

Tolerance of hostility towards female politicians: A survey experiment

Abstract

The interactions between citizens and politicians constitute an important component of political representation. Previous research has shown that women politicians are contacted more by citizens, that these contacts are more often hostile, and that hostility is the worst for women in powerful positions. This paper studies the reasons for this gender-gap in hostile citizen contacts. A survey experiment is designed with a sequence of vignettes that lets the respondent imagine a policy of school re-organization that places their child in a relatively bad school. The respondent is then shown a fictitious and hostile email sent to the top politician and asked about the extent to which they find the hostile reaction to be “acceptable” and “understandable”. By randomly assigning the sex of the policy maker, a main goal is to analyse if the tolerance to hostile contacts is shaped by the politician’s sex. Additional questions measure possible reasons for differences in tolerance, namely: 1) perceptions about how politicians should interact with citizens, involving more or less direct contact; and 2) a view that women politicians should deal with hostile contacts in a more accommodating way. While previous research has focused on the constituent–representative interaction from the perspective of politicians, less attention has been paid to this interaction from the perspective of constituents. This paper offers the first survey experiment of its kind in exploring the cost–benefit structure of harassment toward female and male politicians. In the medium run, these experimental results will be used to build a theory on how gender norms for politicians’ leadership styles shape the tolerance structure among citizens for hostility toward men and women politicians.

Introduction

The issue of violence against politicians is starting to gain attention (Dal Bó, Dal Bó, and Tella 2006; Daniele 2017; Daniele and Dipoppa 2016; James et al. 2016; Pathé et al. 2014), with one line of research particularly focusing on the gender aspects (Bardall 2013; Bjarnegård 2017; Krook 2017; Krook and Restrepo Sanín 2016a, 2016b; Kuperberg 2018). Previous research has demonstrated that there is a gender gap in physical and psychological violence targeting politicians. Women in politics are more exposed to political violence than men, and this gap increases with the level of power (Håkansson 2019). This pattern is especially strong for psychological forms of violence such as online harassment, and threats communicated by phone or email (Håkansson 2019). In order to expand the understanding of this striking pattern, this paper sets out to study whether the higher frequency of harassment against women political leaders can be traced to a higher tolerance for others' harassment. Based on a survey experiment, the paper will explore the following research question:

Do constituents have a higher tolerance of hostile communication directed at female politicians than male, and if so, why?

Research on gendered harassment of politicians is dominated by studies carried out from the perspective of politicians rather than perpetrators. Constituents are the most common perpetrators against Swedish politicians (Håkansson 2019), making this perpetrator category central to understanding why women are targeted more than men. In order to study this issue causally, this paper outlines a survey experiment that measures differences in tolerance of hostility toward male and female politicians and tests three key reasons for this pattern.

A large literature in political psychology offers a theoretical foundation for women's greater exposure to hostile citizen contacts. While some researchers have concluded that women in politics need to demonstrate male-coded qualities such as assertiveness to show that they (unlike other women) can be good leaders (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993), other researchers have shown that women are punished and face backlash when they demonstrate qualities typical of assertive leadership (Brescoll, Okimoto, and Vial 2018; Rudman et al. 2012). Previous research has also shown that women are judged more harshly for making mistakes as politicians and that people are quicker to draw negative conclusions about women's competence and suitability for leadership (Brescoll 2016; Carli and Eagly 2001; Holman, Merolla, and Zechmeister 2011; Okimoto and Brescoll 2010; Rudman et al. 2012).

Much research has been devoted to attitudes to female political candidates and gendered expectations of what politicians should represent and enact substantively from the perspective of voters, and with the purpose of evaluating constraints and opportunities for getting women elected (see e.g. Bauer 2015, 2017; Bos 2011; Hayes and Lawless 2015). Far less attention has been paid to gender dimensions in expectations on how elected representatives should lead and act in relation to constituents, or expectations on how much hostility elected representatives should tolerate.

This paper contributes to the burgeoning research field among gender and politics scholars that focuses on how working conditions for politicians are gendered (e.g. Collier and Raney 2018; Franceschet 2010; Krook and Mackay 2011; Lovenduski 2014). This line of research departs from recognising that it is not enough that women get elected or gain real power and influence

for political gender equality to be achieved: the conditions for exercising political office also impact on the prospects for political gender equality. This research has highlighted the expectations women have to balance as office holders coming from parties, but less is known about how constituents' expectations differ for women and men and how these expectations shape the working conditions of elected representatives.

The interaction between representatives and constituents is a central component of representation, and elected officials increasingly receive direct communications from constituents as this has become technically easier (Aars and Strømsnes 2007; Hooghe and Marien 2014; Naurin and Öhberg 2013; Öhberg and Naurin 2016). Studying the gender differences in constituency contacts from the perspective of constituents makes an important contribution to literature on representation styles.

