

# POSITION CONGRUITY BIAS: WHY VOTERS IN VIETNAM MAY BE PARTICULARLY BIASED AGAINST WOMEN AS VILLAGE LEADERS

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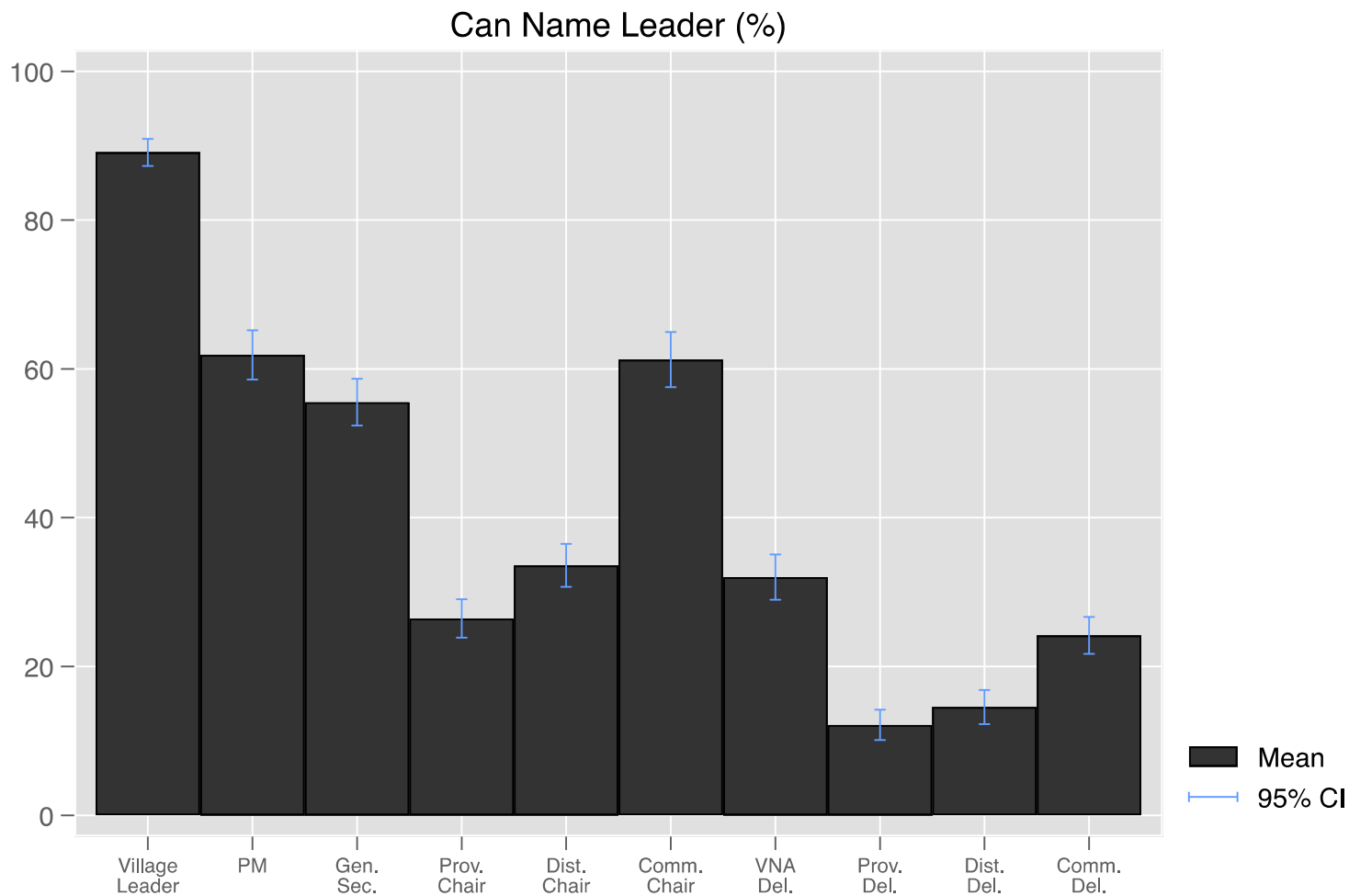
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# Importance of Women's Representation

