

Women's Leadership and the Expansion of Populist Radical Right Party Agendas

Rossella Merullo ¹  and Ana Catalano Weeks ² 

¹ Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Sciences, University of Hamburg, Germany

² Department of Politics, Languages & International Studies, University of Bath, UK

Correspondence: Ana Catalano Weeks (a.c.weeks@bath.co.uk)

Submitted: 3 April 2026 **Accepted:** 22 July 2026 **Published:** 3 September 2026

Issue: This article is part of the issue “From the Far-Right to the Far-Left: Women Populist Leaders in Comparative Perspective” edited by Henriette Müller (New York University Abu Dhabi) and Pamela Pansardi (University of Pavia), fully open access at <https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.i515>

Abstract

How do women leaders shape the agendas of populist radical right (PRR) parties, and how does this in turn impact nativist parties' electoral appeal? Historically male-dominated PRR parties are now increasingly led by women. Yet, research has not systematically examined how women-led PRR parties recalibrate priorities, or what influence this has on perceptions of the party. To shed light on these questions, we combine observational and experimental evidence. In the first stage, we describe key differences between men- and women-led PRR parties using manifesto data from 15 Western European countries (1988 to 2025). We find that women-led PRR parties broaden issue agendas, increasing attention to areas such as environmental protection, labour policy, and cultural policy. In the second stage, we test the effects of these appeals through a survey experiment manipulating leader gender, agenda breadth, and rhetorical framing. We draw on role congruity theory, which distinguishes between (masculine) agentic political communication, emphasising strength and authority, and (feminine) communal communication, emphasising care and collective wellbeing. Our results show that simply broadening the issue agenda does not consistently reduce perceived extremism or increase support. Instead, responses depend on how the expanded platform is communicated. Agentic framing increases perceptions of ideological radicalism, whereas communal framing improves leader favourability and increases vote likelihood. These effects do not vary systematically by leader gender or respondent gender. The findings offer new insights into how women leaders reshape party agendas, and the conditions under which such issue expansion influences perceptions of nativist parties.

Keywords

gender and politics; party agendas; populist radical right; women's political leadership

1. Introduction

Across Europe, populist radical right (PRR) parties have moved from the margins of party systems into positions of substantial electoral strength and, in some cases, government office. At the same time, a notable demographic shift has taken place within these historically male-dominated parties: An increasing number are now led by women. Prominent examples include Giorgia Meloni of Brothers of Italy, Marine Le Pen of the French National Rally, and Alice Weidel of Alternative for Germany. These leadership changes have often been accompanied by claims that PRR parties are broadening their appeal and moderating their image. For instance, under Marine Le Pen's leadership, the French National Rally pursued a strategy of *dédiabolisation*, seeking to normalise the party by softening its image and expanding its policy agenda beyond its traditional focus on immigration (Mayer, 2013, 2015). Similarly, observers have noted that Giorgia Meloni's leadership places greater emphasis on competence, economic governance, and other valence issues alongside its nativist core (Pedrazzani & De Giorgi, 2025).

Despite these developments, we know surprisingly little about whether and how women leaders shape the agendas of PRR parties, or what consequences such changes have for voters' perceptions of these parties. Existing research offers two important insights while leaving this question unresolved. First, scholarship on party competition shows that PRR parties—historically narrowly focused on immigration and national identity—have increasingly diversified their agendas as they seek to expand their electorate (Akkerman, 2015; Bergman & Flatt, 2020; Meguid et al., 2025). Second, literature on gender and political leadership suggests that women leaders can influence party agendas, though the evidence is mixed and focuses primarily on mainstream rather than niche parties (Greene & O'Brien, 2016; Kroeber, 2022). It remains unclear whether the agenda-setting dynamics associated with women's leadership extend to parties whose identities are strongly anchored in a small set of core issues.

In this article, we bring these strands of research together to examine how women leaders shape the policy agendas of PRR parties and how voters respond to changes. Building on research showing that diversity within party elites tends to broaden party platforms (Greene & O'Brien, 2016), we consider whether women leaders expand the range of issues PRR parties emphasise, rather than fundamentally alter their ideological positions. For PRR parties, which face a strongly gendered support base and reputational constraints linked to extremism, expanding the agenda may represent a strategic way to attract new voters without alienating existing supporters. We further argue that this strategy has electoral consequences: Broader issue agendas can reduce perceptions of extremity and improve evaluations of nativist parties, particularly when communicated by women leaders.

To investigate these dynamics, we adopt a two-stage research design that combines observational and experimental evidence. In the first stage, we conduct an analysis of party manifestos from PRR parties in 15 Western European countries between 1988 and 2025. This analysis allows us to assess whether women-led PRR parties differ from men-led parties in the breadth of their issue agendas and to identify the types of issue expansions that occur. The results reveal a consistent pattern: Women-led PRR parties address a wider range of issues in their manifestos. Women give greater attention to environment, labour policy, and cultural policy. These findings suggest women PRR leaders bring a particular focus on protection, without fundamentally shifting the party's core ideology.

In the second stage, we test how voters respond to such agenda expansion using a survey experiment that manipulates leader gender and issue emphasis. The experimental design is directly informed by the manifesto analysis. We test whether broader messages, compared to messages focused narrowly on immigration, shape perceptions of extremity, favourability, and electoral support. The results show that expanding the issue agenda does not, in itself, change voters' perceptions of nativist parties or increase support. Instead, responses depend on how broader agendas are communicated. Messages that frame expanded policy agendas using communal language, emphasising collective wellbeing and social responsibility, attract more favourable evaluations (especially among the centre-right) than those framed using agentic rhetoric, emphasising strength and authority. Contrary to our expectations, these responses do not vary systematically by leader gender.

Our study makes three contributions to the literature. First, it advances research on gender and political leadership and on PRR parties by showing that women PRR leaders shape the breadth of party agendas, even in this context of highly constrained ideological profiles. Second, it demonstrates that the electoral consequences of agenda expansion in nativist parties depend less on the presence of new issues than on how those issues are communicated. Third, bringing these insights together, the study suggests that communal framing—more commonly but not uniquely used by women—rather than gender per se could motivate “softened” perceptions of nativist parties.

The rest of the article proceeds as follows. We first review research on issue ownership and agenda expansion among PRR parties, and the role of women leaders. We then develop theoretical expectations about how women's leadership shapes PRR parties' issue agendas and how gender, agenda expansion, and gendered styles of political communication may, in turn, affect electoral support. We examine how women's leadership influences agenda-setting through an observational analysis of PRR manifestos across Western Europe. Next, we present results from a survey experiment on voter responses to different agenda strategies. The final section discusses implications for party competition, gender and leadership, and nativist party strategy.

2. PRR Issue Expansion and Women Leaders

PRR parties are widely understood as niche parties with strong ownership of immigration, combined with an authoritarian and populist worldview (Kriesi et al., 2008; Mudde, 2007; Rydgren, 2005). These parties emerged and gained support by emphasising cultural conflict, anti-immigration, and opposition to political elites, organised around what Rydgren (2005) describes as a successful ideological “master frame.” Thus, PRR parties have historically concentrated on a relatively narrow set of issues compared to mainstream parties. This strategy creates challenges: Reliance on a limited issue agenda may restrict parties' ability to broaden their electoral base or adapt to changing political competition.