Hypotheses and theoretical foundations

Study A

One reason to expect more hostile constituent contacts targeting female politicians is, to put it harshly, that they are more disliked than male politicians. Women in politics and other leadership roles face more negative attitudes about their competence (Eagly and Karau 2002), and it takes less to elicit negative emotions towards female than male politicians (Brescoll 2016; Brescoll, Okimoto, and Vial 2018). The following hypothesis is drawn out from this theoretical expectation:

H1: Constituents have a higher tolerance for hostility directed at female than male politicians

H1a: Constituents are more likely to reply that hostility is acceptable when it is directed at female than male politicians

H1b: Constituents are more likely to reply that hostility is understandable when it is directed at female than male politicians

The second hypothesis is that higher tolerance of hostility will be accompanied by assigning lower severity to acts of hostility targeting female politicians, and demands on more politeness on behalf of women in response to harassers:

H2: Constituents consider it more appropriate for women to be polite to aggressors

H1 and H2 constitute the main hypotheses that study A aims to test.

Study B

Previous research on gender and constituency contact

Women in politics spend more time on constituency work and are better at it (Beck 1991; Flammang 1985; Norris 1997; Richardson and Freeman 1995; Thomas 1992), rate devoting time to the problems of citizens who have contacted them as more important than men do (Naurin and Öhberg 2013; Norris and Lovenduski 1995), and specifically report being contacted personally by constituents more often than male representatives (Herrick 2010; Norris 1997; Richardson and Freeman 1995).

Most research on constituent-representative relations has been carried out from the perspective of politicians. For example, Thomas (1992) studied if women and men in politics see their roles

and relationship to constituents differently, Norris (1997) has studied why politicians prioritise interacting with constituents, Herrick (2010) finds that female politicians report being contacted more often by citizens than male, and Naurin and Öhberg (2016) studied how politicians are responsive to citizens' communications and in another study (2013) how efficient politicians perceive citizen-initiated contact for affecting policy. This research provides knowledge on gender differences in how politicians perceive and react to citizen-initiated contact, and hints at a difference where women in politics report receiving more contacts than men. It does not, however, offer insight into why citizens would contact female politicians more than male.

It has been established descriptively that women in local politics exercise more inclusive leadership styles in processes of policy-making (Kathlene 1994), conduct public meetings more inclusively with a higher citizen participation (Holman 2015), and give higher priority to involving citizens in budget processes (Weikart et al. 2006). Similarly, women in congress self-perceive as being more relationship-oriented, better at understanding others, and engage with constituents in a more humble and less adversarial manner (Dittmar, Sanbonmatsu, and Carroll 2018). This descriptive difference in leadership styles likely stems, at least in part, from a higher demand on inclusivity from women politicians. The question remains whether diverging from such a leadership style incurs punishments in the form of direct hostility from constituents.

Based on previous research, we know that female leaders face expectations that they should be nurturing and relationship focused, and that people prefer communal leadership styles from female managers. However, women and men in politics are not always entirely comparable due to the horizontal and vertical gender segregation in politics. In most parliaments across the globe, women assume more responsibility for social and welfare issues and are higher represented in leftist parties; which place a higher priority on such issues (Inglehart and Norris 2003). Hence, this could lead to a pattern of more constituency contact, and more negative contacts, for women politicians that is unrelated to gendered preferences among constituents. Such a pattern could stem from the fact that women occupy more roles that deal with individual cases. Similarly, the work division between politicians entails that front-benchers deal less directly with constituents than back-benchers do (Norris 1997). The vertical gender segregation in politics could then also contribute to women engaging more with citizens. This raises the question whether informal expectations based on a politician's sex, or formal capacity, matters more for what type of politicians citizens are more likely to direct their contact to and expect direct interaction with. If given a choice between a female and a male politician with the exact same formal role, people would perhaps be as likely to contact the male as the female politician.

However, there is reason to believe women are approached more by constituents independent of their formal roles as politicians. Due to women's traditional roles as nurturers and caregivers, people might expect women to care more about constituents' problems and views, prioritise relationships and be more approachable and available. If women receive a larger share of contacts from constituents, and assuming that there is a latent propensity to harass politicians amongst any constituency, women will receive a higher share of harassment due to the volume of total contacts they receive. This expectation forms the basis of the following hypotheses:

H3: Constituents prefer direct interactions with female over male politicians

H3a: Constituents prefer to contact female over male politicians

H3b: Constituents have a higher preference for face-to-face interaction with female than male politicians

A preference for contacting female politicians would likely stem from a higher expectation on their availability to citizens and a more interactive leadership style. Constituents' expectations on more inclusive leadership and more approachability among female politicians could entail justification of hostile communications just as it would include all forms of communications. Likewise, expectations on an inclusive leadership style and approachability should entail expecting less reprisals in response to hostility targeting female politicians:

H4: Preference for direct interaction with female politicians is associated with a higher tolerance of hostility towards them and expectations on lower response severity

H4a: Preference for interaction with female politicians explains part of the higher tolerance of hostility towards them

H4b: Preference for interaction with female politicians explains part of the higher expectations on politeness in women's response to hostility towards them

H4, including (H4a and H4b) cannot be tested causally in this experiment, but will be analysed in order to contribute to theory development by providing descriptive evidence.

Design

The experiment will be fielded via Lucid, a survey company. The study will be hosted on Qualtrics and survey respondents from Lucid will be directed towards the Qualtrics study and complete the questionnaire on that platform. The survey questionnaire is found at the end of the paper.

Vignette outline

In short, the vignette outlines a hypothetical situation where the respondent is confronted with a policy that is upsetting, and a peer that reacts with hostility towards the politician behind the policy. In a sequence of five questions, respondents evaluate interactions between constituents and representatives along the way. The survey flow is outlined in Figure 1. An outline of outcome variables, explanatory variables, and covariates is listed in Table 1.

