Evaluating Party Leaders:
How Demographics, Partisanship, Policies and Issues Affect Voters' Opinions

Amanda Bittner
Doctoral Candidate
University of British Columbia
bittnera@interchange.ubc.ca

Abstract: While scholars may agree that to some extent, voters evaluate and consider party leaders' personality traits when making choices on polling day, there is substantial disagreement about how it is that voters actually evaluate candidates. In particular, scholars have made very different conclusions about the types of "background" factors that influence voters' evaluations of leaders. Existing studies, generally based upon the analysis of a single election year in a single country, point to divergent sets of factors that influence voters' evaluations of leaders, including voter demographics, partisanship and ideological leanings of both voters and leaders, and policy/issue related factors. This paper examines these competing explanations of leader evaluations through the analysis of national election study data from seven countries: Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand, the United States, Germany, and Sweden. Through a large, pooled analysis of 35 election studies, this study suggests that voter demographics matter very little, while partisanship and ideological self-placements have a more substantive impact on evaluations of party leaders. The analysis further suggests, however, that there is one over-arching factor influencing the perception of party leaders more than any other: the sex of the leader herself. Simply put, all voters, regardless of their sex or level of political sophistication, rate female leaders more negatively than male leaders. This finding has important implications for our understanding of the origins of evaluations, as well as contributing to a growing literature on the perceptions of women party leaders and candidates.

Introduction

Why do voters evaluate party leaders? And where do perceptions come from? A number of scholars have pointed to the overwhelming influence of the media in shaping our political perceptions more generally, and suggesting that one of the reasons that party leaders weigh as heavily in the vote calculus as they do is the result of media focus and priming, placing the horse race first and foremost in the minds of voters (Crewe and King 1994, Gidengil et al. 2000, Mendelsohn 1994, Mendelsohn 1996, Mughan 2000). Others have suggested that we evaluate leaders because it is an "easy" thing to do, since it mimics a process we do every day in our regular lives, as we encounter new individuals and decide how we feel about them (Cottrell, Neuberg, and Li 2006, Rahn et al. 1990). Others still suggest that we can use how we feel about leaders as a "shortcut" to help with vote choice when we lack other types of information—policy platforms and performance history, for example (Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991), and that personality traits may provide cues about how a given individual will perform once in office (Glass 1985, Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991).

While some or even all of these "reasons" for leader evaluation are entirely plausible, what they don't tell us is where it is that perceptions come from in the first place: what types of factors influence the way we evaluate party leaders? Existing studies, generally based upon the analysis of a single election year in a single country, point to divergent sets of factors that influence voters' evaluations of leaders. Some suggest voter demographics matter (Cutler, 2002), others point to the importance of partisanship and ideological leanings of both voters and leaders (Bartels 2002, Graetz & McAllister 1987), while others suggest that policy/issue related factors are key (Weisberg & Rusk 1970, Rusk & Weisberg 1972). Some studies note the importance of all of the above in different circumstances (Conover & Feldman 1989).

This paper examines these competing explanations of leader evaluations through the analysis of national election study data from seven countries: Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand, the United States, Germany, and Sweden. By analyzing a total of 35 election studies, and this paper takes a broad and in-depth look at the factors affecting the evaluation of party leaders. This will facilitate a deeper understanding of the effects of this diverse set of factors, while also providing the means to determine the extent to which there is a common set of factors influencing leader evaluations across countries and institutional environments.

This study suggests that there are indeed some generalizations that can be made about the sources of perceptions across these seven countries. First, individuals' personal partisanship and ideological views play the largest role in influencing their evaluations of party leaders. Attitudes towards issues play a secondary role, while socio-demographics have only a minimal impact on perceptions of leaders. Second, there does appear to be some indication that a characteristic intrinsic to the leader (the leader's sex) may play a more substantial role than anything else in determining how voters rate the leader. Finally, there are significant differences in the way that political sophistication mediates perceptions of party leaders: the more sophisticated consider more factors overall and weigh those factors more heavily in their ratings.

Literature

Much of the literature on leader evaluations suggests that voters' perceptions of leaders play a discernible role in influencing vote choice. Scholars suggest that leader evaluations are quite proximate to the vote, and are thus often "entered" as one of the last variables in voting models (Campbell et al. 1960, Miller and Shanks 1996). This practice suggests that other, prior, variables have an impact on leader evaluations as well as having an independent impact on the

vote itself. These "prior" variables are usually socio-demographics (such as age, gender, and employment status), partisanship, ideology, and attitudes towards issues.

Studies of voters' evaluations of leaders suggest that these types of "prior" variables may act as cues and heuristics, shaping perceptions and evaluations of candidates, both in terms of personality as well as their positions on issues (Conover and Feldman 1989, Rahn 1993). Much of the literature suggests that people will use the information available to them, making inferences based on whatever information they have, even if they have next to no information at all. Indeed, socio-psychological experiments suggest that without any other sources of information, subjects will make inferences about quality of leadership and ideology based on looks alone (Riggle et al. 1992). Most suggest, however, that with increasing amounts of information, voters tend to use other, "higher," factors when making judgments.

Conover and Feldman (1989) find that at different times, issue positions, partisanship, and the ideology of the individual affect his or her impression of candidate positions on issues. They suggest that campaigns and the media prime some cues over others at different times, and that as a result, different combinations of factors may come together to shape perceptions. They find that early in the campaign, when there may be less information about candidates available to voters, there will be more false consensus and projection effects, based on the individual's own positions. As more information surfaces over the course of the campaign, this projection happens less, and individuals tend to base their perceptions more on the partisanship and ideology of the candidate.

The notion that partisanship plays a key role is supported and emphasized by experimental research (Rahn 1993), which suggests that not only is the individual voter's partisanship a factor, but that the party label of the candidate has a major impact on voters'

perceptions. Rahn argues that "partisan stereotypes" act as heuristics, affecting the nature of information processing, and that voters tend to use the heuristic even when more information is available. She finds that when party and ideological cues are not available, people will listen to candidates' policy statements and make inferences based on what they hear. However, when both candidate statements *and* party labels are available, subjects prefer to rely on heuristics, making judgments based on impressions of what it means to be a Republican or a Democrat, regardless of what policy statements individuals actually make. While Rahn doesn't talk about issue ownership as such, her findings give support to the notion that voters have expectations about candidates' issue positions based on the party banner.

The role of the partisan stereotype is different from the role of the voter's partisanship in affecting evaluations of party leaders, but points to the incredible role of the party in shaping perceptions. Aldrich et. al (1999) regressed trait dimensions on demographics and partisanship for each party leader in a number of US elections, and found that partisanship and race were the strongest predictors of trait evaluations. Their observations fit neatly with previous conclusions made by Conover (1981), who suggests that voters are more likely to use a cue to differentiate between candidates if they feel strongly about it, and that the characteristics voters use to define their own political selves are more likely to resonate strongly when evaluating candidates than are "non-self attributes." Race and partisanship are two fairly strong "identifications" in the American context, thus it is not surprising that these two factors influenced perceptions of party leaders so strongly.

