The Consequences of Terror Threat for
Public Preference over Female Leadership

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Abstract. One reason why women have a difficult time attaining higher levels of office is that voters tend towards perceiving men as having traits and issue competencies that are most relevant to executive office. While many scholars have documented the presence of gender trait and belief based stereotypes, we are interested in how these preferences vary across country context and how circumstances (specifically times of threat and non-threat) magnify or mitigate these types of attitudes and how country-level circumstances can change preferences for female leadership. Extant scholarship, in particular in the U.S. context, provides evidence that national security threats can cause individuals to devalue female leaders. We assess the link between exposure to information about terrorist threat and expressed opinions concerning female leadership across country contexts. Using experiments in four advanced developed democracies (France, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States), we find that preferences for female leadership varies significantly across countries, but that few common patterns emerge across threat and non-threat contexts.

Women hold less than a quarter of national legislative seats around the globe; a lower proportion holds positions in the executive ministry; and, still fewer numbers occupy the office of head of state (IPU 2014; UNWomen 2012). Barriers to women entering politics exist at many levels and, when women do run, biases in favor of male leadership can undermine women's chances at the polls.[1] Although it is clear that country-level variations produce substantial differences in preferences for female leadership, we do not yet know what those variations in preferences look like or how county-level contexts might influence aggregate or individual attitudes towards women in political office. Our research first evaluates abstract preferences using data from a set of experiments, imbedded in online surveys delivered to samples designed to approximate the national populations of these countries, conducted in the summer of 2012 in four advanced industrialized democracies: France, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States. We find significant country-level variation in preferences for female leadership, but high overall levels of acceptance of female leadership.

Events in particularly countries also have the potential to influence preferences for women's political leadership, as certain context may cue preferences for stereotypical female or male characteristics (Bauer 2014, 2015; Kunda and Spencer 2003). One line of research argues that inclinations to prefer men in leadership positions can be heightened in times of security threat (Holman, Merolla, and Zechmeister 2011; Lawless 2004). Given the pervasiveness of terrorist threat in the modern world, it is important to understand the extent to which women face additional disadvantages in threatened versus better times. Yet, the limited research on security threats and preferences for female leadership has focused mostly on the U.S. case and only some of it has specifically examined the issue of terrorist threat. We use experimental data, where our treatments

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[1] For example, see the research by Cecilia Mo (Forthcoming) discussed in a recent piece by Nicholas Kristoff in the *New York Times* (http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/12/opinion/nicholas-kristof-she-gets-no-respect.html?_r=0).

consist of a news story with information about either terrorist threat or positive news,[2] to examine whether contexts in which terrorism is made salient amplify tendencies to prefer male political leadership, finding little evidence that experimentally elevating concern about terrorist threat influences preferences for women's leadership across country contexts. In some cases, preferences shift under conditions of terror threat, but in most cases there is no detectable difference in preferences for male versus female leadership in threated versus better times. We supplement these findings by asking respondents to report their attitudes about actual female leaders in their country; again, we find very little evidence that terror threats have a direct, negative effect on evaluations of these leaders.

Our results reaffirm the importance of considering country-specific factors, as they shape the expression of preferences for male versus female leadership generally and under conditions of terrorist threat. These factors may include women's electoral fortunes within the context of a county's history of electing women to office, citizen's attitudes about women in positions of power, and the salience of particular issues. Our results are point to the necessity of testing the application of findings across countries to understand the applicability of those findings. In general, these findings present a positive evidence for the potential of women's political parity.

Existing Perspectives on Preferences for Female Leadership and Security Threat

Research shows persistent biases against women in traditional masculine domains, including political office. Although discrimination against women has declined over the last several decades, scholars demonstrate that this is largely due to women being seen as more competent in traditional female areas, which balance out the negative views of women as unable to handle masculine areas (Lips 2001; Matlin 2011; O'Leary 1977; Eagly and Mladinic 1994).

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[2] In addition, each of the country studies included other threat conditions that we do not examine here. We also have experimental data for additional countries that we do not include in our analysis.

One specific challenges that women seeking or holding public office face is the existence of political gender stereotypes, or assumptions about character, behavior, and competence in political office based on the person's gender.

Research on the application of gender stereotypes in the *general population* clearly establishes the universal – and varying – nature of many gender stereotypes (Eagly & Wood 1999; Eagly et al. 2000; Wood and Eagly 2002). The common gender stereotypes include that women are more nurturing and compassionate, and men are stronger leaders and more dominant. Social structural scholars demonstrate that perceptions of gender characteristics and stereotypes relate, in part, to that group's position in society and are acquired in early gender socialization (Diekman and Eagly 2000; Conway, Pizzamiglio, and Mount 1996; Kite and Whitley 1996; Johannesen-Schmidt and Eagly 2002). Given that gender stereotypes relate to women's position in society, it is unsurprising that the expression of these stereotypes vary across country contexts. Scholars have documented, for example, variance in levels of gender stereotypes across the U.S., Brazil, Chile, Germany, and Spain, connecting that variability to the level of women's equality and political factors in each country (Diekman and Eagly 2000; Diekman et al. 2005; Wilde and Diekman 2005; Garcia-Retamero, Müller, and López-Zafra 2011). In particular, increasing numbers of women in political and social life leads to increasing perceptions of women as holding masculine characteristics (Diekman et al. 2005).

The gender stereotypes held about women in the general population also extends to women seeking and holding political office. Scholars have shown that people routinely use stereotypes in place of more complete information about a candidate's positions, ideology, or competence. Women seeking and holding political office are stereotyped as better able to address women's and children's issues, as more compassionate and kind, and as more liberal (Alexander and Andersen

1993; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993a, 1993b; Burrell 1994; Koch 2000; Dolan 2010; Fridkin and Kenney 2009: Bauer 2013, 2014; Jones and Shephard 2007). On the other hand, people ascribe agentic personality traits to men, seeing them as more assertive, strong, and conservative, as well as being able to handle foreign affairs, crime, and defense (Sanbonmatsu 2002; Dolan 2004; Lawless 2004; Holman, Merolla, and Zechmeister 2011). Research also suggests that individuals have different "baseline" preferences for candidates, grounded in gender stereotypes, and these preferences may change over time as the issue context shift (Sanbonmatsu 2002). Limited research evaluates attitudes concerning female *political* leaders in a cross-country context.[3] Our research begins to fill that gap. Based on this body of knowledge, we believe that views of female political leadership vary across *country* contexts.

