leaders of the parties the most important faces of an election. Second, as it was suggested by negative personalization theory, parties follow a calculated strategy for attacking other leaders and parties, based on the popularity of other leaders. According to this theory, the expectation was to see as a leader's popularity goes up in the polls, the number of attacks against her/him drops, and the number of attacks against her/his party rises instead. Even though my results show that the 2015 campaign was a highly personalized campaign and leaders of the three parties were the main targets of attacks, I did not find enough evidence to support negative personalization theory. My models found significant correlation between leaders' popularity rate and the number of attacks against him, but in contradiction to what the theory expects, the correlation was positive. This means that by increasing a leader's popularity in the polls, the probability of becoming the target of attacks for him is increased as well.

6.2. Implications for Canadian Politics

The first critical finding of this research is that negative campaigning has become a significant part of our elections and a reality in Canadian democracy. Around 80% of all press releases and more than 90% of campaign related press releases included negativity. This simply means that we should expect to see negativity as the primary force in any political campaign. Overall, 67% of all attacks targeted leaders and 33% of them were directed toward parties. This also shows that negativity in 2015 campaign was highly personalized. Further studies are required, such as Ontario 2018 and Alberta 2019 elections, to see if this pattern has become a dominant feature in Canadian elections. If the answer is yes, it means that Canadian politics are moving toward a presidential style with the main emphasis on leaders of parties. This implies the critical role of mass media and social media in campaign communication as suggested by other studies in this topic. However, more research is required in order to compare the effects of parties' attempts to reinforce the image of their leaders with the role of media in portraying leaders as the primary driver of parties. But, the implication of the result is clear; leaders have become the focal point of positive and negative campaign in an election. It also means that the tone of the campaign has become more and more personalized, and leaders and their personal lives become the center of attacks. Put this together with the incumbent theory, we should expect to see Prime Ministers and Premiers as the primary targets of attacks in the upcoming elections. The second critical finding is the role of public opinion in shaping parties' negative campaign strategies. As we have seen during our analysis, there was a strong relationship between federal voting intention and the dynamic of negativity in parties' press releases. Therefore, parties continuously adapt and revise their negative strategies based on competitive position of others in the polls.

The primary purpose of this thesis was to identify main factors in determining parties negative campaign strategies, based on the existing literature. Situating this research in the Canadian context required looking at studies that focus more on multiparty systems around the world. I categorized all of the existing theories into five main categories that can be tested in Canadian context. To perform these tests, I created a unique dataset by coding all parties' press releases during the 2015 campaign. I found the federal voting intention as the strongest dynamic factor for parties' negative campaign strategy development during the campaign.

Since this research was the first study in Canadian context that includes all existing theories of parties' negative behaviour, it can be an initial step towards understanding negativity in Canadian politics. My analysis of parties' negative behaviour in 2015 federal election creates a basis for further research, by providing a platform to collect, code, and analyze campaign related data such as press releases, TV ads, and leaders' debates. The data collection method was also unique, since it looked at the number of attacks within a press release instead of counting the whole text as one negative news. As I mentioned in the beginning of this thesis, I focused on the party strategy side of the existing literature. Although I provided a brief overview of effects of negative campaigning, determining its effectiveness in the Canadian context is the topic of a different research. However, as it becomes clear in my results, the party, LPC, who conducted the most, and received the least number of negative attacks won the election. It can be a crucial and interesting topic for a new study on negativity in Canadian elections to see if it was the negative campaigning that changed the outcome of the 2015 federal election, and how the party which was in the third place in the Commons and in the polls, ended up winning a clear majority government.

7. Bibliography

Ansolabehere, S., Iyengar, S., Simon, A., & Valentino, N. "Does attack advertising demobilize the electorate? *American Political Science Review*, 88, (1994): 829–838.

Ansolabehere, Stephen D., Shanto Iyengar, and Adam Simon. "Replicating Experiments Using Aggregate and Survey Data: The Case of Negative Advertising and Turnout." *The American Political Science Review* 93, no. 4 (1999): 901–9.

Ansolabehere, Stephen. *Going Negative: How Attack Ads Shrink and Polarize the Electorate*. Free Press, 1995.

Atkin, Charles, and Gary Heald. "Effects of Political Advertising." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 40, no. 2 (1976): 216-28.