The impact of socio-demographics (such as race) have also been found to be integral in perceptions of party leaders. Cutler (2002) paints perhaps the clearest picture of the link between voter characteristics and leader evaluations, with his finding that "closeness" matters. The more

similar a leader is to a voter in terms of socio-demographic characteristics, the more positively disposed that voter is towards the leader. He incorporates sex, religion, region of residence and language into his analysis, and his findings point to the importance of basic demographic characteristics. The broader literature on the role of sex, however, is mixed.

While there is a substantial literature on the gender gap, suggesting that women and men make different choices and have different opinions (Bittner 2007b, Conover 1988, Gidengil et al. 2003, Inglehart and Norris 2000, Sapiro and Mahajan 1986, Sapiro and Conover 1997), the effects of gender (of both the voter *and* the candidate) on evaluations of leaders are not as clear. Zipp and Plutzer (1985) suggest that the gender of the leader does not have a substantial impact on perceptions. While they focus more on vote choice than leader evaluations per se, their study finds that the votes of men and women are not a major reflection of the sex of the candidate. Later, however, they find that the sex of the voter is in fact related to voting for women candidates (1996). In fact, they suggest that gender identity competes with partisanship as a cue for voting behaviour, as the effect of women voting for women is amplified for Democratic female candidates who are perceived to be the most feminist. Banducci and Karp (2000) suggest, however, that the effects of gender identity are mixed, finding that the link between women voting for women is not concrete.

In general, it seems as though our understanding of the influence of these "background" factors on perceptions of leaders is also not concrete. At different times, scholars have found differing combinations of factors (socio-demographic, partisanship, partisan cues, ideology, and issue attitudes) to affect perceptions and evaluations most strongly. Furthermore, it is not at all clear why these different factors have the influence they do, or what the process of evaluation really is. Does the impact of partisanship or ideology differ when individuals are more or less

politically sophisticated? Does gender matter more or less according to level of political sophistication? Do attitudes towards policy issues affect evaluations to the same extent as either socio-demographic variables or partisanship? It is to these questions that we now turn.

The Dependent Variable: Evaluations of Leaders' Personality Traits

The bulk of the discussion of the impact of leaders has focused on the effect of overall "feelings" towards leaders on election outcomes: essentially, the net effect of "feeling thermometers" on vote choice. And while some scholars have looked at the role of traits themselves in the Canadian context (Gidengil et al. 2006, Johnston et al. 1992, Johnston 2002), a more systematic assessment of the role of personality traits is necessary in order to really understand both how people evaluate leaders' personalities. Furthermore, a look at the evaluations of actual traits rather than feeling thermometers may help to clarify the role of leaders in elections, since not only is the thermometer a very general measure, it also may not be the most reliable source of information about voters' evaluations of leaders. As Johnston notes, the feeling thermometer "…carries too much nonpersonality freight. Even with party identification and the like controlled, it is still infused with party, group and policy judgments…" (2002: 174). By focusing solely on traits, we may get a more precise picture of what voters think about when they evaluate leaders.

There is a rich literature on "person perception" in cognitive and political psychology. Scholars in these fields have spent years assessing personality traits of individuals, of leaders, and how as a society we perceive those traits in others, as part of a larger study of the human psyche and our perceptions of our environment. MacRae and Bodenhausen (2000) suggest that the perception of personality traits in others takes place as a part of general "categorical thinking" on

the part of individuals. That is, in order to make the world ordered, meaningful, and predictable, we think categorically about others. Much of this is subconscious, and the result of the way in which our mind stores and processes information. Cognitive psychology research suggests that information is stored in our minds in what are known as "schemata" (Lau and Sears, 1986). Schemata, the plural form of "schema," can be likened to a series of hierarchical storage cabinets in our minds, each cabinet essentially reflecting a different category or topic, with links in between categories.

Each schema in the mind affects the way in which we gather new information, as well as how we call up old information (Lodge and Hamill 1986). Scholars have suggested that schemata play an important role in how we perceive and interact with the world: they provide categories for labeling people, events, and places, they influence what information gets both stored in and recalled from memory, and they allow us to integrate what we already know into our interpretations of new circumstances where we lack a complete picture—essentially, in new situations, they allow us to "fill in the blanks" with information we already have (Conover and Feldman 1989, Lodge and Hamill 1986).

It has been suggested that the process of evaluating political candidates and party leaders fits within the schemata framework. Kinder et al. (1980) suggest that voters agree on the traits that an ideal president should possess. They argue that voters then use this "presidential prototype" or schema as a shortcut to decision-making. The idea is that voters apply existing categories (the prototype) to the leadership candidates and evaluate the candidates based on the traits that an ideal candidate should possess. It is as if the voter opens up his/her filing cabinet, takes out the file labeled "presidential prototype" and checks to see whether the candidate's traits

match the traits inside the file. A comparison is made between the individual candidates running in the election and the ideal candidate.

Brown et al. (1988) assess the extent to which the concept of schemata applies to the way Canadian voters evaluated the traits possessed by party leaders during the 1984 Federal election. They find that schemata or prototypes of leaders get used repeatedly, as voters consider the same types of factors when evaluating all of the leaders. This finding suggests that looking more closely at trait is a useful exercise, as it would allow us to get a deeper insight into the way in which voters think "categorically" about leaders. Rather than just looking at overall feelings towards a leader, by looking at traits we might be able to gain a deeper understanding of how people evaluate leaders.

Early in the study of person perception and leadership candidates, Kinder et al. (1980) suggested that the presidential prototype consists of two main types of qualities: personality and performance. Since this time, a number of scholars have expended a substantial amount of time to determine the extent to which these categories or dimensions of traits really are the dimensions that voters think about, or whether traits more realistically fit into other, different, dimensions. Over the years, scholars have suggested that voters evaluate traits in categories numbering anywhere from two to twelve (see, for example, Bean and Mughan 1989, Bean 1993, Brown et al. 1988, Glass 1985, Miller et al. 1986, Stewart and Clarke 1992, Brettschneider and Gabriel 2002, Johnston 2002, Kinder et al. 1980, Kinder 1983, Kinder 1986), with the majority suggesting that traits fall into some combination of the following four main categories; *integrity*; *competence*; *leadership*; and *empathy*.

More recently, cross-national, over-time examination of trait evaluations in election studies has suggested that it makes the most sense to think about traits as falling within two main

"umbrella" dimensions: *competence* and *character* (see Bittner 2008, for a more complete review of the literature and detailed data analysis). A typology based on these two dimensions refines the existing literature: the *competence* dimension broadly includes traits falling in both the "leadership" and "competence" dimensions listed above, and the *character* dimension includes traits which had previously been thought to belong in both the "integrity" and "empathy" dimensions. The labels themselves do not signify substantively different understandings of the way in which voters perceive party leaders: they represent a collapsing of the four previous dimensions into two, based on patterns and correlations in the evaluations of party leaders of 35 different election studies.[1] Because the dimensions themselves do not change, even if the specific traits within them might differ slightly from year to year, looking at traits in this way allows us to consider evaluations of leaders' character and competence, regardless of the changes that have taken place in the question format.

