

Support for Leader's Decisions in Conflict and Negotiation: Women Do Not Benefit From Relevant Expertise While Men Do

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In the present research, we examined the role of leaders' domain-specific expertise and gender as affecting individuals' evaluation of proposals related to intergroup conflict. Across three studies, conducted in two different conflict-related contexts (Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the refugee crisis in Europe), we showed that men and women do not equally benefit from domain-specific expertise. Having high (compared to low) domain-specific expertise positively affected participants' attitudes towards the proposal when its author was a man but not when she was a woman. We further demonstrate that specific characteristics of the proposal (i.e., security relevance) and of the participants (i.e., level of sexism) affect reactions to different negotiation proposals. Our findings suggest that even when women acquire relevant knowledge and experience, they do not benefit from them as much as men. One implication of these findings is that training and enhancing women's expertise may not be enough to eliminate gender bias.

KEY WORDS: negotiation, gender, gender bias, leadership

As we are writing this article, the American presidential campaign is well underway, with the various candidates recruiting public support for their candidacy. The Democratic Party's elections offer an interesting case. On one side, we have former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, and on the other—Senator Bernard Sanders. While both have had long careers in the public service and government, it is of little refute that Clinton is the more experienced one. In fact, her experience far exceeds that of all candidates of both Democratic and Republican Parties. However, Senator Sanders had commented on this experience gap arguing that his “lack of foreign policy experience compared to Clinton's does not matter, because he has better ‘judgment’” (Doyle, 2016). This remark reveals an important issue about gender and leadership: Does domain-specific expertise equally benefit men and

women? In this article, we aim to examine this question and test whether women's domain-specific expertise can assist them to overcome the gender bias that exists in leadership and negotiation and decrease its negative effects. Specifically, we focus on the effect of domain-specific expertise on public support of negotiation proposals authored by a man versus a woman.

Past work has shown that individuals' evaluation of peace proposals is affected by the identity of the proposal's author, so that proposals offered by one's ingroup are evaluated more positively than those proposed by the outgroup (Maoz, Ward, Katz, & Ross, 2002; Ross, 1995). This effect, termed "reactive devaluation," is one of various psychological barriers to reconciliation preventing people from being open to, and accepting, outgroup proposals and views (Ross & Ward, 1995). Reactive devaluation was found in a variety of contexts such as negotiations between university students and administration, between the United States and Russia (Ross, 1995), and between Israelis and Palestinians (Maoz et al., 2002). In the current research, we extend this work and examine how specific characteristics of a leader affect subsequent support for a negotiation proposal. Thus, we propose that receptiveness and openness to negotiation proposals might be shaped not only by whether the person proposing it belongs to the adversarial outgroup, but also by other factors such as gender and domain-specific expertise.

Gender was examined in the context of reactive devaluation and was found to affect evaluation of negotiation proposals in the Israeli-Palestinian context (Maoz, 2009). More specifically, Israeli-Jewish participants read a negotiation proposal authored by either a man, or a woman, Israeli-Jew or Palestinian. When participants evaluated a proposal authored by a Jewish man, it was rated as more beneficial for Israel than when it was authored by a Jewish woman. When the proposal was described as authored by a member of the outgroup, the opposite pattern emerged, so that the proposal was evaluated as more beneficial for Israel (i.e., less beneficial for Palestinians' goals) when the author was a Palestinian woman (vs. a man). These findings suggest that an author's gender affects public support of negotiation proposals, such that women are perceived as generating lower-quality proposals, thus gaining less support.

Such effects of gender should not be surprising in light of research on gender bias and stereotypes. Although women's representation in parliaments and governments has increased in recent decades, women are still underrepresented in politics around the world, particularly in masculine domains such as military and security (UNWomen, 2014). Such gaps are partially explained by pervasive stereotypes affecting evaluation, attitudes, and judgment of men and women (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2012). Gender stereotypes portray women as communal (e.g., showing concern for others) and men as agentic (e.g., assertive; Cuddy, Glick, & Beninger, 2011). The two stereotypes were described as mutually exclusive, so that women are often portrayed as warm but not competent (e.g., Fiske, 2012; Heilman, 2001) and men as competent, but not warm (Heilman, 2012). Relevant for the current research, this effect is even more pronounced in masculine, compared to feminine domains (e.g., Brescoll, Dawson, & Uhlmann, 2010; Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins, 2004), and specifically in negotiations (Kray, Kennedy, & Van Zant, 2014; Stuhlmacher & Linnabery, 2013). For example, Kray and her colleagues (2014) found that women were evaluated as easier to deceive in negotiation, as they were perceived as less competent negotiators than men. These stereotypes affect the outcomes of women, who are less likely to be hired for a job (Moss-Racusin, Dovidio, Brescoll, Graham, & Handelsman, 2012), more likely to be deceived in negotiation (Kray et al., 2014), and receive lower public support (Bauer, 2015).

One way to prevent the potential negative outcomes for women is by providing individuating information (Koch, D'Mello, & Sackett, 2015), specifically regarding their competence. Research shows that when a leader's high performance was made explicit, women were evaluated as equally competent as men (Heilman et al., 2004) and that women in male-dominated fields were rated as equally status-worthy as men, when acting in a clearly competent manner (Brescoll et al., 2010).

Thus, one might expect that information about domain-specific expertise will overcome gender bias leading to similar evaluation of expert women and men.

