Voting for Mother and Father: An experimental approach to parenthood and British political leadership

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Introduction

It has been powerfully argued that, alongside an overall increase in mentions of politicians’ families over the last few decades, motherhood has become politicized. This politicization has been aided by the emergence of high-profile politicians whose motherhood has been the subject of extensive commentary, such as Sarah Palin in the US. Female leaders internationally, such as Angela Merkel in Germany and Julia Gillard in Australia, have also found their (non)motherhood subject to commentary. This paper contributes to this growing literature by conducting a case study using the British case. The case of Britain is useful because, recently, two parties, the Labour party and the Conservative party, held leadership elections in which two women ran—a mother and a non-mother. In both cases the motherhood of one candidate was used to implicitly criticise her female opponent for not having children.

The analysis is divided into two components. Firstly, following on from existing research, I examine the effect of varying party leadership candidates’ sex and parenthood status voter evaluations via experimental methods. Second, the experimental findings are subject to high-information experimental design using Dynamic Process Tracing Environment (DPTE) software, which brings some of the noise of real-world elections back into the experimental environment, offering a more dynamic experimental setting. DPTE is an internet-based programme which allows a researcher to attempt to recreate a dynamic social environment, such as an election. It reflects the vast flow of information received during a campaign where an ever-changing subset of the overall information is available at any one point in time. By using this software to create artificial party leadership elections this paper sets out a research design to explore the effect of varying candidate sex and parenthood on voter evaluations.

Previous work on voters’ gender-based stereotypes has made excellent use of experimental methods, but some of the results have been challenged by analysis of real world elections which suggest that women are not systematically discriminated against at the Ballot box (e.g. Dolan 2014). The combined methodology presented in this paper has the potential to bridge the divide between the two methodologies and test voter reactions with both clear experimental manipulations and more of the nuance of a real election campaign.

The Foundations: Gender-Based Stereotyping

To properly understand the effect of candidate sex and parenthood on voter evaluations one must begin with the work on gender-based stereotyping. Over the last few decades, mainly in the US context, numerous studies have examined voters’ gender-based stereotypes, demonstrating how they can work against women running for executive office. In the 1990s
and early 2000s, experimental studies found how descriptive stereotypes meant certain issues and traits were associated with the sexes. Seminal pieces included Huddy and Terkildsen’s US experimental work (1993a, 1993b) in the early 1990s which laid the foundations for many of the experimental designs and typologies of gender stereotypes later used. Their first paper (1993a) found that women tend to be seen as more compassionate, they are considered to be “warm, gentle, kind and passive” whereas men are more often seen as agentic, they are thought to be “tough, aggressive and assertive”. Men are then seen as more competent on tough, aggressive issues such as the military, foreign affairs and defence whereas female politicians are seen as competent on compassion issues such as healthcare, education and childcare (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a, p. 121). For both sexes possessing male traits was most beneficial. These were linked to presumed competency on issues such as economics and the military which is valued in leaders and were preferred characteristics for candidates for higher executive office (Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993b).

Later studies moved from these descriptive stereotypes which “purport to describe what group members are typically like (“women are gentle”)” to also look at prescriptive stereotypes which “describe the behavioural standards group members must uphold to avoid derision by the perceiver (“women should be gentle”). Prescriptive stereotypes relate to social norms and the notion that those who perform against expected norms will be punished (Gill, 2004, p. 619, original emphasis). Experimental evidence suggests women may need to display male behaviour associated with leadership to appear competent but simultaneously can experience backlash for not demonstrated expected feminine behaviour, such as communality, i.e. being more compassionate, warm and selfless (Eagly and Carli, 2003). Simultaneously when women display expected communal traits this can undermine their competency as they are thought to be devalued behaviours. This is what Jamieson (1995) termed the femininity/competency bind – women may have to strike a balance between stereotypically ‘female’ and ‘male’ behaviour. These prescriptive stereotypes have still been found in more recent studies, for example Okimoto and Brescoll’s (2010) experimental design showed that adding the information to a politician’s website that they had specific power-seeking ambitions negatively affected vote choice for women and resulted in a perceived communality deficit, but improved the reaction to men.

