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,

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
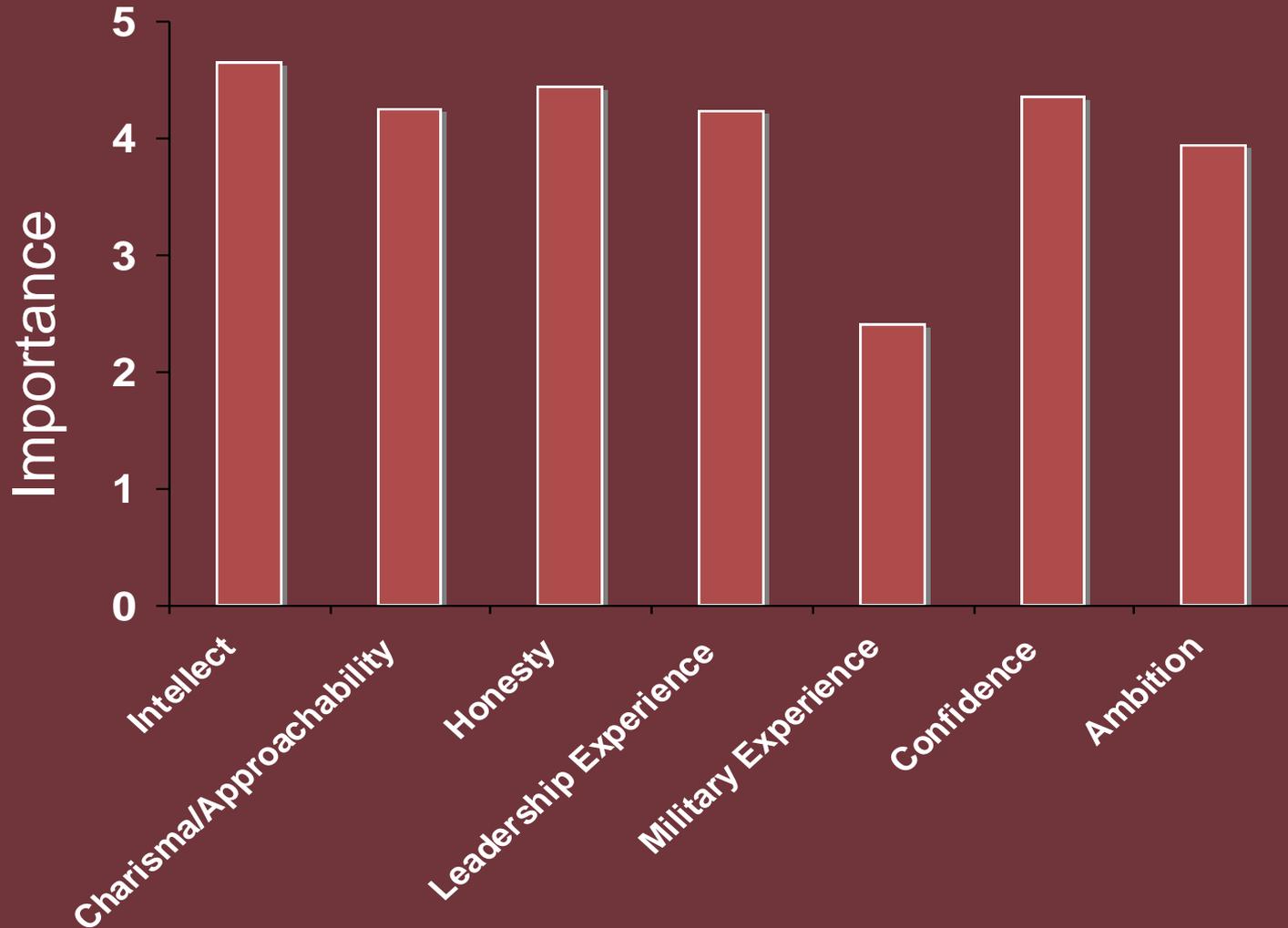
Sources: Fox and Lawless

Methods

- 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?

