

Special Section**Gender and Political Leadership**

Too Soft and Feminine: Masculinity and the Gender Gap in the 2016 US Presidential Election

Melissa Deckman
Washington College

This article examines how attitudes about masculinity factored into voters' choices in the 2016 US presidential election. It also examines how other factors influenced voters' choices, especially the choices of women voters. While the media portrays women as a unified and homogenous group in terms of their voting behavior, this analysis shows that women voters constitute a rather diverse group. Their voting choices vary greatly, and are influenced by factors such as partisanship, race, education, and their views about masculinity. The impact of these factors is more pronounced among male voters. However, statistical analysis shows that women who believe that society has become too soft and feminine were more than three times as likely as women who do not hold such views to have voted for Donald Trump. Despite Trump's overtly sexist campaign, a strong cohort of conservative white women cast their ballots for him. Whether conservative women voters will back Democratic candidates in the near future as a result of the #Me Too movement remains to be seen; however, based on this analysis of the 2016 election, this seems unlikely.

Keywords

gender gap, 2016 presidential election, voting behavior, conservative women, masculinity

The 2016 presidential election in the United States was historic on several fronts. Hillary Clinton, the former First Lady, United States Senator, and United States Secretary of State, was the first woman to be nominated for the American presidency by a major political party. The Democratic Party officially nominated her at its convention in August 2016. The Republican side, on the other hand, nominated American businessman and television personality,

Donald J. Trump, a political novice who ran a campaign touting his outsider status. Trump's campaign was also arguably one of the most negative and sexist campaigns in American political history; he chastised female reporters, as well as his two female rivals in overtly sexist terms. In particular, he mocked the appearance of his only woman primary opponent, Carly Fiorina. He also lambasted Hillary Clinton by running television advertisements that questioned

whether she had the “fortitude, strength, and stamina” to run the country. The early September 2016 release of the Access Hollywood audiotape, a 2005 recording of Trump bragging about his sexual conquests and the impunity with which he could afford to sexually assault women (Transcript 2016), combined with more than a dozen allegations from women who stated that Trump had made unwanted sexual advances toward them in the past (Pearson, Gray, and Vagianos 2017), led many pundits to predict that Clinton would emerge victorious in the 2016 presidential contest (Deckman 2016a). Pundits claimed that women voters were likely to favor her candidacy en masse given the accusations levied against Trump. Notably, Trump denied all these accusations.

To be sure, Clinton’s prospects were not particularly strong. Certain political scientists and commentators suggested that the presidential race would be very a closely-fought affair, especially since the Democrats had held the presidency for the last eight years. Moreover, only once in the past six decades had a party successfully maintained the White House after an incumbent president was reelected—in 1988, when George H.W. Bush replaced Ronald Reagan. Additionally, while the U.S. economy had certainly improved since the Great Recession, which began in 2009, many voters felt and claimed otherwise. This was because there was no significant increase in their wages in more than a decade. Typically, the party in power in the White House tends to lose its position whenever economic conditions become uncertain.

While Hillary Clinton did win the popular vote by more than 3 million votes, Donald Trump secured a majority of Electoral College votes in November 2016. He was successful in 30 states, including narrow wins in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania—three states that also voted for Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012 (Meko, Lu and Gamio 2016). Overall, Hillary Clinton did secure more votes from women voters, and this fact mirrors a longstanding American political phenomenon known as the “gender gap,” in which women are more likely to vote for Democratic presidential candidates than men. However, a majority of white women voters backed Donald Trump. Why did so many white women vote for Trump? And how did Trump’s overtly masculine campaign influence America’s voting calculus in general?

This article seeks to address these questions by analyzing voting behavior in the 2016 American presidential election; it especially focuses on women’s voting behavior in this election. The article is based on a careful review of the literature pertaining to the phenomenon of the gender gap in American politics. In addition, it also uses data published by the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI); this data breaks down the presidential vote by gender, and it also considers other factors, such as party, race, education, and marital status. Next, the article seeks to identify the underlying factors that may have influenced women’s choice in the election. To this end, this analysis focuses on women voters’ attitudes about social, economic, and national security concerns.

Additionally, the article also considers voters' perceptions of masculinity and the likely influence of these perceptions on the outcome of the 2016 American presidential election. Last, the article examines the political developments that took place during the first year of Trump's troubled presidency; in particular, the article focuses on the #MeToo movement, which has put a brighter spotlight on sexual harassment. In the wake of a controversial Senate campaign to fill the seat of one of President Trump's cabinet officials, the United States has once again been captivated by talk of women's rights in the electoral context. Therefore, it is also relevant to consider whether issues such as sexual harassment and "toxic masculinity" will continue to shape the phenomenon of gender gap in future American elections.

The Gender Gap and Voting Behavior in American Politics

Scholars have long considered the factors that influence the voting decisions of American men and women in American politics, especially since the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, when a gender gap first emerged, showing that women, overall, were more likely to vote for Democratic presidential candidates and to identify as Democrats than men (Ondercin 2017). Although the size of the gender gap has varied, it has become such a predictable feature of American politics that Democratic presidential candidates routinely strategize to

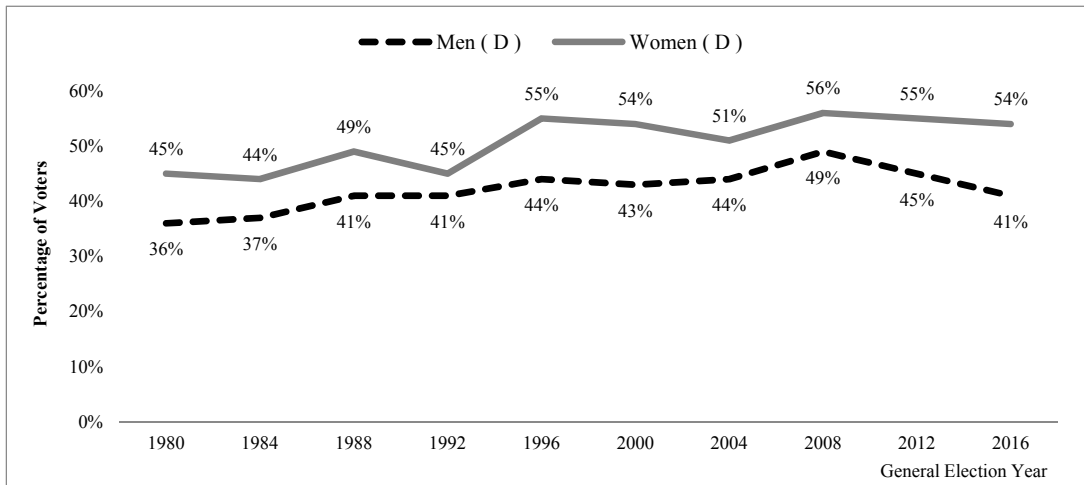
widen this gap and, Republican candidates aim to minimize it. Figure 1 shows the gender gap as defined by the percentage of women who voted for the Democratic presidential candidate compared with the percentage of men who voted for the Democratic presidential candidate since 1992. This illustration was compiled using data published by the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University (CAWP 2016).¹

As Figure 1 demonstrates, the gender gap in the *Democratic* votes for Hillary Clinton was 13 percent in 2016: 54 percent of women voted for Clinton, whereas only 41 percent of men voted for her. Likewise, (and this is not reported in Figure 1), 52 percent of men and 41 percent of women voted for Donald Trump, which indicates a gender gap of 11 percent. If the gender gap is considered to be the difference in the percentage of women and the percentage of men voting for the *winning* candidate, then this 11 percent difference is the joint all-time high gender gap measured in an American presidential election: the 1996 election, which was won by Bill Clinton, also displayed the same gender gap (CAWP 2016).