Expertise in specific domains is becoming increasingly important in a rapidly changing world. Organizational and political leaders rely on experts when required to make decisions in domains in which they have little knowledge (Huber, 1999). Not only leaders rely on experts, but the layperson seeks the advice or insight of experts as well. For example, research on persuasion shows that speaker's expertise and experience are critical factors affecting listeners' attitudes. The elaboration likelihood model (ELM; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984) posits that persuasion operates via two routes: a central route (quality of arguments) and a peripheral one (e.g., attributes of the source of information). Supporting the role that source's expertise plays in persuasion processes, research found that source credibility, which is often a direct result of expertise, shapes individuals' attitudes (Sternthal, Phillips, & Dholakia, 1978); predicts source's persuasiveness (Chaiken, Liberman, & Eagly, 1989); and leads to more favorable ratings of the source itself (e.g., greater influence of leaders on their subordinates; Knight & Weiss, 1980). Source's expertise is especially relevant when individuals do not have direct experience with the decision or situation (Wu & Shaffer, 1987). Such effects may be of particular importance in the political domain, as the majority of people are not directly involved in daily decision-making in government, and it is therefore expected to be even more influential in shaping support for a negotiation proposal.

In the current work, we examine whether expertise, as a characteristic of an individual heading a negotiation team, will affect the evaluation of proposals outlined by the leader and his or her team. Importantly, we focused on whether the gender of the leader would interact with levels of expertise to impact evaluations. As women in leadership and negotiation often encounter bias and discrimination (e.g., Heilman, 2012), gaining expertise may be women's way to overcome this bias and acquire the support they need to achieve various goals, such as advancing various negotiation proposals.

However, other bias-related processes may intervene in this process, hindering the potential positive effects of expertise. The aforementioned gender stereotypes generate different expectations from men and women so that women are perceived as incongruent with the role of leaders (Schein, 1973). This perceived lack of fit may intervene with information processing and affect individuals' evaluation of women, so that individuals may interpret identical action differently when enacted by a man versus a woman (Heilman, 2015). This may also apply to the interpretation of individuals' credentials; for example, people attribute less competence for a woman (vs. a man) even when their curriculum vitae are identical (Moss-Racusin et al., 2012). Moreover, it was repeatedly shown that when women are highly skilled or competent, they may still be subjected to bias in the form of less liking or being seen as less socially skilled (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007; Rudman & Glick, 2001). Thus, as the Clinton-Sanders example suggests, it is possible that even when women are described as experts, they may not benefit from it, as this information may be processed in a way that would render their experience less consequential.

Our goal in the current research was to isolate the role of domain-specific expertise in shaping support for a proposal authored by a man versus a woman in the domain of political negotiations. Drawing on the literature on gender bias in general and specifically in the political domain (e.g., Bauer, 2015; Maoz, 2009), we hypothesized that a proposal authored by a man would be evaluated more positively compared to one authored by a woman. Further, we hypothesized that information about the author's domain-specific expertise would elicit greater support for the proposal, so that when the author (either male or female) will have high (vs. low) domain-specific expertise, the proposal will receive greater support. More importantly, we examined whether domain-specific expertise would increase support for a proposal when the author is a male but will have less impact on the evaluation of the female-authored proposal. Such an effect would be evidenced by an interaction between gender and domain-specific expertise. To test these hypotheses, we conducted three studies,

two in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict context and the third study in the context of the refugee crisis in Europe.

STUDY 1

Study 1 followed a 2 (author's gender) \times 2 (author's domain-specific expertise: high/low) between-subjects design. Participants were Israeli-Jews who evaluated a proposal authored by an Israeli leading a negotiation's team in the context of Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Author's gender was manipulated via the name of the alleged head of the team, using a man's (Boaz) or a woman's (Dana) name. Domain-specific expertise was manipulated by describing the author's background as including either high domain-specific experience (having vast military experience: served as a high-ranking officer in the intelligence corps and as being an expert on security matters) or low domain-specific experience (a Middle East expert with no particular military background). Although a Middle East expert has relevant knowledge of Palestinian/Arab history and culture, he or she lacks the security experience that is needed to address issues, which are at the heart of Israeli-Palestinian disagreement (e.g., security measures for Israelis or distribution and use of arms for Palestinians). We expected the information about domain-specific expertise to positively impact responses towards the proposal authored by a man and to have little influence on reactions to the female author, which were expected to be more negative.

Method

Participants

One hundred Jewish Israeli undergraduate students (53 males; age ranging from 20 to 33, $M = 26.91$, $SD = 3.03$) volunteered to participate in the study in exchange for course credit. Regarding political orientation, 35 participants (35%) classified themselves as leftists, 57 participants (57%) as rightists (for eight participants, information regarding their political orientation was not available).¹

Procedure and Measures

The study was presented as examining attitudes toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. All participants read a short paragraph describing the decision of the Israeli government to create a team of experienced professionals, holding diverse political orientations, to lead negotiations with the Palestinians. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions, differing in the gender of the head of the team and his or her domain-specific expertise. Participants read a short description of the team leader's background and the description of the proposal.

Participants were then asked to evaluate the proposal generated by the team headed by Boaz/Dana, which concerned the allocation of water resources in the area (based on Kahn, Liberman, Halperin, & Ross, 2016; see the online supporting information), by responding to four items: "If this proposal would be presented in a referendum, to what extent would you support it?"; "To what extent do you think that the average Israeli would support this proposal?"; "If you were an external advisor to the negotiations, to what extent would you recommend Israel to accept this proposal?"; and "In your opinion, to what extent is this proposal good for Israel?" ($\alpha = .86$). All items were rated on a scale ranging from 1 (*not good at all*) to 5 (*very much*). Finally, participants provided demographic details,

¹ To determine participants' political orientation, we asked participants to which party they voted in the previous elections. In Israel, various parties advocate different political stances, and therefore it is possible to infer one's political orientation based on their voting patterns. Participants who voted for Ha'avoda and Meretz were classified as leftists, and those who voted for Halikud, Israel is our home, Kadima, and Shas, were classified as rightists.

