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Sexual identity and Gender Gap in Leadership. A political intention experiment

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Abstract

The underrepresentation of women and homosexuals in leadership positions has been well documented, but the grounds for this need further investigation. We conduct a field and an online experiment to test a prominent theory about the sources of the sexual and gender gap in political leadership ambition: women's and homosexuals' higher aversion to engage to competitive environments. Within an experimental political environment as a context for our research, we employ two distinct subject sample pools – highly politically active individuals and workers from an online labor market. By controlling for a variety of internal and external factors and preference-based indicators, we establish that there are fundamental sexual and gender behavioral differences, stemming from differences in underlying psychological abilities and differences due to the nature of electoral competition. We find that priming individuals to consider the competitive nature of politics has a strong negative effect on women's and homosexuals' interest to run for a political office, but not on men's and heterosexuals' interest, hence significantly increasing the gender and sexual gap in leadership ambition. While on the online experiment the gender gap holds, surprisingly, we found that homosexuals' intention to participate in politics follows the opposite course.

JEL-Codes: D01 D91, C93

Keywords: Sexual gap, Gender gap, leadership, politics, experiment

Introduction

Do women and men make different choices about becoming candidates when faced with the same decision problem? How does being a woman or homosexual affect perceptions of being fit for gender and sexual-stereotyped positions? Who wants to lead and why? Sexual orientation and gender discrimination have been constantly under investigation by the research body, and many attempts have been made to understand the determinants of leadership suitability. The integration of sexual and gender minorities into party politics is one of the major changes to have taken place in several countries. Although attitudes toward females and homosexual individuals are changing rapidly, most politicians are still white straight men. As the traditional leader prototype in Europe and United States is that of a heterosexual, white man, it follows that the leadership ideal consists of individuals with heterosexual, white male characteristics (Fassinger et al. 2010 and Rosette et al. 2008). For example, in the USA, Congress remains 83 % white and 83 % male, while the EU Parliament, nowadays, consists of 60 % males (in 1990 males where 80 % and in 2000 about 70 %) and 88 % whites.¹

In general, women's and homosexuals' underrepresentation in leadership positions has been monitored constantly in recent years. More particularly, although women make up the majority of the US population (51 %), they hold only about 20 % of elected congressional offices, about 24 % of state legislative seats and 10 % of governorships². Similarly, the share of women in the EU population is approximately 51 %, but only six EU countries have reached or surpass a minimum threshold of 40 % for women's participation in their parliaments³. Concerning, homosexuality, while an estimated 5% of the U.S. population identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer, just 0.17% of elected officials across all levels of the American government are homosexuals (in 2020 we saw a 41 % increase of homosexual candidates)⁴. In Europe, the average percentage of homosexuality by country increases every year (Lam, 2016). Nonetheless, the political representation with homosexual leaders remains close to invisible in public office⁵. Meanwhile, several surveys suggest the broad acceptance of homosexual individuals in politics by USA and EU citizens, with 64% saying they would feel comfortable seeing a homosexual person in the highest elected position, 54% would be comfortable with an intersex person and 53% comfortable with a transgender prime minister. The rates for acceptance of a work colleague are equally high⁶.

¹<https://cawp.rutgers.edu/current-numbers>

<https://euobserver.com/>

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2019/637976/EPRS_ATAG\(2019\)637976_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2019/637976/EPRS_ATAG(2019)637976_EN.pdf)

² Center for American Women and Politics, 2014 Fact Sheet, <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast-facts/levels-of-office/documents/elective.pdf>.

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/EDN-20190306-2>

⁴<https://victoryfund.org/news/2020-lgbtq-candidate-diversity-report-released-at-least-1006-lgbtq-people-running-in-2020/> (Out for America 2020 Survey)

⁵ LGBT, Representation and Rights, Curriculum in Global Studies, UNC-CH

⁶ Eurobarometer spring 2019

Fully integrating women and homosexuals into leadership positions is essential for a society to flourish. For that reason, we have to understand why these population subgroups still encounter considerable barriers to reaching their full potential. Some of these barriers are, at least in part, self-imposed and have strong relationships with psychological determinants. For example, the “lean-out” phenomenon of affluent women opting to slow or stop their highly demanding careers greatly thins the ranks of women who could be leaders (Chrobot-Mason et al. 2019). Brands and Fernandez-Mateo, 2017, found that women’s decision to “lean out” when considering leadership roles may very well be caused by psychological factors due to previous rejections or bias from gender-based stereotypes and discrimination (Bozani et al. 2019). Overall, the literature suggests that perhaps women do at times hold themselves back. However, the reasons for this are complex and rarely seem to be the result of their aversion and lack of desire to engage in leadership roles.

Similarly, the perceptions of homosexuals and their decision-making process for engagement in leadership positions has been under investigation by several research bodies, which try to contribute to the understanding of the unique leadership challenges faced by sexual minorities (Fassinger et al. 2010 and Barrantes, & Eaton, 2018). For example, Salvati et al., 2016, revealed that several sexual minorities suffer of prejudices and negative attitudes when applying for leadership positions (Pellegrini et al. 2020). Moreover, for these sexual minorities, the conscious decision to include sexual orientation identity as part of their visible public persona is a complicated issue. As there is ample evidence that being openly gay or lesbian still entails safety concerns on many fronts, the very issue of visibility may in and of itself affect the willingness of homosexuals to pursue leadership roles (Eagly et al. 2003). For homosexual people, their own perceptions of themselves as leaders, as well as the judgments of others regarding their leadership, may focus on whether others in the group or organization perceive or know that the leader is a member of a sexual minority. Unlike women and people of color, whose identification usually is obvious, homosexual people often retain some (both initial and ongoing) decision about whether their sexual orientation identity is part of what is known about them in their workplaces (Salvati et al. 2020). Thus, a sense of aversion for and disillusionment in leadership positions may arise (Milltet, 2016). Therefore, homosexuals often have to invest more in education or have to constantly demonstrate their competence, compared to their heterosexual counterparts, in order to achieve the highest leadership positions (Aksoy et al., 2018;2019).

The dearth of these subgroups in leadership roles—and in whole fields—creates the perception that they do not belong in those positions or professions. In the political world, this means that women and homosexuals are less likely than men and heterosexuals to be recruited to run for elected office, are more likely to be discouraged from running, and are less likely to consider themselves “qualified” to run—even though they now raise as much money and are as successful as male and heterosexual candidates when they do run for public office.

Obviously, this decreases women’s and homosexuals’ leadership ambitions and leads to a form of discrimination (Stiglitz, 1973; Francois, 1998 and Lane, 2016). Several laboratory and field experiments have revealed evidence that women are less likely than men to seek to be elected to political leadership positions (Lawless & Fox, 2008;

Kanthak & Woon, 2015; Preece & Stoddard, 2015 and Alan et al. 2020). Based on various aspects of the psychological literature⁷, the aforementioned studies have, mainly, pointed out that women have lower motivation to lead and may be more concerned about whether they will harm other individuals with the decisions that they will need to make as leaders (Elprana et al., 2015).

In the same direction, sexual orientation discrimination also exists in several economic aspects (Clain & Leppel, 2001; Weichelbaumer, 2003 and Drydakis, 2009). In politics, despite the growing recognition of legislation that counteracts sexual prejudice and promotes civil rights and inclusion policies for sexual minorities, recent studies have revealed that homosexuals are still unfairly treated and for that reason, their loss aversion⁸ in politics increases over time (Fassinger, 2010; Salvati et al. 2021 and Barrantes & Eaton, 2018). A possible interpretation was coined by researchers with the “gay glass ceiling effect” (Aksoy et al. 2019 and Frank, 2006). According to this, even though homosexuals seem to be more likely to report managerial authority, supervisory responsibilities and managerial positions compared to heterosexuals, gay and lesbians are, however, less likely to attain the highest-level managerial positions and therefore earn less than heterosexuals (Mize, 2016). Thus, this is coherent with the glass ceiling effect that posits that barriers are increasingly pronounced as one moves up the organizational hierarchy (Cotter et al. 2001).

All the above studies make clear that a woman’s or homosexual’s decision in a leadership role, such as in political involvement, has various psychological determinants.

In this study, we investigate the determinants of the leadership ambition gender and sexual gap: women’s and homosexuals’ higher aversion to competitive environments. To test differences in male and female participants’ and homosexuals and heterosexuals’ correspondence to competition in several ways, we conduct an offline and an online experiment using two distinct subject pools: individuals with high political activity and engagement and workers in an online labor market. After reading either a neutral control statement (benchmark group) or a statement presenting the competitive nature of the political process (treatment group), the participants in both settings had the opportunity to request information on the key elements of an effective election campaign strategy. We then compared the behavioral patterns at which respondents in each treatment group choose to read/watch our optional information as evidence of increased leadership ambition.

We reveal that, in the field experiment, priming participants to consider the competitive nature of politics has a significant negative effect on women’s and homosexuals’ interest in political office, but not on men’s and heterosexuals’. Surprisingly, we find that this effect on homosexuals’ behavior towards leadership turns positive when the experiment is online, while it remains in the same direction for women. In general, this different response by men and women significantly increases the gender gap in the treatment of competition relative to the control and confirms several findings from previous studies (Preece & Stoddard, 2015; Foos & Gilardi, 2019; Preece et al. 2016

⁷ Such as the leader emergence literature in psychology.

⁸ Loss aversion is the tendency to prefer avoiding losses to acquiring equivalent gains.

and Kanthak & Woon, 2015). These findings also suggest that in a real-world context, among politically active individuals, women and homosexuals are differentially turned off by the competitive framework and characteristics of politics. On the other hand, our results from the experiment in an online labor market (i.e. Amazon Mechanical Turk), confirm women's behavioral trend, but the revealed opposite effect for homosexuals suggest that several psychological determinants are key factors in a homosexual's decision to engage in political competition. For that reason, we also demonstrate that personality traits play an important role in the underlying decision regarding politics, especially for homosexual participants (Drydakis et al. 2018; Judge et al. 2000; 2002; Pellegrini et al. 2020 and Aichholzer, & Willmann, 2020).

Next, in an attempt to give a more comprehensive interpretation for the behavioral responses of women and homosexuals, we take the analysis a step further, by embedding social preference determinants in our experiment (Peng, 2022). The kinds of social preferences that might predict different behaviors in electoral environments pertain to trust and honesty (Kanthak & Woon, 2015 and de Vries & van Prooijen, 2019). Thus, initially, in the beginning of the experimental process, we selected the Five-Minute Addition Task used by Niederle and Vesterlund (2007) to study preferences for competition. Next, we informed the participants about their performance, and in the end of the process, we adopted the campaign messages strategy of Kanthak and Wood, to measure participants' lying aversion (Gneezy et al. 2003 and Gneezy, 2005). In our view, this, initially, is actually a desirable feature of our experimental design, for the simple reason that politics, like math, is traditionally viewed as a task that belongs in the masculine domain (Conway, 2001) and therefore provides us with a harder test of election aversion proxy index than using a gender/sexual-neutral or feminine task (Kanthak & Woon, 2015) and it also allows us to investigate if differences in honesty or trust might explain differences in candidate entry decisions. Hence, we suggest that the election aversion of female and homosexual participants, resulting in underrepresentation in politics, have personality- and preference-based explanations. Indeed, our findings are consistent with a growing body of behavioral sciences literature that tries to investigate and explain that the scarcity of individuals with a particular gender and sexual status in a variety of important positions and roles in society - in politics as well as in business leadership - is a consequence of both external and internal motivational factors (Bowles et al. 2007; Jones & Linardi, 2014; Gneezy et al. 2009 and Reuben et al. 2012).

