4-17-2018

# Navigating the Double Bind: Exploring the Relationship Between Gender, Political Ideology, and Human Rights

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***Navigating the Double Bind:***
***Exploring the Relationship Between Gender, Political Ideology, and Human Rights***


An Honors Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors in
*Political Science.*


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ABSTRACT

Do female chief executives on the political left exhibit better respect towards human rights than their counterparts on the political right? This paper explores the relationship between a female political leader and her ideology and how this relationship may influence policy attitudes, specifically, human rights practices within a country. I argue that women leaders face a political double bind in their actions and that their ideologies affect how they navigate this bind. Past research has found that women leaders must fulfill two roles: their role as leader and their role as woman (Paxton and Hughes 2014). Women leaders must work harder to win over support from the population by portraying both masculine (leader) and feminine (woman) traits. Practicing good human rights allows women to demonstrate their more feminine qualities of cooperation, negotiation, and care (Burns and Murdie forthcoming). I examine this relationship using four case studies on the following leaders: Golda Meir of Israel, Gro Harlem Brundtland of Norway, Indira Gandhi of India, and Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain. I argue that the inclusion of these leaders is important, first, because they serve as chief executive of their country. Second, I can also compare both politically left and right leaning leaders from various regions around the globe. The outcomes of this research can shed light on gender stereotypes that impact women leaders and provide information for future candidacies of women leaders to the highest political office.

Thesis Mentor:_____
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Honors Director:_____
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April 2018
Department of Political Science and International Studies
University Honors Program
**Georgia Southern University**

**Acknowledgements**

I would like to acknowledge and extend my heartfelt thanks to the following people who have made the completion of my undergraduate thesis possible:

To my mentor, Dr. Courtney Burns, for her vital encouragement and support. Thank you for your patience, your mentorship, and your knowledge on women in politics. I admire you more than you know.

Dr. Jamie Scalera, for the constant reminders and much needed motivation. You served as an advisor and cheerleader throughout this process and I value your mentorship.

To my parents, thank you for giving me the world. Your care, encouragement, and attempts at understanding my political babble are the support that pushed me through my undergraduate career. I hope I've made you proud.

To Jefferson Doehling, thank you for your partnership. Your patience, intelligence, and sense of humor brightens my life.

To Georgia Southern, for serving as my home for the last five years. I will cherish my time here forever.

To the University Honors Program, for promoting scholarship and offering encouragement to students and for providing the resources to success.

**Introduction**

The Rohingya Muslims are currently experiencing a massive human rights atrocity. This ethnic group resides on the western border of Myanmar with the Bay of Bengal to the west. This minority population of Muslims migrated to Myanmar during the early 20th century, a move that was viewed negatively by most of the native Buddhist population. The Rohingya have not been granted citizenship in Myanmar. Fleeing extrajudicial killings, rape, arson, torture, and infanticide, more than 400,000 of Rohingya have since sought refuge in Bangladesh (Sreenivasan 2017). These actions are supposedly being conducted by both the government and Buddhist majority population and have garnered the attention of many human rights groups including the United Nations and Amnesty International. The Rohingya have been considered "the world's most persecuted minority" (Al Jazeera Staff 2017).

The unexpected factor in this account is that a woman is the head of government in Myanmar. Aung Suu Kyi, a former political prisoner, was recently elected, leading to a transition from a military to civilian regime. During her time on house arrest, Suu Kyi devoted herself to the study of Buddhist meditation. Suu Kyi campaigned on the premise of the connectedness of democracy and Buddhism (BBC Staff 2017). She saw democratization as a way to gain freedom from the existing authoritarian government. Despite these claims, massive human rights violations are taking place under her leadership, a surprising crisis under the leadership of an advocate of a people's government (Davenport and Armstrong 2007). Some question whether the military, who is charged with responsibility of these atrocities, is answering to Suu Kyi. However, Suu

Kyi has recently stated that these events are an inaccurate exaggeration. This indicates that she is not taking the accounts of the Rohingya seriously (BBC Staff 2017).

Conventional wisdom, holds that women are more peaceful than men. Stereotypical views are that women are caring, nurturing, emotional, and empathetic (Eagly and Karau 2002). It may be easily assumed that women are more likely to aspire to respect human rights within a country. Suu Kyi shows that the relationship between these factors is much more complex. In fact, recent research finds that female chief executives do protect human rights more than men (Burns and Murdie forthcoming).

While one may be quick to conclude that female chief executives aim for better human rights within their nations, I argue that a more complex link exists. I seek to move beyond the discussion of the political double bind that female leaders face. Instead, I look to explore how female leaders navigate this double bind and how it influences their human rights respects within a nation. There is extant research that looks at ideology and policy but not how it interacts with gender (Benoit and Laver 2007, Tavits and Letki 2009, Koch 2009, Rosas and Ferreira 2013, et al). To my knowledge, no study has yet examined how political ideology of female leaders affects policy decisions. Furthermore, extensive research has been done on women in legislatures (Phillips 1996, Eagly and Karau 2002, Koch and Fulton 2011, Genovese and Steckenrider 2013, et al). However, little research has been conducted on female chief executives and their influence on politics. The continuing increase of female political participation and female chief executives globally have interested researchers around the world.

I seek to build on existing research about these women and explore if a nation's female chief executive in collaboration with her respective political ideology has any

relationship with the level of human rights respects within that state. Specifically, I ask: do female chief executives on the political left exhibit better respect towards human rights than their counterparts on the political right? To adequately explore this question, I must first study the political double bind that female leaders face. Next, I discuss the relationship between gender and human rights. Following this, I seek to understand the role of political left and right ideologies in policy changes. Next, I analyze how female leaders use these political ideologies to navigate the political double bind and, in turn, how this navigation affects respects towards human rights within their nations.

