When P*ssy Grabs Back: An Examination of the Gender Gap in the 2016 Presidential Election

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Since the 1980 Presidential Election, there has been a significant voting gender gap in that women tend to vote more for Democratic candidates than men. There is no doubt that the gender gap persisted in 2016. However, several unusual factors had the potential to affect the way the gap presented itself. The hypotheses were tested by analyzing the relationship between gender and other demographic variables such as race, income level, and education in relation to vote choice, using data from the Cooperative Congressional Election Study for 2008, 2012, and 2016. The results show that women's probability of voting for the Republican candidate tends to increase or decrease along with men's within several of the demographics tested. The gap remained proportional to that of previous years, but certain demographics saw a shift in the probability that they would support the Republican candidate and some new variables became significant influences.

Keywords: Gender Gap, Voting, 2016 Presidential Election, Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump.

I. Introduction

Throughout the 2016 Presidential campaign season, women and the issues that affect them were greatly emphasized on several occasions. The spotlight was heavily focused on women so often for a number of reasons. First and foremost, Hillary Clinton was the first woman to win a major party nomination for President. Beyond her historic candidacy, women's issues were also a prominent feature of this election because of trends in past elections, one of these trends, of course, being the gender gap. The narrative of the Democratic Party that Republicans are waging a war on women contributed to the focus on women's issues as well. Finally, the candidacy of Donald Trump was probably the most significant contributor to the role women's issues played in this campaign season. From the outset of Trump's campaign, he made derogatory comments about women, said abortion should be punishable, and was recorded making comments about his uninvited advances on women, to name only a sampling of instances that many found troubling. Trump's unflattering campaign moments made good fodder for attack ads and the media. Despite this, however, he managed to hold onto to a substantial number of supporters and went on to win the Presidency.

What is noteworthy about the support Trump received is from where that support came. According to analysis from FiveThirtyEight released in October, if only women voted, Hillary Clinton would have won by a landslide, garnering 458 electoral votes, and just 80 going to Trump. In every presidential election since 1980, there has been a statistically significant gender gap (Carroll, 2006). The gender gap presents itself with a larger proportion of women voting for the Democratic candidate and men for the Republican candidate. Therefore, Trump's unpopularity among women in this analysis and others is not totally surprising and not completely due to his inflammatory comments and actions throughout the campaign. There was no doubt that that there would be a gender gap in 2016 and the disparity between women's and men's vote choice could even have seen an increase over past elections.

So, did the gender gap present itself in an unusual way due to the abnormal campaign leading up to the election? Voter choice could reflect people's aversion to the words and actions of a candidate. This raises the question: was the gender gap consistent throughout the 2016 election cycle despite certain incidents? At each stage in the campaign, did the same proportion of women and men cast their vote for a certain candidate? On the other hand, could more women than men have been alienated by developments about Trump's attitude toward women and women's issues? The result of this being that as the campaign progressed the gender gap might have fluctuated along with certain events. However, in the past, women's issues have actually not played a large role in shaping the gender gap. Does this hold true for 2016? Additionally, how did men's voting behavior affect the formation of gender gap? Women are most often the focus of research on the gender gap, but men also have a role to play. The fact that Hillary Clinton was the first female major party nominee could also have had a significant impact on voting decisions. However, it has been shown in the past that women do not simply vote for female candidates based on identity alone. Under these circumstances, is the gender gap in 2016 actually more pronounced than in past elections or was it less influential than perhaps the education gap? Overall, it seems that the 2016 election campaign could have had an exacerbating effect on the gender gap.

There has been a great deal of research done on the gender gap in the past. When women first gained the right to vote, it was assumed that there was no difference in the way that they voted as compared to men. However, this notion was disproven in 1980 when a significantly larger proportion of women voted for the Democratic candidate, Jimmy Carter. Since the emergence of the gender gap, many have sought to understand what drives the difference between the voting patterns of women and men. Many have attributed the differences to women's greater tendency to support larger government in the form of social welfare programs (Deckman, 2004). Women are more likely to support these programs for a few reasons, one being that they are more likely to benefit from them. Interestingly, women's issues like abortion and the right to choose have very little influence on the gender gap.

While I will be utilizing prior research into the gender gap to inform my own, there are several aspects of my research that will differentiate it from what has previously

been done. Since the election occurred only a few months before I began my research, I am contributing a more recent analysis of the gender gap, focusing on whether women's issues had a greater influence on voting than in the past. The circumstances of this election were quite abnormal, due in part to both major party candidates, and the increased focus on women's issues may have caused women to base their vote more on their opinions about these issues than in previous elections. Finally, I will analyze the gender gap over the course of the 2016 campaign. Many specific incidents related to women's issues throughout the year garnered a lot of attention from the public and the media. As the campaign progressed, these moments could have affected women more strongly than they affected men. In my analysis over the course of the whole election, I will determine if any fluctuations in the gender gap have a correlation to certain events.