Context may also matter in perceptions of female leadership and the application of gender stereotypes. Survey research also finds that, while people often assign stereotypes in the abstract, they do not always rely on them in concrete circumstances (Dolan 2013; Dolan and Lynch 2013; Dolan 2014), and some may even advantage women seeking office (Dolan 2004). Others suggest that gender stereotypes must be activated by context (Bauer 2014; Holman, Merolla, and Zechmeister 2011; 2015). The vast majority of this research focuses on the use and application of gender stereotypes to political candidates in the United States, with very few comparisons across country contexts.

Support for female political leadership may not only vary across country contexts, but across different issue environments (Bauer 2014; Sanbonmatsu 2002; Holman, Merolla, and Zechmeister 2015). These issue environments may advantage or disadvantage female candidates

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[3] While we expect to find similar variations across country context, there is also the possibility that female leadership in many places is too rare or individualized to fit the mold of gender stereotyping about women more generally (Schneider and Bos 2014).

and leaders (Bos and Stapel 2009). For example, the surge in female representation in Congress in the United States in 1992 (the 'Year of the Woman') occurred during a time when concerns about issues on which women are seen as stronger – including corruption and social services – dominated the election (Dolan 1998). One issue environment that may be particularly relevant for leadership is conditions of terrorist threat. Before connecting conditions of terrorist threat to evaluations of female leaders, we first discuss how this context leads to the prioritization of strong leadership more generally.

Conditions of terrorist threat elicit a host of negative emotions in the public, from fear to anger (Huddy et al. 2005; Merolla and Zechmeister 2009a). In order to cope with the negative emotions that arise in these contexts, individuals may adopt a number of different coping mechanisms, some of which relate to how they perceive and evaluate political leaders (Merolla and Zechmeister 2009a). One particular coping mechanism that individuals may adopt is to turn to a strong leader whom one deems capable of resolving the threat. Individuals may even project additional leadership evaluations onto such a leader (Merolla and Zechmeister 2009a; Merolla and Zechmeister 2013a). Strong leadership becomes particularly valued in such a context given the threat to physical security. The public devalues concerns about how the threat is addressed and concentrates instead on identifying a leader who is able to restore feelings of security and calm. While the majority of this research focuses on the United States, scholars have found application across various country contexts (Merolla and Zechmeister 2013b).

Some existing scholarship demonstrates a link exists between conditions of terrorist threat and preferences for strong leadership. First, scholars have shown that President Bush's approval ratings and popularity increased when terrorism was salient, both at the individual (Berinsky 2009) and aggregate level (Nacos 2007; Willer 2004). Second, individuals come to prefer more hawkish

leaders when terrorism is salient (Gadarian 2010) and project leadership characteristics onto existing leaders when terrorism was salient, a finding that applied to both George W. Bush and to Republican (Merolla and Zechmeister 2009a; Merolla and Zechmeister 2013a). Not only do individuals come to perceive certain political figures as stronger leaders in a context of terror threat, they also weight leadership evaluations more heavily in their voting decisions, while the weight of issue stances and partisanship diminishes (Merolla and Zechmeister 2009a; Merolla and Zechmeister 2009b). As a whole these findings provide significant evidence that voters come to prioritize leadership over other qualities in a context of terrorist threat.

How might this tendency to prefer stronger, more hawkish leaders in times of terror threat connect to evaluations of female candidates and leaders? We know that existing gender stereotypes that men are perceived as stronger leaders who are more capable of dealing with issues of national security. In addition, individuals are more likely to apply gender stereotyping information in contexts where the information is relevant for candidate evaluations (Bauer 2014). This leads us to expect that male political leadership increase in times of terrorist crises, and this may particularly be the case for male leaders on the right hand side of the ideological spectrum.

Research demonstrates that preferring masculine traits in times of war or prioritizing issues of terrorism, Iraq, homeland security, and national security increases preferences for male candidates (Falk and Kenski 2006; Kenski and Falk 2004; Lawless 2004). Along these same lines, Holman, Merolla, and Zechmeister (2011) show that experimentally manipulated conditions of terrorist threat can increase the extent to which subjects generally prefer male versus female political leadership. They further demonstrate that Hillary Clinton was the most negatively affected when terrorism was salient, while George W. Bush received a boost in evaluations. Later work demonstrates that individuals apply partisan stereotypes in conditions absent of terror threat, but

apply gender stereotypes when terror threats become salient, which disadvantages a hypothetical Democratic candidate.

There is also a growing body of scholarship that challenges the role that gender stereotypes might play in influencing attitudes towards female candidates and leaders. In particular, work by Dolan and colleagues finds that voters use gender stereotypes in the abstract, but that they play a minimal role in actual voting decisions (Dolan 2010; Dolan and Lynch 2014; Dolan 2014). In addition, Brooks (2014) finds that individuals do not apply stereotypes to women in office because they see them as "leaders, not ladies." Furthermore, Brown, Diekman, and Schneider (2011) find that threats *increase* preferences for female leadership, as women are associated with change and men with continuity. As a result, under some circumstances, the traditional preference for male leadership could be diminished in times of threat and women may actually have an advantage. In short, this emerging body of literature suggests that preference for female leadership may be unaffected or even elevated during times of threat.

It is also unclear whether existing findings about gender stereotypes, terror threats, and women in office from the United States apply in all circumstances. For example, research on gender and candidate evaluations in Turkey finds that while gender influences evaluations of candidate competencies and characteristics, it does not influence vote choice (Matland and Tezcür 2011). Similarly, in Russia, the gender of a candidate influences perceptions of that candidate, but rarely changes vote preference (Avdeyeva and Matland 2014). Therefore, the expectation that male leaders, in general or of certain political backgrounds, will be particularly advantaged in a context of terror threat may not travel across borders.