This topic is one that has lasting significance due to its attempt to correlate supposed societal gender norms, political ideologies, and human rights respect within a nation. It also seeks to understand the attitudes of female political leaders based on political ideology. This paper most specifically explores the factors that contribute to human rights respects and abuses within a country dependent on the political leanings of the female chief executive. The results from this study will further explain these ideologies of female political leaders and how this characteristic influences their policy, awareness, and general attitude toward human rights within their nations. The results could also to help predict future political patterns, successfulness of potential leaders, and the nature of human rights within a nation based upon its chief executive. In the ever developing system of politics, understanding the nature of politicians based on both their gender and ideology holds a relevance to not only the success of a nation, but to the possible success of future generations of young women. For example, the outcomes of this research can shed light on the gender stereotypes that impact women leaders and

provide information for future candidacies of women leaders to the highest political office.

This paper is divided into five sections. In the first section I discuss the existing literature that exists concerning the relationship between gender, political ideologies and human rights. Next, I discuss my theory that builds on the knowledge interpreted from previous scholars. In the third section, I discuss my research method and data. Finally, I provide an analysis and discussion of the implications of my findings.

**Literature Review**

*Gender and Leadership*

Women chief executives are not as common as male leaders, and therefore their habits and characteristics are harder to study. Women are severely underrepresented as national leaders around the globe, accounting for only eight percent of national leaders today (Jalalzai 2013). However, it is certain that once a female obtains office, she faces a political double bind. Past research has found that women leaders must fulfill two roles: their role as leader and their role as woman (Paxton and Hughes 2014). This happens because general populations do not necessarily equate women with leadership. In other words, women leaders have to work harder to win over support from the population by portraying both masculine (leader) and feminine (woman) traits (Burns and Kattelman 2017). Traits such as dominance, aggression, rationality, and competition are usually associated with males and political leadership. Feminine qualities of cooperation, negotiation, and care are often seen when demonstrating good human rights practices (Paxton and Hughes 2014). These feminine traits are considered the opposite of male and therefore, leadership, traits. These gender stereotypes work adversely for women aspiring

political power. When women fulfill the stereotypical constructivist roles that they are given by society as nurturers and more emotional beings, it allows them to exemplify one set of expected traits from their double bind (Melander 2005). Showcasing these traits could also be attributed to women campaigning toward a certain audience in order to earn their votes. However, these women have still not portrayed the more masculine traits expected of them. Populations tend to punish female chief executives who are too masculine, but also those who are too feminine (Ridgeway 2001).

Barbuto and Burbach (2006) studied emotional theory through application of a research design based on emotional intelligence to political leaders. These scholars defined transformational leaders as those who exhibit positive behaviors like individualized consideration, motivational techniques, and intellectual stimulation while in a position of leadership. These characteristics of a transformational leader could arguably also be attributed to a politician who was concerned with respecting human rights.

They pair this understanding of transformational leaders with those who are knowledgeable in emotional intelligence. According to their research, females usually have a better understanding of emotional intelligence and therefore would function as transformational leaders. These leaders are likely to make positive changes concerning issues within their realm of authority that directly impact human rights in a way that increases respect for these rights. However, this emotional intelligence may be interpreted as weakness to constituents.

Eagly and Karau (2002) seek to understand this perceived incongruity that exists between female gender roles and leadership roles. First, women are seen less favorably

than men as potential leaders; secondly, women who do hold leadership positions are evaluated more negatively than men (Paxton and Hughes 2014). Eagly and Karau (2002) contribute the presence of these stigmas to the lack of political participation and representation of women in governments globally.

This divide is also understood when considering that women bring a different set of values, experiences and expertise to politics (Phillips 1996). Much like Melander's (2005) essentialist argument, Phillips (1996) argues that women biologically are representative of different traits than men. While characteristics such as compassion, negotiation and peacefulness would suggest that women are more likely to respect human rights, conclusive evidence is still lacking.

Through this literature we see that the way a woman navigates the political arena is different than how male leaders proceed through their careers. Women are met with a political double bind that puts different obstacles in their paths than what is expected of leaders in general. Overall, women are seen as more nurturing and people-oriented, which contributes to them showing better human rights practices. While harboring these characteristics may be a key factor in positive leadership for the case of human rights, it plays directly into the double-bind that women face while in office. If a female leader does exhibit an understanding of emotional intelligence and efforts of cooperation, the woman is still missing the expected masculine traits of a leader. Often these traits are adverse in nature compared to the stereotypical nurturing, people-oriented traits we have studied above. This double bind poses a challenge to women, it may be that they have to overcompensate in their actions to appear strong, or more masculine. This may lead to quicker engagement in conflict and Caprioli and Boyer (2001) argue that not engaging

would be political suicide. However, I am not interested in the bind that women leaders face, but rather how they navigate this bind. Women process through the double bind in the foreign and domestic realms. The foreign arena allows them to display the more stereotypical masculine traits while the domestic arena allow for expected feminine traits to be acted upon (Burns and Murdie forthcoming, Koch and Fulton 2011). Within this paper, I have accepted the literatures over foreign relations and the masculine traits tied to that arena and are interested only in studying if and how a female leader uses the domestic realm to gain support from her constituents. To do this, I must study the way that gender interacts with political ideology.

*Human Rights*

To further my discussion, I study existing literature on human rights. Here I hope to understand who and what contributes towards the respect of human rights and what happens when a lack of respect is present. Human rights take many different forms. Most frequently studied are physical integrity rights, however, other rights fall within the purview of human rights. These include: civil rights, political rights, economic rights, environmental, social, and group rights.

Civil and political right must be taken into account when studying human rights as a whole. Civil and political rights "ensure one's ability to live, and to engage in religious, political, intellectual, or other activities, free from coercion, abuse, or discrimination" (Cingranelli and Richards 2014). These rights measure less violent human rights abuses within a nation. Civil and political rights were among the first to be recognized as a human necessity and will contribute heavily to my understanding of

human rights in general and the way in which a female chief executive respects these rights.