This work makes excellent use of experimental methods. Often, in a ‘real-world’ election, there is too much noise to be able to isolate specific causal effects; experiments allow researchers to strip back the noise and isolate and identify gender stereotypes. The common method creates a ‘low-information’ environment; participants are given a short vignette with candidates’ biographies and then asked to evaluate each candidate. One of the disadvantages of experimental methods is always the artificial and sterile environment in which they are
performed can limit their generalisability (Christensen, 1991). Yet this is enhanced by low-information experiments which miss much of the nuance voters face as they encounter a range of information throughout the course of a real election. Current studies are offer a snapshot at the beginning of a race. We know who is first out of the stalls, but not what happens between there and the finish line. Acting solely on this work one would conclude that women are routinely thwarted by gender-based stereotypes when running for leadership positions – yet this has not been the case. The oft-repeated mantra is ‘when women run, women win’ (Carroll and Sanbonmatsu, 2013). Voters do not seem to apply these stereotypes to the extent some experimental evidence suggests when in the ‘real-world’ of politics. This offers the first hypothesis to test in this experimental design:

*H1: Gender-based stereotypes will dissipate in a high-information environment*

A more recent body of literature suggests that systematic differences between voter perceptions of male and female leaders do disappear when voters operate in a high-information environment, such as a campaign. Dolan (2014) rightly suggests that current experimental work may take too simplistic a view of voter stereotypes. Stereotypes do not act in a vacuum – they interact with other prejudices such as partisan stereotypes and preferences. Stereotypes are also a cognitive shortcut and so can disappear when voters have sufficient information, such as during campaigns. Dolan’s (2014, p. 4) study of survey data and campaign data of the 2010 US Elections found stereotypes were not completely irrelevant but female candidates “are not routinely hampered or harmed by them”. It should be clear however that Dolan and others do not claim that gender does not matter. Dolan recognises that there are plenty of parts of the political system were women are disadvantaged, such as recruitment. But when women do run for office the evidence suggests, “in the end, women candidates have a relationship with the public that is colored by their sex but not controlled by it” (Lynch and Dolan, 2014, p. 66). Again, this work offers static snapshots; Dolan measured abstract stereotypes at the beginning and real candidate evaluations at the end of the election, meaning we get a shot of the finish line now as well but still do not see what happens in between.

Both these bodies of literature give an insight into the gendering of political leadership but they offer static snapshots at the beginning and end of a process. Both overlook what happens in the actual race. Gender-based stereotyping may be having an effect but we could miss it by taking static snapshots of what is a dynamic process. Future research needs to consider the voting process as a whole. At first, when little is known about candidates, voters may rely on gender-based stereotypes – just as they use other cognitive shortcuts such as partisanship – but as a campaign progresses and voters receive, and seek out, more information these stereotypes dissipate.
Bringing the noise back in

The experimental procedure proposed in this paper aims to bring some of the nuance of real elections into the experimental environment. A more dynamic experimental environment can account for the role of information in voter’s decision-making and allow researchers to trace the process by which a choice is made. Dynamic Process Tracing Environment (DPTE) software is used to simulate a real election environment. The software has the advantage of being closer to a real election environment and allows the researcher to trace the decision-making process of participants. However, it must be noted that by nature experiments are artificial environments therefore generalisability will always be limited to some extent and we cannot completely replicate a real-world election.

The advantage of this method is it allows us to reconsider how we see elections. It considers elections to be a dynamic social environment where voters process information over time. Within this process, sex is a piece of information about a candidate which could focus the media, the other candidates, and voters in a way that other candidate traits do not (Ditonto et al., 2014). This is especially the case when the candidate is female given the continued under-representation of women in politics. As Lynch and Dolan (2014) noted – female candidates’ relationship with the public is coloured by their sex. Visualising the voting process such, Ditonto et al (2014)’s study proposed that gender-based stereotypes will lead voters to seek different kinds of information about male and female candidates and these search patterns may affect vote choice. Using DPTE to simulate US presidential primaries and general elections they found that, overall, subjects seek out more competence-related information for female candidates as well as more information on compassion issues and that evaluations of candidates’ traits and issues were important predictors of vote choice. This finding supports the idea that any disadvantage women face at the beginning may be compensated for by information received during a campaign, satisfying any originally assumed deficits. For instance, the fact that subjects searched for more competency-based information on women links to Jamieson’s (1995) contention that male competency is often presumed whereas women’s is questioned. Based on this paper’s findings two more hypotheses are offered:

