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## Why can't a woman be more like a man? Female leaders in crisis bargaining

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### ABSTRACT

What is the impact of gender on international affairs? In this paper, we argue that existing theories of international relations often miss the crucial role of gendered perceptions in politics. We draw on research in experimental psychology and the comparative politics of gendered leadership to understand how gender influences reactions to female foreign policy. We argue that female leaders in particular face gender stereotypes that cause dispute opponents to underestimate their resolve during bargaining. Using data on the gender of leaders in militarized disputes, we find evidence of gender biases in bargaining interactions: Female-led states are more likely to have their disputes reciprocated and are consequently more likely to forcefully escalate a dispute than male-led governments. These findings point to the importance of stereotypes and cognitive biases when studying how the increasing heterogeneity of policymakers—and especially world leaders—impacts foreign policy.

### KEYWORDS

Gender; bargaining; military dispute; stereotypes; leaders; foreign policy

## Introduction

What is the impact of gender, specifically the gender of state leaders, on international politics?<sup>1</sup> In this paper, we argue that female leaders may behave similarly to their male counterparts during international bargaining—but they are perceived differently. Dispute opponents consider female leaders as less willing to follow through on hard-line policies, causing them to resist threats made by women more often than similar threats issued by men. Compared with men, women in turn must take even more aggressive actions to demonstrate resolve at the bargaining table. Thus, we analyze how the reactions of dispute opponents to a leader's gender condition international dispute interactions.

Although theories of foreign policy have begun to account for the gender of policymakers (e.g., Croco and Gartner 2014; Koch and Fulton 2011) and citizens (e.g., Dolan 2011; Eichenberg 2003; Guisinger 2016), they rarely

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<sup>1</sup>We use the word gender in the colloquial sense to differentiate between male and female or man and woman.

 Supplemental data for this article can be accessed on the [publisher's website](#).

explore the effect of gender on the highest levels of political office. There is some evidence suggesting that while female legislators have a pacifying effect on foreign policy, female executives have the opposite effect (Caprioli 2000; Caprioli and Boyer 2001). In particular, female leaders are thought to adopt more aggressive foreign policies in order to gain credibility in masculinized leadership positions (Dube and Harish 2017; Koch and Fulton 2011). On the other hand, Horowitz, Stam, and Ellis (2015) find similar patterns for male and female military dispute initiation.<sup>2</sup> These studies of female leadership have one crucial factor in common: They compare the *behavior* of women with that of men in leadership positions. We are looking at the *reactions* to a woman's behavior rather than expecting a leader's gender to directly condition their own behavior. While gender may not distinguish behavioral patterns, we propose that gendered perceptions cause audiences to interpret and respond to female behavior differently.

The decision to focus on the gender of *leaders* reflects a recent trend in international relations research connecting leadership characteristics with foreign policy.<sup>3</sup> This research program demonstrates the importance of leadership characteristics for such things as dispute initiation, crisis behavior, and a host of other foreign policy outcomes. To date, these studies have found few reliable gender effects. Women may face different challenges as they rise to the top, but this research assumes that women who achieve such leadership positions possess similar traits to men in leadership. Consequently, their policies differ little (e.g., Horowitz, Stam, and Ellis 2015).

These theories of leaders miss the crucial role of gender stereotypes in international interactions. Experimental work and literature on the comparative politics of leadership has long demonstrated pervasive implicit and explicit gender biases in daily exchanges. Such research has honed in on two broad categories of gender stereotypes that shape female leadership at the executive level: communality and agency. Women are seen as more communal (warm, gentle, nurturing, etc.) but less agentic (aggressive, ambitious, dominant, etc.) compared to men. "However, leadership roles require agency" (Brescoll 2016, 416). Women who make it to the highest levels of office are said to emulate men with agentic leadership styles in order to compensate for their inherent disadvantage in such a masculinized role. Yet while women leaders may adopt agentic attributes—typically associated with men and leadership positions—to lead effectively, audiences interpret agency less favorably when it emanates from women rather than men (Heilman and Okimoto 2007; Okimoto and Brescoll 2010). These stereotypes are further exacerbated by the stereotype that women are more emotional than men.

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<sup>2</sup>For a review of the recent positivist literature of gender and international relations, see Reiter (2015).

<sup>3</sup>For a small sample of this research, see Byman and Pollack (2001); Chiozza and Goemans (2004, 2011); Croco (2015); Debs and Goemans (2010); Fuhrmann and Horowitz (2015); Goemans (2000); Horowitz and Stam (2014); Saunders (2011).

We specifically investigate the role of gender stereotypes in international dispute bargaining as an area ideally suited for studying *reactions to* rather than the *behavior of* female leaders. Bargaining outcomes inevitably rely on reactions to one another's threats and promises, and we argue that women face unique challenges in this context. If women play to their traditional gender roles and espouse a communal/female/pacific foreign policy, they eschew valuable hard-line bargaining tactics. However, once they play to agentic/male/aggressive roles by threatening and/or initiating a dispute, the dispute opponent is more likely to discount the threat as a bluff and reciprocate the dispute. Female leaders then escalate disputes to signal resolve. Thus, female leaders do not escalate because they are inherently more aggressive or insecure; rather, the biased response of the dispute opponent provokes escalatory behavior.

Our paper proceeds as follows. First, we explore the literature on leaders and foreign policy and the comparative politics of gendered leadership. Then, combining the insights of these literatures, we propose our own theory of gendered bargaining. We draw on evidence in experimental psychology to describe the mechanisms behind this theory. The third section presents quantitative evidence supporting our predictions. Using data on the gender of leaders in militarized interstate disputes, we find that women are more likely to have their disputes reciprocated by their opponent, and they are more likely to escalate a dispute through force. In the fourth section, we probe the theoretical mechanisms in a case study of Indira Gandhi's role in the Bangladeshi Liberation War of 1971. The final section concludes with a summary of our findings and implications for both theory and policy.

## **Gender, Leaders, and Bargaining**

Empirical research on female leaders in dispute bargaining has been contradictory. Early research on the subject of female leaders found that women behaved more aggressively in crisis bargaining, presumably to compensate for gender disadvantages (Caprioli and Boyer 2001). In this view, women who succeed as national political leaders have adopted masculine leadership styles to counteract gender stereotypes (Fukuyama 1998; Sykes 1993). There is also the view that female leaders are likely to be more effective in bargaining, because women are seen as more risk-averse and unlikely to bluff (Charness and Gneezy 2012). However, Horowitz, Stam, and Ellis (2015, 177) recently found minimal differences by gender for dispute initiation and aggression. They argue that "contrary to conventional wisdom ... women leaders do not necessarily come to power by emulating or trying to outdo their male counterparts, though that potentially happens as well. Nor are they, by definition, weak, conciliatory, and cooperative when facing international crises." Female and male leaders necessarily differ on some background experiences

(motherhood, war experience, etc.), but these characteristics do not affect average conflict risk propensities.<sup>4</sup> In this view, female and male bargaining interactions should resemble one another, holding all else constant.