This is one of the first attempts to measure the effect of competition and election aversion within both a real-world and an online labor setting, in the context of gender and sexual orientation and political leadership ambition. Moreover, we use a unique sample of highly politically engaged individuals, making this study as close as possible to a policy-relevant manipulation (Grose, 2014 and Krupnikov et al. 2021). Furthermore, our replication of the main results with a diverse pool of workers in an online labor market adds an important layer of external validity to our results and highlights several personality factors of our behavioral outcomes.

Undoubtedly, the psychological mechanism and attitudinal correlates of competition and election aversion are related to differences in decisions in other domains, but further research will be required to say exactly what these are.

In the remainder of the paper, we discuss the existing literature on women's and homosexuals' political ambition, we describe our experimental framework and sample pool, we report the econometric model and results, and we discuss the potential implications of our findings on the gender and sexual orientation gap in the labor market and other economic aspects.

Literature review

To understand the forces behind selecting one's self for leadership, we must go a step back and analyze its characteristics. Leadership is the accomplishment of a goal through the direction of human assistants. Leadership also captures the essentials of being able and prepared to inspire others. Effective leadership is based upon ideas—both original and borrowed—that are effectively communicated to others in a way that engages them enough to act as the leader wants them to act. For that reason, leadership skills can be learned and leaders may evolve, according to their personality and cognitive profile (Vroom & Jago, 2007 and Derue et al. 2011). A political leader must inspire others to act while simultaneously directing the way in which they act. He/She must be personable enough for others to follow their orders, and must have the critical thinking skills to know the best way to use the resources at an organization's disposal (Morrell & Hartley, 2006).

This complex nature of leadership obviously results in different behaviors according to gender, culture and sexuality (Ayman & Korabik, 2010), especially when also correlated with an individual's personality traits (Lord et al. 1986 and Zaccaro, 2007). In this context, investigating women's lower levels of leadership ambition is quite challenging. Recent literature shows empirically women's aversion to high levels of competition procedures. These gender differences in competitiveness have been well documented in laboratory settings (Croson and Gneezy, 2009; Niederle and Vesterlund, 2007; Niederle and Vesterlund, 2011; Flory et al., 2014) and have been linked to gender differences in education and labor market outcomes (Buser et al., 2014), revealing that female participants are half as likely as male ones to choose to compete. Female participants were mostly unwilling to enter tournaments competing in a variety of tasks, including shooting baskets, solving anagrams, forecasting stock prices, computing sums, and solving mazes (Kanthak & Woon, 2015). Prior research on the gender gap in leadership ambition, via field experiments, has shown that, within a political framework, women still experience low levels of leadership ambition (Preece & Stoddard, 2015; Karpowitz et al. 2017 and Alan et al. 2020). Several potential explanations have suggested that women's averting behavior on leadership engagement is due to women's family duties and responsibilities (Sapiro, 1982; Bledsoe & Herring, 1990 and Fulton et al., 2006), gender role socialization (Clark et al., 1989; Fox et al., 2001 and Moore, 2005), differences in awareness of qualifications, abilities and required skills (Bledsoe & Herring, 1990; Fox & Lawless, 2004; Fox & Lawless, 2005 and Lawless & Fox, 2010), and differences in party support (Fox & Lawless, 2004; Sanbonmatsu, 2006a; Sanbonmatsu, 2006b; Fulton et al., 2006; Fox & Lawless, 2010; Fox & Lawless, 2011 and Sanbonmatsu, 2013). Several recent studies have also pointed out the psychological determinants of women's low leadership engagement, citing their

low social confidence, fear of embarrassment, assertiveness, anxiousness, fear of disappointing others and increased shyness (Preece & Stoddard, 2015; Kanthak & Woon, 2015; Chrobot-Mason et al. 2019 and Alan et al. 2020)._These behaviors and attitudes which are likely to drive both leadership willingness and leadership status usually discourage women and drive them to be less willing than men to make decisions on behalf of others (Ertac & Gurdal, 2012;2016 and Ertac et al. (2016).

As regards sexual preferences and political ambition, over the past 60 years, models and conceptualizations of leadership -especially in Western societies- have changed profoundly, compared to ideas existing in prior centuries (White et al. 1996). Sexuality and sexual orientation were introduced and described as terms reflecting sexual behavior, identity, and attraction to the same sex, another sex, or more than one sex (Richards et al., 2016; Bailey et al., 2016; IOM, 2011). Gender refers to the norms, roles, and behaviors that typically characterize individuals as male or female, genderqueer, or gender non-binary (Richards et al., 2016). Sexual orientation and gender identity are universal aspects of the self, but they vary greatly in their interpretation and their specificity to different cultural contexts (Bailey et al., 2016). Social science research on homosexual leaders is beginning to pick up speed, and the last few years of work in this area have been more fruitful than ever. However, surprisingly few studies have directly examined how gay and lesbian individuals are perceived and evaluated by heterosexual people, within a political context (Morton, 2017 and Pellegrini et al. 2020). One of the few articles that specifically addresses homosexual leadership proposed a comprehensive model of homosexual leadership enactment. The authors point out the importance of the interaction between sexual orientation, gender orientation, and the situation in influencing “both the leader and the followers in a complex and dynamic process of leadership enactment” (Fassinger et al., 2010). Of particular significance to this paper is the interaction between sexual orientation and gender orientation, as these dimensions of the model can greatly influence how others perceive gay and lesbian leaders. Liberman & Golom, 2015, also found that gay male leaders were considered to correspond less than heterosexual male or heterosexual female managers to the successful manager prototype. An experimental study by Goodman et al., 2008, revealed more complex results. By investigating the effects of a derogatory remark on evaluations of a gay male leader, his research shows that participants who worked with a homosexual leader and heard a derogatory remark about him evaluated this leader’s abilities less favorably and took part in more negative nonverbal behaviors toward him. This is in contrast to participants who worked with either a homosexual leader about whom they did not hear a derogatory remark or a heterosexual male leader. The above studies show that, within competitive environments, homosexuals face a constantly biased behavior from their heterosexual counterparts. Hence, regarding sexual orientation and the leadership prototype, gay men and lesbians have only recently become more visible in the public eye. Leadership prototypes develop over time (Lord & Maher, 1991), and research has shown that they may not be keeping pace with changes in the demographics of society (Rosette et al., 2008 and Dirik, 2020). Thus, the presence of heterosexism in political environments has implications for whether homosexual individuals have the desire or opportunity to attain leadership and managerial roles —roles to which they might bring unique characteristics, goals, skills, experiences, or perspectives.

In this paper, we experimentally investigate the challenges that female and homosexual candidates face regarding leadership social norms and we try to interpret our findings through the psychological aspects of personality and honesty. This article asks two questions: (1) Do female and homosexual political candidates in Greece face gender and sexual bias? (2) Do personality traits and honesty levels explain differences in the behavioral patterns of our subsample groups?

In order to shed light on these questions, we first examine the case of Greece with a field experiment and we then extend our results with an online experiment in USA's largest online labor market (i.e. Amazon Mechanical Turk). We chose Greece as our experimental field because it is an important case, as politicians and policymakers are establishing new electoral norms and laws in the country's current political period. In fact, Greece's center-right government named the country's first openly gay minister, who said that "encountering homophobia in public life was "a given," but hoped his appointment to the conservative government would make it easier for LGBT+ people to tackle discrimination"⁹.

Theoretical Framework & Research Hypotheses

Our paper contributes to the literature in several ways. First, we exploit the power of the randomization process to study gender and sexual differences in leadership ambition by isolating the role of one specific causal mechanism – competition aversion – on women's and homosexuals' leadership engagement. Secondly, our experimental flow allows us to dynamically track the behavioral outcomes of the participants instead on analyzing self-reported variables. Moreover, our sample consists of highly politically active subjects who are already part of political parties and prepared to claim a position in politics¹⁰ in Greece and subjects politically active in several ways that may be potential members in political parties in USA¹¹. This will allow us to investigate the effects between two different populations and whether women and homosexuals respond to our treatment differently. By following Preece & Stoddard, 2015, we expect that emphasizing the competitive nature of politics should decrease women's leadership ambition in both experimental environments. In relation to the sexual gap, studies have revealed controversial findings regarding homosexuals and competitiveness. For example, in an economic context, Buser et al., 2018, showed that gay men compete less while lesbians compete as much as straight women. But within a political context, initial findings suggest that, regardless of existing sexual gaps, when homosexuals live and act within a fair environment, they are more politically engaged than their straight counterparts (Worthen, 2020 and Robert et al. 2018). Differences in taste for political competition will largely be driven by country-specific characteristics. According to social acceptance rankings of the LGBTI community index, USA is on the top of the

⁹ <https://www.ekathimerini.com/society/261121/greece-s-first-gay-minister-hopes-appointment-helps-erode-homophobia/>

¹⁰ It is rare to have a study pool of this quality in social science studies, as experiments of political ambition are (Grosec, 2014).

¹¹ We set as some minimum criteria, for the selection of the online participants, to be politically engaged with a political party. Subjects who stated in the initial screening question that they are apolitical, having an aversion to politics, were excluded from the experiment.

ranking table of developed countries, with an increasing trend, while Greece is at the bottom, with a decreasing trend¹². Thus,

H1: Competitiveness hypothesis: The competitiveness treatment will depress women's leadership ambition relative to the control in both samples. The competitiveness treatment will also depress homosexuals' leadership ambition in the field experiment relative to the control (Greek sample), while it will increase leadership ambition for those in the online experimental framework (USA sample).

Furthermore, since women on average are reported to be more averse to competitive environments than men, emphasizing the competitive nature of politics should decrease women's leadership engagement disproportionately more than men's. Consequently, this will lead to an increase in the gender gap in leadership ambition, relative to the control.

Regarding homosexuality, we expect that the sexual gap will follow the competitiveness response in each experimental framework. Thus:

H2: Competitiveness sexual and gender gap hypothesis: The competitiveness treatment will depress all outcome variables for women more than men, by increasing the gender gap in leadership ambition, relative to the control. The competitiveness treatment will depress all outcome variables for homosexuals' more than heterosexuals', by increasing the sexual gap in leadership ambition, relative to the control in the field experiment (Greek sample), while it will follow the opposite direction in the online experiment (USA sample).

But who opts to go into politics? To investigate self-selection trends, we also embed in our experimental process the types of social preferences that might predict different behavior in electoral environments - trust and honesty (Fehrler et al. 2016). By taking into consideration that trust and honesty is a broad concept with many dimensions, we adopted and introduced in our analysis a simplified version of a lying aversion index, based on Kanthak & Wood, 2015 experimental process. Thus,

H3: Social preferences hypothesis. We expect that women and homosexuals with higher truth levels will behave with higher political aversion. Our competitiveness treatment will further increase the magnitude of the aforementioned effects.