Overall, my research will be significant because it will contribute analysis based on new information. The 2016 Presidential election was unusual and different from any past election in many ways. I will determine through my research and analysis whether the gender gap deviated from the norm as well.

II. Review of the Literature

An Overview of Voting Behavior

There are many factors that impact and shape the electoral decisions and behavior of the American Voter. The most significant factor is that most American voters find themselves drawn to one party more than the other. Additionally, voters' decisions can be significantly influenced by their affiliation with certain groups, whether these are unions, religious groups, or demographic groups based on race or gender (Lewis-Beck, 2008). Demographics, in general, are a strong predictor for voting behavior as well.

Partisanship is a prominent fixture of American politics and it has substantial impacts on vote choice. There is a widely held belief that party loyalty is the most important factor in voting decisions for Presidential elections (Cantor, 1975). A majority of Americans find that they identify strongly or lean more towards one party than the other, although the number of people identifying themselves as Independents has increased over the past few decades (Lewis-Beck, 2008). This element is the result of the long-standing two-party system in the United States, which has made it impossible for a third party to seriously take hold. Thus people tend to feel some loyalty to either the Republican or Democratic Party, but this tendency raises questions about how much vote choice can be interpreted as party loyalty (Cantor, 1975).

Social groupings are another important feature of Americans' lives that influence their voting behavior. These groupings do not have any direct links to politics, but can still have an effect on the vote of its members. During an election campaign, groups are often referred to as voting blocs, such as the "black vote", the "union vote", the "women's vote", etc. (Lewis-Beck, 2008). How strongly someone identifies with a certain group can determine whether or not they vote in line with other members.

Outsiders of a group may also be motivated by its influence, in a negative sense, and vote against the group's interest because they do not feel that the group's influence will benefit them (Huddy, 2009).

Demographics can also be helpful in predicting voting behavior. Race, gender, religion, economic status, education level, and marital status are among some of the most powerful forces (Lewis-Beck, 2008). Each of these demographics has certain characteristic voting tendencies. For example, people with higher levels of education are more likely to vote for a Democratic candidate. Liberal voting tendencies are often associated with unions, people of color, and women as well. People who have higher incomes are more likely to vote for Republicans; older people are also more likely to vote for conservative candidates than young people do. In some cases, it can be difficult to differentiate these trends and to determine the true driving force behind voting decisions. For instance, black voters tend to vote overwhelmingly Democratic. However, other crossover demographics such as income or education level can account for some of this trend (Nagler, 2013).

BACKGROUND OF THE ORIGINATION OF THE GENDER GAP

A gender gap is traditionally defined as the difference in the percentage of women and the percentage of men who vote for a particular candidate. The first appearance of the gender gap in U.S. Presidential elections was in 1980 when Ronald Reagan ran against Jimmy Carter. Before this time, it was thought that men and women voted similarly and held similar opinions on most issues (Carroll, 2006). Since 1980 however, this view has shifted completely and gender is considered to have a great impact on the way a person votes. Now, a significantly larger percentage of women vote Democratic, while men more often identify with Republicans. The effect of the gender gap can be observed at all levels of politics, with some deviation, not just in Presidential elections.

Generally, women have more liberal views on issues like tax policy, gay rights, welfare spending and the role of government (Deckman, 2004). In 1980, only 46% of women voted for Reagan compared to 54% of men, resulting in a gender gap of 8% (Carroll, 2006). This disparity has been observed in every election since and there has been much research into what drives this gap. From this research, many explanations have been offered in order to understand the gender gap. While some have tried to assert that the gender gap is not actually due to gender but rather to subgroups such as race, age, marital status, parental status, etc., this claim has been mostly disregarded. It is not at all supported by data as it can be observed that the gender gap remains relatively consistent across several different demographics (Carroll, 2006). One of the more commonly cited reasons for the gender gap is the "compassion explanation." This explanation attributes women's more liberal political beliefs to differences in biology and socialization. Since women are traditionally mothers and caregivers, this theory connects maternal thinking to women's value of cooperation over competition and individual rights. Another explanation for the gender gap is women's views on the

role of government. Women are more likely than men to support larger government for a number of reasons. For example, women are more likely to be economically disadvantaged than men and tend to be supportive of social welfare programs that provide people with a safety net. Women also are typically more concerned about equal opportunities than men, which they associate with the government creating regulations and more social welfare. Other findings also suggest that when considering certain issues, women tend to take into account the situation for the nation as a whole, while men weigh their personal and family situations more heavily. Additionally, men are less supportive of social safety nets so both tendencies combine to support more women identifying with the Democratic Party than men (Deckman, 2004).