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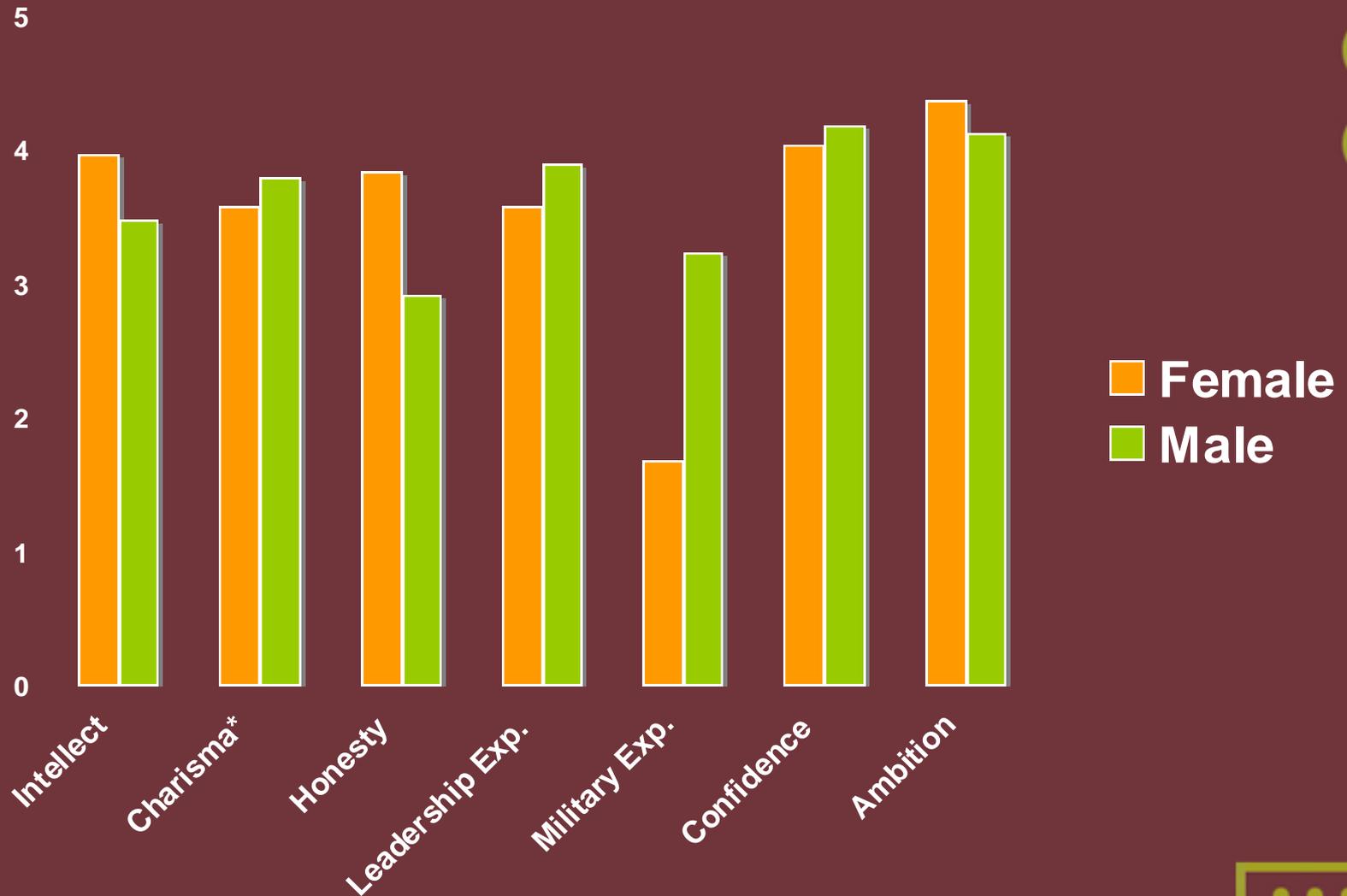
Honesty, Ambition, Intellect

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

- Most Feminine:
  - Emotional expressiveness
  - Capacity for Nurturing

- Least Masculine
  - Individualism

- 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
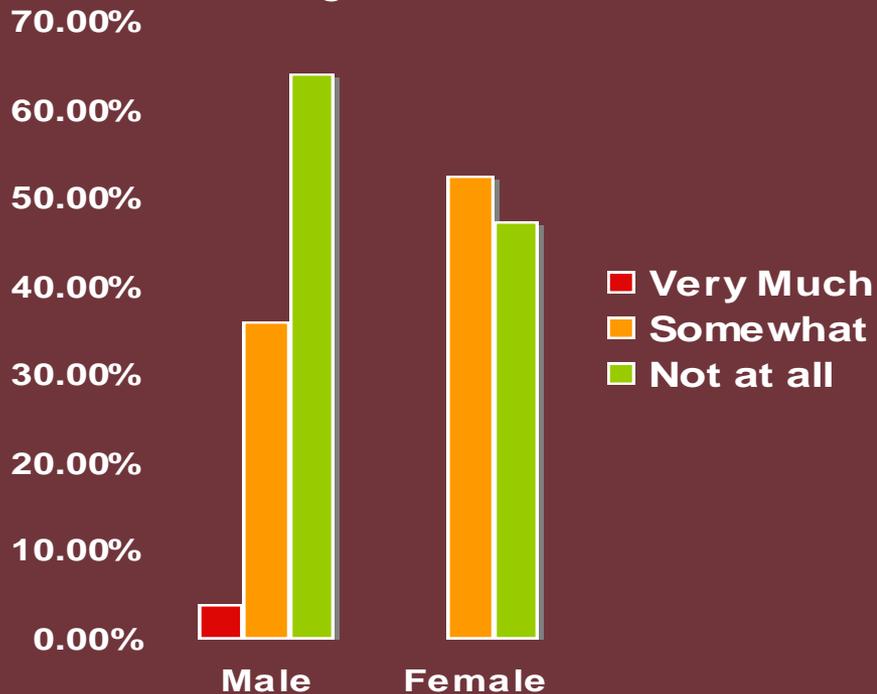
Family Life and Leadership