Finally, in order to conduct a comprehensive overview of the competitive treatment, we turn our attention to psychology, and we embed the subjects' personality traits in our analysis (Heckman et al. 2019). The examination and exploration of how personality traits relate to political attitudes is a matter of scientific discussion. It is already confirmed that the relationship between personality traits and political attitudes is confined to the Big Five (Jonason, 2014). The Big Five theory rests on the five dimensions of personality: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness,

¹² Social Acceptance of LGBTI People in 175 Countries and Locations, 1981 to 2020 report by Flores Andrew (2021), link: <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/white-lgbt-adults-us/>

and neuroticism (i.e. hereafter OCEAN¹³). The role of personality traits is well established in standard models of individual behavior regarding task performance and the adopted OCEAN taxonomy captures individual-specific differences in the ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving (Filiz-Ozbay, et al., 2018). In addition, this mid-sized test ensures a measurement of each personality facet with accuracy and stability (Cobb-Clark & Schurer, 2012), without requiring an excessively long time, which could result in some measurement bias errors (John et al. 1999 and Gensowski, 2018). We used this theory, because several economists have pointed out the close relationship of the big five personality test with economic behavior (Müller & Schwieren, 2012a Fletcher, 2013; Cubel et al. 2016; Heckman et al. 2019 and Mourelatos et al. 2020), especially, for populations with particular characteristics, such as women (Müller & Schwieren, 2012b). The main take-home messages of the literature are that individuals with high levels of openness and extraversion are strongly positively correlated with political engagement (Furnham & Fenton-O'Creevy, 2018 and Bönnte et al. 2017), while conscientious individuals have a negative relationship with political interest (Furnham & Cheng, 2019).

H4: Personality traits hypothesis. We expect that conscientiousness, in particular, will generally have a negative impact on individuals' engagement in political ambition, especially for women and homosexuals, while openness and extraversion will have a positive one. The gender and sexual leadership gap will be decreased and be associated with individuals' high level of openness and extraversion and low level of conscientiousness. Hence, controlling for personality traits will allow us to explain in depth the gender and sexual gap in leadership.

Our experimental framework gives us the opportunity to test our hypotheses using several measures of leadership ambition. These measurements are a relatively low-cost first indication of interest, a higher time consuming-cost second indication of interest and a video concerning tips for an effective political leader, which requires a considerably higher time commitment. We describe our experimental framework and empirical methodology and the results in the following section.

Field Experiment

-Design and sample

To investigate how stereotypes may affect the perceived leadership ambition of women and homosexual potential candidates, we partnered with the four largest parties in Greek politics. Thus, our participants were Party members registered in election lists and engaged in election procedures in national, regional and municipal level as of 2014¹⁴. All these members tend to be politically active subjects with a willingness to

¹³ Openness refers to the tendency to be creative and unconventional, Conscientiousness to the tendency to be organized and disciplined, Extraversion to the tendency to be sociable and active, Agreeableness to the tendency to be trusting and modest and Neuroticism to the tendency to experience negative emotions.

¹⁴ This includes the Parliamentary elections of 2015 and 2019, the Local elections of 2014 and 2019, the European elections of 2014 and 2019.

invest time in political causes¹⁵. Such a sample, casting a targeted-but-broad net around active party members, is ideal for studying sexual and gender behavioral differentials in relation to leadership ambition and political engagement. In collaboration with the political parties, we sent an email with a hyperlink to our experiment, with a request to complete an “important task” containing personalized and innovative tips and tricks on how to exploit social media as an effective tool for election campaigns. We used this aspect of political information to increase our engagement rates, as several research papers have already pointed out that the utilization of social media tools is driving the future of political elections (Enli & Moe, 2013; Boulianne, 2015; Theocharis & Lowe, 2016 and Groshek & Koc-Michalska, 2017). In this study, we wished to isolate the effect of the sexual orientation and gender of the candidate responding to our exogenous information while maintaining all other factors (including party) constant.

Hence, by redirecting to an external link with our experiment, participants first had to answer a set of basic demographic questions and then to fill in the Big Five Personality inventory¹⁶. After that, subjects were given a simplified version of the Addition Task, in order to study their preferences for competition (Kanthak & Wood, 2015). This task involves the computing of random two-digit numbers within a 2-minute time framework and was programmed by Ztree¹⁷ (Fischbacher 2007). To avoid bias from the within-heterogeneity of additions per se, we controlled their complexity and difficulty (Mourelatos et al. 2020). This task is considering as sexual and gender neutral and allow us to construct an index (i.e. measurement of as many of these sums as possible correctly within two minutes) reflecting participants’ initial preferences for competition (Conway et al. 1997 and Kanthak & Wood, 2015). At the end of the task, a message informed participants of their total correct answers and success rate.

Subsequently, our algorithm randomized the sample by gender and sexual orientation, to receive one of two initial messages about running as a political candidate. The control message used neutral language in inviting participants to be a political candidate in the following elections and included a two-paragraph description of the first steps in this process. The competitiveness-treatment message asked participants whether they like arguing about political matters and thrive in competitive environments. It then included a generic discussion of the competitive nature of the political process before inviting subjects to consider running as a candidate. Afterwards, subjects had the opportunity to require information about tips, tools and strategies for an efficient campaign, in a three-stage process. Each time they said “yes”, they proceeded to the next step. This phase consisted of two informational texts about shaping the appearance by creating a political image and initial strategies for building up a social media presence. In the last phase, participants were asked if they would like to watch a 3-minute video containing

¹⁵ Our sample also includes subjects that will be candidates in the forthcoming elections.

¹⁶ The Big Five Personality test is a 44-item inventory questionnaire (John & Srivastava, 1999; McCrae & Costa, 1999) that provides measures for each personality trait i.e., Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism and were estimated on a scale of 1-5, where 1=disagree, 2=slightly disagree, 3=neutral, 4=slightly agree and 5=agree. Afterwards, the OCEAN factors were constructed through factor analysis, in order for each trait to be orthogonal to the rest (McCrae & Costa, 1999). To allow for an easier interpretation of our estimates, Big Five scores are standardized to have mean zero and standard deviation of one in all reported specifications.

¹⁷ The development of z-Tree started in 1995. The first version used outside of the Zurich lab was released in 1998 (version 1.0.1). This article is based on the new features in version 3, version 3.0.18 which is being tested in the Zurich lab.

real examples of an efficient use of social media tools in elections¹⁸. The full texts of the control and treatment messages are included in Appendix B. Participants then proceeded to the end of the experiment. During the experimental flow, the participants had the opportunity to respond “No” and not to proceed to the next phase. In this case, they immediately proceeded to the end.

In the ending part, in order to investigate whether participants’ honesty and trust levels might explain differences in their entry decisions and political engagement, we used a simplified version of Kanthak & Wood’s, 2015, lying aversion task. Thus, the subjects were given a scenario in which they were candidates and they had to choose a message for their campaign, based on their performance in the addition task, as the only information that voters would have about them. Participants had four possible messages that they could send to voters, reflecting their lying aversion (Reuben & Stephenson, 2013). For example, a participant informed by the system that they achieved X correct answers in the Addition task, in the Lying Aversion Task was given to choose between, message 1: “I solved many additions”, message 2: “I solved X additions”, message 3: “I solved X+3 additions”, message 4: “I solved X+6 additions”. Afterwards, we crosschecked each numeric claim against the candidate’s actual scores in the *Addition Task* part and *Lying Aversion Task* part of the experiment to assess its truthfulness and coded whether messages exaggerated a candidate’s true performance and by how much. This form of trust is very similar to what we mean by the ‘informativeness’ of campaigns. If women and homosexuals are less likely to “trust” that others will be honest, then they will believe campaigns to be less informative and, as we explained in our theoretical analysis, we would expect that, mainly, women and homosexuals with high lying aversion are less likely to engage in leadership positions and seek political information (Glaeser et al. 2000; Gneezy, 2005 and Childs, 2012). The full texts of the lying aversion task are included in Appendix B.

Driven by the literature, in order to control for additional sources of variation, before the experiment, the participants filled in the past leadership experience questionnaire¹⁹ (Chan & Drasgow, 2001 and Ng et al. 2008), the cognitive reflection test²⁰ (Bruttel & Fischbacher, 2013 and Banas-Garza et al. 2019), voting intention (i.e. 7 point Likert scale) and political beliefs.

The experiment was conducted in March 2022. The email with the experiment was sent out to over 2,000 political members and generated 322 responses²¹. In addition to collecting respondents’ demographic information, personality traits and data on their political engagement, we observe how they respond to each opportunity for additional information about engaging in politics. We use these behavioral responses as proxies for political leadership ambition in our analysis.

¹⁸ To develop the texts and video in Greek, the research team partnered up with two political journalists and a cinematographer. In the online setting, the experimental components were translated to English by two translators, who worked on the translation separately and in collaboration with the research team; their versions were merged into one. A third independent translator took care of highly deviating elements.

¹⁹ This questionnaire consists of three questions with a predefined list of five answer options.

²⁰ Bruttel & Fischbacher, 2013, showed that while men are more likely leaders, the difference in leadership between men and women decreases when controlling for performance in the cognitive reflection test.

²¹ We had marginally higher response rate than the political experiment of Preece & Stoddard, 2015.

Empirical Strategy

To capture the effects of our treatment on leadership intention and test our hypotheses, we deploy an econometrical model by also including subjects' lying aversion, personality traits and additional covariates. The econometric model can be given by:

$$LI_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times \text{Treatment}_i + \beta_2 \times (\text{Male}_i / \text{Homosexuals}_i) + \beta_3 \times \text{Treatment}_i \times (\text{Male}_i / \text{Homosexuals}_i) + \beta_4 P^k_i + \beta_5 LA^\lambda_i + \beta_5 X_i + \varepsilon_i$$

In this equation, LI_i represents the leadership intention, which consists of our three measures of leadership ambition for individual i : a binary variable indicating whether the subject expressed interest in continuing to read at the first prompt ("Interest 1"), whether the subject expressed interest at the second prompt ("Interest 2"), or whether they chose to watch the video ("video"). Treatment is a dummy variable for a competitiveness treatment, Male is a dummy variable for male gender, homosexuality is a dummy variable for sexual orientation, P refers to the personality traits, where $k = 1, \dots, 5$ are each of the non-cognitive - Big Five personality traits (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism/OCEAN variables), LA refers to the lying aversion level, where $\lambda = 1, \dots, 4$ are the lying levels (truthful, small lie, big lie, ambiguous) and X are individual characteristics (i.e. demographics, social economic attributes and cognitive skills). Lastly, ε is the idiosyncratic error term.

Since our model includes an interaction term, our competitiveness hypothesis (H1) then predicts that $\beta_1 < 0$. Our model also allows us to test the competitiveness gender gap hypothesis (H2) and sexual orientation effects (H2). We define the gender gap as the difference in the average levels of leadership intention of men and women. Hypothesis H2 therefore predicts that the gender gap in the competitive treatment will be larger than the gender gap in the control. Since the gender gap in the treatment is given by $(\beta_2 + \beta_3)$ and the gender gap in the control is given by β_2 , H2 predicts that $\beta_3 > 0$. Similarly, for H2 sexual orientation hypothesis.

Initial Results

Initially, differences in the preexisting characteristics and attributes between the participants in the two treatments are statistically insignificant. Table 1 reports summary statistics for the demographic and social economic variables for each of the two treatment groups. The table suggests that the randomization of treatments was effective.