H2: Voters will more often search for competence-related information about female candidates than male candidates

H3: Voters will more often search for compassion-related information about female candidates than male candidates.
Parenthood and Politics

Voting for Mother

Recently, Deason et al (2015) suggested that there is an emerging ‘Politicized Motherhood’ in the US, alongside an overall increase in mentions of politicians’ families over the last few decades. Motherhood has previously been emphasised but this new Politicized Motherhood is different, and comes alongside a wider cultural emphasis on mothers as “special different and powerful” (Deason et al., 2015, p. 136). This politicization has been aided by an emergence of high profile politicians whose motherhood has been the subject of extensive commentary (Deason et al., 2015). In the 2008 American Presidential Election, Sarah Palin used her traditional role as mother to emphasise her devoted and caring nature. She presented herself as a ‘hockey mom’ who got involved in politics to make things better for her kids (Harp et al., 2010). Similarly, Hillary Clinton was pictured arm in arm with her daughter to show she was ‘mom first and politician second’ (Deason et al., 2015, Stalsburg, 2010). This politicization offers two competing hypotheses for how discussion of motherhood might affect female candidates.

H4(i): Motherhood is detrimental to female candidates

Traditionally motherhood is thought incongruous with ideas of leadership and detrimental to women’s leadership ambitions. As Deason et al (2015) recognise, politicizing motherhood could emphasise traditional gender-based stereotypes given to women which are incongruous with political leadership (such as those discussed above). Palin’s ability to fulfil the duties of Vice President as a ‘mom of five’ was questioned by the US media (Carlin and Winfrey, 2009). Political experiments conducted in the US by Stalsburg (2010) support this; when presented with candidates with varying familial responsibilities respondents thought women with young children were less viable candidates with less time capacity than men with young children. Focus groups by the American Barbara Lee Family Foundation (2017) studying how female candidates can positively respond to questions on balancing their home life and their political career found that the mothers (one single and one married) rated lower on reliability, effectiveness and voter likelihood after the critique and their responses.

H4(ii) Motherhood is beneficial to female candidates

Alternatively, motherhood might be beneficial in a changed political context. If motherhood becomes politicized ‘female’ traits may become more salient and leadership roles seen in more feminine terms. Organisational studies have shown more ‘female’ styles of leadership are increasing in managerial roles (Eagly, 2007). This can be linked to a new cultural emphasis on mothers as ‘special’ and exhibiting natural competency because of this. “By adopting a
maternal campaign strategy, female candidates can ride the wake of cultural conversations in
which mothers’ “natural” capacity for multitasking, diplomacy, and budget management is
experiments found that women who were depicted as successful in male roles were less liked
and seen as less favourable bosses. However, when the additional information was included
that the women were mothers these evaluations improved. The implication here is that the
communality deficit sometimes thought to be faced by women in leadership roles is negated
by motherhood. In other words, if women feel they must display ‘male’ traits to appear
competent, they risk being criticised for not possessing expected ‘feminine’ communal traits
(Jamieson, 1995, Okimoto and Brescoll, 2010, Rosenwasser and Seale, 1988). Motherhood,
in contrast, demonstrates women’s supposed natural communality and so could reduce this
deficit (Heilman and Okimoto, 2007).

H5: A maternal mandate is placed on the non-mother candidate

In contexts where motherhood is politicized, the question is begged about the woman
candidate without children. Is there a ‘maternal mandate’ in play whereby women who do not
have children are criticised (Deason et al., 2015)? Such a reaction has several mutually
reinforcing forms. First, childless women could be perceived as less viable candidates as they
lack the maternal mandate. In contrast, men are thought able to opt in and out of any parallel
concentration on fatherhood more easily (Deason et al., 2015). Secondly, and as noted above,
motherhood can help women overcome perceived communality deficits (Heilman and
Okimoto, 2007). Childless women may not have this option and have been found to be treated
with suspicion for failing to conform to the normality of maternity (Murray, 2010); the
appearance of seemingly sacrificing family for her career could increase any communality
deficit. Indeed, Stalsburg’s (2010) experimental design found women with no children did
significantly worse on every competency indicator except children’s issues and time capacities
than childless men. The Barbara Lee Family Foundation (2017) focus groups found a concern
amongst participants that the unmarried, childless female candidate could not understand the
corncerns of normal families.

