

The Public and Private Beliefs of Margaret Thatcher

The influence of gender bias on public speech

Danaï Kostoulas



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Supervisor: dr. F.E. Bakker

Second Reader: Prof. dr. P. Kopecký

Student number: s1347764

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Introduction

Since Margaret Thatcher was appointed as first female Prime Minister of a Western country in 1979, not many others have followed. A meager total of 13% of Western European prime ministers have been women (Müller-Rommel & Vercesi, 2017, p.250). This number is even lower for female presidents, as women generally had more success in obtaining parliamentary office than presidential posts (Jalalzai, 2010, p.133). The results are not surprising, since many gender stereotypes are still appointed to leaders. Female leaders are expected to be compassionate and empathic, while meanwhile these traits are considered 'weak' (Jalalzai, 2010, p.139; Jalalzai, 2011, p.430; Setzler & Yanus, 2017, p.767). Gender stereotypes could create an impasse in which female leaders can't thrive, such as obstructing the chance to express their full capacity of leadership. This research uses a generally considered "masculine" female leader, to examine whether gender bias has an influence on public speech: Margaret Thatcher.

Thatcher exhibited decisiveness, persistency, and competency on hard issues. These traits are usually associated with men (Jalalzai, 2011, p.p. 429-430; Setzler & Yanus, 2017, p.766). As Thatcher was the first female Prime Minister in a Western country, she was transformational. However, she was not a feminist (Jalalzai, 2010, p.134). While it seems like Thatcher genuinely behaved like a man, some may argue that her behavior was not necessarily natural. Her father raised her to be ready for a 'men's world' (Steinberg, 2008, p.211), she 'toughened up' after negative media attention (Steinberg, 2008, p.214) and took voice lessons to make her 'shrill' voice seem less like a 'housewife' (Gardner, 2014). These examples all indicate that Thatcher was taught to display a more "masculine" behavior.

It could be questioned whether Thatcher's public behavior reflects her personal beliefs. Therefore, I will test whether there is a difference between the private and public beliefs of Thatcher. One method to test this is through the analysis of the operational code. Operational codes evaluate a leader's philosophical and instrumental beliefs about the nature and the use of power in the political system (Renshon, 2009, p.650).

Dyson and Raleigh (2014) have previously conducted a study on the validity of public speeches for measuring a leader's belief system, and found consistency between public and private remarks. However, their research examined a case in an authoritarian regime. Since a leader is appointed instead of chosen in an authoritarian regime, it can't be argued that public opinion or bias has influence on the public presentation of a leader. Renshon (2009) did analyze the difference between public and private material in a democracy, and found that the operational codes from public and private material were also "remarkably similar". However, he didn't consider that gender could possibly influence the outcome.

Consequently, no literature seems to exist that tests the validity of public speech on the basis of gender. This analysis could therefore add a relevant insight on the already existing literature. In order to assess whether gender influences a difference in the operational code, I will also analyze a male leader in addition to Thatcher. The male leader, chosen on the basis of the most similarities to Thatcher, is Ronald Reagan.

This paper will first give an overview on the already existing literature on gender bias in leadership positions and the validity of public speeches to measure beliefs. It then will provide a theoretical framework of relevant concepts such as the operational code. Thereafter, the case selection and relevant method are introduced. Finally, I will analyze the results and provide suggestions for further research.

Literature review

Renshon and Renshon (2008) analyze how accurately world leaders understand the international system and the strategies available to them, while being subjected to their own cognitive limitations. These cognitive limitations include a mixture of an individual's character, psychology and assumptions that are usually studied as 'belief systems' or 'operational codes' (Renshon & Renshon, 2008, p.511). The authors find that good judgments are necessarily a product of subjective psychology and beliefs, but are not detrimental to high-quality decisions. For example, they argue that in strategic circumstances, such as war, the norm of "rationality" can no longer be assumed. More

specifically, they claim that wars begin in the minds of men, branding them “aggressive tyrants” who use force and coercion, while unpopular with public opinion, as strategies for their own hegemonic ambitions (Renshon & Renshon, 2008, p.533). The emphasis on ‘men’ in this assumption implies that there might be a difference between male and female leadership. However, while it is assumed here that warlike behavior and hegemonic ambitions are exclusively masculine, an example of a female leader who decided to accept the political cost of implementing policy that opposed the public opinion is overlooked: Margaret Thatcher.

Dubbed by the media and public as “The Iron Lady”, Thatcher was not only known for her controversial neoliberal domestic policy, which sparked riots and making her “the most unpopular prime minister since records began” (BBC, n.d.). Her determined stance on The Falklands War was also notable. When Argentina invaded the British-ruled Falkland Islands, it was only a matter of days until British military forces were sent under Thatcher’s command to expel the Argentinian army. As “the war brought out the best in Thatcher” (Jenkins, 2013), winning it resulted in immense nation-wide support and the government being re-elected in 1983 with its parliamentary majority more than trebled (Margaret Thatcher Foundation, n.d. a).

It is remarkable that the public opinion on Thatcher went from highly unpopular to highly popular after she was being associated with war – a topic that is often connected to masculinity (Caprioli & Boyer, 2001, p.504; Renshon & Renshon, 2008, p.533; Setzler & Yanus, 2017, p.766). Thatcher publicly reflected decisiveness, determination and calm-mindedness on the war, as a simple “rejoice” was her answer to a journalist’s question whether they were at war with Argentina (Margaret Thatcher Foundation, n.d. b). However, she presented a different stance on the war in her private memoirs, written the following year. These writings present personal feelings of “anguish”, “guilt” and “worry” (BBC, 2015). This raises the question whether there is an incoherency between her public and private thoughts on this matter.

A possible reason to explain this incoherency is that Thatcher is a female leader. The current social norms are still against women in leadership positions, as women are perceived as more appropriate for ‘caring’ activities and are limited to the private

sphere (Müller-Rommel and Vercesi, 2017, p.246; Setzler & Yanus, 2017, p. 767). The first moment that Thatcher had direct influence on policy decision-making, was when she was appointed Minister of Education. She went from opposition spokeswoman on Education to Secretary of State for Education. While the transition from government to cabinet gave Thatcher more momentum as leader, as she had direct influence on policy, Minister of Education was still considered a relatively minor position (Steinberg, 2008, p. 215). These stereotypically 'feminine' branch positions are usually considered less important and low prestige (Müller-Rommel & Vercesi, 2017, p.253). Thatcher's low prestige position as minister of Education is likely to have resulted from her gender, as research has shown that female Members of Parliament (MPs) are usually appointed roles that are associated with femininity, such as healthcare, welfare, children and education (Jalalzai, 2010, pp.139-140; Müller-Rommel & Vercesi, 2017, pp.247-248; Setzler & Yanus, 2017, p.766).