A long tradition in the party competition literature suggests that parties respond to electoral incentives by expanding their issue offerings or emphasising additional topics that can attract new voters (De Sio & Weber, 2014; Downs, 1957). Although this argument was originally developed with mainstream parties in mind, a growing body of research shows that niche parties can also diversify their agendas. Recent studies document that PRR parties increasingly address issues beyond immigration, including welfare, economic protection, the environment, and gender-related topics (Abou-Chadi et al., 2021; Akkerman, 2015; Bergman & Flatt, 2020; Meguid et al., 2025; Spoon & Williams, 2023; Weeks et al., 2025). Through multidimensional competition,

parties can strategically broaden their appeal or blur their positions on secondary issues to reach a wider electorate (Rovny, 2012, 2013). Such strategies may become especially attractive when parties approach an electoral ceiling on their core issue (e.g., their core goal is met; Meguid, 2023), especially when it is salient among the public (Spoon & Williams, 2023), or when other parties adopt similar positions on their core issue (Fernandes et al., 2026).

While we know that PRR parties are expanding their agendas, thus far studies do not investigate how leader gender matters for PRR issue diversification. There is good reason to believe that it does. The literature on women's party leadership reports mixed findings on the question of whether women shift party positions: Some studies find agenda effects, such as greater emphasis on sociocultural and social justice issues (Kittilson, 2011; Kroeber, 2022), while others offer little evidence that women-led parties are systematically more left-leaning or programmatically distinct from men-led parties (Greene & O'Brien, 2016; O'Brien, 2019). Instead, research finds that women's leadership is associated with more diverse, broader party agendas across party families, even as the underlying ideological positions remain unchanged (Greene & O'Brien, 2016).

This finding is particularly relevant for PRR parties, because they face distinctive constraints as niche parties focused on a narrow set of issues (Mudde, 2007). Rather than expecting women leaders to alter the ideological foundations of these parties, we argue that their influence is more likely to be expressed through broader agenda-setting. Consistent with Greene and O'Brien (2016), women leaders may increase the range of issues that PRR parties emphasise while leaving core nativist commitments intact.

There are two reasons that women PRR leaders are more likely to be associated with issue expansion than men PRR leaders. First, the selection of a woman party leader can itself be a visible sign of party renewal, as a change from the historically male ("*Männerpartei*") status quo. In that sense, the gender of the leader could be endogenous to the broader changes party elites aim to produce in both the leadership and (more mainstream) direction of the party—leader gender could be part of a broader strategy of de-demonisation (Mayer, 2013). Second, as in other party families, women leaders of PRR parties have different life experiences than men, and they bring these perspectives into internal deliberations, reducing information barriers and helping parties identify latent issues in the electorate (not least, women; Mansbridge, 1999; Phillips, 1995). For example, Meret (2015) discusses how Pia Kjaersgaard intentionally cultivated a reputation as the mother of the Danish People's Party and emphasised certain gendered issues while maintaining the party's core ideology. This leads us to our first hypothesis:

H1: Women leaders of PRR parties are associated with issue expansion.

3. Electoral Consequences of Agenda Expansion

While existing research shows that PRR parties diversify their agendas, we know less about the electoral consequences of these strategies. In particular, it remains unclear whether broader issue agendas causally affect how voters perceive nativist PRR parties. Observational studies are indicative; Mayer (2013) reports that after Marine Le Pen's normalisation tactics ahead of the 2012 election, through which she "gave her platform a very social tone, asking for a more protective state, more public services, and with a deep anti-EU and protectionist tone, arguments to which women are more receptive than men," vote share increased and

the gender gap closed. And drawing on manifesto data from 23 countries, Bergman and Flatt (2020) find that nationalist parties broadened their agendas over time and that those that increased issue diversity gained votes.

We propose that issue emphasis serves as a cue for party identity. Voters commonly associate PRR parties with a narrow (“niche”) issue focus (Meguid, 2005). Appealing more broadly, conversely, leads voters to perceive that parties are closer to their own ideological position (Somer-Topcu, 2015). A broader policy agenda may therefore signal a more mainstream, governing-oriented party profile and reduce perceptions of ideological extremism. This is especially likely among voters on the right who are open to nativist positions but hesitant about extremist reputations. Building on this research, we expect that presenting a broader agenda will improve evaluations of nativist party leaders in the following ways:

H2a: Party leaders who present a broader policy agenda are perceived as less extreme than leaders who focus narrowly on immigration.

H2b: Party leaders who present a broader policy agenda receive higher favourability evaluations than leaders who focus narrowly on immigration, especially from right-wing voters.

H2c: Party leaders who present a broader policy agenda achieve higher levels of electoral support than those who focus narrowly on immigration, especially among right-wing voters.

We expect these effects to be moderated by leader gender. Women politicians are seen as less extreme than their male counterparts (Adams et al., 2026; O’Brien, 2019) and perceived more warmly in general (Adams et al., 2023). Therefore, agenda expansion may be interpreted as a more credible signal of moderation when communicated by women leaders. Research from political communication highlights the importance of source credibility in voters’ evaluations (Druckman, 2001); here, our argument is that women could be perceived as the more credible source. In contrast, similar expansion efforts by male leaders may be more readily dismissed as strategic. Consequently, voters may react more positively to agenda broadening when it is associated with women leaders. This leads us to expect:

H3: Broadening the policy agenda increases favourability evaluations for women leaders more than for men leaders.

4. Gendered Issue Expansion: Communal vs. Agentic Styles

Beyond differences in issue agendas, research on gender and political communication suggests that women and men often differ in *how* they communicate politically. Studies of parliamentary speech show that women legislators are less adversarial and more likely to draw on personal experience and use inclusive or collective frames (Hargrave & Langengen, 2021; Müller & Pansardi, 2023; van Dijk & Poljak, 2025). Such findings align with social role theory, which argues that women are associated with communal traits such as warmth, empathy, and cooperation, whereas men are associated with agentic traits such as assertiveness and dominance (Eagly, 1987).

Applied to political communication, these expectations can shape both leaders' communication style and voters' evaluations: Women politicians are often expected to display more communal and less confrontational modes of speech, and deviations from these expectations can be penalised (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Women leaders can face bias both because they are viewed as inherently less suitable for leadership (as a masculine role) and because such penalties might be heightened if women display traits perceived as masculine in that role, such as assertiveness, power-seeking, or ambition. For instance, using a series of experiments, Schneider et al. (2022) report that agentic traits are seen as desirable qualities for politicians, that women are seen to lack such traits, and that this incongruence causes depressed preference for female leaders over male leaders.

Role congruity theory is especially relevant to consider in the context of PRR parties, which are known for highly authoritarian, confrontational styles of politics (Sauer, 2020). In these masculine parties, women face a challenge of combining leadership with socially acceptable communication styles. Research from psychology finds that one way to mitigate such negative responses is for women to incorporate more communal speech, including, for example, signs of caring, collective wellbeing, and social cohesion (Bowles & Babcock, 2013; Heilman & Okimoto, 2007). Communal styles might also soften PRR rhetoric: Messages framed in terms of protection, care, and social cohesion appear less aggressive and therefore less ideologically extreme than rhetoric emphasising dominance or conflict. In this way, communal framing may help repackage controversial or exclusionary policies in language that feels more socially acceptable or moderate.

Therefore, beyond adding attention to other issues, women leaders might also moderate the tone of their speech to emphasise more communal language, without abandoning the party's core messages. Such a strategy offers women leaders one way to align with gendered social roles (and thus, increase their support) even in the context of leadership of a male-dominated, authoritarian party. This leads us to the following expectations:

H4: Among leaders addressing additional political issues, those adopting communal framing on the additional issues are perceived as more moderate and favourable than those adopting agentic framing.

H5: Adopting communal rather than agentic framing will increase favourability evaluations for women leaders more than for men leaders.