Why is the gender gap a constant feature of American electoral politics and voting behavior? Scholars have typically relied on three major theories to explain this phenomenon, as well as its persistence. These theories tend to focus on aspects such as biological differences between men and women, culturally defined gender roles, and

1 The Center for American Women and Politics uses exit poll data from Edison Media Research, Voter News Services, and the CBS News/ New York Times.

Figure 1. General Election Gender Gap: Democratic Party Candidate.



Source: Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University.

economic concerns. Some argue that men are more aggressive than women mainly due to biological factors; conversely, they argue that women are more nurturing than men (Ruddick 1989). As a result, women's more pacifist attitudes toward the use of military force has led them to be more likely to vote Democratic than men. Others argue that men and women are socialized from an early age to learn specific gender roles. Typically, women are taught and expected to be nurturing, whereas men are expected to concern themselves with questions such as justice or fairness (Gilligan 1982). Some suggest that women's capacity to mother tends to make them more concerned about social welfare policies aimed at protecting children and families. This capacity is also associated with women's pacifist dispositions; it is argued that women do not prefer military engagement, whereas men tend to do so to a significant extent (Elshtain 1981; Sapiro 1983; Elder and Greene 2012).

Other gender gap scholars argue that women tend to be less economically secure than men. As a result, women are believed to be more supportive of policies that encourage a larger role for government in society and policies that protect and expand social welfare policies (Howell and Day 2000; Carroll 2006; Schlesinger and Heldman, 2001). Given that the Democratic and Republican parties represent distinct, and often opposing, political views, women may be more likely to vote for Democratic presidential candidates, whereas men may be more likely to vote for Republican presidential candidates (Carroll, 2006; Chaney, Alvarez, and Nagler, 1998).

Moreover, male and female voters tend to prioritize different political issues (Chaney, Alvarez, and Nagler, 1998; Kaufmann and Petrocik, 1999). For example, when voting, women tend to focus more on the state of the national economy, whereas men tend to focus more on their personal financial situation (Welch and Hibbing 1992; Chaney, Alveraz,

and Nagler 1998). This observation lends further credence to the cultural arguments for the gender gap: women tend to place greater emphasis on the needs of the group (in this case, the nation), whereas men tend to focus more on their own economic concerns.

However, the state of the economy, whether the nation is at war, the personal qualities of presidential candidates, and the effectiveness of presidential campaigns can mitigate the size of the gender gap. Moreover, most studies of voting behavior show that the explanatory power of gender as a variable often ceases to be statistically significant when additional controls are considered. Political scientists increasingly find that partisanship explains much more about voting behavior than attitudes toward specific policies (Achen and Bartels 2016). It is argued that the “tribal” nature of American politics is exacerbated by an ideological media environment, which tends to divide Americans by reinforcing partisanship (Darr and Dunaway 2017). This means that the impact of partisanship is greater than the impact of gender on voting decisions (Hayes 2011; Miller 2016).

Nonetheless, literature on the gender gap focuses rather exclusively on the factors that make women more Democratic and liberal than men (Barnes and Cassese 2017). In other words, it often fails to consider why or how a significant number of American women are Republicans (Deckman 2016b). It is also worth noting that the gender gap in electoral politics is mitigated by race, religion, and marital status. Interestingly, married people are more likely to vote for Republican

candidates than unmarried people (Kingston and Finkler 1987; Plutzer and McBurnett 1991). Kaufmann (2004) notes that religious men and women (i.e. those who attend church frequently and regard religion as an essential aspect of their lives) tend to be more politically conservative and are also more likely to be Republicans than men and women who are less religious or secular. Compared to minority women, white women are more likely to identify as Republicans and vote for Republican candidates (Deckman 2016b; Cassesse and Barnes 2017). Junn (2017) argues that the gender gap is largely a product of “the steady growth of minority voters in the U.S. electorate over the last six decades that drives higher overall proportions of female support for Democratic Party candidates.”

These findings show that women voters in the US have different political preferences and support diverse causes. Yet, shouldn’t Trump’s overtly sexist presidential campaign and his well-documented misogyny, as well as the historical significance of Hillary’s candidacy—she was the first woman to mount a serious challenge in the political quest for presidency—have persuaded more women to vote for her? Interestingly, most studies find that women voters do not necessarily vote for women candidates merely because they are women (McElroy and Marsh 2010; Dolan 2014; Fulton 2014). In fact, as stated above, partisanship is more influential in this context. In addition, gender consciousness—the notion that women have similar views and outlooks based on their shared experiences—has never united

women voters in the same way racial consciousness has united voters of color (Burns and Kinder 2012; Tesler 2016). While feminist consciousness is strongly correlated with liberal values and policy preferences, this correlation works similarly for women and men (Cook and Wilcox 1991). Moreover, some studies find that feminist attitudes are inconsistent in predicting the voting choices of men and women in presidential elections (Kaufmann and Petrocik, 1999).