Blais, André. "How Many Voters Change Their Minds in the Month Preceding an Election?," n.d., 3.

Brooks, Deborah, and Michael Murov. "Assessing Accountability in a Post-Citizens United Era: The Effects of Attack Ad Sponsorship by Unknown Independent Groups." *American Politics Research* 40, no. 3 (2012): 383.

Budesheim, Thomas Lee, Stephen J DePaola, and David A Houston. "Persuasiveness of In-Group and Out-Group Political Messages: The Case of Negative Political Campaigning," n.d., 12.

Cacioppo, J. T., Gardner, W. L., & Berntson, G. G. (1997). Beyond bipolar conceptualizations and measures: The case of attitudes and evaluative space. *Personality and Social Psychology review*, 1, 3–25.

Campbell, A., P. Converse, W. Miller and D. Stokes (1960), *The American Voter*, Chicago, IL, USA: University of Chicago Press.

Carraro, Luciana, and Luigi Castelli. "The Implicit and Explicit Effects of Negative Political Campaigns: Is the Source Really Blamed?: Negative Campaigns." *Political Psychology* 31, no. 4 (July 12, 2010): 617–45.

Carraro, Luciana, and Luigi Castelli. "The Implicit and Explicit Effects of Negative Political Campaigns: Is the Source Really Blamed?: Negative Campaigns." *Political Psychology* 31, no. 4 (July 12, 2010): 617–45.

Carraro, Luciana, Luigi Castelli, Ioana Breazu, Giulia Campomizzi, Antonella Cerruto, Massimiliano Mariani, and Ivano Toto. "Just Ignore or Counterattack? On the Effects of Different Strategies for Dealing with Political Attacks: Responding to Political Attacks." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 42, no. 6 (October 2012): 789–97.

Damore, David F. "Candidate Strategy and the Decision to Go Negative." *Political Research Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (2002): 669–85.

Dolezal, Martin. "Who Will Attack the Competitors? How Political Parties Resolve Strategic and Collective Action Dilemmas in Negative Campaigning" 23, no. 6 (November 1, 2017): 666–79.

Dolezal, Martin, Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik, and Wolfgang C Müller. "Who Will Attack the Competitors? How Political Parties Resolve Strategic and Collective Action Dilemmas in Negative Campaigning." *Party Politics* 23, no. 6 (November 2017): 666–79.

Downs, Anthony. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper, 1957.

Elmelund-Præstekær, Christian. "Beyond American Negativity: Toward a General Understanding of the Determinants of Negative Campaigning." *European Political Science Review* 2, no. 01 (March 2010): 137.

Elmelund-Præstekær, Christian. "Beyond American Negativity: Toward a General Understanding of the Determinants of Negative Campaigning." *European Political Science Review* 2, no. 01 (March 2010): 137-156.

Fiske, Susan T. "Attention and Weight in Person Perception: The Impact of Negative and Extreme Behavior." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 38, no. 6 (1980): 889–906.

Fitzpatrick, Meagan. "NDP Membership Hits Record Ahead of Convention | CBC News." CBC, February 21, 2012. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/ndp-membership-hits-record-ahead-of-convention-1.1144606>.

Flanagan, Thomas author. *Winning Power: Canadian Campaigning in the Twenty-First Century*. Montreal Quebec: McGill Queen's University Press, 2014.

Flanagan, Thomas. *Harper's Team behind the Scenes in the Conservative Rise to Power*. 2nd ed. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009.

Fridkin, Kim L. "Variability in Citizens' Reactions to Different Types of Negative Campaigns" 55, no. 2 (n.d.): 307–25.

Fridkin, Kim L., and Patrick Kenney. "Variability in Citizens' Reactions to Different Types of Negative Campaigns: Negative Campaigning." *American Journal of Political Science* 55, no. 2 (April 2011): 307–25.

Galloway, Gloria. "300,000 Eligible to Vote in Federal Liberal Leadership Race: Party." Accessed July 18, 2019. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/300000-eligible-to-vote-in-federal-liberal-leadership-race-party/article9336372/>.

Geer, John Gray. *In Defense of Negativity Attack Ads in Presidential Campaigns*. Studies in Communication, Media, and Public Opinion. Chicago, Ill.; London, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Goldstein, K., & Freedman, P. (2002). Campaign advertising and voter turnout: New evidence for a stimulation effect. *The Journal of Politics*, 64, 721–740.

