The “Change” Generation:

How College-Aged Voters Perceive Gender in Political Leadership
Current Trends of women in politics

- **Women in U.S. Congress***:
  - 1991: Made up 6%
  - 2001: Made up 13.6%
  - 2010: Make up 16.8%

- **Women in Statewide Elective***:
  - 1991: 18%
  - 2001: 27.6%
  - 2010: 23%

- Increase since the early 90s in women running, and winning, but steady since the new millennium

Sources:*according to data from the Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University
Existing Research

- 20% of Americans think that most men are better suited emotionally for politics than most women*
- Women perceive themselves as being less qualified to enter politics* and are less likely to consider running for political office
- There is more and more support for female candidates but gender stereotypes still influence voters

Sources: Fox and Lawless
105 Georgetown University undergraduate students, between the ages of 18-24

13 question survey

Respondents split into two groups
- Group A: perceptions of male leadership
- Group B: perceptions of female leadership

Looked also at gender of respondents
What Qualities Are Needed For Leadership?

- Intellect
- Charisma/Approachability
- Honesty
- Leadership Experience
- Military Experience
- Confidence
- Ambition

Importance
How often are they seen in female and male leaders?
Honesty, Ambition, Intellect

Ambition

- Male leadership: 49% see ambition *often*
- Female leadership: 49% see ambition *always*

Honesty

- Male leadership: 12.2% see honesty *often*
- Female leadership: 49.2% see honesty, 18% see it *always*

Intellect

- Male leadership: 51% see intellect *often or always*
- Female leadership: 78.7% see intellect *often or always*
Are these traits gendered?

- **Masculine?**
  - Ambition
  - Aggression
  - Being number one
  - Short-term thinking
  - Individualism
  - Practicality
  - Objectivity

- **Feminine?**
  - Compassion
  - Sensitivity
  - Emotional expressiveness
  - Passivity
  - Capacity for nurturing
  - Subjectivity
The results

- **Most Masculine:**
  - Aggression
  - Being Number One

- **Least Masculine**
  - Individualism

- **Most Feminine:**
  - Emotional expressiveness
  - Capacity for Nurturing

- **Least Feminine:**
  - Passivity
Gendered Traits and Leadership

- Masculine: Stronger
  - Female leadership:
    - 42.7%: stronger or much stronger
  - Male leadership:
    - 53.2%: stronger or much stronger

- Feminine: No Change or Stronger
  - Female leadership:
    - 52.5%: no change
  - Male leadership:
    - 38.3%: stronger*
    - 38.3%: no change

*more men than women thought having feminine characteristics made male leaders stronger
Male leaders

- Overall:
  - 54.3% saw no change

Female leaders

- Overall:
  - 52.5% saw no change
Holding Leaders Accountable for Spousal Behavior

Male Leaders

Female Leaders

Gender of the respondents
Conclusion

- College-aged voters still stereotype female candidates and leaders by associating traits perceived as masculine with stronger leadership.
- Though the “Change Generation” holds more progressive views on female leadership than previous generations, there remains a gender gap (men are more critical of female leaders than women).