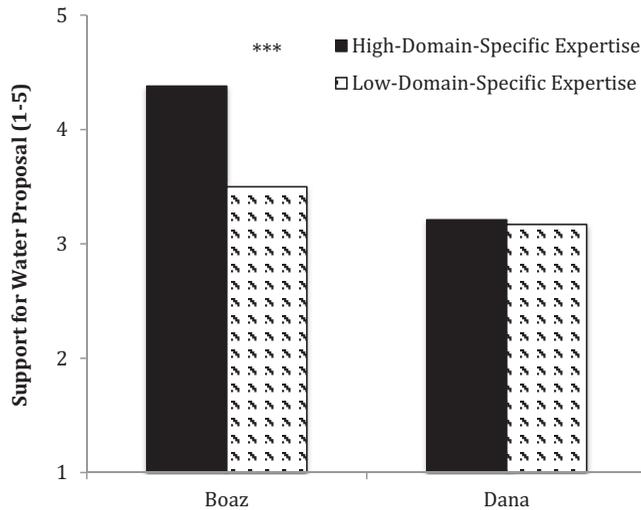


Figure 1. Support of the allocation of water sources proposal as a function of leader's gender and background in study 1. *** $p < .001$.

including the name of the party to which they voted in the previous elections. This measure enabled us to control for variations in political affiliation, likely to impact responses to conflict-related issues.

Results

To examine our hypotheses, we conducted a 2 (author's gender) \times 2 (domain-specific expertise: high/low) Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) on participants' support of the proposal, considering participant's political orientation, age, religiosity, and education as covariates. We first analyzed the data considering participant's gender as an independent variable. We found a main effect for participant's gender, so that women supported the proposal more ($M = 3.84$, $SD = .76$) than men ($M = 3.30$, $SD = .79$), $F(1,83) = 8.13$, $p = .01$, $\eta^2_p = .09$. We therefore controlled for participant's gender in subsequent analysis.

The analysis yielded a significant main effect for author's gender, indicating that overall participants supported the proposal more when the author was a man ($M = 3.93$, $SD = .71$) compared to when she was a woman ($M = 3.19$, $SD = .75$), $F(1,83) = 15.78$, $p = .000$, $\eta^2_p = .16^2$. We also found a significant main effect for author's domain-specific expertise, so that participants were more supportive of the proposal when the author had high domain-specific expertise ($M = 3.76$, $SD = .90$) than when he or she lacked such expertise ($M = 3.34$, $SD = .67$), $F(1,83) = 10.05$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2_p = .11$. The analysis further yielded the expected two-way interaction between author's gender and domain-specific expertise, $F(1,83) = 6.98$, $p = .01$, $\eta^2_p = .08$. As shown in Figure 1, for a male author, participants supported the proposal more when he had high (vs. low) domain-specific expertise ($M = 4.38$, $SD = .40$ vs. $M = 3.50$, $SD = .68$), $F(1,83) = 16.43$, $p = .000$, $\eta^2_p = .16$. However, for a female author, having high (vs. low) domain-specific expertise did not increase support for the proposal ($M = 3.21$, $SD = .86$ vs. $M = 3.17$, $SD = .63$), $F(1,83) = .08$, ns . The differences between the male and

² Data regarding the political orientation was missing for eight participants; therefore, they were not included in the analysis.

female authors were significant when the author had high domain-specific expertise, $F(1,83) = 21.74$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .21$, but not when he or she lacked such expertise, $F(1,83) = 1.39$, *ns*.

Discussion

Study 1 thus supported our hypotheses regarding the expected backlash effect, so that overall a proposal authored by a man was accepted more positively than one authored by a woman. It also supported our hypothesis regarding the effect of domain-specific expertise, showing that when the proposal's author had domain-specific expertise, participants supported the proposal to a greater extent. Moreover, it demonstrated that domain-specific expertise indeed had little effect on support for a proposal authored by a woman; however, it did positively affect acceptance when the author was a man. In Study 2, we aimed to gain further support for these effects by testing whether they generalize to proposals that address more contentious conflict-related issues. The proposal presented to participants in Study 1 addressed a relatively minor issue in the complex relationship between Israel and the Palestinians. We expected these effects to be even more pronounced when the proposal was more directly linked to the conflict due to the masculine nature of the topic (e.g., Sasson-Levy, 2003). Further establishing external validity, in Study 2 we sought to replicate the effects among a more diverse sample than a student one.

STUDY 2

Study 2 followed the same design as Study 1, but it included two different proposals. The first was identical to the one used in Study 1 (regarding the water-resources allocation) and the second addressed the preconditions for the renewal of the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. This latter issue is at the heart of the disagreement between the two sides and is also of a more masculine nature as it touches on security-related issues. Thus, making the author's domain-specific expertise (i.e., military experience) more pronounced may further enhance the differences in reactions to highly experienced men versus women.

Method

Participants

One hundred and twenty Jewish Israelis (61 males; age ranging from 20 to 61, $M = 34.68$, $SD = 9.88$) participated in the study. Participants were approached at a mall in the center of Israel and were invited to participate in the study in exchange for a gift certificate for a meal at one of the mall's restaurants. Regarding political orientation, based on the party for which they voted in the previous elections, 41 participants (34%) were classified as leftists, and 71 participants (59%) were classified as rightists (eight participants did not indicate the name of the party to which they voted in the previous elections and thus were not assigned a political orientation value).