Advanced Democracies and Gendered Leadership:

We evaluate our core questions by looking at experimental data in four advanced industrialized democracies: France, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States. While each of these countries varies in its electoral systems, history of electing women to office, and status of women in society, there are also clear similarities across the set of countries. To begin, all four countries are classified as democracies, are considered fully free by Freedom House, and are designated as high-income or developed by the World Bank. [4]

These four countries also provide an ideal environment for evaluating preferences for female leadership because they have all had marked improvements in women's economic participation and representation in political office as well as decreases in fertility rates (see Table 1), which are all indicators of the general status of women in society (Wildre and Diekman 2005) and represent factors (reproductive health, employment, and political representation) that the United Nations has designated as key measures of women's empowerment. These countries also allow for an evaluation of the effect of women's political representation on tolerance of women's leadership: while all have similar trends on major indicators of the status of women, there are also key differences, particularly in women's representation in political office. Overall, the consistency in the general status of women in the general population, the political status of the countries, and the level of economic development all us to focus on other factors, such as the presence of women in political office as potentially important variable in influencing preferences for women in political leadership.

Table 1: Status of Women across Counties of Analysis

	France	**Spain**	**United Kingdom**	**United States**
	Percentage of Work Force			

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[4] While additional research should certainly consider the role that variations in economic and political development play in preferences for female leadership and the activation of gender stereotypes, we wish to examine our key questions first in an environment where such factors are stable to establish key baseline information.

2005	45.9	40.9	45.9	46.3
1995	44.8	37.7	44.3	45.4
1990	43.2	34.4	43.3	44.4
1985	41.8	29.9	41.5	43.1
	Fertility Rate			
2010	2	1.4	1.9	1.9
1990	1.8	1.4	1.8	2.1
1970	2.6	2.8	2.4	2.5
	Percentage of Women in Parliaments			
2010	19	37	22	17
2000	11	28	18	14
1990	7	15	6	7
1980	4	7	3	3
	History of Women in Positions of Power			
Head of a Parliamentary Body	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table note: Fertility and workforce data from the United Nations. Fertility rate represents the number of children per woman in the population across all age groups. Percentage of the work force is the country-reported women's share of the labor force. Women's representation (1990, 2000, and 2010) from the Inter-Parliamentary Union; 1980s numbers found individually for each country. Women in parliaments are the percentage of parliamentary seats in a single or lower chamber held by women. Head of parliamentary body includes whether a woman has ever served as the head of any of the national parliamentary bodies in the country.

Each country also has an individual history with issues of national security and terrorism. All of these countries have experienced a mid-to-large scale terror attack. Major attacks in the countries of interest include the 2004 Madrid train bombings in Spain, the World Trade Center attacks in 2001 in the United States, the 2005 London Bombings in the U.K., and the Toulouse and Montauban shootings in France.[5] It is within this context – four developed, democratic, countries with relatively high levels of economic and political gender parity and significant

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[5] Given that our research was fielded in the summer of 2012, we restrict our discussion to major incidents prior to the point. Subsequent attacks, including the attack on a newspaper office in Paris and on the Boston Marathon in the United States suggest that our discussion remains relevant as terrorism and national security continues to produce concern among citizens and is politically important.

national security challenges – that we evaluate the overall preferences for women's leadership and how these preferences change in contexts of national security threat.

Experimental Design and Method

To assess the causal relationship between exposure to information about terrorist threat and preferences for female leadership, we employ survey experiment in which the treatment is delivered in the form of a news story. Subjects in the study are randomly assigned to either a control condition or a treatment group to assess baseline preferences and changes based on treatments, including a "good times" condition, which presented respondents with positive news and two terrorist threat conditions, which were identical except that one of these news stories ended with a reminder of core democratic values.[6] The study included other countries and conditions that are not assessed in this paper, but available in the project database.

Our internet-based study was fielded in the summer of 2012 to samples that were drawn to approximate the national adult population in each of four countries: France, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The study was conducted by IPSOS International through their proprietary opt-in panels in each of these countries. Respondents were invited to participate in the study according to quotas set to match census data for each country. Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for each of the samples.

Table 2. Selected Experiment Sample Descriptive Statistics

	Obs.	Mean Age	Percent Female	Mean Education (years)	Working Fulltime (%)
France	943	44	54	16	47
Spain	1151	43	51	16	44
U.K.	992	37	49	14	50
U.S.	1145	45	51	14	41

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[6] The initial design of the split design of the terrorist threat treatment is based on alternative work on the effect of these treatments on democratic values more generally. We are agnostic as to the effect of the democratic reminder on preferences for female leadership, so we test these treatments separately.

Upon responding to an invitation to participate in the study, participants were first consented into the research project. The study took the form of an online survey using Qualtrics platform. Pre-treatment, all respondents were asked a set of questions about their basic demographic and socioeconomic characteristics and political predispositions. The program then randomly assigned participants into the control group or one of the conditions. The treatments took the form of short (~400-500 words) news stories with a similar structure. The treatments also shared a majority of the text, with exceptions of country specific information across the countries. The material for the stories was drawn from actual reports, but edited together into a mock news story; this approach has been used frequently in previous research (Merolla and Zechmesiter 2009; Holman, Merolla and Zechmeister 2011). Additional details and full text examples of the treatments are available in the appendix.

The first treatment group received a "good times" news story, which was designed to increase the salience of positive information and reduce the likelihood that individuals would be thinking about terrorist threat when responding to the questions that followed. The treatment began with a statement that the country is "headed toward a time of increased well-being." It referred to positive trends in areas such as education, the environment, and health in the country and the world; the introduction concluded with a reference to a recent survey where a "majority" of citizens of that country reported high levels of satisfaction. The body of the treatment focused on positive information about education, the environment, and general health and welfare. The final paragraph read discussed the county's elevated levels of happiness as an indicator of more general trends globally towards increased happiness and well-being.

In terror threat treatment groups, participants received one of two versions of an international terrorist threat story. The two treatments were equivalent except that one of the treatments (terrorist threat with democratic reminders) ended with information that all parties in the political system urged citizens "to protect democracy" by adhering to "core democratic values, such as liberty and tolerance, and respect for fundamental democratic practices, such as free and fair elections and an independent judiciary." Beyond this reminder, the two terrorist threat treatments are identical within countries and very similar across countries,.