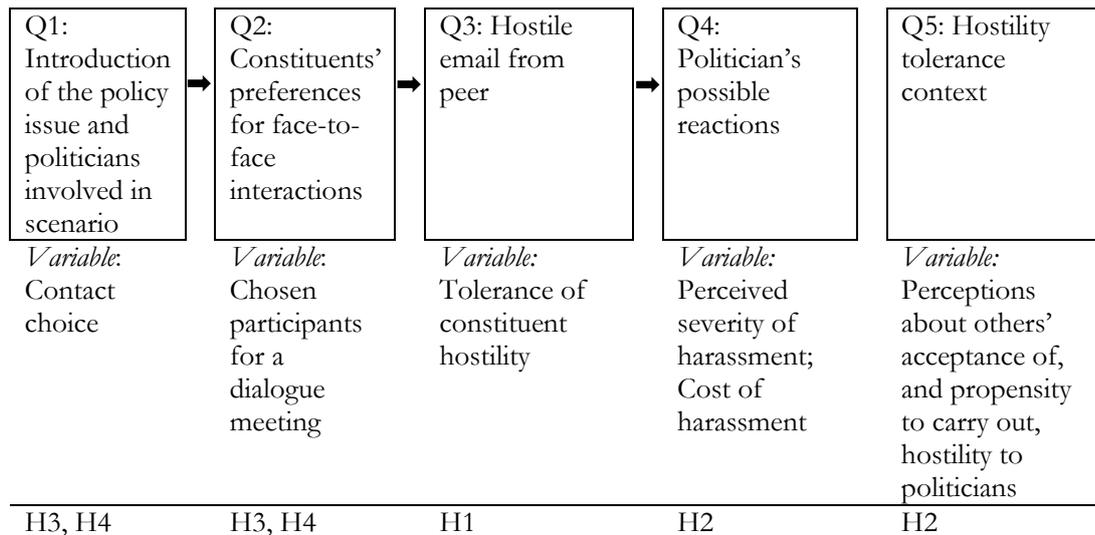


Figure 1: Hypotheses' operationalisations and place in survey

The first question describes a hypothetical scenario where a school is closed down in the respondent's municipality, classes are split up and the respondent's child is assigned to a low-performing school. Two politicians are listed as possible contacts (mayor, and chair of the committee on education), and the respondent is asked which politician they would to contact if they wanted to try to change the situation. The mayor is female under the treatment condition, and under control condition the mayor is male. The gender of the other politician is opposite to the mayor's gender. In order to make sure that the treatment of a female versus a male politician is effectively achieved I will include images of the feigned politicians in the vignette. I add a feigned email address and telephone number, and highlight the formal role of the politician, in order to make it look like a typical contact page at a city webpage and to try to avoid giving away that the politician's sex constitutes the topic of the experiment.

In the second question, respondents are asked which of the politicians they think should participate in a town-hall meeting with constituents where the school policy is discussed. Again, they chose from the same list of politicians as in Q1.

In Q3, a hostile email to the politician is presented and respondents rate to what extent they find the email acceptable and understandable on two separate scales. In order to make this scenario realistic and help participants imagine the situation the illustration is made to look as an actual email. The idea behind letting respondents answer these two scales in that order is to allow them to first answer the socially desirable answer that precludes hostility from being acceptable. Having been allowed to attest to hostility being unacceptable should make it easier to admit to a certain level of understanding for the hostility. "Acceptability" and "Understandability" will be analysed as an index of one of the main outcome variables; tolerance of hostility to politicians.

In Q4, respondents rate how appropriate six different responses from the politician to the email would be. Two options do not contain any reprisals for the email sender: one option includes apologising for the school policy, and another includes answering in a constructive tone. The rest include different degrees of costs to the harasser. This question measures the second of the main outcome variables. Perceived costs to harassing politicians make up a vital part of a climate that enables harassments, and the response option without reprisals operationalises assigning low severity to such actions.

In Q5, respondents rate how acceptable and common this type of email to politicians is in their community. Perceptions about peers' acceptance of certain behaviours and how common those behaviours are operationalises a culture that enables hostility to politicians.

Vignette design

In the selection of a policy issue to describe in the vignette, I have considered that it should be something that people feel strongly about, that evokes negative feelings across the board of political sympathies, and yet the policy issue cannot be absurd but has to feel like something that could happen. The selected policy, school closure and school allotments, is an issue that often attracts much attention when it happens. It is possible that the impact of the gender of the politician behind a policy is stronger for certain issues. For instance, punishments could be worse if a female politician does not conform to expectations on being a nurturer in issues such as education (Cassese and Holman 2018). Inversely, punishments could be worse if a female politician makes an unpopular policy in a male coded policy area such as taxes. Based on the experiment at hand I will not be able to assess how much it matters that I have chosen a female coded policy area (education) since I do not compare to another policy area. This is something for future research to address.