- Why is women's representation important?
  - Some women officials have different policy priorities compared to men
  - More diversity improves decision making
  - Other women more likely to enter politics
  - Other women pay more attention to politics
- Women **village leaders** especially important
  - Village leaders most visible position in Vietnam

# Ability to Name Different Positions (PAPI 2020 Survey)



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  - Village leaders most visible position in Vietnam
  - Village leaders are important role models
  - Village leaders advocate for villager interests
- When women randomly assigned as village leaders in India...
  - Girls' educational attainment increased
  - Gender norms shifted
  - Perception of women's leadership skills improved
- **Women's leadership matters at national and local levels**

# Political Representation in Vietnam

- Vietnam government has prioritized increasing women's representation
  - **However, quotas only for legislative positions (People's Council and National Assembly)**
  - Recent election law mandates 30% quota for women candidates
  - Executive positions at local and national levels less considered
- Why important?
  - Women occupy fewer executive leadership positions
  - Village leaders low at an estimated 12% (according to random sample of

Position	Percentage
<u>Village Leader</u>	<u>12</u>
General Secretary/Prime Minister	0
Province People's Committee Chair	3.12
District People's Committee Chair	3.02
Commune People's Committee Chair	3.42
National Assembly Delegates	27
Province People's Council Delegates	25.7
District People's Council Delegates	24.62
Commune People's Council Delegates	27.71

# Research Questions

- Research question 1:
  - Why are women rare in village leadership positions?
  - Are voters partly responsible? Do voters not want women village leaders?
- Research question 2:
  - Are voters more biased against women holding village leadership positions than other positions? If so, why?
- Why are these questions important?
  - Quotas are partly designed to overcome voter bias
  - If voters are particularly biased against women village leaders, this could justify push for quotas at village level
  - At the same time, if voters are biased, it would mean such a policy could face opposition

# Existing Theory: Why Voters Might Not Want Women Village Leaders

- Theory 1: Voters are hostile to women
  - Voters might simply oppose active women in the public sphere
  - Implication: Voters don't want women to hold any positions regardless of the level of government
  - **Prediction: Voters no more biased against women holding village leadership positions than other positions**
- Theory 2: "Role congruity"
  - Voters not biased against women; voters think women don't have required traits or policy expertise
  - Implication: Voters who want "strong leaders" or experts in defense for certain positions will be less likely to want women for those positions
  - **Prediction: Voters more biased against women village leaders if they expect them to hold "male" traits**



# My Theory: “Village Security Chief”

- My prediction
  - Voters **are** more biased against women village leaders compared to other positions
  - Bias not due to **hostility** or expectations that village heads are **strong leaders**
- My theory
  - Village leaders in rural areas responsible for mobilizing contributions to **infrastructure**
  - Village leaders must encourage villagers to **contribute labor and money** to road construction in rural communes
  - Voters may assume that **men** have more expertise in infrastructure and ability to convince men to contribute **labor** to projects
- Hypotheses
  - H1: Voters should bias more against women village leaders than women in other positions
  - H2: Bias against women village leaders should be higher in rural areas than urban areas

# Data and Methods

- **Data**

- Three waves of the PAPI survey (2019-2021)
- Dependent variable: "Would you prefer a man, women, or it doesn't matter for [randomly select – village leader/meso-level executive/national-level executive/legislator]"
- DV: 1 if man, 0 if woman or neither
- IV: Level of government

- **Legislative**

Commune People's Council Delegate  
 District People's Council Delegate  
 Province People's Council Delegate  
 National Assembly Delegate

