Fear of Gender Favoritism and Vote Choice during the 2008 Presidential Primaries

Seth K. Goldman, University of Massachusetts-Amherst

It has long been suggested that gender stereotyping undercuts support for female candidates, yet a growing number of studies—including several analyses of Hillary Clinton's 2008 presidential campaign—find limited evidence of such effects. By contrast, I find consistent evidence of voter gender bias using an alternative approach based on perceptions of group favoritism. Using new survey measures included on a nationally representative panel survey fielded during the 2008 US presidential primaries, I find that many citizens perceive female elected officials as likely to steer government resources toward women, a behavior that most evaluate negatively. Moreover, fear of gender favoritism predicts opposition to Clinton throughout the 2008 Democratic primary campaign, as well as in a hypothetical general election matchup with the Republican nominee.

Betty Friedan worried then that a woman seen as a threat to men would not get to the White House. But how can a woman who's not a threat to men get there?
—Dowd (2006)

The question of whether female candidates face gender bias remains the subject of intense debate in political science. On the one hand, numerous studies find that voters' gender stereotypes—that is, their expectations about how men and women do, and should, act—bias their perceptions of women candidates (e.g., Huddy and Terkildsen 1993b; Lawless 2004; Rosenwasser and Dean 1989; Sapiro 1981–82). On the other hand, recent research suggests that beliefs about gender stereotypes do not influence vote choice (e.g., Brooks 2013; Dolan 2014), including several analyses of support for Hillary Clinton during the 2008 presidential primaries (Gervais and Hillard 2011; Huddy and Carey 2009; Kinder and Dale-Riddle 2012; Tesler and Sears 2010). Running counter to this growing consensus is a list experiment fielded on a national survey in 2006 which revealed that 26% of the public would be "angry or upset" about "a woman serving as president" (Streb et al. 2008). How can we explain these contradictory findings? One possibility is that social desirability bias interfered with the assessment of gender stereotypes. Yet experiments that minimized this potential problem using fictional candidates still found no double standard applied to women candidates (Brooks 2013).

In this study, I offer a new explanation: some voters may perceive female elected officials as likely to favor women over men in government policy making. Those who fear gender favoritism expect that female political leaders will show outsized concern for women and "women's issues," thus putting men at a relative disadvantage. By this account, gender discrimination is not just about expectations of masculinity and femininity but also about expectations of group-interested behavior by women in positions of power. This should be especially true for men, who have a clear interest in protecting their group's superior position in society (Blumer 1958; Bobo and Tuan 2006) and who are thus likely to be driven by perceptions of group threat (LeVine and Campbell 1972). Yet as scholars have found with other types of gender attitudes, women likely hold negative attitudes about gender favoritism as well, although probably to a lesser extent than men (Glick and Rudman 2010; Swim et al. 1995). Similarly, among those who do fear gender favoritism, its political impact should

Seth K. Goldman (skgoldman@comm.umass.edu) is an assistant professor in the Department of Communication and Commonwealth Honors College at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, MA 01003.

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be negative for both men and women, although perhaps with greater force among men.

To test this approach to voter gender bias, I propose survey measures of fear of gender favoritism and include them on a five-wave nationally representative panel survey fielded during the 2008 presidential primaries. As expected, a substantial proportion of citizens—including somewhat more men than women—believe that female elected officials are likely to favor women over men, and most evaluate such favoritism negatively. Moreover, cross-sectional analyses show significant associations between fear of gender favoritism and reduced support for Clinton during the Democratic primaries, and panel analyses show that fear of gender favoritism predicts within-person change in candidate support over time. Analyses of a hypothetical general election contest between Clinton and the Republican nominee, John McCain, also reveal a significant impact of fear of gender favoritism. Collectively, these findings strongly suggest that fear of gender favoritism played a central role in the 2008 presidential campaign.

GENDER STEREOTYPES AND OPPOSITION TO WOMEN CANDIDATES

Numerous studies have examined the role of gender stereotypes in voters' reactions to women candidates—that is, whether voters apply widely held expectations about the personality traits of women in general to the characteristics of women politicians. Because women in general are stereotyped as having more communal traits (e.g., compassionate and honest) than agentic traits (e.g., strong and tough), scholars hypothesize that voters will evaluate female politicians with these same expectations. And indeed, many studies—including experiments that randomly vary the gender of fictional candidates and surveys that ask about generic male and female candidates—find that respondents perceive female candidates as better able to handle so-called feminine issues, such as education, health care, and helping the poor, while male candidates are perceived as better able to handle so-called masculine issues, such as crime, the military, and terrorism (e.g., Dolan 2014; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993b; Lawless 2004; Rosenwasser and Dean 1989; Sapiro 1981–82).

Yet not all studies find that gender stereotypes reduce support for women candidates. Most notably, in a series of experiments Kahn (1992, 1994) shows that voters' gender stereotypes helped female candidates. Voters perceived female candidates as more honest and compassionate, and as more competent on education, health care, and women's issues, but not as any less capable of handling masculine-stereotyped issues. By contrast, other experimental evidence has demonstrated that most people hold a general preference for male candidates that ultimately undercuts voter support for specific female candidates (Sanbonmatsu 2002). These contradictory findings highlight the challenge of studying a moving target, where the impact of gender can cut both ways (Huddy 1994; Huddy and Capelos 2002).