The Gender Gap and Female Candidates

The gender gap as it relates to women voting for female candidates is a more complex issue. A portion of votes for a female politician can be attributed to in-group favoritism. However, women take into account several factors in addition to the gender of the candidate, not simply voting for a woman because of her gender (Huddy, 2009). Women are loyal to their in-group only to a point; other demographics, such as race, can elicit greater in-group loyalty among voters. What is also important to women is a candidate's party affiliation and beliefs. These factors can often overrule other considerations.

As has been discussed, women are stronger supporters of social services and welfare than men and these issues greatly affect the way they vote. This fact can contribute to the gender gap in lower turnout, non-Presidential elections because of the stereotype that a female candidate is more liberal and supportive of women's issues. However, if voters have any knowledge of the candidate's ideology, the gender gap can disappear. This phenomenon is demonstrated in the 2008 presidential election when Sarah Palin was the Republican Vice-Presidential nominee. The hope for John McCain was that Palin would attract female voters who were disappointed that Hillary Clinton was not the Democratic nominee for President. Her nomination did not have the desired effect though because of Palin's conservative ideology (Huddy, 2009). Women voters do show some bias toward female candidates so long as the candidate is a proponent of issues that are of most concern to women.

Besides the politics of a female candidate, other factors can resonate more than gender with women voters as well. The 2008 Democratic primary provided a unique opportunity to see how gender affects vote choice while controlling for ideology. Analysis of the voting results show that women did have some in-group bias towards Hillary Clinton because she is a woman (Huddy, 2009). This applied to women across most demographics, except race. African American women supported Barack Obama over Clinton by a double-digit margin, therefore identifying more strongly with a candidate who shared their racial identity than their gender identity (Simon, 2008). While gender does exert some influence on women voters, there are many other factors that can take precedence when they are making their choice.

Many studies focus on the role that women's changing political opinions have on shaping the gender gap. However, men have played a major, if not larger, part in creating the gap. As has been established, before 1980, men and women identified with the Democratic and Republican parties in similar proportions. Women's greater support of the Democratic Party has been relatively consistent from 1948 to the present, only dipping below 50% for a brief time around 1956. Originally, men supported the Democratic Party by a larger percentage as well. After 1964, however, men's support for the party steadily declined as their support for the GOP began increasing (Kaufmann, 1999). Although, many researchers have focused on how women shape the gender gap, men have actually contributed to its development significantly.

Researchers who have investigated men's effect on the gender gap put forth a few explanations for their change in voting behavior over time. Some attribute the gender gap to attitudinal differences and differences in issue salience between men and women are found to be a major factor. Similar to earlier discussion of women's political attitudes, many researchers attribute men's role in the gender gap to their attitudinal differences. Social welfare seems to be one of the defining factors for the gender. Men have always had a more conservative view of social welfare than women. However, it was not until the mid-60s and 70s that men's party preference aligned with their ideology. The shift came about as a result of a new wave of Republicanism that emphasized partisan conflict over "big government", making social welfare a more salient issue (Kaufman, 1999). This movement began in the 60s and came to head in the 80s with the help of Ronald Reagan.

In trying to explain men's attitudinal differences over social welfare, some have turned to psychology to determine the reason it became such a salient issue for men. Specifically, men view any weakness or dependency as linked to feminine qualities. Thus, men have an aversion to anything that could imbue these qualities upon them because they have a subconscious fear of being perceived to be less masculine. Republicans have used this to their advantage and painted issues of social welfare as issues of weakness. Ronald Reagan was a strong proponent of this view, at one point stating that the U.S. should "wean [itself] from the long misery of overtaxing, overspending and the great myth that our national nanny knows best" (Ducat, 2004). Connecting liberal policies with weakness and femininity has driven men to the Republican Party in greater numbers over the last half-century.

III. Methodology

One of the major questions that this research hopes to answer is how the gender gap developed over the course of the entire 2016 campaign. Comments and actions of the candidates could have caused men and women's support to diverge at different points throughout the campaign. To determine if support for the candidates fluctuated

over time, trend graphs of men's and women's potential vote were created based on polls periodically released by Quinnipiac University from 2015 to 2016. These graphs can be matched to a timeline of events to potentially connect certain events to any changes in the gender gap. Graphs for the 2008 and 2012 Presidential Elections were created to compare the behavior of the gap from one year to another.

