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THE DOVE'S ADVANTAGE: IMPACT OF GENDER AND CONFLICT
ON EXECUTIVE APPROVAL

by

Micala H. Gillespie

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Political Science

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ABSTRACT

The Dove's Advantage: Impact of Gender and Conflict on Executive Approval

by

Micala H. Gillespie, Master of Science

Utah State University, 2020

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Department: Political Science

Do citizens evaluate female vs. male leaders' foreign policy decisions differently? The number of countries that have had female leaders continues to expand, but little is known about how domestic audiences reward or punish female (relative to male) leaders for foreign policy choices. This study examines how the gender of a national leader conditions the relationship between their hawkish/dovish ideology and public approval for rapprochement policies. Experimental evidence establishes that voters approve more of hawkish leaders that extend the olive branch to adversary nations than of dovish leaders who do so. Drawing on the extant literature, I develop and test expectations about the effect of gender on public approval against a sample of 128 leaders from 31 countries in 1975–2018. I find that female national leaders (especially those of right-leaning ideology) tend to be penalized relative to men: all else equal, women receive lower domestic approval than men. Interestingly, the public opinion data reveal that neither male nor female leaders experience the hawk's advantage for deviating from prior aggressive policy positions. Instead, all leaders across all ideologies receive more support as they

exhibit more compromising foreign policy behaviors. However, conflict outcomes, unlike ideology, do not statistically significantly moderate public support of executives.

(61 pages)

PUBLIC ABSTRACT

The Dove's Advantage: Impact of Gender and Conflict
on Executive Approval

Micala H. Gillespie

Do citizens evaluate female vs. male leaders' foreign policy decisions differently? The number of countries that have had female leaders continues to expand, but little is known about how domestic audiences reward or punish female (relative to male) leaders for foreign policy choices. This study examines how the gender of a national leader conditions the relationship between their hawkish/dovish ideology and public approval for rapprochement policies in militarized interstate conflicts. Results from time-series cross-sectional data using multiple regression models with fixed effects from 31 countries and 127 leaders show that public approval tends to be lower for women leaders and that right-of-center women are particularly prone to public disapproval if they concede in international crises.

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I gratefully acknowledge my parents, friends, and graduate cohort for their constant support and comic relief. When I think back to my years in graduate school, it will be the encouraging phone calls and their enduring belief in me that I remember most.

Sincerely,

Micala Gillespie

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INTRODUCTION

Do citizens evaluate female vs. male leaders' foreign policy decisions differently? As women often face a 'double bind' wherein "they experience disapproval for more masculine behaviors, such as asserting clear-cut authority over others, as well as for their more feminine behaviors, such as being especially supportive of others" (Eagly, 2007), women in national leadership positions may be limited in their ability to navigate foreign policy well if they cannot anticipate how domestic audiences will receive their actions. On the one hand, if women are more likely to be supported in pursuing peace than men, then there may be more room for reconciliation between adversarial nations when a woman is elected to the executive office. This may represent a reason to elect females more frequently and may light the way for more female leadership in other arenas. On the other hand, if women are only supported by voters when initiating or escalating a conflict, or when acting outside of 'soft' or feminine gender stereotypes, then women leader may select more hostile foreign policy outcomes, to the detriment of international peace. As a state's decision to work towards compromise with another country or go to war with them is one of the most consequential, the uncertainty around the way gender and public opinion interact to create incentives and penalties for leaders during conflict is of great concern.

This thesis advances our understanding of how female national leaders are evaluated relative to their male counterparts by testing whether the gender of the national leader interacts with their 1) their ideology to influence domestic public approval and 2) their conflict outcomes to impact public approval. Using the theoretical insights from public opinion literature on "out of character" policy, policy deviation by hawks and doves, and scholarship on public opinion of female leadership, I argue that because men and women in leadership positions are evaluated

differently by domestic audiences, there likely exists a public approval reward for male leaders who deviate from their prior policy reputation while female leaders receive no change in approval for deviating from prior policy reputations. Where men who deviate from their prior positions when dealing with international adversaries are viewed as moderates who are willing to set aside their own interests for that of the nation, women are not. I test this argument against a new, cross-national dataset with a sample of 128 leaders from 31 countries between 1975 and 2018, with 110 men in 31 countries and 18 women across 14 different countries.

This work makes three major contributions to extant scholarship on gender, public opinion, and domestic sources of foreign policy.

First, it brings gender to the forefront of public approval literature as a significant conditioning factor. The number of women in the highest positions of national leadership continues to expand, but the scholarship on their public approval is severely lacking and thus women coming into these positions may be at a disadvantage in not understanding how domestic audiences will react to their actions.

Second, it tests the expectations for policy deviation for both men and women, using public opinion data. Though prior research has attempted to shed light on shifts in public approval for policies that deviate from the leader's prior reputation by using experimental data, little is known about whether these findings apply to women and whether these findings hold up empirically. While there is good reason to use experimental research design, the penalties leaders face would likely be more severe in an experimental setting because leaders strategically avoid situations where their policy responses would knowingly be punished by voters. Using observational public opinion data is advantageous in that it presents a conservative bias that may be more accurate in assessing shifts in public approval due to a leader's foreign policy.

Third, it compares public approval for both escalation and de-escalation policies by female-led and male-led states in conflict where prior research typically focuses on one or the other. To this author's knowledge, no research has explicitly tested public approval of both hawks and doves in the pursuit of both peace and conflict. Existing research has primarily focused on the question of whether Nixon was the only one able to maintain public support when opening relations with China, essentially confining research to public approval of a hawk de-escalating conflict.

The thesis is structured in four main sections. The first is a discussion of existing literature on public opinion of "out of character" policy, policy deviations by hawks and doves, public opinion on female leadership, and whether women in the workplace are evaluated differently than women in the highest positions of national leadership. The second section outlines my theory, building off existing findings that voters sometimes perceive policy deviations by male leaders as a sign of moderation and credibility, and that gender biases cause women to be evaluated differently than men. The third section is my research design and describes my data, variables, and method in depth. The thesis concludes with my analysis of both a full sample with two-way interactions and a split sample of men and women with de facto three-way interactions, as well as a discussion of my robustness checks, limitations, and implications for future work.

EXTANT LITERATURE

Public Opinion on “Out of Character” Policy

Research on consequences for leaders who act out of character or implement “unlikely” policies, hereafter referred to as a policy deviation or norm deviation, is limited and often conflicting. While some argue that leaders who ‘flip-flop’ or act outside of what is expected of them are viewed as inconsistent and penalized, others show that leaders who deviate from their established reputations may draw more favor from voters compared to leaders who do not deviate. Whether these norms were based on party, ideology, or previous policy stances, it is unclear whether support for policies outside one’s typical reputation leads to an increase or decrease in public approval of the leader and their policy. This is a difficult question to study from observational data because leaders should select only to change their positions if they believe it will benefit their circumstance.

Tomz and Van Houweling (2009, 2012) use survey-based experimental data to show that candidate repositioning is penalized because it prompts voters to discount the candidate’s current policies and to draw negative inferences about the candidate’s character. Tomz (2007) posits that this penalty might be not only stem from negative inferences about the candidate, but also from citizens’ concerns about the country’s international reputation. Other survey experiments show that the president loses support both when “backing down” from public threats and “backing into” foreign conflicts (Levy et. Al., 2015) and roll call voting data shows that significant electoral costs exist for senators who change their positions (DeBacker, 2014). Croco (2016) argues the middle ground, that citizens do not always react negatively to a leader who changes

his/her position, but are generally indifferent between a consistent and an inconsistent politician provided that the politician supports the citizens' own current preferred policy.

Cukierman and Tommasi (1998) on the other hand, find that under democratic conditions large shifts in economic policy are more likely to be implemented by the “unlikely” party and that the more “unlikely” a policy is, the more incumbent parties gain an electoral advantage. They theorize that this phenomenon is due to voters judging the credibility of the policy based on the ideological identity of the policymaker. Cowen and Sutter (1998) also find that right wing politicians are better suited to pursue left wing policies, because only a right-wing politician can signal the credibility or soundness of a left-wing policy. While Petrocik (1996) and Petrocik, Benoit, and Hansen (2003) show that candidates increase their electoral prospects by campaigning on and enhancing the salience of issues that their party has a reputation for ‘owning’ or caring about (i.e., Republicans would own issues of taxation and the size of government, while Democrats would own social welfare issues), the country’s status and security are issues that are not typically ‘owned’ by any one party (Petrocik et. al., 2003, p. 599) and thus it remains unclear whether how voters might reward or penalize leaders for taking action in this arena.