- **Meso-Executive**

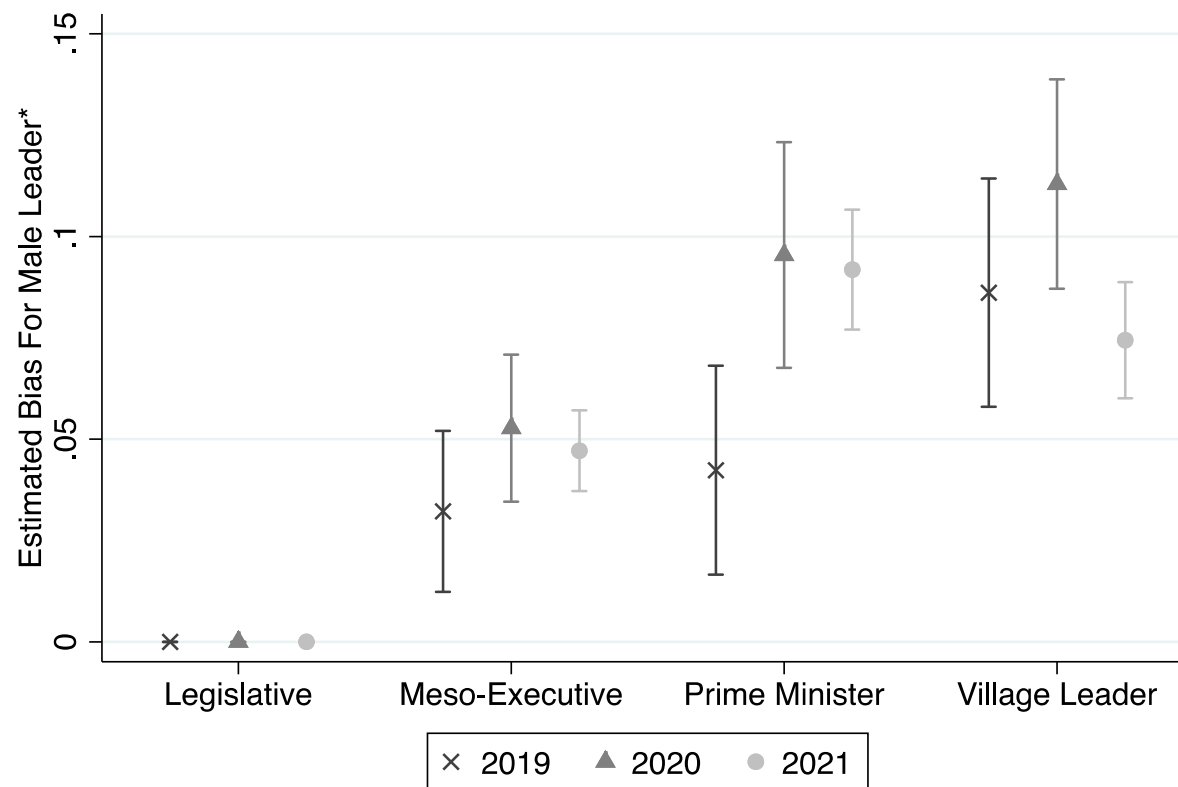
Commune Party Secretary  
 Commune People's Committee Chair  
 District Party Secretary  
 District People's Committee Chair  
 Province Party Secretary  
 Province People's Committee Chair