----- Please Insert Table 1 about here -----

Regarding lying aversion and personality differences, Tables 2 and 3 report the differences across treatments, gender and sexuality, separately, using two-tailed t-tests. We find no significant differences across treatment groups. While the difference is not statistically significant, as shown in Table 2, females seem to be more truthful, while males more ambiguous. Furthermore, homosexuals appear to be more truthful, while heterosexuals have a greater tendency to lie.

----- Please Insert Table 2 about here -----

Personality traits do not statistically significantly differ among treatment groups. Females and homosexuals appear to have higher levels of neuroticism, while males and heterosexuals' higher levels of openness and extraversion (Lynn & Martin, 1997 and Allen & Robson, 2020). Moreover, we observe that females appear more conscientious and agreeable than males. No statistically significant differences on conscientiousness and agreeableness are revealed between heterosexuals and homosexuals.

----- Please Insert Table 3 about here -----

Next, we analyze the average differences in leadership intention across treatments for men and women and homosexuals and heterosexuals, separately, using two-tailed tests. We define this difference in average response rates for males and females as the gender gap and homosexuals and heterosexuals as the sexual orientation gap (Table 4). Thus, a significant negative effect of the competitive treatment on females' leadership ambition across all interests was observed. As Figure 1 illustrates, the competitiveness treatment decreased women's leadership intention significantly more than men's, increasing the gender gap up to 19.9 percentage points on Interest 2 ($p = 0.028$, two-sided). This is consistent with our competitiveness hypothesis (H1).

Table 4 also reveals a significant negative effect of the competitive treatment on homosexuals' leadership ambition. As shown in Figure 2, our treatment had a negative impact, across all political interests up to approximately 30% on Interest 1. Nevertheless, the sexual gap tends to decrease going from interest 1 to interest 3. This is consistent with our competitiveness hypothesis (H1).

----- Please Insert Figure 1 about here -----

----- Please Insert Figure 2 about here -----

Estimation Results

We report the marginal effects of our logit models of our dependent variables in Table 5 and 6. The marginal effects are reported to ease the interpretation of the coefficients in logit regressions. Columns [1], [4], [7] in each Table report the results, controlling for demographics and other covariates.

First of all, we find strong evidence in support of the H_1 hypothesis of competitiveness. Table 5 confirms that female participants have significantly lower levels of leadership intention. The treatment coefficient is negatively and statistically significant across all leadership interests. As seen in the Table, even when controlling for lying aversion (columns 2,5,8) and personality traits (columns 3,6,9), female participants exhibit significantly lower probabilities to respond to the interests than males. These results are consistent with the prior literature. Furthermore, in line with Preece & Stoddard, 2015 and Flory et al. 2014, we reveal that the treatment did not change males' leadership intentions within a competitive political environment. Concerning β_3 coefficient of the interaction term *Treatment X Male*, the analysis revealed a positive and statistically significant effect across all the dependent variables. This is strong evidence of the

competitive gender gap hypothesis (H_2). When we control for lying aversion, the effect slightly decreases for Interest 1 and increases for Interest 2 up to 23.2 percentage points (column 5), while when we include personality traits in the specifications, the effect decreases. Moreover, it seems that the gender gap is driven primarily by the traits of openness, extraversion and conscientiousness. Hence, it is crucial to take into consideration psychological insights and social preferences such as lying aversion, which might predict different behavior in electoral environments pertaining to honesty and competitiveness.

Next, we examine the effects of the treatment on the sexual orientation gap in leadership intention. Table 6 shows that we find strong evidence in support of the H_1 hypothesis of competitiveness. Our treatment changed the behavior of homosexuals. The coefficient β_3 of the interaction term Treatment X Homosexuals is negative and statistically significant across all the political interests (columns 1,4,7). The sexual orientation gap grows bigger for Interest 2 and 3 when we include differences on lying aversion (columns 5,8) in the analysis. Lastly, it also seems that the sexual orientation gap is driven primarily by the traits of openness, extraversion and conscientiousness (columns 3,6,9).

In both cases, mostly women and homosexuals with higher truth levels behave with higher political aversion, increasing the magnitude of the aforementioned gaps in leadership intentions (H_3), while conscientious individuals appear to have low leadership intentions and individuals with high levels of openness and extraversion appear to have a higher leadership engagement within a competitiveness political environment (H_4).

Online Experiment

In order to generalize our main experimental findings and add external validity to our results we recruited US workers from the leading online labor market, Amazon Mechanical Turk (i.e. AMT). The bibliography shows that Mechanical Turk, operated since 2005 by Amazon, is the most well-known crowdsourcing platform and a popular source of participants for research, offering the key elements that experimental research requires (Paolacci et al. 2010 and Berinsky et al. 2012). Finally, although this crowdsourcing platform consists of a pool of men and women with diverse characteristics, it is large pool of individuals more representative of the U.S. population than in-person convenience samples (Ipeirotis 2010; Berinsky et al. 2012 and Horton et al. 2011)²². Thus, AMT shapes market dynamics as an online labor market and was very compatible with our experiment's workflow. Given that our experimental outcomes are obtained from a single country (Greece), we replicated the experimental procedure in a broader, nation-wide US sample.

Our recruitment process engaged 329 online participants in a survey task about “a general demographic screening questionnaire”. Our task is considered a common-

²² Horton et al. 2011 has shown that it is possible to, quickly and inexpensively, replicate findings from traditional, physical laboratory experiments in the online laboratory, by replicating several well-known experiments conducted in the context of online labor markets.

neutral online job, to avoid self-selection bias issues (Buhrmester et al. 2016 and Kittur et al. 2008). For the same reason, we did not set any pre-hiring criteria and we followed the compensation rate recommended by Amazon Mechanical Turk (\$0.90)²³.

After accepting the online job terms, the participants followed a hyperlink to our experimental environments. To avoid country heterogeneity issues, we ensured that our respondents would be only US citizens, by adding an extra question about residency in the beginning of the experimental process and we launched during the normal business hours of US EST. Participants that failed to confirm their US residency were excluded from our analysis. Next, our experimental systems did not allow workers to participate in our survey twice (i.e. based on their unique AMT IDs). Finally, to ensure respondents' focus, we followed the same attention strategy as in the field setting, by displaying three pop-up messages as a warning sign in each text and instructions section, reminding subjects that they had to read the information carefully and that the system is aware of low time-consuming behaviors, which would be excluded from the task. As with our field experiment, we collected participants' performance on the Ztree addition task, their responses to the three invitations to learn more about running for office, their responses on the trust and honesty task and recorded the time they spent on the online survey, as well as their demographic information, personality traits and past leadership experience indication.

Initial Results

Initially, differences in the preexisting characteristics and attributes between the participants in the two treatments are statistically insignificant. Table 7 reports summary statistics for the demographic and social economic variables for each of the two treatment groups. The table suggests that the randomization of treatments was effective.

----- Please Insert Table 7 about here -----

Regarding lying aversion and personality differences, Tables 8 and 9 report the differences across treatments, gender and sexuality, separately, using two-tailed t-tests. We find no significant differences across treatment groups. As shown in Table 8, females seem to be more truthful, while males more ambiguous. Furthermore, homosexuals appear to be more truthful, while heterosexuals have a greater tendency to lie.

----- Please Insert Table 8 about here -----

Personality traits do not statistically significantly differ among treatment groups. Females and homosexuals appear to have higher levels of neuroticism, while males and heterosexuals' higher levels of openness and extraversion (Lynn & Martin, 1997 and Allen & Robson, 2020). No statistically significant differences on conscientiousness and agreeableness are revealed.

²³ This translates to about \$5-\$6 hourly wages. According to Amazon, the average effective wage on Mechanical Turk is around \$4.80 per hour. The respondents had the opportunity to drop out at any time during the survey but were only paid upon completion.

----- Please Insert Table 9 about here -----

Next, we analyze the average differences in leadership intention across treatments for men and women and homosexuals and heterosexuals, separately, using two-tailed tests. We define this difference in average response rates for males and females as the gender gap and homosexuals and heterosexuals as the sexual orientation gap (Table 10). Thus, a significant negative effect of the competitive treatment on females' leadership ambition across all interests was observed. As Figure 3 illustrates, the competitiveness treatment decreased women's leadership intention significantly more than men's, increasing the gender gap up to 17.4 percentage points on Interest 3 ($p = 0.00$, two-sided). This is consistent with our competitiveness hypothesis (H1).

On the other hand, Table 10 also reveals a significant positive effect of the competitive treatment on homosexuals' leadership ambition. As shown in Figure 4, the competitiveness treatment further boosts homosexuals' leadership intention, significantly more than heterosexuals'. This positive effect of the competitive treatment persisted through all measures of leadership ambition, with homosexuals being more likely than heterosexuals to continue reading on Interest 2 and Interest 3. Hence, the sexual orientation gap decreases until it disappears in Interest 3 ($p = 0.01$, two-sided). This is consistent with our competitiveness hypothesis (H1).

----- Please Insert Table 10 about here -----

----- Please Insert Figure 3 about here -----

----- Please Insert Figure 4 about here -----

Estimation Results

We report the marginal effects of our logit models of our dependent variables in Table 11 and 12. The marginal effects are reported to ease the interpretation of the coefficients in logit regressions. Columns [1], [4], [7] in each Table report the results, controlling for demographics and other covariates.

First of all, we find strong evidence in support of the H₁ hypothesis of competitiveness. Table 11 confirms that female participants have significantly lower levels of leadership intention. The treatment coefficient is negatively and statistically significant across all leadership interests. As seen in the Table, even when controlling for lying aversion (columns 2,5,8) and personality traits (columns 3,6,9), female participants exhibit significant lower probabilities to respond to the interests than males. These results are consistent with the prior literature. Secondly, in line with Preece & Stoddard, 2015 and Flory et al. 2014, we reveal that the treatment did not change males' leadership intentions within a competitive political environment. Concerning β_3 coefficient of the interaction term *Treatment X Male*, the analysis revealed a positive and statistically significant effect across all the dependent variables. This is strong evidence of the competitive gender gap hypothesis (H₂). Interestingly, when we control for lying aversion, the effect increases up to 34.9 percentage points (column 8), while when we

include personality traits in the specifications, the effect decreases. Moreover, it seems that the gender gap is driven primarily by the traits of openness and conscientiousness. Hence, it is crucial to take into consideration psychological insights and social preferences such as lying aversion, which might predict different behavior in electoral environments pertaining to honesty and competitiveness.

Next, we examine the effects of the treatment on the sexual orientation gap in leadership intention. Table 12 shows that, although we find strong evidence in support of the H_1 hypothesis of competitiveness, our competitiveness treatment changed the behavior of the homosexuals in the opposite direction. The coefficient β_3 of the interaction term Treatment X Homosexuals is positive and statistically significant across all political interests (columns 1,4,7). The sexual orientation gap grows bigger when we include differences on lying aversion (columns 2,5,8) in the analysis. Lastly, it seems that the sexual orientation gap is also driven primarily by the traits of openness and conscientiousness (columns 3,6,9).

In both cases, women and homosexuals with higher truth levels behave with higher political aversion, increasing the magnitude of the aforementioned gaps in leadership intentions (H_3), while conscientious individuals appear to have low leadership intentions and individuals with high levels of openness and extraversion appear to have a higher leadership engagement within a competitiveness political environment (H_4).