Policy Deviation by Hawks and Doves

When it comes to foreign policy, recent findings demonstrate that hawkish leaders who deviate from the norm of military force and instead pursue diplomatic or conciliatory policies, enjoy a significant boost in domestic approval ratings compared to dovish leaders who pursue the exact same policy. It’s relevant to note that deviation from hawkish and dovish norms may or may not constitute ‘flip-flopping’ on policy, i.e., a deviation constitutes a ‘flip-flop’ only if it contradicts previous explicit promises on a given issue. Here, leaders may be viewed as deviating

when they act outside their typical foreign policy preference for diplomatic vs. military means, but may not be switching sides on specific policies. To be clear, hawks in this analysis are characterized as leaders who typically favor military solutions over diplomatic ones and often have reputations for emphasizing military force as an essential element in protecting national security. They emphasize that they will not shy away from using force where necessary and are likely to have a mindset that “the only way to achieve peace is to be ready for war” (Mattes and Weeks, 2019, p. 58). Doves on the other hand, are described as leaders who prefer diplomatic solutions over military ones. They typically emphasize that they believe diplomacy, cooperation, and negotiations are key to national security and that they will use military force as a last resort. The mindset of a dove would be that “the only way to achieve peace is to act peacefully” (Mattes and Weeks, 2019, p. 58). Hawkish and dovish affiliations are thus distinct from ideological and party affiliations, as they describe a leader’s overall foreign policy preferences.

Existing literature appears to primarily support a ‘hawk’s advantage’ in pursuing peace and a disadvantage for doves who do the same. When hawks attempt to reconcile with a distrusted adversary, voters react more favorably to them than dovish leaders who pursue the exact same policy. However, the jury is still out on how voters perceive hawkish behavior. Based on this theory of a domestic approval boost for leaders who act out of character, one might expect doves to be rewarded when pursuing conflict and hawks to be penalized for pursuing conflict, but there is no definitive evidence yet. Schultz’s (2005) models suggest that hawks are more likely to initiate cooperation and more likely to see it last, but this analysis does not examine how public approval changes as a function of such decisions. Mattes and Weeks (2019) use survey experiments to demonstrate support for the thesis that hawks are better positioned to pursue peace, finding that voters penalized both hawks and doves for opting for rapprochement

over a status quo policy, but that the penalty was much more severe for doves. They also demonstrate that even when the policy succeeded in eliciting a positive response from the adversary, hawks were rewarded but doves were still penalized, theorizing that voters base their public approval on assessments of the leader's moderation and the policy's credibility. This suggests that voters do not condition their approval on the policy or policy outcome, but rather on who is implementing the policy.

Counterarguments for why hawks should not experience an advantage in pursuing peace also exist, with Clare (2014) showing that doves are rewarded in some ways for norm adherence because their diplomatic reputations give them greater bargaining leverage with adversaries who would rather deal with a diplomatic leader than a militaristic one. However, this study does not focus on how public opinion changes as a result of these policy choices, as it only examines an adversary's likelihood of cooperating. Fehr (2014) also studies hawks pursuing peace and casts doubt on the idea that the leader's reputation matters at all, arguing that in the case of a hawkish Nixon resuming relations with a then isolated communist China, public opinion was already shifting on communism and that leaders can pursue 'unlikely' policies with minimal domestic repercussions as long as "conditions are favorable and audience costs can be minimized."

To sum up, experimental evidence suggests that policy deviation in foreign affairs tends to be rewarded by voters. Yet, no empirical studies have put this question to the test directly, while indirect evidence on the domestic advantage in pursuing out-of-character foreign policy appears to have mixed support.

Public Opinion on Female Leadership

In the past half century, 56 of the 146 nations (38%) studied by the World Economic Forum in 2014 and 2016 have elected a female head of government or state for at least one year,

excluding figurehead roles (Pew, 2017). In 31 of these countries, women have led for five years or less, in 10 nations they have led for only a year, and at least 13 have had women leaders who held office for less than a year (Pew, 2017). These female-led states have included the United Kingdom, Israel, Liberia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, France, Germany, Poland, Canada, Brazil, Nicaragua, Argentina, Finland, Norway, South Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines, and New Zealand (Reiter, 2015). Although it is clear that female national leadership is not confined to one geographic region or regime type, there exists a significant gap in the empirical work both exploring the incentives women face for different conflict behaviors as well as the way an executive's gender, ideological affiliation, and dispute outcomes interact when pursuing international peace or conflict. The following section outlines existing theories on the relationship between gender and public expectations of leadership, with most of the literature stressing that female leaders are evaluated differently than their male counterparts and may face different incentives and penalties based on gender biased reactions to their leadership.

Gendered expectations are often based on both descriptive stereotypes about how individuals actually behave as well as proscriptive stereotypes about how they should behave (Eagly and Karau 2002). Though gender and sex are not the same, with the former being a social construct that does not always coincide with biological sex, there are societal expectations that men will be masculine, and women will be feminine. Burns and Kattelman (2017) among many others state that this difference “makes the study of gender in International Relations particularly murky, especially quantitatively.” As Everitt and Gaudet (2016) note, male leaders are consistently stereotyped as being more strong, competent, tough, and assertive than women (Alexander and Anderson, 1993; Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993; McDermott, 1997). Women, on the other hand, are stereotyped as conflict averse (Burns and Kattelman, 2017), compassionate,

warm (Alexander and Anderson, 1993), emotional, people-oriented, gentle, kind, passive, caring, and sensitive (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993). It remains unclear how much of this is due to biological or sociological factors, but research does show that men and women typically favor different perspectives on interpersonal conflict (Gilligan, 1982), negotiation strategies (Boyer et al., 2009) support for democratic candidates in the US context (Chaturvedi, 2016), casualty concerns, appropriate use of force (Eichenberg, 2003), prioritization of humanitarian vs. economic and strategic concerns, and multilateralism (Brooks and Valentino, 2011). These facts together demonstrate that there will likely be assumptions, expectations, and stereotypes that are more likely to attribute a hawkish preference to men while attributing a dovish preference to women.

These stereotypes result in a ‘double bind’ for female leaders in that they must demonstrate masculine qualities to show that they are strong enough to lead and aggressive enough to protect, as well as traditionally feminine traits of cooperation and compassion in order to not violate gender roles (Burns and Kattelman, 2017). Further, gendered expectations and stereotypes appear to work against women who seek positions of power even if they exhibit the same behavior as men (Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky, 1992). For example, the ‘backlash effect’ is thought to exist for female politicians who adopt masculine approaches, with perceptions of role incongruity resulting in more negative and critical assessments due to negative perceptions that accompany broken status norms (Butler and Geis, 1990; Eagly and Karau, 2002; Gidengil and Everitt, 2003; Meeks, 2012; Okimoto & Brescoll, 2010; Ridgeway, 2001). Post and Sen (2020) point out that while women may feel the need to adopt more agentic attributes in order to rise to leadership roles, or those attributes that demonstrate assertiveness, independence, ambition, dominance, forceful, confidence, or competitiveness, they still experience negative

reactions from both men and women, and are viewed as emotional, less credible, and less competent, while their male counterparts are viewed as more competent and credible (p. 4). These findings have been documented elsewhere about female leaders who engage in discipline (Atwater, Carey, and Waldman, 2001; 2005), initiation of salary negotiations (Bowles, Babcock, and Lai, 2007), authoritative leadership style (Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky, 1992), competitiveness (Rudman and Glick, 1999), criticism (Sinclair and Kunda, 2000), and self-promotion (Rudman, 1998). The backlash women in leadership positions receive for any agentic, strong, or confident behavior is unfortunate, as women faced with scrutiny in masculinized policy areas like national security often resort to more hawkish behavior or adopt more aggressive foreign policies in order to gain credibility and avoid being seen as ‘soft’ (Burns and Kattelman, 1992; Dube and Harish, 2017; Koch and Fulton, 2011).

Women in the Workplace vs. the Oval Office

The question remains then as to how women in the highest national leadership positions have gained and maintained their seats despite facing penalties for both masculine and feminine behavior. One possible explanation is that voters may expect masculine behavior in foreign policy and more feminine behavior in domestic policy. Jalalzai (2008, 2010) argues that women as ‘unifiers of the family’ may be elected after conflict under the expectation that they will unify the country or in instances where their powers are constrained. This is not uncommon, as several women have been elected to office directly following a conflict, perhaps because women’s values and temperaments are believed to contrast favorably against those of the men who got the nation into the conflict (Burns and Kattelman, 1992).

