# Introduction

Women leaders face a dilemma: they are expected to display traditional “masculine” leadership traits such as toughness and assertiveness, while simultaneously satisfying voters’ expectations of traditionally “feminine” traits like empathy, warmth and caring (Schneider; Schneider, 2016). During periods of crisis, however, these dynamics might work differently. Existing research has shown that crises brought on by terrorism and war, stereotypically male domains (Lawless 2004), create support for male candidates more than female candidates. However, a crisis in public health—a stereotypically female domain—may enable female leaders’ appeals to their constituents by demonstrating traditionally female characteristics (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993). The current crisis provides the first modern opportunity to study these dynamics.

This project will address this puzzle in two ways. First, we will use observational data from Twitter to determine whether female governors in the United States discuss the covid-19 epidemic differently from their male counterparts. For example, do female leaders rely more on emotional and moral appeals than male leaders? We will also investigate how Twitter users respond to different appeals conditional on the gender of the politician. Second, to better identify the causal mechanisms at work, we will test the patterns we find in the observational data using a conjoint experiment with American MTurk users. We ask the following two research questions:

**RQ1:** *Do female governors address the pandemic in a different way?*

**RQ2:** *Are female governors interacted with differently on social media when they address the pandemic?* *And if so, why?*

# Observational analysis:

**Objective:** are there any patterns in how people behave on Twitter and how they are interacted with?

* Collect Tweets from governors. We use governors and not other politicians because they are more directly in control of the pandemic.
  + NOTE: I think it would still be stronger if we look at all members of congress. I am still worried something specific about one of the few female governors would drive the results otherwise.
* With the observational analysis we answer both research questions:
  + (1) Do female governors address the pandemic in a different way?
    - This is a simple difference in means: what is the difference in moral and emotional appeals in tweets containing the word COVID between men and women. That is, we use descriptive data on number of Tweets on COVID and their level of emotion.
  + (2) Are female governors interacted with differently on social media when they address the pandemic?
    - Here we can use regression and explore the relationship between re-tweets & comments, gender, and covid cases.
      * *Main explanatory variable:* candidate gender
      * *Outcome variables:* number of interactions with tweets that reference COVID (likes, re-tweets, comments); hostility in the comments (<http://www.perspectiveapi.com/#/home> ).
      * *Potential interaction effects:* candidate gender X covid cases.

# Conjoint experiment:

**Objective:** any patterns we found above, are they causal and can they be explained by the specific nature of the pandemic?

## Selecting Tweets to use in the Conjoint:

* Make a list of the most extreme Tweets based on observational analysis.
* Let an MTurk sample classify these tweets according to several labels we provide (e.g. emotional appeal or moral appeal). This ensures two things. First, it shows that we have not selected these Tweets as random. Second, it makes sure we know the average respondent sees these Tweets the same way we do.

## The Conjoint

* A standard Conjoint with candidate profiles. The profiles include several recent ‘Tweets’ by the specific politician. These Tweets can be moral, emotional, or a control Tweet. This tests whether a particular type of communication is more effective.
* Above the candidate comparison, we add a treatment vignette that labels the Covid crisis according to a particular frame: a health crisis, a national security crisis, an economic crisis, or a control vignette. This tests whether a particular type of communication is more effective if the COVID crisis is framed in a particular way.
  + The purpose of the vignette is to show that the effect of using specific rhetoric in combination with candidate gender is indeed different based on the framing of COVID.
  + The exact estimation would thus be a triple interaction: candidate gender X a specific tweet X the treatment vignette.
  + We can also do the same estimation without gender, then we would ask whether using specific framing in a Tweet has a larger effect on a candidate being selected if the COVID crisis is framed in a particular way.