- **National Executive**

Prime Minister  
 Party General Secretary

- **Village Leader**

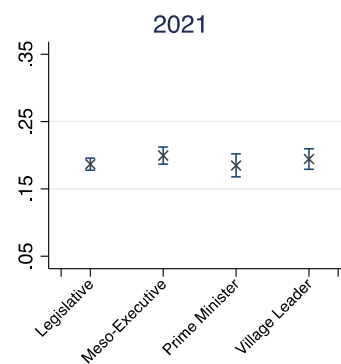
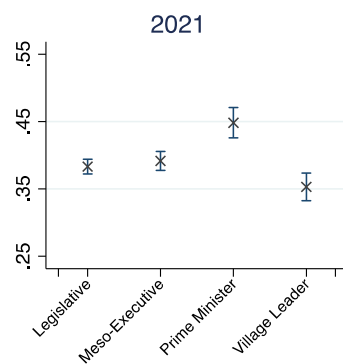
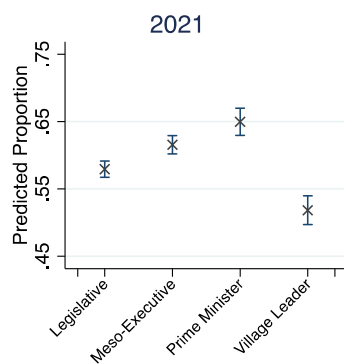
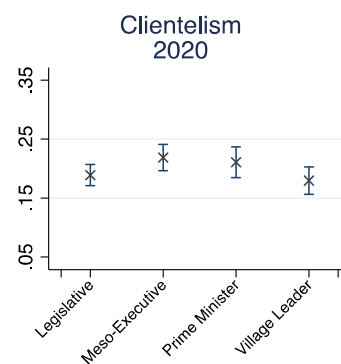
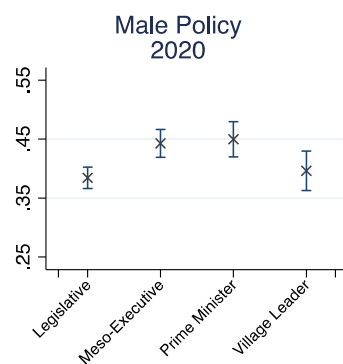
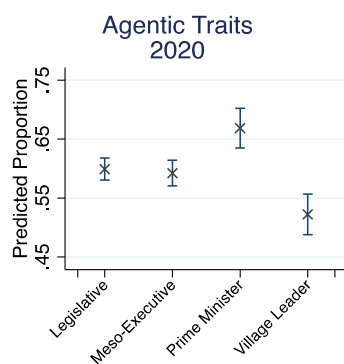
# Results



# Results

- Voter hostility towards women does not explain bias
  - Bias varies across positions
  - Voters 7-8% more biased against women village leaders than women legislators
  - ***Voters as biased against women village leaders as prime minister***
- Question
  - Is it "role congruity" where voters expect "strong leaders" at village level (like for PM)?
  - Is it the case that voters expect village leaders to deal with "male" issues like economics, security and defense?
  - Is it the case that voters think male village leaders can deliver patronage?
- Two tests to address to address these questions
  - Voter bias **should not be associated with male traits or male policy expertise**
  - Voter bias should be higher against women village leaders in rural areas compared to urban **only for village leader positions**