In recent years, however, public opinion research has begun to coalesce around a surprising result: minimal gender bias toward women candidates. During the 2006 US Senate elections, for instance, respondents to a national survey rated female incumbents equally to male incumbents on experience and more positively on leadership, honesty, caring, the economy, and health care (Fridkin and Kenney 2009), and another 2006 survey found no differences in perceptions of male and female Senate candidates' traits (e.g., compassionate and strong leadership; Hayes 2011). Analyses of the 2010 and 2014 elections echo these findings: respondents to national surveys rated male and female House, Senate, and gubernatorial candidates equivalently on a range of traits and issues (Dolan 2014; Hayes and Lawless 2015, 2016). Finally, a series of experiments embedded in a nationally representative survey found no evidence that voters punish women candidates more than men for lacking experience, crying, displaying anger, acting domineering, lacking empathy, or having knowledge gaffes (Brooks 2013). Encapsulating the dominant explanation for this new set of findings, Hayes and Lawless (2015, 108) suggest "that the electoral landscape is far more favorable to women than it was even just two decades ago, when the study of gender stereotyping was in its heyday." So although many people still endorse gender stereotypes of women in general, they have become less likely to apply those stereotypes to their evaluations of women candidates (Dolan 2014).

Nonetheless, there remain a variety of conditions under which we might expect continued gender bias (Hayes and Lawless 2016). For example, when campaign communication highlights stereotypical feminine traits, voter gender stereotypes reduce support for female candidates, and although voters on the whole may not associate gender stereotypes with female candidates, some subgroups do (Bauer 2015a, 2015b). Many scholars also suggest that female candidates for higher-level office are more likely to be penalized for violating traditional gender norms (Fowler and Lawless 2009; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993a). Of course, there is no higher office in the United States than the presidency, thus making Hillary Clinton's 2008 campaign an interesting test of this hypothesis. Not only that, but Clinton has long been criticized for challenging traditional gender norms, especially during her years as first lady (Burrell 2001). Moreover, anecdotal accounts of the 2008 campaign suggest that "gender was a pervasive force" (Carroll 2009, 2), with numerous instances of sexist media coverage reinforcing gender stereotypes (Carlin and Winfrey 2009; Lawless 2009). At the same time, quantitative content analyses have

uncovered little systematic evidence of explicit gender bias in mainstream media coverage of Clinton during the 2008 campaign (Lawrence and Rose 2010; Miller, Peake, and Boulton 2010). Still, there were some subtle biases, such as horse race coverage emphasizing gender differences in group support and critiques of Clinton as competent yet lacking warmth (Miller et al. 2010).

Did gender stereotypes undercut support for Clinton during the 2008 campaign? Survey research during Clinton's years as first lady led many to expect that this would be the case, given a large division in views of her by gender at the time (Burrell 2001). Consistent with this expectation, experimental and survey evidence from the early 2000s found that an increased focus on terror threats activated gender stereotypes, thus reducing Clinton's favorability (Holman, Merolla, and Zechmeister 2011). A more recent study from 2012 suggests that serving as secretary of state may have helped to inoculate Clinton from such stereotype effects, although of course this service came after the 2008 campaign (Holman, Merolla, and Zechmeister 2017). Perhaps surprisingly then, scholars have found little evidence that beliefs about gender hurt Clinton in the 2008 election (Huddy and Carey 2009). Analyses using a variety of surveys all found that gender beliefs did not significantly influence vote choice (Gervais and Hillard 2011; Kinder and Dale-Riddle 2012; Tesler and Sears 2010). Notably, these studies operationalized gender beliefs in a variety of ways—as views about women's role in work and the home, modern sexism, benevolent sexism, and hostile sexism—yet came to the same null result.

A NEW APPROACH: FEAR OF GENDER FAVORITISM

One interpretation of recent scholarship is that the political impact of gender stereotypes has waned in recent years, leading to less overall voter gender bias against women candidates. Alternatively, a different—and as yet unmeasured—form of voter gender bias may be operating. Prior research emphasizes a theoretical approach premised on the idea that stereotypes of what is appropriately "feminine" and "masculine" produce biased perceptions of women candidates, thus reducing support for women candidates. Here I propose an additional theoretical route in which voters penalize women candidates on the basis of a fear of gender favoritism, or the perception that female elected officials will favor women over men in a range of government activities.

For instance, fear of gender favoritism might include government hiring and spending, as well as a focus on issues perceived as aiding women, at the expense of men. Note that whereas the gender stereotype approach suggests that female politicians will be perceived as better able to handle so-called feminine issues like education and health care, the favoritism approach suggests that female politicians will be seen as likely to use policies to directly benefit women over men. Some voters might assume, for example, that women in office will try to improve educational opportunities for girls by taking resources away from boys. Perceptions of gender favoritism, to the extent that they represent a broad set of beliefs, should also apply more generally to the expectation that female elected officials will use the levers of government power to systematically redistribute resources from men to women.

On the one hand, it may seem unlikely that many voters will perceive female politicians as so blatantly engaged in group competition with men, especially given communal stereotypes of women. On the other hand, sexism research clearly demonstrates that a struggle for dominance characterizes gender relations worldwide (Glick and Rudman 2010). The group conflict approach, although it has been primarily applied to racial and ethnic relations (Blumer 1958; LeVine and Campbell 1972), may well help to explain the dynamics of gender politics. To be sure, intergroup relations as they pertain to gender are unique given what scholars call "intimate interdependence," or that many men and women live together, rely on one another, and raise children (often of the other gender) together (Glick and Rudman 2010, 333). Yet an interest in gender hierarchy can remain alongside intimacy and affection. Indeed, the central mechanism of this approach is the perception of competing group interests, rather than personal or self-interest (Sherif et al. 1961). As Stephan et al. (2000, 64) suggest, "In a world of limited resources, the interests of men and women are often opposed to one another in the economic and political domains." To date, evidence for this claim comes primarily from the economic domain, with studies finding that men perceive threats to their group's interests following the implementation of affirmative action programs and the growing advancement of women into management positions (Beaton, Tougas, and Joly 1996; Tougas et al. 1995). In political science research, by contrast, the focus has been almost entirely on race and ethnicity, with studies showing significant effects of perceived group threat on policy views (e.g., Bobo 1983, 2000; Bobo and Tuan 2006) and opposition to minority candidates (Baek and Landau 2011; Goldman 2017).