In both treatments, the first paragraph referenced warnings that the country is "on the brink of experiencing a major terrorist attack", and placed this in the context of increased vulnerability to terrorism around the world. The first paragraph ended with a reference to public opinion, as a "majority" of citizens of that country "are somewhat or very worried about the possibility of a violent terrorist attack." The body of the treatments focused on increased danger posed by terrorism, including work by Al Qaeda to mount coordinated, lethal attacks on citizens in various public areas. The article then concluded with statement by a public official in the country about the lethal intentions of terrorists.

All subjects were presented with a set of questions concerning their emotional state (using a reduced version of the PANAS battery; see Watson, Clark, and Tellegan 1988); the control group received this questions after the initial demographic questions, while the treatment group received these questions following the treatment. All respondents were also asked a series of question batteries and individual questions related to preferences over democratic politics, including institutions and values. The study included other countries and conditions that are not assessed in this paper, but are available in the project database.

Included in the questions were two sets of manipulation checks, including a set of questions focused on information about the news stories to assess whether individuals read and retained information about the news stories. We allowed respondents to return to the article if needed before responding. As one would expect, compliance is imperfect. In addition, the mean value on an additive information measure (created based on correct vs. incorrect responses to questions) is higher in the threat conditions compared to the good times condition (Merolla and Zechmeister 2013b). Yet, despite these minor differences and imperfect compliance, we see that people tended to pay at least some attention to the news stories. Looking across the four countries at an additive scale ranging from 0 to 1 to 2 (correct answers), the mean for each condition ranges from a low of 1.32 in the case of the good times condition in Spain to a high of 1.79 in the case of the terror threat conditions in the U.S.

We also wanted to assess the extent to which the terror threat conditions increase negative emotions and decrease positive emotions relative to the control group and good times conditions. Following the treatments (or not in the case of the control condition) respondents were presented with a series of questions asking individuals the extent that they feel a range of emotions (Watson, Clark, and Tellegan 1988; Marcus, MacKuen, and Neuman 2011). The treatments have expected effects across countries: decreasing positive emotions and increasing negative emotions (in the case of Spain, anger and not fear) relative to the good times condition and/or control groups.

Analyses and Results

To address whether preferences for female leadership vary across county contexts and, within those, across threat versus non-threat contexts, we assess responses to four questions to evaluate various preferences for female leadership. The first taps *general preferences* for male versus female leadership. The second narrows the focus to *willingness to support a female head of*

state. The third refines the focus once again, examining *preferences for hypothetical female (versus) male candidates* from the left versus the right parties running for office. The final set of questions examine feeling thermometers of prominent female leaders in each country, which taps *actual preferences* for female leaders in each country.

We begin our analysis with an evaluation of an abstract preference for male or female leadership generally. Respondents were asked: "Some people think that men make better political leaders than women, while others think women make better political leaders than men. What do you think?" Some scholars have used this measure as a proxy for gender stereotypes (Sanbonmatsu and Dolan 2009; Sanbonmatsu 2002), while others use it as a general evaluation measure (Eagly and Karau 2002; Eagly and Mladinic 1994). Given the scholarly consensus that gender stereotypes are dynamic and vary based on the status of women in society, we expect variation across countries in preferences for male versus female leaders. We assess this expectation by focusing on the control group, which was not exposed to any treatment article and thus should be indicative of the general population's attitudes.

The *Preference for Female Leadership* measure is coded so that a preference for men is coded as one, "no difference" coded as two, and a preference for women coded as three; thus, higher average values are associated with an interest in female leadership. Table 3 shows the means on this variable per country, as well as the percentage giving each response across the four countries in the study, only for the control group. We find differences in baseline preferences for female leadership across countries. Individuals in the U.S. and U.K. exhibit lower levels of preference for female leadership than individuals in Spain and France and these differences are statistically meaningful (F(3, 4468) = 26.71, p< 0.00). While the differences are not very large substantively, we see starker differences when we look at the distribution of the responses. The

modal response across all countries is that there is no difference between men and women; however, 16% of those in the U.S. and 14% of those in the U.K. say that they think men make better leaders, compared to only 4% and 5% in Spain and France, respectively. While the vast majority of individuals see no difference between men and women across all these countries, we do find significant differences between baseline preferences. These results provide additional support for previous research that finds gender stereotypes are dynamic across cultural context (Diekman and Eagly 2000; Diekman et al. 2005).

Table 3. Preference for Female (versus Male) Leadership, across Countries (Control)

Country	Average	Men are better	No Difference	Women are better
United States	1.95	16%	73%	11%
United Kingdom	1.95	14%	77%	9%
Spain	2.15	4%	77%	19%
France	2.06	5%	84%	11%

Note: Question asked: Some people think that men make better political leaders than women, while others think women make better political leaders than men. What do you think?" Responses were coded so that 1 = preference for men, 2 = no difference, 3 = women.

We next test whether these preferences for female leadership vary across threat conditions. If we treat this measure as a general evaluation, extant scholarship points in two different directions: on the one hand, some argue and find evidence that women are disadvantaged in times of security threat and on the other hand some have found that individuals either do not apply stereotypes in actual political contexts, or may even come to prefer female leadership in times of threat (see our earlier discussion). Furthermore, if we consider this measure as a proxy for gender stereotypes, existing research suggests that overall belief in stereotypes are sticky and resistant to change (Vogel et al 2003; Schneider and Bos 2014), and we should therefore see little difference across experimental conditions.[7] Given these different possibilities, we begin without *a priori*

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[7] There is evidence, however, that while stereotypes themselves are sticky, their application is not (Bauer 2014; Kunda and Spencer 2003). As such, we might expect that levels of gender stereotypes remain consistent across

expectations as to whether we will find variation in preferences for male and female political leaders in general across experimental conditions.