Voting for Father

It is thought than men can opt in or out of any parallel concentration on fatherhood. Much of
the literature focuses on motherhood. However, in the British context parenthood and politics
is indirectly discussed in the context of the personalisation of politics thesis which contends
there is an increased emphasis on the traits that make leaders human-beings, alongside a
greater interest in their private lives (Langer, 2007, Blick and Jones, 2010). This links to
Stanyer’s intimisation of politics which contends “presidents, prime ministers and ministers
have joined the growing class of celebrities” (Stanyer, 2013, p. 72). Stanyer (2007) briefly notes women may face more evaluation of their family life but overall gender is little accounted for in this literature. As is the case with motherhood, there are two competing hypotheses on how fatherhood could affect male candidates.

**H6(i): Fatherhood as beneficial to male candidates**

Within the context of the personalisation of politics politicians, including male politicians, may use their family to manipulate their image. For example, commentators suggested that Gordon Brown used his wife and children to try and soften his hard image (McGuire and Winter, 2015). Within this framework we can hypothesise that fatherhood would benefit male candidates, making them appear more personable. The focus group research by the Barbara Lee Family Foundation (2017) found that the male, married, father included as a control was rated higher after the critique of balancing home and work life and his responses, whereas all the women, of varying parental statuses, were damaged by the discussion. The father’s responses were also thought to be the most convincing compared to all the female candidates.

**H6(ii) Fatherhood as detrimental to male candidates**

However, this may not always work in the candidate’s favour. Although concentrating primarily on female candidates, Stalsburg (2010) did find a fatherhood penalty in her experiments – the men with no children were advantaged compared to the men with children. She proposes a man with children may be feminised which would emasculate the candidate and run counter to traditional ideas of an ‘ideal’ executive who “embodies strength, power, masculinity, and independence” (Stalsburg, 2010, p. 396).

**The British case**

To contribute to the growing literature on politics and parenthood I am conducting research on voter perceptions in the British context. The case of Britain is useful because recently two parties, the Labour party and the Conservative party, held leadership elections in which two women ran – a mother and a non-mother. In both cases the motherhood of one candidate was used to implicitly criticise her female opponent for not having children. In the 2015 Labour leadership election an aide to Yvette Cooper, a mother, retweeted comments by Helen Goodman MP who said she was supporting Cooper because “as a working mum, she understands the pressures on modern family life” (Anon, 2015). This was seen, and may well have been orchestrated as, a direct attack on Liz Kendall, Cooper’s ‘childless rival’. Similarly, in 2016 Andrea Leadsom commented in an interview with The Times that Theresa May, “possibly has nieces, nephews, lots of people” but being a mum (like herself) meant “you have
a real stake in the future of our country” (Moir, 2016). Original content analysis comparing newspaper coverage of UK party leadership elections from 1975 to 2016 where women were serious contenders found that although the proportion of coverage related to candidates’ family life varied over time for both sexes, at times it was the male candidates’ family that was of greater interest than the women’s. The discussion of fatherhood changed over time, with an increasing interest in male candidates’ family. The rise of the ‘modern man’ could be traced over time. Yet, when mothers ran they were undoubtedly of interest. A ‘politicization’ of motherhood previously observed in US literature was seen in the UK context. In two leadership elections, for competing parties, only a year apart motherhood was used to distinguish between the female candidates and, to some extent, pit them against each other (Smith 2017, forthcoming).

Method

The secondary aim of this paper was to outline an experimental method which allows more of the nuance of a real election to enter the experimental environment. Experiments are a useful research tool as they allow researchers to isolate specific causal effects, by artificially manipulated the characteristics of a candidate and controlling the experimental environment. This experimental design aims to offer a more nuanced experimental environment than previous studies; however, it remains the case that experiments are always an artificial environment, a limitation one must account for when considering the generalisability of findings. Yet, experiments can shed light on causality in what is a complex environment of gender and political leadership; something which studying small N, context specific elections can often fail to do. Taken together these two bodies of work can complement each other and provide a coherent snapshot of the role of gender in political leadership.