Procedure and Measures

In Study 2, participants were asked to evaluate two separate proposals: The first was the water-resources allocation proposal used in Study 1. The second proposal focused on a core issue in the dispute between the two adversaries—the preconditions to the renewal of negotiation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The proposal outlined a list of steps both Israel and the Palestinians would take regarding security and diplomatic issues in order to promote the renewal of the negotiations (e.g., Israel would allow the entrance of goods into Gaza and The Palestinian National Authority would postpone all initiatives to gain recognition of a Palestinian state in the UN for one year). As in Study 1, participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions, differing in author's gender and his

or her domain-specific expertise. We used the same items as in Study 1 to assess support for each proposal separately ($\alpha = .88$; $\alpha = .90$).³

Results

For each proposal separately, we conducted a 2 (author's gender) \times 2 (author's domain-specific expertise: high/low) Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) on participants' support of each proposal, controlling for participant's political orientation, age, religiosity, and education. As in Study 1, we first analyzed the data considering participant's gender as an independent variable; this time we found no significant differences between men and women and therefore did not include participant's gender in further analysis (for similar procedure, see Heilman & Okimoto, 2007).

Support for the allocation of water resources. As hypothesized, the analysis yielded a significant main effect for author's gender, indicating that participants supported the proposal to a greater extent when the author was a man ($M = 3.89$, $SD = .66$) than when she was a woman ($M = 3.27$, $SD = .73$), $F(1, 104) = 24.93$, $p = .000$, $\eta^2_p = .19$.⁴ There was also a main effect for author's domain-specific expertise, so that when the author had high domain-specific expertise, participants expressed more supportive attitudes toward the proposal ($M = 3.73$, $SD = .84$), compared to when he or she lacked such expertise ($M = 3.41$, $SD = .63$), $F(1, 104) = 9.30$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2_p = .08$. Finally, as in Study 1, the analysis yielded a significant two-way interaction between author's gender and domain-specific expertise, $F(1, 104) = 8.04$, $p = .01$, $\eta^2_p = .07$. For a male author, having high (vs. low) domain-specific expertise increased participants' support of proposal ($M = 4.28$, $SD = .44$ vs. $M = 3.51$, $SD = .61$), $F(1, 104) = 16.64$, $p = .000$, $\eta^2_p = .14$; whereas for a female author, having high (vs. low) domain-specific expertise did not increase participants' support for the proposal ($M = 3.24$, $SD = .81$ vs. $M = 3.31$, $SD = .65$), $F(1, 104) = .02$, ns . The differences between the male and female authors were significant when the author had high domain-specific expertise, $F(1, 104) = 30.73$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .23$, but not when he or she lacked such expertise, $F(1, 104) = 2.88$, ns .

Preconditions for negotiation proposal. The analysis yielded a significant main effect for author's gender, so that participants were more supportive of the proposal when the head of the team was a man ($M = 3.93$, $SD = .52$) than when she was a woman ($M = 3.10$, $SD = .95$), $F(1, 104) = 39.97$, $p = .000$, $\eta^2_p = .28$. There was also a main effect for author's domain-specific expertise, so when the head of the team had high domain-specific expertise, participants expressed more favorable attitudes toward the proposal ($M = 3.61$, $SD = .95$), compared to when he or she had low domain-specific expertise ($M = 3.39$, $SD = .77$), $F(1, 104) = 4.29$, $p = .04$, $\eta^2_p = .04$. Unlike the results for the water-resources allocation, the two-way interaction between author's gender and domain-specific expertise was not significant, $F(1, 104) = .94$, ns , suggesting that the two plans differed in their effects on participants' evaluation.

Discussion

The results of Study 2 partially supported our hypotheses. Replicating the results of Study 1, participants were more supportive of the water-resources allocation proposal when the author was a man,

³ We also measured another outcome variable—importance of team members' characteristics, examining the perceived importance of military/security background for other members of the negotiation team. Results supported the effect of high-domain expertise as less beneficial for women than for men. For the sake of simplicity, we do not report the results in the manuscript but include the full analysis in the online supporting information.

⁴ Again, data regarding the political orientation was missing for eight participants; therefore, they were not included in the analysis.

when the author had high domain-specific expertise, and particularly when a man (vs. a woman) had high domain-specific expertise. While findings for the preconditions for the negotiation proposal replicated the effects of gender and expertise, there was no replication of the interaction between the two variables. These findings suggest that the two proposals, or the issues they address, may be qualitatively different, subsequently yielding different effects of author's gender and expertise. While both proposals address issues relevant for the negotiation between Israel and the Palestinians, the water-resources allocation proposal addresses a more minor issue, whereas the preconditions proposal addresses core issues at the heart of the conflict. In addition, the preconditions proposal includes explicit military and security issues and thus is more masculine in nature. These differences may have increased participants' sensitivity to the gender of the author, making their expertise less consequential, as the larger effect size suggests ($\eta^2_p = .31$).

In Study 3, we sought to further investigate reactions to gender and expertise of leaders in the context of core security-negotiation proposals, this time in an alternate intergroup context. Moreover, we introduced another measure of support, which may be more sensitive to the expertise manipulation. Specifically, because people tend to want to learn from experts (Huber, 1999), we examined whether desire to learn more about the proposal will be shaped by expertise even in a core security proposal.

Moreover, in Study 3 we wanted to examine these effects in a different context, to test whether these effects were unique to the Israeli-Palestinian context or whether they reflect a more general phenomenon. Finally, it is possible that different people would react differently to proposals authored by an expert man versus a woman. While participant's gender did not affect their attitudes, other individual differences, such as level of sexism, may affect participants' evaluations of the proposal. To that end, we included participant's sexism as a moderator in Study 3.