This research also tests the effect of gender on vote choice when controlling for several other factors including race, education, income level, marital status, party identification, and policy positions. These factors are controlled by performing a binary logistic regression analysis of gender and each of the variables. This determines if the variables have a significant impact on a person's vote choice and whether the relationship between the control variables and the dependent variable (vote choice) is positive or negative. The next portion of analysis focuses on the interaction between gender and variables for race, education, income level, marital status, and party identification. Interaction analysis aids in determining how gender and other variables impact one another or if they have an independent influence on vote choice.

Performing regression analyses of vote choice and controlling for policy positions will help to determine if women's issues played a greater role in the gender gap in this election. In the past, the gender gap has been explained by women's beliefs about the role of government. However, this election has been unusual because there have been so many incidents that could have potentially alienated a greater proportion of women than men from Donald Trump.

Finally, the coefficients for each of the variables are used to calculate the likelihood that a person will vote for the Republican candidate in the election. As a result, the change in the effect of certain variables can be compared from one election to another. Calculating the probabilities of men and women makes the results easier to compare the gender gap across time.

Polling data from the Cooperative Congressional Election Study for the years 2008, 2012, and 2016 will be used to complete this analysis. The survey has a sample size greater than 50,000 people and has two waves, one pre and one post-election questionnaire. The first wave is conducted from September to October and asks questions about political attitudes, and demographic factors. The second wave is administered in November and asks questions mostly related to the actual election.

IV. The Gender Gap Over the Course of Campaigns

Data Collection

Overall, in 2016, it appears that the gender gap was significantly wider and more erratic over the course of the campaign than in the past two elections. As can be seen in Figures 1 and 2, the majority of the time there was a gap of about 10 to 20 points between men and women voting for Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. In both the 2008 and 2012 campaigns, the gender gap fluctuated between a low of 3 points and a high of 14.

FIGURE 1
SUPPORT FOR HILLARY CLINTON IN 2016
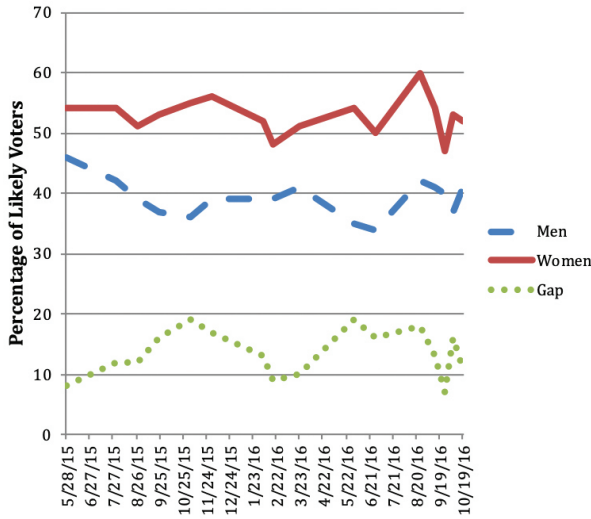
Data Source: Quinnipiac Poll

FIGURE 2
SUPPORT FOR DONALD TRUMP IN 2016
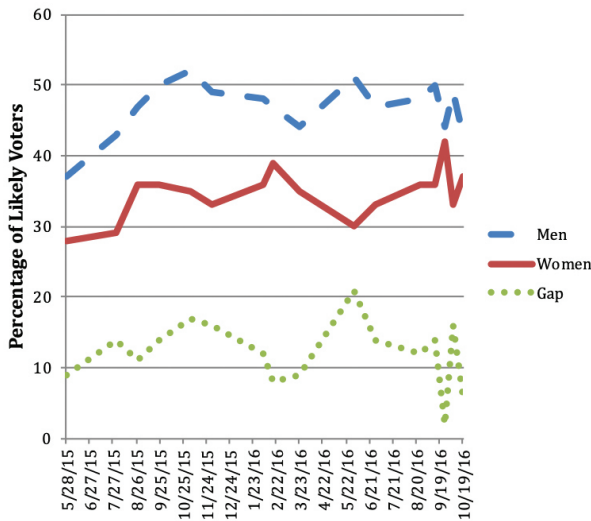
Data Source: Quinnipiac Poll

At the outset of the campaign, the gender gap was at an expected level, as compared to 2008 and 2012, of 8 or 9 points. From the end of May 2015, the gap continually increased until a peak in November 2015 at nearly a 20-point difference. Over the course of this timeframe, Trump made many disparaging remarks about several people,

most of whom were women including Megyn Kelly, Rosie O'Donnell and Carly Fiorina. These attacks were largely based on superficial issues such as insinuating Megyn Kelly was on her period or insulting Carly Fiorina's looks. As the number of these attacks increased, Trump may have driven away more and more women partially explaining the growth of the gender gap.