Indeed, we see little evidence that attitudes towards female leadership are influenced directly by threat contexts. Table 4 presents the average score on the *Preference for Female Leadership* measure across our control, good times, terror threat (no reminder), and terror threat (reminder of democratic values) conditions. While differences continue to be significant across *countries* within each condition, there is little variation across *threat contexts.* More specifically, the difference in leadership preference is significant across countries for each experimental condition (see significance values in the bottom row in table) and in the same ways observed among those in the control group from the prior table. Meanwhile, we find no significant differences in preference for female leadership across experimental conditions in the U.S., Spain, or France (see last column in table). We only find one country with a significant difference in preference for female leadership across conditions and that is the U.K. (significance values available in the far right column of the table). The findings are such that, on average in the U.K., respondents appear to prefer female leadership *more* in the terror threat (no reminder) context, mean=2.08, compared to the other conditions. This result is consistent with the argument and findings of Brown, Diekman and Schneider (2011), which suggest that in some cases individuals may prefer female leadership in times of threat.

Table 4. Preference for Female Leadership across Experimental Conditions

	Control	Good times	Terror threat - no reminder	Terror threat – reminder	ANOVA across conditions
United States	1.95	1.95	1.91	1.98	0.6746
United Kingdom	1.95	1.95	2.08	1.96	0.0349
Spain	2.15	2.15	2.13	2.13	0.9188

threat conditions, but the effect of these stereotypes on evaluations of leaders or vote patterns increases when contexts make the stereotype more useful.

France	2.06	2.06	2.09	2.06	0.4608
ANOVA	0.0000	0.0000	0.0010	0.0003	

Note: Question asked: Some people think that men make better political leaders than women, while others think women make better political leaders than men. What do you think?" Responses were coded so that 1 = preference for men, 2 = no difference, 3 = women.

We next analyze differences across countries and contexts in support for a female for the highest national executive position. Respondents were asked whether they would be willing to support a qualified female president or prime minister (depending on the given country). The question did not reference a party or a particular candidate. We coded the variable such that a value of one means respondents would be willing to support a female for the office. In general, given past findings, we would expect support for a qualified female for the highest executive position to be fairly high in these major industrialized democracies, though support should vary across countries and, possibly, across contexts of threat and non-threat.

In Table 5, we present willingness to *Support a Female Executive* across countries and across conditions. Looking first at the control condition, we see high levels of support for a female executive across the countries, as expected. More than 90% of respondents in all of the countries indicate that they would support a female for president or prime minister, though there is some significant variation. In particular, Spain registers higher support, 99%, compared to the other countries, which hover between 91% and 92%, and these differences are statistically significant. The high levels of support are not surprising, especially given research on social desirability bias and support for female leaders. For example, Streb et al. (2008) find that individuals are more likely to report an unwillingness to support a female for president in the U.S. using a list experiment, where individuals do not directly have to report that they would not support a female for president.

Once again, we also assess the responses across conditions. In this case, we do not observe any significant differences in support for a female executive across experimental conditions. In short, regardless of country context, exposure to a condition of terrorist threat has no significant effect on expressed preferences for female leadership. This result could be due to a ceiling effect given very high proportions of individuals expressing support for female leadership, but may also reflect a resistance to shifting attitudes toward female leaders across conditions of security threat and non-threat (or control).

Table 5. Willingness to Support a Female Executive

	Control	Good times	Terror threat - no reminder	Terror threat – reminder	ANOVA
United States	92%	92%	94%	94%	0.5100
United Kingdom	92%	92%	91%	92%	0.5432
Spain	99%	99%	98%	99%	0.4300
France	91%	91%	93%	92%	0.7948
ANOVA	0.0013	0.0564	0.0115	0.0037	

Table Note: Percentage of respondents indicating yes to the question "Would you support a female for the office of [Head of State]?"

Our third analysis examines the experimental manipulation of gender cues in the context of a hypothetical election between the most left and most right party in each country.[8] We narrow our focus to parties on the left and right as the comparison should be most stark as parties on the right may be perceived as stronger on security issues (Merolla and Zechmeister 2009a), especially compared to parties on the left. Respondents were asked the following question in which we randomized the gender for each party: "Suppose a [Randomize: male/female] party candidate is running against a [Randomize: male/female] party candidate for the office of president/prime

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[8] We also had match up questions between the center parties and those on the left and right, but focus here on this comparison. Results for the center parties are available upon request. The parties were as follows in each country: France (left: Socialist Party right: National Front); Spain (left: United Left; right: Popular Party); United Kingdom (left: Labour; right: Conservatives); and, U.S. (left: Democrats; right: Republicans).

minister. Assuming these were your only two options, which party would you be more likely to support in the election?" The goal of the experimental design was to minimize social desirability biases and increase external validity, in part by providing individuals with partisanship as another dimension to help guide their choice.

Our dependent variable is the percentage of the respondents who indicate that they would vote for the candidate on the right. Existing literature in the U.S. context supports an expectation that the left female candidate could be most disadvantaged in a context of terror threat (Merolla and Zechmeister 2009a), while the right male candidate may be most advantaged, given the intersection of gender and party stereotypes (Holman, Merolla and Zechmeister 2011). However, work on gender and party stereotypes is not as well established in other countries nor across time in the U.S. case, so it is not clear if these same relationships will hold. For example, while scholars have established the connection of the Democratic Party with feminine stereotypes and the Republican Party with masculine stereotypes in the United States (Winter 2010) and the United Kingdom (Childs 2005; Campbell and Lovenduski 2005), this connection is much more tenuous in France and Spain.[9]

Table 6 shows the reported vote intention for the candidate on the right across countries and experimental conditions.[10] There are clear variations in preferences for candidates on the right and the left, as expected, across country contexts in the control condition (column I). Interesting gendered patterns of preference also emerge; for example, in France and Spain, voters prefer the male right candidate (row B) to the female right candidate (row A) by nearly 10 points, while

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[9] For example, the socialists banded together with parties from the center and the right in France to promote gender quotas (Htun 2004).

[10] Rows and columns are numbered (columns) and letter (rows) to assist with discussion.

voters in the UK prefer the female right candidate to the male right candidate by more than 15 points.