These findings and predictions are surprising given decades of research on the unique challenges that women face in leadership positions. Studies have shown that women must overcome various hurdles to leadership in the domestic political context, stemming from public preferences for “male” characteristics at higher levels of office (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993). Lawless (2004) finds that female presidential candidates face disadvantages when “men’s issues” dominate the political agenda. Women in leadership especially face challenges in the national security realm: Swers (2007) finds that gender stereotypes often favor male defense leadership, making it difficult for female senators to establish reputations on security. These studies represent a burgeoning research on public perceptions of female politicians, especially in the American political context (Bauer 2015; Dolan 2014; Fox and Lawless 2011; Hayes and Lawless 2015).<sup>5</sup>

At a broader theoretical level, Eagly and Karau (2002) note that the difficulty for women leaders lies in the mismatch of *gender* stereotypes with *leadership* stereotypes. The challenge is two-pronged. First, communal attributes (affectionate, helpful, kind, sympathetic, interpersonally sensitive, nurturant, gentle, etc.), which are identified as distinctly female, are divorced from successful leadership models. Second, when women embrace agentic leadership qualities (aggressive, ambitious, dominant, forceful, independent, daring, self-confident, competitive, etc.), which are identified as male, they often experience resistance and backlash from relevant audiences (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt 2001; Heilman and Okimoto 2007). Research shows that when female leaders adopt agentic traits to fit their leadership roles, observers view them as less competent leaders than their male counterparts. The disconnect between these two stereotypes—that leadership requires agency and that women lack agentic attributes—is exacerbated by a third stereotype, the strongest of gender stereotypes: the belief that women are more emotional than men (Brescoll 2016; Plant et al. 2000). To illustrate, US President Richard Nixon noted, “I don’t think a woman should be in any government job whatever. I mean, I really don’t. The reason why I do is mainly because they are erratic. And emotional. Men are erratic and emotional, too, but the point is a woman is more likely to be.”<sup>6</sup> Because of this stereotype, audiences interpret (often implicitly) female policies as more emotional than equivalent male policies. Actual emotional displays further undermine female leadership—“especially when the emotion conveys

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<sup>4</sup>These findings match up with other evidence in the literature on the recruitment of women for terrorist organizations (Bloom 2011; Eager 2016; Thomas and Bond 2015).

<sup>5</sup>This is just a small sample of the literature. For a recent and more comprehensive review, see Lawless (2015).

<sup>6</sup>Clyber (2001).

dominance (e.g., anger or pride),” which is often associated with an agentic (male) leadership style (Brescoll 2016, 415). Women thus struggle to adopt successful leadership tactics, because gender stereotypes exclude them from effectively 1) making policy associated with agentic attributes and 2) expressing emotions which convey agency and leadership.

Additionally, agentic emotions and actions decrease evaluations of female competence and credibility. In a recent study of female business leaders, “women’s perceived competency drops by 35% ... when they are judged as being ‘forceful’ or ‘assertive’ ” (Maxfield, Grenny, and Chase 2015). In an experimental study of adult participants, Brescoll and Uhlmann (2008, 268) “found that both male and female evaluators conferred lower status on angry female professionals than on angry male professionals.” Other experimental evidence shows that women who adopt an aggressive leadership style receive more negative performance evaluations, while men receive *additional* credit for similar approaches (Heilman et al. 2004). Salerno and Peter-Hagene (2015, 589) find that “when a woman expresses anger this does not just make her seem less credible, but seems to make assessing her credibility irrelevant—instead, participants just became more confident in their own opinion.” Thus, while anger or aggression help men govern effectively, the same tactics undermine perceptions of female leadership credibility (Hess et al. 2000; Zell, Krizan, and Teeter 2015). Because of these stereotypes, audiences are more likely to view women as incompetent leaders, compared with men (Brescoll 2016, 411).

An important clarification is in order: Schelling (1966) argues that (male) leaders can engage in tactics of “rational irrationality” to make the opponent believe he will take an otherwise unlikely action.<sup>7</sup> “Emotional” behavior is often equated with “irrational” behavior (Mercer 2005), and audiences infer a tradeoff between the ability to control outward emotional display and the ability to make important decisions in a rational, objective manner (Shields 2002). Extrapolating from this argument, female emotion might consistently signal such irrationality, enhancing threat credibility. According to the logic of some international relations theories, gender stereotypes regarding emotion should accordingly *benefit* women in international bargaining by making their threats appear more credible.

However, theories of gendered leadership make it quite clear that this hand-tying tactic does *not* work in cases of female bargaining. In fact, the reality is quite the opposite: Female emotion signals weakness and irresolution, while male emotion signals strength and resolve (Brescoll and Uhlmann 2008). Due to gender stereotypes operating during interactions, female hard-line tactics signal both the unwillingness and the inability to follow through

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<sup>7</sup>See Schelling’s (1966) discussion on pages 36–43 of *Arms and Influence* in which he argues that “Sometimes we can get a little credit for not having everything quite under control ...”.

on polices—clearly a handicap rather than an asset for establishing credibility during bargaining. Zammuner (2000) finds that female leaders are treated as unreliable during difficult situations due to their perceived emotional instability. Brescoll (2016, 418) discusses an experimental study in which while “people believed that men would control their emotions and ‘intervene in the situation,’ they believed that women would be unable to ‘keep calm’ and would thereby be ‘confused’ and ‘bewildered’ by the events.” As a consequence, female leaders are considered less likely to stand firmly behind their decisions and more likely to back down from a policy if challenged (Brescoll 2016; Salerno and Peter-Hagene 2015). Thus, displaying emotion and feigning irrationality (or even being crazy) can enhance the credibility of male threats; but pervasive, implicit gender stereotypes regarding emotion undercut perceptions of female credibility in bargaining.

Many argue that women should be able to anticipate these biases and compensate accordingly, but the experience of female leaders demonstrate a challenging “double bind” or a difficult “balancing act.” Female leaders often have a difficult time striking the right balance for several reasons. For one, women in high-status leadership positions threaten the status quo whereby men historically possess more power and status than women (Moss-Racusin and Rudman 2010). For another, those female leaders who anticipate gender bias might restrain their emotions—but this approach also provokes backlash (Rudman and Phelan 2008). Translated to the language of crisis bargaining: some women, aware of their credibility problems, may be less likely to bluff if they know that their bluffs are likely to be called. However, women should also know that not threatening plays to gender stereotypes and signals weakness, inviting more hostility from the opponent. They face a “double bind” in which neither soft-line nor hard-line actions induce respect.<sup>8</sup>

To sum up this diverse literature on gendered leadership and gender stereotypes: Aggressive, forceful actions signal agency, leadership, and masculinity. Gender stereotypes preclude women from successfully adopting agentic policies or expressing emotions that convey dominance. However, female leaders must adopt agentic tactics and/or express masculine emotions (often in the form of aggressive policy measures or forceful management tactics) to lead effectively. While such policies often convey resolved policies/ leadership for men, such actions tend to communicate—due to gender stereotypes regarding emotion—that the female leader is neither willing nor able to follow through on a policy or policy stance. In turn, observers are likely to underestimate a woman’s resolve during bargaining situations.