From November 2015 to February 2016, the gap descended to its original level of 8 or 9 points. Trump continued to make inflammatory statements, many offensive towards women; but the trend of the gender gap did not reflect any potential concern on the part of women. Also over this period, an inspector for the FBI stated that some of the emails on Clinton's private server were classified. This development may have contributed to the decrease in support for Clinton during the period from November to February.

In the beginning of June 2016, there is a sharp spike in the gender gap. The difference between women and men in support of Hillary increases by 9 points to a 19-point gap. For Trump, the difference between men and women increased by 12 points to a 21-point gap. Since the previous poll, Trump had body-shamed Ted Cruz's wife, stated he thought women should be punished for having abortions, among other offensive statements. The decrease in the percentage of women who supported him could be tied to these statements. It seems that Trump's comments did not affect men in support of him as the percentage saw an increase in this period.

After the spike in June 2016, the gender gap decreased slightly but still remained in the mid to high teens. In September 2016, the gap dropped to its lowest level. Earlier in the month, Clinton had said that Trump supporters belonged in a "basket of deplorables," which could explain the decrease in support for her overall at this time. Shortly after, the size of the gap increased again in mid-October, most likely due to the recent discovery of the Access Hollywood tape in which Trump is heard making many crude comments, some which can be classified as sexual assault. While this development was one of the most shocking, not as many of his supporters seemed to be driven away as they had in the past. This could have to do with the fact that on the same day that the tape was released, WikiLeaks released emails from John Podesta, Clinton's campaign chairman, that revealed some content from Clinton's speeches to Wall Street.

The final breakdown of the gender gap for 2016 was 13 points for Hillary Clinton and 11 points for Donald Trump (see Figure 3). This is an apparent increase over previous years. In 2012, the gender gap was 10 points for Barack Obama and 8 points for Mitt Romney, and in 2008, the gap was 7 points for Barack Obama and 5 points for John McCain. While the end results for 2016 were not as dramatic as some points during the campaign, there was a clear increase over the past two elections.

FIGURE 3
EXIT POLL SUPPORT FOR CANDIDATES IN 2016
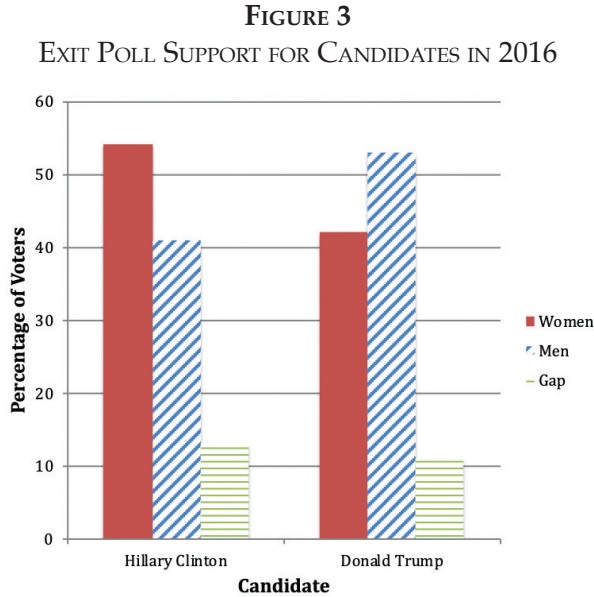
Data Source: The New York Times

V. Data Analysis

LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS

In this analysis, vote choice is the dependent variable, gender is the primary independent variable, and other demographic variables are independent controls. The variable for vote choice is coded as 1 for the Republican candidate and 0 for the Democratic candidate. As a result, variables that have positive coefficients are more likely to vote for the Republican and those with negative coefficients are less likely.

The Female, Republican, Democrat, Black, Hispanic, Married, High School Educated, College Educated, Low Income, and Middle Income variables are included in this first regression model. The results are shown in Table 1. Income and education variables are absent in 2008 due to a lack of responses for those questions. Every variable had a significant impact on vote choice in each election year. The Female variable had a negative relationship to vote choice in all years, and its effect increased with each election. In 2012 and 2016, the Republican and Democrat variables have equal impacts on vote choice; the Republican variable has a positive relationship, while the Democrat variable was negative. Interestingly, although the Black variable had a negative relationship to vote choice across all three elections, its effect decreased with each one. The Hispanic variable had a negative relationship to vote choice all three years, and the Married variable had a positive relationship in each election. However, neither one of these variables moved in a consistent direction in terms of their effect from election to election. The variables for high school and college education both had positive

relationships to vote choice in 2012, and their effects more than or almost doubled in 2016. Both income variables had positive relationships to vote, and each increased slightly in 2016.