Most existing research on female chief executives and human rights practices studies just physical integrity rights, a subcategory of humans rights as a whole. Physical integrity rights are reserved as the most "egregious" or "severe" government abuses, including torture, imprisonment, disappearances and extrajudicial killings (Poe and Tate 1994). In contrast to civil or political rights, physical integrity rights concern the freedom from physical harm that a person experiences within their own nation from the government of that nation. The general belief is that democracy reduces government violations of personal integrity rights (Davenport and Armstrong 2007).

Past research has concluded that, in addition to democracy, higher levels of gender equality within a nation contribute to more peaceful relations with other nations, less risk of civil war, and the likelihood of better domestic human rights practices (Caprioli and Boyer 2001; Caprioli 2005). These studies evaluate gender equality by measuring gender equality in parliament, education, and labor force. This research does not, however, study the role of female leadership in the practice of these human rights respects.

To further the discussion of physical integrity rights and how gender could contribute to this relationship, Melander (2005) compared three theories that describe the way that a woman seeks to fulfill her role as a political leader. First, Melander (2005) defines the essentialist argument which builds on the assumption that the inherent reproductive role of a woman and the compassionate tendencies that come with motherhood to cause her to be averse to violence and prefer peace and peaceful methods

of conflict resolution. His constructivist argument relies more upon the societal gender roles that are established rather than the biological tendencies that could possibly exist. Next, Melander's (2005) spurious correlation argument suggest that all results found are spurious and have no correlation. Melander (2005) concludes that uncertainty still remains about the "causal mechanism which political gender equality reduces personal integrity rights abuse" (164) and that his arguments are still not conclusive enough to determine the relation between gender and human rights respect.

Through extensive research on female chief executives and state human rights practices, Burns and Murdie (forthcoming) conclude that female chief executives are more likely better for the protection of physical integrity rights within a nation. While female leaders may be better for physical integrity rights, it should not be assumed that just because a female executive is in power, that she will or could work for the betterment of all classifications of human rights. In fact, advocates of human rights would be wise in not only supporting female chief executives, but educating leadership on human rights as well. These scholars do not, however, take the ideology of the leader into account.

Overall, previous literature suggests that there is a possibility human rights within a nation could be improved as female representation increases. However, this research takes into account only physical integrity rights within a nation, not political and civil rights as well. Whether or not women who serve as chief executives display more respect towards human rights overall may depend on the inclusion of all of these classifications of human rights: physical integrity, civil, and political.

*The Role of Party Ideology in Policy Choices*

      In an effort to decipher what makes a female leader more likely to practice better human rights, I examine existing literature on political ideologies and the relevant characteristics of these ideologies. Understanding what is expected of a leader who employs a certain ideology, regardless of their gender, is pivotal to understanding my overall question.

      Political ideology is considered on a spectrum of left leaning to right leaning belief systems. In general, the left is considered more liberal in their policy expectations, whereas the right is considered to hold more conservative values (Tavits and Letki 2009). These partisanship variations contribute to foreign and domestic policies in very different ways. Overall research finds that parties on the right spend more money on defense and privatization. They are also considered more hawkish and warmongering (Benoit and Laver 2007). Parties on the left can be conflictual as well, but in general tend to focus more time and resources on domestic affairs such as expanding the welfare state, overall they also have a smaller budget (Tavits and Letki 2009).

      The welfare state refers to the characteristics and policy decisions most commonly implemented by parties on the left. Leaders who fall on the left of the political spectrum are usually concerned with welfare, employment, and health care (Koch 2009). Left leaning candidates also have policy platforms focused on collective action, redistribution of resources, and equality (Koch and Cranmer 2007). This emphasis on domestic welfare is what leads scholars to conclude that governments on the left are less likely to engage in conflict, and if conflict does occur, will engage for much shorter durations of time (Koch 2009).

More traditionally, conservative values correlated with right ideologies, however, may be what lends to these governments engaging in conflict more often and for longer periods of time (Koch 2009). These values include relative gains, power in terms of military capabilities, and strategic self-interest (Rosas and Ferreira 2013). Studies show that nations engaged in war have less than ideal human rights practices (Cingranelli and Richards 2014). During wartime, and others times when the state leader's power is threatened, the respect of physical integrity rights within a nation decrease; this is referred to as the law of coercive responsiveness (Bell, Clay, and Murdie 2012). This law explains the correlation between a leader's aspirations to maintain power during times of threat. Coercive action will persuade citizens to stay loyal to their government for fear of harm or death during times of conflict in a nation.

These differences in ideologies suggest that the political leanings and gender of an executive may interact with one another and contribute to their level of human rights practices, especially during or just after times of conflict. The existing literature on the independent topics of women leaders, political ideology, and human rights is extensive. However, this research design looks to analyze the way in which these components work together and what relationship exists between them.

**Navigating the Double Bind: Human Rights, Gender, and Political Ideology**

In this paper, I look explore the relationship between a female chief executive, her political ideology, and the level of human rights within her country. I argue that women do face a political double bind. A female leader faces this bind because her constituents expect her to fulfill two roles: one as leader and one as woman (Paxton and Hughes

2014). This means that due to the fact that they are female, different expectations are placed on them by their constituents. These expectations are different than what their male counterparts may encounter. These expectations take the form of traits portrayed by women leaders. These leaders are expected to portray both masculine and feminine traits in order to please their constituents (Burns and Kattelman 2017). Burns and Murdie (forthcoming) find significant evidence that women leaders practice better human rights than male leaders. They argue that human rights practices display one side of the double bind. However, they do not take into account political ideology of leaders. Political ideology is important to include because leaders are heavily influenced by their ideologies (Koch 2009). Additionally, these authors study human rights from a strictly physical integrity rights based point of view. My study takes into account not only physical integrity rights, but political and civil rights as well, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of human rights in a nation.