Images can signal other things than gender, e.g. age, niceness (including through facial expressions such as a smile). In order to avoid such violations of the excludability criterion images and names have been selected to signal same age, race and class. The names were selected from lists of common names in the age cohort born in the 1960s in the US. Google searches were used to ascertain that the names did not belong to any well-known celebrity, and Google image searches were carried out to ascertain that the majority of pictures that turned up displayed people similar to those in the experiment in terms of gender, age, and race. The images used in the survey have previously been used in Clayton, O'Brien and Piscopo (2019). They have been tested on Mturk to make sure they score equally on attractiveness, likeability, competence, and perceived age. More information can be found in their online appendix (Clayton, O'Brien, and Piscopo 2019).

The advantages of studying the proposed hypotheses using a survey experiment are that when using observational data on real-world examples it is hard to disentangle the impact of different aspects of a candidate. A candidate can be perceived negatively due to their party affiliation, policy action, age, gender, or any other myriad of aspects. Even when comparing similar women and men it is difficult to isolate the impact of gender from possible confounders. In experiments, as opposed to the real world, it is possible to assess evaluations of candidates that meet the all-else-equal criterion: identical in all aspects except for gender. In the present case, the politician will act similarly in all respects and occupy the exact same formal roles, and only their gender is varied. Hence, this allows me to get an estimate of if and how gender matters for the tolerance of hostility towards a politician cleansed of other factors that differ between politicians. In addition, experiments overcome the socially desirable answer that a politician's gender does not affect the extent of hostility against them one tolerates. Furthermore, vignettes, as opposed to conjoint experiments, have the advantage that people process information better when it is presented in the form of a story (see e.g. Berinsky and Kinder 2006).

A critique raised against vignettes is that asking respondents to report how they would behave in a hypothetical situation does not necessarily correspond to actual behaviour (Fowler 1995).

However, vignettes have been shown to effectively capture actual behaviour (Hainmueller, Hangartner, and Yamamoto 2015). Moreover, my main aim is not to capture actual behaviour: the primary interest is attitudes towards hostility directed at female and male politicians. Attitudes to hostility in a social context makes up a culture that can be permissive of such acts to different degrees. Research on violence prevention has demonstrated that individuals’ beliefs about the attitudes of others is key to individuals’ propensity to perpetrate. Hence, attitudes to hostility from a peer is not interpreted as a measure of own propensity for perpetration but as an indicator of an enabling culture (see also Hulin, Fitzgerald, and Drasgow 1996 regarding cultures that enable sexual harassment in the workplace).

As illustrated in Figure 2, randomisation will happen in two steps: the main treatment is the gender of the mayor in the vignette. In the next step, three pictures of female and male legislators are randomly varied to make sure that any difference in the outcomes for female and male legislators do not entirely emanate from the pictures themselves. The average hostility tolerance, response severity, contact choice and intense interaction preference for the three fictitious women will be compared to the same for the three fictitious men.

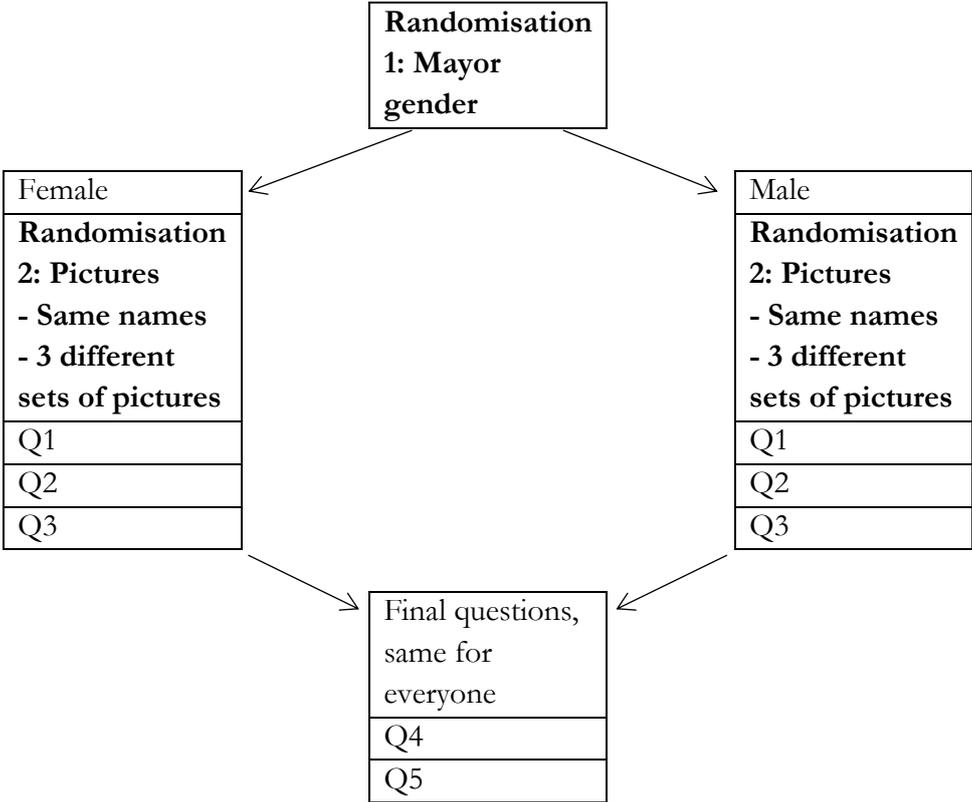


Figure 2: Survey flow and randomisation

US--Sweden Comparison

The survey experiment described here is part of a larger project that includes data collected in Sweden. Findings from the presently described experiment will be compared to findings from a similar experiment carried out in Sweden. The comparison between findings in the US and

Sweden will be used to assess the external validity of the findings. Similar outcomes with respect to the hypotheses are expected in the US and Sweden. Furthermore, the US survey will be used as a pilot and inform amendments to the survey to be fielded in Sweden. Data collection in Sweden will be pre-registered separately.