Dynamic Process Tracing Environment (DPTE)

DPTE software is an internet-based programme which allows the researcher to attempt to recreate a dynamic social environment, such as an election. It reflects the flow of information received during a campaign where an ever changing subset of the overall information is available at any one point in time (Redlawsk and Lau, 2009). A main ‘home-screen’ of headlines scrolls down so only a certain amount of information is available at one time. Once a participant clicks on a label to access that item the main body of information continues to scroll in the background so, like a real election, there is a cost in terms of information being “here today gone tomorrow” (see Appendix 2) (Redlawsk and Lau, 2009, p. 12) and participants are only seeing a selection of all material that is out there. The DPTE software allows for the experimenter to control what information is available and how easy it is to access by how often it appears in the main screen of scrolling information. One can also interrupt the
flow of information with ‘free information’ that all participants see, such as a political campaign advert, which the user will not be able to exit. DPTE has mainly been used to examine voter behaviour in elections, primarily in the US context (Lau and Redlawsk, 2006, Redlawsk and Lau, 2009). In regards to gender, Ditonto et al’s (2014) study used DPTE experiments and found participants more often viewed competence-related information and stances on compassion issues for female candidates.

**Stimulus Material**

As well as the effect of candidate sex on voter evaluations and behaviour this research is interested in the effect of emphasising candidates’ parenthood. Original content analysis on UK party leadership elections where women have run (Smith 2017, reference forthcoming) found that motherhood was of interest – female candidates tended to face more evaluative statements than their male competitors regarding their family life in the media coverage. As discussed, in 2015 and 2016, the motherhood of one female leadership contender was used to directly criticise her childless female opponent.

**Aim**

This experiment aims to explore how voter choice, evaluation and decision-making processes vary according to the leader’s sex and parenthood status. It takes the view of voting as an information processing task where the sex of the politician is one of those pieces of information (Lau and Redlawsk, 2006). Voters are assumed to have bounded rationality and seek out and process information in any decision-making process, including voting. This can mean using heuristics: problem-solving strategies, which are cognitive shortcuts whereby judgements or decisions can be made without a complete search for alternatives, this includes person stereotypes concerning gender.

**Design**

The proposed experiment is a 2 x 3 mixed factorial design with sex of the leader a within-subject factor and candidates’ parenthood a between-subject factor. The independent variables will be the leader’s sex and parental status. The dependent variables voters’ evaluation, vote choice and decision-making processes.

The common N for experimental studies in psychology is 15-20 per condition (Christensen, 1991, Field and Hole, 2003) as well as considering the precedent of previous studies. Based on this a minimum sample of 120 is recommended which is 20 per ‘cell’ for the experimental design and in line with previous studies (Lau and Redlawsk, 2006) (see Figure 1).
**Procedure**

At the beginning of the experiment participants are asked to complete a short survey on their demographic information such as their age, occupation, sex, and their political affiliation to provide the researcher with an overview of the sample. Participants are asked to select which party they most closely affiliate with – Labour or Conservative – to determine what leadership election they will take part in. To reduce the effect of social desirability and self-presentation motive, where participants change their response to present themselves in a positive light (Christensen, 1991), a certain level of deception is used. Participants are told the experiment is about evaluations of political leaders and the interest in gender is not immediately revealed. In each leadership election there are four candidates – two men and two women. As well as allowing for more variation in parental status in each election, it is thought that having four candidates of different sexes makes the interest in gender less obvious than if there was one man and one woman running.

Upon entering the environment, participants are randomly allocated into three groups – the control group, the motherhood group or the fatherhood group. Participants are told they have the opportunity to vote for the leader of their preferred party via a party leadership election. They are then presented with brief descriptions and photos of the candidates who are running for leader. Sex is randomly varied between profiles using photos and gendered pronouns. In the control group, participants receive information which is neutrally framed and makes no mention of the parenthood of any candidates. In the motherhood group, participants immediately learn that one female candidate is a married mother-of-two and one is married with no children, no mention is made of the male candidates’ family. In the fatherhood group, participants immediately learn that one male candidate is a married father-of-two and one is married with no children, no mention is made of the female candidates’ family. Which candidates are made the (non-)mother or (non-)father is randomly varied between candidate profiles. Previous experiments by Stalsburg (2010) similarly varied the parenthood and sex of candidates, however these were low-information experiments where participants received
only a candidate’s picture, a short description and an excerpt from a speech before evaluating candidates. As discussed, these experiments are designed to offer a more dynamic experimental environment.