This study applies the group conflict approach to gender attitudes and hypothesizes that fear of gender favoritism by female elected officials reduces support for female candidates. Prior research on gender attitudes suggests that men should be more likely to perceive and negatively evaluate gender favoritism but that many women will hold these beliefs as well (Glick and Rudman 2010). For men, gender favoritism is assumed to operate via a perceived threat to their political and societal dominance; for women, continuous exposure to sex-

ist cultural messages often leads to acceptance of status quo hierarchy (Jost and Kay 2005). At the same time, the relationship between gender attitudes and opposition to women candidates often does not vary by gender (Swim et al. 1995). Yet insofar as threat may be a particularly powerful motivation, I empirically assess whether the impact of fear of gender favoritism is larger among men than women in predicting opposition to Hillary Clinton during the 2008 campaign.

METHOD

To test these hypotheses, I rely on the 2008 National Annenberg Election Study (NAES) Internet panel survey, which included five waves fielded between fall 2007 and winter 2009. The 2008 NAES was fielded over the Internet by GfK (formerly Knowledge Networks), which recruits nationally representative samples using address-based sampling and supplies free Internet access to those who need it. This study relies on wave 1 (October 2, 2007–January 1, 2008, $N = 18,663$) and the first half of wave 3, before Clinton exited the race and the gender favoritism items were dropped from the survey (April 2–June 9, 2008, $N = 9,722$). Consistent with prior studies using Internet probability surveys, the 2008 NAES is broadly representative of the US adult population (for comparisons to the July 2008 current population survey, see app. A; apps. A–C are available online).

To measure fear of gender favoritism, I created survey items designed to tap *perceptions* of gender favoritism (i.e., the extent to which female elected officials are perceived as favoring women over men) and *attitudes* about gender favoritism (i.e., evaluations of gender favoritism as good or bad). Wave 1 included four perception items, and wave 3 included the four perception items as well as one attitude item. Table 1 presents the full wording of the items along with their frequencies on wave 3, separately for men and women.

Each perception item assesses a different policy area in which voters might perceive female elected officials as group interested. Thus, one item asked respondents whether they believe that female elected officials are likely to favor women for government jobs over male applicants, while another asked more generally about favoritism toward women in government spending. A third item asked specifically about perceptions of gender favoritism in the promotion of educational opportunities, and the fourth and final item asked whether respondents perceive female elected officials as likely to focus on issues that mainly affect women. As shown in table 1, levels of perceived gender favoritism varied across items and by respondent gender. On the jobs item, 39% of men and 32% of women perceived gender favoritism. By contrast, on the education item, just 25% of men and 17% of women perceived gender favoritism. The corresponding figures for men and women on the spending item are 37% and 32%; and on the issues item, 33% and 27%. Despite variation across the items, responses were highly correlated, so I averaged them to create a reliable scale (Cronbach's alphas on waves 1 and 3 are .89). The summary indicator is coded to range from 0 to 1, where higher values indicate perceiving more gender favor-

Table 1. Perceptions and Attitudes about Gender Favoritism of American Adults (%)

	Men	Women
Perceptions of gender favoritism:		
Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Female elected officials are more likely to...		
1. Favor women for government jobs over male applicants.		
Strongly agree	5.8	4.6
Somewhat agree	32.8	27.5
Somewhat disagree	41.2	43.2
Strongly disagree	20.1	24.6
2. Promote educational programs targeted at girls at the expense of boys.		
Strongly agree	4.5	2.8
Somewhat agree	20.6	13.8
Somewhat disagree	45.9	43.7
Strongly disagree	29.0	39.7
3. Support government spending that favors women.		
Strongly agree	5.2	3.5
Somewhat agree	31.7	28.4
Somewhat disagree	39.8	40.2
Strongly disagree	23.2	27.9
4. Focus on issues that mainly affect women.		
Strongly agree	5.4	4.1
Somewhat agree	27.2	22.7
Somewhat disagree	42.8	42.6
Strongly disagree	24.6	30.6
Attitudes about gender favoritism:		
Thinking about the statements you just read, would it be good or bad if female elected officials favored women?		
Very good	3.3	6.2
Somewhat good	26.5	33.4
Somewhat bad	46.7	40.0
Very bad	23.5	20.3

Note. The sample includes the 4,343 male and 5,545 female respondents interviewed in wave 3. Percentages shown exclude those who refused to answer (ranging from 1.6% to 1.8% of men and 2.2% to 2.5% of women, for each item).

itism. Overall, men were somewhat more likely to perceive gender favoritism than women ($r = .14$ on wave 1 and .10 on wave 3, $p < .001$).

Immediately after the perception items on wave 3, a follow-up question assessed attitudes about gender favoritism by asking respondents whether they think it would be good or bad if female elected officials favored women. Interestingly, about a third of men (30%) evaluated gender favoritism as a good thing. And although most men evaluated gender favoritism negatively, just 24% called it "very bad" versus 47% who chose "somewhat bad." Among women, 40% evaluated gender favoritism as a good thing, with the remainder split between "somewhat bad" (40%) and "very bad" (20%). The gender difference in evaluations of gender favoritism is modest but statistically significant ($r = .10$, $p < .001$). The measure of attitudes about gender favoritism is coded to range from 0 to 1, where higher values indicate having more negative evaluations of gender favoritism.