Table 6. Votes for the Right Candidate in Candidate Matchups across Countries

Row ↓ Column →		I	II	III	IV	ANOVA
	United States					
		Control	Terror NR	Terror R	GT	
A	Female v. Female – Left v. Right	60%	49%	60%	56%	0.6844
B	Female v. Male – Left v. Right	56%	56%	59%	60%	0.9753
C	Male v. Female – Left v. Right	62%	59%	57%	69%	0.6466
D	Male v. Male – Left v. Right	55%	40%	58%	52%	0.2461
	ANOVA	0.8814	0.1255	0.5960	0.0246	
	United Kingdom					
		Control	Terror NR	Terror R	GT	
A	Female v. Female – Left v. Right	48%	50%	61%	45%	0.4153
B	Female v. Male – Left v. Right	31%	55%	46%	50%	0.1046
C	Male v. Female – Left v. Right	48%	45%	59%	45%	0.4513
D	Male v. Male – Left v. Right	36%	55%	37%	53%	0.0900
	ANOVA	0.2112	0.6945	0.0487	0.8264	
	Spain					
		Control	Terror NR	Terror R	GT	
A	Female v. Female – Left v. Right	32%	37%	45%	47%	0.1306
B	Female v. Male – Left v. Right	42%	51%	50%	42%	0.4379
C	Male v. Female – Left v. Right	45%	66%	45%	53%	0.0419
D	Male v. Male – Left v. Right	34%	35%	53%	33%	0.9150
	ANOVA	0.4360	0.0044	0.2753	0.208	
	France					
		Control	Terror NR	Terror R	GT	
A	Female v. Female – Left v. Right	27%	31%	35%	35%	0.8196
B	Female v. Male – Left v. Right	38%	30%	17%	38%	0.0813

C	Male v. Female – Left v. Right	39%	21%	26%	27%	0.2042
D	Male v. Male – Left v. Right	40%	29%	24%	31%	0.3138
	ANOVA	0.5300	0.6399	0.2873	0.679	

Note: Question asked: "Suppose a [female/male] very left candidate is running against a [female/male] right candidate for the office of Prime Minister. Assuming these were your only two options, which party would you be more likely to support in the election?" Hypothetical match-up is listed across the top of the table. Cells contain the percentage of respondents who indicated they would prefer the *candidate on the right*.

Evaluating differences across conditions also reveals interesting – and not necessarily expected – patterns. Looking first at the United States, we see very little movement in vote preference across the treatment conditions, particularly in the matchups between male and female candidates. We do see that respondents decrease their support of the candidate on the right in male vs. male and female vs. female matchups when cued with the terror threat (no reminder), but there are no clear effects for the gender of the candidate across these changes (p=.13). Some of the individual changes approach statistical significance; for example, the female-right candidate (versus the male-left candidate) in the terror no reminder condition received a majority vote (59%), while the male-right candidate versus the male left candidate does not (40%; p=.11).

In the United Kingdom, we see significant differences within the female left v. male right match-up across experimental conditions. For example, the male right candidate receives only 31% of the vote in the control group, but receives a majority, 55%, in the terror threat no reminder condition (p=.06). We see a similar pattern of the male right candidate being advantaged in a context of terror threat relative to the male candidate on the left. However, the female candidate on the right does not get the same type of boost from a condition of terror threat since there are no significant differences across these contexts when she faces a female or male on the left. The results from the UK, then, seem more supportive of shifts in support for female leaders in contexts of threat, though they suggest less of a decrease in support for a leftist female and more of a lack

of a boost for a rightist female. Thus, respondents in the UK react to the treatments and mock elections in the manner expected from previous research and theories.

The results in Spain are a bit puzzling to us. We see a significant increase in support for the female candidate on the right when she faces a male on the left in a context of terror threat (no reminder), 66%, compared to the control group, 45%. However, her advantage relative to a female on the left is weaker and not quite significant ($p=.14$) in looking at conditions of threat and non-threat. Furthermore, the male candidate on the right does not get any boost from a context of threat compared to non-threat when facing a female or male on the left. The only other significant finding to emerge within this context is within the terror no-reminder context across candidate match-ups. The candidates on the right receive a majority of the vote when they face the opposite gender, but do not get a majority when they face the same gender. It makes sense that support might be lower for the right candidates once gender is held constant, since individuals may then just be using party as a cue, but it is more surprising that we find similar support for candidates on the right when they face candidates of the opposite gender. Terror threats with a reminder of democratic values and good times see very even votes for the right candidate across matchups.

In France, the male right candidate does marginally better than the female right candidate (when facing a female opponent) in the control condition (Column I, A-B), but the female right candidate is not similarly disadvantaged when facing a male opponent. The introduction of the terror threat context (without reminders of democratic values) leads to general reductions in support for the right candidate across the matchups, with the female right candidate (male opponent, Column II, row C) receiving the lowest level of support. The change in the support in the control (39%) as compared to the terror no reminder (21%) nears statistically significance ($p=.07$). The terror threat with reminders condition also produces changes, with the right-male

candidate (female opponent, Column III, row B) receiving the lowest level of support, a decline that is statistically different from the level of support he received in the three other conditions.

Our fourth (and final) sets of analyses examine whether the introduction of national security threat concerns influences preferences for actual female leaders in each country. In this examination, we look at a variety of feeling thermometers, which are ratings of how warm or cold a respondent feels toward a political figure on a 0 to 100 scale. We selected a set of female leaders in an attempt to get a diverse set of female leaders from a variety of party backgrounds across the countries. The names, parties, and political backgrounds of female leaders we assess are available in Table 7. As is clear from Table 7, we ask about women with a wide-ranging set of backgrounds from presidential candidates to political party founders to ministers of government.

Table 7: Female Leaders, Party, and Positions

Leader	Party	Position
	United States	
Hillary Rodham Clinton	Democrat	Secretary of State, Former First Lady
Nancy Pelosi	Democrat	Former Speaker of the House
Condoleezza	Republican	Former Secretary of State, National Security Advisor
Sarah Palin	Republican	Former Nominee for Vice Presidency
	United Kingdom	
Baroness Warsi	Conservative	Co-Chair of the Party, Former Minister
Theresa May	Conservative	Home Secretary
Harriet Harman	Labour	Deputy Leader for the Labour Party
	Spain	
Carme Chacón	Socialist	Former Minister of Defense
Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría	The People's Party	Deputy Prime Minister
Ana Botella	The People's Party	Mayor of Madrid
Diez	*Union, Progress and Democracy*	Founder of Unión Progreso y Democracia
	France	
Marine Le Pen	National Front	President of the National Front

Table note: Position is the office the leader held at the time of the experiment. Thus, while Hillary Clinton is no longer the Secretary of State, she held this position in the Summer of 2012.