To evaluate the possible effect of a high-information environment on gender-stereotypes before participants enter the ‘election’ they are asked to give their first impressions of the candidates and rate them on a series of individual measures on desirability as a leader, competence, communality and agenticism. Participants then enter the ‘election’ which will run for 12 minutes during which they are presented with a scrolling screen of headlines with information about each candidate e.g. “Alex Crane’s position on education”. When a participant selects a headline the main screen continues to scroll in the background so, like a real election, the participants have autonomy in seeking information but there is a cost in terms of material being ‘here today gone tomorrow’. The between-group variable continues to be manipulated by frequently mentioning the parenthood of the male or female candidates. Within articles on other topics, e.g. an issue stance, parenthood will be mentioned. For example, “Alex Crane, who has two children, spoke about education policy today”. Including a mention of parenthood in 50% of the articles should ensure that all participants will be exposed to the manipulation. This may be more than a candidates’ parenthood would be realistically mentioned in a campaign but the experimental environment requires exaggeration at times.

**Figure 2. Experiment Procedure**

![Diagram of Experiment Procedure]

In the control group the role of information will also be considered given the caveats to the stereotyping literature discussed we would expect that gender-stereotypes that might be present in the pre-election questionnaire would dissipate after participants experience the high-information environment of the simulated leadership campaign.
Dependent Variable Measurement

The dependent variables split into three categories – evaluation, final choice and decision-making:

(1) Evaluation

The pre-election and post-election questionnaire asks respondents to pick their preferred leader, i.e. ’cast their vote’, and to rate each leader on a series of 9-point scales (adapted from Heilman and Okimoto, 2007, p. 83). Some scales should be reverse scored to lessen response sets (Bryman, 2012) and most are later combined into composite measures.

- A personal-likeability composite measure of:
  o Abrasive-not abrasive
  o Untrustworthy-trustworthy
  o Likeable-not likeable

- Desirability as a political leader

- Perceived communality composite measure of:
  o Compassionate-not compassionate
  o Understanding-not understanding
  o Sensitive-insensitive

- Agentic peace composite measure of:
  o Tough-weak
  o Assertive-not assertive
  o Bold-timid
  o Active-passive

- Competence measure

(2) Vote Choice

The pre-election and post-election questionnaire asks respondents to pick their preferred leader, i.e. ’cast their vote’.

(3) Decision-Making

Decision-making relates to elements measured during the simulated campaign of what information the participants accessed during the election process. The amount of information can be measured but most importantly for this experiment we are interested in the type of information.
Ethics

The ESRC 2015 Ethical Framework says research should seek to achieve maximum benefit to the research whilst ensuring minimum risk of harm to participants and the researcher. A key ethical concern for this experiment is the deception used. The deception is thought vital to prevent socially desirable answers and to ensure participants are selecting and analysing information as they would usually in an electoral or political decision-making environment instead of being hyper-sensitive to gender differences as may be the case if they are informed of the true purpose of the experiment. It is felt there will be no undue harm to participants. No group will benefit over another group or believe they are receiving a benefit which they are not (Bryman, 2012, Margetts and Stoker, 2010). A debrief at the end of the experiments will reveal the true subject matter. Participants can withdraw at any stage, anonymity is guaranteed, informed consent collected, and all data kept according to the Data Protection Act (Bryman, 2012).

Hypotheses

This experimental design has two parts – I am interested in the effect of a candidate’s sex on voter evaluations and how varying parenthood affects voter evaluations for male and female candidates. The hypotheses generated in the literature review are grouped into these two experimental manipulations in Appendix 1 alongside the measures for how these would be tested.