Grenier, Éric. "259,010 Eligible to Vote in Conservative Leadership Race | CBC News." CBC, April 25, 2017. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/conservative-membership-numbers-1.4085442>.

Haddock, Geoffrey, and Mark P Zanna. "Impact of Negative Advertising on Evaluations of Political Candidates: The Canadian Federal Election," n.d., 20.

Hale, Jon F., Jeffrey C. Fox, and Rick Farmer. "Negative Advertisements in U.S. Senate Campaigns: The Influence of Campaign Context." *Social Science Quarterly* 77, no. 2 (1996): 329–43.

Hansen, Kasper M., and Rasmus Tue Pedersen. "Negative Campaigning in a Multiparty System." *Scandinavian Political Studies* 31, no. 4 (2008): 408–27.

Haynes, Audrey A., and Staci L. Rhine. "Attack Politics in Presidential Nomination Campaigns: An Examination of the Frequency and Determinants of Intermediated Negative Messages against Opponents." *Political Research Quarterly* 51, no. 3 (1998): 691–721.

- Hazama, Yasushi. *Electoral Volatility in Turkey: Cleavages Vs. The Economy*. Chiba: Institute of Developing Economies, 2007.
- Hernández-Huerta, Víctor A. "Negative Advertisements and Voter Turnout: The Evidence from Mexico." *Colombia Internacional* 92 (October 1, 2017): 135–56.
- Ito, Tiffany A., Jeff T. Larsen, N. Kyle Smith, John T. Cacioppo, and Kruglanski, Arie W. "Negative Information Weighs More Heavily on the Brain: The Negativity Bias in Evaluative Categorizations." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 75, no. 4 (1998): 887-900.
- Jacobson, Gary C. "How Do Campaigns Matter?," *Annual Review of Political Science* 18, no. 1 (May 11, 2015): 31–47.
- Johnson-Cartee, Karen S., and Gary Copeland. "Southern Voters' Reaction to Negative Political Ads in 1986 Election." *Journalism Quarterly* 66, no. 4 (December 1989): 888–986.
- Johnson-Cartee, Karen S., Author, and Copeland, Gary. *Negative Political Advertising : Coming of Age. Communication* (Hillsdale, N.J.). Hillsdale, N.J.: Taylor and Francis, 1991., 17
- Kahneman, Daniel. 2011. *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. Toronto: Penguin Canada.
- Kaid, Lynda Lee, and Christina Holtz-Bacha. *The SAGE Handbook of Political Advertising*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications, 2006.
- Krupnikov, Yanna, and Nichole M. Bauer. "The Relationship Between Campaign Negativity, Gender and Campaign Context." *Political Behavior* 36, no. 1 (March 2014): 167-188.
- Krupnikov, Yanna. "How Negativity Can Increase and Decrease Voter Turnout: The Effect of Timing." *Political Communication* 31, no. 3 (July 3, 2014): 446–66.
- Krupnikov, Yanna. "When Does Negativity Demobilize? Tracing the Conditional Effect of Negative Campaigning on Voter Turnout: When Does Negativity Demobilize?" *American Journal of Political Science* 55, no. 4 (October 2011): 797–813.
- Lau, R. R., & Pomper, G. M. (2001). Effects of negative campaigning on turnout in U.S. Senate Elections, 1988–1998. *The Journal of Politics*, 63, 804–819.
- Lau, Richard R., Lee Sigelman, and Ivy Brown Rovner. "The Effects of Negative Political Campaigns: A Meta-Analytic Reassessment." *Journal of Politics* 69, no. 4 (2007): 1176–1209.

Lau, Richard, and Ivy Rovner. "Negative Campaigning." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12 (2009): 285-306.

M. Garramone, Gina. *Voter Response to Negative Political Ads*. Vol. 61, 1984. 251.

Mackie, Diane M., Leila T. Worth, Arlene G. Asuncion, and Reis, Harry T. "Processing of Persuasive In-Group Messages." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 58, no. 5 (1990): 812–22.

Martin, Paul S. "Inside the Black Box of Negative Campaign Effects: Three Reasons Why Negative Campaigns Mobilize." *Political Psychology* 25, no. 4 (August 2004): 545–62.

Mayer, William G. "In Defense of Negative Campaigning." *Political Science Quarterly* 111, no. 3 (1996): 437–55.