Moreover, when women want to reach leadership positions, they are expected to present the same and more as their male counterparts: 'to be considered a man's equal, women have to be more than a man's equal' (Müller-Rommel & Vercesi, 2017, p. 247). The status of party leader provides us with an extra dimension in the concept of leadership, as ministers are appointed and have not been forced to campaign for their position in the same public way as elected leaders (Claveria, 2014, p.1157). Comparative public opinion data finds that the public in many countries still believe that men are more suitable in leadership positions than women (Jalalzai 2010, p.140). The most evident example of the gender gap is the lack of female leadership in the executive office (Claveria, 2014; Hunt, Gonsalkorale & Zadro, 2014; Jalalzai, 2010; Müller-Rommel & Vercesi, 2017; Setzler & Yanus, 2017). This view is strengthened by the media portrayals of political candidates, reinforcing gender stereotypes by displaying masculine traits and behavior as appropriate for leadership (Jalalzai, 2010, p.139).

So when women do decide to run, they are immediately subjected to media bias that focuses on their personal traits rather than their policy positions (Setzler & Yanus, 2017, p.767). One example of this is how biased news coverage sparked a hostile response towards the female leadership of Julia Gillard, Australia's first female Prime Minister, by focusing on gender as a key role (Hunt, Gonsalkorale & Zadro, 2014, p.724). Müller-

Rommel and Vercesi (2017, p.430) argue that once women reach a top position in politics, they are subjected to a stricter evaluation. So with a position of greater power comes higher media attention (Claveria, 2014, p.1157), especially when this position is filled by a woman.

The importance of the influence of media and public opinion also becomes apparent in the case of Thatcher. When she was running for the position of party leader, she received support from Gordon Reece, a former television producer and ex journalist, and Airey Neave, another politician, who advised her on television technique (Steinberg, 2008, p.215). It is notable that most help from Thatcher's supporters had a substantial emphasis on public portrayal. As public opinion is interconnected with gender bias, it is highly significant in the conceptualization of female leadership for this research. It could therefore be argued that as the public often associates strong leadership with masculinity (Hunt, Gonsalkorale and Zadro, 2014, p. 723; Jalalzai, 2011, p.444), female leaders might be inclined to convey a different narrative to the public than they would in private.

To assess whether this narrative can be translated into actual beliefs, an operational code can be measured. The operational code, or 'belief system', is a set of norms, values, standards and guidelines that influence a leader's strategy and tactics in politics. The belief system is particularly influenced by a leader's own assumptions about the nature of a conflict and by the image of the 'other' (Schafer & Walker, 2006a, p.566). The comparison of the 'self' to the 'other' might have a different context for male and female leaders, taking into account that female leaders are often perceived as 'weak' (which might influence their own perception of themselves). Therefore, it could be argued that when female leaders have a different belief system from their male counterparts, they are inclined to hide that to strengthen their position as a leader. Caprioli and Boyer (2001) also found evidence of female leaders hiding their true beliefs. They argue that while women in positions of power are less likely to support the use of international violence and are more prone to use a consensual approach to conflict solving, they are compelled to use a leadership style that conveys strength in traditional male terms. The authors claim that a possible reason behind this is that female leaders will act violently in order to prove themselves in a hostile, male-dominated and -defined international

political environment (Caprioli & Boyer, 2001, p.507). This means that female leaders who want to strengthen their leadership position would benefit from withholding their own actual beliefs.

Even in the case of Margaret Thatcher, who was known for her unapologetic persistence, evidence can be found of her changing her rhetoric before or after being subjected to the public. A first example is how she sparked major backlash among the public after cutting a free-milk program for primary school children. Gendered slurs by the media and public, such as “ditch the bitch” resulted in her development of a tougher exterior (Steinberg, 2008, p. 214). In this case, the (gendered) criticism by the public and media represent a hostile, male-dominated political environment, while the need for a tougher exterior reflects how Thatcher needed to change in order to fit in that environment. A second example of Thatcher showing a change in behavior is during the Falklands War. While Thatcher showed belligerence in public, using the quote: “If the present Government have no stomach for the fight, let them depart”(Segal, 2014, p.10; Margaret Thatcher Foundation, n.d. c), she presented a different narrative in Parliament: after hearing that the Falkland Islands had been occupied, Thatcher’s voice was the most moderate in the House of Commons (Steinberg, 2008, p. 223). This too shows an inconsistency between Thatcher’s public and (more) private narrative.

As mentioned earlier, it is possible that a female leader can be motivated to hide certain (feminine) aspects of their leadership style. This does not necessarily mean that they change in their beliefs. A leader’s belief system is constructed out of determinants such as culture, character and cognition that have been built up through the course of their life (Schafer & Walker, 2006a, p. 566). For example, Thatcher’s relationship with her father growing up prepared her for a political world: as they would engage in political discussions Thatcher picked up on his conservative ideals; As a student she was hard working, regardless of the discontent of her classmates (Steinberg, 2008, pp. 211-212). It is highly unlikely that this set of references constructed throughout a lifetime will change overnight.

However, since the operational code is measured from speech acts, a public speech could lead to a different outcome relative to a private conversation. Especially when

considering the possibility of the influence of public gender bias. It can therefore be questioned whether the validity of public statements is sufficient to measure a (female) leader's belief system. The reason that public statements do not necessarily reflect the private views of a leader, is that they are susceptible to structural bias and deceptions (Schafer, 2000, p.514; He & Feng, 2013, p.223). The presentation of these structural manipulations in public speeches is called "impression management". Impression management means that spoken words can be strategically altered to create a desired impression on others (He & Feng, 2013, p.224; Renshon, 2009, p. 652). Leaders might resort to this strategy because they are highly sensitive to their public significance and might want to create the desired identity that accompanies that (Tetlock & Manstead, 1985, p.60).