I argue the political double bind does exist and I aim to expand on this theory by demonstrating how women on the left and right may traverse this bind differently from one another due to their political ideologies. In addition to exhibiting their more feminine traits of cooperation and nurturing, women must fulfill those expected masculine traits in order to prove themselves as leader in other areas. By failing to display both type of traits, women may face harsher criticism from their constituents (Ridgeway 2001; Caprioli and Boyer 2001). When a female leader supports policies that appear more in line with more aggressive and competitive traits, she is displaying those correlating leadership traits like aggression and competitiveness. To navigate this bind and portray feminine traits, women who have different political ideologies may make different policy

decisions to attempt to achieve success within their position of power. It is important to emphasize that there is already evidence for the way that a female leader and her ideology interact with foreign affairs (Koch and Fulton 2011). I am studying just one side of the political double bind, specifically how domestic human rights allow women to navigate the bind successfully.

Taking into account parties on the left and right, I previously explored the implications of these ideologies and what values have been associated with each. In contrast to right ideology budgeting tactics, left leaning ideology tends to budget more for internal social programs (Tavits and Letki 2009). These programs are focused towards the wellbeing of citizens rather than the state as a whole. These leaders are more concerned with social welfare spending, equality within the state, and domestic affairs (Koch 2009). In general, politicians on the left maintain an aversion to external conflict and war and instead focus on internal policies and expanding the welfare state (Tavits and Letki 2009). These internal policies may not allow a female leader to showcase aggression or competition, traits generally associated with leadership. Perhaps there exists an interactive relationship between a female leader's ideology and the level of human rights within her nation.

I argue that nations under the political guidance of female chief executives whose political ideologies are left leaning are more likely to have more positive human rights conditions than nations under the guidance of a female leader on the political right. These leaders will practice better human rights because left leaning practices are more conducive to feminine traits such as negotiation and cooperation. Because left leaning leaders are able to campaign on ideals associated with social welfare and overall

domestic well-being there is less expectation from constituents from the beginning of their rise to power that this particular leader will be hawkish and display competitive traits. This is due to the fact that traits associated with left leaning leaders most closely reflect traits and attitudes expected of a leader who practices good human rights. Therefore, women on the left face a less significant struggle with the political double bind than a women on the right and are more likely to practice good human rights.

To expand on this, parties on the right tend to be viewed as more hawkish and less concerned with domestic policies (Rosas and Ferreira 2013). This right leaning ideology contributes more monetary resources to defense spending and national security rather than towards domestic affairs (Benoit and Laver 2007). Nationalism is high among members of this ideology, this implies that leaders on the right may be more willing to engage in conflict with another nation (Benoit and Laver 2007). During a time of conflict leaders are more likely to employ the law of coercive response in order to ensure that they do not experience a loss of power. Because of this response, domestic human rights violations increase in times of war (Cingranelli and Richards 2014). All of these factors contribute to my argument that female chief executives on the right are more likely to violate human rights than their counterparts on the left.

H1: *Women chief executives on the political left will practice better human rights than women on the political right.*

**Research Design**

In order to test my hypothesis, I conduct case studies on four female chief executives. My four cases studies include: Indira Gandhi of India, Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain, Gro Harlem Brundtland of Norway, and Golda Meir of Israel. These cases reflect women from nations globally, not from one select region. The four case studies allow me to compare a woman on the political left and a woman on the right for both the Global North and the Global South.

The data for the ideologies of these women are collected from biographical sources on each of them (Everett 2013, Henderson 2013, Genovese 2013, Thompson 2013, et al). This intentional selection allows us to understand the effect of gender and ideology in a way that represents more diverse regions of the world. By taking into account my control variables, as well as the diversity of locations that these women leaders represent, I hope that my results will directly to relate the ideology of a female chief executive and how this variable affects human rights within her nation.

Even though these leaders all came to power through different paths, these details are minute in understanding their human rights practices during their terms of leadership. The only one of these women to come to power through a political dynasty is Indira Gandhi, whose father served as prime minister before her. Margaret Thatcher, Gro Harlem Brundtland, and Golda Meir were all elected by their constituents.

*Independent Variable*

Women chief executives and their political ideology serves as my independent variable of interest. Using assessment of cases done on women leaders and their political ideologies, I study these women as members of either the political left or right ideology.

By conducting case studies on these female chief executives, I am able to better understand the decision making that these women choose to exhibit and how their ideologies contribute to these decisions.

*Dependent Variable*

Human rights is the dependent variable for this research design. I use the measures for physical integrity, political, and civil rights when considering the level of human rights within a nation. It is important to note that by studying all three of these categories we are able to understand the degree to which rights are violated by a chief executive outside of just violent means. My physical integrity rights measurements will be collected from the CIRI physical integrity rights index that represents a nation's respect for freedom from political imprisonment, torture, extrajudicial killings, and political disappearances (Cingranelli and Richards 2014). This index rates physical integrity rights within a nation with ordinal variables on a 0 - 8 scale, where a higher value represents better respect for human rights. Physical integrity rights are expected to be better in democracies, so including political and civil rights in my study allow us to be more comprehensive and better assess a wide array of human rights (Davenport and Armstrong 2007). My political and civil rights measurements are collected from data from the Freedom House dataset. This dataset is based on a 1 to 7 scale where 1 represents the most amount of freedom and 7 is the least amount of freedom citizens experience in terms of a nation's overall political and civil rights (Freedom House 2018).

*Control Variables*

I also take into account some control variables in each case study. First, I use the Freedom House 21-point Polity2 Indicator to understand and control for regime type

(Marshall et al 2002). This 21 point spectrum consists of ordinal variables that range from -10 to 10, where -10 represents a hereditary monarchy and +10 is assigned to consolidated democracies. Subcategories exist within the spectrum. Autocracies fall between -10 and -6, anocracies between -5 and +5 and democracies are assigned values between +6 and +10. I control for regime type because nations that operate as a democracy have better human rights than other regime types (Davenport and Armstrong 2007).