5. Study 1: Women PRR Leaders and Issue Expansion—Evidence from 15 European Democracies

Having set out our theoretical expectations regarding PRR leader gender and issue expansion, we next turn to the empirical evidence. To investigate leader gender and PRR party issue diversification (H1), Study 1 examines party manifestos as systematic indicators of issue emphasis over time.

5.1. Data and Methods

We construct a longitudinal dataset combining information on party leadership, gender composition, electoral performance, and manifesto content for 34 PRR parties in 15 Western European countries between 1988 and 2025 (countries, parties, and manifestos are listed in Table A1 in the Supplementary File). We focus on Western

Europe, where the PRR party family emerged within postwar democratic systems and immigration-based cleavages (Kitschelt, 1994; Mudde, 2007), where the gender gap in PRR support is particularly pronounced (Harteveld et al., 2015), and where prominent cases of female leadership provide leverage to examine gender.

The dataset includes 141 manifestos, including 25 observations of parties with a woman leader, across 10 parties—Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ), Danish People’s Party (DF), Progress Party (FP), The New Right, National Rally (FN;RN), Alternative for Germany (AfD); Brothers of Italy (Fdi), Right Answer 21 (JA21), Progress Party (FrP), Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)—in eight countries—Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, UK (for further details, see Table A1 in the Supplementary File). Because women’s leadership remains relatively rare among PRR parties, we treat the analysis as primarily descriptive. Accordingly, our objective is not to determine whether these patterns are unique to PRR parties, but to document how women’s leadership is associated with agenda breadth and issue emphasis within this party family. These patterns also inform the experimental design presented in Study 2.

We examine two outcomes. First, we test whether women leaders are associated with broader policy agendas in party manifestos. Second, we assess whether leadership gender corresponds to shifts in the relative salience of specific issues.

We measure issue attention using the Manifesto Project Dataset (MPD), which provides the most comprehensive cross-national data on party programs. The MPD (Lehmann et al., 2025) coding scheme has known limitations, including broad and sometimes heterogeneous issue categories (Gemenis, 2013). These concerns are particularly relevant to cross-cutting issues such as gender, which may span several policy domains (Meguid et al., 2025). Because our analysis focuses on agenda breadth and the distribution of issue attention rather than precise ideological positions, the MPD remains an appropriate source for examining cross-national patterns over time.

To operationalise agenda breadth, we use the effective number of manifesto issues (ENMI), a Shannon entropy-based measure developed by Greene (2015) that captures how evenly manifesto attention is distributed across policy categories. Higher values indicate more diverse platforms. ENMI is calculated across 34 policy dimensions derived from the 56 main MPD categories (Table A2 in the Supplementary File). Following Lowe et al. (2011), we collapse confrontational pairs and related categories into composite indices to avoid inflating entropy by counting multiple expressions of the same issue as distinct. To examine shifts in emphasis, we also estimate issue-level salience across the 34 policy dimensions using their log-transformed importance scale (Appendix A in the Supplementary File).

The key independent variable is a binary indicator of whether the party was led by a woman at the time of the election. We control for the lagged share of women in the parliamentary delegation (Greene & O’Brien, 2016), incumbency status (Greene, 2015; Greene & O’Brien, 2016; Wagner & Meyer, 2014), and lagged vote share to account for the possibility that parties expand their agendas following weak performance (Somer-Topcu, 2015). We also include a lagged dependent variable to capture the persistence of manifesto agendas across electoral cycles. We include time period fixed effects to account for time trends; we use a five-year time period, since election timing is irregular across our countries. All models are estimated with party fixed effects and standard errors clustered at the party level.

5.2. Results

5.2.1. Issue Breadth

We first examine whether women leaders are associated with broader policy agendas in PRR party manifestos. Consistent with our expectations (H1), Table 1 indicates a positive association between female leadership and issue breadth. In the baseline specification (Model 1), the coefficient on women leaders is positive and statistically significant (1.797, $p < 0.05$), indicating that, within parties, manifestos issued under female leadership tend to feature broader agendas. The association remains substantively unchanged in the full specification (Model 2; 2.422, $p < 0.01$). In substantive terms, the estimated effect corresponds to approximately a 0.6 standard deviation increase in ENMI, equivalent to a party expanding its manifesto from roughly 16 to 18 distinct issues.

As identification relies on a limited number of leadership transitions (DF, Denmark; FN, France; AfD, Germany; FrP, Norway; DUP, UK; FPÖ, Austria), Figure B3 in the Supplementary File shows that the results are not driven by any single country. Descriptive and robustness checks support the main findings (Appendix B in the Supplementary File).

None of the additional covariates reaches conventional significance. Contrary to Greene and O'Brien (2016), we find no significant association between women's parliamentary representation and agenda breadth in PRR parties, possibly because the low levels of women's representation in PRR parties constrain the

Table 1. Female leadership and manifesto issue breadth in PRR parties.

	Baseline model (1)	Full model (2)
Woman leader	1.797* (0.779)	2.422** (0.697)
% Female MPs ($t - 1$)		0.022 (0.034)
Incumbency		0.432 (2.423)
Vote share ($t - 1$)		-0.061 (0.067)
Lagged ENMI		-0.184 (0.134)
Observations	133	94
R^2	0.343	0.323
R^2 (within)	0.024	0.085
Party fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Time period fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Clustered standard errors	Party	Party
Parties	29	20

Notes: + $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; period fixed effects are measured in five-year bins (1988–2025); the reduction in observations and parties across models is due to missing values in the lagged variables and the automatic removal of singleton fixed effects; models 1 and 2 are OLS models with party fixed effects and party-clustered standard errors, estimated using the function *feols* from the *fixest* package in R (4.4.1).

mechanisms identified in prior research, leaving leadership as the more consequential channel through which gender shapes party agendas.

5.2.2. Issue Saliency

Having confirmed that women leaders are linked to broader agendas, we next explore how exactly agendas shift by examining individual issues. Figure 1 presents the estimated “effects” of female leadership across individual policy dimensions. Each estimate is derived from a separate regression. Because the analysis involves multiple issue-specific models, individual coefficients should be interpreted cautiously; we therefore focus on patterns among issues exhibiting meaningful within-party temporal volatility rather than isolated coefficients. These estimates are descriptive in nature and serve primarily to inform the design of the survey experiment presented in the next section.

The results reveal a coherent pattern of issue reorientation under female leadership. Significant effects are concentrated on issues with moderate-to-low levels of within-party temporal volatility; that is, policy domains in which parties adjust emphasis across elections but are not among the most volatile or episodic elements of PRR agendas. Diagnostics on baseline saliency and volatility are reported in Table C1 in the Supplementary File.

The estimated effects are distributed across several types of policy areas. Female leadership is associated with increased saliency of environmental protection, worker protection (labour policy), multiculturalism, and cultural policy, alongside reduced attention to law and order and traditional morality. Notably, environmental protection also shows a positive and significant effect—a noteworthy result given the relatively low volatility of this issue across PRR manifestos. Together with the positive shifts in labour and cultural policy, this pattern is consistent with findings that female party leaders in Western Europe tend to pay greater attention to Green, Alternative, and Libertarian (GAL)-related issues (Kroeber, 2022).

At the same time, increases in multiculturalism-related discourse, capturing attention to issues of cultural identity, integration, and relations between cultural groups, and political authority suggest that female leaders do not distance themselves from the PRR’s core agenda. Instead, they appear to foreground key elements of the party’s identity politics while reinforcing narratives of leadership strength and governing competence. This pattern is consistent with Spierings and Zaslove (2015), who argue that PRR party leadership remains strongly masculinised even under female leaders, and with Meguid et al. (2025), who show that women in PRR parties tend to engage strategically with the party’s ideological core.