The measures of attitudes about gender favoritism and perceptions of gender favoritism show a significant negative correlation ($-.21$, $p < .001$). That is, respondents who perceived more gender favoritism were somewhat less likely to evaluate such favoritism negatively. On the basis of standard treatments of effect size, the correlation of $-.21$ can be considered small to medium in magnitude (Cohen 1992). This is consistent with my conceptualization of these two indicators as related but distinct aspects of fear of gender favoritism. In analyses not shown, I also examined whether perceptions and attitudes about gender favoritism had a multiplicative effect, by including interaction terms in all of the models predicting support for Hillary Clinton, but none of the interactions were statistically significant.

In the next section, I first examine whether fear of gender favoritism reduced support for Hillary Clinton during the 2008 Democratic primaries among self-identified Democrats.[1] I operationalize support for Clinton with self-reported vote preference, where 1 equals a preference for Clinton and 0 equals a preference for another Democratic candidate. I control for standard demographics, including race (black), education (in years), income (in dollars), age (in years), and region of residence (South); attitudinal variables, including party strength, perceived relative ideological proximity, perceived relative issue agreement, and perceived viability and electability; as well as campaign contact and political interest. I also model racial attitudes using parallel measures of perceptions and attitudes about racial favoritism. All of the variables range from 0 to 1. Full details and wording for each variable can be found in appendix B.

RESULTS

Table 2 presents cross-sectional logistic regression models predicting support for Hillary Clinton during the 2008 Democratic primaries. Columns 1 and 2 show the association between perceptions of gender favoritism and Clinton vote choice in fall 2007/winter 2008 (wave 1) for male and female Democrats, controlling for perceptions of racial favoritism and a variety of other potential influences. As shown in column 1, among men many standard predictors are significantly related to Clinton support, including racial attitudes, ideological proximity, issue agreement, and perceptions of viability and electability. Yet even with these factors accounted for, there is still a negative and marginally significant impact of perceptions of gender favoritism (-1.04, $p = .05$). Among women, column 2 shows that many of the same factors mattered, although not racial attitudes or perceptions of gender favoritism ($-.24$, $p > .10$).[2] To ease interpretation of these findings, I estimated the conditional probabilities of support for Clinton at different levels of perceived gender favoritism, holding all other variables constant.[3] Among men, moving from those who perceived the least to the most gender favoritism is associated with a negative shift in the probability of a Clinton preference from .34 to .16; among women, the probabilities are .50 and .44. By contrast, moving from those men who perceived the least to the most racial favoritism is associated with a positive shift in the probability of a Clinton preference from .14 to .49; among women, the probabilities are .45 and .54.

Columns 3 and 4 of table 2 present models predicting support for Clinton among male and female Democrats in spring/summer 2008 (wave 3). The first thing to notice is the much larger impact of perceptions of gender favoritism, among both men (-2.50, $p < .001$) and women (-1.70, $p < .001$), relative to the early campaign period captured on wave 1. This is especially interesting given that the wave 3 models also include the indicator of attitudes about gender favoritism, which has a sizable negative impact among men

1. Self-identified Democrats include those who said they were a "strong Democrat" or a "not very strong Democrat" or felt "closer" to the Democratic Party.

2. In this and all other models, I examined gender differences in effect size, by including an interaction term between gender and the favoritism variables in a fully interactive pooled model. In the wave 1 pooled model, the interaction between gender and perceptions of gender favoritism is not statistically significant ($-.80$, $p = .22$).

3. I held continuous variables at their means and categorical variables at their modes.

Table 2. Effects of Fear of Gender Favoritism on Clinton Vote Preference during the 2008 Democratic Primaries: Logit

	Fall/Winter 2008 (Wave 1)		Spring/Summer 2008 (Wave 3)	
	Men (1)	Women (2)	Men (3)	Women (4)
Perceptions of gender favoritism	−1.04+	−.24	−2.50***	−1.70***
	(.54)	(.36)	(.45)	(.33)
Attitudes about gender favoritism			−1.60***	−1.03***
			(.38)	(.28)
Perceptions of racial favoritism	1.76***	.35	1.88***	1.85***
	(.45)	(.33)	(.37)	(.28)
Attitudes about racial favoritism			1.44***	1.39***
			(.37)	(.28)
Party strength	.35	.60*	.73**	.44*
	(.31)	(.25)	(.28)	(.22)
Race (black)	−.02	−.49*	−1.34***	−2.14***
	(.36)	(.20)	(.26)	(.20)
Education	−.28	−.32	−.46	−.27
	(.38)	(.30)	(.29)	(.22)
Income	−.31	−.95*	−.33	.08
	(.47)	(.42)	(.41)	(.30)
Age	−.39	−1.11**	1.04*	.26
	(.52)	(.40)	(.49)	(.38)
South	−.04	−.29+	.24	.10
	(.22)	(.17)	(.19)	(.14)
Campaign contact	.15	−.07	−.52	−.40
	(.45)	(.36)	(.33)	(.24)
Political interest	−.36	−.11	−.72*	−.97***
	(.34)	(.25)	(.29)	(.23)
Perceived viability (Clinton)	.89**	.57**	.36	.50**
	(.26)	(.17)	(.22)	(.17)
Perceived electability (Clinton)	1.97***	1.45***	3.63***	3.41***
	(.20)	(.16)	(.18)	(.15)
Perceived relative issue agreement	2.67***	2.73***	1.21***	1.03***
	(.26)	(.20)	(.18)	(.14)
Perceived relative ideological proximity	3.38**	3.74***	6.47***	5.13***
	(1.16)	(.88)	(.98)	(.77)
Constant	−5.35***	−4.10***	−5.50***	−4.22***
	(.75)	(.56)	(.65)	(.51)
Sample size	1,063	1,445	2,007	2,879
Pseudo-R^2	.42	.33	.56	.52

Note. Logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses among self-identified Democrats. All variables range from 0 to 1. The pseudo-R^2 is McFadden. In wave 1, the impact of perceptions of gender favoritism does not differ significantly by gender (−.80, $p = .22$). In wave 3, the impact of perceptions of gender favoritism (−.80, $p = .15$) and attitudes about gender favoritism (−.57, $p = .22$) do not differ significantly by gender.