Additionally, I control for both domestic and external conflict within a nation by using the PRIO/Uppsala dataset on conflict (Gleditsch et al 2002). This measure consists of a binary measurement where the value 0 reflects the absence of conflict and the value 1 represents the presence of a conflict of some kind during a particular year. During times of conflict, human rights within a nation are violated more often than in times of peace (Poe and Tate 1994).

To include control for population size, I use data from the World Bank Development Indicators (2014). Human rights are more likely to be abused in countries with large populations (Davenport and Armstrong 2007).

Finally, it is important to note the diversity of ethnic groups within a nation while conducting my research. Some countries may experience more conflict when ethnic fractionalization is present (Poe and Tate 1994). I use the Fractionalization Data dataset of ordinal values to understand the number of ethnic groups that are recognized in my nations of study (Fractionalization Data 2011). I control for all of these variables because they are popular explanations for human rights abuses in nations.

**Analysis and Discussion**

[Insert Table 1, 2, 3, and 4]

In order to attempt to further understand the possible interaction between a female chief executive and the level of human rights respects in her country, I have conducted four case studies. By studying two women from the Global North, one on the political left and one on the political right, and then repeating this process for leaders in the Global South, I hope to better understand the nature of this interaction. By looking at the values given in these tables, some broad conclusions can be made about these female leaders, their ideologies, and human rights within their nations.

*Global North, Right Wing*

To conduct my case studies, I begin with Margaret Thatcher. Thatcher serves as my case for a Global North leader with a political right ideology. Thatcher served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (UK) from 1979 to 1990, the longest term of any UK Prime Minister in the 20th century (Genovese 2013). Thatcher was a member of the Conservative Party and was elected and then re elected for three consecutive terms (Genovese 2013, 270). Often referred to by her nickname, The Iron Lady, Thatcher's legacy is one of strong will.

According to my data in Table 1, during Thatcher's time of leadership the United Kingdom maintained a consistent ranking for civil and political rights. Being that the UK is a western democracy, these results are not surprising. However, there is a noticeable decrease in the level physical integrity rights in 1985.

In the years leading up to 1985, Thatcher faced many terrorist attacks within the nation. The Irish Republican Army paramilitary was located in the region of Northern

Ireland. The organization operated under the goal to remove Northern Ireland from the UK and establish a republic encompassing all of Ireland in its entirety (Jackson et al 2007). The IRA launched terrorist attacks against infrastructure within northern Ireland, hoping to use force to cause the collapse of the government within the region (Shanahan 2009). By inflicting enough casualties to British forces and the surrounding infrastructure, the IRA hoped that negative public opinion in Britain would cause leadership to withdraw from the region (Jackson et al 2007).

Leading up to 1984, the IRA launched a number of domestic terrorists attacks in order to achieve their goal of internal discord, and ultimately, legitimized succession (Shanahan 2009). Most of these attacks were targeted at infrastructure and large, but empty, municipal buildings. The IRA's goal was to make a statement, not murder their own potential citizenry. However, in October of 1984, the IRA conducted an assassination attempt again Prime Minister Thatcher. Under a pseudonym, an IRA member planted a long-term bomb in the Brighton Hotel, a floor above Thatcher's soon to be hotel suite. The bomb detonated on October 12, 1984. Thatcher was unharmed, but five people were killed, and 30 seriously injured, in the incident. Following this attempt, the IRA issued a threatening message to Thatcher, "Today we were unlucky, but remember we only have to be lucky once – you will have to be lucky always" (The Bingham 2013).

These events prompted Thatcher to respond to IRA presence with strengthening harshness and political imprisonment levels escalated exponentially in the UK at the turn of 1985 (Shanahan 2009). She is said to have responded dryly to the incident, "Crime is crime is crime. It is not political" (Shanahan 2009). This reaction by Thatcher highlights

her conservative ideals and how she chooses to navigate the political double bind she encounters as a female leader. Previous literature on ideology demonstrates that leaders on the right act more harshly than leaders on the left.

Civil, political, and physical integrity rights are only one way to conceive of human rights. Another way that some scholars have studied Thatcher's human rights record is in her economic and educational policies. In addition to the prevalent domestic succession disputes, scholars argue that Thatcher's time of leadership was one that further divided the population of the UK economically (Simms 2008). Thatcher's conservative economic policies made the rich richer and the poor poorer. This resulted in economic tension across the country and ultimately lost her the leadership after she emerged as a conviction politician concerning a fixed poll tax issue in 1987 (Simms 2008). Thatcher's policies resulted in a less progressive tax system, cuts to social services, and a higher national unemployment rate (Genovese 2013, 284). Her policies defined clear winners and losers at the expense of the general working class public and society in the UK became "meaner and greedier" (Ogden 1990, 335).

Educational rights were also challenged under Thatcher. Her agenda did not include cuts to educational policies; however, the loss of morale concerning social policy plummeted, leaving the education system in crisis by association (Genovese 2013, 287). This emphasizes Thatcher's prioritizing of addressing terrorism and economics over more welfare-based policies that would contribute to social rights within the United Kingdom. This emphasis is often expected of leaders on the right, but is not expected from women.

Thatcher's case makes it important to note the different ways in which human rights can be violated. While her overall policies were initially created to promote

economic development and growth, under the "moral code of competitive capitalism", the policies were not successful in providing stability to the general public. Additionally, when faced with succession disputes Thatcher responded in ways that violated the human rights of the populations in Northern Ireland. High levels of political imprisonments following IRA terrorist attacks in the early 1980s caused physical integrity rights to decrease in the UK. This drop in physical integrity rights, paired with the her implementation of social and economic policies to that did not benefit the general public shows that the conservative agenda of Margaret Thatcher hurt her citizens in ways not shown merely by traditional human rights measures.