Methodology

The bulk of research into evaluations of party leaders is based on a single election in a single country, and while there is a handful of studies which incorporate either longitudinal analysis (although this is usually from a single country) or comparative analysis (usually a single election in a couple of countries), most of the conclusions we have to date are based on a narrow sample of survey respondents. This study builds upon and extends previous analyses, by

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[1] Organizing and conceptualizing traits into overarching dimensions is particularly valuable in that it facilitates longitudinal assessment of the evaluation of leaders' traits where it otherwise would not be possible. One of the main difficulties with assessing voters' evaluations of leader traits over time is the extent to which surveys change over time. These changes are characteristic of nearly all election studies. Question formats change, the types of traits that respondents are asked to evaluate change, and (obviously) leaders change, which makes isolating and examining patterns in evaluations a real challenge. While previous research suggests that question format does have an effect on our understanding of the effect of trait evaluations (Bittner 2007a), these effects are not so substantial to preclude longitudinal analysis of traits even with the changes in question format over time.

examining data from 35 election studies across 7 countries, including Australia, Britain, Canada, Germany, New Zealand, the United States, and Sweden. These election studies were chosen because their data and questionnaires were readily available in either English or French, and the surveys incorporated questions about specific leaders' personality traits in a closed-ended format. The resulting dataset includes approximately 500 variables, coded in a common format, for a total of more than 186,000 respondents.

While the specific closed-ended traits questions may change from election study to election study, the *nature* of the traits within each dimension does not really change. Generally speaking, the *competence* category tends to be composed of traits related to intellect and strength of leadership, while traits in the *character* category relate to the individual's compassion, honesty, trustworthiness, and morality. Large comparative analysis has revealed the strength of the connection between traits within each category, regardless of which country or year we look at (Bittner 2008). Essentially, the traits are related, and are broadly measuring aspects of the same thing, whether character or competence. All traits were coded on a 0-1 scale, with 1 representing the most positive evaluation of the leader on a given trait, and 0 representing the most negative evaluation of the leader on the trait. These evaluations were then combined to create an index for each of the two trait dimensions. By doing this for each of the main party leaders in each of the elections in question, we are able to compare voters' perceptions of the party leaders along the two different trait dimensions.[2]

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[2] Comparing evaluations of party leaders across countries comes with considerable methodological challenges, first and foremost in terms of grouping parties into "types." Because, for example, the German FDP does not exist in Canada, and because the British Labour Party does not exist in the US, using each country's party label for cross-national analysis is not feasible. However, there are commonalities among parties from different countries, and scholars have expended considerable effort to develop cross-national comparisons between parties based on party policies and platforms. Examples include expert surveys (Benoit and Laver 2006) and the Comparative Manifesto Project (Budge et al. 2001). See (McDonald, Mendes, and Kim 2007) for a review of these efforts. My analysis makes use of Benoit and Laver's extensive (2006) work, which maps parties along two dimensional lines: stances on social liberalism and on taxes versus spending. I categorized parties according to their placement along these two dimensions, grouping parties with similar

In order to assess the factors influencing the evaluations of leaders, evaluations of

leaders' character and competence were regressed on a slate of independent variables,

traditionally found to have an effect on the way voters perceive party leaders. These independent

variables include socio-demographics, partisanship, ideological self-placements, and issue

attitudes.

Impact of SES, PID, Ideology, and Issues on Trait Evaluations

Numerous studies have pointed to socio-demographics, partisanship, ideology, and issue

attitudes as factors influencing evaluations of party leaders (Banducci and Karp 2000, Conover

1981, Conover and Feldman 1989, Graetz and McAllister 1987, Hayes 2005, Plutzer and Zipp

1996, Rahn 1993, Riggle et al. 1992, Zipp and Plutzer 1985), but the results are mixed, and are

often based on studies of a single election in a single country, or experimental analyses. By

extending the analysis to incorporate a total of 35 election studies from 7 different countries, we

are able to broaden our insight into the general importance of these factors overall.

Tables 1 through 4 depict the results of a series of regression analyses with evaluations of

leaders' character and competence as dependent variables. Tables 1 and 2 look at the respective

roles of socio-demographics and partisanship, while Tables 3 and 4 also incorporate voters'

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locations into the same group or category. Party categories included "Conservative" (including the Canadian
Conservatives, the American Republicans, the British Conservatives, the German CDU and CSU, the Australian Liberals
and the Swedish Moderate Party); "Centre-Left" (including the Canadian Liberals, British Labour, New Zealand Labour,
Australian Labor, the German SPD, and the US Democratic party); "Left" (which includes the Canadian NDP, the
Swedish Left Party, the New Zealand Alliance, the British LibDems, and the Australian Democrats); "Centre-Right"
(includes the Swedish Centre Party, the New Zealand National Party, New Zealand ACT, the Swedish Peoples Party, and
the German FDP); "Right" (includes New Zealand First, Australian ONE, Australian Nationals, Swedish Christian,
Swedish NDP, and the Canadian Reform Party); "Green" (includes the Swedish, Canadian, New Zealand, Australian, and
German Green Parties); and "Sectional" (which includes the Canadian Bloc Quebecois, the Scottish National Party and
the Welsh Plaid Cymru). See Bittner (2008) for full description and details about the categorization process. By
aggregating parties into these groups, it was then possible to analyze evaluations of the leaders of these different parties
en masse, because of the new common nomenclature.

ideological self-placements and issue attitudes.[3] The regression analyses were run for the leaders of the three most common parties, the Centre-Left leaders, Conservative leaders, and Left party leaders, and not for the remaining party leaders, because of the substantial drop in sample size. As Table 1 indicates, the sample size even for evaluations of Left party leaders is substantially lower than that for evaluations of the other two main party leaders. The N for evaluations of the other party leaders is even lower, and reflects only the evaluations of the respondents in a few election studies, thus limiting the "generalizability" of the findings.

The model includes five socio-demographic variables: marital status, sex, education, employment status, and age, because these are the only five demographic variables that were universal to all of the 35 election studies. Unfortunately other variables which one might expect to be important (income, union membership, and race/ethnicity) were not present in each of the election studies, and thus cannot be incorporated into the large pooled analysis. As illustrated in Table 2, the impact of the demographic variables ranges from 0.003 to 0.054 on a scale from 0-1 (a fraction of a percentage point to just over five percentage points when converted to a 0-100 scale), and the impact of the variables varies by the leaders' political party. Most of the differences are quite small. Interestingly, regardless of which leader the individual is evaluating, marital status appears to have one of the stronger effects among demographic variables, with married individuals giving Centre-Left party leaders lower ratings, and Conservative and Left leaders slightly higher ratings on the character dimension.

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[3] The models were run separately because of a phenomenon in the German Election Studies where individuals who were asked to evaluate leaders' personality traits were not also asked to provide their ideological perspectives and issue placements. While German respondents *did* answer these questions, it appears as though the sample was split on which respondents were asked which questions, thus the models that incorporate issues attitudes and ideological views were run without the German study, and weights were recalculated and applied to reflect the exclusion of the country from the analysis.

Employment status also has a slightly larger coefficient than other demographic variables, as employed individuals give lower ratings to Centre-Left leaders than the unemployed, but give higher ratings to Conservative and Left party leaders. Age has the largest impact on evaluations of Conservative Party leaders, as with each step in the age category (each category reflects 10 years), individuals give higher ratings to the leader by 0.015 points. Education has the largest impact on evaluations of Left party leaders' character, with individuals having obtained a university degree giving higher ratings to the Left leader by 0.054 points. University graduates also give Centre-Left leaders slightly higher ratings (by 0.014 points) than non-graduates.