+ $p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

(−1.60, $p < .001$) and women (−1.03, $p < .001$) as well.[4] Although the wave 1 and wave 3 models are not strictly comparable, a logical speculation for these differences is that exposure to the campaign, especially news coverage highlighting gender conflict in candidate support, further activated fear of gender favoritism in Democratic respondents' support for Clinton. In contrast to the substantial negative effects of beliefs about gender favoritism, the models show substantial positive effects of perceptions of racial favoritism (1.88 and 1.85, $p < .001$) and attitudes about racial favoritism (1.44 and 1.39, $p < .001$) among male and female Democrats, respectively.

Figure 1 shows the predicted probability of a Clinton vote preference at different levels of the gender favoritism variables. Moving from those who perceived the least to the most gender favoritism is associated with a shift in the probabilities from .65 to .13 among men and .72 to .32 among women. Similarly, moving from those who evaluated gender favoritism the most positively to the most negatively is associated with a shift in the probabilities from .67 to .29 among men and .72 to .48 among women. With respect to beliefs about racial favoritism, however, moving from those who perceived the least to the most racial favoritism is associated with a shift in the probabilities from .25 to .69 among men and .46 to .85 among women. And moving from those who evaluated racial favoritism the most positively to the most negatively is associated with a shift from .22 to .54 among men and .40 to .73 among women.

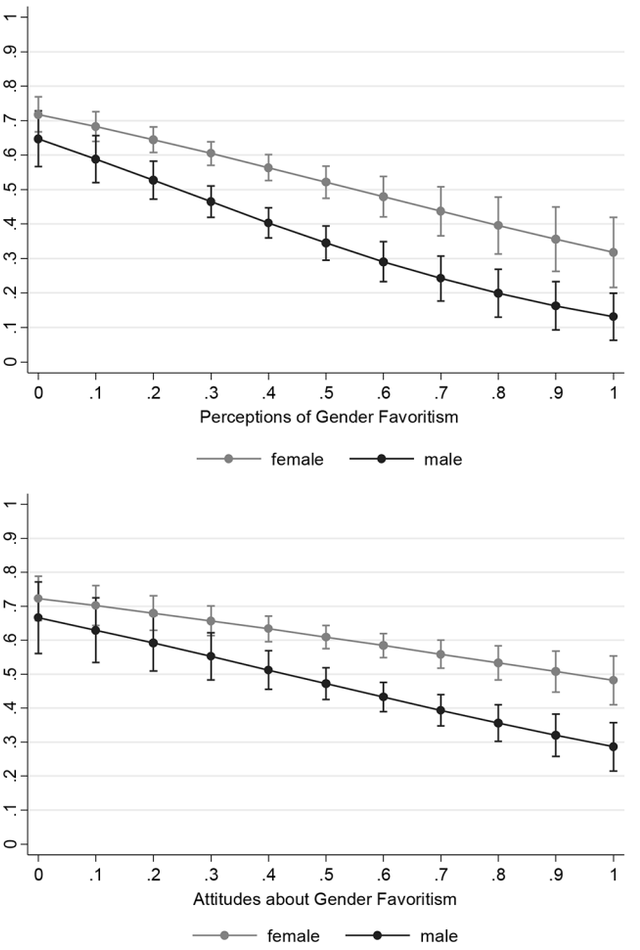

Figure 1. Effects of perceptions and attitudes about gender favoritism on the probability of a vote for Clinton during the 2008 presidential primaries, by gender (wave 3). Probabilities are based on the logistic regression models in table 2, columns 3 and 4. All other continuous variables are held at their means, with categorical variables held at their modes. Higher values indicate perceiving more favoritism and evaluating favoritism more negatively.

Explaining change over time in vote choice

Fear of gender favoritism is significantly associated with reduced support for Hillary Clinton on waves 1 and 3. Another key question is whether fear of gender favoritism can help explain change over time in Clinton's vote share at the individual level. In the aggregate, the 2008 NAES shows little change in Clinton's overall share of the Democratic vote from wave 1 (51% of women, 44% of men) to wave 3 (51% of women, 43% of men). But this aggregate stability overshadows substantial within-person change in vote choice during this time period. As shown in table 3, among male Democrats 32.2% of Clinton's wave 1 supporters defected to Obama by wave 3, 6.4% of Obama's wave 1 supporters defected to Clinton, and just 35% of men who initially supported another candidate moved to Clinton by wave 3. Among female Democrats, table 4 shows that 28% of Clinton's wave 1 supporters defected to Obama by wave 3, 12.5% of Obama's supporters defected to Clinton, and fully 48.3% of women who initially supported another candidate moved to Clinton by wave 3.

Why did some voters leave the Clinton camp, while others flocked to her side? To examine whether fear of gender favoritism influenced within-person change in Clinton vote choice, I employ fixed effects logistic regression, which only uses within-person variance (Allison 1990, 2009; Halaby 2004). As a result, fixed effects regression can help us understand why each individual changed his or her vote choice over time. Because each person is compared to him- or herself at an earlier point in time, the stable effects of all other factors—whether they are observable or unobservable—automatically drop out. By contrast, other observational designs, including other panel designs, rely on between-person variance, so they remain open to spurious associations from unmeasured individual characteristics. With fixed effects, however, only

4. In a pooled model, the interactions between gender, on the one hand, and perceptions and attitudes about gender favoritism, on the other hand, are negative but not statistically significant (−.80, $p = .15$, and −.57, $p = .22$, respectively).

