

The Impact of #MeToo

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Until recent decades, it was often assumed that a leader's power was accompanied by sexual privilege. The term "sexual harassment" was rarely used before the confirmation hearings of Clarence Thomas, a US Supreme Court justice, in 1991. In 2017, the Twitter hashtag #MeToo led to further changes in public opinion and to a plethora of accusations and lawsuits. Sexual aggressors were brought to justice and new laws were introduced, but there was backlash against #MeToo as well. This chapter explores how the movement has affected both women and men in leadership positions, and how #MeToo has played out in different parts of the world.

The phenomenon known as #MeToo started in 2017 on a social media platform, but the intersection between leadership and human sexuality, and between power and sexual privilege, has a long history. It includes, for example, the supposed right (the *droit de seigneur*) of a feudal lord to have sexual intercourse with a vassal's bride on her wedding night. In many cultures, superior male power (which could be position or age or money or influence) has granted men a certain license in their speech and behavior towards women. Even in cultures where overt physical aggression has been illegal, the more powerful a man, the more latitude he has been given.

Having sexual access to many women has been a sign of status, and what we now call sexual harassment was often have been seen as proof of a man's virility. Sexual aggressiveness and dominance was seen as a natural, even essential, attribute of a powerful leader. In casual speech, male power is often summed up as "having balls," which means being virile, potent, and able to perform sexually. A powerful man has been expected to have a strong sex drive, and the burdens he takes on as a leader are thought to give him a greater than average need for sexual relief.

But a consideration of how sexual interactions affect women in leadership is relatively new. In the anthology *Women and Leadership: The State of Play and Strategies for Change* (Kellerman et al. 2007), for example, there is no reference to sexual relations or sexual harassment. The chapter "Isn't She Delightful? Creating Relationships That Get Women to the Top (and Keep Them There)" opens with the acknowledgement that for some women the passage to power and influence

occurs “by virtue of a relationship with someone on the inside, such as a husband or father,” but there is no consideration of how the passage to power might have been the “casting couch” (on which women were expected to exchange sexual favors for advancement) or its equivalent. The word “sex” is not in the index, nor is “harassment.”

The #MeToo movement began in the US entertainment industry in 2017. It grew quickly, as women began to share their stories online. Within months, men in political, academic, and business leadership positions came under scrutiny for behaviors that ranged from sexual talk and excessive hugging (and other physical gestures that women felt as an invasion of their personal space) to more overt aggression, including ordering women to watch masturbation, forceable touching, and rape. This has raised questions about the responsibilities and rights of leaders, and the standard they should be held to. It has also led to backlash. In some cases, the backlash against seems to have encouraged or supported strong-man leaders who clamp down on women’s rights and seek to limit their ability to speak out.

This chapter provides historical background and then focuses on the more recent impact of what is generally called the #MeToo movement. We use the hashtag #MeToo as the umbrella term it has become, defining an ongoing effort to reveal the experience of sexual harassment: demeaning or aggressive actions directed mostly at women and mostly by men. We also consider what #MeToo, and related discussion of sexuality and power, means for men and women, and how it is affecting our ideas about leaders and followers.

Twentieth-century Attitudes

During the 1970s, as women began to enter the workforce in greater numbers, many old attitudes about sexual behavior remained in place. Women who were raped often found themselves confronting a legal system more concerned with what they had been wearing or why they were out late at night than what had happened to them. Social psychologists have noted that “[u]nlike many other interpersonal crimes such as robberies or muggings, victims of sexual assault are particularly vulnerable to being blamed for their attack” (Gravelin, Biernat, and Bucher 2019). This was also true for women who encountered sexual harassment in the workplace.

Prior to the 1980s, there were few laws criminalizing this kind of behavior; the term “sexual harassment” was not even in common use until the mid-1970s. The majority of women who endured workplace harassment were often told to accept it as just the way things were (Bennett 2019). And if a woman decided to complain, she often found that it made things worse: her male colleagues tended to defend the man she was accusing and blame her for encouraging his behavior through how she acted or how she dressed (Bongiorno, et al. 2020).

This was largely the state of affairs in 1991 when a lawyer named Anita Hill testified during the confirmation hearings for US Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas that he had sexually harassed her while he was her supervisor at the Department of Education and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Hill, a woman of color, faced harsh and skeptical questioning from the all-male and all-white Senate Judiciary Committee, chaired by then-Senator Joe Biden. She

later recalled that the senators did not take her seriously or properly investigate her allegations (Noveck 2021).