The more compelling explanation for the paradox of women rising to leadership positions even when they face a ‘double bind’ however, may be that women who have been elected to the

highest national leadership positions as presidents or prime ministers are evaluated differently than women in the workplace and women in other levels of government. While the bulk of social science and psychology research supports the idea of a ‘backlash’ effect for women exhibiting agentic behavior in general, there is robust evidence in the international relations realm that female national leaders are rewarded for masculine behavior, and indeed must be masculine in order to rise to their positions and maintain them. For example, several researchers have found that an increase in domestic gender equality levels and female legislators often leads to lower levels of conflict and defense spending, but that having a female executive in office has the opposite result with higher levels of defense spending and higher probability of escalating disputes to violence (Caprioli, 2000; Caprioli and Boyer, 2001; Koch and Fulton, 2011). This is not because female executives are more prone to violence and conflict initiation than men, but rather that they are much more likely to have their bluffs called, their resolve questioned, their disputes resisted and reciprocated, and be forced to take more escalatory measures to demonstrate their resolve (Post and Sen, 2020, Caprioli and Boyer, 2001). Burns and Kattelmann (1992) provide a further explanation for these findings, theorizing that the reason female executives are more likely to uphold political empowerment rights while being less likely to respect physical integrity rights is that women are generally more inclusive of marginalized and minority groups, but have to “uphold their authority with an iron fist” and crush dissent when the time calls for it. Women elected to the highest positions of state leadership may not be any different in character or ideology than their male counterparts or women in other arenas, but biases against them seem to provoke, reward, and necessitate more aggressive leadership and conflict behavior.

The experiences of leaders like Margaret Thatcher, Indira Gandhi, and Golda Meir appear to support the ‘masculine’ selection effect for national leadership positions. Fukuyama (1998) cites Thatcher’s role in the Falkland War and fight against the Irish Republican Army, Indira Gandhi’s war with Pakistan and trials against Sikh separatists, and Golda Meir’s heavy-handed policies against Palestine and the Arab world as evidence that women are more violent than men. However, none of these female leaders initiated the crises in which they were involved (Caprioli and Boyer, 2001). Additionally, more recent studies using expanded data show no relationship between the gender of the national leader and propensity for interstate conflict (Horowitz, Stam, and Ellis, 2015). Therefore, it seems more likely that women are simply forced to exhibit agentic and ‘masculine’ behaviors when leading and protecting their countries to gain credibility with the public, even if they are likely to be penalized for the same type of aggressive behavior elsewhere.

There is thus far insufficient evidence to determine what kind of behavior voters expect from their female national leaders, what situations result in men and women simply being rewarded/penalized to different degrees for the same action, and when voters will penalize one gender and reward the other. Positivist work in gender and international relations has addressed conflict onset, interstate war, human rights, civil war, violence against civilians, international norms, and globalization, but until now has not extensively regarded a leader’s gender as a significant factor shaping domestic public approval of them and their foreign policy (Reiter, 2015). As such, my contribution in extending the hawk’s advantage thesis from male leaders acting within previously established hawkish and dovish norms, to female leaders acting within previously assumed gender norms *and* hawkish and dovish norms, may help us to better

understand the hawk's advantage and the incentives leading women in power to choose cooperation or conflict.

The Argument: Moderation and Policy Credibility

Two Mechanisms Whereby Policy Deviation Is Rewarded: Moderation and Credibility

Cukierman and Tommasi (1998) and Cowen and Sutter (1998) were some of the first to model the policy credibility mechanism, or the reason why publics might believe a policy is in the best interest of the nation (rather than in the best interest of the leader) when it comes from a leader who would not typically propose that policy. Mattes and Weeks (2019) were the first to test experimentally both the policy credibility mechanism as well a new mechanism that judges the leader's deviation from previously stated policy preferences, the moderation mechanism. They demonstrate that voters approve more of hawks (than doves) pursuing rapprochement foreign policy because voters' believe that this strategy is more moderate than a hawk's earlier preference and thus is more in line with the best interest of the nation. While these two mechanisms, the moderation and policy credibility mechanisms, are shown to account for why publics reward hawks but not doves for peaceful foreign policy decisions in an experimental setting (Mattes and Weeks, 2019), it remains to be seen whether this pattern holds up against observational data. Furthermore, no study has tested whether the reverse is true about doves enjoying an advantage when initiating more hostile foreign policy decisions. Finally, and most importantly for this study, no evidence examines whether citizens evaluate female hawks and doves differently than male ones.

The first mechanism is policy moderation. Voters are thought to perceive out-of-character behavior or "unlikely" policies as a sign of the leader's moderation or willingness to compromise. Whereas leaders who act within their preferences are more often viewed as

extremists, those who deviate are viewed as moderates. Therefore, leaders with hawkish preferences are thought to be rewarded by voters when they pursue diplomatic approaches or conciliatory policies because they are perceived to be ideologically moderate and compromising, whereas leaders with dovish preferences would be penalized for pursuing the exact same action because they appear to be ideological zealots or extreme pacifists.

The second mechanism is policy credibility. This mechanism contributes to the policy deviation advantage and norm adherence disadvantage in that leaders who deviate from their expected behaviors are thought to be pursuing policies in the best interest of the nation rather than their own. This is distinct from the prior mechanism in that voters are making a judgement about the policy, rather than the leader, based on the policy-policymaker pair. When leaders act within their preferences and expected norms, voters may find it difficult to discern whether the policy is in the best interest of the nation or whether the leader is blindly following their own natural policy preference. When hawks pursue militaristic action for example, voters may perceive the leader as acting within their own predispositions or inclinations. However, when hawks deviate from the norm and pursue diplomatic or conciliatory policies, as Richard Nixon did in 1972 delivering the olive branch to a distrusted communist Mao in China, then voters may assume the deviation was for the good of the country and must be credible policy rather than a personal preference.

Policy Deviations and Public Approval for Male Leaders

Table 1 presents the expected trends in public opinion for leaders deviating from and adhering to their expressed political ideology; these trends may be labeled as ‘policy norm deviation advantage’ and ‘policy norm adherence disadvantage.’ The shaded areas in Table 1 indicate the findings established in Mattes and Weeks (2019) via a survey experiment (whose

survey prompts describe male leaders), while the unshaded areas present the logical implications from these findings. Importantly, the unshaded implications in every table of this analysis have not yet been tested experimentally; and none of these implications has been tested against observational public opinion approval data cross-nationally.

Based on voters' perceptions of moderation and policy credibility, Table 1 lays out the expectations that leaders who deviate on policy are rewarded by voters, while those who do not deviate on policy are punished. This is why in Table 1 hawks are expected to be rewarded for dovish behavior in the bottom left quadrant (Mattes and Weeks show that this pattern exists), while doves are expected to be rewarded for hawkish behavior in the top right quadrant.

Table 1 also presents the expected trend that leaders who do not deviate from the policy norm expected by their ideology are penalized by voters. This theoretical expectation about a policy norm adherence disadvantage (i.e., a penalty for acting in line with one's reputation) is the logical continuation of Mattes and Weeks's theoretical model that voter reward those leaders who deviate because voters assume that the leader is a moderate and the policy is in the nation's interest. By this logic, the expectation is that there will be a penalty for leaders who do not deviate from previously expressed hawkish or dovish ideology, because voters would assume that the leader is an extremist and the policy is in their own interest, rather than the nation's. This is why hawks are expected to be penalized for hawkish behavior (the top left quadrant of Table 1), because voters would think they are extreme warmongers and that they are instituting the policy in their own interest, not the nation's. Additionally, doves are expected to be penalized for dovish behavior (the bottom right quadrant of Table 1), as voters will believe the leader is an extreme pacifist and following their own interests instead of the nation's.

Table 1: Expected public opinion approval for male leaders for hawkish and dovish behavior given their prior policy reputations

	Hawk Affiliation	Dove Affiliation
Hawk Behavior	No policy norm deviation = Penalty for acting within hawkish norms because the leader appears to be an extreme warmonger and the policy doesn't seem credible	Policy norm deviation = Reward for acting outside of dovish norms because the leader appears to be a moderate and the 'unlikely' policy seems credible
Dove Behavior	Policy norm deviation = Reward for acting outside of hawkish norms because the leader appears to be a moderate and the 'unlikely' policy seems credible	No policy norm deviation = Penalty for acting within dovish norms because the leader appears to be an extreme pacifist and the policy doesn't seem credible

Note: The table compares the expected public approval for male leaders across two dimensions: hawk/dove reputation (affiliation) and hawk/dove behavior. The shaded areas have been supported experimentally by Mattes and Weeks (2019); the unshaded areas are untested.