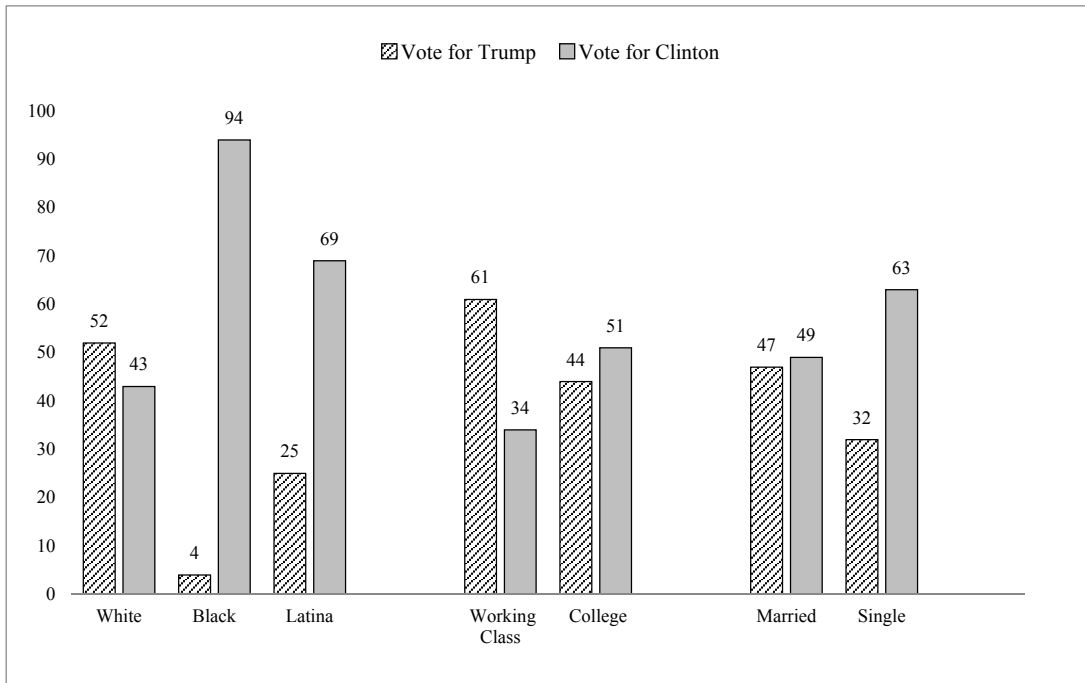
While several studies have focused on the impact of gender consciousness and feminism on voting behavior in American presidential elections, few have focused on the role of voters' attitudes about masculinity. This article, therefore, aims to examine whether attitudes about masculinity influenced voters' choices in the 2016 presidential campaign. First, however, this article focuses on how party, race, education, and marital status shaped women's voting choices. It also focuses on the diverse range of political issues women were concerned with, especially the concerns of women directly affiliated with a party. The article connects these concerns with the larger themes and concerns discussed by the two presidential candidates. Finally, the article aims to predict the extent of gender gap in the aftermath of Donald Trump's first year of presidency.

Women Voters in 2016

A large portion of the data represented in this article has been sourced from several randomly selected national surveys conducted by PRRI, a non-partisan, non-profit research organization. However, first it examines the 2016 exit poll data compiled by CNN, the news organization, to break down women's votes into specific categories. As Figure 2 shows, women's votes in the 2016 presidential election were not entirely uniform. Overall, 54 percent of women cast their ballots for Hillary Clinton, whereas only 41 percent of women voted for Trump. Hillary fared much better among minority women and single women. An overwhelming majority of African-American women—94 percent—voted for Hillary Clinton, and so did 69 percent of Latinas. White women, however, were more inclined to vote for Donald Trump—52 percent—and only 43 percent of white women voted for Hillary Clinton.²

As in previous elections, single women displayed a strong preference for the Democratic nominee. The preference of married women voters, however, tended to be somewhat split between the two candidates. In addition, the number of college-educated women who voted for Clinton was slightly higher than the number of college-educated women who voted for Trump. Working-class women—defined as those without a college degree—displayed a strong preference for Donald Trump. Erin Cassese and Tiffany

2 There were several hi-profile third party candidates that drew a small percentage of voters, such as Libertarian Gary Johnson and Green Party candidate Jill Stein, which is why the percentages do not add up to 100 percent.

Figure 2. Women's Vote by Race, Class, Marital Status.

Source: CNN Exit Polls (2016).

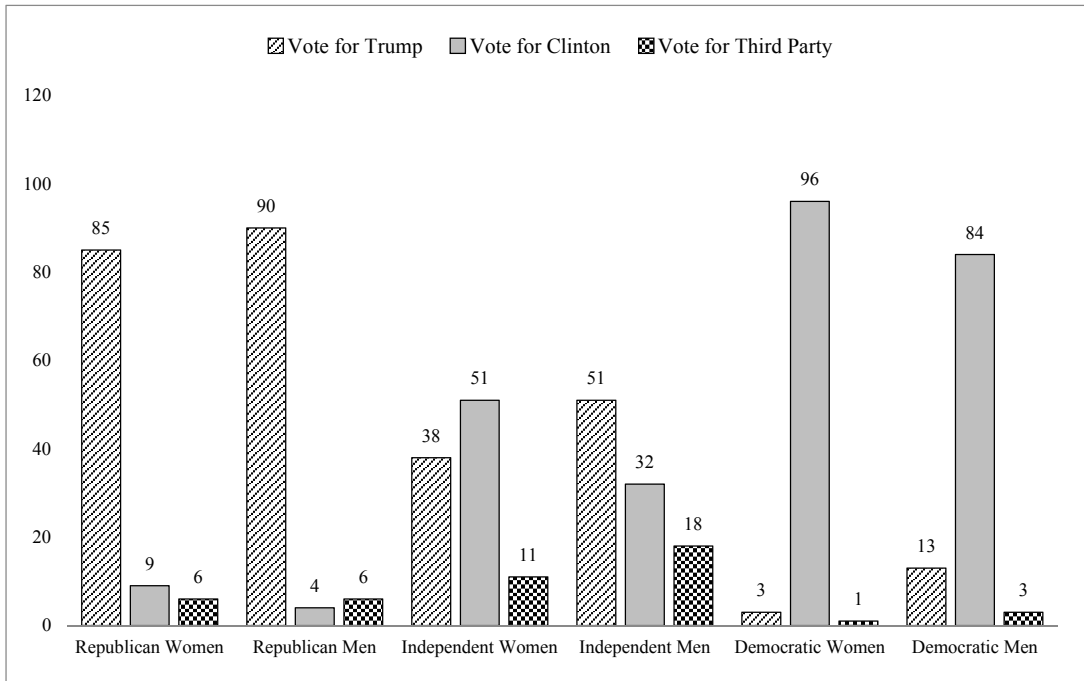
Barnes (2017) show that Trump's margin of victory among white, working-class women was particularly large—even higher than his margin of victory among white, working-class men. They also note that low-income white women who were more likely to have voted for Barack Obama in 2012 switched their allegiance to Trump in 2016. This is a particularly underappreciated finding.

Figure 3 shows how party and gender affected voting behavior (See Figure 3).³ The data clearly show that partisanship had a greater influence on voting behavior than gender in the 2016 presidential election.

Interestingly, 96 percent of women who identified as Democrats voted for Hillary Clinton, and only 9 percent of women who identified as Republican voted for her. On the other hand, 85 percent of women and 90 percent of men who identified as Republican voted for Donald Trump. In addition, 13 percent of men who identified as Democrats defected and voted for Trump. Among self-described political independents, a majority of the women voted for Clinton, whereas majority of the men voted for Trump. Interestingly, nearly one out of every five independent male voters voted for a third

3 PRRI conducted this survey, the 2016 Post-Election White Working Class Survey, with *The Atlantic* magazine. It had a sample size of 1,162 (both landline and cellphone) and was released December 1, 2016. <https://www.prri.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/PRRI-The-Atlantic-WWC-Post-Election-Survey-Topline-FINAL.pdf>.

Figure 3. Vote for President by Party and Sex.



Source: PRRI, White Working Class Survey (2016).