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<sup>8</sup>See Catalyst (2007); Pew Research Center (2015); and Snyder (2014).

## Gender Stereotypes and Dispute Bargaining

We argue that gender and leadership stereotypes handicap women's interactions with dispute opponents. The literature on cognitive biases has found evidence that intense stress and situations of ambiguous information cause individuals to deploy schemas—essentially cognitive shortcuts—to process information (Dovidio and Gaertner 2000; Fiske 2002; McDermott 2004). Thus, in situations of international crisis (situations of high stress), governments are most likely to draw on gender schemas to respond to threats from women.<sup>9</sup> During dispute bargaining, international audiences should interpret hardline, aggressive (“angry”) foreign policies emanating from women through the lens of gender bias. Since female agency is interpreted as emotional weakness rather than an indication of resolve or commitment, the dispute opponent will be more likely to view threats from women and demands as easily challenged/resisted. Thus, threats, dispute initiation, and demonstrations of military force are less effective signals of resolve coming from a state led by a woman than one led by a man. Because the target state concludes that the woman lacks resolve, it is more likely to resist female-instigated disputes. In response to this resistance, women must take more escalatory measures to demonstrate resolve.

As indicated throughout this paper, gender stereotypes often operate on an implicit, rather than the explicit, level (Eagly and Karau 2002; Goldin and Rouse 2000; Moss-Racusin et al. 2012). Indeed, schemas concerning race, gender, class, etc. are often unconscious, or implicit, and can clash with “explicit” attitudes or beliefs. Typically their usage changes based on increased exposure or awareness about their existence (Dovidio and Gaertner 2000; Fiske et al. 2002; Nosek, Banaji, and Greenwald 2002). Our theory relies primarily on implicit gender stereotypes, but we do find unambiguous sexism throughout our case research. This is likely because gender norms are not the same across space and time: Some state leaders hold conventional Western feminine norms that reflect these biases on a more implicit level. Non-western (and some Western) bargaining opponents are more likely to hold explicit biases, in which “male leaders seem ... unwilling to ‘lose’ to a women lest their masculinity be questioned” (Caprioli and Boyer 2001, 508).<sup>10</sup> For example, explicit gender stereotypes surfaced during the lead-up to the Falklands War between Great Britain and Argentina. In negotiations with Argentine General Galtieri, the American negotiator Vernon Walters emphasized: “General, they *will* fight, and they will win ...” In response, Galtieri insisted that the British would not fight and at one

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<sup>9</sup>Granted, most studies regarding stereotypes have been conducted in the laboratory. However, an increasing number of these studies overcome the “college sophomores” problem by using adult samples in various contexts (including the business world, academia, and domestic politics).

<sup>10</sup>See also Bosson and Vandello (2011); Hunt, Gonsalkorale, and Murray (2013); McGlen and Sarkees (1993); Willer, Rogalin, Conlon, and Wojnowicz (2013).

point said, “That woman wouldn’t dare” (referring to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher). Walters stated, “Mr. President, ‘that woman’ has let a number of hunger strikers of her own basic ethnic origin starve themselves to death, without flickering an eyelash. I would not count on that if I were you.”<sup>11</sup> Galtieri’s gendered comment regarding Thatcher indicates more explicit bias.

Regardless, we should expect implicit rather than explicit gender biases to dominate international relations. It is generally not politically acceptable to be blatantly sexist. Gender norms are pervasive, and we would expect a majority of governments to be governed by them at an implicit level. Not every person holds these biases, but government officials likely hold these biases given how historically male-dominant both government and military apparatuses have been (Cohn 1987). Indeed, the logic of gender stereotypes is not even dependent on the gender of the opponent’s leaders or government. Women are just as likely to exhibit bias against other women in various contexts, including business (Brescoll and Uhlmann 2008), education (Moss-Racusin et al. 2012), and law (Coffey and McLaughlin 2009).<sup>12</sup>

Because of the often implicit nature of these stereotypes, the gender of the leader in many ways shapes the gender identity of the ruling government, whether it be democratic or non-democratic (Goldstein 2001). Envision the way in which we label a government by the ruling leader, such as “Thatcher’s government” or the “Obama administration.” Leaders do not rule alone, but their gender shapes many of the ruling dynamics and international perceptions. For this reason, we would expect that gender will have similar effects on threat credibility whether the threat emanates from a democratic or non-democratic leader. We also predict that gender biases will even permeate lower-level disputes that are often carried out by lower-level officers acting according to standard operating procedures. Accordingly, we use the terms “female leaders” and “female-led states” interchangeably throughout the remainder of this paper. Regardless of whether the stereotype operates implicitly or explicitly during specific cases, we expect average levels of reciprocation and escalation to be higher for female-led states due to gender bias.<sup>13</sup>

## Hypotheses on Dispute Bargaining

We propose that gender bias increases the likelihood that a dispute opponent will miscalculate the resolve of a female opponent. Though our theory does not present a bargaining framework in the sense of a formal model, the intuition of the bargaining interaction is consistent with one. The problem

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<sup>11</sup>Quoted in Freedman and Gamba-Stonehouse (1990, 176).

<sup>12</sup>The MID data set includes only three observations of female-female dyads, which is not enough information to allow us to test these arguments during international dispute bargaining.

<sup>13</sup>For a more thorough discussion of this point, we refer the reader to the supplementary files.

we address is one of asymmetric information leading to conflict. The woman initiates a conflict with some type of offer or demand. The target state has incomplete information about her resolve and so does not know whether to accept or reject the offer. In this case, the target state is even less likely to make the correct decision, because an inaccurate prior belief (gender bias) prevents the target from using the new information of the demand to update accurately. The target state therefore rejects the bargain, believing her to be irresolute. This rejection results in conflict.

Gender ultimately introduces an additional element of informational uncertainty into the bargaining calculus. When a male-led government initiates a dispute, the target state will respond according to situational factors, as predicted by existing theories of international relations (see discussion of control variables). When a woman instigates a dispute, the target state will interpret the aggression in light of female stereotypes and be more likely to reciprocate the dispute. This logic implies that women or female-led states, on average, will issue less successful threats and demands than men or male-led states.

