

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST FEMALE CANDIDATES IN 2016 CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS: THE ROLE OF MODERN SEXISM IN VOTE CHOICE

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THE 2016 ELECTION



Was It Hillary Or Was It Sexism?

- Hillary Clinton has been a public figure for decades, and was one of the most controversial presidential candidates in history
- She was hated because of Benghazi, Bill Clinton, Syria, Obama, partisanship
- She faced sexism from the media, Donald Trump, Fox News, BernieBros, Trump Supporters, the general public
- Many claimed they would never vote for because of Benghazi, Bill Clinton, Syria, Obama, partisanship, Monica Lewinsky

There is no way to know what happened-- Hillary has been a public figure for so long it is impossible to separate opinions about her from sexist sentiment

ABSTRACT

This project will examine the effects of modern sexist attitudes on voting behavior in the 2016 House and Senate elections in which a man was running against a woman. This project contributes to existing literature on sexism, effects of candidate gender, and voting behavior, by looking at the role of sexism in lower federal elections in the context of having a female two party presidential candidate running in the general election. Using the 2016 American National Election Study (ANES) data, variables were coded to make up a modern sexism battery, and controls were implemented to account for the female candidate's party, her incumbency status, and the office she was running for. Additionally, control variables were added to account for voter age, party ID, gender (male), race (white), education level, income bracket, how many children they had living with them under 18, if they were married, and their religiosity. A modern sexism scale was created by way of an additive index of sexism based questions in the ANES dataset. First, an OLS regression analysis was run to determine which voter characteristic variables were related to higher levels of sexism. Next, regressions were run to examine the influence of sexism on voting for the female candidate—my main hypothesis—which there was supporting evidence for. For House elections, every point increase on the sexism scale is associated with a .9% decrease of probability of voting for the woman candidate. When it comes to voting for a female Senate candidate, there is a .7% probability decrease with every point increase on the sexism scale.



Hypotheses

- 1) Certain voter characteristic traits will be associated with higher/lower levels of sexism
- 2) *In a mixed gender race, after controlling for shared partisanship and candidate and voter demographic variables, higher levels of sexism will be associated with lower probability of voting for the woman candidate

Findings

Sexism and Characteristic Variables Relationships

Sexism	Coefficient	Std. Error	Significance
Democrat	-1.962	0.206	***
Republican	1.836	0.215	***
Male	1.309	0.132	***
White	0.135	0.157	
Age	0.010	0.004	**
Education	-0.543	0.057	***
Income	-0.187	0.032	***
Married	-0.052	0.092	
Children	0.252	0.069	***
Religious	0.232	0.044	***
Constant	9.522	0.501	***

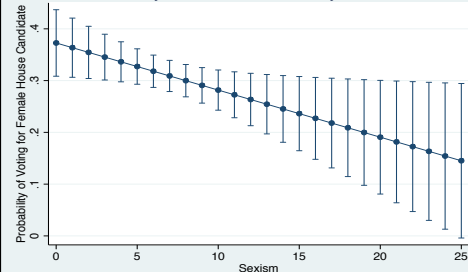
Mean DV 7.092 Std. Deviation DV 4.277
R-squared 0.275 Number of Obs. 3196.000

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Figure 1. Sexism and Characteristic Variables Regression Analysis.

- The regression table above shows how a number of voter characteristic variables correlate with higher or lower levels of sexism
- There is a positive relationship between sexism and being a Republican, being male, being older, having more children and being more religious
- There is a negative relationship between sexism and being a Democrat, being more educated, having a higher income, and being married

Probability of Female House Vote by Sexism

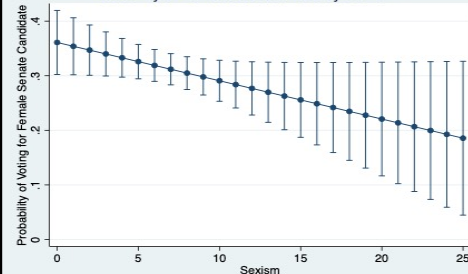


The graphs show the probability of someone voting for a woman in House/Senate election by level of sexism (0-25)

House:

- Average probability of voting for a woman at a 0 on the sexism scale is about 38%
- There is a near 0 probability of voting for the woman candidate amongst those with the highest levels of sexism

Probability of Female Senate Vote by Sexism



Senate:

- Average probability of voting for a woman at a 0 on the sexism scale is about 35%
- There is about a 5% probability of voting for the woman candidate amongst those with the highest levels of sexism

Implications

- There is quantitative evidence that after controlling for voter demographic variables, candidate characteristic variables, and partisanship, *sexism did play a role in vote choice in 2016 male-female congressional elections*
- It is likely that this sentiment during the lower elections played a role in the election outcome for Hillary Clinton, suggesting that sexism can be at least partially credited with her loss



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