Possible heterogeneity and covariates

A potentially important heterogeneity could stem from respondent's gender. Psychological research has shown that on average women trust women more, and men trust men more. Hence, they might prefer to contact a politician of their own gender. Moreover, men are more critical of female politicians than women (see e.g. Gatto and Petherick 2018; Morgan and Buice 2013) and might be more accepting of hostility towards them.

The policy issue, a school close-down, has been selected in order to avoid partisan cues and preferences that differ across the party spectrum. However, since respondents tend to infer candidates' partisanship based on the candidate's gender (women are commonly believed to be Democrats), I indicate that all politicians are Democrats. It is possible that non-Democratic sympathisers have more positive attitudes to Democratic male than female candidates and that this affects their tolerance of hostility against the candidate. Consequently, I will test for any heterogeneity based on the respondent's ideology (see e.g. Hayes 2011; Koch 2000; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan 2009).

The survey will also collect information about respondents' household composition, which will be used to test if tolerance of hostility differs depending on whether respondents have children in school age. If the group of respondents that are potentially affected specifically by the situation described have a higher tolerance for hostility, this could indicate that this segment of respondents is most emotionally engaged by the scenario described in the vignette. Alternatively, this could be captured by controlling for respondent's age, under the assumption that people are socialised into understanding the implications of the scenario by being part of a social context of peers with families. The outcome variables, explanatory variables, and covariates as well as how these are measured are outlined in Table 1.

Estimation procedures

I will calculate the difference of means for tolerance of hostility towards female versus male candidates. A Student's T-test will be used to analyse statistical significance of differences. Regression analyses will also be carried out using the covariates listed in Table 1 to test whether respondents' individual characteristics influence the tolerance of hostility and the gender gap in tolerance. Furthermore, including control variables can improve precision and are unproblematic granted a correct implementation of the randomisation (Gerber and Green 2012). I will calculate ATE estimates, standard errors / confidence intervals, and p-values. The main specifications will test the hypotheses as follows:

A:

$$H1: \text{Hostility_tolerance} = \alpha + \beta \text{Female} + \gamma \mathbf{X}' + e$$

$$H2: \text{Response_severity} = \alpha + \beta \text{Female} + \gamma \mathbf{X}' + e$$

B:

$$\text{H3a: Contact_choice} = \alpha + \beta\text{Female} + \gamma\mathbf{X}' + e$$

$$\text{H3b: Intense_interaction_preference} = \alpha + \beta\text{Female} + \gamma\mathbf{X}' + e$$

$$\text{H4a: Hostility_tolerance} = \alpha + \beta_1\text{Female} + \beta_2\text{Intense_interaction_preference} + \gamma\mathbf{X}' + e$$

$$\text{H4b: Response_severity} = \alpha + \beta_1\text{Female} + \beta_2\text{Intense_interaction_preference} + \gamma\mathbf{X}' + e$$

\mathbf{X}' is a vector of covariates consisting of respondent characteristics as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Variables and expected impact

	Concept	Variable	Indicator	Values	Expected impact
Outcome variables	Tolerance of hostility towards politician	Understanding of scenario involving hostility towards a politician	“To what extent to you find this parent’s actions understandable?”	5 point Likert scale ranging from “Completely understandable” to “Completely not understandable”	-
		Acceptance of scenario involving hostility towards a politician	“To what extent to you find this parent’s actions acceptable?”	5 point Likert scale ranging from “Completely acceptable” to “Completely unacceptable”	-
	Perceived cost to harassing a politician	Degree of severity/politeness in measures politician should take when receiving hostility	“In your opinion, how appropriate would the following actions be as a response to the parent’s email?”	5 point scales ranging from “Completely appropriate” to “Completely inappropriate”, with reference to six response actions.	-
		Beliefs about how acceptable hostility to politicians is in one’s community	“How acceptable do you think this type of email is to other people in your community?”	5 point Likert scale ranging from “Completely acceptable” to “Completely unacceptable”	-
		Beliefs about how common hostility to politicians is in one’s community	“How common do you think these types of emails to politicians are in your community?”	5 point Likert scale ranging from “Very common” to “Very rare”	-
	Preference for contacting politician	Respondent’s preferred contact	“If you were to contact a politician ... who would you approach?”	Multiple choice based on formal role and gender of politician	-

	Preference for interaction with politician	Respondent's preferred politician(s) to participate in town-hall meeting	"If the local government were to hold a town-hall meeting ... which politician/politicians do you think should participate?"	Multiple choice based on formal role and gender of politician	-
Explanatory variable	Politician's gender	Mayor's gender in vignette	Gender signalled by name (appears three times in vignette) and image (appears in Q1 and Q3)	Dichotomous	Overall higher tolerance of hostility towards female mayor than male
Control variables	Respondent sex	Survey block on demographic questions	"What is your gender?"	Male, Female	Male respondents are expected to be especially tolerant of hostility to female politicians
	Respondent's family composition	Survey block on demographic questions	"Do you have children?"	Has children who still live at home, Has children who have moved out of the family home, Does not have children	It is possible that respondents that have children are more prone to accept and understand hostility towards politicians in the case described in the vignette.
	Respondent age	Survey block on demographic questions	"In what year were you born?"		Respondents in age span where peers have children might be more prone to accept and understand hostility towards politicians in the case described in the vignette.