Discussion

This study includes a field and online experiment designed to further test the competitiveness aspect of politics as a primary source of gender and sexual gaps on leadership intentions. Firstly, we followed the paper of and Preece & Stoddard, 2015 and we conducted our experiment within the context of politics, because it is a field that is perceived as highly competitive and entails substantial gender and sexual imbalances²⁴. By following Kanthak & Woon, 2015, we also highlight the role of trust and honesty when running for an office as a key factor that might influence decisions regarding leadership intentions of female and homosexual candidates. Lastly, motivated by Heckman et al. 2021, we argue that personality traits are key factors that affect choices on leadership and characterize aspects of individuals' behavior that can be studied in both behavioral economics and psychology.

In both experiments, we reveal that females' intentions marked a statistically significant decrease when they faced the competitive nature of politics compared to males. This finding is consistent with prior laboratory studies, which highlight that females, in general, shy away from public competitive environments (De Paola et al. 2021; Buser et al. 2021 and Niederle & Vesterlund, 2007) and subjectively underestimate their self-promotion (Exley & Kessler, 2022). Our findings also help in better understanding some of the sources and dynamics of gender difference (Reuben & Timko, 2018), suggesting that competitiveness – together with other personality traits such as extraversion, openness and conscientiousness and psychological factors such as

²⁴ Furthermore, political leadership positions do not require investment in specialized training, education and professional track.

honesty and trust – could be relevant to explaining the gender differences in access to high-level positions, career advancement and leadership accomplishments (Fehrer et al. 2020 and Kanthan & Woon, 2015). Therefore, our results might help to raise awareness and represent a significant step toward gender equity.

Regarding the sexual gap, it seems that taste for competition offers at most a partial explanation for the observed sexual orientation in leadership intentions. We find that priming individuals to consider the competitive nature of politics has a strong negative effect on homosexuals' interest to run for a political office in the field experiment, while surprisingly, we found that homosexuals' intention to participate in politics follows the opposite course in the online experiment. This finding may be the result of three reasons. First, previous research points out that gays are less attracted to competition than straight men but lesbians are more attracted to competition than straight women, which in case of a labor market may lead to a wage penalty for gays and a wage premium for lesbian women (Buser et al. 2018). In our case, the online experiment consisted of more lesbians than gays in relation to the field experiment. This difference in homosexuals between our samples²⁵ may drive the effect of leadership intentions within competitive environments, like politics²⁶. Secondly, we should take into consideration that, in general, politics can still be viewed as having masculine leadership positions (Cavazza & Pacilli, 2021). The findings of previous experiments have shown that gay males were seen as better for “feminine” jobs — in other words, gay men were thought of as feminine and therefore it was assumed that they would be good at feminine jobs, but not for masculine ones. On the other hand, for leadership positions rated either as masculine, feminine or gender-neutral, there was no difference for lesbian women (Wang et al. 2021). In other words, we see that beliefs about sexual orientation are influenced by beliefs about gender. Lastly, we should also take account of the fact that our field sample were Greeks involved in the election process, while our online sample consisted of US citizens. Country-specific attitudes and existing prejudices toward homosexuality seem to play an important role in shaping our homosexual participants' behavior²⁷. Future research can try to analyze the aforementioned points in depth and isolate their effects. In addition, it would be interesting to investigate whether homosexuals' other psychological factors such as self-confidence toward typically stereotyped masculine jobs, such as public speaking, can explain at least partially the results documented in this paper.

Finally, it is worth mentioning two caveats. The first one concerns the external validity of our findings. Although we chose two countries diametrically opposed on gender and sexual issues subjects in our field experiment are from a country (i.e. Greece) that tend to perform poorly in terms of gender and sexual equality, so our results might not extend to women and homosexuals less exposed to traditional gender norms. The second concerns the fact that we are unable to disentangle whether these effects that we find

²⁵ Lesbians represented 31.94% of homosexual participants in our field experiment and 48.51% in the online experiment.

²⁶ A weakness of our paper is the relatively small sample size of homosexuals, which did not allow for a deeper empirical analysis.

²⁷ According to social acceptance rankings of LGBTI community index, USA is at the top of the ranking table of developed countries, with an increasing trend, while Greece is at the bottom place with a decreasing trend.

derive from female and homosexuals' propensity to avoid the political environment in Greece or are more generally related to their general desire to avoid competitiveness, regardless of job required. While our research provides an important step, more experiments in alternative competitiveness environments can shed light on this.

Data Limitations

Our data are not without limitations. We know that non-response and self-selection bias may create concerns for the validity of the analysis of data. We take this issue seriously. The design and the nature of the field and online experiment does not allow us to fully assure the generalizability of the participant sample. For that reason, in the case of the field experiment, we required from the participant political parties, average scores of their members' basic demographic characteristics. Fortunately, we did not find statistical significant differences between the general political population and our sample in the case of gender, education, income, age and marital status. Unfortunately, we cannot support the same regarding sexual orientation and personality traits due to the lack of population data. Concerning the online experiment, our sample in general follow the national distribution, although the online participants are skewed somewhat toward higher education²⁸. Lastly, to avoid self-selection biases, the offered wage is in line with the price policy of Amazon Mechanical Turk (Banfi, & Villena-Roldan, 2019).

Conclusions

This paper strengthens and extends previous findings about sexual orientation, gender stereotypes and leadership, within a political context. The stark scarcity of homosexuals and females in leadership positions persists despite much improvement in societal norms and institutional barriers in recent years. Indeed, our results showed that the presence of male dominance and heterosexism in politics also has implications for whether females and homosexual individuals have the desire or opportunity to attain leadership and managerial roles—roles to which they might bring unique characteristics, goals, skills, experiences, or perspectives within a political context. Our experimental process tried to address women's and homosexuals' leadership gap and give insights into the psychological sources of their aversion to politics.

We suggest that election aversion is a key behavioral source of women's and homosexuals' underrepresentation, which may have personality and preference-based explanations. Our findings are consistent with a growing body of literature in the behavioral sciences that tries to investigate the dearth of demographic minority groups such as women and homosexuals, in a variety of important positions in society—in politics as well as in business leadership, science, and technology. Based on that research, there is now a consensual view that women's leadership is not just a matter of fairness, but also has the potential to move companies, governments, and societies in new and better directions.

The present research is not without limitations. Despite its effectiveness, the treatment strategy may have a level of bias, due to the political aspects it refers to (i.e. social

²⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, 2019. PINC-04. Educational Attainment—People 18 Years Old and Over. Total Money Earnings, Work Experience. Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex.

media, internet tools etc.). Moreover, regarding sexual orientation, there is a possibility that some participants may have been reluctant or confused as to whether to mention their homosexuality²⁹, although open disclosure of one's own sexual orientation is getting more and more common, especially in western countries (Jones & King, 2014). Finally, as regards the generalizability of our results, given that the participants were exclusively from a diverse pool in Greece in the field experiment and from the US in the online setting, future studies might use cross-national samples that include women participants and people in sexual minority groups in order to explore the possible effects of participants' gender and sexual orientation on leadership effectiveness in a wider spectrum.

Authorship contribution statement

Evangelos Mourelatos: Conceptualization, Methodology, Data analysis, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Project administration. **George Krimbas:** Investigation, Data curation, Experimental Design, Writing – review & editing. **Kostas Giotopoulos:** Investigation, Data acquisition, Writing – review & editing

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Statements and Declarations

Declaration of Competing Interests

With the submission of this manuscript I would like to undertake that the above mentioned manuscript has not been published elsewhere, accepted for publication elsewhere or under editorial review for publication elsewhere.

Data

Data are available upon reasonable request.

Conflict of interest statement

The authors have no affiliation with any organization with a direct or indirect financial interest in the subject matter discussed in the manuscript.

²⁹ For that reason, we have a two-stage process. Firstly, we asked for their gender and secondly for their gender sexual preference.

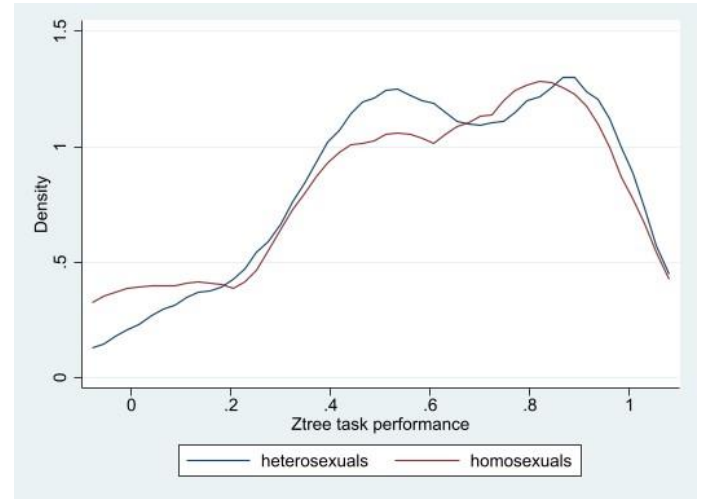
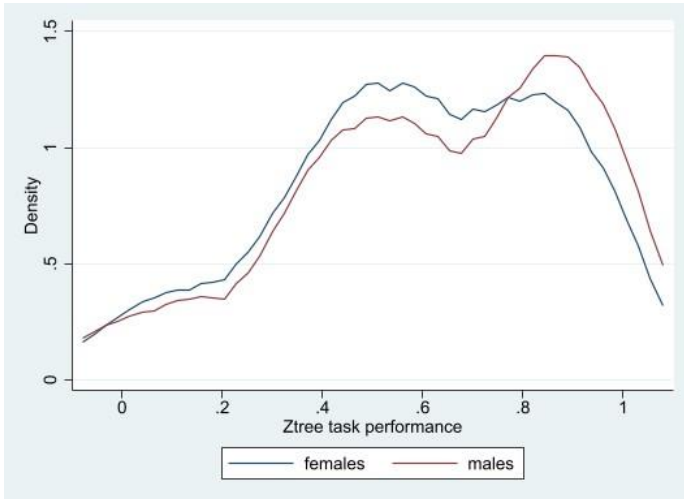
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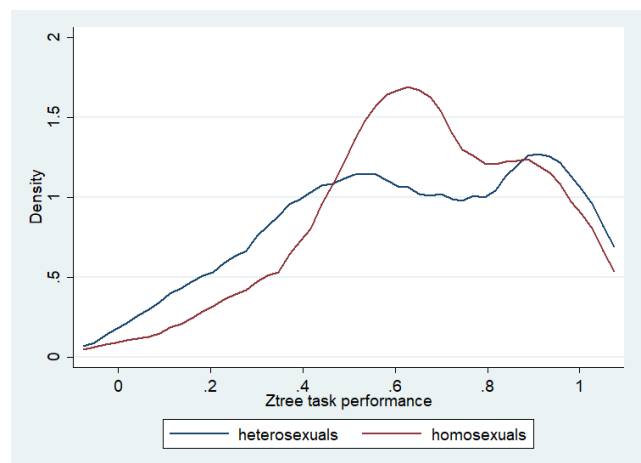
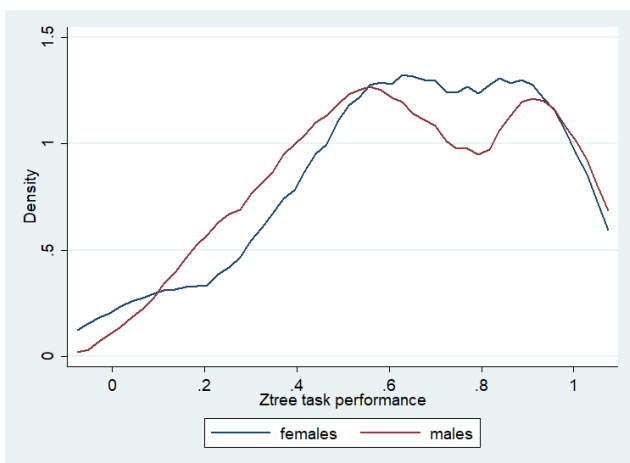
Appendix A Supplementary data

We find no differences in the distribution of task performance by gender and sexuality on both experiments. Concerning the field experiment, the average performance of females is 0.592, while for males is 0.627. This difference is not statistically significant ($p = .13$, two-tailed) (Figure A.1). Similarly, the average performance of homosexuals is 0.586, while for heterosexuals is 0.618. This difference is, also, not statistically significant ($p = .18$, two-tailed) (Figure A.2).