To reiterate, the shaded expectations in the bottom row of Table 1 were supported against experimental data (Mattes and Weeks, 2019); none of these expectations have been tested against observational data. The unshaded quadrants are this author's extension of the Mattes and Weeks (2019) theory that voters base their public approval on assessments of the leader's moderation and the policy's credibility. The outlined expectations in the top row assume that when male leaders follow their prior policy reputations, they will be penalized, and when they deviate from their prior policy reputations, they will be rewarded. The contribution in this analysis is that we test whether 1) experimental findings are also observed in the empirical world or whether leaders select themselves out of penalties completely, and 2) whether the top row scenarios follow the logic of the bottom row's as can be inferred from Mattes and Weeks (2019).

To sum up, relying on insights from Mattes and Weeks (2019), I expect that the same logic of penalty and reward should apply to situations in which leaders pursue peaceful or conflictual foreign policy. Therefore, we should expect:

H1: All else equal, the public approval of male leaders will tend to **increase** after male leaders take foreign policy actions that **deviate** from their prior policy reputations.

H2: All else equal, the public approval of male leaders will tend to **decline** after male leaders take foreign policy actions that **adhere** to their prior policy reputations.

Policy Deviations and Deviations from Gender Norms for Women

When citizens observe hawkish and dovish female leaders select peaceful or conflictual foreign policy strategies, they not only judge female leaders' strategies as policy deviations, but also evaluate whether female leaders deviate from gender norms. I argue that in addition to 'policy norm deviation advantage' and 'policy norm adherence disadvantage,' female leaders are also subject to public opinion punishments and rewards based on their deviation from or adherence to gender norms. That is, when it comes to foreign policy, gender itself may have a hawkish vs. dovish dimension in the eyes of citizens.

On the one hand, evidence from other disciplines suggests that women in the workplace face a backlash when they display assertive, agentic, or aggressive leadership styles, because they are deemed less credible and competent. At the same time, women are expected to practice cooperation and compassion in the workplace as to adhere to gender roles. If such 'double bind' expectations exist for female national leaders, then one might expect that female leaders are punished regardless of their previous policy affiliation or foreign policy actions.

On the other hand, if the evaluation of female leaders based on gender norms mirrors the expected 'policy norm deviation advantage' and 'policy norm adherence disadvantage,' then one

would expect that female leaders could benefit from gender norm deviation and could be punished for adhering to gender norms. If so, a female leader would be viewed as a moderate when pursuing more militant (i.e., more masculine or hawkish) foreign policies, and as an extremist when acting as a dove. For instance, evidence from the United States shows that during the times of terror threat, a Democratic woman will be evaluated more harshly than a Republican woman (Holman, Merolla, and Zechmeister, 2016). This may be because female Democrats, that tend to position themselves as doves on foreign policy issues, may be penalized for being extreme pacifists. By contrast, Republican women, typically affiliated as hawks on foreign policy, did not receive as harsh a penalty and may be seen as more moderate because of the way their ‘dovish’ gender and ‘hawkish’ political preferences interact.

It remains unclear whether voters will base assessments of “out-of-character” behavior more on the leader’s prior hawkish and dovish preferences, or on expectations about hawkish and dovishness that are derived from gendered stereotypes. Since both aspects (gender and prior hawkish/dovish preferences) are likely to be at least somewhat present in the subconscious of voters when assessing a leader’s moderation and the credibility of their policy, there is likely an interaction effect where gender and hawkish/dovish preferences, as well as gender and hawkish/dovish conflict actions, interact to determine public approval.

While my expectations that male leaders are subject to a policy norm deviation advantage (due to perceptions of moderation and credibility) and to a norm adherence disadvantage (due to perceptions of extremism and self-interest) have a solid theoretical footing in the extant literature, it is unclear whether the same expectations would apply to women. Two different patterns emerge in the scholarship on how female leaders are evaluated and are outlined in the following two subsections. The first scenario describes the expected changes in public approval

for women national leaders who are treated the same as women in the general workplace, where they are penalized no matter what behavior they exhibit, i.e., the ‘double bind.’ The second scenario shows the expectations of public approval if women in the highest national leadership positions are evaluated differently than women in the general workplace and are in fact rewarded for their more agentic and masculine behaviors. That is, it is possible that ‘gender norm deviation advantage’ and ‘gender norm adherence disadvantage’ exist for female national leaders.

Assuming Female National Leaders Are Treated Like Women in the Workplace

Table 2 shows the same public approval rewards for policy norm deviations and penalties for adhering to policy norms as Table 1, but makes the leader a female so that gender stereotypes are included as a salient factor shaping public opinion. In stressful situations where information is lacking, individuals are prone to cognitive bias in which they deploy cognitive shortcuts in order to process information (Post and Sen, 2020). As gender stereotypes (both implicit and explicit) are one of the most powerful and prevalent cognitive shortcuts, even when compared with race, occupation, and age, and are widely shared across cultures, it is likely that in times of international conflict with incredibly high stakes and low information, gender stereotypes are biasing and simplifying voter perceptions of their female leaders’ complex behavior (Catalyst, 2007; Eagly and Karau, 2007). The incongruity between ‘soft’ female gender roles and typical ‘hard’ leadership qualities likely produces a prejudice toward female leaders no matter what action they take, leading voters to infer that women both possess less leadership capability and are violating their gender roles just by holding their national executive position (Eagly and Karau, 2007). The idea of role incongruity can best be exemplified by Pakistani President’s statement about Indira Gandhi in 1971, that “Mrs. Gandhi is neither a woman nor a head of state by wanting to be both at once” (Post and Sen, 2020, p. 19).

As voters hold female candidates to much more stringent qualification standards than male candidates (Bauer, 2019), they tend to have dissimilar beliefs about leaders and women while holding similar beliefs about leaders and men (Eagly and Karau, 2007). Since citizens call on gender stereotype shortcuts in times of crisis, it is likely that voters will have less favorable attitudes towards female leaders than male ones and that women will have much greater difficulty in being recognized as effective in their roles no matter what actions they take. In this way, the backlash effect results in double bind for women in leadership and a penalty for female leaders—regardless of their foreign policy actions—arising solely from their gender.

Where male hawks are expected to be rewarded for dovish behavior (a policy norm deviation) and penalized for hawkish behavior (no policy norm deviation, see Table 1), the expectations for female hawks should change, because voters would likely be also penalizing women for holding leadership positions in which they are deviating from their gender roles. Women of both ideological affiliations exhibiting hawkish behavior (the top row of Table 2) are therefore expected to receive a penalty due to the backlash effect women face for agentic, hawkish, militaristic, and aggressive behavior. Women who exhibit dove behavior by pursuing more conciliatory and diplomatic approaches in conflict are also penalized. This is because they appear too ‘soft’ in the realm of national security and their gender leads voters to believe they are naturally incapable of defending the country.

Based on the ‘double bind’ worldview, women are penalized just for being women in national leadership positions. Thus, the penalties and rewards they receive for policy norm deviations are either amplified or balanced out by the penalty they receive because of their gender. This means women affiliated as hawks and pursuing militaristic means over diplomatic ones would receive two penalties: one for appearing extreme and acting within their own

Table 2: Expected public opinion approval for female leaders for hawkish and dovish behavior given their prior policy reputations, assuming the ‘double bind’ effect

	Hawk Affiliation	Dove Affiliation
Hawk Behavior	<p>No policy norm deviation = Penalty for acting within hawkish norms because the leader appears to be an extreme warmonger and the policy doesn’t seem credible</p> <p>Gender norm deviation = Penalty for acting outside of gender-based assumptions due to the backlash effect women face for agentic behavior</p> <p>Result = Double Penalty</p>	<p>Policy norm deviation = Reward for acting outside of dovish norms because the leader appears to be a moderate and the ‘unlikely’ policy seems credible</p> <p>Gender norm deviation = Penalty for acting outside of gender-based assumptions due to the backlash effect women face for agentic behavior</p> <p>Result = Status quo (because receiving both a penalty and reward should result in no change)</p>
Dove Behavior	<p>Policy norm deviation = Reward for acting outside of hawkish norms because the leader appears to be a moderate and the ‘unlikely’ policy seems credible. This would be the typical hawk’s advantage.</p> <p>No gender norm deviation = Penalty for acting within gender-based assumptions about women being dovish and appearing too ‘soft’</p> <p>Result = Status quo (because receiving both a penalty and reward should result in no change)</p>	<p>No policy norm deviation = Penalty for acting within dovish norms because the leader appears to be an extreme pacifist and the policy doesn’t seem credible</p> <p>No gender norm deviation = Penalty for acting within gender-based assumptions about women being dovish and appearing too ‘soft’</p> <p>Result = Double Penalty</p>

Note: The table compares the expected female domestic approval across two dimensions: hawk/dove reputation (affiliation) and hawk/dove behavior. The outlined expectations assume that female leaders face a “double bind”, i.e., a backlash for deviating from gender norms (assertive women are viewed negatively) as well as a backlash for adhering to gender norms (feminine women are also viewed negatively).

interests when taking hawkish action and one for gendered backlash effects (top left quadrant of Table 2).