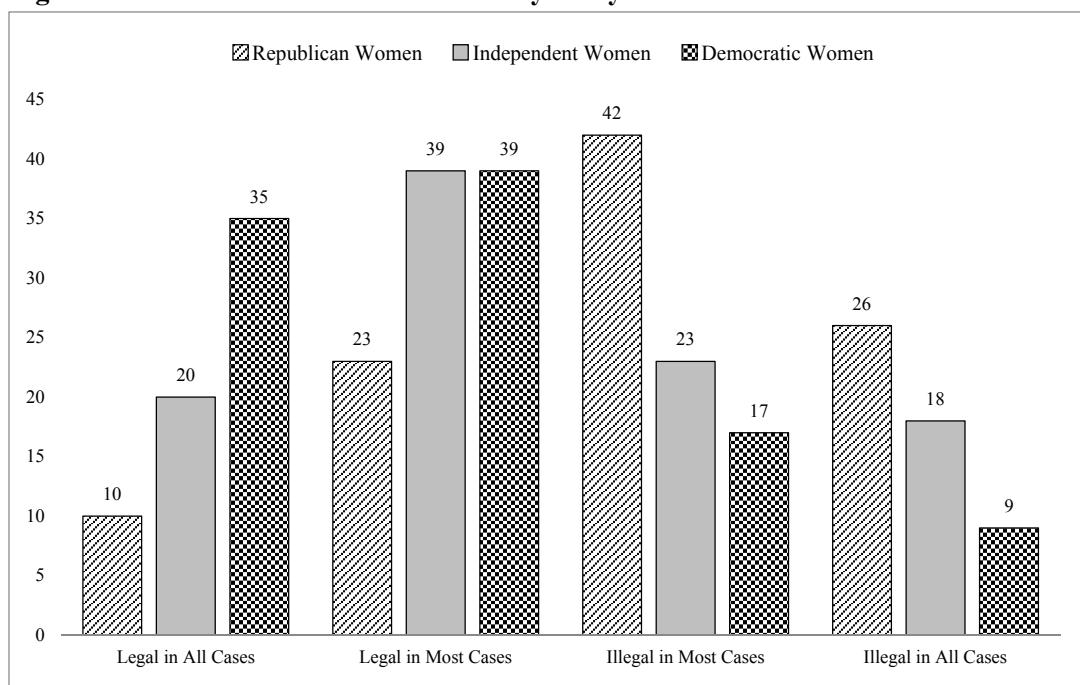
party candidate, which is more than the number of independent female voters who did so.

The reason Hillary Clinton was unable to secure more votes from Republican women was in part due to the latter's distinct political stance from the Democratic Party—in particular, their assessment of the party's policies and politics. Moreover, Trump also attacked the Democratic Party's stance in his campaign, and his assessments also received extensive media coverage. In particular, the issue of abortion occupied the political center stage: The Democratic Party strongly

endorses abortion rights, the “pro-choice” position, whereas the Republican Party endorses a strict, pro-life position. Nonetheless, some Democrats tend to be pro-life, and Republicans to be pro-choice. Figure 4 shows women's attitudes toward abortion with respect to their party affiliation; it shows that Republican women are far more likely to believe that abortion should be illegal in all or most cases than Democratic women, or women who identify as political independents.⁴

While abortion is not exactly a “make or break” issue for most Americans, Gallup

4 Data here come from PRRI's 2015 American Values Survey, conducted between September 11 and October 4, 2015. The sample size was 2,695 and was released on November 17, 2015. <https://www.prri.org/press-release/news-release-american-values-survey-finds-troubled-electorate-7-in-10-believe-u-s-in-recession-most-say-americas-best-days-are-in-the-past/>.

Figure 4. Women's Abortion Attitudes by Party.

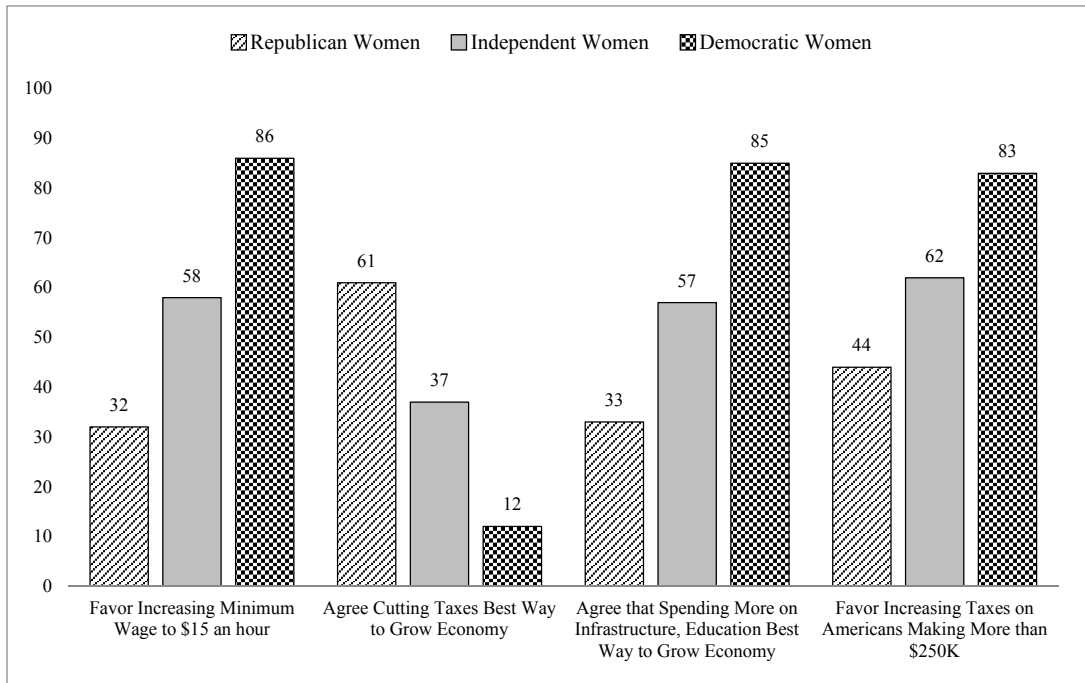
Source: PRRI, American Values Survey (2015).

finds that an increasing number of Americans—about 20 percent, as of 2015—tend to only vote for a candidate who shares their views on abortion; and pro-life voters are more likely to do so than pro-choice voters (Rifkin 2015). In the 2016 presidential election, anti-abortion activists were pleased with Trump for having selected Indiana Governor, Mike Pence, as his running mate, who is vocally pro-life. The activists were also buoyed by Trump's pledge to appoint "pro-life," conservative judges to the judiciary (Ertelt 2016).

Abortion, however, is not the only issue that divides Republican, Democratic, and Independent women. Figure 5 shows that Republican women are far more conservative than other women when it comes to

economic issues, such as tax policy and the minimum wage. They also tend to believe that increasing infrastructure and education spending is not the best way to spur economic growth. For instance, 83 percent of Democratic women believe that increasing taxes on Americans who earn more than \$250,000 in annual income is the right thing to do, whereas only 44 percent of Republican women do so. Moreover, 60 percent of Republican women believe that cutting taxes is the best way to grow the economy, whereas only 12 percent of Democratic women hold this belief. Interestingly, 85 percent of Democrats tend to prefer spending more on infrastructure and education as a way to grow the economy. Similarly, Democratic women prefer increasing the minimum wage while

Figure 5. Women’s Attitudes on Economic Issues by Party.