We would expect that liberal women without significant foreign policy backgrounds would be most harmed by the introduction of a terrorist treatment from research on women in the United States (Holman, Merolla, and Zechmeister 2011), but it is unclear whether these gender and partisanship expectations apply across country contexts. In addition, we generally expect that women who have national security experience (such as Secretary of State or Minister of Defense) will be more liked or at least protected from negative assessments during times of terror threat.

In general, consistent with our findings on the abstract measures, we find little evidence that female leaders are published during times of terror threat. Table 8 presents average feeling thermometer scores towards the female leaders across the control group and the terror (no reminder), terror (reminder of democratic norms) and good times treatments. In the United States, there is no evidence that Clinton, Rice, or Palin are negatively assessed during the terrorist threat treatments. Nancy Pelosi's ratings dip *slightly* in the terror threat treatments, as compared to the good times and control groups, but the difference is insignificant.

Consistent with the hypothetical left-right voting patterns, women in the United Kingdom appear to be preferred during times of terror threat; all three female leaders receive elevated evaluations in the terror threat (no reminder) condition, with a statistically significant difference. This suggests that female leaders in the United Kingdom are not seen as weak on national security, nor do respondents view them as less favorable in times of crisis.

In Spain and France, the only significant difference across the treatments is that respondents viewed Botella, the mayor of Madrid, more positively after the terror threat treatment. This may be due to the fact that Botella is associated with the response to the Madrid train bombings and is thus viewed as capable during times of terror threat. Other than this singular

change, general warmth towards Le Pen in France or the other female political leaders in Spain is not influenced by the terror threat treatments.

Table 8: Feeling Thermometers towards Female Leaders across Treatments

	Control	Terror NR	Terror R	Good Times	ANOVA
	United States				
Clinton	59	56	58	59	0.73
Pelosi	44	40	40	44	0.33
Rice	57	59	58	57	0.83
Palin	41	43	41	41	0.85
	United Kingdom				
Warsi	36	44	38	38	0.04
May	36	45	41	42	0.01
Harman	39	48	41	43	0.01
	France				
Le Pen	39	34	33	39	0.11
	Spain				
Chacon	32	31	30	31	0.83
Santamaria	28	32	28	29	0.46
Botella	21	27	21	21	0.05
Diez	38	42	40	37	0.13

Overall, the feeling thermometer results suggest that consistent with our previous results, female leaders are not automatically disadvantaged during times of terrorist threat. Second, there is some evidence that the background of particular leaders, such as Botella, can advantage women in times of terrorist threat. Third, country-level variations are again clear, with evaluations of female leaders in the United Kingdom increasing during times of terror threat.

Conclusion

We have presented here an evaluation of how countries and threat context influence assessments of female leaders and preferences for female leadership. The results are mixed. On one hand, we find very clear evidence that preference for female leadership and the willingness to vote for women varies significantly across country contexts. On the other hand, however, we find

little evidence that there are clear patterns of decreased preferences for women in elected office in times of terror threat. Indeed, we find in some cases, the terror treatment increases support for female leadership. We also find that the country with the highest level of women's representation (Spain) also has the highest levels of preferences for women's representation, suggesting that women's representation itself breeds tolerance for women's representation.

The research presented here is a preliminary evaluation of our research questions. Moving forward, additional research could evaluate whether the effects we find are homogenous across sub-groups as well as in developed versus developing countries. In particular, an examination of whether liberal and conservative respondents are equally influenced by the treatments would provide insight into where and how women can (and cannot) succeed electorally in times of treat. Other research suggests that low-information voters are particularly given to using gendered information in candidate assessments (Bauer 2015; Jones and Shephard 2007; Fulton and Ondercin 2012; 2015). Future analysis could focus on the commonalities and differences across countries in the populations that are most or least willing to support female leadership, as well as those most likely to respond to crises.

A growing body of literature also demonstrates that gender stereotypes, while sticky, are not evenly applied across all circumstances. Previous research also suggests that times of threat may activate or deactivate the application of gender stereotypes. Future investigations might evaluate whether stereotype activation occurs in a uniform manner across country contexts as well as whether specific types of crises activate gender stereotypes..

Our results provide additional evidence for the need to be cautious in generalizing from a set of findings from the United States to public opinion over female leadership in other time periods/contexts in the U.S. and with respect to other countries. Indeed, our results demonstrate

that many of ideas about preferences for gendered leadership, based on past studies of the U.S. case, simply do not apply in other contexts, at least with respect to expressed preferences

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Appendix: Example Treatments and Questions

Treatments:

Terrorist Threat – No Reminder

TT1   Fears of Terrorist Attacks in the United States

Experts are warning that the United States is on the brink of experiencing a major terrorist attack. According to multiple reports, intercepted evidence points to the existence of a large-scale plan by Al Qaeda and its affiliates to carry out a lethal series of bombings across multiple countries. An unfortunate reality of terrorism today is that all countries are vulnerable, including the U.S. According to a recent survey by the Latin American Public Opinion Project, the majority of Americans are somewhat or very worried about the possibility of a violent terrorist attack.

   Terrorist plots and attacks have grown in sophistication and in lethality over the last decade. Deadly attacks have been carried out in countries around the globe, leaving citizens around the world feeling increasingly insecure. Al Qaeda is reported to have been especially pleased with the 2008 attack in Mumbai, India; in that attack, a small group of well-armed terrorists killed nearly 200 men, women, and children.

   Al Qaeda has been intent on implementing similar well-coordinated and lethal attacks as a demonstration of its strength. The strategy of infiltrating a well-populated civilian area with guns and bombs is considered easy to execute and notoriously difficult to prevent. While Al Qaeda continues to set its sights on tourist areas, terrorists are also committed to attacks on public transportation systems, shopping centers, and sporting events.