Margaret Thatcher's case provides initial support for my hypothesis. Her case supports my theory by emphasizing the ways that she responded to various challenges during her time of leadership. Burns and Kattleman (2017) show that female chief executives are more likely to face terrorism during their leadership than are their male counterparts. My theoretical expectations suggest that female leaders with right ideologies will respond to threats with more coerciveness than their left-leaning counterparts. This is due to the bind they face as female leaders, the expectations from constituents that they remain womanly while simultaneously acting masculine in their role. Thatcher's case shows the struggle between strength as a female leader and policies that negatively affect domestic human rights, perhaps by way of overcompensation. Thatcher's nickname "The Iron Lady" is exemplary of the bind she faced.

*Global North, Left Wing*

Gro Harlem Brundtland is an interesting counterpart to Margaret Thatcher in terms of human rights respects in times of domestic disagreement. Brundtland was elected Prime Minister of Norway in 1981. She was the youngest person and first woman to ever hold the office of Prime Minister in Norway (Henderson 2013). She was a member of the Labour Party, a social-democratic association within Norwegian politics (Henderson 2013).

By studying data in Table 2, it is interesting to note that during Brundtland's time as Prime Minister of Norway, all areas of human rights maintained a consistent ranking. Similarly to the UK, these results are not initially surprising. Norway functions as a parliamentary representative democratic constitutional monarchy, a system in which good human rights are expected.

These expectations should not, however, prove conclusive on their own. As seen in the case of Margaret Thatcher, even high functioning democratic societies can have human rights ranking discrepancies. This was not the case in Norway under Brundtland's leadership, though. Unlike the United Kingdom during Thatcher's leadership, Norway did not face terrorist activity while Brundtland was in power. During this time, Norway did not engage in any conflict. This allowed Brundtland to focus her time on policy efforts and reform rather than responding to threats or conflict situations.

Brundtland's policy choices and areas of focus align with her progressive ideals. Before becoming Prime Minister, Brundtland lobbied for women's rights and progressive family policies in the 1970s (Henderson 2013). Specifically, she passed legislation concerning a generous paid family leave for Norwegian families. She emphasized this

issue, among with climate change, environmentalism, a demand for a healthy and educated world both in her pre-political era and once she was elected. These issues are typically associated with liberal ideals and contribute positively to the well-being and integrity of citizens in a nation. Brundtland was met with much support from her constituents while working to pass these policies (Jalalzai 2016).

Brundtland was also an advocate for equality during her time in office. Her cabinet consisted of eight women and nine men and was the most representative cabinet in terms of gender equality in Norwegian history. She also enforced the quota that required 40% of candidates running for office to be women (Henderson 2013).

Over the course of her life, not just her time in office, Brundtland has been committed to sustainable development. These efforts have earned her the nickname, "Mother of Sustainability". Throughout her political career, Brundtland developed and exhibited a concern for issues with global significance (UN.org). She was considered a global player and was well-known for advancing progressive policy goals worldwide. Brundtland stepped down as Prime Minister in 1996 to take on the role as Director-General of the World Health Organization (Henderson 2013).

Brundtland supports my theory by exemplifying how female leaders are able to navigate the political double bind in different ways based on their political ideology. Brundtland advocated for similar issues prior to achieving office as she did during her time as Prime Minister, so her policy expectations when she assumed leadership did not surprise constituents. Not surprisingly, Brundtland lended most favorably to welfare policies. This is often expected of both women and leaders with left ideologies. I argue that these stereotypes allowed Brundtland to navigate the double bind easier than a

woman on the right. The interaction between women, the political double bind they face, and their political ideology explains the different phenomena that occur as a female leader attempts to navigate that bind. For example, the double bind that Brundtland faced was much more navigable and amenable to her pursuing her policy preferences because of her ideology identification and womanhood.

*Global South, Right Wing*

Indira Gandhi assumed the office of prime minister of India in 1966. She held office for three terms, was voted out of office and imprisoned, and was then elected for a fourth term in 1980. Gandhi's path to power was a dynastic one. Her father, Jawaharlal Nehru, served as the second prime minister of India from 1947 to 1964. Gandhi was a member of the Indian National Congress party and held a politically right ideology (Everett 2013).

During Gandhi's time in office, India experienced substantially low levels of physical integrity, civil, and political rights (see Table 3). "After serving three terms, Gandhi was voted out of office [in 1977] for her increasingly authoritarian policies, including a 21-month state of emergency in which Indians' constitutional rights were restricted" (History.com). Despite this history, she was reelected to a fourth term in 1980.

Gandhi's early policy implementation focused on continuing former prime minister, Shastri's, economic liberalization and environmental policies (Everett 2013). She had inherited a weak and troubled economy upon assuming office and spent much of her efforts working towards alleviating this situation. She spearheaded what was referred to as The Green Revolution. This environmental revolution addressed the chronic food shortages that affected the poor Sikh farmers of the Punjab region, Gandhi spurred

growth through the introduction of high-yield seeds and irrigation. These developments eventually produced a surplus of grains within the nation (Shiva 2016).

Gandhi also promised the citizens of India policies aimed at establishing a more economically independent India (Everett 2013). She advocated for passing policies to help the poor; however, she did not carry those policies out one she was in office and the poor often rebelled (Everett 2013). Her populist rhetoric concerning economic liberalization had won the support of her constituents to begin with, but those same constituents were dissatisfied with her actions once she assumed office as prime minister. She did not follow through on her populist rhetoric with initiatives on poverty and many constituents coordinated protests against Gandhi. "Political protests, including riots, strikes, student 'indiscipline,' rural rebellions and secessionist movements increased" during her first few years as prime minister (Rudolph and Rudolph 1987, 238). In response to these protests, Gandhi cracked down on the poor protesters and imprisoned individuals in opposition to her, much of this was considered a caste based dissonance.

Gandhi is also credited with leading her country into the nuclear age with the detonation of an underground device in 1974 (Singh 2012). While this action can be seen as scientific and educational progress for India, it is important to note how this development highlights her attention to state and military strength, a traditionally conservative leadership focus.