Even the general public seemed to doubt her story: surveys conducted at the time showed that 70 percent of respondents thought Hill had committed perjury (Bennett 2019). Thomas was confirmed as a Supreme Court justice on 15 October 1991, and Hill went back to her job as a professor at the University of Oklahoma. The senators who had treated her condescendingly and even accused her of lying faced no consequences (Stolberg 2014).

But the story did not end there. All across the country, Hill's experience resonated with women. The phrase "they just don't get it" became commonplace. Women's advocacy groups began receiving a growing number of phone calls and letters from women who not only identified with the harassment Hill had testified about, but who had also been treated dismissively when they reported it. Marcia D. Greenberger, founder and co-president of the National Women's Law Center, based in Washington DC, noted that male politicians were suddenly changing their tune and expressing strong opposition to sexual harassment. The same was true with some corporate executives, who promised to improve conditions for their female employees. But Greenberger also noted that without legislation, including the ability to seek monetary damages, victims would have little protection if they came forward (Moore 1991).

Later in October 1991, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1991, which included provisions allowing women who had been sexually harassed to sue, although it was criticized by advocates for having a cap on how much a victim could receive. Greenberger called the limits "indefensible" and vowed to work to get them removed (Zaldivar and Moore 1991). Unfortunately, those efforts were unsuccessful, and the limits remained in place.

The Earlier Origin of #MeToo

In 1997, Tarana Burke, an African-American social activist and community organizer, was working at a youth camp in Selma, Alabama when a thirteen-year-old girl confided in her about being sexually assaulted by her mother's boyfriend. As she later recalled, "I didn't have a response or a way to help her in that moment, and I couldn't even say 'me too'" (Garcia 2017). The incident haunted Burke since she was a survivor of sexual assault herself (Kantor 2021).

She started a discussion group on social media, a space where women and girls could share their experiences, and benefit from knowing that others had been there and survived. She decided to give her virtual community the name Me Too, to represent the need for compassion and empathy that survivors were seeking (Ohlheiser 2017).

While the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas hearings inspired some women to run for political office, society's attitudes were slow to change. Women still found that if they reported an assault or an incidence of harassment, their version of events was often discounted. This was especially true if the person they were accusing was wealthy or influential.

Rumors about R. Kelly's behavior, for example, had circulated since the mid-1990s. Kelly was a successful R&B vocalist who had sold millions of records,

in addition to writing and producing numerous hit songs. But for more than two decades, he was repeatedly accused of having sex with underage girls, as well as possessing child pornography. Although he was arrested several times, no charges against him ever seemed to stick. Women and girls who came forward were offered cash settlements, which depended on them signing a non-disclosure agreement, forbidding them from talking about their claims again. Evidence later surfaced that record company executives also had made excuses or covered for him as long as he kept turning out hits (Edgers 2018).

In October 2016, Donald Trump, another high-profile celebrity with an aura of invincibility, bragged on tape during his presidential campaign that because he was famous, he could do whatever he wanted with women, even “grab them by the pussy” (Sullivan 2020). Prior to this, eleven women had accused him of sexual harassment, but he had attacked their credibility and said their claims were “pure fiction.” His supporters rallied around him, and he was eventually elected president, receiving the votes of 53 percent of white female voters (Mayer 2017).

The Tipping Point (Perhaps)

Later in the year that Trump took office, the movement we know as #MeToo began. The issue of sexual harassment and abuse, something that has always been part of the human experience, ignited. This seems to be the result of historical synchronicity: women’s anger over the 2016 US presidential election; a major press investigation of a powerful Hollywood figure, and the ubiquity of celebrity social media.

On 5 October 2017, the *New York Times* published the results of an investigation, which would later win a Pulitzer Prize, focusing on a powerful man who had been rumored to harass and assault women for decades: Hollywood movie mogul Harvey Weinstein. The allegations went back to 1990. In 2015, there was a police investigation but the charges were dropped.

