

# Effects of Candidate Demographic on Voter Turnout

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## Introduction

- Though much research has been conducted to determine which types of people are likely to show up on voting day, little is known about how candidate characteristics influence overall voter turnout.
- Implicit prejudice and racial or gender biases may influence voter turnout among the voting eligible population.

## Hypotheses

- When compared to an election with exclusively white candidates, voter turnout for elections with one or more non-white candidate will be lower.
- When compared to an election with exclusively male candidates, voter turnout for elections with one or more female candidate will be lower.

## Methods

- Data on voter turnout and election results were manually collected from volumes 24, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, and 32 of “America Votes.”
- The data span the years 2004 to 2016 and includes information for gubernatorial and senatorial elections for all U.S. states.
- To test the hypotheses, 3 OLS regression models were created

## Results

Fig. 1

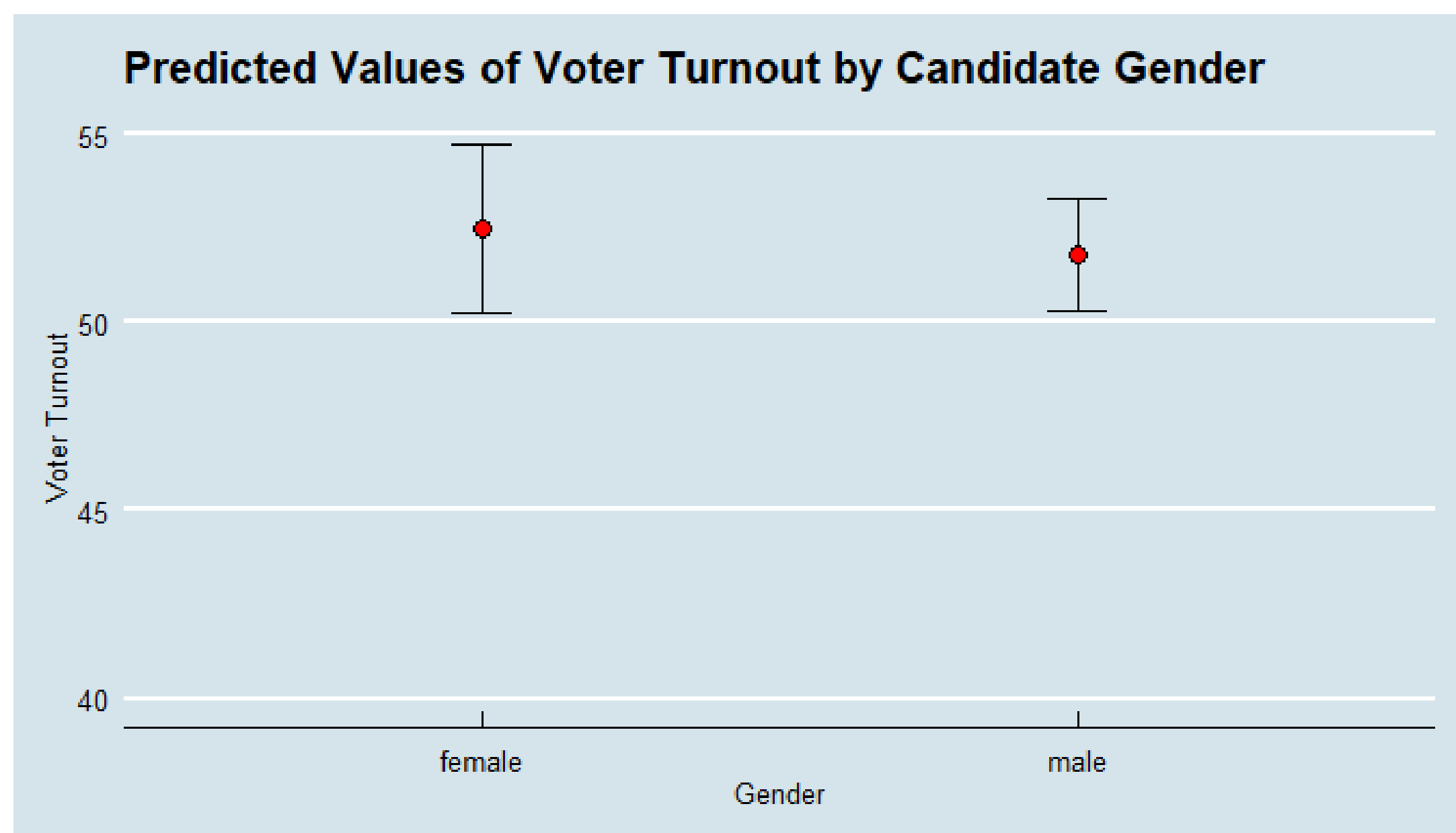


Fig. 2

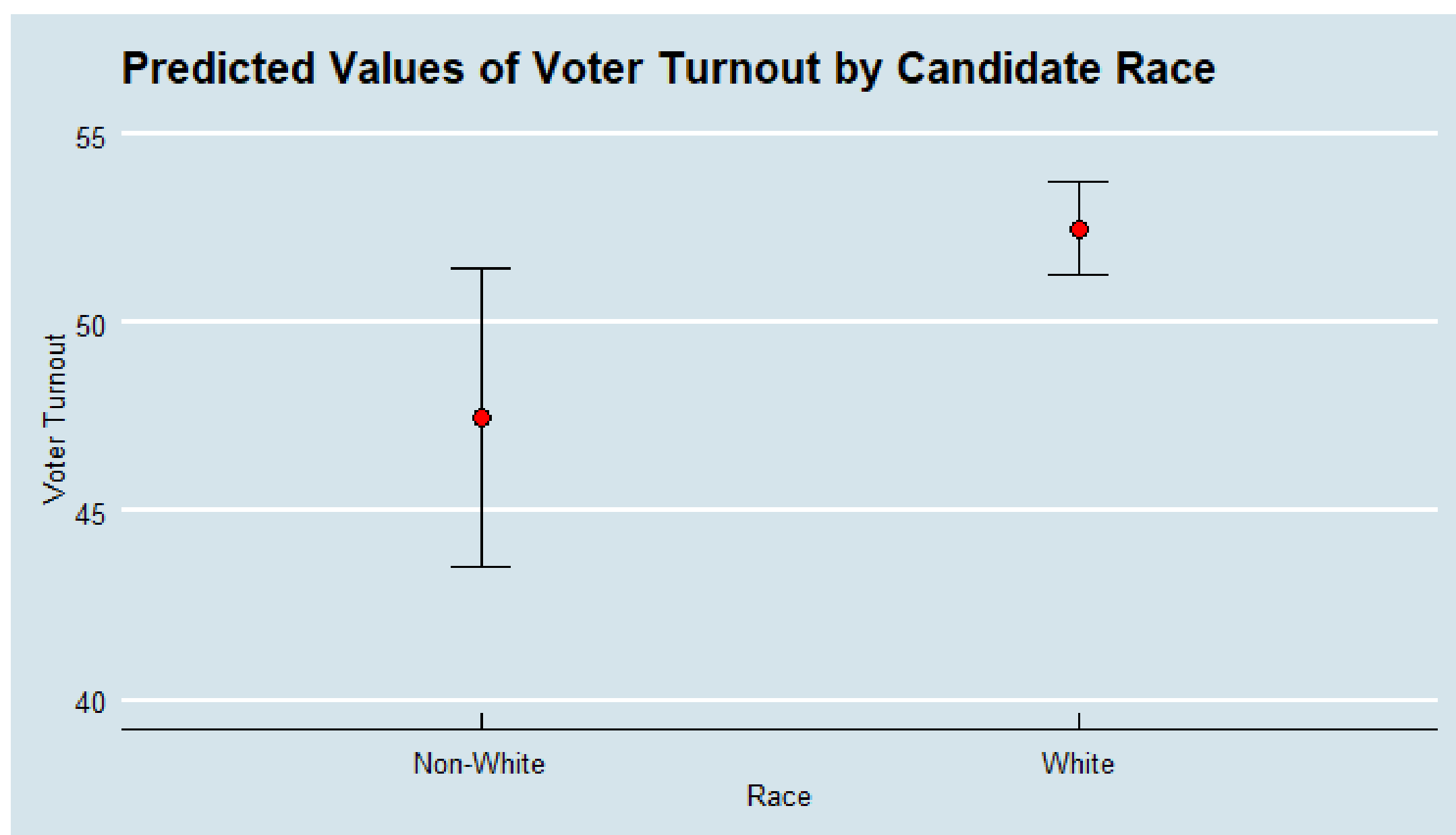


Table 1: The Effect of Candidate Race and Gender on Voter Turnout

	OLS 1	P-Value	OLS 2	P-Value	OLS 3	P-Value