The hazard of impression management and the validity of public speech have been explored before. Dyson and Raleigh (2014) examine whether public speeches are indicative of leader's private beliefs, through content analysis of speech acts of Saddam Hussein. They find that his worldview and perception of himself as political actor were consistent in public and private material. While this research indicates that public speeches can be validly used to extract a leader's operational code, Hussein was the leader in an authoritarian regime. Since such leaders are not elected, they could be less inclined to resort to impression management. It is therefore necessary to also test the validity of public speeches in a democracy.

Renshon (2009) does this by making an assessment by comparing the operational code taken from John F. Kennedy's official speeches during the summer of 1962 to the operational code acquired from transcripts of his private discussions in the same period. The author finds that the operational code of Kennedy's public speeches were 'remarkably similar' to that of his private conversations (Renshon, 2009, p. 658). Taking into account the differences between the spontaneity of private material versus the composed context of public material, the results suggest that public speech can be legitimately used for content analysis. While the author finds that public speeches are useful to infer beliefs, he does not consider taking gender bias into account.

Since the previous material has proven that the operational codes extracted from public and private remarks is consistent in male leaders, it can be assumed that they are not inclined to resort to impression management. I argue that because of public gender bias, female leaders are.

As this paper focuses on the stigmatization of female leadership, public speeches could provide evidence for female leaders turning to “impression-management” to adjust to the male-dominated political arena. If this were the case, it would imply that the use of public material to extract a female leader’s operational code would not be a valid method.

I will focus my research on the role of gender in leadership by exploring if female leaders change their narrative in public speeches in order to adhere to the existing social norms. While there is much empirical evidence on gender stigmatization in leadership roles (Hunt, Gonsalkorale and Zadro, 2014; Jalalzai, 2011; Müller-Rommel and Vercesi, 2017), there is no sufficient evidence on the consequences hereof. Since Margaret Thatcher was a female leader who had been subjected to gender bias, but had also gained political power within male dominated societies by expressing male behavior (Caprioli & Boyer, 2011, p.508), my research question is:

To what extent is there a difference between the publicly and privately held beliefs of Margaret Thatcher during her time as Prime Minister, and if so, is this connected to gender?

Theoretical Framework

The research question consists of a relationship between two factors: the difference between Thatcher’s public speeches and her private discourse at the time of her political leadership as Prime Minister and the possible influence of gender on this difference.

The Operational Code analysis

The Operational Code was first coined by Leites (1951; 1953), in which he studied the values and attitudes of the Bolshevik political elite. Leites emphasized the influence of personality and the cultural environment in Russia on elites and their decision-making. This combination of cultural and psychological foundations created an 'operational code' from the strategies of the Soviet elite (Schafer & Walker, 2006b, p.7). This system of analysis was later reinvented and simplified by Alexander George (1969) as a set of general beliefs of a political leader (Dyson, 2001, p.330). This set consists of norms, values, standards and guidelines that structure a political leader's strategy and tactics in international politics. George also emphasizes that the operational code is not absolute; the system influences decision-making, but does not necessarily determine it (George, 1969, p.192).

George argued that the operational code should be codified into philosophical and instrumental beliefs. This way, a leader's belief consists of a framework of personality biases and outside influences (Schafer & Walker, 2006b, p.7). The distinction is made between general assumptions regarding the fundamental nature of politics, which are the *philosophical* beliefs, and specific beliefs about strategic policy methods for attaining what they want, which are called *instrumental* beliefs. To determine a leader's operational code, a total of ten questions about a leader's beliefs should be answered (Schafer & Walker, 2006b, p.8-9). These questions are presented in table 1.

Since political scientists rarely have direct access to a leader, it is difficult to determine the leader's belief system. Therefore the "at-a-distance" analysis is introduced: an approach that can reveal how personal and psychological context can influence leadership decision-making style (Dyson, 2006, p.290). This methodology is based on the assumption that a leader's personal state of mind can be deduced from what they say and how they say it (Dyson 2006, p.290; Schafer, 2000, p.512; Schafer & Walker, 2006b, p.26). Contemporary operational code analysis uses the Verbs In Context System (VICS) (Schafer & Walker, 2006b, p.8). This type of content analysis scores attribution patterns by focusing on verbs in written or transcribed speech acts of a political leader

(Renshon, 2009; Walker, Schafer & Young, 1999). The VICS analysis will be further elaborated on in the 'method' section of this paper.

Table 1: The Operational Code

Philosophical beliefs

P-1: What is the “essential” nature of political life? Is the political universe essentially one of harmony or conflict? What is the fundamental character of one’s political opponents?

P-2: What are the prospects for the eventual realization of one’s fundamental political values and aspirations? Can one be optimistic, or must one be pessimistic on this score, and in what respects the one and/or the other?

P-3: Is the political future predictable? In what sense and to what extent?

P-4: How much “control” or “mastery” can one have over historical development?

P-5: What is the role of “chance” in human affairs and in historical development?

Instrumental beliefs

I-1: What is the best approach for selecting goals or objectives for political action?

I-2: How are the goals of action pursued most effectively?

I-3: How are the risks of political action calculated, controlled, and accepted?

I-4: What is the best “timing” of action to advance one’s interest?

I-5: What is the utility and role of different means for advancing one’s interests?

(source: George, 1969)

Public versus Private Material

To understand the implication of using public or private verbal acts for the operational code, it is important to define what material is used and why.

The public material used in this research exclusively consists of public speeches. Public speeches are often a preferred means for analysis because they are more extensive and far easier to access than private material (Renshon, 2009, p.652). However, public speeches are more susceptible to structural bias and deceptions (Schafer, 2000, p.514; He & Feng, 2013, p.223). The presentation of these structural manipulations in public speeches is called “impression management”. By resorting to impression management leaders may use specific phrases or verbs as a strategy to deceive the public (He & Feng, 2013, p.224; Renshon, 2009, p.652). Using impression management could depend on a leader’s personality (e.g. public self-consciousness) or situational factors (e.g. presence of an audience) (Tetlock & Manstead, 1985, p.61).