TABLE 1

BETA COEFFICIENTS FOR REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF GENDER AND
DEMOGRAPHIC/IDENTITY VARIABLES

Variable	2008	2012	2016
Female	-0.349*	-0.394*	-0.439*
Republican	2.155*	2.850*	2.495*
Democrat	-0.718*	-2.912*	-2.567*
Black	-2.939*	-2.308*	-1.755*
Hispanic	-0.436*	-0.768*	-0.648*
Married	1.028*	0.800*	0.806*
High School Educated	–	0.565*	1.324*
College Educated	–	0.340*	0.650*
Low Income	–	0.223*	0.231*
Middle Income	–	0.215*	0.275*

*Significant ($p < .05$)

In order to calculate the probability of a man or woman voting for the Republican with all other factors held constant, the probability of white, college educated, middle income, married men and women was calculated to show the gap. Education and income variables are missing from the 2008 model, so the probabilities are not as directly comparable to 2012 and 2016. That being said, the gender gap was about 7% in 2008. The gap grew to nearly 9.5% in 2012, and then decreased to just over 8% in 2016, a slight increase over 2008.

INTERACTION ANALYSIS

The following analysis shows how gender in combination with other variables affects vote choice in the 2008, 2012, and 2016 Presidential Elections. Each model includes a variable for gender, at least one demographic variable, and a variable that represents the interaction between the two. If the interaction variable is significant, it indicates that the combination of gender and the demographic factor has an added impact on vote choice on top of their influence individually.

A. Gender and Party Identification

The model for gender and party identification includes the Female, Republican, Democrat, Female Republican, and Female Democrat variables and the results are

shown in Table 2. In this model, independent voters are the reference category. All of the variables were significant except for Female Republican in 2012 and Female Democrat in 2016. The Female and Democrat variables were significant and had a negative relationship to vote choice in all three elections. Until 2016, the Female Democrat variable was not significant. Therefore Democratic women voters were less likely to vote for the Republican in 2016 not only because they are Democrats or women, but because the interaction between the two factors has a significant impact on vote choice. Republican and Female Republican always have a positive relationship to vote choice. Even when controlling for party identification, a gap still exists between men and women's likelihood of voting for the Republican.

TABLE 2
BETA COEFFICIENTS FOR INTERACTION ANALYSIS BETWEEN GENDER AND
PARTY IDENTIFICATION

Variable	2008	2012	2016
Female	-0.637*	-0.427*	-0.416*
Republican	1.972*	2.841*	2.445*
Democrat	-0.880*	-3.263*	-2.735*
Female Republican	0.566*	0.155	0.203*
Female Democrat	0.430*	0.237*	0.040

*Significant (p < .05)

B. Gender and Race

The model for gender and race includes the variables Female, White, and White Female and the results are shown in Table 3. Each variable across all three years was significant in impacting vote choice. The effect of the Female variable has an increasingly negative relationship to vote choice, so with each election women voters are less likely to vote for the Republican. In 2016, the relationship between white voters and vote choice remained positive and has increased overall since 2008. White women voters showed a steady increase in the variable's positive relationship to vote choice.

TABLE 3
BETA COEFFICIENTS FOR INTERACTION ANALYSIS BETWEEN GENDER AND
WHITE/NONWHITE

Variable	2008	2012	2016
Female	-0.621*	-0.863*	-0.892*
White	0.877*	1.063*	0.961*
White Female	0.343*	0.423*	0.612*

*Significant (p < .05)

In 2008, white men were 6.87% more likely to vote for the Republican candidate than white women. The gap widened in 2012 when white men's likelihood of supporting the Republican increased while white women's decreased. However, in 2016, the gap was relatively similar to its level in 2008 at 6.06% because men's support of the Republican decreased while women's remained virtually the same.

C. Gender and Education

The model for gender and education includes the Female, College Educated, and College Educated Female variables. The results are shown in Table 4. In both 2012 and 2016, all the variables had a significant impact on vote choice. The Female and College Educated Female variables had negative relationships to vote choice in both elections. However, the college variable changed from a positive to negative relationship from 2012 to 2016. Between 2012 and 2016, the likelihood of college educated women voting for the Republican decreased, while the likelihood that college educated men would vote for the Republican increased negligibly. As a result, there was a nearly 5% increase in the gap from 2012 to 2016.