   Interpol cites the possibility of terrorists launching attacks with biological or chemical weapons as a "particularly urgent concern." The most likely form of a chemical attack is ricin, a white, powdery toxin that is so deadly that just a speck can kill if it is inhaled or reaches the bloodstream. Recent intelligence reports indicate that Al Qaeda's affiliate in Yemen has been working with large quantities of castor beans, the plant material required to make ricin.

   Speaking off the record, one former security analyst offered this pessimistic conclusion: "Terrorists still have innocent people in their sights and the will to murder them. They are always working on the next attack, refining their methods." In light of recent terrorist chatter and evidence in security reports, it appears it is no longer a question of whether there will

be a successful attack on U.S. soil but, rather, when, how many, and with what types of deadly consequences.

   With concern about the possibility of a large scale terrorist attack on the rise, security experts in the United States are asking individuals to be more vigilant than ever.

❍ Continue (1)

MCT1_TTa According to the report, are more than half or less than half of citizens in the U.S. worried about the threat of terrorism?

❍ More than half (1)
❍ Less than half (2)
❍ Return to the article (3)

Terror Threat – Reminder of Democratic Values

TTP1   Fears of Terrorist Attacks in the United States

   Experts are warning that the United States is on the brink of experiencing a major terrorist attack. According to multiple reports, intercepted evidence points to the existence of a large-scale plan by Al Qaeda and its affiliates to carry out a lethal series of bombings across multiple countries. An unfortunate reality of terrorism today is that all countries are vulnerable, including the U.S. According to a recent survey by the Latin American Public Opinion Project, the majority of Americans are somewhat or very worried about the possibility of a violent terrorist attack.

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With concern about the possibility of a large-scale terrorist attack on the rise, security experts in the U.S. are asking individuals to be more vigilant than ever. At the same time, leaders from all sides of the political system issued a statement yesterday extolling individuals to protect democracy not only through vigilance, but also through "the practice of core democratic values, such as liberty and tolerance, and respect for fundamental democratic practices, such as free and fair elections and an independent judiciary."

○ Continue (1)

MCT1_TTPa According to the report, are more than half or less than half of citizens in the U.S. worried about the threat of terrorism?

○ More than half (1)
○ Less than half (2)
○ Return to the article (3)

Good Times Treatment:

GT_I We would now like to ask you to read a short news story. Please read the news story carefully. You will be asked questions after you have finished reading the story. Please click here to continue to the news story.

GT1 Multiple Indicators Paint a Positive Portrait

Experts are indicating that the United States is headed toward a time of increased well-being. According to multiple reports, advances in education, the environment, and health are laying the groundwork for a promising future. These advances are not only affecting the U.S., but are part of a global trend. According to a recent World Values Survey, a majority of Americans report moderate to high levels of life satisfaction.

Studies indicate considerable improvements in education around the globe. According to a study by UNESCO, from 1999 to 2008, an additional 52 million children enrolled in primary school. Similar increases have occurred with respect to secondary education. There have also

been increases in the adult literacy rate over time from 75% in 1990 to 82% in 2005. In the United States, education at all levels has improved over the last decade.

The world is also making important strides on the environment. According to the World Bank, global air quality has shown marked improvement over the past decade, which experts attribute to changes in the types of power used by consumers, better quality vehicles on the road, and greater awareness of the impacts of air pollution on public health.

There has also been a dramatic increase in the development and use of renewable energy. In 2011, UN Under-Secretary General Achim Steiner remarked: "Renewable energies are expanding both in terms of investment, projects and geographical spread. In doing so, they are making an increasing contribution to combating climate change, countering energy poverty and energy insecurity." These improvements to air quality and investment in renewable energy are also occurring within the U.S.

Advances are also reflected in improvements to general health and welfare. According to UNESCO, early childhood welfare is improving around the world. Mortality among children under 5 fell from 12.5 million in 1990 to 8.8 million in 2008. Officials note that healthier lifestyles are decreasing health problems for many people such that both men and women are living longer lives than ever before. Advances in medicine have also translated into significant strides in combating diseases and an increase in immunizations is leading to the eradication of infectious diseases such as polio, malaria, and measles.

In global surveys of happiness, most countries surveyed have experienced an increase in happiness over time. High levels of life satisfaction in the U.S. and around the globe make sense when viewed from the perspective of these and other indicators of well-being.

❍ Continue (1)

MCN1a According to the report, are more than half or less than half of citizens in the U.S. either moderately or highly satisfied with their lives?

❍ More than half (1)
❍ Less than half (2)
❍ Return to the article (3)

Key Questions:

GEN1 Would you support a qualified female for the office of President?

❍ Yes (1)
❍ No (2)

GEN2 Some people think that men make better political leaders than women, while others think women make better political leaders than men. What do you think?

❍ Men make better political leaders (1)
❍ Women make better political leaders (2)
❍ There is no difference (3)

GEN3a Suppose a male Democrat is running against a female Republican for president. Assuming these were your only two options, which party would you be more likely to support in the election?

❍ Democratic (1)
❍ Republican (2)

GEN3b Suppose a female Democrat is running against a male Republican for president. Assuming these were your only two options, which party would you be more likely to support in the election?

❍ Democratic (1)
❍ Republican (2)

GEN3c Suppose a female Democrat is running against a female Republican for president. Assuming these were your only two options, which party would you be more likely to support in the election?

❍ Democratic (1)
❍ Republican (2)

GEN3d Suppose a male Democrat is running against a male Republican for president. Assuming these were your only two options, which party would you be more likely to support in the election?

○ Democratic (1)
○ Republican (2)

GEN8 In general, do you think men or women in elected office are better at handling foreign affairs?

○ Men (1)
○ Women (2)
○ No Difference (3)

FT_I We would now like you to rate some groups and individuals on something called a feeling thermometer.　Rating someone from 51 to 100 means you feel favorable and warm toward the person.　Rating someone from 0 to 49 means you feel unfavorable and cool toward the person.　Rating someone at 50 means that you feel neither warm nor cold toward the person. If you do not recognize the group or individual, please indicate that with the option provided.

FT3c How would you rate...?

_____ Hillary Clinton (1)

FT3d How would you rate...?

_____ Nancy Pelosi (1)

FT3e How would you rate...?

_____ Condoleeza Rice (1)

FT3f How would you rate...?

_____ Sarah Palin (1)