Since female leaders are more liable to public stigmatization, it can be assumed that they are inclined to resort to impression management. For example, the case of Thatcher has shown that public self-consciousness might have motivated a different stance, as she ‘toughened up’ after negative media attention (Steinberg, 2008, p.214). The soar in popularity after starting (and winning) a war (Margaret Thatcher Foundation, n.d. a) could be a situational factor that gives insight on how the public ‘wanted’ to see their leader.

This does not necessarily mean that a male leader would never use impression management. However, previous research on the validity of public speech (Dyson & Raleigh, 2014; Marfleet, 2000; Renshon, 2009) found no indication of impression management. Since the subjects in these works were all men, it can be assumed that male leaders are less inclined to do so.

For this research, I have decided to select private letters, telephone calls, a memoir and interviews as private material. As social significance, or the need to ‘a desired identity’, is the dominant factor for resorting to impression management (Tetlock & Manstead, 1985, p.60), it is important to use data that is free of public scrutiny as much as possible. A memoir is one of the safest sources; it is written by the leader him/herself, which bypasses external influence. It is also written in hindsight, indicating that ‘social significance’ might not be relevant anymore.

While letters and telephone calls can be considered as private, they do involve another actor. This means that impression management cannot be ruled out. However, empirical evidence thus far illustrates that stigmatization of female leadership is mostly propagated by the public and the media (Claveria, 2014; Caprioli & Boyer, 2001; Hunt, Gonsalkorale & Zadro, 2014; Jalalzai, 2010; Jalalzai, 2011; Setzler & Yanus, 2017). Since these external factors are absent from private letters and telephone calls, they could be considered as 'valid' private speech acts.

Finding private material is a difficult task when it comes to world leaders. Therefore, I decided to broaden the scope of private material by adding interviews. The use of interviews however, does involve the public (and the media). It could subsequently be argued that interviews are not free of impression management. Dille (2000) tested the presence of impression management in interviews, and found that the level of spontaneity in interviews resulted in the valid expression of the personality of the speaker. As it is pointed out that interviews have low levels of impression management, it is reasonable to assume that they could be classified as 'private material'.

In order to test the difference between public and private material, disruptive elements must be eliminated. This can be done by limiting the material to (a) the same person and (b) the same time frame (Renshon, 2009, p.652). Renshon and Renshon (2008, p.513) prove that effects such as stress and time pressure have significant effect on a leader's operational code over time. Effects like that, mostly result from events that embody crises, such as war. This would mean that in Thatcher's case, an event like The Falklands War would display a change her operational code. Nevertheless, Schafer and Walker (2006a) point out that a leader's belief system remains relatively stable over a longer period of time. Therefore, measuring Thatcher's belief system over a longer period of time should express a stable operational code, regardless of a crisis such as the Falklands war.

Considering the presence of impression management in public speech, the following hypothesis can be posed:

H1: There is a difference between Margaret Thatcher’s publicly and privately held beliefs, during her time as Prime Minister.

Conceptualizing gender through the “Special Relationship”

The aim of this study is to analyze whether gender bias might have an influence on the public narrative of female leaders. While there is much empirical evidence to build assumptions that substantiate this theory, there is no real certainty that gender is the dependent variable. It is difficult to decide whether a possible change in results is a consequence of gender, and not personality, for example. A possible way to measure if gender is a dependent variable is by using a *Most Similar Systems Design*. The mechanism behind this method is making a comparison between two leaders who are similar on all levels, *except* for one dependent variable. When the cases involved show different results, it can be concluded that the dependent variable is responsible (Bryman, 2016, p.68; Seawright & Gerring, 2003). In this case, the dependent variable is gender. A male leader who shared the most similarities with Thatcher is Ronald Reagan (Bashevkin, 1994; Cooper, 2012; Royed; 1996; Treharne, 2015). The choice to compare Thatcher to Reagan is based on their similarities in four different areas: their background, their period in office, their party affiliation and their domestic and foreign policy. These similarities are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Most Similar Systems Design for Thatcher and Reagan

| | Background | Party Affiliation | Period in Office | Policy | Political System* | <i>Gender</i> |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| Thatcher | Politically engaged in younger years | Conservative | 1979-1990 | Neo-liberalism | Parliamentary | Female |
| Reagan | Politically engaged in younger years | Conservative | 1981-1989 | Neo-liberalism | Presidential | Male |

* The difference between the presidential and parliamentary system can be neglected. This is elaborated on in the following section.

The relevance of these variables for the comparison between Thatcher and Reagan are explained in detail below:

Years ascending to period in office:

The two leaders shared a similar background, resulting in a set of mutual beliefs that influenced their policy proposals (Royed, 1996, p.48; Treharne, 2015, p.1). In their younger years, Thatcher and Reagan showed to be alike in their political interests during college. While Reagan was president of the student body in high school, and lead strikes against the college president in his freshman year (Cannon, 1991), Thatcher joined the Oxford University Conservative Association and worked in election campaigns (Steinberg, 2008, p.212). But not only their individual backgrounds show similarities. Before Thatcher and Reagan were elected leaders, their states were in comparable economic conditions. Britain's economy showed to be in serious trouble. The nationalized industries gave only power to trade unions and lead to economic limitations such as high unemployment and stagflation in the 1970s. These kind of economic problems were also present in The United States, causing a state of "national malaise" (Cooper, 2012, p.2). Moreover, both States' international prestige was affected by respectively the Vietnam War and the Suez Crisis (Treharne, 2015, p.2). These factors directed both leaders to the same fiscal and political ideologies led by their strong anti-communist rhetoric (Treharne, 2015, p.250). This resulted in a close working and personal relationship between the pair (Treharne, 2015, p.250) during their time in office. When it was announced that Reagan won the presidential election in 1980, Thatcher had already been in power for over a year.

Party Affiliation:

As the economy in both countries withered, there was an opening for a party to promote major change (Royed, 1996, p.48). In both cases, this was the conservative party. When Thatcher was elected in 1979, she established the ground for what has been described as neo-conservatism (Bashevkin, 1994, p.277). The political ideology is a variant of traditional conservatism in which free markets and an anti-communist rhetoric are encouraged (Dagger & Ball, 2016). These were translated into Thatcher's take on local governments, campaigns to restore the market place by enhancing the climate for business enterprise and trade unions (Bashevkin, 1994, p.277). This was no different for

Reagan. The role of trade or labor union reform was reflected in the neo-liberal economic philosophy adopted by both Thatcher and Reagan. These unions played an important role in (the decline of) their economies and with that the limited support for the union-backed Labour Party and Democratic Party. Through reform Thatcher and Reagan were determined to guarantee free market and capitalism (Cooper, 2012, pp.117-118).