Women politically affiliated as doves and taking hawkish action, on the other hand, would receive one reward for acting outside of their political affiliation's policy norm and one penalty for gendered backlash effects (top right quadrant of Table 2). The reward for a policy norm deviation balances the gender penalty and is expected to make no change in a female leader's public approval. It is unclear whether the reward for policy deviation will offset the penalty drawn from gender bias and is especially interesting in determining whether these two aspects are given the same weight by voters in the aggregate.

In the case of women pursuing peace, diplomacy, compromise, rapprochement, or conciliatory action, we expect a reward for hawkish women and a penalty for dovish women. Women affiliated as hawks are expected to be rewarded for the policy norm deviation because their ideological affiliation positions them to be viewed as moderate and the 'unlikely' policy seems more credible (bottom right quadrant of Table 2). This would be the typical hawk's advantage. However, hawkish women still face backlash effects, so this is expected to balance out the reward gained from the policy deviation and result in no change of public approval.

Women affiliated ideologically as doves pursuing dove action would be penalized twice for acting within both of their expected policy and gender norms (bottom left quadrant of Table 2). This policy-policymaker pair is thus expected to receive the greatest drop in approval and receive the most punishment from voters because the leader would be viewed as an extreme pacifist and the strategy would draw the least amount of credibility because it is viewed as the 'natural inclination' of both females and doves.

In summary, if we assume that national female leaders face a double bind, a backlash effect, and are treated similar to women in the workplace, we should expect that like women in an average workplace, female national leaders just “can’t win.” Adherence to female leaders’ prior reputations will tend to be punished in both escalatory cases (because hawkish women deviate from gender norms) and in de-escalatory scenarios (because dovish women adhere to feminine gender norms). We therefore should expect:

H3: Compared to that of male leaders, the public approval of female leaders will tend to **stay the same (no approval bump)** after female leaders take foreign policy actions that **deviate** from their prior policy reputations.

H4: Compared to that of male leaders, the public approval of female leaders will tend to **decline to a greater extent** after female leaders take foreign policy actions that **adhere** to their prior policy reputations.

Assuming National Leaders are Treated Differently than Women in the Workplace

Social construction of what national leadership should look and behave like entails extreme masculine behaviors, which is why national leadership has been one of last frontiers for women to break through. Yet women have become chief executives of states across geographic regions and regime types. While women undoubtedly face unique challenges in ensuring domestic security that a male counterpart of the exact same qualification, political ideology, and character would not, empirical trends suggest that female national leaders tend to use force internationally to a greater degree than men. Recent examples of female national leaders resorting to military force abound: Meir, Gandhi, Thatcher. One after another, a string of international relations studies that systematically examine behavior of female versus male leaders find that female executives escalate conflict, exhibit higher levels of violence, and are

Table 3: Expected public opinion approval for female leaders for hawkish and dovish behavior given their prior policy reputations, assuming that women's deviation from traditional gender norms is rewarded by citizens

	Hawk Affiliation	Dove Affiliation
Hawk Behavior	<p>No policy norm deviation = Penalty for acting within hawkish norms because the leader appears to be an extreme warmonger and the policy doesn't seem credible</p> <p>Gender norm deviation = Reward for acting within hawkish norms because the leader appears to be to be 'strong' enough to lead and avoids being viewed as too soft</p> <p>Result = Status quo (because receiving both a penalty and reward should result in no change)</p>	<p>Policy norm deviation = Reward for acting outside of dovish norms because the leader appears to be a moderate and the 'unlikely' policy seems credible</p> <p>Gender norm deviation = Reward for acting within hawkish norms because the leader appears to be to be 'strong' enough to lead and avoids being viewed as too soft</p> <p>Result = Double Reward</p>
Dove Behavior	<p>Policy norm deviation = Reward for acting outside of hawkish norms because the leader appears to be a moderate and the 'unlikely' policy seems credible. This would be the typical hawk's advantage.</p> <p>No gender norm deviation = Penalty for acting within gender-based assumptions about women being dovish and appearing too 'soft'</p> <p>Result = Status quo (because receiving both a penalty and reward should result in no change)</p>	<p>No policy norm deviation = Penalty for acting within dovish norms because the leader appears to be an extreme pacifist and the policy doesn't seem credible</p> <p>No gender norm deviation = Penalty for acting within gender-based assumptions about women being dovish and appearing too 'soft'</p> <p>Result = Double Penalty</p>

Note: The table compares the expected female domestic approval across two dimensions: hawk/dove reputation (affiliation) and hawk/dove behavior. The outlined expectations assume that female national leaders are rewarded for more assertive behavior that deviates from traditional gender norms.

more likely to be reciprocated against than their male counterparts (Post and Sen, 2020, Caprioli and Boyer, 2001). Even the analysis of Europe in 1480–1913 reveals that female queens engaged in wars more frequently than kings (Dube and Harish, 2020).

The fact that female leaders are so often selecting behaviors with higher levels of violence and aggression suggests that these leaders are selecting these behaviors because they expect that it will help them maintain office in the future. Whether the persistence of female national leaders exhibiting masculine, aggressive, and violent behavior is due to conscious strategic planning and considerations of domestic approval, or due simply to the fact that they are challenged more often and simply have to react with an ‘iron fist’ in order to maintain their positions, it appears that women who act with more aggression are advantaged.

Table 3 shows the expected domestic approval consequences for female national leaders acting outside hawkish and dovish norms without a ‘backlash effect’ for agentic behavior. Rather, in this scenario they are assumed to be treated differently than women in other leadership positions, because their post as the chief executive is one of the most consequential for national security and thus requires and rewards an agentic approach. Thus, we expect to see a reward for women who pursue hawkish and militaristic behavior and propose that there may be a penalty when they pursue conciliatory, peaceful, or placatory actions. Table 3 shows this reward for gender norm deviations for women of both political affiliations who choose hawk behavior. However, because female hawks acting as hawks are not deviating from their political norm, they receive a penalty that cancels out the reward they received for gender norm deviation, resulting in the status quo. Female doves acting as hawks on the other hand, receive two rewards: one for the policy norm deviation and one for the gender norm deviation. This is because voters

who see their leaders acting out of character are more likely to view them as moderates and more likely to assume the policy must be in the best interest of the nation.

The bottom row of Table 3 details expectations for public opinion after female leaders choose dove behavior. A penalty for women who pursue peace is anticipated, because gender biases lead voters to believe that these women are only working towards compromise and diplomacy because they cannot control their natural ‘pacifist’ inclinations. Thus, they are more likely to be perceived as extreme rather than moderate, ineffective in their leadership role, incapable of protecting the country, and following their own blind preferences rather than doing what is right for the country. While hawks pursuing peace receive a reward for the policy norm deviation that may cancel out this gendered penalty for dove behavior, female doves would receive twice the penalty for acting within their expected preferences. If the women that rise to chief executive positions are truly treated differently than both their male counterparts and women in more general leadership roles, then doves pursuing conflict would receive the highest gains in domestic approval while doves pursuing peace would see the greatest declines in domestic approval.

In summary, if we assume that national female leaders are treated differently than women in an average workplace such that citizens reward female leaders for more assertive behaviors, i.e., for deviating from traditional gender roles, we should expect:

H5: Compared to male leaders, the public approval of female leaders with a hawkish reputation is **not expected to fluctuate** in response to escalatory/de-escalatory foreign policy actions.

H6: Compared to male dovish leaders, the public approval of female leaders with a dovish reputation will tend to **increase to a greater extent** after female doves take escalatory foreign policy actions.