Table 1 also indicates that the impact of partisanship substantially dwarfs that of socio-demographic variables. Centre-Left partisans give their party leader ratings over 0.17 points higher than the reference group: non-partisans. Conservative Partisans give more positive ratings to the Conservative leader, nearly 0.18 points higher than the reference group, while Centre-Left partisans give the most negative evaluations to the Conservative leader, with ratings just over 0.1 points lower than the reference group. Left partisans give highest ratings to their leader on the character dimension, with ratings nearly 0.17 points higher than non-partisans.

The dynamic with respect to evaluations of leaders' competence, as seen in Table 2, is similar to that seen in Table 1. That is, marital status has slightly larger coefficients, and individuals who are married tend to rate Centre-Left leaders more negatively and Conservative leaders more positively than do non-married individuals. Employment status affects only evaluations of the Centre-Left leaders' competence, with employed individuals giving lower ratings than others do. Education again has a large impact on evaluations of Left leaders, with university graduates giving Left leaders higher ratings than non-graduates, and giving Conservative leaders lower ratings than non-graduates. Age appears to have less of an impact

than it does for evaluations of character, as the coefficient for age is less than half the size it is for evaluations of Conservative leaders' character.

Interestingly, sex has a different effect for evaluations of competence than character as well: in terms of evaluations of character, women tend to give slightly higher (less than 0.01 points) ratings to Centre-Left and Conservative leaders, and slightly lower (again, less than 0.01 points) ratings to Left leaders. This appears to conflict with the gender gap that exists in voting and attitudes in general, where women appear more to the left (Conover 1988, Gidengil et al. 2003, Inglehart and Norris 2000, Sapiro and Conover 1997) and thus would be expected to evaluate Left party leaders more positively. However, women evaluate Left leaders more positively on the competence dimension than men do, and to a greater extent than their evaluations of the other two types of party leaders, perhaps making up for the lower evaluations of Left leaders' character.

Table 2 further illustrates the varying effects of the different variables included in the model, and partisanship continues to have a substantially larger impact on evaluations than do socio-demographic variables. Centre-Left partisans tend to rate Centre-Left leaders' competence more highly than non-partisans. Conservative partisans evaluate Conservative party leaders more positively on the competence dimension, while Centre-Left partisans are the most negative about Conservative leaders. Left partisans evaluate Left leaders the most positively on the competence dimension.

When we introduce other variables, the dynamics change slightly, and in many ways the model becomes more refined. Tables 3 and 4 introduce individuals' ideological self-placements and attitudes towards policy issues into the model. Three types of issue attitudes were chosen for inclusion into the analysis, two of which were based on the nature of party policy dimensions as

identified and utilized by Benoit and Laver (2006), and which served as the basis for situating

parties and placing them into groups (as discussed in footnote 2 above).

The two main issue attitudes which served as dimensions for Benoit and Laver were party

positions on taxes versus spending and social liberalism. Thus variables getting at respondents'

views on these issues were coded in as similar a fashion as possible across election studies, in

order to fit the two policy dimensions.[4] The social liberalism variable was most often based on

attitudes toward abortion, while the taxes versus spending variable was based on respondents'

attitudes towards taxation and government spending. The third issue attitude that was

incorporated into the analysis varied from election study to election study, and reflected

respondents' attitudes towards the "major election issue" at the time. Thus while this variable is

substantially different from one election to the next, it seeks to capture attitudes towards a

contemporary issue that weighed heavily in the election, be it health care, defense and foreign

policy, free trade, and so on.

All issue attitudes were coded on a 0-1 scale, where 1 reflects a more "liberal" or

"progressive" attitude, and 0 reflects a more "conservative" or "reactionary" attitude. Thus, for

example, individuals believing that access to abortion should be the most readily available (of the

choice set presented to them in the election study where they were interviewed) were given a 1

on the social liberalism variable, while those believing most strongly in a claw back in access to

abortion, or in limiting the circumstances under which abortions could be obtained, were coded

a 0 on the scale.

The ideology variable was coded in the opposite direction, where individuals who

considered themselves to be the most Left-leaning were coded as 0, and those who considered

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[4] See Bittner 2008 for complete list of variables from all election studies, as well as additional coding details.

themselves to be the most right-wing were coded as 1. Thus we would expect ideology coefficients to be positive for evaluations of Conservative leaders (as more conservative respondents should be more likely to evaluate conservative leaders more positively), and negative for evaluations of Left leaders, and issue attitude coefficients should be in the opposite direction: negative for evaluations of Conservative leaders (as a more left-leaning respondent should be more negative about conservative leaders) and positive for evaluations of Left leaders (and in fact, this is the case, as Table 3 illustrates).

When we introduce the ideology and issue attitude variables, the size of the sample included in the analysis drops substantially. As mentioned earlier, the German sample was split, and those individuals evaluating character and competence were not also asked for their ideological views or issue attitudes, thus Germany was dropped from the analysis. In addition, not all studies within a given country included an ideology variable (for example, Canada 1993), thus some respondents were dropped from the analysis, even if the country as a whole was not dropped. Finally, the other main source of attrition occurred where some issue attitude variables were included in a post election study rather than the campaign study, thus the number of observations dropped where those individuals whose socio-demographic data was collected in a pre-election study were subsequently not included in the post election study, and therefore were not asked for their opinions. The N, while it is substantially smaller than it was in the analyses presented in Tables 1 and 2, is still quite large (as high as 75,000 respondents!) and weights are still incorporated so as to ensure that no one study (or country) floods the analysis.

Broadly, Tables 3 and 4 illustrate that socio-demographics have the smallest impact on evaluations of character and competence. Ideological self-placements and partisanship have the largest impact on evaluations, followed by attitudes towards policy issues. Furthermore, ideology

rivals partisanship for largest impact on evaluations. Now, this may be an artifact of the way the variables are coded: a person either is or isn't a Centre-Left partisan. But the ideology variable, though also coded in terms of 0-1, is more of a scale, where the difference between 0 and 1 is more extreme. Thus the impact of ideology, as measured in the analysis, ought to have more of an impact than partisanship, because individuals who consider themselves to be very "right-wing" are quite different from those individuals who consider themselves to be very "left-wing." However, coding is not everything: issue attitudes are coded in the same manner (though in the opposite direction), and the coefficients for issue attitudes are not as large as either ideology or partisanship coefficients. Simply put, an individual's ideological views matter, and they matter more than attitudes towards policy issues, or socio-demographics.

While the exact sizes of coefficients change somewhat with the inclusion of issue attitudes and ideology into the model, the dynamics described earlier with respect to the effects of socio-demographics or partisanship do not change much. Centre-Left partisans still give highest ratings to their own leader. Conservative partisans rate their own leaders most highly, while Centre-Left partisans are most negative about Conservative leaders. Left partisans rate their own leaders most positively. Demographics have more minor effects on evaluations, as seen from the smaller-sized coefficients, and attitudes towards issues have a larger impact on evaluations than demographics, but a smaller impact than either partisanship or ideology.