The simultaneous decline in law and order and traditional morality saliency suggests a complementary dynamic. These issues are among the most strongly associated with authoritarian masculinity in the radical right agenda and may generate role incongruity costs for female leaders (Eagly & Karau, 2002)—consistent with Meret (2015), who finds that female PRR leaders often soften the party’s authoritarian tone without abandoning core positions.

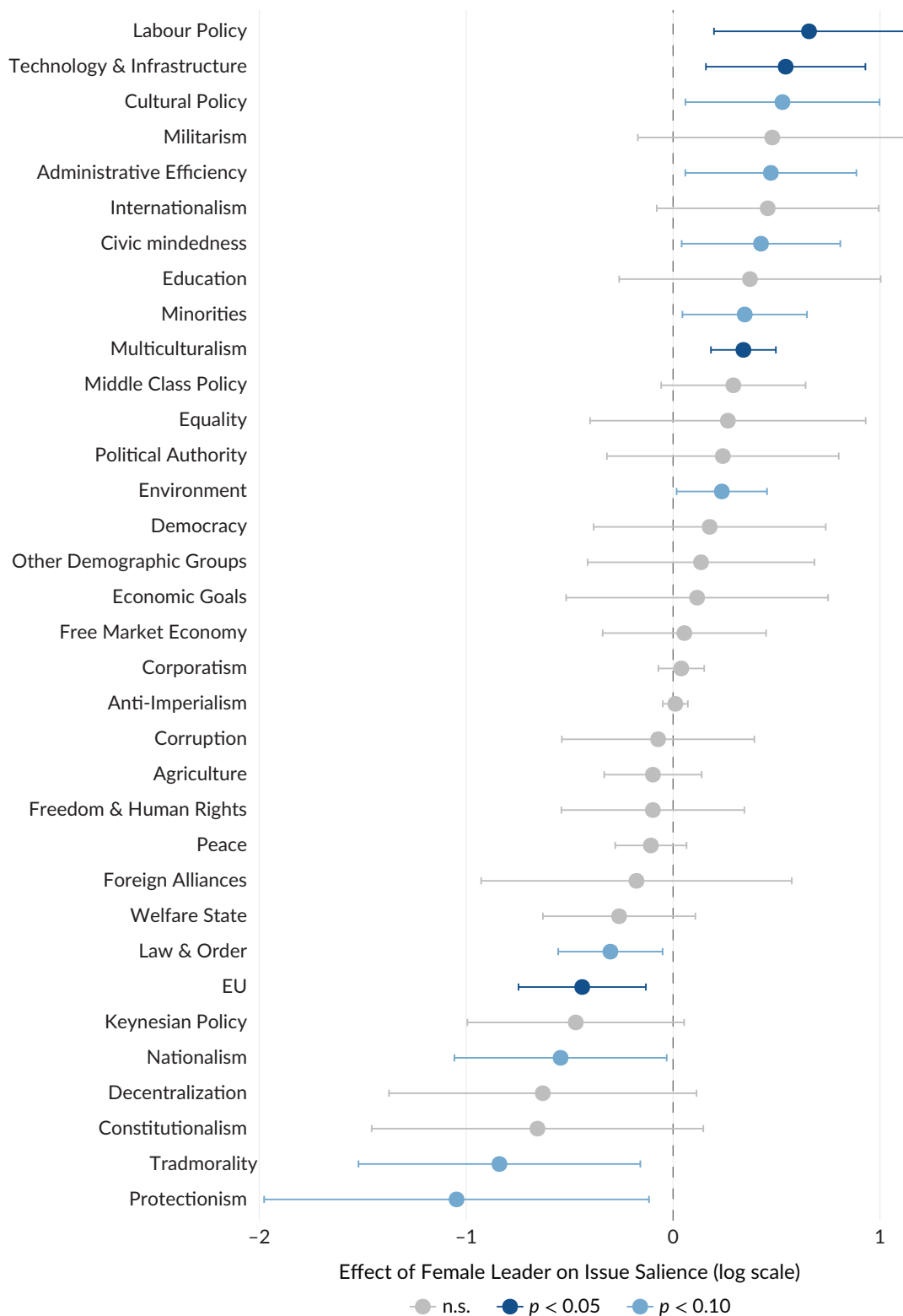


Figure 1. Issue-specific effects of female leadership on manifesto salience. Notes: Points represent within-party coefficient estimates from fixed-effects models with party and five-year period fixed effects, and 90% confidence intervals; positive values indicate issue salience increase under female leadership; models include the same controls used in the previous analysis (Model 2); all models are estimated in R 4.4.1 using the function *feols* from the *fixest* package.

Taken together, these results indicate that PRR women leaders maintain ownership of core issues while expanding attention to additional policy domains such as the environment and labour policy. These patterns establish the empirical foundation for the second part of our analysis. If women leaders broaden the policy repertoire of PRR parties, an important question is how voters respond when these issues are presented as part of the party platform. We address this question in the next section through a survey experiment.

6. Study 2: Evidence From a UK Survey Experiment

The observational analysis shows that women-led PRR parties tend to broaden their policy agendas and increase emphasis on socially protective policy domains. These patterns inform the design of our survey experiment. Rather than testing abstract forms of ideological moderation, the experiment evaluates how voters respond when nativist parties incorporate additional policy domains into their platforms. We focus the experimental stimuli on environmental and labour policy.

6.1. Data and Methods

To test our hypotheses, we conducted an original survey experiment in the UK in February and March of 2026. The UK offers a useful setting for testing our argument. Although PRR parties have historically been less successful in the UK than in continental Europe, our study was fielded during a period of strong support for Reform UK. This allows us to examine voter responses to PRR agenda expansion in a context where the PRR is politically salient, and also offers a useful point of comparison with more established European cases. Importantly, Reform UK has never had a woman leader, meaning respondents are unlikely to have prior associations between the party and female leadership, reducing the risk that pre-existing attitudes toward a specific leader confound our experimental estimates. The survey was administered online through survey provider Prolific to $N = 3,983$ UK voters. A detailed description of the sample is reported in Table D3 in the Supplementary File.

Recruitment quotas were applied based on party affiliation using the most recent YouGov voting intention poll available prior to fieldwork (details in Table D4 in the Supplementary File). The study was pre-registered; the pre-registration is available at <https://aspredicted.org/bi2bj8.pdf>. Appendix D in the Supplementary File details how this study relates to the pre-analysis plan.

In the experiment, respondents read a short vignette describing a hypothetical political leader presenting their electoral agenda. We randomly manipulate both the scope of the policy agenda and the rhetorical framing used by the leader. The experiment includes three agenda conditions: (a) a narrow agenda focused exclusively on anti-immigration policy (control), (b) a broader agenda combining immigration, environmental, and labour policy framed using agentic language (treatment 1), and (c) the same broader agenda framed using communal language (treatment 2). For the environmental component, we specifically refer in the vignette to climate policy, coded in the MPD under the category of environmental protection (Lehmann et al., 2025) and typically articulated through climate and energy policy in PRR parties (Lockwood, 2018). More details in Table D1 in the Supplementary File.

We operationalised the agentic/communal distinction by varying the framing of each additional policy statement. The agentic framing employed language emphasising strength, authority, and decisiveness

(e.g., “decisive,” “scrap,” “break,” “slash”), while the communal framing employed language emphasising care, cooperation, and social responsibility (e.g., “family,” “community,” “support,” “protect”). Beyond word choice, the two framings also differed in how they identified the beneficiary of the policy: Agentic statements were phrased in individualistic, first-person terms centred on the leader’s own resolve, whereas communal statements explicitly named the family and the community as the beneficiaries of the policy. Table D1 in the Supplementary File reports the full wording. To validate this manipulation, we, in addition, analyse respondents’ open-ended answers using the same dictionary-based approach: Respondents in each condition use significantly more of the corresponding (agentic or communal) language (Table E2, Supplementary File).