Parliamentary vs. Presidential system:

Nevertheless, there is an important aspect that may not be overlooked. While Thatcher was chosen Prime Minister in a parliamentary system, Reagan was elected President in a presidential system. These systems have substantial differences that might influence policy-making. To start with, Britain's parliamentary system is often referred to as a 'responsible two-party system'. This means that when a party with specific policies is elected, the public is able to clearly identify who is responsible and can vote correspondingly. Contrastingly, in a presidential system there is no assurance that the legislative and executive power will be from the same party, which has consequences for policy effectiveness and party consequences (Royed, 1996, p.46). Moreover, due to its institutional structure a parliamentary system requires negotiation, deliberation and collaboration, which are all traits to be considered as stereotypically feminine. Presidents are viewed as rapid and decisive, caused by their fairly autonomous position, which is often associated with masculinity (Jalalzai, 2011, pp. 429-430). Taking the gender stereotypes into account, female leaders are more likely to be prime ministers than presidents (Jalalzai, 2011). As the research question is based on the possible change in behavior because of gender bias, female leaders in parliamentary systems might not challenge the traditional gender norms. This concept could therefore produce an inconsistent result to this research.

However, while gender stereotypes draw men to be perceived as associated with the Republican Party and conservatism and women with the Democratic Party and liberalism (Jalalzai, 2010, p.140), Thatcher was conservative. Moreover, her inflexible and decisive approach to governing was contrary to the collaborative attitude associated with women. It is therefore likely to assume that Thatcher did indeed challenge the traditional gender norm, regardless of her premiership.

Additionally, the structural differences between a presidential and a parliamentary system do not seem to significantly influence leadership style. In view of the previously mentioned constraining structure of a presidential system, Hermann (1994) questions how presidents are able to maintain control over policy making while being subjected to the influence of the government and political environment. It becomes apparent that the structure of the system is dependent on the leadership style, rather than the other way around. Hermann illustrates this by examining how Bill Clinton's preferred style led to a two-tiered advisory system. In another work, Kaarbo and Hermann (1998) explore whether the same result is generated when prime ministers in parliamentary systems are studied. They find that the leadership style of prime ministers in parliamentary systems also affects the structure of the system. This means that the literature on presidents in presidential systems can be generalized to prime ministers in parliamentary systems. While these studies by Hermann and Kaarbo and Hermann focus on the influence of leadership traits, Schafer and Walker (2006a) demonstrate that the structural difference between a presidential and a parliamentary system can also be neglected when measuring a leader's belief system. When comparing two leaders (one prime minister, one president) during the same time period, they find a similar belief system regardless of their different leadership traits. This proves that while Thatcher and Reagan are both from a different political system, it is a variable that should not influence the outcome of the research question.

By disassembling the "Special Relationship" between The United Kingdom and The United States in the 1980s, the parallels in leadership between Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan become apparent. The only differential factor between Thatcher and Reagan appears to be gender. Considering the earlier posed assumption that the use of impression management relies on gender, a second hypothesis can be constructed:

H2: There is no difference between Ronald Reagan's publicly and privately held beliefs, during his time as president.

Method

To assess whether gender bias affects the public rhetoric of female leaders, I will conduct a quantitative operational code analysis of the public and private speech acts of both Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. As mentioned before, the operational code is measured through the VICS analysis, which focuses on verbs in written or transcribed speech acts of a political leader (Renshon, 2009; Walker, Schafer & Young, 1999). The possible difference between public and private material is measured by the automated coding program *Profiler Plus v. 7.3.2*¹, which is used along with the Operational Code scheme.

VICS

VICS operates on two levels. On one level, sentences that contain verbs are coded for directionality, with + for cooperative and – for conflictual, and for intensity, which presents the following scale: -3 (punish), -2 (threaten), -1 (oppose), 0 (neutral), +1 (support), +2 (promise) and +3 (reward) (Renshon, 2009, p.654). By considering both the direction and intensity of transitive verbs in the leader’s speech, a broad image is created on how this leader perceives power in the political arena. When conflict-oriented verbs are used, it can be implied that the actor sees the political universe as hostile. Another leader may see it as friendly and will use more cooperative verbs. Neutral verbs are coded as ‘0’ and are not considered, as they don’t provide relevant information (Schafer & Walker, 2006b, p.31).

On a second level, spoken material is coded for ‘ingroup’ or ‘outgroup’, highlighting whether a leader refers to him- or herself (*instrumental beliefs*) or to an “other” (*philosophical beliefs*) (Renshon, 2009, p.654). In short: philosophical beliefs measure how the leader views the political universe and other actors involved. How a leader calculates his or her own political strategies within that universe is measured through instrumental beliefs (Schafer & Walker, 2006b, p.31).

¹ The program *Profiler Plus v. 7.3.2.*, developed by Social Science Automation, Inc., can be found on <https://profilerplus.org/>

The results provide quantitative answers to the operational code questions. These quantitative answers are called VICS indices (Schafer & Walker, 2006b, p.32). A brief explanation of the definitions by Schafer and Walker (2006b, pp.33-38) of the VICS indices is provided below:

P-1: The Nature of the Political Universe:

P-1 captures how the leader balances his/her views about politics, conflict and nature of others. The index varies from -1 to +1; a low score indicates a hostile view of the political universe, and a high score implies a friendly view.

P-2: Realizing Fundamental Values:

This index considers the way a leader views the intensity of others' actions, and is related in part to P-1. For example, a leader who perceives the political world as more friendly will consequently be more optimistic about realizing his/her political values. The index varies from -1 for a pessimistic view to +1 for an optimistic view.

P-3: Predictability of the Political Universe:

With this index, the way the subject considers others' actions as predictable or not can be examined. The wider the variety of actions by the other, the less predictable it is perceived by the actor, and vice versa. The index scales from 0, which indicates a very low score, to 1, indicating very high predictability.