Attitudes on the issue of taxes versus spending had the greatest impact on evaluations of the leaders' character, for all three major parties. After taxes versus spending, the major campaign issue appears to have the largest impact on evaluations of character, for the Centre-Left and Conservative leaders, while attitudes on the social liberalism dimension affect evaluations of Left leaders' character more than the major campaign issue (although the

coefficient on social liberalism is larger for evaluations of the other two major parties, suggesting that in general, issue attitudes appear to influence evaluations of character for Centre-Left and Conservative leaders more than Left leaders).

When it comes to evaluations of leaders' competence, the dynamic is slightly different. While issues still affect evaluations more than demographics, attitudes towards taxes versus spending are not the most influential issue for evaluations of the competence of all three leaders. The taxes versus spending dimension has the largest impact on evaluations of Centre-Left and Left leaders, but not Conservative leaders. Perceptions of Conservative leaders' competence appears to be more influenced by the major campaign issue and by attitudes towards social liberalism (with equally-sized coefficients) than taxes versus spending. For Centre-Left and Left party leaders, the major campaign issue has the second largest impact on evaluations of competence, and the coefficients on attitudes towards social liberalism trail further behind. For the most part, then, the data suggest that of this group of issues, the taxes versus spending dimension and attitudes towards the major campaign issue have the largest impact on perceptions of leaders' traits generally.

The data suggest that while socio-demographics have the smallest effect on perceptions of leaders' traits, age and sex appear to have the smallest effects among demographic characteristics, while marital status and education appear to affect evaluations a little more. The data as presented in Tables 1 through 4 do not actually account for characteristics possessed by the leaders however, or the extent to which voters may be affected by the "similarity" between themselves and the party leader (beyond the effects of partisanship and, more loosely, ideology). Cutler (2002) notes the effect of socio-demographics, in particular the extent to which leaders are

similar to voters, in influencing vote choice, and thus it seems worth exploring a bit in the context of evaluations of party leaders.

The Impact of the Leader Herself: Women as an Example of the Impact of Socio-Economic Sameness

Cutler's (2002) finding that "closeness" between voters' and leaders' characteristics is fascinating, and worth exploring on a broader level. The difficulty with the task of matching socio-demographic characteristics between leaders and voters in the comparative context is the sheer number of leaders evaluated in the 35 election studies (105 in total), and the difficulty in finding biographical information about all of them, to then match it to information about voters—information that is not consistently available across all election studies. I collected information about the leaders' age, sex, religious background, ethnicity, and language (in the Canadian context), and merged this information into the larger dataset. The difficulty, of course, is that the only two sociodemographic variables of all of these that were common to all election studies were age and sex, thus narrowing down the ability to "match" leaders' and voters' characteristics quite a bit, at least in the context of a large pooled analysis.

As such, I opted to focus solely on the socio-demographic characteristic which appears to get the most discussion and analysis in the comparative literature, sex. The literature is not conclusive as to whether or not the sex of the leader affects voters' perceptions, nor is it conclusive as to whether women are more likely to vote for women candidates (Banducci and Karp 2000, Gidengil, Everitt, and Banducci 2006, Plutzer and Zipp 1996, Shabad and Andersen 1979, Zipp and Plutzer 1985). By looking at this issue on a larger scale (35 election studies), with a total of 10 woman party leaders (of 105) evaluated by respondents in the election studies, it may be possible to gain greater insight into the impact of the leaders' sex on perceptions.

Table 5 depicts the results of the regression analyses, in which evaluations of leaders' character and competence for each of the three main party types were regressed on the demographic variables found in all 35 studies, as well as partisanship and the variables of interest, the leader's sex as well as the interaction between the leader's sex and the sex of the voter. Only the coefficients of the latter two are presented in the Table. Men give lower character ratings to women leaders versus men leaders of all three major parties. For Centre-Left leaders, women leaders receive ratings nearly 0.4 points lower (on a 0-1 scale) than men leaders.

This effect is slightly reversed after we account for women voters. The interaction coefficient (woman voter*woman leader) is 0.032, suggesting that while women leaders are still evaluated more negatively than men, by -0.35 points, women tend to view women Centre-Left leaders more slightly more positively than men do. Conservative women leaders are also evaluated more negatively than Conservative men leaders, with men giving women leaders ratings 0.48 points lower than men leaders. Unlike the dynamic seen for Centre-Left leaders, however, women voters also perceive women Conservative leaders more negatively, with the sum of the main effect and the interaction coefficient suggesting that women Conservative leaders are evaluated nearly 0.5 points lower than men Conservative leaders are.

This suggests that women do not necessarily evaluate a leader more positively simply because she is a woman, and the results may actually have more to do with the findings of traditional gender gap literature: perhaps women evaluate women Conservative leaders more negatively because they are Conservative, rather than because they are women. Indeed, the fact that women voters evaluate women Left leaders more positively gives further credence to this notion. Women Left leaders are evaluated slightly more negatively than men leaders, by men

voters (coefficient of -0.04), while women voters evaluate them slightly less negatively (the sum of the interaction and the main effect is -0.03 and statistically significant).

On the competence dimension, men also tend to view women leaders more negatively than men leaders, although to a lesser extent than they did on the character dimension. Men give competence ratings just over 0.1 points lower to women Centre-Left leaders than men leaders, and the effect of women voters' perspectives slightly reverses this effect: women voters evaluate women Centre-Left leaders slightly less negatively than men do, with a ratings nearly 0.09 points lower than they give to men leaders. For Left leaders, men also view women candidates more negatively on the competence dimension, with ratings over 0.02 points lower than men candidates receive. The effect of women's perceptions actually reverses this effect, however, as the coefficient for the interaction effect is positive and larger than the main effect: women evaluate women Left leaders more positively than men leaders.

The effect of the leaders' sex on perceptions of Conservative leaders' competence is not statistically significant, and the sizes of the coefficients are quite small. This may have something to do with Margaret Thatcher specifically: in the 1987 British election, 88% of voters gave her the most positive evaluation on the competence dimension. This is the highest competence rating for any of the leaders of any of the parties in any of the 35 election studies in this analysis. Thatcher's mean competence rating in 1987 was 0.95 (out of 1), while her average character rating was approximately half of that: this is a substantial difference, and sets her apart from other leaders in terms of perceptions of her competence. She was no ordinary Conservative leader, regardless of her sex.

Women leaders are generally perceived more negatively than men on both personality dimensions, regardless of party. Interestingly, both men and women view women leaders less

negatively on the competence dimension than they do on the character dimension, indicating that they evaluate the two traits very differently. Women voters tend to evaluate women leaders slightly more positively than men do, but with the exception of the evaluation of Left leaders on the competence dimension, women do not evaluate women leaders more positively than they evaluate men leaders, they simply rate them a *little less* negatively.