Male leaders

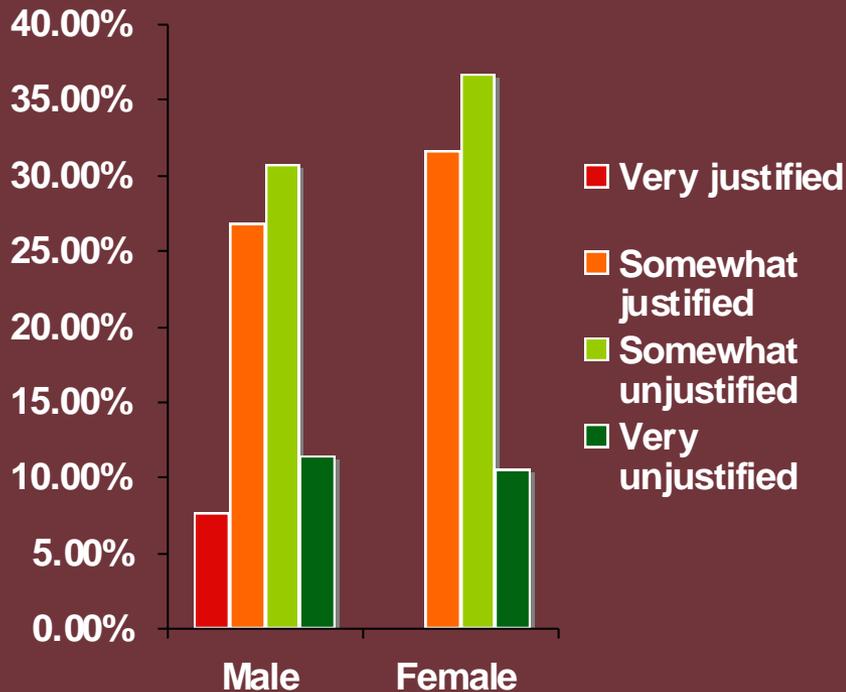- Overall:
  - 54.3% saw *no change*
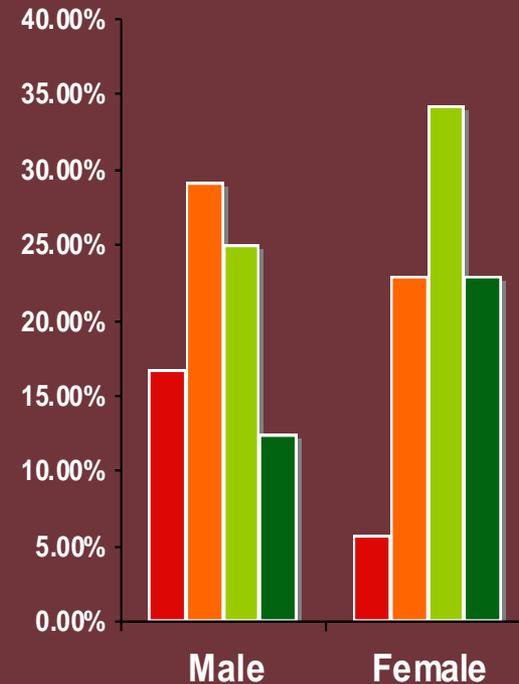
Female leaders

- Overall:
  - 52.5% saw *no change*

Legend:
- Very Much (red)
- Somewhat (orange)
- Not at all (green)

Holding Leaders Accountable for Spousal Behavior

Male Leaders

Female Leaders

Legend:
- **Very justified**
- **Somewhat justified**
- **Somewhat unjustified**
- **Very unjustified**

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)