We also manipulate the gender of the leader described in the vignette. Leader gender is signalled through gendered names, pronouns, and a silhouette displayed alongside the text. The combination of agenda scope, framing style, and leader gender produces six experimental conditions (see Table 2). The vignette is shown in Figure 2.

Table 2. Overview of experimental conditions.

Condition	Framing	Male Leader	Female Leader
Control: Narrow Agenda	—	Control	Control
Treatment 1 (T1): Broad Agenda	Agentic	T1	T1
Treatment 2 (T2): Broad Agenda	Communal	T2	T2

The policy positions in the vignette reflect highly nativist issue positions commonly associated with populist radical-right parties, although the leader’s party affiliation is not explicitly stated. This was a deliberate choice, because when party labels are present, voters tend to rely on partisan cues as a shortcut, displacing attention from other substantive information (Kirkland & Coppock, 2018). Accordingly, we interpret our experimental results as capturing responses to a nativist party leader rather than to any specific PRR party.

Importantly, we confirm that the majority of respondents (60%) did place the party on the radical right of the ideological spectrum (L–R from 8 to 10), and among these respondents the results are substantively identical to those obtained in the full sample (Table E3.1, Supplementary File). The treatment effects are thus not an artefact of ambiguity in how the nativist party was perceived.

Stimuli in the vignette draw on recurring policy proposals from UK PRR manifestos while avoiding verbatim reproduction of any specific party document. As we show in Table D1 in the Supplementary File, the substantive policy positions remain identical; only agenda scope and rhetorical framing vary. Computational text analysis further indicates that the agentic and communal versions occupy very similar ideological positions, confirming that the manipulation operates through framing rather than substance (Figure D1, Supplementary File). This design thus allows us to isolate how voters respond to differences in agenda breadth, framing style, and leader gender.

After reading the vignette, respondents evaluated the leader and message across several dimensions. Our main outcome measures capture evaluations of the leader and the perceived ideological character of the message, including leader favourability, perceived extremism, vote likelihood, and party placement on a 0–10 left–right scale. Finally, we collected standard demographic information, including gender and party

Control Condition: Narrow Agenda

Rebecca [Henry] Mitchell, the party leader, said:

I believe Britain must take back **control of its borders**. As a woman/man born and bred in this country, my priority is clear: **to end mass immigration, stop all small-boat crossings** and **deport illegal migrants** from safe countries.

Record mass immigration has damaged our country. We must act in the national interest and stand for British culture, identity, and national values.

Treatment 1: Broad Agenda with Agentic Framing

Rebecca [Henry] Mitchell, the party leader, said:

I believe Britain must take back **control of its borders**. As a woman/man born and bred in this country, my priority is clear: **to end mass immigration, stop all small-boat crossings** and **deport illegal migrants** from safe countries.

Under my new leadership, our party will **scrap the costly Net Zero agenda**. I will take decisive action to harness Britain's own resources **to drive down energy bills**, instead of forcing taxpayers to find unrealistic renewable targets.

And to strengthen our economy and break the benefit trap, I will **cut taxes on work**, tighten eligibility and **strictly limit welfare support** to only those who qualify, and **slash the red tape** holding back British enterprise to create well-paid jobs.

Treatment 2: Broad Agenda with Communal Framing

Rebecca [Henry] Mitchell, the party leader, said:

I believe Britain must take back **control of its borders**. As a woman/man born and bred in this country, my priority is clear: **to end mass immigration, stop all small-boat crossings** and **deport illegal migrants** from safe countries.

Under my new leadership, our party will **shift away from the Net Zero agenda**. We will work together to use Britain's shared resources to **make energy bills affordable** and **protect the livelihoods of our families and communities**, instead of asking households to shoulder the burden of unrealistic renewable goals.

And to strengthen our economy and **help people escape the benefit trap**, we will **cut taxes on work**, ensure our **welfare system protects and supports** only those in genuine need, and carefully **reduce unnecessary regulations** that hold back British enterprise to create well-paid jobs for families across the country.

Figure 2. Vignette overview. Notes: Names in brackets indicate the male leader condition; bold text indicates key policy terms.

affiliation, to examine heterogeneous treatment effects. The full questionnaire is reported in Table D2 in the Supplementary File.

We estimate OLS regression models to capture average differences between experimental conditions in respondents' evaluations of the leader and message, with interaction models to assess whether effects vary by leader gender, respondent gender, and party affiliation. Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the treatment effects; full regression tables are in the Supplementary File.

6.2. Results

We begin by testing whether presenting a broader policy agenda changes how voters evaluate nativist party leaders and their messages (H2). Recall that these hypotheses predict that leaders presenting a broader agenda should appear less extreme (H2a), receive more favourable evaluations (H2b), and generate greater electoral support (H2c). The manipulation check confirms that treated respondents correctly identified the issues in their assigned message (Figure E1, Supplementary File).

Figure 3 displays the estimated treatment effects across the main outcomes, with full regression results reported in Table E3 in the Supplementary File.

Pooling the two agenda-broadening treatments together provides little support for these expectations. Presenting a broader policy agenda slightly increases perceived message radicalism ($\beta = 0.086$, $p < 0.05$), corresponding to approximately 0.08 standard deviations on the outcome scale (a modest effect; Cohen, 2013). This result runs counter to H2a and suggests that expanding the agenda does not, on average, make PRR messaging appear less extreme. This result is driven primarily by the agentic condition.

In contrast, communal broadening generates a different pattern of responses. When the broader agenda is framed using communal language, respondents place the party significantly further to the left on the ideological scale ($\beta = -0.193$, $p < 0.05$), corresponding to approximately 0.10 standard deviations. Communal broadening also improves evaluations of the leader. Leaders presenting a broader agenda with communal framing receive higher favourability evaluations ($\beta = 0.119$, $p < 0.05$, 0.08 standard deviations) and modestly higher vote likelihood ($\beta = 0.114$, $p < 0.10$, 0.07 standard deviations). These effects provide partial support for H2b and H2c. Agenda expansion alone does not automatically soften perceptions of PRR messaging. Instead, its electoral consequences depend on how the expanded agenda is communicated: Communal framing appears to moderate perceived ideology and improve leader evaluations, whereas agentic framing reinforces perceptions of radicalism.