The Mediating Role of Political Sophistication

Partisanship and ideology appear to affect evaluations of leaders' traits most, followed by attitudes towards issues, followed finally by voters' own socio-demographic characteristics. It appears, however, that if we consider the size of coefficients, the variable that has the largest impact on voters' evaluations of party leaders is the sex of the leader itself: that is, men and women alike perceive women leaders more negatively than men leaders. While this information helps us to understand the sources of evaluations, it does not actually assist in determining the mechanism: why do people evaluate leaders the way they do? Do personal demographic characteristics matter more when a voter is less informed and less able to make judgments based on other factors? Do people with more political sophistication evaluate leaders differently, based on more "sophisticated" factors? Do ideological and policy-based considerations matter more? And perhaps even more interestingly, are there differences in how voters perceive women candidates based on their levels of political sophistication? Are the less sophisticated more or less predisposed to rate women leaders negatively?

The idea that political sophistication mediates attitudes and voting behaviour is not new. Indeed, a rich literature has emerged on the role of political knowledge, political information, political sophistication, in order to determine the extent to which this characteristic, intrinsic to

the voter, affects his or her political values and perceptions (Alvarez 1997, Bartels 1996, Bittner 2007, Converse 1964, Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996, Hayes 2004, Lau and Sears 1986, Luskin 1987, Luskin 1990, Roy 2007, Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991, Zaller 1992). It is completely reasonable to expect that individuals possessing greater amounts of political sophistication will perceive party leaders very differently from those with lesser amounts. Perhaps the more sophisticated base their evaluations on a separate set of considerations than the less sophisticated. Or perhaps the more sophisticated will still consider the same number or same types of factors, but will base their evaluations more heavily on some rather than others.

In this section I investigate these possibilities, by looking at the types of factors that affect evaluations of leaders' character and competence, among a partial sample of all of the respondents interviewed in these 35 election studies: the least sophisticated and the most sophisticated. Within each election study, respondents were divided into quartile groups according to their level of political sophistication: roughly the 25% who were most sophisticated were grouped together, and the 25% who were the least sophisticated were grouped together, to create an overall low and high sophistication group. In total, when all election studies are combined, there are 37,905 respondents in the least sophisticated group, and 37,026 in the most sophisticated group, of the 156,307 respondents for whom there is information about their political sophistication.

Character and competence evaluations were then regressed on all of the same variables as in the previous tables, only this time the analysis took place within sophistication groups rather than in the sample as a whole. Tables 6 and 7 illustrate the results of these regression analyses,

for the Centre-Left and Conservative parties only.[5] The first thing that one might notice upon looking at the tables is the substantial difference in the number of observations in the low and high sophistication groups. While both groups started out at approximately the same size, the numbers dropped off substantially when the other variables were entered into the mix. Indeed, even when looking simply at the breakdown of individuals who evaluated the traits of Centre-Left and Conservative party leaders, the drop is notable.

Table 8 lays out the number of individuals evaluating the leaders' traits of these two parties. As immediately evident, there are substantially fewer than 37,000 respondents in any of the cells, and furthermore, there are approximately 4000 fewer respondents in the low sophistication group than in the high sophistication group, regardless of which party's leader is being evaluated. There are also fewer individuals who evaluated Conservative leaders' personality traits than Centre-Left leaders' personality traits. And this all takes place before we add the other variables into the analysis. When evaluations are regressed on all of the other variables laid out in Tables 6 and 7, we are left with just over approximately half and one third the number of respondents that began in each of the two groups of political sophistication.[6]

At the end of the day, the sample sizes are still quite large by historical standards. It is rare for pooled analyses with this many election studies and respondents to be conducted, and with the exception of those studies in which respondents did not both evaluate party leaders *and*

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[5] Left party leaders' evaluations are not examined according to low/high levels of sophistication because the substantially smaller sample size.

[6] The substantial drop-off in the low-sophistication group is somewhat predictable, for a couple of reasons. First, there is the effect of coding: all respondents providing an answer of "don't know" on a trait evaluation question were coded as missing. Since people who are less politically sophisticated are more likely to provide "don't know" responses to questions than those who are more politically sophisticated (Berinsky 2004), the drop in sample size is not surprising. Second, there is a significant link between participation in surveys (and especially re-interviews) for respondents who are less interested and knowledgeable (again, see Berinsky 2004). These individuals are less likely to agree to be interviewed in the first place, and the re-interview rate is substantially lower among the less sophisticated compared to those individuals with higher levels of political sophistication.

provide an indication of their ideological self-placement, no study was dropped from the analysis. We may thus feel fairly confident in the results of these regression analyses.

So are there differences in the factors that influence perceptions according to level of political sophistication? The quick answer is yes. As Tables 6 and 7 illustrate, first, the number of coefficients that are statistically significant is generally larger in the high sophistication group than in the low sophistication group, for evaluations of both trait types for leaders of both parties. It appears as though high sophisticates consider a greater number of factors overall.

In addition, however, the amount of emphasis placed on certain types of factors is greater among the highly sophisticated. While ideology, partisanship, and issue attitudes are more important than socio-demographics among both groups of respondents, the size of the coefficients are substantially larger among the highly sophisticated group in comparison to their less sophisticated counterparts. For example, with respect to evaluations of Centre-Left party leaders' character, the ideology coefficient is -0.07 for those in the less sophisticated group, and -0.154 in the more sophisticated group: double the size! In evaluations of Centre-Left leaders' competence, the same dynamic exists, but is even more pronounced: the ideology coefficient is -0.55 among the less sophisticated, and -0.152 for the more sophisticated.

In terms of the effects of partisanship, the variable appears to have, for the most part, more of an impact on perceptions of character and competence among the more sophisticated rather than the less sophisticated. With the exception of Centre-Left partisans evaluating Centre-Left leaders' competence, the more sophisticated tend to perceive the leaders of their own party more positively than the less sophisticated do. Furthermore, partisans of the "opposing" party tend to view the leader even more negatively in the highly sophisticated group than in the less sophisticated group: more sophisticated Conservative partisans view the Centre-Left leader more

negatively than less sophisticated Conservative partisans, and more sophisticated Centre-Left partisans perceive the Conservative leader more negatively than less sophisticated Centre-Left partisans.

Finally, socio-demographic variables generally appear not to have much of an effect regardless of political sophistication: only employment status is significant with respect to evaluations of the Centre-Left leaders' competence, and marital status and education achieve statistical significance only with respect to evaluations of Conservative leaders' character. The effect of socio-demographics is dwarfed by the effects of partisanship, ideology, and issue attitudes, with one exception: the sex of the party leader. Much as when looking at the effects of the leaders' sex on attitudes among the whole sample, this variable continues to provide the greatest amount of explanatory power for both low and high sophisticates' evaluations of leaders' traits.

Overall, low sophisticates evaluate Centre-Left women leaders' character more negatively than high sophisticates do. Furthermore, while the interaction variable (woman voter*women leader) has a larger coefficient for the less sophisticated, less sophisticated women voters still give Centre-Left women leaders more negative evaluations on character than more sophisticated women do (i.e, when we sum the coefficients). With regards to evaluations of Centre-Left leaders' competence, the dynamic is similar in the sense that both groups evaluate women leaders more negatively than men leaders, and the less sophisticated evaluate women leaders more negatively than the more sophisticated. Once the coefficients are combined, it becomes clear that the two groups of women evaluate women leaders similarly (with a coefficient of -0.211).