McAllistar, I. (2007) 'The Personalization of Politics', in R. J. Dalton and H. Klingemann (eds), *Oxford Handbook of Political Behaviour*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 571–88.

Meffert, Michael F., Sungeun Chung, Amber J. Joiner, Leah Waks, and Jennifer Garst. "The Effects of Negativity and Motivated Information Processing during a Political Campaign.(Voter Behavior)." *Journal of Communication* 56, no. 1 (2006): 32

Merritt, Sharyne. "Negative Political Advertising: Some Empirical Findings." *Journal of Advertising* 13, no. 3 (October 1984): 27–38.

Morisi, Davide. "When Campaigns Can Backfire: National Identities and Support for Parties in the 2015 U.K. General Election in Scotland." *Political Research Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (December 2018): 895.

Motta, Matthew P., and Erika Franklin Fowler. "The Content and Effect of Political Advertising in U.S. Campaigns." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, December 22, 2016.

Mughan, Anthony. *Media and the Presidentialization of Parliamentary Elections*. Basingstoke ; New York: Palgrave, 2000.

Muller, Wolfgang C. "Political Parties in Parliamentary Democracies: Making Delegation and Accountability Work." *European Journal of Political Research* 37, no. 3 (May 2000): 309–33.

Müller, Wolfgang C., and Kaare Strom. *Policy, Office, or Votes?: How Political Parties in Western Europe Make Hard Decisions*. Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics. Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Poguntke. *The Presidentialization of Politics: A Comparative Study of Modern Democracies*. Comparative Politics. Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online Monographs, Oxford University Press, 2005.

Pruysers, Scott, and William Cross. "Research Note: 'Negative' Personalization: Party Leaders and Party Strategy." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 49, no. 03 (September 2016): 539–58.

Rahat, Gideon, and Tamir Sheafer. "The Personalization(s) of Politics: Israel, 1949–2003." *Political Communication* 24, no. 1 (January 29, 2007): 65–80.

Redlawsk, David P., Andrew J. W. Civettini, and Karen M. Emmerson. "The Affective Tipping Point: Do Motivated Reasoners Ever 'Get It'? The Affective Tipping Point." *Political Psychology* 31, no. 4 (July 12, 2010): 563–93.

Ridout, Travis N., and Jenny L. Holland. "Candidate Strategies in the Presidential Nomination Campaign." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (December 2010): 611–30.

Roy, Jason, and Christopher Alcantara. "Fighting Fire with Fire: The Implications of (Not) Going Negative in a Multiparty Election Campaign." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 49, no. 03 (September 2016): 473–97.

Roy, Jason, and Christopher Alcantara. "Fighting Fire with Fire: The Implications of (Not) Going Negative in a Multiparty Election Campaign." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 49, no. 03 (September 2016): 473–97.

Ruscher, Janet B. *Prejudiced Communication: A Social Psychological Perspective*. New York: Guilford Press, 2001.

Sartori, Giovanni. *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*. Cambridge [Eng.]: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

Sides, John. "Do Voters Perceive Negative Campaigns as Informative Campaigns?" *American Politics Research* 38, no. 3 (May 1, 2010): 502–30.

Skaperdas, Stergios, and Bernard Grofman. "Modeling Negative Campaigning." *The American Political Science Review* 89, no. 1 (1995): 49.

Soroka, Stuart, and Stephen McAdams. "News, Politics, and Negativity." *Political Communication* 32, no. 1 (January 2, 2015): 1–22.

Soroka, Stuart, Marc André Bodet, Lori Young, and Blake Andrew. "Campaign News and Vote Intentions." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 19, no. 4 (November 2009): 359–76.

Stewart, Charles J. "Voter Perception of Mud-slinging in Political Communication." *Central States Speech Journal* 26, no. 4 (December 1, 1975): 279–86.

Surlin, Stuart H., and Thomas F. Gordon. "How Values Affect Attitudes Toward Direct Reference Political Advertising." *Journalism Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (March 1977): 89–98.

Theilmann, John, and Allen Wilhite. "Campaign Tactics and the Decision to Attack." *The Journal of Politics* 60, no. 4 (1998): 1050–62.

Toros, Emre. "Negative Campaigning in Turkish Elections" *Turkish Studies* 16, no. 4 (October 2, 2015): 487–509.