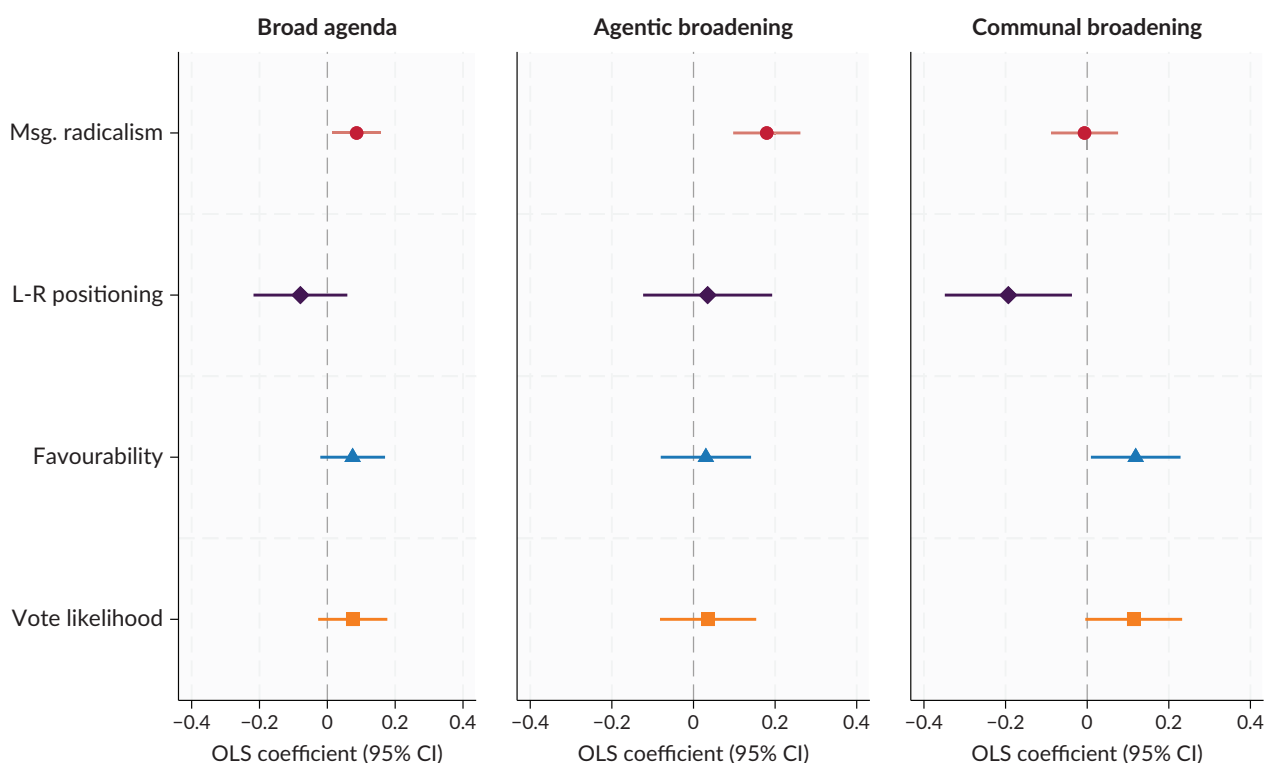


Figure 3. Treatment effects across outcomes. Notes: Each panel displays OLS coefficients with 95% confidence intervals for one broadening condition (broad agenda overall, agentic broadening, and communal broadening) across four outcomes (message radicalism [H2a], left-right party positioning [alternative for H2a], leader favourability [H2b], and vote likelihood [H2c]); the dashed vertical line indicates the null effect (zero); all models are estimated in STATA 19, with robust standard errors; $N = 3,983$.

To assess whether these effects vary across the electorate, Table E4 in the Supplementary File presents interaction models between the treatment conditions and respondents' party affiliation. Of particular interest are responses among right-wing voters, for whom H2b and H2c predict stronger positive effects of agenda broadening. To further illustrate these differences, Table E4.2 in the Supplementary File reports party-specific regressions estimated separately for each party subsample. The results provide some evidence consistent with these expectations. Among Conservative voters, presenting a broader agenda increases leader favourability and vote likelihood. These patterns suggest that right-leaning voters respond more positively to expanded policy agendas than to immigration-only messaging.

The difference we observe between agentic and communal framing is also consistent with H4. While the preceding results estimate each condition against the control, Table 3 compares the two conditions directly. Restricting the sample to treated respondents, communal framing produces substantially lower perceived message radicalism than agentic framing ($\beta = -0.186$, $p < 0.001$, approximately 0.17 standard deviations), and places the party significantly further left on the ideological scale ($\beta = -0.228$, $p < 0.01$, roughly 0.11 standard deviations). Both effects are modest but consistent with the expectation that communal language repackages messaging in ways that feel less extreme to voters, even when the underlying policy content remains unchanged. The differences in leader favourability and vote likelihood are directionally consistent with H4 but not statistically significant. These findings offer partial support for H4: Communal framing softens ideological perceptions of PRR messaging, while its direct impact on candidate evaluations and vote intention remains suggestive rather than conclusive.

Table 3. Communal vs. agentic framing: Treatment comparison across outcomes.

	Msg. Radicalism	L–R Positioning	Favourability	Vote Likelihood
Communal	–0.186*** (0.041)	–0.228** (0.076)	0.088 (0.056)	0.078 (0.061)
Constant	3.378*** (0.029)	7.588*** (0.054)	2.838*** (0.040)	2.631*** (0.043)
Observations	2,650	2,650	2,650	2,650
R^2	0.008	0.003	0.001	0.001

Notes: OLS regressions with robust standard errors in parentheses; + $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; models estimated in STATA 19.

6.2.1. Leader Gender

We next test whether agenda broadening improves evaluations of female leaders more than male leaders (H3), and whether communal framing produces larger gains for women leaders than for men (H5). Figure 4 presents predicted means by treatment condition and leader gender; interaction models are presented in Table E5 in the Supplementary File.

The results provide little support for either hypothesis. Across the full sample, the interaction between the treatments and the leader's gender is not statistically significant for any outcome. In other words, broadening the agenda or changing the rhetorical framing does not improve evaluations of women leaders more than those of men leaders.

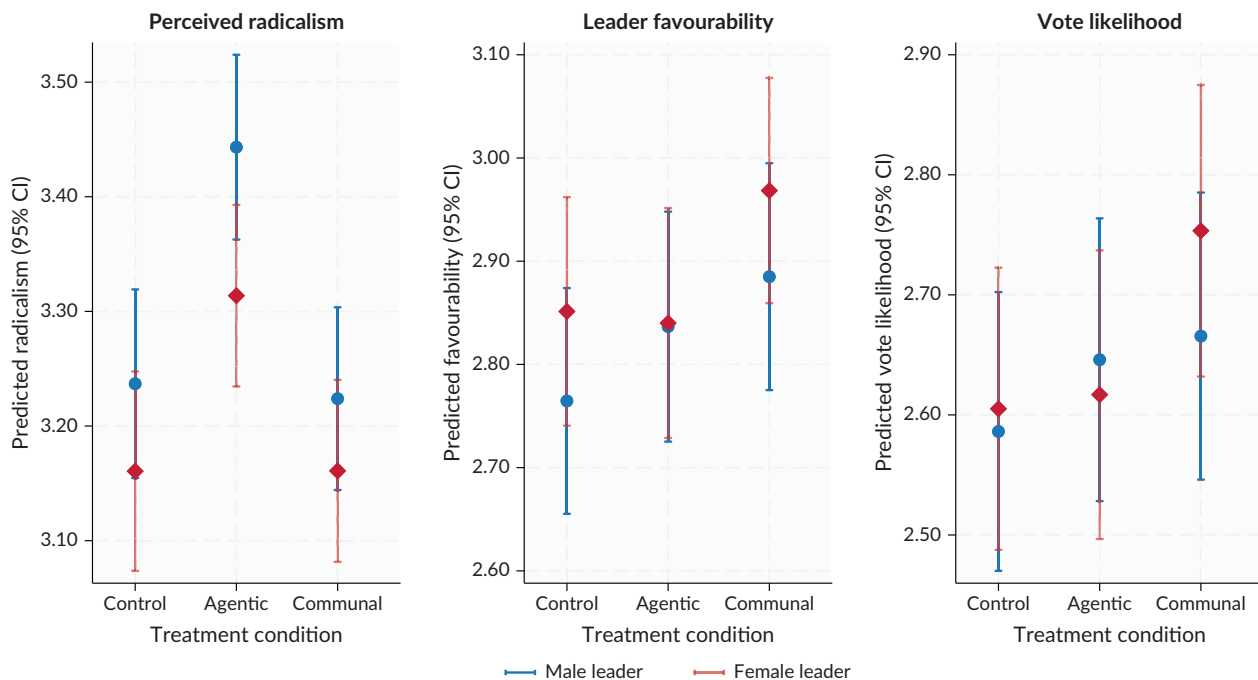


Figure 4. Treatment effects by leader gender. Notes: Each panel displays predicted means from OLS regressions with treatment variables interacted with leader gender across three outcomes (perceived radicalism, leader favourability, and vote likelihood); dots indicate the estimated means, while bars show 95% confidence intervals based on robust standard errors; blue circles represent male leaders and red diamonds represent female leaders; all models are estimated in STATA 19, with robust standard errors; $N = 3,983$.