**Hypothesis 1** *Disputes initiated by female-led states are more likely to be reciprocated by the target state than disputes initiated by male-led states.*

Following from Hypothesis 1, female-led states must escalate disputes with higher levels of hostility to bargain effectively. When they face initial resistance to their demands, they use escalatory threats and military measures to establish resolve.<sup>14</sup>

**Hypothesis 2** *Female-led dispute initiators will escalate disputes to higher hostility levels than male-led dispute initiators.*

There is a sense that female leaders should anticipate troubles at the bargaining table and compensate early on (Caprioli et al. 2001). According to this logic, women, anticipating difficulties at the international level, instigate especially hostile disputes.<sup>15</sup> They provoke reciprocation from the dispute opponent with their initial hostility. However, this interpretation of challenger escalation is also indicative of gender bias. Most research in international relations indicates that challenger escalation demonstrates resolve and *decreases* dispute reciprocation, not the reverse. If a woman's military escalation prompts spirals of escalating hostilities, then this is a very different dynamic than traditional crisis escalation done by men. It is ultimately possible (and altogether probable) that both mechanisms are at play

<sup>14</sup>According to theories of "audience costs," additional challenger escalation indicates that the target did not view the challenger as resolved. See Eyerman and Hart (1996); Fearon (1994); Haynes (2012); Huth and Allee (2002); Partell and Palmer (1999); Prins and Sprecher (1999). Fearon (1994, 585) argues that "when large audience costs are generated by escalation, fewer escalatory steps are needed credibly to communicate one's preferences."

<sup>15</sup>We are not the first to propose this as a possible explanation for gender variation in crisis escalation. Koch and Fulton (2011) posit this in their paper on national security policy in democracies and Caprioli and Boyer (2001) speculate on this in their study of international crises.

in empirical reality. The women who anticipate gender bias might escalate a dispute early on, provoking dispute reciprocation; those women who do not anticipate the bias escalate after initial dispute reciprocation. In this way, female leaders face a “double bind” in bargaining: female leaders are more likely to face resistance to their demands whether they initially take an aggressive approach or not.<sup>16</sup> Either way, women are more likely to escalate a dispute due to gender biases at work during bargaining interactions.

## Research Design

It is very difficult to discern implicit bias, as it presumes that the holder of that bias may be unaware of its influence on his/her behavior or ignorant of its very existence. Thus, we would expect implicit bias to be more obvious in behavioral patterns across space and time rather than in a single case. While most leaders are hesitant to openly express gender bias during dispute negotiations, they may either unwittingly or knowingly utilize implicit gender stereotypes to respond to threats from women. We thus propose a research design that leverages aggregate data to compare responses to disputes initiated by female-led and male-led states.

We employ the Correlates of War (COW) project’s Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) data set, version 4.01 (Palmer et al. 2015) to test our hypotheses. The unit of the analysis is the dyadic MID, with one initiating state and one target state per observation. MIDs include all “cases in which the threat, display or use of military force short of war by one member state is explicitly directed towards the government, official representatives, official forces, property, or territory of another state” (Jones, Bremer, and Singer 1996). While the MID dataset has been criticized for its lack of coercive threats (Downes and Sechser 2012), this dataset provides the best available data on military disputes involving female executives across space and time.<sup>17</sup>

We compiled a data set of all MIDs between 1980–2010.<sup>18</sup> This resulted in a population of 1,337 dyadic MIDs. However, our theory relies on the unique position of women in the bargaining process. One female leader in an international coalition of numerous male leaders will likely cloud gender effects during the dispute. In order to appropriately assess the role of gender during international disputes, we perform the analyses on bilateral MIDs ( $n = 879$ ) and MIDs in which there was one challenger ( $n = 1043$ ).

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<sup>16</sup>See Catalyst (2007); Pew Research Center (2015); and Snyder (2014).

<sup>17</sup>For a more detailed discussion of why we necessarily rely on this dataset in our empirical analysis, please see our discussion in Appendix B of the supplementary files.

<sup>18</sup>Only two female leaders (Indira Gandhi and Golda Meir) initiated militarized disputes before 1979. The 1980s really began the upsurge in female leaders.

## **Dependent Variables**

To evaluate Hypothesis 1, the analysis here uses `DISPUTE RECIPROCATION` to measure the first dependent variable of interest. This variable is coded 1 if the target threatens or uses militarized force to respond to the challenger's threat. It is coded 0 if there was no such militarized response. This measure has been criticized as "a poor indicator of threat effectiveness" because lack of reciprocation does not necessarily mean successful coercion and a reciprocated threat does not necessarily imply a failed threat (Downes and Sechser 2012, 465). Regardless of these (valid) critiques, `DISPUTE RECIPROCATION` is especially appropriate to testing our theory for two reasons. First, models of reciprocation have been standard in the literature mainly because reasonable alternatives have not arisen. We can compare the results here to other studies on dispute bargaining by relying on similar data. Second, even if reciprocation does not equal a failed threat, we view military reciprocation as revealing the target state's disregard for the challenger's position. Theories of gender stereotypes predict that dispute opponents should be more likely to reciprocate a female-led dispute because they perceive a woman's policies as easier to resist.

We replicate the reciprocation models with an alternative specification of the first dependent variable using `TARGET HOSTILITY LEVELS`. The hostility level of the target is coded as an ordinal variable, with values of 1 (No militarized action), 2 (Threat to use force), 3 (Display of Force), 4 (Use of force), and 5 (War). The `DISPUTE RECIPROCATION` variable is coded directly from this variable in that values of 1 are equivalent to no reciprocation (0) and values of 2–5 are coded as dispute reciprocation (1). We expect dispute initiation from women to increase the probability of target escalation compared with disputes initiated by men.

To evaluate Hypothesis 2, the analysis employs `CHALLENGER HOSTILITY LEVELS` as a measure of the second dependent variable. The hostility level of the challenger is coded as an ordinal variable in the same way as the hostility level of the target. Our theory dictates that women are more likely to escalate a dispute to higher levels of hostility than male leaders due to initial dispute reciprocation.

## **Independent Variables**

Our primary independent variable is `FEMALE`, a dummy variable coded 1 if the challenging state in the dyadic MID was headed by a woman and 0 if the leader was a man. We define "leader" as the head of state who controls foreign policy. We do this because these actors are most prominent in international disputes, being most likely to influence foreign policy and international negotiations. We compiled this variable from the "Worldwide Guide to Women in Leadership" (Christensen 2015), but our coding agrees with the extended version of Archigos v. 4.1 (Goemans, Gleditsch, and

Chiozza 2009). We cross-checked each observation to ensure that each female leader included in our dataset was indeed in charge of foreign policy during the dispute.<sup>19</sup>

This coding resulted in 33 observations of MIDs instigated by female-led states (2.47% of all observations). For bilateral disputes, there are 26 of these observations (2.95% of bilateral MIDs). Appendix A of the supplementary files lists all the female leaders involved in militarized disputes between 1980 and 2010.<sup>20</sup>

We use control variables standard in the literature throughout our analysis. For a discussion of all control variables, see Appendix C of the supplementary files.