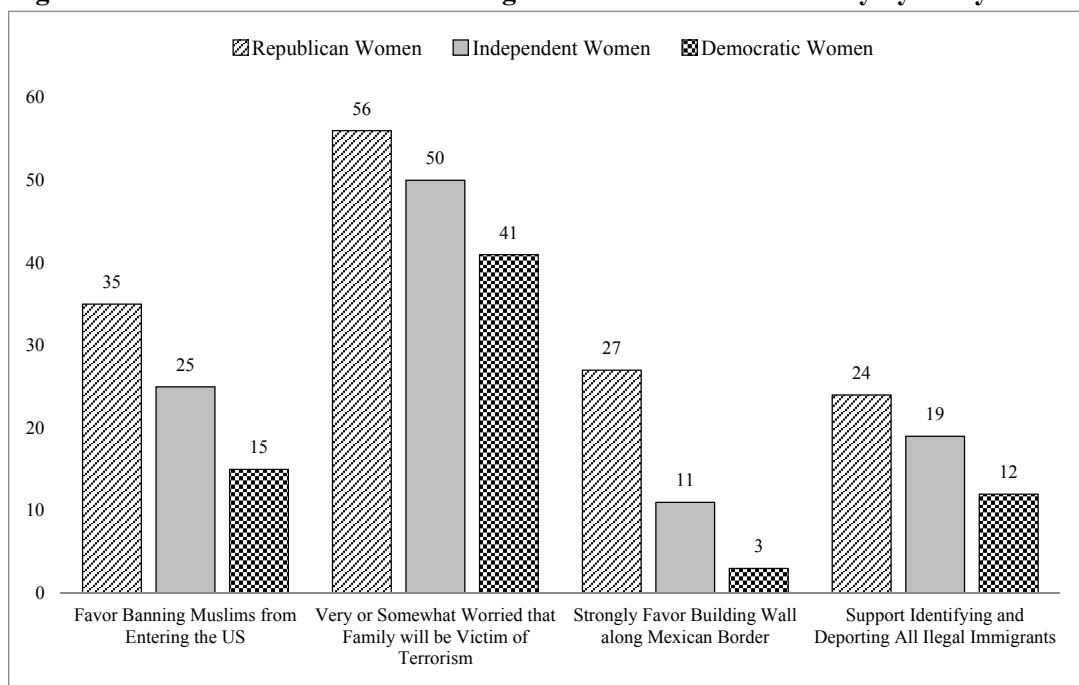


Source: PRRI, White Working Class Survey (2016).

most Republican women do not. During his campaign, Donald Trump repeatedly pledged to lower taxes—indeed, his only major legislative accomplishment in his first year in office was working with Congress to approve a massive overhaul of the tax structure, thereby lowering taxes for many Americans. Given that Republican women’s economic philosophy is largely contrary to the views espoused by Hillary Clinton and the Democratic Party, it should come as little surprise that Republican women found Trump more appealing.

Trump also made his views about national security and immigration integral aspects of his presidential campaign. He adopted a hard-right stance on immigration policy, calling for the United States to build a wall

along the Mexican border to stem illegal immigration from Mexico and Central American countries. Moreover, he routinely touted a tough position on immigration from Muslim countries, arguing that Muslims should be temporarily banned from coming to the United States; he argued that Muslims were a direct threat to the safety of the American public. While the majority of the American public did not share such views, his voters, including many Republican women, found these views to be extremely relevant and persuasive. Figure 6 suggests why this move may have succeeded in preventing Republican women from voting for Hillary Clinton. Republican women tend to consistently espouse a conservative position: they tend to call for the banning of

Figure 6. Women's Attitudes on Immigration and National Security by Party.

Sources: PRRI, Brookings Immigration Survey (2016); PRRI, Atlantic Survey (2016).

Muslims from entering the United States, building a wall with Mexico, and deporting illegal immigrants. Moreover, more than half the Republican women—56 percent—worried that they, or their family members, may become victims of terrorism. On the other hand, only 41 percent of Democratic women held such a belief.

By contrast, Hillary Clinton's campaign routinely touted progressive policy views on social issues, such as abortion, and economic policies pertaining to the minimum wage and taxes. She also endorsed the need to spend more on infrastructure and education; she proposed a policy to introduce free college tuition for American students. She fiercely opposed the idea of building a wall along the Mexican border, and decried Trump's

proposed Muslim ban as reckless and an attempt to “demonize and declare war on an entire religion” (Clinton 2016). Clinton also strongly endorsed comprehensive immigration reform that would allow some undocumented immigrants to stay in the country legally. In short, her vision of a more inclusive country that embraced immigrants and people of different colors and ethnicities was in stark contrast to Donald Trump's “America First” brand of politics. Overall, while more women in the electorate may have found Clinton's message receptive, a strong contingent of Republican women, particularly white, non-college educated women, chose to back Donald Trump instead.

Masculinity in the Presidential Election

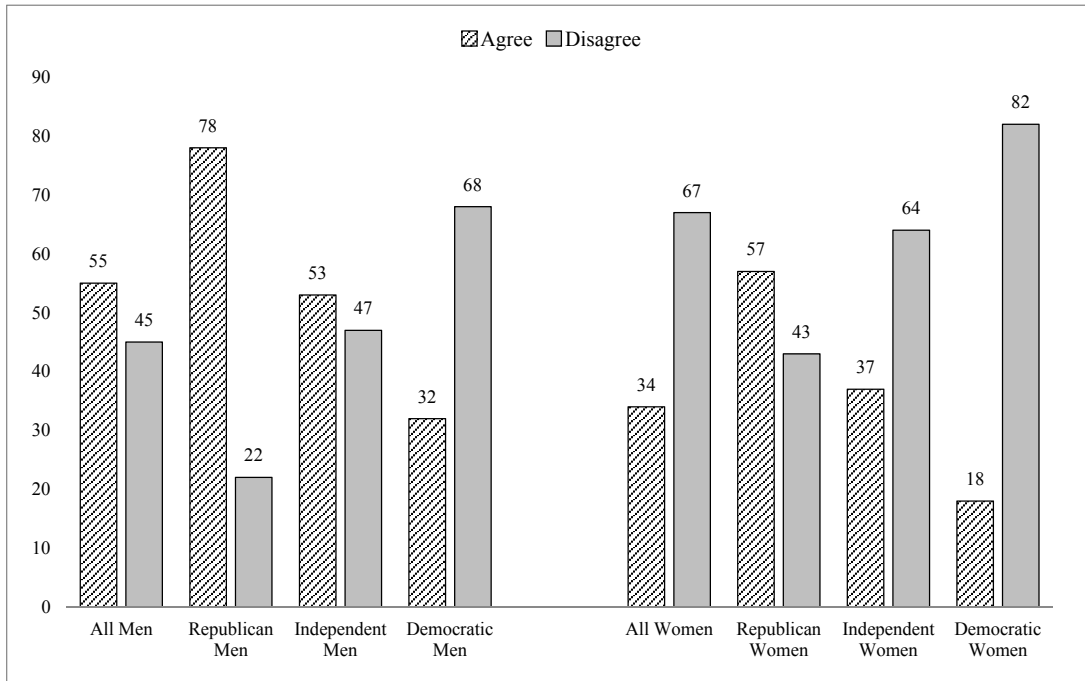
Predictably, Hillary Clinton secured more women voters as the Democratic nominee than Donald Trump, the Republican nominee. Therefore, in some respects, the gender gap remains alive and well in American politics. Yet, the analysis presented in the previous section serves as a stark reminder that American women are not a uniform or homogenous group. Simply put, Republican women and Democratic women hold very different political views and priorities. This may explain why Donald Trump, despite his overtly misogynistic behavior, was able to keep Republican women firmly in his party's camp, much to the surprise of many political observers.