For their groundbreaking report, Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey interviewed numerous female actors as well as some of Weinstein’s employees. These women accused Weinstein of coercing them to engage in sex, or in some cases, forcing himself upon them. Some said he told them that having sex with him would advance their careers, while refusing would thwart any hopes they might have for future roles. Further, as the reporters explained, “Mr. Weinstein enforced a code of silence; employees of the Weinstein Company have contracts saying they will not criticize it or its leaders in a way that could harm its ‘business reputation’ or ‘any employee’s personal reputation.’” Weinstein’s behavior was well-known by his colleagues, both male and female, but few dared to speak out about it or confront him. And, also like R. Kelly, when Weinstein reached settlements with eight of his victims, he made sure they signed non-disclosure agreements (Kantor and Twohey 2017).

More high-profile movie stars spoke out about Weinstein’s abusive behavior, not only describing what Weinstein had done (or tried to do), but also discussing how powerless they had felt, given his ability to make or break their careers. Within days, a majority of the Weinstein Company’s board members decided they had heard enough, and they voted to fire him.

“I see this as a tipping point,” Jenni Konner, executive producer of the HBO series *Girls*, told a *Times* reporter. Now, things would start to change for the better,

Konner said, because Weinstein’s firing “[will] scare any man in Hollywood using his power for anything but making movies and television” (Twohey 2017).

Reporters reached out to Anita Hill, who pointed out that what matters in sexual-harassment cases is “believability,” and that means the accusers “have to fit a narrative” that the public will accept. Noting that women who are not famous and attractive are often treated very differently from well-known entertainers, she said, “[P]eople often believe the myth that only conventionally beautiful women are harassed—and so it didn’t seem that far-fetched to people that this would happen to beautiful starlets” (Mayer 2017).

Then Tarana Burke noticed something in her feed: the hashtag #Me Too. She was puzzled, because she had intentionally avoided promoting her 2006 online advocacy group; she believed the survivors of sexual assault she was working with, the majority of whom were young women of color, needed a private space to discuss their experiences. She soon found out why: on 15 October, the actor Alyssa Milano had tweeted an invitation: “If you’ve been sexually harassed or assaulted write ‘me too’ as a reply to this tweet.” The response was almost immediate, and within a few days, the tweet had been shared millions of times (Brockes 2018).

Milano was informed of the origins of Me Too, and she reached out to Burke, tweeting “I was just made aware of an earlier #MeToo movement, and the origin story is equal parts heartbreaking and inspiring,” while linking to the website of Burke’s non-profit Just Be Inc. Burke was able to inform those who were unfamiliar with her years of advocacy that she created “Me Too” as a way to “remind women, particularly women of color, that they are not alone,” and that the goal was “empowerment through empathy” (Guerra 2017).

When *Time* magazine named its Person of the Year for 2017, the magazine’s cover showed a group of people—Ashley Judd, Susan Fowler, Adama Iwu, Taylor Swift and Isabel Pascual—whom they called “the silence breakers,” saying that these women represented hundreds of others, some famous, many not (Zacharek, Dockterman, and Edwards 2017). They were from different occupations, different socioeconomic backgrounds, different races. But they all had one thing in common: because they had spoken up about the sexual harassment or abuse they had endured, previously powerful men had been held accountable.

Later that year, the *New York Times* was able to compile a long list of famous men who were either forced to resign or were fired as a result of accusations against them. In addition to Harvey Weinstein, the list included celebrity chef Mario Batali, comedian Louis C.K., owner of the National Football League’s Carolina Panthers Jerry Richardson, co-host of NBC’s “Today Show” Matt Lauer, co-founder of Def-Jam Records Russell Simmons, and actor Kevin Spacey. An entire season of the *Great American Baking Show* was pulled, and never aired, because of harassment claims against host Johnny Iuzzini.

#MeToo Around the World

The #MeToo phenomenon quickly spread across the world. Women began telling their stories and confronting the men who had assaulted or harassed them. But not every country welcomed this new openness, or supported the concept of women’s rights.

And the subject was perceived in different ways, even in modern democratic countries. While #MeToo lit up the educated elite in the United States, it was not received rapturously by everyone. Even as French women exposed the behavior of male colleagues with the hashtag #ExposeYourPig, for example, a letter signed by more than 100 prominent Frenchwomen began to circulate, criticizing the movement for going too far: “Rape is a crime. But insistent or clumsy flirting is not a crime, nor is gallantry a chauvinist aggression. As a result of the Weinstein affair, there has been a legitimate realization of the sexual violence women experience, particularly in the workplace, where some men abuse their power. It was necessary. But now this liberation of speech has been turned on its head.”