For evaluations of Conservative party leaders' character, both less and more sophisticated men evaluate women leaders equally negatively. Ratings of Conservative leaders' competence are

quite different with the more sophisticated giving less negative evaluations than the less sophisticated. Among women voters, high sophisticates tend to view women leaders less negatively than low sophisticates, for both trait dimensions. While the interaction variables (woman voter*woman leader) are not statistically significant, the sums of the two coefficients *are* statistically significant, with p values of 0.000.

Broadly, then, while women voters do evaluate women leaders more negatively than they evaluate men leaders of the two major parties (all coefficients are negative), more sophisticated women voters tend to evaluate women leaders slightly less negatively than less sophisticated women voters do. The evidence suggests that political sophistication affects the way that both women and men perceive women leaders.

Conclusion

Overall, it appears that we can in fact make some general statements about the types of factors that influence evaluations of party leaders. First, partisanship and ideology have a greater impact on ratings than other variables do. After these two influential factors, attitudes towards issues have the largest impact, and socio-demographic background characteristics of voters appear to exert the smallest influence on evaluations (although not so small that the effect is non-existent). The effect of the leader's sex is interesting, in that it (by far) has the greatest impact on ratings of character and competence: that is, voters of all types evaluate women party leaders more negatively than men leaders. This finding requires further research, in order to ascertain the extent to which other leaders' characteristics (religion, education, socio-economic status, etc.) may have an influence on individuals' perceptions of leaders' personality traits as well. Is the effect of the leader's sex simply a general effect of leaders' characteristics overall,

where we could substitute sex for religion or language and still get a similarly large effect? Or is there something about sex itself that matters so much. Perhaps running a series of country-specific analyses (where the data exist) might shed some additional light on this issue.

What these results show us, however, is that there are substantial differences in the way that different individuals weigh "background" factors when evaluating party leaders' personality traits. The more sophisticated tend to consider more factors overall (as evidenced by the greater number of statistically significant coefficients), they tend to give more weight to the factors that they do consider (as evidenced by the larger size of most coefficients), and they tend to rely more heavily on their ideological views than their partisanship in forming their perceptions. Finally, more sophisticated women tend to evaluate women leaders a little less negatively than less sophisticated women voters do, suggesting that the negative view of women leaders may not be a permanent endemic, but may shift as a) more women take a leadership role and people become more comfortable with the idea of women leaders; and b) education rises in society and more individuals in general become more politically knowledgeable and sophisticated.

Tables

Table 1
Effect of Socio-Demographics and Partisanship on Character Evaluations

	Centre-Left Leaders	Conservative Leaders	Left Leaders
Married	-0.015	0.033	0.020
	(0.003)**	(0.003)**	(0.004)**
Woman	0.009	0.007	-0.008
	(0.003)**	(0.003)*	(0.003)*
University Degree	0.014	0.002	0.054
	(0.003)**	(0.003)	(0.004)**
Employed	-0.012	0.008	0.017
	(0.003)**	(0.003)**	(0.004)**
Age	0.003	0.015	0.007
	(0.001)**	(0.001)**	(0.001)**
Centre-Left PID	0.136	-0.107	0.021
	(0.003)**	(0.003)**	(0.005)**
Conservative PID	-0.082	0.173	0.019
	(0.004)**	(0.003)**	(0.005)**
Left PID	-0.014	-0.034	0.166
	(0.007)*	(0.006)**	(0.006)**
Other PID	-0.062	-0.056	0.046
	(0.006)**	(0.008)**	(0.007)**
Observations	122874	115378	36640
R-squared	0.23	0.26	0.27

OLS Estimation, robust standard errors in parentheses
Model includes controls for fixed effects, with dummy variables for each election study
* significant at 5% level; ** significant at 1% leve l

Table 2
Effect of Socio-Demographics and Partisanship on Competence Evaluations

	Centre-Left Leaders	Conservative Leaders	Left Leaders
Married	-0.014	0.022	0.001
	(0.003)**	(0.003)**	(0.004)
Woman	0.005	0.001	0.011
	(0.002)*	(0.003)	(0.004)**
University Degree	0.001	-0.031	0.029
	(0.003)	(0.003)**	(0.004)**
Employed	-0.016	0.005	0.001
	(0.003)**	(0.003)	(0.004)
Age	-0.002	0.006	0.005
	(0.001)*	(0.001)**	(0.001)**
Centre-Left PID	0.127	-0.084	0.012
	(0.003)**	(0.003)**	(0.006)*
Conservative PID	-0.075	0.142	-0.029
	(0.003)**	(0.003)**	(0.006)**
Left PID	-0.017	-0.018	0.180
	(0.007)*	(0.006)**	(0.007)**
Other PID	-0.036	-0.030	0.015
	(0.006)**	(0.007)**	(0.008)*
Observations	122809	114720	35314
R-squared	0.26	0.23	0.25

OLS Estimation, robust standard errors in parentheses
Model includes controls for fixed effects, with dummy variables for each election study
* significant at 5% level; ** significant at 1% level

Table 3
Effect of SES, Partisanship, Ideology, and Issue Attitudes on Character Evaluations

	Centre-Left Leaders	Conservative Leaders	Left Leaders
Married	-0.006	0.025	0.024
	(0.004)	(0.004)**	(0.006)**
Woman	0.006	0.010	-0.006
	(0.003)	(0.004)**	(0.005)
University Degree	0.005	0.008	0.044
	(0.004)	(0.004)*	(0.006)**
Employed	-0.008	0.001	0.016
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.006)**
Age	0.004	0.012	0.013
	(0.001)**	(0.001)**	(0.002)**
Centre-Left PID	0.112	-0.075	-0.003
	(0.004)**	(0.005)**	(0.008)
Conservative PID	-0.053	0.133	0.013
	(0.005)**	(0.005)**	(0.009)
Left PID	-0.038	-0.032	0.166
	(0.010)**	(0.008)**	(0.010)**
Other PID	-0.061	-0.034	0.039
	(0.008)**	(0.010)**	(0.010)**
Ideology (L-R)	-0.145	0.190	-0.082
	(0.009)**	(0.009)**	(0.013)**
Issue Attitude: Major Campaign Issue	0.063	-0.040	0.013
	(0.005)**	(0.005)**	(0.009)
Issue Attitude: Taxes versus Spending	0.077	-0.066	0.076
	(0.006)**	(0.006)**	(0.009)**
Issue Attitude: Social Liberalism	0.024	-0.034	0.020
	(0.005)**	(0.005)**	(0.009)*
Observations	74865	67899	15536
R-squared	0.28	0.34	0.21

OLS Estimation, robust standard errors in parentheses
Model includes controls for fixed effects, with dummy variables for each election study
* significant at 5% level; ** significant at 1% level

Table 4
Effect of SES, Partisanship, Ideology, and Issue Attitudes on Competence Evaluations