H7: Compared to male dovish leaders, the public approval of female leaders with a dovish reputation will tend to **decline to a greater extent** after female doves take de-escalatory foreign policy actions.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Note on the Selection Effect

Leaders are strategic. This means that a national executive anticipates and avoids those foreign policy strategies that are likely to be penalized by the public. If indeed, leaders select themselves only into the situations that they think will benefit their chances of maintaining their position in office (or party/faction reelection/holding on to power – depending on the political regime), then any public disapproval of national leaders after international crises could potentially be interpreted as a finding that is likely to be amplified in an experimental setting.

Data

To assess how a leader's gender ideology, and conflict behavior impact his or her domestic net approval, this study utilizes a new, cross-national dataset to test the above hypotheses, combining data from the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) dataset (Maoz et. al., 2017), the Rulers, Elections, and Irregular Governance (REIGN) dataset (Bell, 2016), the Database of Political Institutions (DPI) (Scartascini et. al, 2018), and the Executive Approval Database (EAD) 2.0 (Carlin et. al., 2019).

The resultant time-series cross-sectional dataset uses the leader-year unit of analysis. The years of observation include 1975–2018 across 31 countries and 128 state leaders. Given the limited temporal scope and limited number of leaders, it is necessary to exercise caution in generalizing these findings.

Dependent Variable

My argument holds that publics will reward and penalize leaders differently based on their gender, ideology, and conflict behavior, so my dependent variable is executive public

approval ratings from the Executive Approval Database 2.0. The Executive Approval Database (EAD) 2.0 “represents the most comprehensive, publicly available collection of time-series indicators of public support for political executives in the world” (Carlin et. al., 2019, p. 1).

Its advantage is that it measures presidential, prime ministerial, and government approval for states in which the national leader is either directly elected or indirectly elected by the legislature (Carlin et. al., 2019, p. 1). This continuous variable provides us with the most direct measure of changes in public opinion and gives us the most accurate sense of how domestic audiences are rewarding or penalizing their leader. The net executive approval by year shows us the percentage of positive responses minus the percentage of negative responses across 31 countries in 1975–2018.

Independent Variables

Because our interest lies in determining whether citizens evaluate female and male national leaders’ foreign policy decisions differently, one independent variable is the national leader’s sex. This dichotomous variable *Female* coding females as 1 and males as 0 primarily came from The Rulers, Elections, and Irregular Governance Dataset (REIGN). As this dataset had a temporal constraint up to 2016, I extended the coding of the sex of leaders in office in 2016–2018. My sample includes 110 men and 18 women. Though there were more than 56 female national leaders in the past century, only 18 female leaders are included in my analysis for several reasons. Some women were elected in mixed systems in which they were not the primary decision-makers in conflict. Another thirty women were excluded because they were the acting presidents and did not maintain their office for more than a few days or weeks. Additionally, missingness of public approval and conflict data also contributed to excluding female leader observations.

My second independent variable *Ideology* comes from the Database of Political Institutions. It is a trichotomous variable categorizing the chief executive as right-leaning, center, or left-leaning. This variable does not completely capture hawkish, moderate, and dovish foreign policy preferences but acts as a proxy. In this analysis, right-leaning is used to represent a hawkish leader while left-leaning is used as a proxy for dovish ones. In order to interpret how the interaction of gender and ideology affect executive approval, this variable was coded with right-leaning as 1, center as 2, and left-leaning as 3. In addition, some male leaders (and none of the females) had no coded ideology, which has a value of 0.

The third independent variable is *Conflict Outcome*; it records how a militarized interstate dispute ended. The data come from the Militarized Interstate Dispute dataset from the Correlates of War project. Because “authority in the military emphasizes hierarchy so that individuals and units act according to the intentions of commanders,” the national executive is likely to have a significant amount of decision-making power in conflict even if there is civilian control of the armed forces or the executive is not the explicit commander in chief (Kohn, 1997, p. 141). These dispute outcomes therefore attempt to capture a leader’s hawkish and dovish preferences.

The dispute outcomes show whether a leader yielded, compromised, or came to a stalemate in a conflict, with yield coded as 1, compromise as 2, and stalemate as 3. I categorize a yield and compromise as dovish because these two outcomes imply that the leader was willing to either cooperate, negotiate, pursue other diplomatic avenues, or back down from a militarized aggression. I categorize a stalemate as hawkish because this implies that the leader was unwilling to back down militarily and may have been less inclined towards negotiation or compromise. The dispute outcome was coded as 0 when none of these outcomes occurred in a year and when

leaders experienced no conflicts in a year, attributing a more dovish behavior to that leader if they were able to diplomatically avoid all types of militarized interstate conflict. Losses and victories were not included because the loss or victory of a nation in conflict does not reflect the decisionmaker's actions. Rather, these outcomes may have been due to forces like military size and strength, alliances, and other factors beyond the leader's hawkish or dovish preference. Thus, a militarized interstate dispute outcome of a yield, compromise, or stalemate provides the best measure of a leader's foreign policy preferences in dealing with adversaries.

Controls

This research controls for country-specific variation by employing fixed effects. In addition, I control for *Duration in Office*, a cumulative sum of years during which the leader has held office.

In the future versions of this research, it will be important to control for economic indicators and international rivalries.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 4 provides descriptive statistics for the main variables in my analysis. My sample includes the leaders of 31 countries, with 110 men and 18 women. The male leaders in my sample held their executive positions between 1975-2018 in all 31 countries while the women in my sample included those who held office between 1979-2018 across 14 different countries. As for leaders classified as hawks because of their right leaning ideology, 49 were men and 8 were female. On the left, 45 men and 8 women were classified as doves. The rest were in the center, making the two ideological groups of interest roughly equally represented in the sample.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Sum
Net Approval	539	4.444308	22.56478	-79.7141	63.09252	2395.482
Ideology	539	1.697588	1.151778	0	3	915
Female	539	0.1762523	0.3813887	0	1	95
Conflict outcome	539	0.7625232	1.275741	0	3	411
Country ID	539	217.9759	226.01	2	920	117489
Year	538	2000.92	9.14273	1975	2018	1076495
Duration in office	539	7.12987	3.916154	0	19	3843
Observations	539					

Method

The dependent variable, domestic public net approval of the national leader, is continuous, thus I use ordinary least squares regression with robust standard errors to estimate the effects of independent variables on public opinion. I test whether the gender of the national leader interacts with their ideology to influence domestic public approval (Model 1, Table 5). I also test whether gender interacts with conflict outcomes to impact public approval (Model 2, Table 5).

Additionally, using the same method and model specification, Models 3 and 4 of Table 8 present the split sample analysis for male and female leaders separately. These models serve as de factor three-way interaction effects between gender, ideology, and conflict outcomes.

All models employ robust standard errors and fixed effects for countries to account for interstate disparities.

ANALYSIS

The expectations describe an interaction between three theoretical determinants of public opinion: gender, ideology, and conflict outcome. In the following two sections, I first analyze the impact of interactions between gender and ideology and gender and conflict outcome using the full sample. I then present the analysis of the interaction between ideology and conflict outcome for the split samples of male and female leaders separately.

Analysis Using Full Sample with Two-Way Interactions

The results presented in Table 5 inform us whether female leaders are evaluated differently than men as a function of their ideologies (holding conflict outcomes constant) and as a function of conflict outcomes (holding ideology constant). It is important to note, however, that these results do not test the hypotheses directly.

Model 1 of Table 5 shows how gender conditional on ideology shapes public opinion of leaders. All coefficient estimates in Model 1 with the exception of *Conflict Outcome* are statistically discernible at the 95–99% confidence level, meaning that under the repeated data-generating process this effect would be observed by chance alone less than 5–1% of the time. The coefficient for *Female* in Model 1 shows the impact of gender when ideology is set to zero. Recall that ideology set to 0 is not meaningful for female leaders (as there are none in the sample who were coded that way). The estimate for *Ideology* in Model 1 captures the impact of one-unit increase in ideology for male leaders: as their ideology changes from no ideology to right-leaning to center to left-leaning their net approval increases by 3 percentage points. It is important to note that this finding does not undermine the hawk's advantage thesis, as the hawk's advantage is implied to exist only during the times of rapprochement, while this model includes

observations during both conflictual and peaceful times. The coefficient for the interaction term labeled *Gender x Ideology* shows that females who moved towards ideological left receive an almost 10 percentage point increase in public approval. To better interpret this interaction term, I rely on Table 6.