This discussion had been going on in France since 2011, when Dominique Strauss-Kahn, a politician who was managing director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and considered a contender for the French presidency, was arrested in New York for sexual assault against a hotel maid. He was eventually acquitted, but the case nonetheless provoked discussion about the supposed entitlements of a powerful man.

Even as arguments rage in France about “wokeism,” the movement had impact: there have been official investigations, men have lost their positions or been banished from public life, and the legal system is responding to a new understanding of consent. Georges Tron, a former government minister, was convicted of rape in February 2021 and given a five-year prison sentence in an appeals court ruling, after having been cleared of the charge in 2018.

In Japan, few victims of sexual assault have ever come forward, and those who did were subjected to vilification and blame. “Female lawmakers, especially in their early years, do not have a strong foundation of support, and when they are harassed, they have a hard time speaking up about their experiences because they think that they have to tolerate it to gather votes,” according to Mari Hamada, the head of Stand By Women, a Tokyo-based organization that supports female legislators and assembly members who have experienced sexual harassment.

But in 2017, journalist Shiori Ito summoned the courage to publicly accuse television executive Noriyuki Yamaguchi of raping her in 2015. She credited the #MeToo movement with giving her the confidence to speak up. “I thought ‘It wasn’t only me!’ and I believe there were others who thought so, too,” she said. “I saw women in Europe or the United States actively discussing it and standing up together but I didn’t think that happened in Japan at the same time” (McCurry 2019). Ito, who ultimately won a civil suit against Yamaguchi, was named one of *Time’s* 100 Most Influential People of 2020 for her efforts in giving a voice to Japanese victims of sexual violence.

In Nigeria, women who spoke up were often told to “prove it,” and instead of investigating the charges, law enforcement frequently believed the men and called the women’s morals into question. Photographer Busola Dakolo went on television to speak about how her former pastor had raped her when she was in her teens. The pastor, Biodun Fatoyinbo, was still very influential and he had a large following. He denied her accusations, and instead of an investigation, Dakolo was visited by the police, who told her she was suspected of participating in a criminal conspiracy. But despite ongoing attempts to intimidate her, Dakolo remained determined to

be heard; her efforts encouraged other Nigerian women to come forward, even if speaking up often resulted in criticism and shaming.

In China, a well-known tennis professional, Peng Shuai, disappeared from social media and public view after writing an account on Weibo about being coerced into sex by a prominent leader, Zhang Gaoli. Her post was deleted after having been widely shared on social media. After a public outcry and protests by sports organizations—but not by the International Olympic Committee (IOC)—the government released videos and photographs purporting to show her in good spirits. During the 2022 Winter Olympics she was escorted by officials to interviews at which she denied her former claims. Her silencing provides an example of the Chinese approach known as “kill the chicken to scare the monkeys.”

A major problem in many countries is a legal system that does not offer victims of assault or harassment much protection. In India, for example, the #MeToo movement encouraged large numbers of women to speak openly about the harassment they endured at work or talk about the men who believed there was nothing wrong with forcing a woman to have sex. But there was seldom any follow-up when women spoke out; unless the story involved a high-profile celebrity, the media rarely covered it, and the police rarely investigated. As one female journalist remarked, “In India, women still have limited access to justice—unless their stories are used as trauma porn for the nation” (Chatterjee 2020).

In Australia, women have accused the legal system of protecting the men who harassed them. In late 2017, the #MeToo movement led many women to tell their stories; and some of those stories were about bad behavior by famous men, including the Oscar-winning actor Geoffrey Rush. But Rush sued a tabloid that reported on these allegations, and he won a large settlement. As an Australian reporter explained, this is typical of the Australian justice system, which “has some of the most restrictive defamation laws in the world, which heavily favor the plaintiff.” Knowing that a victim’s statement could lead to a defamation suit has had a “chilling effect” on women who want to see the men who harassed or assaulted them held accountable (Funnell 2020).