Figures A.1 and A.2. Task Performance (Kernel Densities), field experiment

Regarding the online experiment, the average performance of females is 0.647, while for males is 0.635. This difference is not statistically significant ($p = .34$, two-tailed) (Figure A.3). Similarly, the average performance of homosexuals is 0.661, while for heterosexuals is 0.631. This difference is, also, not statistically significant ($p = .17$, two-tailed) (Figure A.4).



Figures A.3 and A.4. Task Performance (Kernel Densities), online experiment

The fact that the distribution of scores is equal rules out the possibility that stereotype threat is a relevant factor in our cognitive task. If it were, we would see female and homosexual participants, underperforming relative to male and heterosexual ones, due to the extra psychological pressure of feeling judged by a negative, self-fulfilling stereotype. This does not appear to be the case in our experiments (Kanthak & Woon, 2015 and Preece, 2016).

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Figures

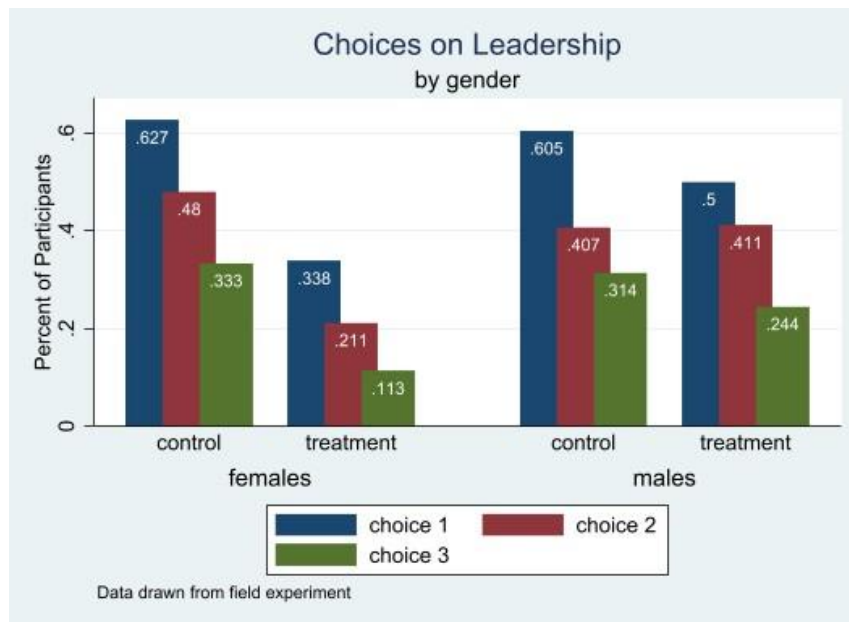


Figure 1. Leadership Intention by Treatment and Gender (Field sample).

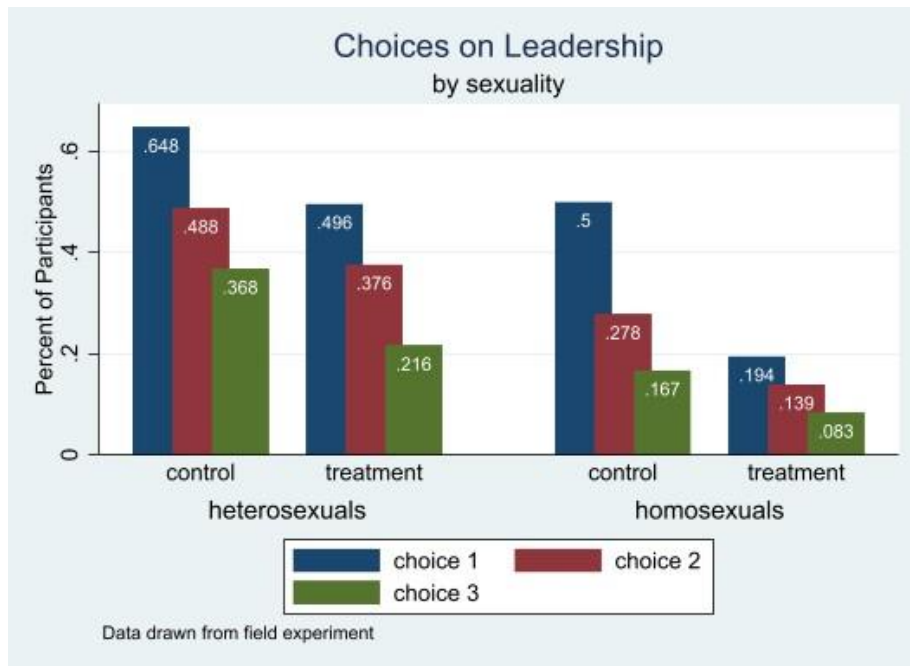


Figure 2. Leadership Intention by Treatment and Sexuality (Field sample).

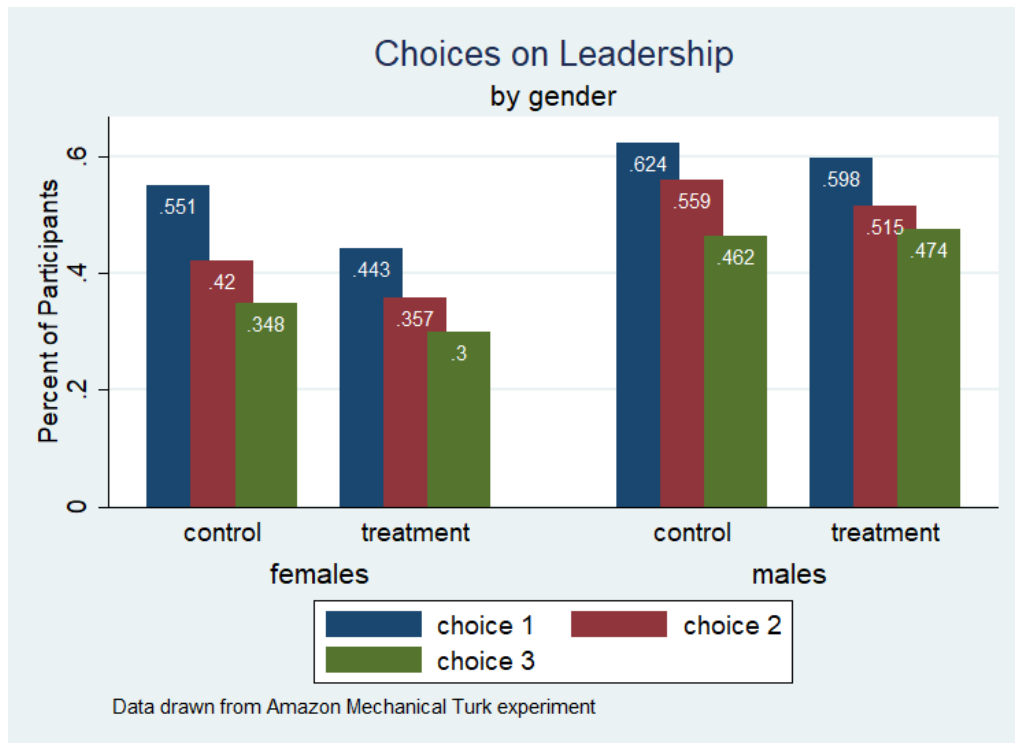


Figure 3. Leadership Intention by Treatment and Gender (Online sample).

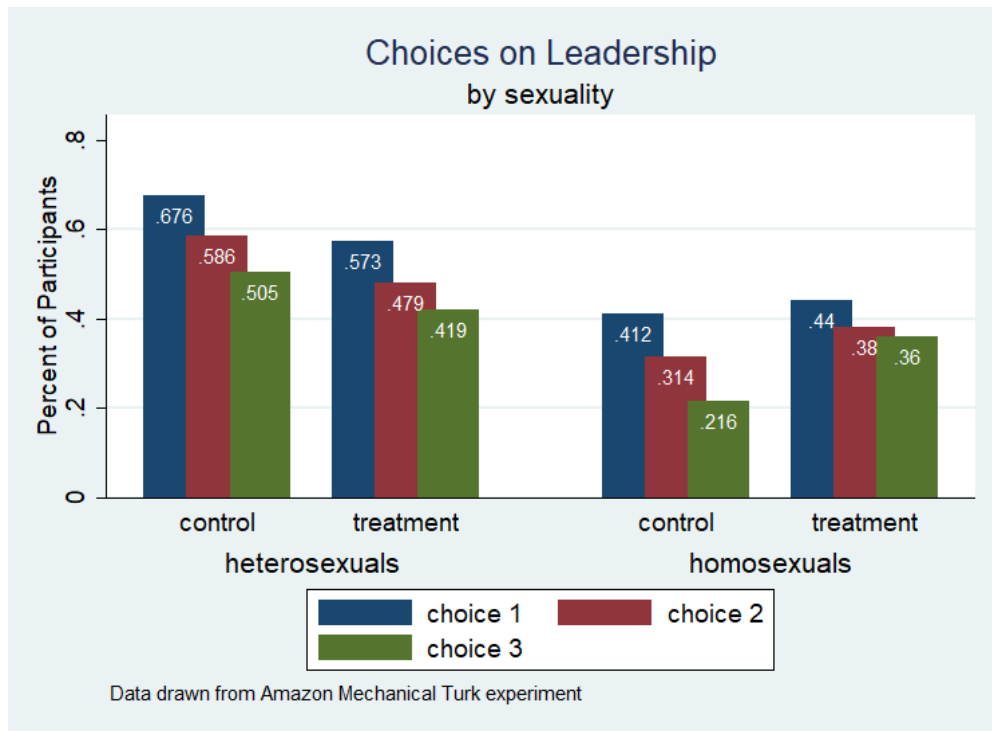


Figure 4. Leadership Intention by Treatment and Sexuality (Online sample).

Tables

Table 1. Descriptive statistics by treatment.