Table 5: The impact of gender and ideology on net approval

Independent Variable	Models	
	(1)	(2)
Female	-30.26*** (8.27)	-7.72 (4.59)
Ideology	3.19*** (0.93)	4.15*** (0.91)
Gender x Ideology	9.82** (3.15)	----- -----
Dispute Outcome	1.12 (0.78)	0.87 (0.82)
Gender x Outcome	----- -----	0.52 (2.41)
Duration in office	1.28*** (0.34)	1.18** (0.34)
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Intercept	-17.12*** (4.05)	-17.63*** (4.14)
N observations	539	539
N countries	31	31
N leaders	128	128
N female leaders	18	18
R ²	0.373	0.358

Note: Coefficient estimate (robust standard errors); ‘***’ p< 0.001 ‘**’ p< 0.01 ‘*’ p<0.05.

Table 6 shows the predicted values of net approval for all combinations of the interacted variables. The main takeaway from this analysis is that a leader’s gender indeed conditions the

relationship between their ideology and public approval, and that ideology has a substantively larger effect on women's approval than on men's. Hawkish females received substantially lower approval than their male counterparts (net approval for women falls within the 95% confidence interval of -27 to -5, while for men within that of -3 to 4.5), consistent with the 'backlash effect' where women are penalized for acting hawkishly, i.e., "outside" of their gender roles.

It is important to note that this effect does not test my main argument directly, as these effects on approval are estimated independently of conflict outcomes. Furthermore, an average centrist male leader has substantially higher net approval than a typical female centrist: 4.8 to 9.4 vs. -11. to 4.5. Only for leaders of left-leaning ideology there is no statistically discernible difference between males' and females' net approval. That is, only left-leaning women leaders avoid the gender penalty.

Table 6: The predicted values of net approval by leaders' gender and ideology

gender	ideology	predicted value	se	z	p	lower 95	upper 95
men	no ideology	0.7401537	1.909183	0.39	0.698	-3.010802	4.491109
men	right	3.927975	1.280655	3.07	0.002	1.411884	6.444067
men	center	7.115797	1.17049	6.08	0	4.816145	9.415449
men	left	10.30362	1.683713	6.12	0	6.995642	13.6116
women	no ideology	-29.52395	7.737762	-3.82	0	-44.72627	-14.32164
women	right	-16.51315	5.362438	-3.08	0.002	-27.04869	-5.977615
women	center	-3.502353	4.049536	-0.86	0.388	-11.45844	4.453735
women	left	9.508446	4.775139	1.99	0.047	0.1267703	18.89012

Note: Predicted values are based on Model 1 of Table 5.

Model 2 of Table 5 shows how gender conditional on conflict outcome shapes public opinion of leaders. The constituent term coefficients for *Dispute Outcome* and for *Female* in Model 2 are not statistically discernible at conventional levels. Substantively, the coefficient *Female* is negative, implying that during the times of no conflict, female leaders are penalized in

net approval by almost 8 percentage point relative to men. This suggests that female leaders who pursued neither aggressive nor conciliatory approaches internationally still face a penalty for being female (regardless of ideology).

Table 7: The predicted values of net approval by leaders' gender and conflict outcome

gender	outcome	predicted value	se	z	p	lower 95	upper 95
men	no conflict	5.1054	1.314123	3.89	0	2.523554	7.687245
men	yield	5.976778	1.131946	5.28	0	3.752854	8.200702
men	compromise	6.848157	1.484226	4.61	0	3.932112	9.764203
men	stalemate	7.719536	2.119385	3.64	0	3.555598	11.88347
women	no conflict	-2.617042	3.886985	-0.67	0.501	-10.25377	5.019685
women	yield	-1.227634	4.407661	-0.28	0.781	-9.887328	7.432061
women	compromise	0.1617749	5.826903	0.03	0.978	-11.28629	11.60984
women	stalemate	1.551184	7.660589	0.2	0.84	-13.49951	16.60188

Note: Predicted values are based on Model 2 of Table 5.

Here, I discuss statistically nonsignificant results; while this may seem irrelevant, the low number of female observations makes it possible that differences do not appear statistically important due to a lack of cases. Therefore, assuming nonsystematic missingness of female observations, these substantive effects may suggest the effects from a fuller set of cases.

The interaction term *Gender x Outcome* is neither substantively nor statistically important, as the predicted values of net approval for all combinations of values of gender and conflict outcome demonstrate (Table 7). That is, neither for male nor for female leaders' public opinion changes noticeably if leaders pursue a yield instead of compromise or a compromise instead of stalemate. Although each predicted value of approval for male leader is different from 0, they are not statistically different from each other. This means that the hawk's advantage revealed by experimental studies may not exist in observational data. I discuss this possibility in the conclusion.

These values are also not statistically different from the approval of female leaders given the same conflict outcome. This is driven by the scarcity of observations for women in the specified conflict outcomes: out of 18 female leaders in the sample, none compromised and only 1 female leader yielded and only 4 saw a stalemate, suggesting that female executives tend to avoid more conciliatory foreign policy outcomes.

Analysis Using Split Sample: Men vs. Women

In this section, I analyze the interaction between ideology and conflict outcomes for male and female leaders separately. This split sample approach effectively allows me to estimate the impact of a three-way interaction.

Model 3 of Table 8 presents the interaction between *Ideology* and *Conflict Outcome* only for men, while Model 4 — only for women. In both models, the coefficient estimate for *Ideology* is positive and statistically significant. This means that one-unit change in *Ideology* generates a net positive approval for men (Model 3) and women (Model 4), who experience none of the conflict outcomes of interest: male leaders are estimated to see a 3 percentage point rise as their ideology changes from right-leaning to center to left-leaning, while for women each one-unit change in ideology generates a staggering 21 percentage point jump in approval when no conflict outcomes occur.

While neither interaction term is statistically discernible, it is important to note that the signs for the interaction in Model 3 is positive but in Model 4 is negative. To ease interpretations of these effects, I have included all predicted values of net approval for male and female leaders in Tables 9 and 10 respectively.

Table 9 conveys two main takeaways. First, left-leaning men enjoy higher net approval than right-leaning men regardless of conflict outcomes. For instance, when no conflict outcomes

occur, right-leaning and left-leaning male leaders are predicted to have a net 2 and 8 percentage point approval estimates respectively (Model 3). Within each category of ideology, as a male leader experiences no conflict outcome as opposed to yielding as opposed to compromise as opposed to stalemate, his net approval rises, however, these changes in predicted net approval are not statistically discernible from each other. That is, difference in predicted values of net approval for male leaders of different ideologies are statistically significant, but differences in predicted values of net approval for different conflict outcomes within the same ideological categories are not statistically discernible from each other.

Table 8: The impact of gender and ideology on net approval for male vs. female leaders

Independent Variable	Only men (3)	Only women Models (4)
Ideology	3.26** (1.14)	21.33*** (2.939)
Conflict Outcome	0.674 (1.31)	8.777 (5.269)
Ideology x Conflict Outcome	0.057 (0.606)	-2.318 (4.487)
Duration in office	1.429*** (0.365)	-0.674 (0.866)
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Intercept	-17.406*** (4.259)	-86.42*** (10.48)
N observations	444	95
N countries	31	14
N leaders	110	18
R ²	0.358	0.561

Note: Coefficient estimate (robust standard errors); '***' p< 0.001 '**' p< 0.01 '*' p<0.05.

Table 9: The predicted values of net approval by ideology and conflict outcome for male leaders

ideology	conflict outcome	predicted value	se	z	p	lower 95	upper 95
no ideology	no conflict	-1.423679	2.288816	-0.62	0.534	-5.922733	3.075376
no ideology	yield	-0.7494341	1.81794	-0.41	0.68	-4.322902	2.824034
no ideology	compromise	-0.0751896	2.189589	-0.03	0.973	-4.379197	4.228818
no ideology	stalemate	0.5990549	3.115584	0.19	0.848	-5.525152	6.723261
right	no conflict	1.835401	1.412689	1.3	0.195	-0.9414783	4.61228
right	yield	2.566524	1.098772	2.34	0.02	0.406702	4.726346
right	compromise	3.297647	1.450128	2.27	0.023	0.4471747	6.148119
right	stalemate	4.028769	2.163887	1.86	0.063	-0.224716	8.282255
center	no conflict	5.094481	1.161515	4.39	0	2.811326	7.377636
center	yield	5.882482	0.9340927	6.3	0	4.046365	7.718599
center	compromise	6.670483	1.345745	4.96	0	4.025193	9.315773
center	stalemate	7.458484	2.040741	3.65	0	3.447063	11.46991
left	no conflict	8.353561	1.816304	4.6	0	4.783308	11.92381
left	yield	9.19844	1.516771	6.06	0	6.21697	12.17991
left	compromise	10.04332	1.97959	5.07	0	6.152099	13.93454
left	stalemate	10.8882	2.855436	3.81	0	5.275357	16.50104

Note: Predicted values are based on Model 3 of Table 8.