STUDY 3

To examine the effects of author's gender and high domain-specific expertise in Study 3, we chose a context inspired by recent political events in Europe. We presented British citizens with a scenario regarding the exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union (Brexit). As we sought to examine the effect of core security issues, we chose to tackle the issue of refugees arriving to the EU from war zones in Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, an issue which was at the heart of the "Leave EU" campaign. We presented participants with a supposedly potential negotiation proposal as part of the Brexit negotiation, concerning the refugee issue. As in Studies 1 and 2, the proposal was authored by a male or a female leader who had either high or low domain-specific expertise.

Furthermore, in Study 3 we examined how participants' level of sexism would affect their reaction to a male versus a female leader, with low versus high domain-specific expertise. Research has shown that preexisting levels of sexism predict greater gender bias against women, particularly in competence evaluation (Moss-Racusin et al., 2012). We expected, therefore, that participants high on sexism would be particularly likely to demonstrate both gender bias, and specifically an "expertise bias," so that they would be less affected by a woman's high domain-specific expertise compared to a man's expertise. Thus, in Study 3 we hypothesized that among participants high on sexism, information regarding a leader's domain-specific expertise would positively impact support of the negotiation proposal when it is authored by a man, but not when it is authored by a woman. Participants low on sexism were expected to be equally affected by information regarding the leader's expertise when he was a man and when she was a woman.

Method

Participants

Two hundred and eight British citizens (103 males; age ranging from 18 to 72, $M = 36.26$, $SD = 11.72$) participated in the study. Participants were recruited via an online participant pool (via Prolific)⁵ and were paid £1.25 for their participation. Thirteen participants were dropped from subsequent analysis for various reasons (one participant indicated he was not a British citizen; seven participants guessed the purpose of the study; and six participants failed an attention check), leaving a final sample of 195 participants. One hundred and seventy-two participants reported voting in the Brexit referendum in June 2016, of which 108 voted “stay in the EU” (overall 122 indicated they supported staying in the EU, and 73 supported leaving it). Regarding political orientation, 97 participants described their political attitude as left (or as “center-left”), 45 as center, and 47 as right (or “center-right”).

Procedure and Measures

The study was presented as examining attitudes toward Brexit and related issues associated with leaving the EU, and the procedure was similar to that in Studies 1 and 2. All participants read a short paragraph providing background information regarding the Brexit and particularly regarding the issue of refugees as potentially driving the decision to leave the EU. Then participants were told that UK representatives were currently negotiating with the EU regarding the Brexit arrangements and were informed that they would read an informal proposal that is a part of these negotiations. Participants were then randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions. Author's gender was manipulated via the name of the alleged head of the team (Brian/Karen Williams). Domain-specific expertise was manipulated by describing the author's background as including either high domain-specific experience (a former executive in the home office—the department that oversees immigration and is responsible for the security and economic prosperity of the United Kingdom, with specific expertise in issues related to counterterrorism and immigration); or low domain-specific experience (an Orientalist, a specialist in Middle Eastern cultures and diversity issues). Moreover, we considered these effects as a function of sexism level (high vs. low). Thus, the study involved a 2 (author's gender) \times 2 (author's domain-specific expertise: high/low) \times 2 (sexism level) between-subjects design.

Participants were then asked to evaluate the proposal concerning UK policy in refugee-related matters, which was allegedly presented to the British government and EU administration. The proposal was created for this study and included three principles, for example, “The UK will uphold previous agreements and will allow individuals to apply for asylum if they want to stay in the UK as refugees” (for the full proposal, see the online supporting information).

Support for the refugee proposal. Participants then indicated their support in the proposal using four items adapted from Studies 1 and 2: “In your opinion, to what extent is this plan good for the UK?”; “To what extent would you support this plan?”; “To what extent would the average British Citizen support this plan?”; and “If you were an external consultant to the negotiations, to what extent would you recommend enacting this proposal?” ($\alpha = .89$). All items were rated on a scale ranging from 1 (*Extremely bad/extremely unlikely to support it*) to 7 (*Extremely good/extremely likely to support it*).

Desire to learn more about the proposal. In Study 3, we added an additional item: “I would want to learn more about this proposal,” also ranging from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly agree*). This item taps into participants' openness to information regarding the negotiation proposal, which has been shown to predict support for compromises in peace processes (e.g., Halperin & Bar-Tal, 2011). In addition, this item may be particularly sensitive to the expertise manipulation (people tend to want to learn from experts; Huber, 1999) and as such may be more affected by the expertise

⁵ See <https://www.prolific.ac/>

manipulation even in a core security proposal. Finally, it may measure support in the proposal less directly and allow for more complexity in participants' responses, which may allow for greater openness to information beyond the leader's gender.

Brexit-related attitudes. To examine the effect of participants' preexisting attitudes toward Brexit, the negotiations with the EU, and the refugee crisis, we included four items. Participants were asked: "How interested are you in the Brexit negotiations and developments?"; and "How concerned are you with the refugee crisis in Europe and the UK?" rated on a scale ranging from 1 (*Not interested/concerned at all*) to 5 (*Extremely interested/concerned*). Participants were then asked to indicate whether they voted in the referendum in June 2016 (answers were "Yes"/"No"), and what did they vote, or would have voted had they took part in the referendum ("Stay in the EU"/"Leave the EU").

Participant's levels of sexism. To further examine whether individual characteristics affect participants' evaluation of a female (vs. male) author, we included a short version of the modern sexism scale (Swim, Aikin, Hall, & Hunter, 1995). After participants completed all dependent measures (to avoid revealing the true purpose of the study), they rated their agreement with four items: "Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the modern world"; "It is easy to understand the anger of women's groups in our society"; "It is easy to understand why women's groups are still concerned about societal limitations of women's opportunities"; and "Society has reached the point where women and men have equal opportunities for achievement" ($\alpha = .90$). These items were rated on a scale of 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly agree*).