Respondent
ideology

Survey block on
demographic
questions

“Generally speaking, do
you consider yourself as a
Republican, Democrat, or
Independent?”

Strong Democrat
Democrat
Lean Democrat
Independent
Lean Republican
Republican
Strong Republican

Democrat respondents
are expected to be
overall less tolerant of
hostility to female and
male Democrat mayors

References

- Aars, Jacob, and Kristin Strømsnes. 2007. "Contacting as a Channel of Political Involvement: Collectively Motivated, Individually Enacted." *West European Politics* 30(1): 93–120.
- Bardall, Gabrielle. 2013. "Gender-Specific Election Violence: The Role of Information and Communication Technologies." *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 2(3).
- Bauer, Nichole M. 2015. "Emotional, Sensitive, and Unfit for Office? Gender Stereotype Activation and Support Female Candidates." *Political Psychology* 36(6): 691–708.
- . 2017. "The Effects of Counterstereotypic Gender Strategies on Candidate Evaluations." *Political Psychology* 38(2): 279–95.
- Beck, Susan Abrams. 1991. "Rethinking Municipal Governance: Gender Distinctions on Local Councils." In *Gender and Policymaking*, ed. Debra L. Dodson. Rutgers, NJ: Eagleton Institute: Center for the American Woman and Politics, 103–13.
- Berinsky, Adam J., and Donald R. Kinder. 2006. "Making Sense of Issues Through Media Frames: Understanding the Kosovo Crisis." *Journal of Politics* 68(3): 640–56.
- Bjarnegård, Elin. 2017. "Gender and Election Violence: Advancing the Comparative Agenda." *Comparative Politics Newsletter* 27(1): 11–15.
- Bos, Angela L. 2011. "Out of Control: Delegates' Information Sources and Perceptions of Female Candidates." *Political Communication* 28(1): 87–109.
- Brescoll, Victoria L. 2016. "Leading with Their Hearts? How Gender Stereotypes of Emotion Lead to Biased Evaluations of Female Leaders." *The Leadership Quarterly* 27(3): 415–28.
- Brescoll, Victoria L., Tyler G. Okimoto, and Andrea C. Vial. 2018. "You've Come a Long Way... Maybe: How Moral Emotions Trigger Backlash Against Women Leaders." *Journal of Social Issues* 74(1): 144–64.
- Carli, Linda L., and Alice H. Eagly. 2001. "Gender, Hierarchy, and Leadership: An Introduction." *Journal of Social Issues* 57(4): 629–36.
- Cassese, Erin C., and Mirya R. Holman. 2018. "Party and Gender Stereotypes in Campaign Attacks." *Political Behavior* 40(3): 785–807.
- Clayton, Amanda, Diana Z. O'Brien, and Jennifer M. Piscopo. 2019. "All Male Panels? Representation and Democratic Legitimacy." *American Journal of Political Science* 63(1): 113–29.
- Collier, Cheryl N., and Tracey Raney. 2018. "Understanding Sexism and Sexual Harassment in Politics: A Comparison of Westminster Parliaments in Australia, the United Kingdom, and Canada." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 25(3): 432–55.
- Dal Bó, Ernesto, Pedro Dal Bó, and Rafael Di Tella. 2006. "'Plata o Plomo?' Bribe and Punishment in a Theory of Political Influence." *American Political Science Review* 100(1): 41–53.