Descriptively, messages attributed to female leaders are perceived as slightly less extreme on average than identical messages attributed to male leaders, although these differences are small. The predicted values in Figure 4 also show modest variation across framing conditions: Female leaders perform somewhat better under communal framing and slightly worse under agentic framing relative to the control. However, the trajectories for male and female leaders remain largely parallel, indicating that the broadening treatments do not differentially benefit female leaders.

We also test whether treatment effects (communal and agentic) vary by respondent gender. As shown in Table E6 in the Supplementary File, we find no statistically significant gender differences in responses to the framing treatments. We further examine whether responses differ between centre and radical right voters, with the discussion and results reported in Appendix E7 in the Supplementary File.

To summarise our experimental results, simply broadening the issue agenda does not consistently moderate perceptions of nativist party messaging. Instead, the electoral consequences of expansion depend on how the broader platform is communicated. Communal framing of the expanded agenda improves leader evaluations and increases vote likelihood, particularly among centre-right voters, whereas agentic framing reinforces perceptions of radicalism and does not increase vote intention. And contrary to our expectations, these effects do not vary systematically by leader gender. Women leaders are neither penalised nor rewarded for presenting broader agendas, and male and female voters respond similarly to the issue expansion treatments. Overall, the findings suggest that the strategic benefits of agenda expansion for PRR parties lie less in the gender of the leader presenting the message than in the rhetorical style through which the expanded policy agenda is communicated—a style which, in practice, is associated more with women.

7. Conclusion

Are women leaders associated with PRR agenda expansion, and how do voters respond when nativist parties present broader policy platforms? Combining cross-national manifesto data with a survey experiment, we find that European PRR parties present broader policy agendas when they are led by women. Within the same party, manifestos issued under women's leadership give attention to a wider range of policy domains. Women leaders are associated with diversification of issue attention even within niche PRR parties.

The results of our UK survey experiment show that such agenda shifts can have electoral consequences, but these depend on how broader platforms are communicated. Presenting a wider set of policy issues does not in itself reduce perceptions of extremism or increase support. Instead, broader agendas receive more favourable evaluations when they are framed using communal language that emphasises collective wellbeing and social responsibility—and this is especially true among centre-right, Conservative voters. In contrast, agentic framing that emphasises strength and authority leads respondents to perceive the message as more radical and does not increase willingness to support the party. Contrary to our expectations, these responses do not vary systematically by leader gender, nor do they vary by respondent gender. Instead, our results suggest that the gender of leaders matters more indirectly, insofar as it shapes rhetorical style.

These findings contribute to several strands of literature. First, they add to research on niche party competition by showing that agenda diversification shapes voter perceptions in ways that depend on communication style. While previous work has documented policy expansion among PRR parties (Bergman & Flatt, 2020), our results highlight the importance of how newly introduced issues are framed when presented to voters. Second, the findings speak to debates on gender and political leadership. Much of the existing literature focuses on whether women leaders shift parties' positions ideologically or prioritise certain "women-friendly" policy domains. Our results suggest a different dynamic: Women's leadership in PRR parties is associated with attention to a broader range of political issues, rather than systematic ideological change. These patterns resemble findings from research on mainstream parties showing that women leaders expand the scope of agendas without altering positions (Greene & O'Brien, 2016); we establish this is even true within the niche PRR.

Last, the results contribute to work on gendered political communication by highlighting the important role of communal framing. In our experiment, voters respond more positively to political messages that emphasise collective welfare and social cohesion, even though (or perhaps especially because) such messages originate from parties known for confrontational political styles. This contrasts with research suggesting that agentic traits are seen as desirable qualities for politicians (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Schneider et al., 2022). One interpretation is that agentic leadership traits are subject to ceiling effects: When rhetoric centred on strength and authority becomes too pronounced and veers into authoritarianism, its electoral value diminishes.

Our study has several limitations, which offer directions for future research. The observational analysis relies on a limited number of gendered leadership transitions among PRR parties and should therefore be interpreted with caution. Future research could incorporate additional cases over time or extend the analysis to PRR parties in other regions to increase leverage on leadership change. The survey experiment focuses on a single national context and a specific set of policy issues; replicating the design in other countries and

policy domains would help assess the generalisability of findings. In particular, future work should examine whether the effects identified here travel to contexts where PRR parties are more deeply institutionalised and have longer histories of electoral success. Finally, future research could usefully analyse real-world political communication to determine how frequently men and women PRR leaders employ communal or agentic framing when presenting policy agendas.

Overall, our findings point to a broader implication for understanding contemporary PRR politics: Agenda expansion alone does not necessarily soften the perceived radicalism of nativist parties. Instead, the effects of broader party agendas depend on how issues are communicated. In this sense, the rhetorical style through which policies are presented may matter as much as the policies themselves.

Acknowledgments

The authors thank the two anonymous reviewers and the editors for their constructive feedback. We are grateful to Hilde Coffé, Michal Grahn, Jessika Haak, Gefjon Off, Kaitlin Senk, Vera E. Troeger, and Ilayda Yuecel for their valuable feedback. We also thank the participants of the PhD seminar of the “DFG Graduate Program Collective Decision-Making” at the University of Hamburg, the University of Bath PoLIS departmental workshop, the Berlin-Brandenburg Political Behaviour Workshop 2026 at Humboldt University, and the EPSS Annual Meeting 2026 for helpful comments on earlier versions of this work.

Funding

This work was supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation; project no. 401375414) and the Department of Politics, Languages & International Studies at the University of Bath. Publication of this article in open access was made possible through the institutional membership agreement between the University of Bath and Cogitatio Press.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

Data Availability

Data and replication code available on request.

LLMs Disclosure

The authors used ChatGPT (OpenAI) for language editing. All content and analysis are the authors' own, and the authors take full responsibility for the final manuscript.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the authors (unedited).