Variables	Full Sample [1]	Control [2]	Treatment [3]	Difference [3]-[2] [4]
Males	0.546	0.534	0.558	0.024
Homosexuals	0.223	0.222	0.224	0.002
Age	33.21	32.29	34.14	1.85
Married/partnered	0.468	0.447	0.490	0.043
At least tertiary education	0.727	0.732	0.723	-0.009
Income (in euros)				
< 1,500	0.472	0.423	0.520	-0.097*
1,500– 3,000	0.311	0.322	0.308	-0.014
> 3,000	0.217	0.223	0.211	-0.012
IQ Index	0.556	0.530	0.581	0.051
Past Leadership Experience	2.908	2.902	2.915	0.013
Voting Intention	5.254	5.292	5.217	-0.075
Political Beliefs				
Left Wing	0.178	0.211	0.143	-0.068
Social democratic	0.354	0.335	0.373	0.038
Liberal	0.468	0.453	0.484	0.031

Source: Authors' Calculations. Data drawn from the field experiment.

Notes: N= 322. Statistical Significance: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, *p<0.10

Table 2. Lying Aversion by treatment, gender and sexual orientation.

	Control	Treatment	Differences
Truthful	0.322 (0.036)	0.372 (0.038)	0.049 (0.053)
Small Lie	0.447 (0.039)	0.448 (0.039)	0.001 (0.055)
Big Lie	0.192 (0.031)	0.161 (0.029)	-0.031 (0.042)
Ambiguous	0.037 (0.014)	0.018 (0.011)	-0.019 (0.018)
	Males	Females	Differences
Truthful	0.329 (0.040)	0.369 (0.040)	0.040 (0.053)
Small Lie	0.150 (0.029)	0.198 (0.030)	0.048 (0.042)
Big Lie	0.443 (0.037)	0.452 (0.041)	0.009 (0.055)
Ambiguous	0.118 (0.012)	0.027 (0.013)	-0.091** (0.019)
	Heterosexuals	Homosexuals	Differences
Truthful	0.324 (0.029)	0.430 (0.058)	0.106** (0.064)
Small Lie	0.184 (0.024)	0.152 (0.042)	-0.032 (0.051)
Big Lie	0.468 (0.031)	0.375 (0.057)	-0.093** (0.066)
Ambiguous	0.024 (0.009)	0.041 (0.023)	0.017 (0.022)

Source: Authors' Calculations. Data drawn from the field experiment.

Notes: N= 322. Statistical Significance: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, *p<0.10

Table 3. Personality by treatment, gender and sexual orientation.

	Control	Treatment	Differences
Openness	3.378 (0.056)	3.394 (0.054)	0.016 (0.048)
Conscientiousness	3.461 (0.066)	3.421 (0.077)	-0.040 (0.052)
Extraversion	3.120 (0.057)	3.155 (0.056)	0.035 (0.059)
Agreeableness	3.650 (0.038)	3.628 (0.039)	-0.022 (0.054)
Neuroticism	2.899 (0.052)	2.937 (0.038)	0.038 (0.076)
	Males	Females	Differences
Openness	3.436 (0.059)	3.435 (0.048)	-0.001 (0.079)
Conscientiousness	3.208 (0.078)	3.499 (0.060)	0.291** (0.102)
Extraversion	3.296 (0.052)	3.259 (0.059)	-0.037 (0.080)
Agreeableness	3.526 (0.036)	3.775 (0.038)	0.249*** (0.052)
Neuroticism	2.866 (0.048)	2.964 (0.060)	0.098* (0.076)
	Heterosexuals	Homosexuals	Differences
Openness	3.576 (0.032)	2.939 (0.119)	-0.637*** (0.087)
Conscientiousness	3.398 (0.059)	3.487 (0.090)	-0.089 (0.123)
Extraversion	3.426 (0.037)	2.753 (0.104)	-0.673*** (0.088)
Agreeableness	3.505 (0.029)	3.409 (0.058)	-0.096* (0.083)
Neuroticism	2.807 (0.040)	3.303 (0.087)	0.496*** (0.087)

Source: Authors' Calculations. Data drawn from the field experiment.

Notes: N= 322. Statistical Significance: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, *p<0.10

Table 4. Average response rates by choice

		Percentage who choose Interest 1 (Text)			Percentage who choose also Interest 2 (Text)			Percentage who also watched Interest 3 (Video)		
		Males	Females	Difference	Males	Females	Difference	Males	Females	Difference
Control		0.605 (0.056)	0.626 (0.053)	0.021 (0.077)	0.410 (0.053)	0.480 (0.058)	0.070 (0.079)	0.319 (0.050)	0.333 (0.054)	0.019 (0.074)
	N	86	75	-	86	75	-	86	75	-
Treatment		0.500 (0.053)	0.338 (0.058)	-0.162** (0.078)	0.411 (0.052)	0.212 (0.048)	-0.199** (0.072)	0.244 (0.045)	0.113 (0.038)	-0.131** (0.061)
	N	90	71	-	90	71	-	90	71	-
		Heterosexuals	Homosexuals	Difference	Heterosexuals	Homosexuals	Difference	Heterosexuals	Homosexuals	Difference
Control		0.648 (0.043)	0.500 (0.054)	-0.148** (0.091)	0.488 (0.045)	0.278 (0.075)	-0.210** (0.093)	0.368 (0.043)	0.167 (0.062)	-0.201** (0.087)
	N	125	36	-	125	36	-	125	36	-
Treatment		0.496 (0.045)	0.194 (0.066)	-0.302*** (0.091)	0.376 (0.043)	0.139 (0.058)	-0.237** (0.086)	0.216 (0.036)	0.083 (0.046)	-0.133* (0.073)
	N	124	37	-	124	37	-	124	37	-

Source: Authors' Calculations. Data drawn from the field experiment.

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses.

* Statistical significance at the 10 percent level.

** Statistical significance at the 5 percent level.

*** Statistical significance at the 1 percent level

Table 5. Marginal effects at means of treatment and gender.

	Interest 1 (Text)			Interest 2 (Text)			Interest 3 (Video)		
	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]	[8]	[9]
Gender Gap									
Treatment	-0.472*** (0.099)	-0.469*** (0.068)	-0.486** (0.062)	-0.438*** (0.047)	-0.422*** (0.050)	-0.408** (0.047)	-0.255** (0.045)	-0.215*** (0.039)	-0.188** (0.026)
Male	-0.014 (0.083)	-0.016 (0.076)	0.022 (0.090)	-0.049 (0.063)	-0.047 (0.068)	0.010 (0.084)	0.001 (0.033)	0.003 (0.034)	0.042 (0.040)
Treatment x Male	0.210*** (0.072)	0.196** (0.073)	0.204** (0.080)	0.253*** (0.081)	0.232*** (0.082)	0.218** (0.094)	0.139* (0.085)	0.102 (0.080)	0.066 (0.065)
Lying aversion									
<i>Lying category</i>									
Small lie		0.116*** (0.059)	0.102** (0.054)		0.083* (0.063)	0.068* (0.069)		0.123** (0.054)	0.089* (0.053)
Big lie		0.102** (0.057)	0.105* (0.067)		0.141*** (0.045)	0.136*** (0.035)		0.149*** (0.047)	0.126*** (0.034)
Ambiguous		0.106 (0.123)	0.121* (0.085)		0.078* (0.119)	0.074* (0.092)		0.167* (0.121)	0.125* (0.071)
Personality Traits									
Openness			0.073** (0.036)			0.087*** (0.030)			0.025 (0.042)
Conscientiousness			-0.141** (0.058)			-0.095*** (0.032)			-0.052* (0.029)
Extraversion			0.088** (0.039)			0.036 (0.065)			0.071* (0.047)
Agreeableness			-0.018 (0.066)			0.083 (0.064)			0.012 (0.047)
Neuroticism			0.0162 (0.058)			-0.012 (0.032)			-0.049 (0.025)
Pseudo R ²	0.211	0.219	0.243	0.212	0.226	0.267	0.214	0.251	0.312
Observations	322	322	322	322	322	322	322	322	322

Source: Authors' calculations. Data drawn from the field experiment.

Notes: The table reports the marginal effects. Dependent variables: Interest Choice (0/1). Partial effects are estimated using a logit model, where explanatory variables are set to their mean values. The reference category for lying aversion is the honest/ truthful category. The specifications control for demographics (married, income level, educational level) and other covariates (IQ level, Past Leadership experience index, voting intention, political beliefs and Ztree performance). Logit standard errors in parentheses.

Statistical Significance: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, *p<0.10.

Table 6. Marginal effects at means of treatment and sexual orientation.

	Interest 1 (Text)			Interest 2 (Text)			Interest 3 (Video)		
	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]	[8]	[9]
	Sexual Orientation Gap								
Treatment	-0.410*** (0.051)	-0.418*** (0.072)	-0.420** (0.056)	-0.266*** (0.052)	-0.258*** (0.050)	-0.238*** (0.065)	-0.169** (0.037)	-0.145** (0.035)	-0.129** (0.038)
Homosexual	-0.090 (0.075)	-0.084 (0.082)	-0.045 (0.090)	-0.123* (0.081)	-0.101* (0.088)	-0.011 (0.098)	-0.114** (0.053)	-0.079* (0.058)	-0.004 (0.045)
Treatment x Homosexual	-0.270* (0.151)	-0.252* (0.154)	-0.287** (0.130)	-0.196* (0.109)	-0.212** (0.101)	-0.283** (0.121)	-0.048 (0.057)	-0.074* (0.053)	-0.118** (0.059)
	Lying aversion								
<i>Lying category</i>									
Small lie		0.099* (0.071)	0.084* (0.065)		0.074* (0.063)	0.063 (0.066)		0.116** (0.053)	0.085* (0.049)
Big lie		0.096* (0.053)	0.101* (0.055)		0.137*** (0.044)	0.141*** (0.039)		0.146*** (0.042)	0.126*** (0.034)
Ambiguous		0.103 (0.133)	0.116 (0.097)		0.073 (0.129)	0.081*** (0.101)		0.167* (0.135)	0.126* (0.074)
	Personality Traits								
Openness			0.059 (0.085)			0.077** (0.030)			0.023 (0.040)
Conscientiousness			-0.139** (0.056)			-0.092*** (0.031)			-0.052* (0.028)
Extraversion			0.085** (0.040)			0.031 (0.062)			0.067* (0.046)
Agreeableness			-0.013 (0.068)			0.084 (0.067)			0.011 (0.046)
Neuroticism			0.022 (0.063)			-0.011 (0.028)			-0.048* (0.025)
Pseudo R ²	0.219	0.225	0.248	0.215	0.229	0.267	0.217	0.257	0.313
Observations	322	322	322	322	322	322	322	322	322

Source: Authors' calculations. Data drawn from the field experiment.

Notes: The table reports the marginal effects. Dependent variables: Interest Choice (0/1). Partial effects are estimated using a logit model, where explanatory variables are set to their mean values. The reference category for lying aversion is the honest/ truthful category. The specifications control for demographics (married, income level, educational level) and other covariates (IQ level, Past Leadership experience index, voting intention, political beliefs and Ztree performance). Logit standard errors in parentheses.

Statistical Significance: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, *p<0.10.

Table 7. Descriptive statistics by treatment.