Yet, often overlooked in this assumption is the question of whether or not Trump actually gained votes because of his “alpha male” candidacy (Deckman 2016a). In other words, did voters' attitudes about masculinity in American society also influence voters' choices in the 2016 presidential election? Did Trump's campaign, which reinforced gender stereotypes, actually strengthen Trump's support base? Some commentators argued that Trump's strident stance on national security during the campaign, and his penchant for praising authoritarian rulers, such as Russian President Vladimir Putin, had a gendered component. For instance, one of Trump's campaign ads featured a video of Hillary Clinton coughing and stumbling—she had experienced a bout of pneumonia

during the campaign trail—with Trump's voice claiming that she “doesn't have the fortitude, strength or stamina to lead in our world” (Deckman 2016a). Political scientists have shown that attacks on stamina and toughness can be particularly effective against female Democrats (Cassese and Holman 2016). It is, therefore, reasonable to wonder, as columnist Jill Filipovic (2017) has remarked, whether Donald Trump's campaign pledge to “make American great again” also included “an implicit pledge to return white men to their place of historic supremacy.” However, there is a relative dearth of research on the impact of attitudes about masculinity in the context of voting behavior.

In 2016, PRRI asked American voters to rate the extent to which society has become soft and feminine to measure attitudes about masculinity in American culture.⁵ Less than half of all American voters—43 percent—agreed that American society had become too soft and feminine. Figure 7 shows that men are more likely to hold this view (54 percent) than women (34 percent). Additionally, more than two-thirds of Republican voters agreed that society had become too soft and feminine, but only 24 percent of Democratic voters held this view (data not reported). Independents were found to tread a middle path: 46 percent agreed that society had become too soft and feminine. However, male Republicans were the most likely to agree with the idea that America had ceased to be masculine enough: 78 percent of male

5 Data come from the 2016 post-election, White Working class survey conducted jointly by PRRI and *The Atlantic*.

Figure 7. Society Has Become Too Soft and Feminine.

Source: PRRI, Atlantic White Working Class Survey (2016).

Republicans agreed that society had become too soft and feminine (see Figure 7). In contrast, Democratic women were more likely to disagree with this sentiment: nearly 82 percent disagreed with this assessment. On the other hand, only 57 percent of Republican women agreed that society had become too soft and feminine, a majority nonetheless. Therefore, it can be stated that Republican women are much more conservative than Democratic and Independent women; however, it also shows that Republican women are not as conservative as male Republicans when it comes to views about masculinity and American society.

Did people's views about masculinity in American society shape Donald Trump's

victory, and, if so, how? Voters of Clinton and Trump hold vastly different views on this matter: a mere 18 percent of Clinton's voters agree that American society has become too soft and feminine, whereas 70 percent of Trump's voters agree with this assessment (data not reported).

However, do such feelings drive voting behavior when additional controls are added? In other words, do attitudes about masculinity work as an independent factor in explaining why voters voted the way they did in the 2016 presidential elections while accounting for partisanship and other factors? To answer this question, it is necessary to perform a logistic regression analysis, a form of regression analysis used when the dependent variable is dichotomous;

in this case, the dependent variable pertains to whether respondents in the survey voted for Donald Trump (1 = yes; 0 = no).

In addition to regressing attitudes about masculinity onto votes for Trump (coded 1 = agree that society is too soft and feminine; 0 = disagree that society is too soft and feminine), the statistical model controls for a variety of variables, which in previous studies have been linked to vote choice. These variables include partisanship (here, measured as a series of dummy variables, with Independents left out of the model as a reference category), ideology (1 = very liberal; 5 = very conservative), marital status (1 = married; 0 = not married), race (1 = white; 0 = non-white [including Latinos⁶]), age, and education (1 = less than high school education; 8 = post-graduation education). The model also includes controls for several measures that pertain to religion, as studies have demonstrated that attitudes about patriarchy and masculinity are driven by religion (Gallagher 2004). Evangelicals, in particular, have a religious subculture that promotes men as head of the Church, as well as head of the home (Smith 1999). Thus, the model controls for church attendance (1 = never attends church; 6 = attends church more than once a week) as a measure of religious commitment, while also controlling for whether someone identifies as an

Evangelical Protestant (1 = yes; 0 = no). Studies have also found that greater religiosity and Evangelical status are also significantly related to the likelihood of voters being Republican and voting for Republican candidates—another important reason to include these controls in the model (Putnam and Campbell 2011). Given that this article focuses mainly on the gender gap, the model also includes a control for gender (1 = male; 2 = female) in the full model. Table 1 presents the results of this analysis; the variables that are statistically and significantly related to predicting a vote for Trump are highlighted by asterisks.

Table 1 shows that, even controlling for other factors, voters who believe that America has become too soft and feminine are significantly more likely to vote for Donald Trump. Considering the odds-ratio, respondents who adopt this masculine attitude are more than 2.8 times likely to vote for Trump than respondents who reject the idea that America has become too soft and feminine. Alternatively, holding all other variables at their mean values, voters who believe that American society is too soft and feminine increased the probability of voting for Donald Trump by 51 percentage points, indicating a strong relationship between

6 While it is true that most Latinos consider themselves white (Darity 2016), I chose to label them as non-white in data analysis because (1) research shows that Latinos often consider their Hispanic background to be part of their racial background (Gonzalez-Barrera and Lopez 2015); (2) as a group in society, they have often face marginalization and discrimination distinct from Anglo Americans; and (3) Latinos tend to be underrepresented in survey samples because they do not make up enough of the US population—so combining them with other racial minorities makes sense. Moreover, Latinos demonstrate voting behavior historically that is distinct from non-Latino white Americans.