- Daniele, Gianmarco. 2017. "Strike One to Educate One Hundred: Organized Crime, Political Selection and Politicians' Ability." *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*.
- Daniele, Gianmarco, and Gemma Dipoppa. 2016. "Mafia, Elections and Violence against Politicians." *IEB Working Paper* 2016(29).
- Dittmar, Kelly, Kira Sanbonmatsu, and Susan J. Carroll. 2018. *A Seat at the Table: Congresswomen's Perspectives on Why Their Presence Matters*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Eagly, Alice H., and Steven J. Karau. 2002. "Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice toward Female Leaders." *Psychological Review* 109(3): 573–98.
- Flammang, Janet A. 1985. "Female Officials in the Feminist Capital: The Case of Santa Clara County." *Western Political Quarterly* 38(1): 94–118.
- Fowler, Floyd J. 1995. *Improving Survey Questions: Design and Evaluation*. London: Sage.
- Franceschet, Susan. 2010. "The Gendered Dimensions of Rituals, Rules and Norms in the Chilean Congress." *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 16(3): 394–407.
- Gatto, Malu A. C., and Anna Petherick. 2018. "The Presidenta Effect: Perceptions of Women in Politics in Post-Impeachment Brazil."
- Gerber, Alan S., and Donald P. Green. 2012. *Field Experiments : Design, Analysis, and Interpretation*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Hainmueller, Jens, Dominik Hangartner, and Teppei Yamamoto. 2015. "Validating Vignette and Conjoint Survey Experiments against Real-World Behavior." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 112(8): 2395–2400.
- Håkansson, Sandra. 2019. "Do Women Pay a Higher Price for Power? Gender Bias in Political Violence in Sweden." DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.30065.12649/1.
- Hayes, Danny. 2011. "When Gender and Party Collide: Stereotyping in Candidate Trait Attribution." *Politics & Gender* 7(2): 133–65.
- Hayes, Danny, and Jennifer L. Lawless. 2015. "A Non-Gendered Lens? Media, Voters, and Female Candidates in Contemporary Congressional Elections." *Perspectives on Politics* 13(1): 95–118.
- Herrick, Rebekah. 2010. "Sex Differences in Constituent Engagement." *Social Science Quarterly* 91(4): 947–63.
- Holman, Mirya R. 2015. *Women in Politics in the American City*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press.
- Holman, Mirya R., Jennifer L. Merolla, and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister. 2011. "Sex, Stereotypes, and Security: A Study of the Effects of Terrorist Threat on Assessments of Female Leadership." *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy* 32(3): 173–92.
- Hooghe, Marc, and Sofie Marien. 2014. "How to Reach Members of Parliament? Citizens and Members of Parliament on the Effectiveness of Political Participation Repertoires." *Parliamentary Affairs* 67(3): 536–60.

- Huddy, Leonie, and Nayda Terkildsen. 1993. "Gender Stereotypes and the Perception of Male and Female Candidates." *American Journal of Political Science* 37(1): 119–47.
- Hulin, Charles L., Louise F. Fitzgerald, and Fritz Drasgow. 1996. "Organizational Influences on Sexual Harassment." In *Women and Work: A Research and Policy Series, Vol. 5. Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: Perspectives, Frontiers, and Response Strategies*, ed. Margaret S. Stockdale. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.
- Inglehart, Ronald, and Pippa Norris. 2003. *Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change Around the World*. Cambridge University Press.
- James, David V. et al. 2016. "Aggressive/Intrusive Behaviours, Harassment and Stalking of Members of the United Kingdom Parliament: A Prevalence Study and Cross-National Comparison." *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology* 27(2): 177–97.
- Kathlene, Lyn. 1994. "Power and Influence in State Legislative Policymaking: The Interaction of Gender and Position in Committee Hearing Debates." *American Political Science Review* 88(3): 560–76.
- Koch, Jeffrey W. 2000. "Do Citizens Apply Gender Stereotypes to Infer Candidates' Ideological Orientations?" *The Journal of Politics* 62(2): 414–29.
- Krook, Mona Lena. 2017. "Violence Against Women in Politics." *Journal of Democracy* 28(1): 74–88.
- Krook, Mona Lena, and Fiona Mackay, eds. 2011. *Gender, Politics and Institutions - Towards a Feminist Institutionalism*. Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Krook, Mona Lena, and Juliana Restrepo Sanín. 2016a. "Gender and Political Violence in Latin America. Concepts, Debates and Solutions." *Política y gobierno* 23(1): 127–62.
- . 2016b. "Violence Against Women in Politics. A Defense of the Concept." *Política y gobierno* 23(2): 459–90.
- Kuperberg, Rebecca. 2018. "Intersectional Violence against Women in Politics." *Politics & Gender* 14(4): 685–90.
- Lovenduski, Joni. 2014. "The Institutionalisation of Sexism in Politics." *Political Insight* 5(2): 16–19.
- Morgan, Jana, and Melissa Buice. 2013. "Latin American Attitudes toward Women in Politics: The Influence of Elite Cues, Female Advancement, and Individual Characteristics." *American Political Science Review* 107(4): 644–62.
- Naurin, Elin, and Patrik Öhberg. 2013. "Call Me Maybe? Politicians' Views of Citizen-Initiated Contacts with Elected Representatives. A Survey and Experiment with Swedish Politicians." In *Stepping Stones: Research on Political Representation, Voting Behavior and Quality of Government*, Göteborg Studies in Politics, eds. Stefan Dahlberg, Henrik Oscarsson, and Lena Wägnerud. Gothenburg, Sweden: University of Gothenburg, Department of Government.
- Norris, Pippa. 1997. "The Puzzle of Constituency Service." *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 3(2): 29–49.

- Norris, Pippa, and Joni Lovenduski. 1995. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge University Press.
- Öhberg, Patrik, and Elin Naurin. 2016. "Party-Constrained Policy Responsiveness: A Survey Experiment on Politicians' Response to Citizen-Initiated Contacts." *British Journal of Political Science* 46(4): 785–97.
- Okimoto, Tyler G., and Victoria L. Brescoll. 2010. "The Price of Power: Power Seeking and Backlash against Female Politicians." *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin* 36(7): 923–36.
- Pathé, Michele, Jane Phillips, Elke Perdacher, and Ed Heffernan. 2014. "The Harassment of Queensland Members of Parliament: A Mental Health Concern." *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law* 21(4): 577–84.
- Richardson, Le, and Pk Freeman. 1995. "Gender Differences in Constituency Service Among State Legislators." *Political Research Quarterly* 48(1): 169–79.
- Rudman, Laurie A., Corinne A. Moss-Racusin, Julie E. Phelan, and Sanne Nauts. 2012. "Status Incongruity and Backlash Effects: Defending the Gender Hierarchy Motivates Prejudice against Female Leaders." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 48(1): 165–79.
- Sanbonmatsu, Kira, and Kathleen Dolan. 2009. "Do Gender Stereotypes Transcend Party?" *Political Research Quarterly* 62(3): 485–94.
- Thomas, S. 1992. "The Effects of Race and Gender on Constituency Service." *Western Political Quarterly* 45(1): 169–80.
- Weikart, Lynne A., Greg Chen, Daniel W. Williams, and Haris Hromic. 2006. "The Democratic Sex: Gender Differences and the Exercise of Power." *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy* 28(1): 119–40.