## Empirical Analysis: Model Specification and Findings

For the first set of tests, we employ a logit model due to the dichotomous nature of the dependent variable, which takes on the value of 1 if the target militarily reciprocates a threat and 0 if not. For the second and third sets of tests, we employ ordered logit models, because both `TARGET HOSTILITY LEVELS` and `CHALLENGER HOSTILITY LEVELS` are ordinal variables ranging from 1 to 5. We report robust standard errors, clustered around the challenger in the dispute, to account for possible interdependence among cases with the same challenger that might deflate the standard errors. We report the marginal changes in probability throughout the body of this paper along with graphical representations of this estimates, as these facilitate a more natural interpretation of the effects.<sup>21</sup>

### Dispute Reciprocation

How do target states respond to women's dispute initiation? In [Table 1](#) we present the first set of logistic regressions to evaluate Hypothesis 1. In these regressions, gender acts as an additional predictor of dispute reciprocation and target escalation in dispute bargaining. While we can only draw tentative conclusions from this data due to the small number of female leaders, the results suggest that female-led states face higher levels of reciprocation and hostility levels from target states.

This first set of tests, reported in Models 1–2, considers the effect of `FEMALE` on dispute reciprocation. The gender of the leader is reliably associated with target resistance, increasing dispute reciprocation as anticipated by Hypothesis 1. In both models presented in [Table 1](#), the variable for leader gender (`FEMALE`) is positive and statistically significant at the 90% level or above. In Model 2, the variable `FEMALE` increases the probability of

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<sup>19</sup>For example, Pratibha Devisingh Patil was the twelfth President of India from 2007 to 2012. She would not be included in our coding of `FEMALE` because she was not the Prime Minister handling government foreign policy.

<sup>20</sup>Data of all female leaders, even those not involved in MIDs, are available from the authors upon request.

<sup>21</sup>We estimate these effects through the margins command in Stata 13 (StataCorp 2013).

**Table 1.** Logit estimates of *dispute reciprocation* and ordered logit estimates of *target* and *challenger hostility levels*.

	Dispute Reciprocation		Target Hostility		Challenger Hostility	
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Bilateral disputes	One challenger	Bilateral disputes	One challenger	Bilateral disputes	One challenger
FEMALE	0.768 ** (0.379)	0.811 ** (0.365)	0.895 *** (0.338)	0.955 *** (0.346)	0.878 * (0.494)	1.014 * (0.525)
CAPABILITY RATIO	-0.287 (0.291)	-0.630 ** (0.284)	-0.306 (0.299)	-0.556 ** (0.279)	0.029 (0.353)	0.042 (0.307)
NUCLEAR	0.338 (0.279)	0.386 * (0.234)	0.406 (0.259)	0.454 * (0.244)	-0.469 (0.355)	-0.367 (0.401)
CONTIGUOUS	1.134 *** (0.206)	0.944 *** (0.193)	1.275 *** (0.194)	1.186 *** (0.191)	-0.097 (0.265)	0.266 (0.241)
TERRITORY	0.746 *** (0.261)	0.858 *** (0.270)	0.621 *** (0.229)	0.617 *** (0.217)	0.388 (0.266)	0.157 (0.261)
POLICY	-0.392 * (0.212)	-0.452 ** (0.221)	-0.378 * (0.217)	-0.443 ** (0.223)	0.643 *** (0.172)	0.336 (0.206)
LEADERSHIP	-0.662 (0.468)	0.702 (0.617)	-0.630 (0.481)	0.488 (0.423)	0.160 (0.463)	0.223 (0.315)
NONDEMOCRATIC CHALLENGER	0.332 (0.230)	0.522 *** (0.198)	0.384 * (0.209)	0.499 *** (0.191)	0.571 ** (0.281)	0.521 * (0.309)
NONDEMOCRATIC TARGET	-0.078 (0.171)	-0.093 (0.139)	-0.003 (0.164)	0.027 (0.144)	0.050 (0.195)	0.186 (0.202)
ALLIANCE	-0.090 (0.187)	-0.017 (0.207)	-0.171 (0.196)	-0.103 (0.207)	0.020 (0.170)	-0.013 (0.209)
CONSTANT	-1.155 *** (0.267)	-0.908 *** (0.281)				
CUT 1			1.284 *** (0.266)	1.089 *** (0.286)	-2.975 *** (0.397)	-2.768 *** (0.429)
CUT 2			1.300 *** (0.264)	1.162 *** (0.278)	0.055 (0.315)	0.363 (0.352)
CUT 3			1.941 *** (0.259)	1.933 *** (0.269)	5.911 *** (0.550)	5.816 *** (0.539)
CUT 4			6.482 *** (0.587)	6.130 *** (0.499)		
N	879	1043	879	1043	879	1043
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.085	0.097	0.067	0.071	0.034	0.025

NOTE: Robust standard errors in parentheses.

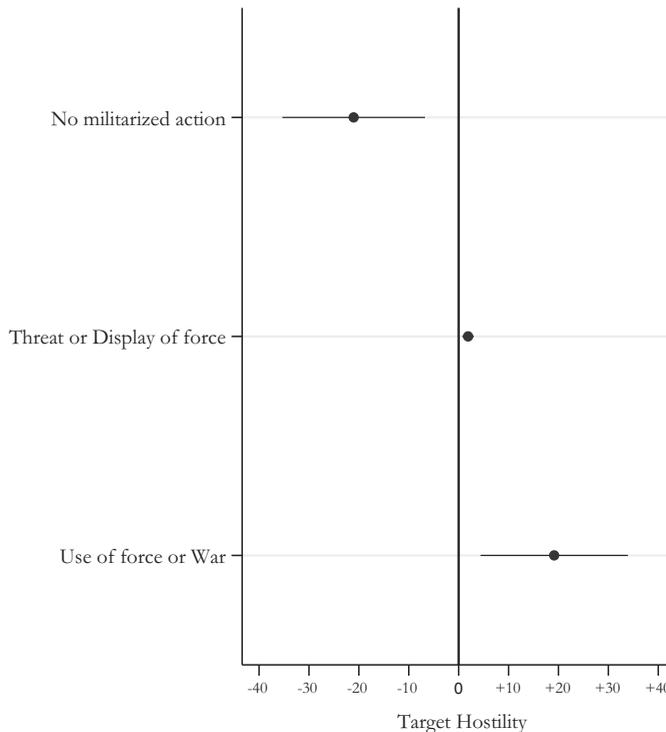
\* $p < 0.10$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

dispute reciprocation by 17.1 percentage points, other things being equal. This result is statistically significant at the 95% level ( $p$ -value = 0.024). As a comparison, contiguity increases the likelihood of reciprocation by 19.95 percentage points ( $p$ -value = 0.000). These patterns of reciprocation are consistent with Hypothesis 1, which predicts that female leaders (i.e., female-led states) will face higher levels of resistance from target states during international disputes, compared with male leaders (i.e., male-led states).