Variables	Full Sample [1]	Control [2]	Treatment [3]	Difference [3]-[2] [4]
Males	0.577	0.574	0.581	0.007
Homosexuals	0.295	0.314	0.299	-0.015
Age	37.30	37.12	37.47	0.35
Caucasian	0.741	0.771	0.712	-0.059
Married/partnered	0.674	0.703	0.647	-0.056
At least tertiary education	0.382	0.358	0.407	0.049
Income (in U.S. dollars)				
<\$3,000	0.512	0.549	0.480	-0.069
\$3,000–\$5,000	0.285	0.252	0.317	0.065
>\$5,000	0.203	0.228	0.179	-0.049
IQ Index	0.497	0.516	0.481	-0.035
Past Leadership Experience	3.132	3.131	3.133	0.002
Voting Intention	5.107	5.179	5.035	-0.143
Political Beliefs				
Conservative	0.258	0.234	0.281	0.047
Moderate	0.225	0.228	0.222	-0.006
Liberal	0.517	0.537	0.497	-0.040

Source: Authors' Calculations. Data drawn from Amazon online labor market.

Notes: N= 329. Statistical Significance: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, *p<0.10

Table 8. Lying Aversion by treatment, gender and sexual orientation.

	Control	Treatment	Differences
Truthful	0.253 (0.034)	0.311 (0.035)	0.058 (0.049)
Small Lie	0.345 (0.037)	0.351 (0.033)	0.006 (0.050)
Big Lie	0.278 (0.035)	0.335 (0.036)	0.057 (0.050)
Ambiguous	0.123 (0.025)	0.102 (0.023)	0.021 (0.034)
	Males	Females	Differences
Truthful	0.252 (0.031)	0.323 (0.039)	0.071* (0.050)
Small Lie	0.294 (0.033)	0.302 (0.039)	0.008 (0.051)
Big Lie	0.315 (0.033)	0.294 (0.038)	-0.021 (0.051)
Ambiguous	0.136 (0.025)	0.079 (0.022)	-0.057** (0.035)
	Heterosexuals	Homosexuals	Differences
Truthful	0.245 (0.028)	0.366 (0.048)	0.121** (0.053)
Small Lie	0.333 (0.031)	0.217 (0.041)	-0.116** (0.054)
Big Lie	0.307 (0.030)	0.306 (0.046)	-0.001 (0.055)
Ambiguous	0.114 (0.021)	0.108 (0.031)	-0.005 (0.037)

Source: Authors' Calculations. Data drawn from Amazon online labor market.

Notes: N= 329. Statistical Significance: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, *p<0.10

Table 9. Personality by treatment, gender and sexual orientation.

	Control	Treatment	Differences
Openness	3.650 (0.045)	3.601 (0.047)	-0.049 (0.065)
Conscientiousness	3.644 (0.056)	3.568 (0.057)	-0.076 (0.081)
Extraversion	3.068 (0.060)	3.048 (0.060)	-0.020 (0.085)
Agreeableness	3.466 (0.054)	3.433 (0.054)	-0.033 (0.076)
Neuroticism	2.909 (0.064)	2.928 (0.066)	0.019 (0.092)
	Males	Females	Differences
Openness	3.667 (0.039)	3.569 (0.054)	-0.098* (0.032)
Conscientiousness	3.581 (0.052)	3.639 (0.063)	0.058 (0.082)
Extraversion	3.177 (0.051)	2.895 (0.070)	-0.282*** (0.085)
Agreeableness	3.413 (0.049)	3.498 (0.059)	0.085 (0.077)
Neuroticism	2.815 (0.058)	3.059 (0.074)	0.244*** (0.092)
	Heterosexuals	Homosexuals	Differences
Openness	3.646 (0.037)	3.480 (0.063)	-0.166** (0.071)
Conscientiousness	3.620 (0.048)	3.572 (0.072)	-0.048 (0.088)
Extraversion	3.125 (0.048)	2.907 (0.084)	-0.218*** (0.091)
Agreeableness	3.462 (0.043)	3.421 (0.076)	-0.041 (0.083)
Neuroticism	2.858 (0.053)	3.055 (0.087)	0.197** (0.099)

Source: Authors' Calculations. Data drawn from Amazon online labor market.

Notes: N= 329. Statistical Significance: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, *p<0.10

Table 10. Average response rates by choice

		Percentage who choose Interest 1 (Text)			Percentage who choose also Interest 2 (Text)			Percentage who also watched Interest 3 (Video)		
		Males	Females	Difference	Males	Females	Difference	Males	Females	Difference
Control		0.623 (0.050)	0.550 (0.060)	-0.073 (0.078)	0.559 (0.051)	0.420 (0.059)	-0.139* (0.079)	0.462 (0.051)	0.347 (0.057)	-0.115* (0.078)
	N	93	69	-	93	69	-	93	69	-
Treatment		0.597 (0.050)	0.442 (0.063)	-0.155** (0.079)	0.515 (0.051)	0.357 (0.057)	-0.158** (0.077)	0.474 (0.050)	0.300 (0.055)	-0.174*** (0.076)
	N	97	70	-	97	70	-	97	70	-
		Heterosexuals	Homosexuals	Difference	Heterosexuals	Homosexuals	Difference	Heterosexuals	Homosexuals	Difference
Control		0.675 (0.044)	0.411 (0.069)	-0.264*** (0.080)	0.585 (0.046)	0.313 (0.065)	-0.272*** (0.082)	0.504 (0.047)	0.215 (0.058)	-0.289*** (0.080)
	N	111	51	-	111	51	-	111	51	-
Treatment		0.572 (0.045)	0.440 (0.076)	-0.132** (0.039)	0.478 (0.046)	0.380 (0.069)	-0.098** (0.084)	0.418 (0.045)	0.360 (0.068)	-0.058 (0.083)
	N	117	50	-	117	50	-	117	50	-

Source: Authors' Calculations.

Notes: N= 329. Standard errors are in parentheses. * Statistical significance at the 10 percent level. ** Statistical significance at the 5 percent level.

*** Statistical significance at the 1 percent level

Table 11. Marginal effects at means of treatment and gender.

	Interest 1 (Text)			Interest 2 (Text)			Interest 3 (Video)		
	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]	[8]	[9]
Gender Gap									
Treatment	-0.267*** (0.099)	-0.269*** (0.105)	-0.247** (0.112)	-0.219** (0.094)	-0.269*** (0.101)	-0.231** (0.123)	-0.201** (0.100)	-0.241*** (0.092)	-0.195* (0.119)
Male	-0.021 (0.083)	-0.044 (0.082)	-0.026 (0.087)	-0.021 (0.094)	-0.045 (0.105)	-0.064 (0.110)	-0.038 (0.086)	-0.090 (0.095)	-0.096 (0.130)
Treatment x Male	0.264** (0.123)	0.310*** (0.123)	0.280** (0.122)	0.199* (0.125)	0.314*** (0.142)	0.286** (0.154)	0.256** (0.120)	0.349*** (0.122)	0.306** (0.157)
Lying aversion									
<i>Lying category</i>									
Small lie		0.319*** (0.097)	0.332*** (0.100)		0.467*** (0.102)	0.474*** (0.110)		0.389*** (0.082)	0.345*** (0.084)
Big lie		0.238*** (0.086)	0.288*** (0.101)		0.443*** (0.072)	0.524*** (0.097)		0.341*** (0.072)	0.368*** (0.103)
Ambiguous		0.272*** (0.084)	0.282*** (0.098)		0.412*** (0.081)	0.431*** (0.090)		0.195* (0.112)	0.182* (0.113)
Personality Traits									
Openness			0.150* (0.083)			0.323*** (0.091)			0.254*** (0.070)
Conscientiousness			-0.179*** (0.071)			-0.283*** (0.086)			-0.274*** (0.082)
Extraversion			0.076* (0.051)			0.075 (0.066)			0.135* (0.078)
Agreeableness			-0.081 (0.061)			-0.113 (0.100)			-0.157 (0.099)
Neuroticism			0.132** (0.065)			0.136 (0.111)			0.106 (0.112)
Pseudo R ²	0.291	0.316	0.383	0.335	0.394	0.489	0.329	0.373	0.484
Observations	329	329	329	320	320	320	320	320	320

Source: Authors' calculations. Data drawn from Amazon online labor market.

Notes: The table reports the marginal effects. Dependent variables: Interest Choice (0/1). Partial effects are estimated using a logit model, where explanatory variables are set to their mean values. The reference category for lying aversion is the honest/ truthful category. The specifications control for demographics (Caucasian, married, income level, educational level) and other covariates (IQ level, Past Leadership experience index, voting intention, political beliefs and Ztree performance). Logit standard errors in parentheses. Statistical Significance: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, *p<0.10.

Table 12. Marginal effects at means of treatment and sexual orientation.

	Interest 1 (Text)			Interest 2 (Text)			Interest 3 (Video)		
	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]	[8]	[9]
Sexual Orientation Gap									
Treatment	-0.179*** (0.071)	-0.174*** (0.072)	-0.160** (0.085)	-0.176** (0.076)	-0.183** (0.082)	-0.163* (0.102)	-0.162** (0.072)	-0.156** (0.068)	-0.142* (0.093)
Homosexual	-0.204* (0.098)	-0.212** (0.093)	-0.196** (0.103)	-0.167* (0.110)	-0.182* (0.119)	-0.183 (0.149)	-0.272** (0.108)	-0.285*** (0.097)	-0.307*** (0.109)
Treatment x Homosexual	0.165** (0.116)	0.217*** (0.117)	0.181* (0.123)	0.211 (0.149)	0.294* (0.161)	0.285* (0.179)	0.372*** (0.130)	0.420*** (0.126)	0.409*** (0.140)
Lying aversion									
<i>Lying category</i>									
Small lie		0.302*** (0.105)	0.300*** (0.106)		0.454*** (0.105)	0.466*** (0.117)		0.383*** (0.088)	0.332*** (0.092)
Big lie		0.230*** (0.096)	0.275*** (0.104)		0.436*** (0.081)	0.516*** (0.096)		0.324*** (0.083)	0.358*** (0.101)
Ambiguous		0.277*** (0.092)	0.269*** (0.101)		0.425*** (0.079)	0.441*** (0.088)		0.209* (0.127)	0.180 (0.124)
Personality Traits									
Openness			0.172** (0.085)			0.341*** (0.089)			0.279*** (0.076)
Conscientiousness			-0.180*** (0.068)			-0.277*** (0.085)			-0.262*** (0.088)
Extraversion			0.082 (0.056)			0.085 (0.072)			0.156** (0.079)
Agreeableness			-0.069 (0.062)			-0.102 (0.101)			-0.146 (0.102)
Neuroticism			0.131** (0.061)			0.141 (0.105)			0.107 (0.103)
Pseudo R ²	0.286	0.309	0.378	0.329	0.390	0.487	0.333	0.374	0.492
Observations	329	329	329	320	320	320	320	320	320

Source: Authors' calculations. Data drawn from Amazon online labor market.

Notes: The table reports the marginal effects. Dependent variables: Interest Choice (0/1). Partial effects are estimated using a logit model, where explanatory variables are set to their mean values. The reference category for lying aversion is the honest/ truthful category. The specifications control for demographics (Caucasian, married, income level, educational level) and other covariates (IQ level, Past Leadership experience index, voting intention, political beliefs and Ztree performance). Logit standard errors in parentheses. Statistical Significance: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, *p<0.10.