Finally, participants provided demographic details, including their political affiliation (left, center-left, center, center-right, right, or other).

Results and Discussion

Initial analysis indicated that the mean sexism score in the sample was 2.92 ($SD = 1.33$), reflecting a rather egalitarian sample. While significant differences in sexism levels were found between men ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.48$) and women ($M = 2.49$, $SD = 1.01$), $t(162.57) = 4.83$, $p < .000$, there was no effect for participant's gender on any of the analyses, and thus it was not included in further analyses.

To examine our hypotheses, we ran a three-way ANCOVA on the two outcome variables considering author's gender, domain-specific expertise as independent variables and participant's sexism levels as a moderator (using Hayes' [2013] PROCESS macro; model 3, using 5,000 bootstraps with the sexism variable mean-centered). In all analyses, we controlled for several relevant variables: participant's political orientation, age, religion, religiosity level, education, interest in Brexit negotiation, whether he or she voted in the referendum, their vote (or potential vote), and finally their concern regarding the refugee crisis.

Support for the refugee proposal. A significant main effect was found for participant's level of sexism ($b = -.29$, $SE = .08$, $t = -3.40$, $p < .001$; CI 95% $[-.46, -.12]$), so that participants who were one standard deviation below the mean of sexism (low on sexism) supported the proposal more ($M = 4.72$) than did participants who were one standard deviation above the mean sexism (relatively high on sexism; $M = 3.99$).

The analysis also yielded a significant two-way interaction between author's gender and participant's level of sexism ($b = -.51$, $SE = .15$, $t = -3.36$, $p = .001$; CI 95% $[-.81, -.21]$). Follow-up analysis revealed a significant effect of author's gender for participants high on sexism ($b = -.99$, $SE = .28$, $t = -3.53$, $p < .001$; CI 95% $[-1.55, -.44]$), so that participants high on sexism were more supportive of the proposal when the author was a man ($M = 4.52$) than when she was a woman ($M = 3.50$). Participants low on sexism did not differ in their support of the proposal in the different conditions ($b = .32$, $SE = .28$, $t = 1.15$, *ns*). Examination of the other set of simple effects revealed a significant difference between participants high and low on sexism only when the author was a

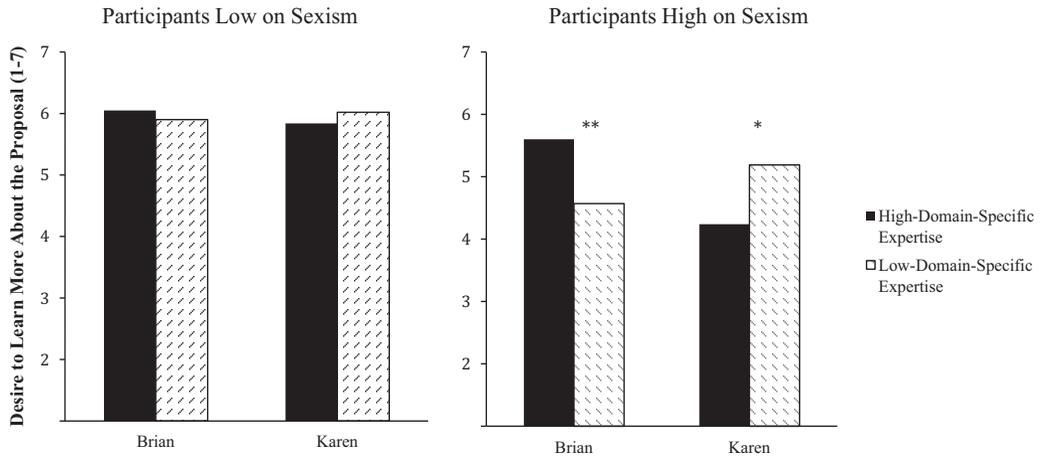


Figure 2. Desire to learn more about the proposal as a function of leader's gender and domain-relevant expertise and in study 3. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

woman ($b = -.52$, $SE = .11$, $t = -4.72$, $p < .001$; CI 95% $[-.74, -.30]$) but not when he was a man ($b = -.03$, $SE = .11$, $t = -.24$, ns). There were no other significant effects. These findings support the findings of Study 2, revealing a general gender bias, leading to greater interest to learn about a male-authored core security proposal, particularly among people high on sexism.

Desire to learn more about the proposal. The analysis yielded a significant main effect for participant's level of sexism ($b = -.38$, $SE = .09$, $t = -4.44$, $p < .001$; CI 95% $[-.55, -.21]$), so that participants low on sexism expressed greater interest to learn more about the proposal ($M = 5.94$) than did participants high on sexism ($M = 4.90$).