Table 10 presents the predicted net approval for female leaders as a function of their ideology and conflict outcomes. I only show the net approval for the cases of no outcomes and cases of stalemates, as no women in the sample experienced a compromise and only one female leader yielded in a crisis, suggesting that female national leaders select themselves out of situations when they lose or compromise in international disputes. Furthermore, there are only four female leaders in the sample who collectively oversaw 13 stalemates, this makes the confidence intervals extremely wide for the estimates of net approval, which is why none of the estimates for the stalemate scenario are statistically discernible from each other.

Table 10 delivers two main takeaways. First, when female leaders experience no conflict outcomes, left-leaning females enjoy substantially higher net approval than right-leaning women. These estimates are statistically discernible from each other. Second, experiencing a stalemate

increases the net approval estimate of female executives, however these effects are not statistically important.

Table 10: The predicted values of net approval by ideology and conflict outcome for female leaders

ideology	conflict outcome	predicted value	se	z	p	lower 95	upper 95
no ideology	no conflict	-42.54544	7.574844	-5.62	0	-57.62888	-27.462
no ideology	stalemate	-16.21371	15.81522	-1.03	0.308	-47.70584	15.27842
right	no conflict	-21.20746	4.308785	-4.92	0	-29.78734	-12.62757
right	stalemate	-1.831304	4.976286	-0.37	0.714	-11.74035	8.077747
center	no conflict	0.130529	2.041439	0.06	0.949	-3.934494	4.195553
center	stalemate	12.55111	13.08589	0.96	0.34	-13.50622	38.60844
left	no conflict	21.46851	3.766138	5.7	0	13.96917	28.96785
left	stalemate	26.93352	26.25933	1.03	0.308	-25.35549	79.22252

Note: Predicted values are based on Model 4 of Table 8.

Robustness Checks

I have checked whether the results are impacted by dropping any particular leader; they are not.

I have also run the analysis with two versions of the Dispute Outcome variable, the first in which victories and losses were included in the 0 category and the second excluding victories and losses from the 0 category so that 0 represents a leader having no militarized conflicts in that year. Since victories and losses were not common, this only resulted in the list-wise deletion of seven observations and did not affect the results, as is demonstrated by Tables 11 and 12 which replicated Tables 5 and 8 respectively.

I also ran models with two-way fixed effects, such that not only country-level variation but also year-level variation was accounted for. All results are very similar.

Table 11: Robustness checks for Table 5

Independent Variable	Models	
	(5)	(6)
Female	-30.60*** (8.260)	-7.662* (4.622)
Ideology	2.945*** (0.935)	3.942*** (0.926)
Gender x Ideology	10.01*** (3.154)	
Dispute Outcome (no victories or losses)	1.104 (0.789)	0.837 (0.828)
Gender x Outcome	0.536 (2.409)	
Duration in office	1.277*** (0.343)	1.181*** (0.351)
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Intercept	-16.55*** (4.06)	-17.10*** (4.15)
N observations	532	532
N countries	31	31
N leaders	128	128
N female leaders	18	18
R ²	0.372	0.357

Note: The baseline category of Conflict Outcome represent no conflict only. Coefficient estimate (robust standard errors); '***' p< 0.001 '**' p< 0.01 '*' p<0.05.

Table 12: Robustness checks for Table 8

Independent Variable	Only men (7)	Only women Models (8)
Ideology	2.931 ** (1.150)	21.34 *** (3.494)
Dispute Outcome (no victories or losses)	0.519 (1.307)	8.777* (5.269)
Ideology X Dispute Outcome	0.137 (0.608)	-2.319 (4.488)
Duration in office	1.430*** (0.370)	-0.675 (0.866)
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes
N observations	437	95
R ²	0.356	0.561
N countries	31	14
N leaders	110	18

Note: The baseline category of Conflict Outcome represent no conflict only. Coefficient estimate (robust standard errors); '***' p< 0.001 '**' p< 0.01 '*' p<0.05.

Limitations and Future Work

The current study is an early step towards unpacking the influence of gender, ideology, and conflict outcomes on public approval of national leaders. The data utilized in this study have many shortcomings. Mainly, in my future work, I will recode the ideology measure such that it captures a leader's foreign policy positions as opposed to positions within the ideological landscape of domestic policy. For instance, a hypothetical president Hillary Clinton would have been coded in these data as left-leaning, therefore my model would assume her as a dove on foreign policy despite her enthusiasm for interventionism. Coding hawk vs. dove reputation

would also alleviate data missingness problem which forces me to remove some observations of female leaders in conflict.

Additionally, observational studies are prone to some omitted variable biases. Here, there is the chance that significant shifts in executive approval data based on executive scandals or drastic changes in social or economic stability were not accounted for.

In addition to recoding key variables and expanding the number of controls in the models, future work should also investigate whether the data exhibit autocorrelation and account for that methodologically.

CONCLUSION

Despite significant progress towards gender equality, the data reveal women leaders are evaluated differently than their male counterparts. My argument centers on a leader's foreign policy actions interacting with their ideology and gender to affect public approval ratings. The data demonstrate that militarized conflict outcomes do not significantly shift public opinion, though ideology and gender do. Therefore, I did not find evidence to support my hypotheses 1 through 4 and 6–7. My fifth hypothesis, that the public approval of female leaders with a hawkish reputation would not be expected to fluctuate in response to foreign policy actions when compared to male leaders, was inconclusive. It appears that foreign policy actions had little impact, but hawkish females did receive substantially lower approval ratings than male hawks, male doves, and female doves.

Another expectation—that the public approval of female leaders would tend to stay the same (no approval bump) after taking foreign policy actions that deviated from their prior policy reputations while men would receive a boost in public approval—could not be tested, as none of the female leaders in this sample ever compromised and there was only one instance of yielding. *This strongly suggests that women try to avoid conciliatory outcomes, in line with the gender norm deviation reward worldview.*

Furthermore, the data reveal that—in contrast to the experimental findings—men on the other hand, do not appear to experience an advantage for deviating from prior reputations. My hypothesis that all else equal, the public approval of male leaders would tend to increase after taking foreign policy actions that deviated from their prior policy reputations and decline after taking foreign policy actions that adhered to their prior reputations, was not consistent with the

data. While male hawks were estimated to receive higher net approval when they exhibited conciliatory outcomes, male doves enjoyed even more net approval when they did so.

While future studies should attempt to test the hawk's advantage hypothesis against a fuller set of cases, this thesis provides grounds for doubting whether the hawk's advantage can be observed empirically for either men or women, as leaders strategically avoid disadvantageous conflict outcomes. There may be potential for more peace if both male hawks and male doves are rewarded for conciliatory foreign policy. Women on the other hand, may not receive the same public approval rewards.

Where women appear to select themselves out of conciliatory, left-leaning, or dovish behaviors in times of militarized interstate conflict, this analysis has uncovered that women in this sample were significantly rewarded for a left-leaning or dovish ideology. While the hawk's advantage thesis suggests that men with hawkish ideologies are advantaged over doves when pursuing rapprochement policies in experimental data, I find that women received higher public approval when leaning ideologically left, with left in this data presuming dove behavior on foreign policy. I also find that when holding conflict outcomes constant, female hawks received the worst net approval compared to male hawks and to women who leaned more towards dove ideology.

The gendered double bind that women face suggests that women have to be feminine in office to maintain their support, but that the very display of femininity during times of conflict may be used against them to show that they are incompetent leaders and that their strategies are not in the interest of the nation. Therefore, women face significant barriers both in reaching high-status political positions and in choosing foreign policy strategies. The perpetuation of gender biases and their impact on shaping a state's foreign policy decisions in conflict has far-reaching

and costly implications. If women are only supported by voters when initiating or escalating a conflict, then this may incentivize more hostile international relations when women are elected during times of conflict. The results of this analysis offer some hope in that if left-leaning or dovish women are likely to be supported for their ideology, even if they are not supported for acting on those preferences in times of militarized conflict, then there may be more room for reconciliation between adversarial nations led by women leaders.

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