#MeToo in Court: Successes and Failures

Considerable progress has been made in holding many high-profile men accountable for their behavior. R. Kelly was brought to justice in September 2021, found guilty of nine counts, including racketeering and sex trafficking. For participants in the #MeToo movement, Kelly’s conviction sent an important message about inclusivity. Previously, the high-profile men who were held accountable were mostly white, as were the majority of their accusers. But R. Kelly was Black, and most of his accusers were also Black. Activists noted that historically, the claims of Black women and girls were frequently dismissed, but in this case, finally, they were believed. As a law professor and former district attorney explained, “When you have girls who aren’t famous, they’re not stars in their own right—and they’re Black—it becomes so easy for people to overlook their suffering and to cast it aside so the status quo can be preserved” (Closson 2021).

But while some advocates were encouraged that more women were being taken seriously than in past decades, not everyone was optimistic that this #MeToo-inspired

change would last. Some men feel that #MeToo claims go too far, penalizing men for minor and unwitting transgressions. The political right, where the strong-man style of leadership is welcome, sees #MeToo as a threat to traditional power dynamics and the personal license that has been part of having political power. It's notable that even in the conservative Southern Baptist Convention, a 2022 report found that the leadership had turned a blind eye to pervasive claims of sexual harassment and abuse by men in power..

Legal results have been mixed. Actor and comedian Bill Cosby, who had been accused of sexual assault or harassment by more than fifty women over five decades, was convicted of drugging and molesting Andrea Constand in 2018. But Cosby maintained his innocence and appealed his conviction, and it was overturned by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in 2021.

During the 2018 hearing to confirm Judge Brett Kavanaugh to the US Supreme Court, the psychologist and professor Christine Blasey Ford accused him of sexual assault back when they were both in their teens. He angrily denied the accusation, and was ultimately confirmed.

#MeToo posed some difficulty for the Democratic Party, which in 2016 had nominated Hillary Clinton to run for president of the United States. As the wife of former president Bill Clinton, she had been known for standing by him, and was accused of denigrating women who accused him of sexual harassment. When he was impeached over lying about an affair with an intern, a progressive effort was given the name "Move On," meaning that the country should move past the president's personal behavior. #MeToo contradicted that approach to misbehavior on the part of a prominent person, instead insisting that everyone should be held accountable.

New York State governor Andrew Cuomo, who was a prominent Democratic Party politician who won accolades for his leadership during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, was forced to resign from office in 2021 after the release of a report by state attorney general that detailed many cases of sexual harassment by Cuomo. While his removal was applauded, it also led to the resignation of two prominent women in the #MeToo movement. The chair, Roberta Kaplan, and the chief executive, Tina Tchen, of the sexual harassment victims' advocacy group Time's Up, resigned from the organization after it was revealed that they had advised Cuomo about how to counter his accusers.

Mary Shannon Little, a former federal prosecutor, wondered why even women who were famous still felt unwilling to come forward. Looking back at the testimonies that helped to bring down men like Matt Lauer and Harvey Weinstein, who was eventually convicted and sentenced to twenty-three years for rape and criminal sexual acts, she noted that many people had failed the victims, including "the corporate boards, CEOs, and senior managers [who were] responsible for keeping their employees safe." And, citing the Matt Lauer story, she found it hard to believe that the decision-makers at NBC were unaware of his behavior. "Did [the network] promote a culture where staffers feared retaliation if they snitched on the golden gander? Or had victims and witnesses complained before and nothing happened?" (Little 2017). If most companies were more concerned about protecting their highest earners or biggest names, and regarded accusations against them as just a nuisance, would things just go back to the way they were, as soon as reporters moved on to some other big story?

Other advocates were concerned that while certain well-known men were being held to account, the average woman facing sexual harassment at her job might not receive such a favorable outcome. Further, advocates in minority communities continued to worry about whether victims of color would be believed if they spoke out.

Some men managers said that they were less likely to work closely with women colleagues because they were afraid of #MeToo accusations. Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook chief operating officer, wrote that she hoped the outcry over misconduct doesn't "have the unintended consequence of holding women back."

Many companies began to offer training to help managers recognize behaviors that might be perceived as problematic. One transnational study found, however, that as women rose to positions of greater responsibility, they were harassed more, not less. And they were often harassed by men who were junior to them, and even by their direct reports. These women supervisors and middle managers were perceived by some as stepping outside their proper roles.