References

- Abou-Chadi, T., Breyer, M., & Gessler, T. (2021). The (re)politicisation of gender in Western Europe. *European Journal of Politics and Gender*, 4(2), 311–314.
- Adams, J., Bracken, D., Gidron, N., Horne, W., Lee, S., O'Brien, D. Z., Santoso, P., Senk, K., & Stevenson, R. T. (2026). *Gender inclusivity shifts parties' images leftward: Observational and experimental evidence*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

- Adams, J., Bracken, D., Gidron, N., Horne, W., O'Brien, D. Z., & Senk, K. (2023). Can't we all just get along? How women MPs can ameliorate affective polarization in Western publics. *American Political Science Review*, 117(1), 318–324.
- Akkerman, T. (2015). Gender and the radical right in Western Europe: A comparative analysis of policy agendas. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 49(1/2), 37–60.
- Bergman, M. E., & Flatt, H. (2020). Issue diversification: Which niche parties can succeed electorally by broadening their agenda? *Political Studies*, 68(3), 710–730.
- Bowles, H. R., & Babcock, L. (2013). How can women escape the compensation negotiation dilemma? Relational accounts are one answer. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 37(1), 80–96.
- Cohen, J. (2013). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (revised ed.). Academic Press.
- De Sio, L., & Weber, T. (2014). Issue yield: A model of party strategy in multidimensional space. *American Political Science Review*, 108(4), 870–885.
- Downs, A. (1957). *An economic theory of democracy*. Harper.
- Druckman, J. N. (2001). On the limits of framing effects: Who can frame? *The Journal of Politics*, 63(4), 1041–1066.
- Eagly, A. H. (1987). *Sex differences in social behavior: A social-role interpretation*. Psychology Press.
- Eagly, A. H., & Karau, S. J. (2002). Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders. *Psychological Review*, 109(3), 573–598.
- Fernandes, J. M., Meguid, B. M., & Weeks, A. C. (2026). Thinly veiled: The use of femonationalist speech in European parliaments. *British Journal of Political Science*, 56, Article e40.
- Gemenis, K. (2013). What to do (and not to do) with the Comparative Manifestos Project data. *Political Studies*, 61(1_suppl), 3–23.
- Greene, Z. (2015). Competing on the issues. *Party Politics*, 22(6), 809–822.
- Greene, Z., & O'Brien, D. Z. (2016). Diverse parties, diverse agendas? Female politicians and the parliamentary party's role in platform formation. *European Journal of Political Research*, 55(3), 435–453.
- Hargrave, L., & Langengen, T. (2021). The gendered debate: Do men and women communicate differently in the House of Commons? *Politics & Gender*, 17(4), 580–606.
- Harteveld, E., van der Brug, W., Dahlberg, S., & Kokkonen, A. (2015). The gender gap in populist radical-right voting: Examining the demand side in Western and Eastern Europe. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 49(1/2), 103–134.
- Heilman, M. E., & Okimoto, T. G. (2007). Why are women penalized for success at male tasks? The implied communality deficit. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92(1), 81–92.
- Kirkland, P. A., & Coppock, A. (2018). Candidate choice without party labels. *Political Behavior*, 40, 571–591.
- Kitschelt, H. (1994). *The transformation of European social democracy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Kittilson, M. C. (2011). Women, parties and platforms in post-industrial democracies. *Party Politics*, 17(1), 66–92.
- Kriesi, H., Grande, E., Lachat, R., Dolezal, M., Bornschie, S., & Frey, T. (2008). *West European politics in the age of globalization*. Cambridge University Press.
- Kroeber, C. (2022). How parties led by a woman redefine their positions: Empirical evidence for women's green, alternative and libertarian agenda. *European Journal of Political Research*, 61(1), 175–193.
- Lehmann, P., Franzmann, S., Al-Gaddooa, D., Burst, T., Ivanusch, C., Regel, S., Riethmüller, F., Volkens, A., Weißels, B., & Zehnter, L. (2025). *The manifesto data collection. Manifesto project* (MRG/CMP/MARPOR; Version 2025a) [Data set]. Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB); Institut für Demokratieforschung (IfDem).
- Lockwood, M. (2018). Right-wing populism and the climate change agenda: Exploring the linkages. *Environmental Politics*, 27(4), 712–732.

- Lowe, W., Benoit, K., Mikhaylov, S., & Laver, M. (2011). Scaling policy preferences from coded political texts. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 36(1), 123–155.
- Mansbridge, J. (1999). Should blacks represent blacks and women represent women? A contingent “yes.” *The Journal of Politics*, 61(3), 628–657.
- Mayer, N. (2013). From Jean-Marie to Marine Le Pen: Electoral change on the far right. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 66(1), 160–178.
- Mayer, N. (2015). The closing of the radical right gender gap in France? *French Politics*, 13(4), 391–414.
- Meguid, B. M. (2005). Competition between unequals: The role of mainstream party strategy in niche party success. *American Political Science Review*, 99(3), 347–359.
- Meguid, B. M. (2023). Adaptation or inflexibility? Niche party responsiveness to policy competition, with evidence from regionalist parties. *European Journal of Political Research*, 62(2), 355–376.
- Meguid, B. M., Coffé, H., Weeks, A. C., & Kittilson, M. C. (2025). Strategic inclusion without transformation: How populist radical right parties engage with women’s interests. *Comparative Political Studies*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00104140251381760>
- Meret, S. (2015). Charismatic female leadership and gender: Pia Kjærsgaard and the Danish People’s Party. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 49(1/2), 81–102.
- Mudde, C. (2007). *Populist radical right parties in Europe*. Cambridge University Press.
- Müller, H., & Pansardi, P. (2023). Women leading the opposition: Gender and rhetoric in the European Parliament. *Politics and Governance*, 11(1), 164–176.
- O’Brien, D. Z. (2019). Female leaders and citizens’ perceptions of political parties. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 29(4), 465–489.
- Pedrazzani, A., & De Giorgi, E. (2025). Italian politics after the 2022 general elections: Assessing the balance between continuity and change. *South European Society and Politics*, 30(1), 1–9.
- Phillips, A. (1995). *The politics of presence*. Clarendon Press.
- Rovny, J. (2012). Who emphasizes and who blurs? Party strategies in multidimensional competition. *European Union Politics*, 13(2), 269–292.
- Rovny, J. (2013). Where do radical right parties stand? Position blurring in multidimensional competition. *European Political Science Review*, 5(1), 1–26.
- Rydgren, J. (2005). Is extreme right-wing populism contagious? Explaining the emergence of a new party family. *European Journal of Political Research*, 44(3), 413–437.
- Sauer, B. (2020). Authoritarian right-wing populism as masculinist identity politics: The role of affects. In G. Dietze & J. Roth (Eds.), *Right-wing populism and gender: European perspectives and beyond* (pp. 23–40). transcript Verlag.
- Schneider, M. C., Bos, A. L., & DiFilippo, M. (2022). Gender role violations and voter prejudice: The agentic penalty faced by women politicians. *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, 43(2), 117–133.
- Somer-Topcu, Z. (2015). Everything to everyone: The electoral consequences of the broad-appeal strategy in Europe. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(4), 841–854.
- Spierings, N., & Zaslove, A. (2015). Conclusion: Dividing the populist radical right between ‘liberal nativism’ and traditional conceptions of gender. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 49(1/2), 163–173.
- Spoon, J.-J., & Williams, C. J. (2023). Environmental chauvinism? Explaining issue expansion among non-mainstream parties. *Party Politics*, 29(6), 1077–1087.
- van Dijk, R. E., & Poljak, Ž. (2025). Interrupting the interruptions: How women transform the parliamentary debate. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 79(3), 511–533.
- Wagner, M., & Meyer, T. M. (2014). Which issues do parties emphasise? Salience strategies and party organisation in multiparty systems. *West European Politics*, 37(5), 1019–1045.

Weeks, A. C., Caravantes, P., Espírito-Santo, A., Lombardo, E., Stratigaki, M., & Gul, S. (2025). When is gender on party agendas? Manifestos and (de-)democratisation in Greece, Portugal, and Spain. *South European Society and Politics*, 30(4), 561–593.

About the Authors



Rossella Merullo is a doctoral researcher in political science at the DFG graduate program on Collective Decision-Making at the University of Hamburg. Her research focuses on gender and political representation, particularly within the populist radical right, with a special interest in women's leadership, candidate selection, and party competition.



Ana Catalano Weeks is a senior lecturer (associate professor) in comparative politics at the University of Bath. Her research focuses on gender and politics, political representation, political parties, and household inequalities. She is the author of *Making Gender Salient: From Gender Quota Laws to Policy* (Cambridge University Press, 2022).