P-4: Control Over Historical Development:

The index for this belief assesses how much the leader sees him or herself as being in control. It focuses on whether the actor sees him/herself as taking the most action, or others. The variation between low and high predictability is scaled from 0 to 1.

P-5: Role of Chance:

P-5 is related to P-3 and P-4: when the political arena is more predictable, and the leader has more control, the role of chance will be lower. The role of chance is scaled from 0 to 1, with 0 at the low end and 1 at the high end.

I-1: Direction of Strategy:

The direction of strategy indicates what the leader considers the best strategic direction for actions. A cooperative direction of strategy is derived from the leader talking about cooperation. The index varies from -1 for conflictual actions to +1 for cooperation.

I-2: Intensity of Tactics:

As with P-1 and P-2, I-2 is also related to I-1. I-2 measures the leader's beliefs about the intensity of his or her strategy. The index ranges from -1 and the conflictual end to +1 at the cooperative end.

I-3: Risk Orientation:

This index measures how risk averse or risk acceptant the leader is. If the level of diversity of actions is low, the chance of that type of action failing results in a higher risk level. A higher level of diversity results in a lower risk level. Risk orientation varies from low risk to high risk, which is scaled from 0 to 1.

I-4: Timing of Action:

The timing of action index concerns the flexibility of the leader's tactics, and consists of two levels: I-4a and I-4b. I-4a explores the leader's diversity between cooperation and conflict. It balances the risk of being dominated by other against the risk of reaching an impasse. I-4-b considers the level of diversity between words and deeds, and balances the risk of doing too much against the risk of doing too little. Both sub-indices range from low (0) to high (1).

I-5: Utility of Means:

This index measures the leader's beliefs about the utility of different power tactics. The six different indices correspond with the six verb categories found in VICS. Each separate category varies from 0, indicating a low utility, to 1, indicating a high utility. The six indices are: Punish, Threaten, Oppose, Appeal, Promise and Reward.

A complete overview of the VICS scale can be found in Appendix A.

Content

The content standard for the operational code is a speech act of a minimum length of 1500 words, because the coding relies on placing spoken words in a context. Another precondition is that the data is about foreign policy (Renshon, 2009; Walker, Schafer & Young, 1999, Dille, 2000). This 1500 word threshold was traditionally introduced for the operational code to not be influenced by very short speeches, as the coding procedure relies on the context in which speech is conducted. A more recent approach allows the use of smaller speech acts, as long as the material contains at least 15 to 20 verbs that can be coded. If the number of codeable verbs falls below this threshold, the material might be too case-specific and are not sufficiently valid to construct an operational code (Schafer & Walker, 2006b, pp. 43-44). Due to limited access to private material, some of the speech acts that I have collected did not have the required minimum of 1500 words. However, all of the private material used does contain a minimum of 20 codeable verbs and are therefore valid.

Also, in order to find a statistical significance, each measured belief system must be formed by at least six separate samples (Renshon, 2009). Using these criteria, I have collected a total of 15 speech acts by Thatcher (9 public; 6 private) and 15 speech acts by Reagan in the same ratio². The data is collected from a period starting January 20, 1981 and ending January 20 1989, while Reagan and Thatcher were simultaneously in office.

Analysis

The mean scores of Thatcher's operational code are presented in table 3. The mean scores were calculated for the public (N=9) and private (N=6) speech acts. An independent t-test was performed to determine the statistical significance in the differences between the means of the VICS indices for the public and private material.

² A detailed list of the material can be found in Appendix B.

Table 3. Margaret Thatcher's Operational Code: Public versus Private

| | Public (N=9) | Private (N=6) | t | p |
|---------------|-----------------|------------------|-------|--------------|
| P-1 | .38 | .49 | -1.05 | .313 |
| P-2 | .20 | .24 | -.540 | .598 |
| P-3 | .13 | .19 | -2.56 | .024* |
| P-4 | .30 | .17 | -1.70 | .139 |
| P-5 | .96 | .88 | 1.97 | .100 |
| I-1 | .61 | .65 | -.308 | .763 |
| I-2 | .28 | .27 | .072 | .943 |
| I-3 | .34 | .31 | .357 | .727 |
| I-4a | .39 | .35 | .316 | .757 |
| I-4b | .47 | .44 | .235 | .818 |
| I-5: Punish | .07 | .09 | -.474 | .643 |
| I-5: Threaten | .01 | .02 | -.696 | .499 |
| I-5: Oppose | .11 | .06 | 1.29 | .220 |
| I-5: Appeal | .59 | .59 | .094 | .927 |
| I-5: Promise | .05 | .11 | -2.01 | .065 |
| I-5: Reward | .17 | .38 | .918 | .375 |

Data in bold presents a significant result

*p ≤ .05

Surprisingly, almost none of the indices showed a difference which were statistically significant at $p < .05$. Significant variation was found in only one of the sixteen indices: P-3 (Predictability of Political Future). This index changed from .13 in public speeches to .19 in private material. This change indicates that the predictability of the political universe is regarded higher measured from Thatcher's private material than from her public speeches. However, the VICS scale (Appendix A) suggests that both indices are still considered *low*.

Considering these results, the first hypothesis, *there is a difference between Margaret Thatcher's publicly and privately held beliefs, during her time as Prime Minister*, can be rejected.

Both public and private documents paint a very similar picture of Margaret Thatcher. The results indicate that she is a leader who considers the political environment *very friendly* (P-1) and is *optimistic* about her own prospects within that environment (P-2);

who has a *low* conviction in the predictability of the political future and her control over historical development (P-3, P-4); who believes in *cooperation* as a most effective approach in achieving goals (I-1, I-2); who has a *low* tolerance for risk (I-3) and has a *low* level of flexibility in shifting between cooperation and conflict (I-4a) and a *medium* level of flexibility between words and deeds (I-4b). Moreover, Thatcher's preferred tactic (I-5) is convincingly 'Appeal'.