Despite some positive advancements that she advocated for, Gandhi was criticized for authoritarian tendencies and government corruption under her rule. In 1975, the Allahabad High Court found her guilty of dishonest election practices in the elections of 1972, excessive election expenditure and of using government resources for party

purposes (Everett 2013). Instead of resigning, which was expected by most citizens, Gandhi declared a state of emergency and imprisoned thousands of her opponents (Biography.com). During this time Gandhi's government operated as a semi-fascist regime and was faced with much contempt from Indian citizens, many dubbed the era the "Reign of Terror." (Singh 2012). Under The Emergency citizens' civil liberties were suspended, the press was extremely censored, and the those in opposition were detained without trial. Gandhi was met with a majority caste based dissonance to her rule and used her leadership role to crush opposition, especially within the lower castes (Everett 2013). By doing so, physical integrity, civil, and political rights were severely disrespected.

At the end of 1971, India engaged in a brief but impactful interstate conflict with western neighbor, Pakistan. Common for right-leaning leaders especially, Gandhi enforced the theoretical Law of Coercive Responsiveness during this time. Citizens thought to be siding with Pakistan, or affiliates with the terrorist activity that had happened in the Kashmir region between the two nations, were imprisoned without due process. Political imprisonment increased and physical integrity rights decreased dramatically during this period.

During her role as prime minister for nearly two decades, Gandhi constantly battled with her gender in complex and contradictory ways. Everett (2013) mentions that Gandhi herself did not see gender as mattering for her tenure in office; however, others note that Gandhi was beholden to the political double bind. She had to express masculine traits, which she did by acting through her political ideology and policies (Everett 2013). She engaged in war, pushed for nuclear weapons developments, consolidated power and crushed any opposition that arose. Despite this, she was also held to traditional female

stereotypes. She was negatively given the nickname "The Dumb Doll" by her political peers and constituents (Everett 2013). This nickname was meant to denounce her as a person power and suggest she was more a face of representation (Everett 2013). At times, however, Gandhi used her gender to her advantage, referring to herself as the mother of her country or referring to her constituents has family members she was taking care of. Through this language Gandhi evoked the traditional nurturing characteristics stereotypically associated with women (Everett 2013). Gandhi's right wing policies and responses to opposition contradictorily coexisting with her attempts to still evoke womanly traits can be seen throughout her rhetoric and policy practices. These attempts at fulfilling the double bind was difficult for her, however, because of her existence as a strong, right wing leader. Her attempts to navigate the double bind she was faced with as a woman leader still brought bad human rights practices to her country of India during her rule.

Ultimately, Gandhi was assassinated by two of her own bodyguards on October 31, 1984 (Everett 2013). In June of 1984, Gandhi ordered a military assault on the most significant religious center for the Sikhs, Darbar Sahib in Punjab (Singh 2012). The attack killed thousands of civilians. Gandhi pushed to reform India's environmental strength, but due to conflict with Pakistan, caste divides, genocide, and internal election practice conflict which led to thousands of dissidents being imprisoned without due process, Indira Gandhi's legacy is a complicated one.

Gandhi "developed a tendency to interpret policy failures and political opposition in terms of conspiracies against her" (Everett 2013). She used this interpretation to make the argument that the intelligence capability of her office needed to be stronger and that

coercive force was necessary to put down dissent. When rules worked against her, she altered them. When party bosses threatened her rule, she overthrew their parties. Gandhi operated as a right-wing populist and interpreted her own power by the degree of control she possessed (Brass 1988).

I argue that both Gandhi's politically right ideology and gender identity interacted in a way that contributed to these low levels of human rights and ultimately what led to such low levels of human rights in India throughout the majority of her time as prime minister. Gandhi was constantly working to overcome the weakness associated with her being female and used her conservative ideals to crackdown harshly on those who opposed her. As a right leaning politician she was expected to be firm in situations of threat but as a woman she was seen as weak. This paradox led to Gandhi's immediate repression of opposition and ultimately bad human rights in India under her leadership.

*Global South, Left Wing*

Golda Meir served as Prime Minister of Israel from 1969 to 1974. Meir was a member of the Labor Party, a traditionally social democratic and Zionist organization. She was the first and only woman to hold the office of Prime Minister in Israel's history (Thompson 2013).

As prime minister Meir advocated for cooperative foreign policy, common of left-leaning leaders. As prime minister she worked closely with the United States as an ally and provider of financial aid, she pursued negotiations with political allies and enemies, and she promoted a ceasefire to end the Yom Kippur War, a 20 day long conflict between Israel, Egypt and Syria (Thompson 2013).

Even though Meir faced interstate violence while she was in office, the human rights in her country did not suffer for it. Throughout Meir's time in office, human rights were low, but consistent, despite being involved in interstate war and facing terrorist violence (see Table 4). During her tenure, conflicts with Arabs and war dominated Meir's agenda (Thompson 2013, 193). Despite facing interstate and terrorist violence, like Gandhi, her reactions were not to imprison her population and diminish rights. Instead, many of Meir's policies revolved around achieving peace. She tried to understand the motives of her enemies and found their thought processes "unfathomable" (Thompson 2013, 195). This commitment to cooperation is expected of both left-leaning leaders and women, stereotypically, so Meir was able to navigate that issue with more ease than a right-leaning leaders would have. She was not expected to be hawkish and was known to have a high tolerance for discussion, an attitude conducive of negotiation (Thompson 2013).