Trent, Judith S. *Political Campaign Communication: Principles and Practices*. Eighth edition. Communication, Media, and Politics. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.

Walter, Annemarie S, and Wouter van der Brug. "When the Gloves Come off: Inter-Party Variation in Negative Campaigning in Dutch Elections, 1981–2010." *Acta Politica* 48, no. 4 (October 2013): 367–88.

Walter, Annemarie S. "Negative Campaigning in Western Europe: Similar or Different?" *Political Studies* 62, no. 1_suppl (April 2014): 42–60.

Walter, Annemarie S. "Negative Campaigning in Western Europe: Similar or Different?" *Political Studies* 62, no. 1_suppl (April 2014): 42–60.

Walter, Annemarie. "Choosing the Enemy: Attack Behaviour in a Multiparty System." *Party Politics* 20, no. 3 (May 1, 2014): 311–23.

Wattenberg, M. P., & Brians, C. L. (1999). Negative campaign advertising: Demobilizer or mobilizer? *American Political Science Review*, 93, 891–899.

Westen, Drew. *The Political Brain: The Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2007.

Wright, William A. "Negative Campaigning." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 24, no. 1 (1993): 103-13.

9. Appendices

9.1 Sample of Coding

9.1.1 Sample of Coding from the Conservative Party Press Release on August 12, 2015

Prime Minister Harper Announces Help For Aspiring Homeowners

August 12, 2015

For immediate release

PRIME MINISTER HARPER ANNOUNCES HELP FOR ASPIRING HOMEOWNERS

Building on his announcement of a new, permanent Home Renovation Tax Credit last week, Prime Minister Stephen Harper today announced improvements to help aspiring homeowners purchase their first house.

“For many Canadians, owning a home is their most important investment and the achievement of a key life goal,” said Prime Minister Harper. “We want to help more Canadian families purchase their first dream home.”

The Home Buyer’s Plan allows aspiring homeowners to make tax-free withdrawals from their Registered Retirement Savings Plans to finance the purchase or new construction of their first home. In 2009, the Harper Government increased the allowable withdrawal from \$20,000 to \$25,000 – the first increase since the program was established in 1992.

“Today, I am announcing a re-elected Harper Government will raise this limit once again – from \$25,000 to \$35,000,” said Prime Minister Harper. “With this increase, we will continue to help families know the pride and stability of having a place to call their own.”

Another issue for aspiring home buyers, especially in Vancouver and Toronto, is the affordability of housing. Real estate commentators have suggested that speculative foreign buyers are a significant factor in driving homes out of the price range of average families in some parts of the country.

“If, in fact, foreign speculators are driving the cost of housing to unaffordable levels, that is something the government can, and should, find a way to address,” the Prime Minister said.

“Our government will commit to collecting comprehensive data on foreign buyer activity in Canada’s housing market,” said Prime Minister Harper. “We will then take action in coordination with provinces to ensure foreign investment in Canada’s housing sector supports the availability and affordability of homes for Canadians.”

The Prime Minister contrasted these practical, serious solutions to help aspiring homeowners against the ineffective and expensive schemes proposed by his opponents. “Justin Trudeau is promising a meaningless ‘national strategy’ that will do nothing for families,” said the Prime Minister. “He just doesn’t understand the issue.”

“Mulcair and the NDP have promised expensive benefits for developers and investors that we cannot afford and that won’t help middle class families,” the Prime Minister said. “Only our Conservative party will continue to support Canadian families in achieving the pride and stability of home ownership.”

9.1.2. Sample of Coding from the Liberal Party Press Release on August 4, 2015

TRUDEAU OFFERING REAL CHANGE FOR THE PEOPLE OF MISSISSAUGA August 4, 2015

MISSISSAUGA, ON – It's time to give middle class Canadians a real and fair chance at success, create jobs, and grow our economy, said the Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, Justin Trudeau, today at the unveiling of the Liberal campaign bus in Mississauga.

"After a decade under Harper, Ontario families are struggling to make ends meet," said Mr. Trudeau. "Stephen Harper has let Canadians down. Our economy has shrunk, household debt and unemployment are rising, and Harper has failed to bring an open, honest government to Ottawa. The Conservatives are out of steam, out of ideas, and out of touch."

The Conservatives' only plan is to give billions of taxpayer dollars to the wealthiest few, doing nothing to help middle class Canadians have a real and fair chance at success. The NDP is offering no answers on the economy, choosing instead to support Harper's plan to give huge benefits to millionaires.