Table 3. Spring/Summer 2008 Vote Intentions (Wave 3) by Fall 2007/Winter 2008 Vote Intentions (Wave 1) among Male Democrats (%)

	Fall 2007/Winter 2008		
	Hillary Clinton	Barack Obama	All Others
Spring/summer 2008:			
Hillary Clinton	67.8	6.4	35.0
	(473)	(24)	(176)
Barack Obama	32.2	93.6	65.0
	(225)	(353)	(327)
Total	100	100	100
	(698)	(377)	(503)

Note. Sample sizes in parentheses. $N = 1{,}578$. The vote intentions on wave 1 for Clinton, Obama, and all others were 44.2%, 23.9%, and 31.9%. On wave 3, when only Clinton and Obama remained, the vote intentions were 42.6% and 57.4%.

factors that change over time within persons can influence the results. Moreover, in the two-period case the constant in the model captures the sum total of all other factors that changed; thus, we need only control for factors that change differentially among individuals (Halaby 2004). For all of these reasons, fixed effects regression provides unusually strong causal evidence.

Table 5 presents fixed effects logistic regression models predicting within-person change in Clinton vote choice from wave 1 to wave 3. Because attitudes about gender favoritism appeared on wave 3 alone, this analysis only examines the impact of perceptions of gender favoritism. Importantly, I model both change in perceptions of gender favoritism from wave 1 to wave 3 as well as the time-varying effects of initial levels of perceptions of gender favoritism on wave 1. Although spuriousness is much less of a concern with fixed effects, I nonetheless include the same large set of control variables as in the previous analyses.[5]

The fixed effects logistic regression models in table 5 predict within-person change in Clinton vote choice from wave 1, when she enjoyed frontrunner status, to wave 3, when she dropped out of the race. Note first that the sample size is much smaller than in the prior analyses because this one only includes respondents who participated in both waves and exhibited change in vote choice. Because the dependent variable is dichotomous and fixed effects only models within-person change, any respondent with the same vote preference on both waves automatically drops out. The table presents the model for male and female Democrats separately. In both cases, within-person change in support for Clinton depended on many of the same predictors identified in the previous cross-sectional analyses. But these analyses go much further in showing that both change in and initial values of perceptions of gender favoritism significantly predicted within-person declines in support for Clinton.[6] Change in and initial values of perceptions of racial favoritism, however, produced significant increases in support for Clinton.

For substantive interpretation, I estimated predicted probabilities using the results in table 5. Among those who became much less likely to perceive gender favoritism, male and female Democrats had a .73 and .78 probability of becoming Clinton voters, respectively, whereas among those who became much more likely to perceive gender favoritism, the probabilities are .45 and .42.[7] Levels of initial perceived gender favoritism had a similar impact. Among those who perceived little gender favoritism initially, the probabilities for male and female Democrats are .79 and .74, whereas for those who perceived a lot of gender favoritism initially, the probabilities are .45 and .46. In contrast to the negative effects of perceptions of gender favoritism, perceptions of racial favoritism increased the probability of respondents becoming Clinton voters. The respective probabilities for change in perceptions of racial favoritism among male and female Democrats are .47 to .75 and .42 to .79. And for initial perceptions of racial favoritism, the probabilities among male and female Democrats are .37 to .72 and .40 to .75, respectively.

A hypothetical general election: Clinton versus McCain

The results thus far provide consistent evidence that fear of gender favoritism undercut support for Hillary Clinton during the 2008 Democratic presidential primaries—both in cross-sectional models as well as far more stringent fixed effects models of within-person change over time. Would these

5. Perceived electability cannot be included because it was measured in the latter part of wave 1 and the earlier part of wave 3, so the same individuals did not answer the items on both waves.

6. In separate pooled models, the interactions between gender and change in perceptions of gender favoritism (.59, $p < .61$) or initial perceptions of gender favoritism ($-.52$, $p = .72$) are insignificant.

7. Because of the restricted range of change in perceptions of gender favoritism, I compare respondents in the 10th and 90th percentiles ($-.33$ to .33). I also compare those in the 10th and 90th percentiles of initial perceptions of gender favoritism (0 to .67). I use the same values to calculate the predicted probabilities for change in and initial perceptions of racial favoritism.

Table 4. Spring/Summer 2008 Vote Intentions (Wave 3) by Fall 2007/Winter 2008 Vote Intentions (Wave 1) among Female Democrats (%)

	Fall 2007/Winter 2008		
	Hillary Clinton	Barack Obama	All Others
Spring/summer 2008:			
Hillary Clinton	72.0	12.5	48.3
	(762)	(70)	(227)
Barack Obama	28.0	87.5	51.7
	(297)	(489)	(243)
Total	100	100	100
	(1,059)	(559)	(470)

Note. Sample sizes in parentheses. $N = 2{,}088$. The vote intentions on wave 1 for Clinton, Obama, and all others were 50.7%, 26.8%, and 22.5%. On wave 3, when only Clinton and Obama remained, the vote intentions were 50.7% and 49.3%.

same effects be likely to occur during a general election campaign when party identification takes on a much larger role? Although this question cannot be answered definitively given that Clinton did not win the Democratic nomination, it is possible to assess the impact of fear of gender favoritism using a question included on wave 3 that asked respondents who they would choose if the 2008 general election pitted Hillary Clinton versus the Republican nominee, John McCain (where 1 equals support for Clinton and 0 equals support for McCain). The full wording of the question is listed in appendix B.