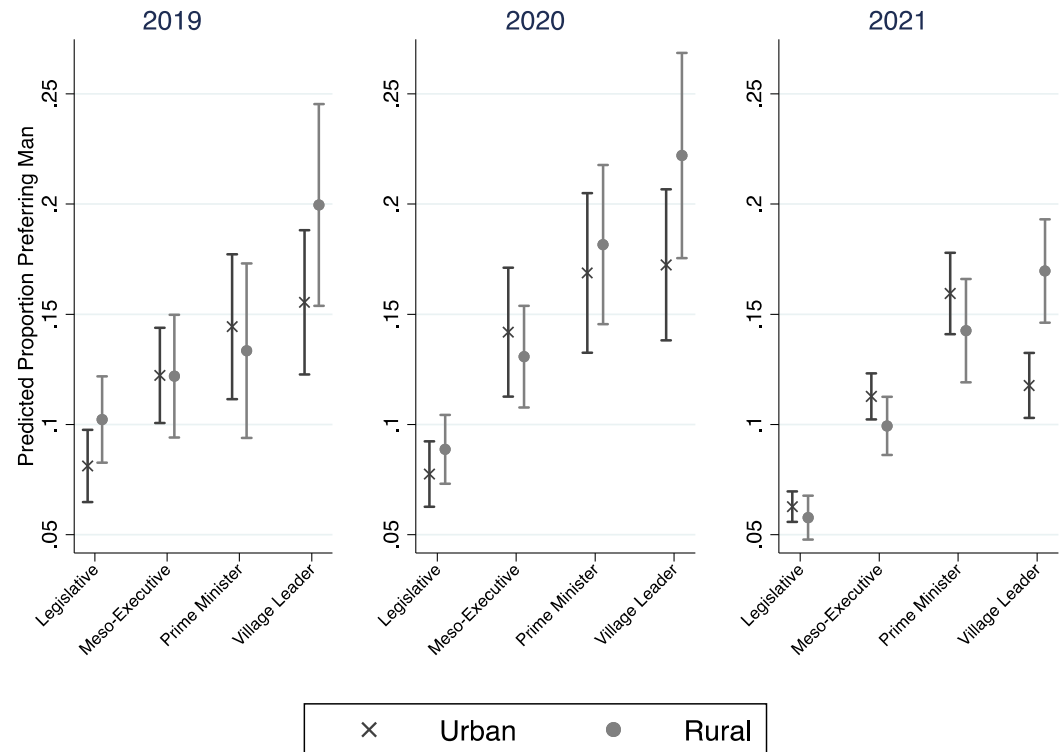
# Male Traits and Positions



- Village leadership positions not associated with “male traits”
- Village leadership positions not associated with “male policy” expertise
- Village leadership positions not associated with clientelism and patronage

# Rural Voters and Village Leader Bias

- Bias against village leaders *is higher* in rural areas than urban areas
- Bias against women for other positions is *no different* in rural areas than urban areas

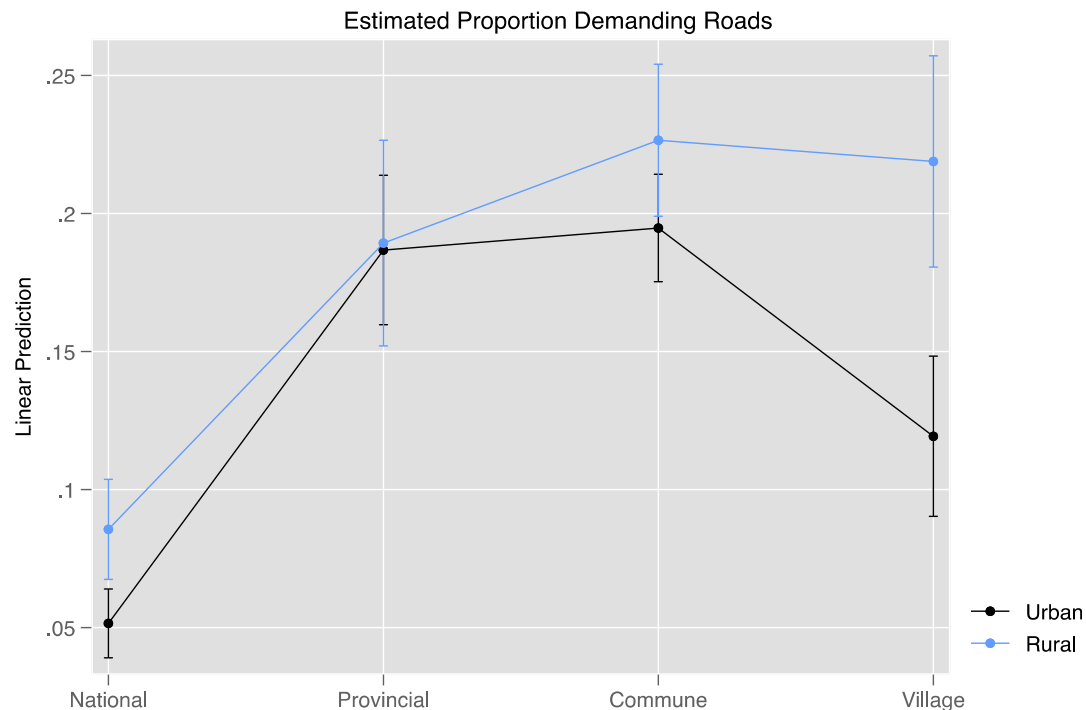


# Mechanism

- Why are rural voters more biased against village leaders
  - My explanation: Village leaders in rural areas more involved in infrastructure projects
- Alternate explanations
  - Village leaders more important in rural areas **[No evidence]**
  - Villagers have contact with village leaders in rural areas **[No evidence]**
  - Village leaders associated with traditional roles in rural areas **[No evidence]**
  - Fewer women village leader role models in rural areas **[No evidence]**