Conclusion

This research proposal has set out an experimental design to measure the effect that an emphasis on parenthood has on voter evaluations of both male and female leadership candidates in the British context. And how this interacts with gender. Beyond this, issues with current methodologies are addressed. The two bodies of literature addressing gender-based stereotypes held by voters offer static snapshots at the beginning and end of a race but overlook what happens for competitors to get to the finish line. A more dynamic approach using Dynamic Process Tracing Environment (DPTE) software is proposed which allows researchers to trace voters’ decision-making process from beginning to end. The researcher believes this will offer a fruitful new method for this area of research allowing experimental research to move beyond previous limitations.
Appendix 1. Hypotheses Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Test</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effect of varying sex on voter evaluations</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>H1: Gender-based stereotypes will dissipate in a high-information environment</td>
<td>Recent evidence has found that voters do not seem to apply traditional gender-based stereotypes to the level suggested by previous experimental evidence when in the high-information environment of a real election campaign.</td>
<td>Any gender-stereotypes present in the pre-election questionnaire will dissipate after participants experience the high-information environment of the stimulated leadership campaign.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H2: Participants will more often search for competence-related information about female candidates than male candidates</td>
<td>Previous experiments using DPTE by Ditonto et al (2014) in the US context found that, overall, participants sought out more competence-related information about female candidates.</td>
<td>Decision-making: Higher levels of competency-related searches for female candidates. Competence-related information is defined as political experience, work experience prior to politics, education and colleagues’ endorsements (based on Carroll 2009 cited in Ditonto et al 2014).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3: Participants will more often search for compassion-related information about female candidates than male candidates.</td>
<td>Previous experiments using DPTE by Ditonto et al (2014) in the US context found that, overall, participants sought out more compassion related information about female candidates.</td>
<td>Decision-making: Higher levels of compassion-related searches for female candidates. Compassion information relates to the compassion issues stereotypically associated with women of health, welfare, education, social care and childcare.</td>
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<td><strong>Effect of varying sex and parenthood on voter evaluations</strong></td>
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<td>H4(i): Motherhood is detrimental to female candidates</td>
<td>Traditionally motherhood is thought incongruous with ideas of leadership. Politicizing motherhood could emphasise traditional gender-based stereotypes given to women which are detrimental to leadership ambitions.</td>
<td>Evaluation: Higher rating on communality than in control condition expected, but lower ratings on competence, desirability as a political leader and agenticism. Vote Choice: Motherhood will have a negative impact on vote choice. Decision-making: A higher concentration on competence-related information for the mother candidate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H4(ii) Motherhood is beneficial to female candidates</td>
<td>The politicization of motherhood means leadership may be seen in more feminine terms and women can benefit from an emphasis on motherhood alongside a view of mothers of having a particular ‘maternal’ competency.</td>
<td>Evaluation: The mother candidate will receive higher ratings on communality, competence, desirability as a leader and agenticism compared to control condition. Vote Choice: Motherhood would have a positive impact on vote choice. Decision-making: Lower concentration on competence-related information for the mother candidate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H5: A maternal mandate is placed on the non-mother candidate</td>
<td>A potential maternal mandate has two elements. Firstly, childless women could be perceived as less viable candidates than mothers as they lack this maternal mandate. Secondly, confirmation of motherhood can help overcome perceived communality deficits for female candidates and childless female candidates do not have this option.</td>
<td>Evaluation: The non-mother candidate will receive lower evaluations than the mother and compared to control condition. Vote Choice: Non-motherhood will have a negative impact on vote choice compared to mother candidate and control condition. Decision-making: The non-mother will receive greater numbers of searches for communality-related information in comparison to the mother candidate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6(i): Fatherhood as beneficial to male candidates</td>
<td>Based on the personalisation of politics thesis, family can be used by politicians to manipulate their image to appear more ‘human’.</td>
<td>Evaluation: The father candidate will receive higher personal-likeability and communality evaluations compared to control condition and mother candidate. Vote Choice: Fatherhood will improve vote choice for male candidate compared to control condition and mother candidate. Decision-making: The father candidate will receive less communality-related searches compared to the control condition.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### H6(ii) Fatherhood as detrimental to male candidates

Stalsburg (2010) found a 'fatherhood penalty' in her experiments whereby men with no children were advantaged compared to men with children. She proposes this may be because fatherhood negatively feminises men.

**Evaluation:** The non-father candidate will receive higher evaluations than the father candidate. Any increase in communality evaluations for the father will lead to a lower rate for competency, agenticism and desirability as a leader compared to the non-father.

**Vote Choice:** Any increase in communality evaluations for the father will mean a lower rate for vote choice compared to the non-father.

**Decision-Making:** A higher concentration on competence and compassion related information for the father candidate compared to the non-father.
Appendix 2. Dynamic Process Tracing Environment (DPTE)

An example of the home screen of rolling information on DPTE from a simulated US presidential election:

An example of the screen users see when they click on a headline from the home screen from a simulated US presidential election:
Bibliography