Interestingly, this type of leadership seems to be in line with stereotypically feminine characteristics. As mentioned earlier, male leaders are generally considered aggressive and coercive (Renshon & Renshon, 2008, p.533), assertive and decisive (Jalalzai, 2011, pp. 429-430), war mongering (Caprioli & Boyer, 2001, p.504; Renshon & Renshon, 2008, p.533; Setzler & Yanus, 2017, p.766) and conflictive (Caprioli & Boyer, 2001, p.507). These characteristics are the opposite of Thatcher's non-risk taking, cooperative, optimistic and supportive beliefs that are presented in table 3. Therefore, it can be argued that Thatcher was a stereotypical female leader. This could imply that there is a difference between male and female leadership,

To examine whether gender plays a role in leadership style, the same test that was conducted for Thatcher was also performed on Ronald Reagan. The results of Reagan's operational code analysis are presented in table 4. The table shows a significant change in the P-3, I-1, I-3, I-4a, I-4b, I-5 *appeal* and I-5 *reward* indices. This means that seven out of sixteen indices were different for the public speeches than for the private material.

Table 4. Ronald Reagan's Operational Code: Public versus Private

| | Public (N=9) | Private (N=6) | t | p |
|---------------|------------------------|-------------------------|----------|----------------|
| P-1 | .23 | .32 | -.818 | .428 |
| P-2 | .05 | .09 | -.466 | .649 |
| P-3 | .13 | .18 | -3.02 | .010** |
| P-4 | .28 | .33 | -.603 | .557 |
| P-5 | .96 | .94 | 1.52 | .177 |
| I-1 | .31 | .69 | -2.32 | .038* |
| I-2 | .06 | .23 | -1.46 | .169 |
| I-3 | .25 | .53 | -3.57 | .003** |
| I-4a | .58 | .31 | 2.53 | .025* |
| I-4b | .53 | .11 | 4.38 | .001*** |
| I-5: Punish | .17 | .05 | 2.20 | .052 |
| I-5: Threaten | .08 | .01 | 1.96 | .084 |
| I-5: Oppose | .09 | .11 | -.308 | .763 |
| I-5: Appeal | .48 | .74 | -3.14 | .008** |
| I-5: Promise | .05 | .10 | -.738 | .486 |
| I-5: Reward | .13 | .01 | 4.72 | .001*** |

Data in bold present significant results

*p ≤.05, **p ≤.01, ***p ≤.001

P-3 changed from .13 to .18, which indicates that Reagan's beliefs concerning the predictability of the political universe changed from *low* in public speeches to *low* in private documents. I-1 changed from .31 to .69. This implies that based on public speeches, Reagan's direction of strategy is *somewhat cooperative*, while it is *very cooperative* privately. Another change is found in I-3, in which the index changes from .25 to .53. The change in I-3 represents a *low* risk acceptance in public speeches, while private material presents *medium* risk acceptance. More changes occurred in I4-a from .58 to .31 and I4-b from .53 to .11, meaning that the flexibility of tactics between cooperation and conflict shifts from *medium* to *low*, and between words and deeds from *medium* to *very low*. The change from .48 to .74 in the I-5 *appeal* index indicates that it has a *very high utility* in both public and private documents, while the change in I-5 *reward* from .13 to .01 implies a shift from a *medium utility* in public speeches to *very low* privately.

Since a significant change was found in the P-3, I-1, I-3, I-4a, I-4b, I-5 *appeal* and I-5 *reward* indices, the second hypothesis, *there is no difference between Ronald Reagan's publicly and privately held beliefs, during his time as president*, can also be rejected.

Relative to Reagan's private documents, his public speeches exhibited lower predictability over the political future (P-3). It also presented a more conflictual approach for obtaining goals (I-1) and less tolerance for risk (I-3). Moreover, his flexibility in shifting between cooperation and conflict are higher (I-4a), just as the flexibility in shifting between words and deeds (I-4b). The use of *reward* as a tactic is higher (I-5*reward*) and the utility of *appeal* is lower (I-5*appeal*). While the I-5 *appeal* index is lower in Reagan's public speeches, it is still the preferred tactic with a score of .48. The increase in conflictual strategy (I-1) could indicate a more "masculine" oriented belief in public speeches. However, the other indices do not necessarily imply a shift that could be connected to gender. Only the decrease of the utility of the 'appeal' (I-5) tactic could imply 'masculinity', since it gravitates toward the "masculine" perceived characteristics mentioned earlier. Nevertheless, it should be taken into account that 'appeal' is still the preferred tactic. The change in this index between public and private beliefs should therefore not be interpreted as "more masculine". Based on Reagan's results alone, it cannot be implied that he is a stereotypical male leader.

While comparing the differences and similarities in the public and private beliefs of Thatcher and Reagan, I have decided to focus solely on P-1, P-2, I-1 and I-2. The reason behind this is that only these indices seem to indicate a 'male' or 'female' leadership style, based on the previously mentioned characteristics. The differences generated by the public and private material have not provided reason to assume that gender was a relevant factor when analyzing Reagan individually. However, when compared to Thatcher, notable trend emerges.

While Thatcher's public and private remarks consider the nature of the political universe (P-1) *very friendly*, Reagan's rhetoric deems it *somewhat friendly*. A similar shift occurs in P-2. As Thatcher is *optimistic* about her political prospects, Reagan is *mixed* in both public and private spheres. Thatcher showed to have a *definitely cooperative* political strategy (I-1) publicly, and a *very cooperative* strategy privately. The intensity of her strategy (I-2) can in both cases be considered as *somewhat cooperative*. Reagan's I-1 index measures a *somewhat cooperative* strategy in public speeches and *very cooperative* strategy in his private rhetoric. The intensity (I-2) was *mixed* publicly and *somewhat*

cooperative privately.

By comparing these indices, it becomes apparent that overall, Reagan's views on the nature of the political universe and his own prospects in that universe are less friendly and optimistic than Thatcher's views. Also, Reagan's political strategy is less cooperative than Thatcher's. Taking into account that lower levels of optimism and cooperation can be considered as more "masculine", it can be implied that relative to Thatcher, Reagan is portraying stereotypical 'male' leadership. This could also imply that there is a difference between male and female leadership.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to explore the validity of public statements for measuring the operational code of female leaders. The underlying assumption was that public bias would cause female leaders to be more susceptible to using impression management. This led to the question: *To what extent is there a difference between the publicly and privately held beliefs of Margaret Thatcher during her time as Prime Minister, and if so, is this connected to gender?* The case of Margaret Thatcher has illustrated that there was no difference between the collected public and private material. Initially, this could have suggested that female leaders don't use impression management, which subsequently indicates that public speeches validly measure the operational code in female leaders. However, when the case of Ronald Reagan was introduced to explore the significance of gender on the analysis, the validity of public speeches was refuted. While it was expected that male leaders do not use impression management, it was surprising to find that the operational code for Ronald Reagan was significantly different in the public and private contexts. Consequently, the validity of utilizing public speech to analyze the operational code of Ronald Reagan could not be confirmed.