TABLE 4

BETA COEFFICIENTS FOR INTERACTION ANALYSIS BETWEEN GENDER AND
COLLEGE EDUCATION

Variable	2008	2012	2016
Female	–	-0.381*	-0.324*
College Educated	–	0.209*	-0.076*
College Educated Female	–	-0.244*	-0.128*

*Significant (p < .05)

D. Gender and Income

The model for gender and income includes the Female, Low Income, Middle Income, Low Income Female, and Middle Income Female variables and the results are shown in Table 5. In this model, high income serves as the reference category. In 2012, only the Female and Middle Income variables were significant. However, in 2016, Female, Low Income, and Middle Income were all significant. There is a positive relationship between vote choice and both low and middle income, and the coefficient for middle income increased considerably over 2012. Despite being insignificant in 2012 for this model, the low-income variable changes from negative to positive just as it did in the model for low-income alone. In the model, high income is considered zero and as a result, middle-income were voters more likely to vote for the Republican than high-income voters, and low-income voters were more likely to vote for the Republican than middle-income voters in 2016.

TABLE 5

Beta Coefficients for Interaction Analysis Between Gender and Income Level

Variable	2008	2012	2016
Female	–	-0.555*	-0.397*
Low Income	–	-0.020	0.298*
Middle Income	–	0.183*	0.264*
Low Income Female	–	0.082	-0.046
Middle Income Female	–	-0.010	0.008

*Significant ($p < .05$)

E. Gender and Marital Status

The model for gender and marital status includes the Female, Married, and Married Female variables and the results are shown in Table 6. The Female variable is significant and has a negative relationship to vote choice across all three elections. The Married variable is significant and has a positive relationship to vote choice in all three elections. The Married Female interaction variable was significant in all three elections and it had a positive relationship to vote choice in 2016, but the effect had decreased since 2008. The gap between the likelihood of married men and women voting for the Republican in 2016 was relatively similar to the gap in 2008. There was an increase in the gap in 2012 due to men's likelihood increasing while women's decreased. Overall, support for the Republican declined from 2008 to 2016.

TABLE 6

Beta Coefficients for Interaction Analysis Between Gender and Marital Status

Variable	2008	2012	2016
Female	-1.557*	-0.365*	-0.618*
Married	0.927*	1.220*	0.806*
Married Female	1.243*	-0.199*	0.274*

*Significant ($p < .05$)

POLICY OPINION AND VOTE

Previous research into the gender gap shows that the gap is usually the result of the differing policy views of men and women. By controlling for gender and opinion on different policies, the effect of certain opinions on vote choice can be determined.

A. Immigration

During the 2016 campaign, immigration reform and border protection were salient issues. Supporters of increasing the number of border patrols were much more likely to vote for the Republican candidate. In 2012, there was not much of a gap between men and women (only 1%), but it increased in 2016 (to 6%) because men's likelihood of support increased, while women's remained relatively stable.

B. Social Issues

Women's issues like a woman's right to choose have been shown not to have a significant impact on the gender gap. However, women are usually more likely to support social issues like gay marriage than men. When gender and support for abortions only in the case of rape, incest, or danger to the mother are controlled, women are about 7% less likely to vote for the Republican than men. The gap remained virtually the same from 2012 to 2016. The likelihood of voting for the Republican decreased by about 15% for both men and women in 2016.

When gender and support for gay marriage are controlled for, the gap between men and women's likelihood of supporting the Republican candidate is about 6% in 2012 and 2016. While the gap remained about the same, men's and women's likelihood actually increased by about 7% in 2016.

C. Issues of Government Intervention

In the past, the gender gap has been explained by women's opinions on the role of government. Women are usually more in favor of social welfare programs and other forms of government intervention than men. However, women are typically less supportive of military intervention than men.

When gender and support for increased environmental protection are controlled, a gap still exists. In 2012, the gap between the likelihood of men and women supporting the Republican was nearly 9%. However, in 2016, the gap shrunk to around 1.5%. Women's likelihood had increased, while men's likelihood had decreased.

Repealing the Affordable Care Act has been a goal of Republicans since it was put in place. When gender and support for repealing the ACA are controlled, the gap between men's and women's probability of voting for the Republican was 4% in 2012 and increased to almost 9% in 2016. Both men's and women's probability decreased; women's decreased at a faster rate.

When controlling for gender and support for raising the minimum wage, there is a gap of about 5% between men's and women's probability of voting for the Republican. The gap remained virtually the same in 2008 and 2016, but men's and women's probability decreased almost 22% in 2016.

When gender and support for military intervention are controlled, there is a gap between men's and women's probability of voting for the Republican, but it varies

widely across the three elections. In 2008, the gap is minor at just under 2%, but men's and women's probabilities diverge in 2012, increasing the gap to about 9%. In 2016, men's and women's probabilities decline and the gap shrinks to about 6%.