In her autobiography, Meir states that she "did not think that gender affected her political career or relationships with colleagues" (Thompson 2013). However, it is obvious that she too struggled with the double bind that she faced. She struggled to meet the responsibilities she felt to her husband and children while simultaneously serving in the public sphere. In order to navigate this bind, Meir learned how to use gender to her advantage as prime minister of Israel. Her legacy is one of softness, often times she was described as "grandmotherly". This could be contributed to the fact that when she came to power originally, she was to serve as a "caretaker prime minister until the next election" (Thompson 2013, 193). This stereotype stuck with Meir and her image as prime minister throughout her tenure. This allowed her to rule the nation and make decisions as

a leader while maintaining the softness stereotypically expected of a female. She was tough in negotiations but when tragedy or conflict struck, Meir too was seen as a victim and not a person to blame for the events (Thompson 2013). Meir's left-leaning ideology contributed to this vision. Her policies of peace, negotiation, and the public opinion of her as a caretaker interacted in a way that made the interaction between her left-leaning policies and gender feel genuine and expected. Constituents did not hold her to a level of toughness, nor was she blamed for the events of conflict within the nation (Thompson 2013).

The interaction between her ideology, policy practices, and gender allowed Meir to exemplify a cohesive face for her people. Her beliefs were straightforward and the interaction between her decisions and gender identity allowed Meir to walk the line between private and public responsibilities she placed upon herself with more ease than a right wing leader. Notably, human rights practices did not improve under Meir. However, past research shows that consolidated democracies and countries not at war practice better human rights (Davenport and Armstrong 2007, Poe and Tate 1994). In other words, Meir had institutional constraints working against her ability to practice better human rights. I argue that had she not faced these issues, human rights may have improved under her tenure in office.

*Discussion*

The findings from my case studies support my hypothesis that the political ideology of female chief executives affects their human rights practices. All four of my studies show that in both the Global North and Global South, human rights practices were less favorable under right wing female leaders despite expectations that human rights

would categorically be better in the Global North. This is especially true when conflict and domestic terrorism are present for leaders in the Global South.

**Conclusion**

The interaction between a female leader and her political ideology weighs heavily on the human rights in her country. Female leaders must navigate the political double bind and exhibit both masculine and feminine traits in order to be positively favored by her constituents. Leaders on the left will practice better human rights because traditionally left practices are more favorable and compatible with stereotypical feminine traits such as negotiation and cooperation. Alternatively, leaders on the right are expected to showcase these same female traits while also exhibiting stereotypically masculine traits such as competition and hawkishness. The avenue they must take for this then, is to be hawkish in their policies.

The implications of this research can shed light on gender stereotypes that impact women leaders and provide information for future candidacies of women leaders to the highest political office. Understanding the political double bind and the additional obstacles that it contributes to female candidacy is vital to understand and overcome if politics are to become more equal. Additionally, this research highlights the importance of the role that other factors, like regime type or institutions, play in the leadership of women. In other words, there is more to the story than just gender.

Further research on the study of women leaders and human rights needs to take into account several factors. First, this study looked at the interaction between gender and political ideology; however, there could be other variables that gender interacts with to explain human rights practices such as, regime type, geographical region,

predecessor/successor, or gender equality. Second, this study would benefit from exploring a quantitative approach in addition to a qualitative approach. This mixed methods approach would give a broader picture of what is going on in this interaction.

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# Appendix

## Indira Gandhi

Prime Minister of India

1966-1977, 1980-1984

| | 1966 | 1967 | 1968 | 1969 | 1970 | 1971 | 1972 | 1973 | 1974 | 1975 | 1976 | 1977 | 1980 | 1981 | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ideology | right | right | right | right | right | right | right | right | right | right | right | right | right | right | right | right | right |
| Physical integrity rights | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Political HR | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Civil HR | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Regime type | - | - | - | - | - | - | 9 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Conflict | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Population | - | - | - | - | - | 547949 | 560652 | 573354 | 586056 | 598097 | 610077 | 625018 | 646172 | 667326 | 676255 | 685185 | 699645 |
| Ethnic fractionalization | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0.41819998 | 0.41819998 | 0.41819998 | 0.41819998 | 0.41819998 | 0.41819998 | 0.41819998 | 0.41819998 | 0.41819998 | 0.41819998 | 0.41819998 |

## Margaret Thatcher

Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

1979-1990

| | 1979 | 1980 | 1981 | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | 1987 | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ideology | right | right | right | right | right | right | right | right | right | right | right | right |
| Physical integrity rights | - | - | 7 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Political HR | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Civil HR | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Regime type | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Conflict | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Population | 55901 | 55945 | 55776 | 55997 | 56049 | 56101 | 56153 | 56205 | 56258 | 56310 | 56362 | 56415 |
| Ethnic fractionalization | 0.12110000 | 0.12110000 | 0.12110000 | 0.12110000 | 0.12110000 | 0.12110000 | 0.12110000 | 0.12110000 | 0.12110000 | 0.12110000 | 0.12110000 | 0.12110000 |

## Gro Harlem Brundtland

Prime Minister of Norway

1981, 1986-1989, 1990-1996

| | 1981 | 1986 | 1987 | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ideology | left | left | left | left | left | left | left | left | left | left | left | left |
| Physical integrity rights | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Political HR | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Civil HR | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Regime type | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Conflict | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Population | 4101 | 4169 | 4188 | 4208 | 4227 | 4248 | 4270 | 4292 | 4315 | 4337 | 4359 | 4381 |
| Ethnic fractionalization | 0.05860000 | 0.05860000 | 0.05860000 | 0.05860000 | 0.05860000 | 0.05860000 | 0.05860000 | 0.05860000 | 0.05860000 | 0.05860000 | 0.05860000 | 0.05860000 |

## Golda Meir

Prime Minister of Israel

1969-1974

| | 1969 | 1670 | 1971 | 1972 | 1973 | 1974 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ideology | center-left | center-left | center-left | center-left | center-left | center-left |
| Physical integrity rights | - | - | - | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Political HR | - | - | - | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Civil HR | - | - | - | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Regime type | - | - | - | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| Conflict | - | - | - | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Population | - | - | - | 3148 | 3240 | 3333 |
| Ethnic fractionalization | - | - | - | 0.34360000 | 0.34360000 | 0.34360000 |