Table 1. Logistic Regression Models
Vote for Trump and All Voters Dependent Variable: Vote for Trump.

| Variables | B (S.E.) | Exp(B) |
|------------------------|-----------------|--------|
| Soft and Feminine | 1.059(.237)*** | 2.882 |
| Sex | 0.392(.241) | 1.479 |
| Republican | 1.390(.272)*** | 4.014 |
| Democratic | -1.915(.128)*** | 0.147 |
| Ideology | 0.953(.128)*** | 2.594 |
| Married | 0.158(.237) | 1.171 |
| White | 0.775(.298)*** | 2.171 |
| Age | 0.016(.006)* | 1.016 |
| Education | -0.212(.065)*** | 0.807 |
| Church Attendance | 0.004(.075) | 0.965 |
| Evangelical Protestant | 0.385(.308) | 1.470 |
| Constant | -4.497(.736)*** | |
| N=816 | | |

* = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *** = $p < .001$

Source: PRRI, The Atlantic White Working Class Survey (2016).

these two concepts.⁷ The only other factors that appear to matter more to vote choice according to the regression model are partisanship, ideology, and race. Republicans are four times more likely to vote for Donald Trump than Independents. Moreover, white voters were more than twice as likely as non-white voters to cast their ballot for Donald Trump. In contrast, and consistent with much of the literature on gender gap, gender is not a statistically significant predictor of vote choice.

Moreover, as Table 2 demonstrates, when this analysis considers women and men voters in separate regression models, attitudes about masculinity in American society continue to exert an independent

effect. Women who believe that society has become too soft and feminine are more than three times as likely as women who do not hold such views to vote for Donald Trump. When calculating predicted probabilities, women voters who share this view are 31 percent more likely to vote for Trump when holding other variables at their mean values. However, predicted probabilities show that attitudes about masculinity appear to exert an even stronger impact on male voters—men who believe American society is too soft and feminine are 67 percent more likely to vote for Trump while controlling other variables at their mean values.

When considering other variables that shape the voting calculus of men and women,

7 STATA's Margins command was used to calculate the predicted probability of voting for Trump while keeping the other variables at their mean values.

Table 2. Logistic Regression Models**Vote for Trump, Men Voters, and Women Voters Dependent Variable: Vote for Trump.**

| | Women Voters | | Men Voters | |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Variables | B (S.E.) | Exp(B) | B (S.E.) | Exp(B) |
| Soft and Feminine | 1.121(.383)** | 3.360 | 1.094(.314)*** | 2.986 |
| Republican | 1.65(.418)*** | 5.228 | 1.157(.369)** | 3.180 |
| Democratic | -2.40(.554)*** | 0.091 | -1.56(.412)*** | 0.210 |
| Ideology | 1.223(.236)*** | 3.414 | 0.841(.158)*** | 2.319 |
| Married | 0.539(.379) | 1.715 | -0.236(.323) | 0.789 |
| White | 1.167(.512)* | 3.213 | 0.654(.381) | 1.924 |
| Age | 0.0152(.011) | 1.015 | 0.0195(.008)* | 1.019 |
| Education | -0.350(.112)*** | 0.705 | -0.141(.087) | 0.868 |
| Church Attendance | -0.196(.138) | 0.822 | 0.043(.100) | 1.044 |
| Evangelical Protestant | 0.838(.492) | 2.311 | 0.093(.409) | 1.098 |
| Constant | -4.725 | 0.008 | -4.169 | |
| | N = 414 | | N = 402 | |

* = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *** = $p < .001$

Source: PRRI, The Atlantic White Working Class Survey (2016).

the models show that partisanship and ideology remain the strongest predictors of vote choice. However, age is only significant for men. As male voters age, they are more likely to vote for Trump; age is not related to women's voting behavior. Instead, education and race are important factors that drive women's vote. White women and less educated women are significantly more likely to vote for Trump than women of color and highly educated women. This supports the findings presented by other similar studies that focus on sex in the context of the 2016 presidential election (Cassese and Barnes 2017). Surprisingly, however, religion as measured by church attendance and evangelical status are not important factors in the decision to vote for Trump. This is quite contrary to the narrative popularized by the news media. The media claimed that

the "religious right" was, in part, responsible for Trump's election.

What findings can we draw from this analysis? The statistical models show a number of things: first, partisanship, race, and ideology are the factors that most significantly determined voters' choice in the 2016 presidential election; these independent variables are so important to shaping vote choice that gender ceases to be important. Gender is not an independent explanatory factor in determining voters' choice. This is not to say that the 2016 presidential elections did not have a gendered component. It is just to say that attitudes about masculinity—measured by asking respondents if they believe American society has become "too soft and feminine"—are also significantly related to Donald Trump's election. Trump's overtly masculine and chauvinistic campaign

appears to have had an impact on some voters—particularly men, but also conservative women. The impact of masculinity in the 2016 elections, as defined by whether Americans perceive society as too “soft and feminine,” certainly warrants more research.

Discussion

The gender gap in American elections is rather discernible: Hillary Clinton won more votes from American women than Donald Trump, whereas Trump secured a majority of the male votes. Predictably, traditional patterns of voting behavior explain much about the outcome of the 2016 presidential election. Partisanship, ideology, and race influenced voters’ choice to a significant extent. These factors continue to exert more independent influence on voting behavior among Americans than gender. Simply put, women voters who are Democrats will mostly vote for Democrats, whereas women voters who are Republican will mostly vote for Republicans. The same partisan pattern holds true for male voters as well. The gender gap exists because women—particularly women of color—are more likely to be Democrats than Republicans.

At the same time, this analysis shows that attitudes about masculinity were also significant in the 2016 presidential election. Voters who felt that America has become “too soft and feminine” were more likely to have voted for Donald Trump—independent of party, ideology, race, and other factors. Trump’s overtly masculine campaign, steeped with themes of law and order and

gendered hostility toward his female opponent, appears to have made masculinity an important component of vote choice.

Another way to interpret these findings about masculinity is to throw light on the fact that Americans who *rejected* this notion (that society has become too soft and feminine) supported Hillary Clinton’s candidacy. Recall that merely 18 percent of Clinton’s voters agreed with this sentiment. The “toxic” masculinity of Trump’s campaign inspired a protest march in Washington and other major American cities on January 21, 2017, the day *after* the inauguration. The “Women’s March” brought together millions of supporters, many decked in pink, “pussy” hats. They rejected sexism and called for the safeguarding of women’s rights, civil rights, and other progressive causes in the wake of Trump’s victory and continued Republican control of both houses of the United States Congress (Przybyla and Schouten, 2017).

Hillary Clinton’s loss has been attributed to many factors, including a lack of enthusiasm among Democratic supporters (Dovere 2016; Siepel 2016) and a general unease with the economy and continued Democratic control in the White House. Yet, the fervor generated by the Women’s March, women activists, and their progressive allies, appears to show no signs of abating. Several political developments in 2017 indicate that 2018 may be a historic year for women in politics. First, the number of women running for political office has reached an all-time high. According to the Center for American Women in Politics, there are four times as many women challenging U.S. House

incumbents, and ten times as many women challenging incumbent U.S. Senators as the two previous election cycles (Dickerson 2017). Emily's List—the largest Democratic organization geared toward electing women candidates to office—reported that the number of women who contacted them about running increased twenty-fold, from 1,000 in 2016 to more than 22,000 in 2017 (Tackett 2017). Many of these candidates directly acknowledge that their decision to run is linked to Donald Trump and his sexist behavior.