#MeToo has also influenced corporate and electoral choices of people in leadership, bringing women into greater prominence. By October 2018, about a year after #MeToo went viral, *The New York Times* reported that women replaced nearly half the leaders who lost jobs or major roles because of #MeToo accusations (Carlsen et al.). Since then, there have been many cases in which a man has been replaced by a woman leader after some accusation or scandal, direct or indirect. For example, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo was replaced by lieutenant governor Kathy Hochul. US Democratic Senator Al Franken was replaced by then lieutenant governor Tina Smith. After MIT's Media Lab director Joi Ito resigned after revelations that he took, and hid, donations from Jeffrey Epstein, he was replaced by Professor Dava Newman. MIT Chairman Robert Millard also resigned and was replaced by Diane B. Greene, the corporation's first women chair. The reasons for these changes vary widely. While in many cases the new leader replaced someone accused of misconduct, in other cases it seems that companies and institutions might have decided that a woman is a less risky choice for the future, less likely to get into trouble or to have past behavior brought to the press.

Leadership, Sexuality, and Power

The #MeToo movement has shed light on workplace harassment, and has helped to put more women into positions of leadership. It has also brought into focus the intersection between our ideas about leadership and sexuality.

The connection between the penis and power of various kinds is a topic that arises in public discourse about leaders and leadership. During the 2016 presidential campaign, for example, Republican candidates made suggestive remarks about the size and functionality of other men's penises. A laudable meme that circulated soon after the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine showed a portrait of Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy along with images of the pyramids and the Grand Canyon, saying that his balls could also be seen from space.

A humorous Danish television show for children has central character with a very long penis that gets him into trouble. Erla Heinesen Højsted, a clinical psychologist, explained "He takes responsibility for his actions. When a woman in the show tells him that he should keep his penis in his pants, for instance, he listens.

Which is nice. He is accountable.” But Christian Groes, an associate professor and gender researcher at Roskilde University, argued that the show is “perpetuating the standard idea of a patriarchal society and normalizing ‘locker room culture’” (Nadeau 2022).

Phallic symbols have been found all over the world, and are considered to be represent reproductive power and regeneration. Phallic worship and rituals connected with the penis were known in both Greek and Roman cults, and in many indigenous religions. In Christianity, too, the penis of Jesus (often covered but still prominent) is known in Renaissance paintings as the *ostentatio genitalium* and given thematic and theological significance.

Today, strong-man politics includes anxiety over male reproductive power, as evinced in declining testosterone levels. In 2022, Fox News host Tucker Carlson aired a program promoting naked sunbathing to regenerate modern men’s weak testicles and bring back male power. While the #MeToo movement wants men to keep their penises in their pants, this reactionary trend makes penises to be a focus of attention and suggests that the male sexual drive should be valued and cultivated, a striking development in conjunction with the drive to make abortion illegal.

The conservative argument might be summed up in what conservative activist Phyllis Schlafly claimed in the 1960s: that women’s lesser sexual drive gave them greater power. “A Positive Woman cannot defeat a man in a wrestling or boxing match, but she can motivate him, inspire him, encourage him, teach him, restrain him, reward him, and have power over him that he can never achieve over her with all his muscle” (Schafley 1977).

The possibility that strong women leaders might also have strong sexual drives seems not to be part of current thinking. In the 2021 *Leaders Who Lust: Power, Money, Sex, Success, Legitimacy, Legacy*, the only women featured are Hillary Clinton, as wife of an unfaithful, lusty husband, and Melinda Gates, as the philanthropic partner of her then-husband Bill Gates, “their hallmark, their lust to leave a legacy.” So far, women have rarely been accused of sexual harassment, and the most prominent female leader associated with unbridled sexual activity is the eighteenth-century Russian empress, Catherine II.

Conclusion

Throughout history, strong leaders have been expected to keep their followers safe in a dangerous world. As we move into a future in which leaders will be faced with global challenges such as pandemics and climate change that cannot be solved with military action, non-gendered leadership skills such as negotiation, persuasion, and cooperation, will be required. But an uncertain future, and growing consensus that national defense is of vital importance in protecting liberal democracies (where women leaders are more common), may also make strong-man leadership more appealing, and could conceivably affect how women lead.

The most significant result of #MeToo as a concept is the encouragement to speak up about abusive behavior. This has become a check, at least to some extent, on those in positions of power, and highlighted the way a sense of sexual entitlement has often been seen as an intrinsic part of strong leadership.

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