	Centre-Left Leaders	Conservative Leaders	Left Leaders
Married	-0.010	0.018	-0.001
	(0.003)**	(0.004)**	(0.006)
Woman	0.001	0.002	0.016
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.006)**
University Degree	-0.006	-0.023	0.021
	(0.003)	(0.004)**	(0.006)**
Employed	-0.014	0.006	0.012
	(0.004)**	(0.004)	(0.006)
Age	-0.001	0.002	0.005
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)*
Centre-Left PID	0.099	-0.065	0.020
	(0.004)**	(0.005)**	(0.008)*
Conservative PID	-0.042	0.107	0.002
	(0.004)**	(0.004)**	(0.009)
Left PID	-0.038	-0.022	0.156
	(0.008)**	(0.009)*	(0.012)**
Other PID	-0.048	-0.015	0.012
	(0.008)**	(0.010)	(0.011)
Ideology (L-R)	-0.121	0.171	-0.063
	(0.008)**	(0.009)**	(0.014)**
Issue Attitude: Major Campaign Issue	0.049	-0.045	0.036
	(0.005)**	(0.005)**	(0.010)**
Issue Attitude: Taxes versus Spending	0.067	-0.039	0.053
	(0.005)**	(0.005)**	(0.010)**
Issue Attitude: Social Liberalism	0.008	-0.045	0.023
	(0.004)	(0.005)**	(0.009)*
Observations	75019	67771	15140
R-squared	0.35	0.26	0.33

OLS Estimation, robust standard errors in parentheses

Model includes controls for fixed effects, with dummy variables for each election study

* significant at 5% level; ** significant at 1% leve l

Table 5

Evaluating Women Leaders: the Effect of Sex on Perceptions of Character and Competence

	Evaluations of Party Leaders		
	Centre-Left	Conservative	Left
Character			
Woman Leader (Main Effect)	-0.382	-0.479	-0.038
	(0.007)**	(0.008)**	(0.009)**
Woman Voter * Woman Leader (Interaction)	0.032	-0.017	0.01
	(0.006)**	(0.006)**	-0.007
Total	-0.349	-0.496	-0.028
	(0.007)**	(0.008)**	(0.009)**
Competence			
Woman Leader (Main Effect)	-0.112	-0.008	-0.024
	(0.006)**	(0.007)	(0.009)**
Woman Voter * Woman Leader (Interaction)	0.028	0.006	0.035
	(0.005)**	(0.006)	(0.008)**
Total	-0.085	-0.002	0.011
	(0.006)**	(0.007)	(0.009)

OLS Estimation, robust standard errors in parentheses

Demographic and Partisanship Controls, as well as fixed effects included in model, coefficients not shown

Table 6
The Role of Political Sophistication in Explaining Sources of Trait Evaluations of Centre-Left Party Leaders

	Character		Competence	
	Low Sophistication	High Sophistication	Low Sophistication	High Sophistication
Married	-0.012	0.001	-0.012	-0.002
	(0.009)	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.006)
Woman	0.012	0.002	-0.007	-0.005
	(0.010)	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.006)
Woman Leader	-0.369	-0.192	-0.252	-0.243
	(0.021)**	(0.014)**	(0.020)**	(0.013)**
Woman Leader * Woman Voter	0.039	0.021	0.041	0.032
	(0.015)**	(0.011)	(0.014)**	(0.010)**
University Degree	0.007	0.007	0.002	-0.010
	(0.012)	(0.007)	(0.011)	(0.006)
Employed	0.000	-0.005	-0.020	-0.013
	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.009)*	(0.007)
Age	0.004	0.004	-0.000	0.000
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)
Centre-Left PID	0.118	0.134	0.100	0.078
	(0.011)**	(0.010)**	(0.011)**	(0.008)**
Conservative PID	-0.015	-0.071	-0.009	-0.047
	(0.013)	(0.010)**	(0.012)	(0.009)**
Left PID	-0.064	-0.023	-0.011	-0.052
	(0.024)**	(0.015)	(0.026)	(0.011)**
Other PID	-0.058	-0.050	-0.015	-0.051
	(0.014)**	(0.013)**	(0.014)	(0.010)**
Ideology (L-R)	-0.070	-0.154	-0.055	-0.152
	(0.022)**	(0.017)**	(0.022)*	(0.015)**
Issue Attitudes: Major Campaign Issue	0.046	0.059	0.037	0.061
	(0.014)**	(0.011)**	(0.013)**	(0.009)**
Issue Attitudes: Taxes versus Spending	0.070	0.079	0.058	0.074
	(0.016)**	(0.011)**	(0.014)**	(0.009)**
Issue Attitudes: Social Liberalism	-0.011	0.029	-0.013	0.019
	(0.013)	(0.010)**	(0.012)	(0.008)*
Observations	11753	19307	11780	19310
R-squared	0.21	0.38	0.22	0.55

OLS Estimation, robust standard errors in parentheses
Fixed Effects (Dummy Variables for each election study) included but coefficients not shown
* significant at 5% level; ** significant at 1% level

Table 7
The Role of Political Sophistication in Explaining Sources of Trait Evaluations of Conservative Party Leaders

	Character		Competence	
	Low Sophistication	High Sophistication	Low Sophistication	High Sophistication
Married	0.011	0.028	0.016	0.013
	(0.010)	(0.008)**	(0.009)	(0.007)
Woman	0.007	-0.004	-0.010	-0.002
	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.008)
Woman Leader	-0.691	-0.691	-0.267	-0.232
	(0.023)**	(0.013)**	(0.029)**	(0.014)**
Woman Leader * Woman Voter	-0.029	-0.020	-0.024	-0.012
	(0.029)	(0.013)	(0.033)	(0.014)
University Degree	0.033	0.016	0.008	-0.011
	(0.012)**	(0.007)*	(0.011)	(0.007)
Employed	-0.006	0.005	0.008	0.004
	(0.011)	(0.008)	(0.011)	(0.008)
Age	0.005	0.014	0.004	-0.002
	(0.003)	(0.002)**	(0.003)	(0.002)
Centre-Left PID	-0.046	-0.088	-0.057	-0.076
	(0.012)**	(0.011)**	(0.012)**	(0.010)**
Conservative PID	0.123	0.149	0.091	0.114
	(0.013)**	(0.010)**	(0.012)**	(0.009)**
Left PID	-0.027	-0.047	-0.049	-0.006
	(0.025)	(0.012)**	(0.027)	(0.014)
Other PID	-0.003	-0.041	-0.018	-0.010
	(0.017)	(0.016)**	(0.018)	(0.016)
Ideology (L-R)	0.102	0.215	0.076	0.191
	(0.024)**	(0.019)**	(0.024)**	(0.018)**
Issue Attitudes: Major Campaign Issue	-0.023	-0.031	-0.019	-0.043
	(0.014)	(0.011)**	(0.014)	(0.010)**
Issue Attitudes: Taxes versus Spending	-0.058	-0.072	-0.013	-0.052
	(0.015)**	(0.011)**	(0.015)	(0.010)**
Issue Attitudes: Social Liberalism	-0.039	-0.045	-0.040	-0.040
	(0.014)**	(0.010)**	(0.013)**	(0.010)**
Observations	9888	16620	9794	16557
R-squared	0.21	0.49	0.17	0.38

OLS Estimation, robust standard errors in parentheses
Fixed Effects (Dummy Variables for each election study) included but coefficients not shown
* significant at 5% level; ** significant at 1% level

Table 8
Number of Respondents Evaluating Major Party Leaders, by Political Sophistication

	Centre-Left		Conservative	
	Character	Competence	Character	Competence
Low	27,533	27,342	24,663	24,183
High	31,584	31,553	28,437	28,320

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