"Harper has a failed plan, while Mulcair and the NDP have no plan at all," said Mr. Trudeau. "Liberals, meanwhile, have a real plan to grow the economy, invest in infrastructure, put more money in people's pockets, and bring our country together. We will cut taxes for the middle class, and create one bigger, automatic, and tax-free monthly benefit that will help families with the high cost of raising their kids. It's time for real change, a new government, and a new direction."

9.2. Campaign Negativity and Leaders' Popularity Rate

9.2.1. Proportion of Negative Attacks Against Trudeau and LPC

Date of Polls	Leader's Popularity	Total Negative Attacks	Negative Attacks Against Leader	Negative Attacks Against Party	Party Leader/Party
31-Jul-15	22.1%	13.2%	3.0%	10.3%	Trudeau / LPC
07-Aug-15	21.3%	15.4%	6.3%	9.0%	Trudeau / LPC
14-Aug-15	20.7%	10.7%	3.3%	7.3%	Trudeau / LPC
21-Aug-15	22.2%	16.1%	11.3%	4.8%	Trudeau / LPC
28-Aug-15	21.7%	19.0%	8.8%	10.2%	Trudeau / LPC
04-Sep-15	22.5%	36.4%	15.8%	20.6%	Trudeau / LPC
11-Sep-15	28.3%	35.7%	24.3%	11.4%	Trudeau / LPC
18-Sep-15	25.5%	23.6%	15.6%	8.0%	Trudeau / LPC
25-Sep-15	27.2%	29.6%	17.8%	11.8%	Trudeau / LPC
02-Oct-15	27.7%	26.1%	12.8%	13.2%	Trudeau / LPC
09-Oct-15	30.4%	35.9%	16.9%	19.0%	Trudeau / LPC

9.2.2. Proportion of Negative Attacks Against Mulcair and NDP

Date of Polls	Leader's Popularity	Total Negative Attacks	Negative Attacks Against Leader	Negative Attacks Against Party	Party Leader/Party
31-Jul-15	27.6%	27.4%	17.5%	9.8%	Mulcair/NDP
07-Aug-15	26.8%	23.1%	11.3%	11.8%	Mulcair/NDP
14-Aug-15	26.4%	41.3%	18.0%	23.3%	Mulcair/NDP
21-Aug-15	27.3%	26.1%	13.9%	12.2%	Mulcair/NDP
28-Aug-15	27.7%	30.4%	20.7%	9.7%	Mulcair/NDP
04-Sep-15	27.8%	27.1%	20.2%	6.9%	Mulcair/NDP
11-Sep-15	27%	24.7%	17.3%	7.4%	Mulcair/NDP
18-Sep-15	26.3%	45.4%	35.1%	10.3%	Mulcair/NDP
25-Sep-15	24.3%	35.5%	22.8%	12.8%	Mulcair/NDP
02-Oct-15	24.4%	17.2%	11.2%	6.0%	Mulcair/NDP
09-Oct-15	23.1%	26.5%	13.1%	13.4%	Mulcair/NDP

9.2.3. Proportion of Negative Attacks Against Harper and CPC

Date of Polls	Leader's Popularity	Total Negative Attacks	Negative Attacks Against Leader	Negative Attacks Against Party	Party Leader/Party
31-Jul-15	31.3%	57.7%	41.5%	16.2%	Harper/CPC
07-Aug-15	31%	51.6%	34.8%	16.7%	Harper/CPC
14-Aug-15	30%	44%	33.3%	10.7%	Harper/CPC
21-Aug-15	28.9%	56.5%	47.0%	9.6%	Harper/CPC
28-Aug-15	28.7%	44.3%	30.4%	13.9%	Harper/CPC
04-Sep-15	28.8%	35.2%	25.9%	9.3%	Harper/CPC
11-Sep-15	29.9%	39.4%	28.2%	11.2%	Harper/CPC
18-Sep-15	29.6%	30.1%	20.6%	9.4%	Harper/CPC
25-Sep-15	30.1%	38.7%	29.2%	9.6%	Harper/CPC
02-Oct-15	32.5%	56.5%	43.1%	13.4%	Harper/CPC
09-Oct-15	28.0%	52.6%	32.9%	19.7%	Harper/CPC