The analysis also yielded the expected three-way interaction between author's gender, domain-specific expertise, and participant's level of sexism ($b = .73$, $SE = .31$, $t = 2.36$, $p = .02$; CI 95% $[.12, 1.34]$). To further examine these effects, we tested the interaction between author's gender and domain-specific expertise for participants high and low on sexism separately. The analysis revealed a significant interaction between author's gender and domain-specific expertise for participants high on sexism ($b = 2.06$, $SE = .58$, $t = 3.51$, $p < .001$; CI 95% $[.90, 3.21]$) but not for those low on sexism ($b = .11$, $SE = .58$, $t = .19$, ns). Analysis of the simple effects for participants high on sexism revealed significant effects for both a male ($b = -1.05$, $SE = .41$, $t = -2.58$, $p = .01$; CI 95% $[-1.85, -.25]$) and a female author ($b = 1.01$, $SE = .42$, $t = 2.39$, $p = .02$; CI 95% $[.18, 1.84]$), but in opposite directions. When the head of the team was a man, participants expressed greater interest to learn more about the proposal when he had high domain-specific expertise ($M = 5.60$), compared to when he had low domain-specific expertise ($M = 4.57$). Conversely, when the team leader was a woman, participants showed lower interest to learn more about the proposal when she had high domain-specific expertise ($M = 4.24$), compared to when she had low domain-specific expertise ($M = 5.19$) (see Figure 2). Examination of the other set of simple effects revealed an effect for author's gender only when he or she had high domain-specific expertise ($b = -1.43$, $SE = .39$, $t = -3.66$, $p < .001$; CI 95% $[-2.20, -.66]$), so that when the author was described as having high domain-specific expertise, participants wanted to learn more about the proposal when the author was a man ($M = 5.60$) than when she was a woman ($M = 4.24$). There was no effect for low domain-specific expertise ($b = .63$, $SE = .43$, $t = 1.45$, ns). Thus, the results of Study 3 show that participant's level of sexism is an important determinant of their attitudes toward expert women, and their subsequent attitudes toward negotiation proposals in different contexts.

Discussion

The results of Study 3 supported those of Studies 1 and 2 and further extend our understanding of the effects of leaders' gender and domain-specific expertise on support for negotiation proposals. Going beyond the results of Study 2, the inclusion of a sexism measure in Study 3 provided us with additional information, revealing that the greater support for a male-authored (vs. female-authored) proposal is only relevant for participants relatively high on levels of sexism. Notable is that in this sample the mean level of sexism was rather low (2.92; $SD = 1.33$) which means that those who are one standard deviation above the mean are participants who have average levels of sexism, and those one standard deviation below the mean are those who have very low sexism scores. This suggests that the relatively high sexism group is more typical (in the sense of having average levels of sexism) and might represent the general population better than the low sexism group.

Furthermore, the inclusion of a more indirect measure of openness to information in Study 3 revealed the same pattern we found in Studies 1 and 2 with respect to domain-specific expertise for the water proposal. In Studies 1 and 2, when evaluating a proposal that was less focused on security, women with domain-specific expertise did not benefit from their experience, while men did. Study 3 further revealed that this pattern holds up among people relatively high on sexism but not among those with very low levels of sexism. This suggests that security issues might push people to focus mainly on the gender of the author, but when threat is less salient, they seem to further consider the level of expertise. As revealed in Study 3, such expertise enhances openness to information when the author is a male and decreases it when the author is a female. We address this further in the general discussion.

Together, these findings provide a more detailed picture of the effects of leaders' gender and expertise on public support, suggesting that not only leaders' characteristics, but other factors such as nature of the proposal and attributes of the listener have an important role in shaping reactions toward a negotiation proposal. The more indirect measure of support suggests that although in some context it may be elusive, an expertise bias against women does exist.

General Discussion

In the present research, we examined the effect of gender and domain-specific expertise on individuals' reactions to negotiation proposals. We specifically examined expertise as it entails outstanding performance, one of optimal level demonstrating superior skills (as opposed to the definition of competence as satisfactory rather than outstanding performance; Herling, 2000). We focused on expertise as a potential source of strength that may allow women to overcome bias and enjoy positive outcomes as men do.

The first two studies revealed that the gender of the head of the negotiation team affected participants' support for a proposal they authored, consistent with past research on backlash. Examining the role of domain-specific expertise on support for negotiation proposals revealed that when presented with the core security-related proposal, participants were mainly affected by a leader's gender, regardless of their expertise, and clearly favored proposals authored by men. When a proposal concerned more peripheral aspects of a negotiation (i.e., the water-resource-allocation proposal), results show that expertise was beneficial for a male but not a female leader. This finding was supported by Study 3, which replicated the results of the preconditions proposal from Study 2 among participants high on sexism, but not those low on sexism.

Furthermore, Study 3 revealed that leader's gender and expertise affected participants' interest to learn more about the proposal, thus overcoming the strong effect of general gender bias, potentially stemming from the core security nature of the proposal. This effect, however, was not identical to the one found in Studies 1 and 2, in which higher expertise led to greater support for a proposal authored by a man but had no effect when the author was a woman. In Study 3, we found not only that men

benefited from expertise, women lost from it, such that participants expressed lower desire to learn about the proposal when the female leader had high (vs. low) domain-specific expertise. This suggests that those relatively high on sexism are not indifferent to women high on expertise, but in fact reacted more negatively to a proposal they promoted. It is possible that the misfit between women and leadership/negotiation/security caused people high on sexism to be particularly negative toward the proposal, as they perceived the woman as violating gender stereotypes. This interpretation is in line with the backlash directed toward women in gender-incongruent role that much work had previously shown (e.g., Rudman & Glick, 2001). The indirect measure may allow them a “convenient” outlet to express their bias, expressing clear disinterest to learn more about a proposal authored by a woman who violates the norms. Such effects can be further examined in future research in order to fully comprehend the impact of leader's gender and expertise on perceptions of people high on sexism.

While these results attest to the role of leader's gender and expertise in shaping support for negotiation proposals, our data suggests that this support is also affected by several other factors. First, we found that the effect of leader's gender and expertise was limited by the nature of the proposal presented. Results show that when presented with core security proposals, participants' support was not affected by the leader's expertise, but they showed a general preference for a proposal when it was authored by a man. It is possible that core security proposals highlight the masculine nature of conflict-related negotiations, which may heighten general gender bias, making the person's expertise less salient. This may be particularly pronounced in more direct measures that require individuals to take a clear stand regarding the proposal (the support measure). It is possible that when the measure allowed for more complexity, people were affected by all information they receive (i.e., expertise) and not just gender. This may specifically be the case with a measure that is relevant for the leader's expertise, such as the interest to learn more about the proposal itself.