## Target Hostility Levels

We also analyze the response of the target state through TARGET HOSTILITY LEVELS, from which the variable DISPUTE RECIPROCATION is drawn. We find that the target is more likely to escalate a dispute when the challenger state is headed by a woman rather than a man. Table 1 reports the coefficients from two models in Models 3–4. Target states appear more likely to escalate to the highest levels of force against a female-led challenger. Targets of threats from women are 19.14 percentage points more likely to resort to force or war during the dispute ( $p$ -value = 0.011) and 21.04 points less likely to resort to no military action ( $p$ -value = 0.004). While the stage of threat/display of force is less certain due to the low number of observations, targets of women's threats are 1.89 percentage points more likely to threaten or display force ( $p$ -value = 0.002). Figure 1 graphs these marginal effects, showing a modest though substantively interesting impact for gender.<sup>22</sup>

These results are consistent with the logic of gendered perceptions: threats emanating from a challenger will be less effective if the leader is a woman rather than a man. Theories of gender stereotypes indicate that while male and female leaders act similarly while in power, international audiences respond differently to similar behavior. Gender stereotypes presumably



**Figure 1.** Marginal effect of FEMALE on target hostility levels.

<sup>22</sup>See Appendix E for detailed reporting of the probabilities at each level of target hostility.

make it more difficult for the target state to use information regarding capabilities and resolve to update and respond appropriately to a woman's threats and demands. Increased dispute reciprocation and target hostility among MIDs lend initial support for this logic to be operating at the international level.

### Challenger Hostility Levels

Following from this, Hypothesis 2 proposes that female-led states will also escalate disputes to higher hostility levels than male-led states. It predicts that female-led states must escalate disputes in order to compensate for gender biases and establish credibility with the bargaining opponent after initial resistance. Here we examine that proposal. The empirical results in [Table 1](#) (Models 5–6) estimate the effects of `FEMALE` on the probability of challenger escalation to assess this second hypothesis.

This third set of tests, reported in Models 5–6, evaluates Hypothesis 2. According to these tests, challenging states headed by female leaders (i.e., female-led states) escalate to higher levels of force than their male counterparts. The results here only reach significance at the 90% level but are suggestive of gender bias. The results reveal that women are more likely to use force or wage war than their male counterparts. Female-led states in this dataset appear somewhat more likely to escalate disputes to the highest hostility levels than are male-led states. In the figure, we collapse the categories of 2 (Threat to use force) and 3 (Display of force) as the base category; then 4 (Use of Force) and 5 (War) for the indicator. Women are more likely to escalate to force or war by 20.02 percentage points ( $p$ -value = 0.017).<sup>23</sup>

These results are consistent with Hypothesis 2. Traditional theories of bargaining would predict no effect for gender, since men and women face similar situational constraints. The logic of gender stereotypes suggests that because female leaders either anticipate or encounter difficulties during dispute bargaining, they likely enact more aggressive policies to overcome problems of perceptions in dispute opponents. These patterns of escalation are indicative of gender bias at the international level.

### Discussion

The most difficult challenges to overcome in the analysis of female leaders are those of selection effects and data limitations. We discuss these concerns below although readily admit that further study must occur before we can definitively dismiss any of these considerations. Given the data limitations, one way

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<sup>23</sup>See Appendix E for detailed reporting of the probabilities at each level of challenger hostility.

forward that addresses a separate but similar research question to ours would be to study female defense ministers in an alternative bargaining context. This would result in analogous analysis with more data, as there have been more female defense ministers than female leaders thus far. Below we further address limitations and ways forward to study female heads of state.

First, research has shown that women frequently come to power under particular circumstances (Jalalzai 2004). Many women leaders rise through political families or dynasties, suggesting that there might be some special reputation associated with them.<sup>24</sup> For example, both female presidents in the Philippines, Corazon Cojuangco-Aquino and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, came from major political families. Indira Gandhi<sup>25</sup> was likely selected in part because her father was the idolized Jawaharlal Nehru. Benazir Bhutto<sup>26</sup> capitalized on her father's credentials.<sup>27</sup> Cristina Fernández de Kirchner became president of Argentina in 2007 after her husband Néstor Kirchner declined to run for reelection. While potentially becoming less common and potentially less helpful (Hillary Clinton as a case in point), women often ride on the coattails of their husbands or fathers to gain power. They can either do so through traditional dynastic (i.e., nondemocratic) rules or democratic elections.

However, we believe that this empirical fact should bias our results *away* from finding higher levels of reciprocation and escalation. Women with strong political ties should be viewed as more established, credible opponents on the international stage. Women coming from political families can use the reputations of their male relatives to improve their international reputation for toughness. If anything, the women in our dataset who arose through dynastic processes should be more effective bargainers than their non-dynastic counterparts, thereby decreasing the probability of reciprocation and the need to escalate. These “dynastic” observations should bias the data away from the patterns uncovered in this paper.

However, the idea of political dynasties hints at the importance of personal reputations. A female leader's credibility might change over time. Indeed, we would expect any leader's credibility to improve over time should s/he take consistent steps to build his/her reputation. As such, the effects of gender stereotypes for a particular leader may fade, disappear entirely, or even flip as a woman establishes her credibility through multiple disputes.<sup>28</sup> Gender bias does fight against this, however. Going forward, one could study an individual female leader's bargaining reputation through a series of case studies.

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<sup>24</sup>This was also true in earlier centuries. Dube and Harish (2017) study the era of female monarchs.

<sup>25</sup>Prime Minister of India from 1966–1977 and again from 1980–1984.

<sup>26</sup>Prime Minister of Pakistan from 1988–1990 and again from 1993–1996.

<sup>27</sup>Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was both the founder of the PPP party and prime minister of Pakistan from 1973–1977.

<sup>28</sup>The ideas in this paper favor the development of personal reputation but recognize that they coexist with state reputation (e.g., Renshon, Dafoe, and Huth 2018).

Perhaps foreign audiences should perceive a general reputation of “toughness” in female leaders, at least one comparable to their male peers. In a rationalist argument, leaders should shift their beliefs based on empirical patterns. Unfortunately, the logic of gender bias predicts the opposite. While the symptoms of implicit gender bias *can* be controlled, it is difficult to completely eradicate it from one’s behavior (Raymond 2013). Gender biases operate in such a way as to limit a leader’s ability to update based on past behavior and accordingly treat men and women similarly. True, foreign leaders might perceive female leaders as more “masculine” than the “traditional” woman. Maybe they conclude that a woman gets into power by “acting like a man.” However, they are still unable to accurately update their beliefs about her resolve, because her actions ultimately demonstrate a disconnect between agentic and communal attributes.