Not only do these results contradict previous literature that found that male leaders are not likely to use impression management, they also illustrate that measuring the validity of public speech is not a suitable way to explore the influence of gender on leadership. The comparison of Thatcher and Reagan's operational codes did however illustrate

another interesting pattern. Based on assumed gender roles in leadership (e.g. conflictive male leaders and consensual female leaders), it can be argued that Thatcher's operational code had a more 'feminine' direction, whilst Reagan had a more 'masculine' style. This could imply that there is a measurable difference between male and female leaders.

Caution is required when generalizing from these results, since there was a slight disparity in source material; Thatcher's private material consisted of a memoir, while such a source was absent in Reagan's analysis. Although all private material met the conditions to avoid impression management, the lack of uniformity could always induce the risk of different results. Moreover, the results could be case-specific, as they were generated from only one male and one female leader. To substantiate my findings, future research could examine whether the same results are generated using other, perhaps multiple, male and female leaders. In the specific case of Margaret Thatcher, it could also be explored why her public image did not reflect her operational code.

While there are still many questions to be asked, this paper has given at least interesting insights into the influence of gender on leadership.

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Appendix A.: VICS descriptors

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------|------------|----------|--------|----------|------------|-------|----------------|
| P-1: Nature of the Political Universe | | | | | | | | |
| Hostile | | | | | | | | Friendly |
| Extremely | Very | Definitely | Somewhat | Mixed | Somewhat | Definitely | Very | Extremely |
| -1.0 | -0.75 | -0.50 | -0.25 | 0.0 | +0.25 | +0.50 | +0.75 | +1.0 |
| P-2: Realization of Political Values | | | | | | | | |
| Pessimistic | | | | | | | | Optimistic |
| Extremely | Very | Definitely | Somewhat | Mixed | Somewhat | Definitely | Very | Extremely |
| -1.0 | -0.75 | -0.50 | -0.25 | 0.0 | +0.25 | +0.50 | +0.75 | +1.0 |
| P-3: Predictability of Political Future | | | | | | | | |
| Very Low | | Low | | Medium | | High | | Very High |
| 0.0 | | .25 | | .50 | | .75 | | 1.0 |
| P-4: Control Over Historical Development | | | | | | | | |
| Very Low | | Low | | Medium | | High | | Very High |
| 0.0 | | .25 | | .50 | | .75 | | 1.0 |
| P-5: Role of Chance | | | | | | | | |
| Very Low | | Low | | Medium | | High | | Very High |
| 0.0 | | .25 | | .50 | | .75 | | 1.0 |
| I-1: Direction of Strategy | | | | | | | | |
| Conflict | | | | | | | | Cooperation |
| Extremely | Very | Definitely | Somewhat | Mixed | Somewhat | Definitely | Very | Extremely |
| -1.0 | -0.75 | -0.50 | -0.25 | 0.0 | +0.25 | +0.50 | +0.75 | +1.0 |
| I-2: Intensity of Tactics | | | | | | | | |
| Conflict | | | | | | | | Cooperation |
| Extremely | Very | Definitely | Somewhat | Mixed | Somewhat | Definitely | Very | Extremely |
| -1.0 | -0.75 | -0.50 | -0.25 | 0.0 | +0.25 | +0.50 | +0.75 | +1.0 |
| I-3: Risk Orientation | | | | | | | | |
| Risk Averse | | | | | | | | Risk Acceptant |
| Very Low | | Low | | Medium | | High | | Very High |
| 0.0 | | .25 | | .50 | | .75 | | 1.0 |
| I-4a: Flexibility of Tactics (between Cooperation and Conflict) | | | | | | | | |
| Very Low | | Low | | Medium | | High | | Very High |
| 0.0 | | .25 | | .50 | | .75 | | 1.0 |
| I-4b: Flexibility of Tactics (between Words and Deeds) | | | | | | | | |
| Very Low | | Low | | Medium | | High | | Very High |
| 0.0 | | .25 | | .50 | | .75 | | 1.0 |
| I-5: Utility of Means (Appeal, Promise, Reward, Oppose, Threaten, Punish) | | | | | | | | |
| Very Low | | Low | | Medium | | High | | Very High |
| 0.0 | | .08 | | .16 | | .24 | | .32 |

Source: Walker, Schafer and Young (2003)

Appendix B: Public and Private Material of Thatcher and Reagan

Margaret Thatcher:

Public material:

1. Speech accepting Donovan Award (“The Defence of Freedom”) – 28 February 1981
<https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104584>
2. Speech to the Canadian Parliament – 22 June 1988
<https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107271>
3. Speech to Conservative Women’s Conference* - 25 May 1988
<https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107248>
4. Speech at Soviet Official Banquet – 30 March 1987
<https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/106776>
5. Speech to Malaysian Institute of Public Administration (INTAN) – 6 April 1985
<https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/106010>
6. Speech to Joint Houses of Congress – 20 Feb 1985
<https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/105968>
7. Speech to Indo-British Association dinner – 23 March 1982
<https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104902>
8. Speech opening London G7 Summit – 8 June 1984
<https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/105699>
9. Speech at Lord Mayor’s Banquet – 10 November 1986
<https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/106512>

* The sections on domestic policy were edited out.

Private material:

1. MT message to Reagan (agenda for G7 and NATO summits) – 28 May 1982
<https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/123339>
2. MT memoir (“Notes on the Emergency Cabinet Committee”) – 3 April 1983
<https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/139104>

3. MT messages to Heads of State (Economic Summit) – 14 December 1983
<https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/145502>
4. TV interview for London Weekend Television *Weekend World* (“Victorian Values”) – 16 January 1983
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