Table 6 presents the results of logistic regression models predicting general election candidate preference among male and female respondents on wave 3. The models include the standard set of control variables, including the seven-point indicator of party identification scaled to range from strong Democrat (0) to strong Republican (1). As expected, party identification, perceived ideological proximity, and perceived issue agreement all show substantial influence. Interestingly, those with more conservative beliefs about racial favoritism continued to be more supportive of Clinton, despite the hypothetical matchup involving two white candidates. This is consistent with prior research finding that the Democratic primary campaign racialized support for Clinton (Tesler and Sears 2010). Even with all of these influences accounted for, table 6 still reveals significant negative effects of both perceptions and attitudes about gender favoritism on support for Clinton. The probability of supporting Clinton over McCain ranges from .50 among men and .67 among women who perceived little gender favoritism to .20 and .34 among those who perceived a great deal of gender favoritism. Similarly, for attitudes about gender favoritism, the probabilities range from .69 among men and .76 among women who evaluated gender favoritism very positively to .22 and .40 among those who evaluated gender favoritism very negatively. By contrast, beliefs about racial favoritism helped Clinton. The probability of supporting Clinton over McCain ranges from .30 among men and .51 among women who perceived little racial favoritism to .48 and .64 among those who perceived a great deal of racial favoritism. And for attitudes about racial favoritism, the probabilities range from .20 among men and .50 among women who evaluated racial favoritism very positively to .47 and .60 among those who evaluated racial favoritism very negatively.

Predictors of fear of gender favoritism

Given the impact of perceptions and attitudes about gender favoritism, it is important to understand the drivers of these beliefs. Although the survey was not designed for this purpose, I provide an initial assessment of the predictors of perceptions (waves 1 and 3) and attitudes about gender favoritism (wave 3) using a series of ordinary least squares regression models in appendix table C1. For each outcome, I first model the effects of demographics alone and then add the attitudinal variables in a second model. Beginning with demographics, I find that men are significantly more likely to perceive and negatively evaluate gender favoritism (i.e., to fear gender favoritism), black Americans consistently express less fear of gender favoritism, and the higher educated show less fear of gender favoritism in two out three models. Interestingly, income and age are associated with perceiving less favoritism but evaluating it negatively.

A number of attitudinal variables are also consistently related to fear of gender favoritism. Consistent with theories of ethnocentrism (Kinder and Kam 2009), the strongest predictor is fear of racial favoritism. Republican Party identification and conservative ideology are also consistently associated with greater fear of gender favoritism. Finally, political interest shows small but consistent associations with perceiving less gender favoritism but evaluating it more negatively. Of course, a number of other factors may also matter, although they could not be included on the survey because of space constraints. Including egalitarianism could be especially informative, given that fear of gender favoritism might plausibly be a consequence of egalitarian concern about the unfair distribution of government resources to some groups over others. Although this seems unlikely given the negative relationship between egalitarianism and modern sexism (Swim et al. 1995), this study is limited in not being able to test this

Table 5. Fixed Effects Logistic Regression Models Predicting Within-Person Change in Clinton Vote Choice during the 2008 Democratic Presidential Primaries

	Men		Women	
	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE
Perceptions of group favoritism:				
Change in perceptions of gender favoritism	−1.81*	.91	−2.40**	.72
Initial perceptions of gender favoritism	−2.32*	1.07	−1.80+	.99
Change in perceptions of racial favoritism	1.83*	.81	2.43***	.68
Initial perceptions of racial favoritism	2.21*	.94	2.27**	.85
Control variable:				
Change in party strength	.81	1.30	1.67	1.58
Initial party strength	−.77	.53	−.24	.48
Race (black)	−2.50***	.66	−4.24***	.69
Education	−.37	.57	.16	.49
Income	.93	.94	.15	.70
Age	1.55+	.87	.63	.71
South	−.53	.39	.86*	.34
Change in campaign contact	−.30	.71	−1.04+	.60
Initial campaign contact	.31	.80	−.72	.77
Change in political interest	.51	.68	.06	.65
Initial political interest	.70	.67	.26	.53
Change in perceived viability	2.93***	.50	2.11***	.34
Initial perceived viability	1.95**	.70	1.78***	.47
Change in perceived relative issue agreement	.98**	.37	1.35***	.32
Initial perceived relative issue agreement	−1.62**	.55	−1.11*	.45
Change in perceived relative ideological proximity	8.61***	2.23	5.92**	1.74
Initial perceived relative ideological proximity	7.93**	2.80	1.92	2.15
Constant	−3.19*	1.52	−.77	1.25
Sample size	403		562	
Pseudo-R^2	.44		.48	

Note. Unstandardized fixed effects logistic regression coefficients with standard errors. The dependent variable is Clinton vote choice, where 1 equals support for Clinton, and 0 for all others. The change variables range from −1 to 1; all of the other independent variables range from 0 to 1. Each model predicts within-person change in vote choice from wave 1 to wave 3. The impact of change in perceptions of gender favoritism does not differ significantly by gender (.59, $p = .61$). The impact of initial perceptions of gender favoritism also does not differ significantly by gender (−.52, $p = .72$).

+ $p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

and other theories about the drivers of fear of gender favoritism directly.

DISCUSSION

Prior survey research carried out during the 2008 Democratic presidential primaries has found little evidence that traditional gender stereotypes undercut support for Hillary Clinton (Gervais and Hillard 2011; Huddy and Carey 2009; Kinder and Dale-Riddle 2012; Tesler and Sears 2010). One explanation is that there was something particular and unusual about Clinton's candidacy that made this possible—perhaps her many years of experience in politics or her emphasis on toughness and strong leadership. Then again, the lack of an apparent double standard for Clinton among most voters is consistent with a growing number of other recent studies using a range of methods, contexts, and samples (Brooks 2013; Dolan 2014; Fridkin and Kenney 2009; Hayes 2011; Hayes and Lawless 2015). The main conclusion from these studies is that traditional gender stereotypes, although they still clearly matter in many other aspects of society, are no longer a political liability for female candidates in the vast majority of cases.