Also closely related to the dynastic leaders is differing domestic incentives. The female leaders analyzed in this paper have mostly risen through democratic processes, but it is possible that women come to power with systematically different levels of domestic support. If women come to power with unprecedented levels of support, institutional constraints might fall away and facilitate more dispute initiation. On the other hand, if women are more likely to come to power during difficult times (e.g., Beckwith 2015; O’Brien 2015), the domestic situation may cause female leaders to select themselves into crises more frequently as a diversionary tactic or to *gamble for survival* (Chiozza and Goemans 2011).<sup>29</sup> International audiences may view female leaders as rash and therefore less resolved due to unique domestic conditions. This is a serious alternative to our proposed theoretical mechanism; and we believe such domestic incentives likely supplement our theory of elite perceptions. Regarding dispute reciprocation, however, recent work has found that even democratic institutions are much less transparent than assumed (Snyder and Borghard 2011; Trachtenberg 2012). Even if women do come to power under systematically different domestic conditions, these domestic factors are unlikely to influence bargaining interactions. Thus, this logic does not undercut our theory but does pose some interesting paths forward.

There is evidence that women are selected into office for their pacifying effect on foreign policy (Enloe 1989, 6), and countries may turn to women when they are exhausted by war or otherwise disinclined to fight (e.g., Lawless 2004).<sup>30</sup> According to this logic, international leaders might reciprocate bluffs at a higher rate due to actual feminine weakness. The empirical record provides little evidence to this effect. The women who make it to the highest levels office may be different from other women, but they differ little from other (male)

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<sup>29</sup>Gambling for survival is more likely to be a nondemocratic tactic because of the high costs of forcible removal. Indeed, high risk of regular removal (democratic elections) from office should make leaders less likely to initiate conflict.

<sup>30</sup>Steinberg (2007) argues that Indira Gandhi was initially selected into power in part for her “weak” or “feminine” qualities. However, the experience of Margaret Thatcher suggests the opposite, indicating that female leaders are selected into office in part because they behave in a more masculine manner. These selection processes likely balance out in the aggregate.

leaders. Horowitz, Stam, and Ellis (2015) find that women and men are, on average, equally risk-averse and aggressive, suggesting that men and women in leadership differ little in observable traits. To further study this question, survey experiments along the audience costs (e.g., Tomz 2007) line might provide evidence of whether domestic publics avoid women during times of crisis.

In all, we recognize the inherent difficulties in studying this question at the present time. The sample of female leaders is small, and the sample of female leaders involved in militarized disputes is even smaller. We cannot establish definitively what is driving the findings of this paper. However, these early quantitative results, mounting evidence in experimental literature on gender stereotypes, and government statements disparaging female foreign policy lend preliminary support to the idea of gender bias in international relations. Women do appear to face unique challenges in international bargaining, just as they do in other societal and leadership contexts. As more and better data becomes available regarding these leaders, we hope that further studies can more thoroughly explore this important question.

The evidence provided above indicates that on average female leaders encounter differential challenges in interstate bargaining. They are more likely to have their threats reciprocated and to escalate a dispute compared with their male counterparts. But it is important to note that while the quantitative evidence is consistent with the logic of gender stereotypes, it is not direct evidence that gender biases play a role in dispute decision-making. Can we find evidence of the proposed mechanisms described earlier in the paper? Do women face gendered perceptions of their actions from dispute opponents? The following section presents a case illustration of the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War as a particularly clear-cut example of how female leaders can face explicit gender bias during international bargaining.

### **Indira Gandhi and the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War**

To illustrate the mechanisms behind our theory, we conduct a brief case study on Indira Gandhi's role in the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971.<sup>31</sup> Gender biases are frequently implicit, manifesting themselves in patterns of biased behavior rather than explicit articulations of prejudice. Regardless, we find numerous statements discounting Gandhi, her leadership, and her policy actions based on her gender in this case study. Additionally, while our theory focuses on target state reactions, we also present evidence that other nations reacted to her policies according to the logic of gender stereotypes.

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<sup>31</sup>Gandhi was the only child of India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, and she became the first female democratic leader in 1966.

After a disputed election result between West and East Pakistan in December 1970, Pakistani President Yahya Khan suspended civil and political liberties in East Pakistan and initiated a military-sponsored genocide of Bengali citizens there. Survivors fled to neighboring India, deluging India's weak welfare state with refugees. Indira Gandhi's "initial and instinctive reaction was to give immediate recognition to a free Bangladesh and to back the liberation struggle and the resistance movement ..."<sup>32</sup> However, her army chiefs and Foreign Minister persuaded her to wait until India could better prepare for any conflict that might arise with Pakistan should India throw its full weight behind a free Bangladesh. In the meantime, Gandhi attempted to alleviate the humanitarian crisis through diplomatic means. She campaigned internationally for the freedom of the Bangladeshi people, but negotiations with world leaders fell on deaf ears.

The following US reactions provide some evidence of gender stereotypes operating during early negotiations. First, the United States disparaged her as a female leader. The recorded conversations between President Nixon and his advisers during the Bangladesh Liberation War "are rife with gendered speech and appeals to masculine 'toughness' that colored Nixon's actions" (Nichter and Moss 2010). Indira Gandhi is described as a "prune—bitter, kind of pushy, horrible woman" by Jackie Kennedy,<sup>33</sup> an "old witch" (Warner 2005, 1109), and "a bitch" by Nixon and Kissinger (Chowdhury 2005). Second, the "double bind" was at play: Regardless of Gandhi's approach—whether diplomatic or military—the US resisted her policies. At first, the United States disliked her diplomatic approach, but eventually the administration also criticized her militaristic policy toward the Bangladeshi issue. Finally, the United States did not perceive Gandhi as capable of achieving her hard-line policy goals, much in line with the logic of gender stereotypes. Nixon and Kissinger mocked her for being backed into the corner by US policy (Chowdhury 2005; Warner 2005), stating "we really slobbered over the old witch."<sup>34</sup> As the dispute progressed, Kissinger claimed that Gandhi's real yet unrealizable goals lay in the annihilation of Pakistani forces altogether and a power grab in the Middle East (Warner 2005, 1112).

More importantly, Gandhi lacked credibility with her opponent, Pakistan, which also focused on Gandhi's gender as a liability in foreign affairs. In August 1971, while Gandhi was pursuing diplomatic options internationally, Pakistani President Yahya Khan discussed Gandhi and her term in office with *Le Figaro*, the French publication, saying, "Mrs. Gandhi is neither a woman nor a head of state by wanting to be both at once." What would he say to Gandhi if there were to be a meeting between the two leaders, the interviewer asked? "I would say: 'Shut up, woman—leave me alone and let my refugees

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<sup>32</sup>Warner (2005), quoting J.N. Dixit, an Indian Foreign Services Official responsible for monitoring the crisis.