Second, the inclusion of participants' individual attributes in Study 3, particularly the level of sexism, allowed us to fine-tune our findings from the first two studies. Our results suggest that participants' attitudes in Study 1, and particularly in Study 2, were affected by participants' preexisting attitudes, not only toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but to women and gender equality in general. Our findings suggest that gender and expertise only affect the reactions of individuals high on sexism. Thus, we see the complex interaction between various elements of personality and context that affect attitudes toward negotiation proposal, particularly when led by women. Therefore, our results advance the discussion on gender bias and its implications for different fields, revealing that even when women acquire relevant expertise, they may not be able to overcome existing biases, even when they are described as exceptional in their knowledge and experience.

These findings make several contributions both to the scholarly knowledge as well as to practice. First, our results support the continuous existence of gender bias, pointing to a potential role of biased interpretation of information on women in positions of power (Heilman, 2015), so that knowledge of women's expertise is discounted by those relatively high on sexism. Our results reveal that even when women have domain-specific expertise they may not benefit from it, as men do, and still suffer from bias and backlash in the form of lower support in the policies they promote. This suggests a pattern of double or shifting standards (e.g., Foschi, 2000; Uhlmann & Cohen, 2005) and discounting of women's skills and expertise, so that when a man and a woman possess similar qualifications, they are judged differently, to the disadvantage of women. This finding is of vast importance as many policies and interventions attempting to enhance gender equality are aimed at increasing the number of women in masculine domains, such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics; e.g., the White House's Women in STEM program). While such change is highly necessary and indeed affects gender equality in various ways, it may not be enough, as women's expertise may not always assist them in the same way it assists men, as shown by the findings of the present research.

However, our results show that not all individuals react in the same manner; those who are more prejudiced were the ones who show this expertise bias toward women, even when general bias is

more prevalent (i.e., a core security proposal). While this finding may offer some optimism as women are not harshly judged by everyone, however, it also means that even when a woman is exceptionally accomplished in a certain domain, she may still suffer from bias on part of people high of sexism.

Our results can also contribute to the literature on gender and negotiation in several ways. First, while much work has examined the implications of gender bias on women in general (e.g., Heilman, 2012), and particularly in negotiation (e.g., Bowles, 2013), we know less about how gender affects support for policy or strategy pursued by a woman versus a man, and more importantly, on the effect of domain-specific expertise as shaping such support. While acquiring specific expertise could potentially shape perceptions of women in leadership roles, our results suggest that it is not the case. Thus, it is important to further examine the various factors affecting evaluation and support of women in the political domain. Such findings could be of vast implication for practice, since competent women, and particularly those in leadership roles, may receive lower evaluation as a result of such biases. Also, such devaluation of women's proposals may prevent the public from rallying up in favor of the decisions women make or the plan they promote once they are in leadership positions. Research focusing on ways to overcome such biases would thus be of great importance and have implications for women and society in general.

One potential limitation of the current research is its focus in a relatively masculine domain (i.e., military), particularly in Studies 1 and 2. It is possible that having a masculine expertise affected the evaluation of proposals authored by women in a unique way (as this characteristic violate gender stereotype), which may limit these effects to such contexts. In Study 3, we attempted to overcome this limitation by using a different context. Although the refugee crisis concerns a core security issue, it does not directly concern military matters, and the context is less masculine, as there is a woman heading the Home Ministry in the United Kingdom. Nonetheless, it is possible that in a more neutral domain (such as journalism) or a female-dominated domain (e.g., nursing), having high domain-specific expertise may actually benefit women, resulting in different outcomes. Thus, future research should examine whether these effects are similar in neutral and female-dominated domains.

Relatedly, future research can also examine whether in certain situations, lacking domain-specific expertise, can be detrimental for men. For example, lacking combatant military background (vs. having more administrative background; a condition we did not include in this research) might hurt men more than women, due to the violation of masculine gender expectations (e.g., Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Rudman, 2010). Also, given the high applicability of these findings, more ecologically valid methods can prove highly important for understanding these effects; for example, directly examining real-life situations, such as comparing responses to candidates for different public offices, who vary in their gender and expertise.

Finally, while our results paint a rather depressing picture, more research is necessary to examine potential paths of changing existing gender bias and particularly expertise bias. Recently it was demonstrated that evidence-based intervention programs were useful in decreasing gender bias among life scientists (Moss-Racusin et al., 2016). Such programs present participants with existing theoretical knowledge regarding subtle bias and present diversity as a mutual goal. Moreover, they engage participants in activities aimed at encouraging them to draw their own conclusions, critically evaluate the evidence presented, and practice techniques used to decrease bias (Moss-Racusin et al., 2014). Our results are relevant for such programs, as they point to an unrecognized expertise bias, which can have vast implications for women and may apply for various fields beyond negotiations. This type of bias, which prevents women from benefiting from their domain-specific expertise, should therefore be taken into consideration when planning intervention programs and targeting different types of gender biases.

To conclude, as the opening example, as well as other cases, suggest, gender bias is still affecting reactions to women in the public sphere, particularly in masculine domains, such as politics, security, and negotiation. While in many countries there are various attempts to enhance women's presence in

leadership positions, and in more masculine fields in general, it is not clear that these efforts suffice. To achieve genuine equality, when a man and a woman would be judged based on merit alone, there is still more to do in terms of understanding, unpacking, and changing existing gender bias.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information may be found in the online version of this article at the publisher's website:

Proposal Descriptions as Provided to Participants

Water Resources Allocation Proposals (Studies 1 and 2)

Preconditions to the Negotiation (Study 2)

Refugee Proposal (Study 3)

Importance of Team Members' Characteristics

Results