# Mechanism

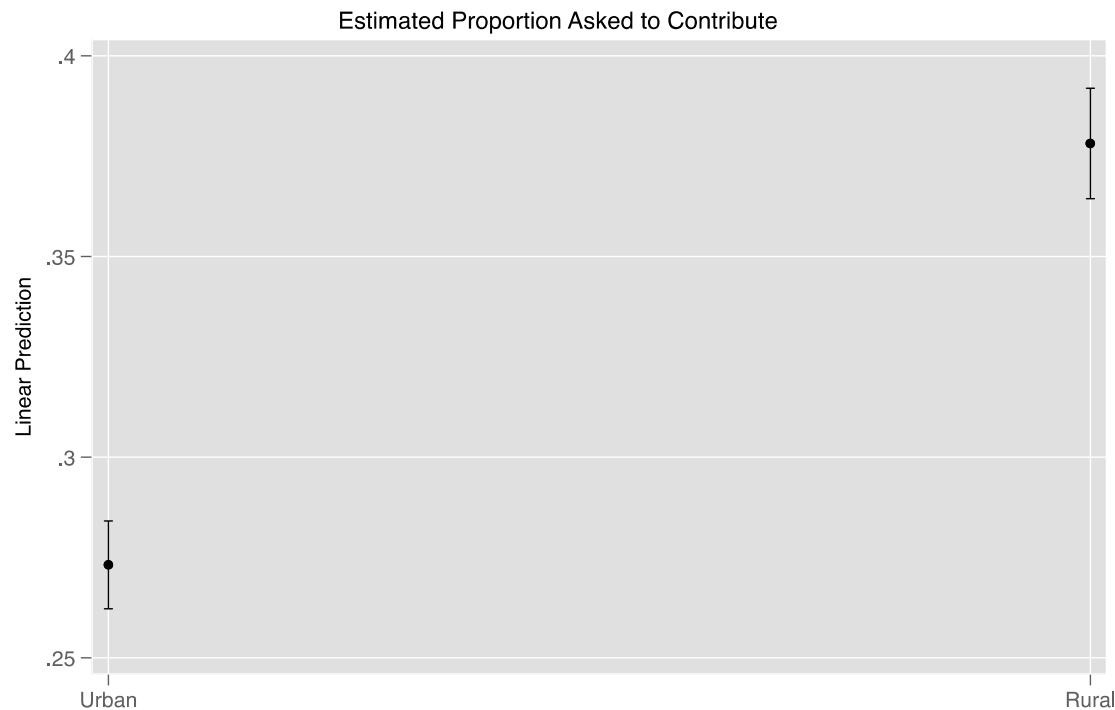
- Question: What issue do you think the [village leader/ provincial government/national gov't] should address?
  - Prediction – Roads and infrastructure should be higher for village leaders in rural areas compared to urban





# Mechanism

- Survey question: Were you asked to make voluntary contributions in the past year?
  - Prediction – Voters in rural areas should be asked more often to provide voluntary contributions



# Conclusion

- Research question 1:
  - Why are women rare in village leadership positions?
  - Are voters partly responsible? Do voters not want them?
  - **Voters are especially biased against women village leaders**
- Research question 2: Why?
  - Rural voters demand infrastructure from village leaders
  - Village leaders must mobilize contributions for projects
  - Voters find men more appropriate for these roles
- Importance
  - Quotas required for legislative positions where bias is lowest
  - Village leaders could be target for quotas
  - Quotas might face resistance