Female Candidate	.76 (.79)	.338	.507 (1.44)	.7240	.990 (.834)	.236
Non-white Candidate	-2.43 (1.25)	.052*	-5.63 (2.47)	.0232*	-1.76 (1.46)	.227
Year	Fixed Effects	Fixed Effects	-.749 (1.67)	0.00*	Fixed Effects	Fixed Effects
Incumbent	-.349 (.815)	.669	1.45 (1.38)	.2934	-.424 (.820)	.606
Election Type	.568 (.834)	.469	6.52 (1.33)	0.00*	.509 (.839)	.543
Competitive Election	-.28 (.052)	0.00*	-.230 (.090)	.0114*	-.278 (.053)	0.00*
GINI (2010)	-103.36 (17.63)	0.00*	-162.75 (29.59)	0.00*	-102.19 (17.69)	0.00*
Female * Non-White	-	-	2.03 (4.54)	.6552	-2.36 (2.65)	.374

## Discussion

- None of the models found any significance for a candidate's gender; however two out of three models found that there is a negative relationship between a candidate's race and voter turnout.
- Results for the relationship between race and voter turnout were significant at the .06 level.
- Non-whites appear to draw less voters to the polls than white counterparts, all else held equal.
- An interaction between candidates that are female, and non-white was included in two out of three models. It did not appear to be significant.

## Conclusions

- There appears to be no relationship between candidate gender and voter turnout.
- We have found evidence that when there are non-white candidates running for office, voter turnout decreases.