VI. Conclusions

Based on the analysis that was conducted, a few conclusions can be made. The first is that the gender gap in 2016 was larger than it had been in the past. In a simple breakdown by gender from the *New York Times*, the gap increased by 3 and 6 points for both candidates over 2012 and 2008 respectively. When different demographic factors were isolated, the gender gap remained relatively the same in some, but did increase within in other demographics. The gap between black men and women, Hispanic men and women, and college-educated men and women all increased in 2016. For Hispanic men and women, and college educated men and women, the increase in the gap was due to men's probability of voting for the Republican increasing and women's decreasing. For black men and women, both probabilities were increasing, but men's probability increased at a faster rate.

In 2016, gender also worked differently in other ways, especially when considered with other demographic factors. For the first time in 2016, being a Hispanic woman had a significant impact on vote choice. Previously, in 2008 and 2012, being a woman or being Hispanic were significant separately, but as a combined variable had no added impact. There was a similar effect for Democratic women in 2016 as well. In 2008 and 2012, being a woman and being a Democrat both had a significant effect on vote choice. Then in 2016, there was a significant interaction between being a woman and a Democrat, which had an impact on vote choice. These changes from insignificant to significant could be attributed to in-group loyalty. Although, in-group loyalty amongst women is weaker than others, Hispanics are more likely to vote for Democrats, as are those who identify as Democrats. The tendency of women to vote for Democrats combined with being Hispanic or a Democrat could have been amplified by the Democratic candidate being a woman. As a result, the interaction between being both a woman and Hispanic or a Democrat became significant for the first time in 2016.

Throughout the 2016 campaign, the effect education would have on voting was discussed often. As was noted, the gap between college-educated men and women did increase in this election. However, although the gap for postgraduate-educated and high school-educated men and women decreased, these two categories still provide interesting insights. Based upon these two groups there also appears to be a larger education gap in 2016 as was speculated by many political commentators at the time of the election. High school-educated men and women's support for the Republican candidate increased significantly, while postgraduate-educated men and women's support decreased significantly. As a result, it appears that education levels are also creating polarization in vote choice.

The apparent polarizing effect of education level may be the result of differing worldviews. For example, climate change is an issue that has become increasingly

partisan over time. People with postgraduate educations may be more willingly to accept the science of climate change than other groups. Whereas, those who only completed high school levels of education may be more skeptical and more likely to view climate science as a debatable topic than fact. The increased partisanship surrounding this and similar issues could also have influenced the divergence between education levels. People who identify more strongly with a certain political party often shape their own views on issues partially based on the perspective of the party. In general, people who hold postgraduate degrees are more likely to identify as Democrats, while those with high school educations are more likely to identify as Republicans. Thus, this phenomenon could explain the divergence between people with high and low levels of education.

Among men and women who hold similar policy positions, there was no significant increase in the gender gap. In fact, in the case of men and women who support environmental protection, the gap actually decreased. Overall, the changes in support of the Republican from year to year seem to fit ideologically. For example, men and women who support increased border patrols had an increased likelihood of voting for the Republican in 2016 and those who support increasing the minimum wage had a decreased likelihood. However, there were some anomalous results, as well. For one, men and women in support of gay marriage had a significantly higher likelihood of voting for the Republican in 2016 than they did in 2012.

Finally, when the gender gap is tracked over the course of the 2016 campaign it was much more volatile than it had been during past campaigns. Throughout the 2016 campaign, the gap was anywhere between 2 and 21 points. In 2012 and 2008, the gender gap only fluctuated between 4 and 16 points at any given time. The 2016 campaign was truly unusual and it was reflected in the way the gender gap presented itself.

This research proved the hypothesis that the gender gap was greater in 2016 to be correct. The misogynistic, racist, and otherwise inflammatory rhetoric of Donald Trump did seem to impact the gender gap and may have also influenced some demographics overall. Individuals with high-incomes, and those with a postgraduate education became much less likely to vote for the Republican candidate in 2016 than they had been in 2012. While there is no way to determine exactly what caused these sizeable shifts, it can be speculated that the unusual nature of the 2016 campaign had a significant impact. This research shows that the gender gap in 2016 was larger than in the past two elections. However, it also indicates that the gap in 2012 was greater than it was in 2008. Could the larger gender gap in 2016 simply have been the result of increasing partisanship between men and women? Can the gender gap be expected to increase with each subsequent election regardless of the political discourse of the campaign? The answers to these questions would require further study in the coming elections.

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