In 2017, Democratic candidates also fared well in several notable, off-year state elections, driven in part by women voters and candidates. In Virginia, a Southern state that voted for Democratic candidates in a number of previous presidential election cycles but had maintained a solid Republican majority in its state legislature, Democrats flipped at least 15 Republican-controlled Virginia house seats in the fall 2017 state legislative election, 12 of which were won by women candidates (Walsh 2017), bringing that chamber to near partisan parity. National anger at Trump and the Republicans also paved the way for the election of Democrat Ralph Northam to the governorship in Virginia by a surprisingly wide margin. The election was marked by high turnout, especially on the part of women voters (61 percent of women voted for Northam, whereas only 39 percent voted for the Republican, Ed Gillespie) (Exit Poll Results 2017).

Moreover, Democrats stunned the political world by winning a special election in

Alabama in December, 2017. By doing so, they filled the Senate seat vacated by Jeff Sessions when he was appointed as the United States Attorney General by Trump. Alabama is one of the most reliably Republican states in the union, and Trump beat Hillary Clinton by close to 30 percentage points in this state in the 2016 presidential race. However, Republicans in their primary election chose the extremely controversial candidate, Roy Moore, as their nominee. Moore had twice been elected as the Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court in Alabama. However, he was removed on two separate occasions for defying federal law when he disobeyed a federal court order to remove a monument of the biblical Ten Commandments from the floor of the Supreme Court building that he had installed in 2003. He was also removed when he disobeyed a court order to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples in 2016 after the Supreme Court ruled that such marriages were legal (Robertson 2016). These actions, however, endeared him to many conservative Christians in Alabama and across the nation. However, in November 2017, a few months after Moore had won the Republican primary to face the Democratic challenger for the open Senate seat, *The Washington Post* reported the following. It claimed that in his thirties and during his spell as district attorney, Moore had initiated sexual encounters with girls as young as 14 years old; several other women also stepped forward to share similar encounters, prompting unprecedented media attention on an election that under other circumstances

would have likely resulted in the election of a Republican (McCrummer, Reinhard, and Crites 2017). While Republican leaders in Congress asked Moore to step aside, not wanting their party to be linked to a pedophile, Donald Trump fully endorsed Moore. This special election garnered non-stop coverage on news media channels as the race came to be viewed in part as a referendum on Trump's presidency. Doug Jones, a political moderate and former United States Attorney in Alabama, became the first Democrat in a generation to be elected to the United States Senate from Alabama. Moore lost by almost two percentage points. Exit polls showed that Roy Moore lost partly due to the very high turnout of African-American voters (Moore had also indicated during the campaign that America was at its greatest during the 19th century, despite the existence of slavery). But Jones' victory was also possible because of a 16 percent advantage with women voters, which represented tremendous gains among suburban and college-educated women (Exit Polls 2017b). While no statistical analysis has been conducted to examine the voting behavior of Alabamians in that particular run-off, it is fair to say that women voters contributed to Roy Moore's defeat.

Finally, 2018 may be an unprecedented year for women in American politics because of a larger societal emphasis on sexual harassment. This impetus may have gathered force during Trump's campaign, but it took on new life in the fall of 2017, as allegations about Harvey Weinstein, a Hollywood mogul and movie producer, made front-page news,

turning the issue of sexual harassment into a touchstone (Farhi 2017). Women, encouraged by social media, began to share their own stories about sexual harassment in the workplace, giving birth to the #MeToo movement. In the months after the Harvey Weinstein story broke, similar allegations were levied against more men of power. This led to the firings and/or resignations of well-known journalists, such as Matt Lauer and Charlie Rose, as well as several member of Congress—both Democratic (John Conyers and Al Franken) and Republican (Trent Franks and Blake Farenthold). Donald Trump's history of sexual harassment is also garnering more attention. A woman who claims to be a victim of Trump's sexual harassment has filed a civil defamation lawsuit against Trump for calling her a liar (Twohey 2017). Notably, she first stepped forward with this allegation during the 2016 presidential campaign.

Mid-term elections in American politics—those held two years after presidential elections—typically result in the President's party losing seats in Congress. Many observers predict that Democrats have a legitimate shot at regaining both the Senate and the House in 2018, especially given the results of the Alabama special election and the Virginia state elections. A record number of women candidates are poised to run for Congress and in legislative seats at the state level—many inspired to directly counter Donald Trump's presidency and the conservative direction taken by Congress. It is true that partisanship still “trumps” gender when it comes to voting decisions, but it is

also true that more women in the American electorate identify as Democrats than as Republicans (Deckman 2016b). With momentum switching to the Democratic Party and its activists—many of whom are

women—2018 may prove to be a year in which Republicans' inability to persuade women voters will have deep political consequences.

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要旨

あまりに甘く、女性的すぎる——2016 年大統領選挙における男らしさと男女格差

Melissa Deckman

本稿は、2016 年米大統領選挙において、特に女性有権者に着眼しながら、「男らしさ」に関する価値観がいかに有権者の選択肢に関与したのか検討する。また、これ以外の要素がどのようにして投票行動を左右したかについても考察する。メディア陣は、あたかも女性有権者は投票で高い結束力を発揮するかのよう報道している。しかし本稿の分析によると、女性有権者の投票は、党派・人種・教育・「男らしさ」に対する見解によって左右される事が分かる。これらの影響は男性有権者の投票行動に特に顕著に現れるものである。ところが女性に関しても、「今の社会はあまりに甘く、女性的すぎる」と考える女性は、そう思わない女性の3倍以上もトランプ氏に投票した確率が高いことが、統計調査結果に見られる。実際、トランプ氏の選挙期間中の性差別的な言動にも関わらず、保守派で主に白人の女性の強いサポート層は、彼に票を投じた。#Me Too の運動の働きかけで、保守派の女性が近い将来、民主党の候補者を支持するかどうかは、今のところまだ分からない。しかし、2016 年選挙の分析結果では、そのような結果が得られる見込みは薄い。

キーワード

ジェンダーギャップ 2016 年米大統領選挙 投票行動 保守派女性 男らしさ

《筆者紹介》

Melissa Deckman is the Louis L. Goldstein Professor of Public Affairs at Washington College and chairs the board of PRRI, the Public Religion Research Institute. Her areas of specialty include religion, gender and conservative political movements in American politics. The author or co-author of more than a dozen scholarly articles and four books, her latest book, *Tea Party Women: Mama Grizzlies, Grassroots Leaders, and the Changing Face of the American Right*, was published by NYU Press in 2016. Her political commentary can be followed on Twitter @melissadeckman.