Treatment condition: female mayor

Imagine that your city has decided to close down the school your child attends. The purpose is to balance the city budget. The classes will be split up and your child has been assigned a place in a low performing school. Your child is worried about this disruption and losing their classmates.

If you would contact a politician in your city to try to change the situation, who would you be most likely to approach?

- Mayor Susan Nelson (D)** 371 559 42 31 susan.nelson@citygov.com (7)
- Chair of the School Board Mark Gallagher (D)** 372 559 42 57 mark.gallagher@citygov.com (8)

If the local government were to hold a town-hall meeting regarding the school policy, which politician/politicians do you think should participate? (Several options possible)

- Susan Nelson, Mayor
- Mark Gallagher, Chair of the School Board

After learning about the policy, a parent sends the following email to the mayor Susan Nelson: --

From: a.smith@gmail.com
Sent: September 8, 2018 11:34 p.m.
To: Susan Nelson
Subject:

I demand to appeal my son’s school placement! How can you treat our children as lab rats!!? I know where you live and I know your kids' names and where they go to school. You stink and mark my words you and your family will PAY FOR THIS!

To what extent do you think that the way the parent acted is acceptable? By *acceptable*, we mean that you could justify a person doing something like this in this situation.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
Completely acceptable	<input type="radio"/>	Completely unacceptable				

To what extent do you think that the way the parent acted is understandable?

By *understandable*, we mean that you could see how a person in this situation would do something like this.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
Completely understandable	<input type="radio"/>	Completely not understandable				

In your opinion, how appropriate would it be for the mayor to respond to the parent's email in the following ways?

	Very appropriate (30)	Somewhat appropriate (31)	Neither appropriate nor inappropriate (32)	Somewhat inappropriate (33)	Very inappropriate (34)
Reply, apologize for the policy, and describe the appeal process for school allotments (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reply describing the appeal process for school allotments in a constructive tone (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reply describing the appeal process for school allotments and emphasize that the comments are unacceptable (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ignore the email (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Report the email to Human Resources (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Report the email to the police (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How acceptable do you think that this type of email is to other people in your community?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
Completely acceptable	<input type="radio"/>	Completely unacceptable				

How common do you think that this type of email to politicians is in your community?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
Very common	<input type="radio"/>	Very rare				

Control condition: male mayor

Imagine that your city has decided to close down the school your child attends. The purpose is to balance the city budget. The classes will be split up and your child has been assigned a place in a low performing school. Your child is worried about this disruption and losing their classmates.

If you would contact a politician in your city to try to change the situation, who would you be most likely to approach?

- Mayor Mark Nelson (D)** 371 559 42 31 mark.nelson@citygov.com (7)
- Chair of the School Board Susan Gallagher (D)** 372 559 42 57 susan.gallagher@citygov.com (8)

If the local government were to hold a town-hall meeting regarding the school policy, which politician/politicians do you think should participate? (Several options possible)

- Mark Nelson, Mayor (1)
- Susan Gallagher, Chair of the School Board (2)

After learning about the policy, a parent sends the following email to the mayor Mark Nelson:

From: a.smith@gmail.com
Sent: September 8, 2018 11:34 p.m.
To: Mark Nelson
Subject:

I demand to appeal my son's school placement! How can you treat our children as lab rats!!? I know where you live and I know your kids' names and where they go to school. You stink and mark my words you and your family will PAY FOR THIS!

To what extent do you think that the way the parent acted is acceptable?

By *acceptable*, we mean that you could justify a person doing something like this in this situation.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
Completely acceptable	<input type="radio"/>	Completely unacceptable				

To what extent do you think that the way the parent acted is understandable?

By *understandable*, we mean that you could see how a person in this situation would do something like this.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
Completely understandable	<input type="radio"/>	Completely not understandable				

In your opinion, how appropriate would it be for the mayor to respond to the parent's email in the following ways?

	Very appropriate (30)	Somewhat appropriate (31)	Neither appropriate nor inappropriate (32)	Somewhat inappropriate (33)	Very inappropriate (34)
Reply, apologize for the policy, and describe the appeal process for school allotments (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reply describing the appeal process for school allotments in a constructive tone (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reply describing the appeal process for school allotments and emphasize that the comments are unacceptable (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ignore the email (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Report the email to Human Resources (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Report the email to the police (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How acceptable do you think that this type of email is to other people in your community?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
Completely acceptable	<input type="radio"/>	Completely unacceptable				

How common do you think that this type of email to politicians is in your community?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
Very common	<input type="radio"/>	Very rare				