<sup>33</sup>Longbottom *Daily Mail*.

<sup>34</sup>Foreign Relations of the United States, vol. E-7, White House tapes, Oval Office 615-4, 5 November 1971, 8:51-9 a.m.

back' ” (Gupte 2009, 403). As evident in the first excerpt, President Khan perceived a disconnect between the qualities associated with leadership (agentic) and those that were female (communal) as predicted by theories of gendered leadership. He then dismissed her. Frustrated by lack of progress, Gandhi unilaterally approved the establishment of a joint military command of Indian forces and Bangladeshi guerrillas on November 12, 1971.

According to several sources, Gandhi made it extremely clear that India would wage war unless Pakistan liberated Bangladesh. Regardless, her threats to intervene were interpreted as a bluff. President Khan's response to Indian threats was one of disbelief: “If that woman [Indira Gandhi] thinks she is going to cow me down, I refuse to take it. If she wants to fight, I'll fight her!” (Malhotra 1991, 137). Yahya Khan could not perceive Gandhi's willingness to fight and ability to win the conflict. In reaction to Indian threats and mobilizations, Pakistan preemptively attacked India on December 3, drawing India into the war that same day. India recognized Bangladesh as an independent nation three days later—and defeated Pakistan militarily within thirteen days.

After the fact, President Yahya Khan stated that he would have responded in a more flexible and less violent manner against India had a male headed the Indian government during the conflict (Weart 1998, 206).<sup>35</sup> He admitted that his escalatory approach was shaped by the gender of his dispute opponent. Due possibly to gender biases, Khan resisted threats that he might have conceded to had they been issued by a man. This provides evidence, albeit ad hoc, that target states are more likely to reciprocate women's threats. In response to Pakistani miscalculation, Gandhi escalated the crisis to war.

Pakistan's preemptive strike is puzzling given its especially rapid defeat. What type of information did Pakistan miss in waging war against India? West Pakistan launched a war on two fronts (in Bangladesh and India), directly drawing in Indian military forces against them. India defeated West Pakistani forces and established Bangladeshi independence in a mere thirteen days. One of the reasons for such a gross miscalculation is likely underestimation of Indian, and more specifically Gandhi's, resolve. Pakistan and the other international actors held gendered biases that made it more difficult for them to discern Gandhi's resolve.

## Conclusions and Implications

This paper probes the role of gender in crisis bargaining. It contributes to recent scholarship on leaders in international relations, although it turns the focus from leadership characteristics to perceptions of leadership and reactions to state behavior. While a number of scholars have argued that gender, specifically gender equality, has a pacifying effect on foreign policy,<sup>36</sup> we find that this pacifying effect

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<sup>35</sup>See also Stoessinger (1990, 135–136).

does not operate at the executive level due to gender bias. Horowitz, Stam, and Ellis (2015) did not find a relationship between national leader gender and propensities for interstate conflict, but we believe our findings are compatible with theirs. Female leaders may differ little from male leaders in conflict proneness, but gender biases provoke higher levels of escalation *after* a dispute has begun. Our findings also agree with Koch et al. (2011), who found that female national leaders are associated with higher levels of defense spending and conflict. Our paper makes a unique contribution by systematically exploring reactions to female-led states, rather than focusing exclusively on female violence/conflict proneness.

Additionally, we draw on existing work that focuses on the role of female leaders in other contexts. Empirical work on gendered leadership either explains the domestic consequences of being a female leader (Jalalzai and Krook 2010) or utilizes psychological assessments to study the impact that different character traits have on foreign policy decisions (Steinberg 2007) and management styles generally (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt 2001). Women in parliaments, bureaucracies, and civil society lead in a more collaborative fashion and are shown to have pacific effects on government policy (e.g., Barnes 2016; Jalalzai 2004; Koch and Fulton 2011). These contributions however do not address the challenges that women leaders face when negotiating in the international arena, the focus of our paper.

Finally, we apply theories of gendered misperceptions to the rationalist bargaining literature (Fearon 1995). Gender bias makes it more difficult to mitigate informational problems in international bargaining. We find that these gender biases can make it more difficult for international actors to resolve situations of private information. Further research should be done to explore whether these biases continue even after war has broken out and to what extent gender stereotypes can be alleviated at the international level.

Indeed, the policy implications of this study affect dispute resolution in tangible ways. Pakistan's thirteen-day loss is indicative of Pakistan's miscalculation of India's resolve. This misunderstanding of female leadership can result in unnecessary costs, both in terms of the political costs associated with precipitating an unnecessary war and the material cost in human lives and national resources. Additionally, while this paper disaggregates by gender, this is just one way to split the data. If perceptions and biases regarding gender matter in international relations (alongside institutional configurations, the balance of power, public opinion, etc.), we could see biases regarding religion, language, and ethnicity also affecting bargaining.<sup>37</sup> All of this implies the need for diverse decision-making bodies and foreign policy advisors to interpret incoming information and avoid these gendered/racial/religious/ethnic perceptions. Diversity may become critical to a state's ability to signal intentions, interpret information, and avoid war. That being said,

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<sup>36</sup>See, for example, Caprioli (2000); Goldstein (2001); Hudson et al. (2012); Regan and Paskeviciute (2003). For a recent update to this finding, see Schroeder (2017).

there is unfortunately evidence that biases and stereotypes operate within groups (in this case, between women) as well.

One important, albeit speculative, implication of this study relates to the future of female leaders. Women face a double bind in politics of being perceived as either unfit for leadership because of their feminine qualities or unfeminine because of their leadership qualities. This quandary was evident in the 2016 United States Presidential election when Hillary Clinton noted this “delicate balancing act” on the campaign trail.<sup>38</sup> As women become more common in politics, we might see voters and foreign elites alike pushing back against the credibility of women. However, a critical mass of female leaders may generate a huge shift in gender stereotypes at the structural level, leading to a broad acceptance of the compatibility of female and leadership traits. Indeed, we can hope that women *will* become more common in the international arena, research on issues related to gender will continue to increase (Reiter 2015), and perhaps gender stereotypes will, like Hegel’s renowned owl of Minerva, vanish as we comprehend their effects.

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<sup>37</sup>Gender stereotypes are shown to be pervasive in a host of situations (Plant et al. 2000) and are likely just one of the biases operating at the leadership level. See Jervis (1976) and Lebow (1981) as seminal research on biases in International Relations. In sum, “[t]he most severe challenge to bargaining theory arises from the cognitive and decision-making biases” (Lake 2011, 45).

<sup>38</sup>“It’s really important not to wall yourself off from how you are actually feeling about what people say or how they treat you or how they treat somebody else that offends you or upsets you. But you’re also as a woman in a high public position or seeking the presidency, as I am, you have to be aware of how people will judge you for being, quote, ‘emotional.’ And so it’s a really delicate balancing act” (White 2016).

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