Table 6. Effects of Fear of Gender Favoritism on Clinton Vote Preference in a Hypothetical 2008 General Election Matchup (Wave 3): Logit

	Men	Women
Perceptions of gender favoritism	−1.36***	−1.41***
	(.36)	(.30)
Attitudes about gender favoritism	−2.07***	−1.56***
	(.36)	(.26)
Perceptions of racial favoritism	.79**	.54*
	(.30)	(.23)
Attitudes about racial favoritism	1.26***	.40
	(.35)	(.27)
Party identification (Republican)	−3.49***	−3.65***
	(.26)	(.21)
Race (black)	.72*	.81**
	(.30)	(.24)
Education	−.14	−.28
	(.28)	(.23)
Income	−.33	−.15
	(.39)	(.30)
Age	−.27	−.21
	(.45)	(.38)
South	.06	−.28*
	(.17)	(.13)
Campaign contact	.77*	−.13
	(.34)	(.27)
Political interest	−.22	−.14
	(.26)	(.21)
Perceived relative issue agreement	3.56***	3.07***
	(.17)	(.14)
Perceived relative ideological proximity	5.45***	4.74***
	(.52)	(.43)
Constant	−2.14***	−.87*
	(.51)	(.40)
Sample size	3,547	4,562
Pseudo-R^2	.72	.66

Note. Unstandardized logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is coded so that 1 equals support for Clinton and 0 equals support for McCain. All other variables range from 0 to 1. The pseudo-R^2 is McFadden. The impact of perceptions of gender favoritism does not differ by gender (.04, $p = .93$). The impact of attitudes about gender favoritism is larger among men but not significantly so (−.51, $p = .24$).

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

Does this mean that voter gender bias more generally is a thing of the past? The findings from this study strongly suggest that such bias remains, although in a form not previously measured by scholars. The theory advanced here is that gender discrimination at the voting booth may arise because of perceptions of female candidates as overly group interested. By this account, women candidates may be harmed by voters' fears that women who gain political power will redistribute resources from men to women. To test whether fear of gender favoritism reduces support for women candidates, I designed new survey measures to assess the extent to which people perceive women elected officials as likely to use government to aid women at the expense of men. I then included the new measures on a nationally representative panel survey fielded during the 2008 presidential primaries.

As expected, across numerous analyses fear of gender favoritism consistently reduced support for Hillary Clinton. Democrats who said they expected women elected officials to engage in favoritism for women over men were far less likely to side with Clinton over her male rivals for the Democratic nomination, even after controlling for a wide range of other factors. Moreover, fear of gender favoritism was associated not only with vote choice in cross-sectional analyses but also with over-time declines in support for Clinton at the individual level using fixed effects panel models. Given the much reduced role of partisanship in primary contests, one might wonder whether fear of gender favoritism would have mattered during a general election contest. An additional analysis suggests that it would indeed have hurt Clinton had she won the Democratic nomination. In a head-to-head matchup between Clinton and John McCain, the Republican nominee, those who feared gender favoritism were significantly less likely to support Clinton, even after taking account of party identification and other variables.

A logical implication of these analyses is that Hillary Clinton may have faced bias from voters who feared gender favoritism during the 2016 presidential campaign. As the first female presidential candidate of a major political party, voters' gender attitudes may have played an especially important role. During the 2008 campaign, Obama's historic candidacy produced the largest effects of racial attitudes on vote choice recorded in modern times (Tesler and Sear 2010), and this same pattern may well apply to gender attitudes in the 2016 election. Not only that, but insofar as Obama's presence drew unprecedented attention to race in 2008, his absence in 2016 may have reduced the effects of racial attitudes, perhaps leaving more space for gender attitudes to influence the vote. Then again, even without Obama on the ballot race-related policies and immigration remained major issues during the 2016 campaign.

Still, the Clinton campaign itself went much further in emphasizing the historic nature of her candidacy in 2016 than in 2008, in particular her appeal to women and "women's issues," such as pay equity and family leave policies. The explicit targeting of female voters is itself notable, and poten-

tially risky, although scholars have yet to test whether such appeals activate fear of gender favoritism specifically. Nonetheless, some evidence suggests that targeting women and "women's issues" may be beneficial, although this has primarily been tested with male candidates (Abdullah 2012; Schaffner 2005), with individual issues that are particularly popular (e.g., domestic violence and sexual harassment; Anderson, Lewis, and Baird 2011; Holman, Schneider, and Pondel 2015), or by combining appeals to social groups in general with appeals to women in particular (Herrnson, Lay, and Stokes 2003). Ultimately, then, whether the benefits of gender targeting outweigh the costs of activating fears of gender favoritism is an open question.

Yet even setting aside the issue of Clinton's gender-targeted appeals, there are other reasons why fear of gender favoritism may have been more strongly activated during the 2016 campaign. Just as media portrayals that highlight group conflict are more prone to activate ethnocentrism (Kinder and Kam 2009), coverage highlighting gender divisions may activate fear of gender favoritism. During the 2016 campaign, then-Republican-nominee Donald Trump brazenly employed sexist remarks against Clinton and other women and repeatedly attacked Clinton for playing the "women's card." Moreover, throughout the primary season and into the summer, media coverage focused intensely on gender divisions in support for Clinton, which may suggest a group conflict frame to voters. In sum, fear of gender favoritism may have played an even stronger role in Clinton's 2016 campaign than it did in 2008.

The next question is whether and to what extent the effects of fear of gender favoritism extend beyond Hillary Clinton. As a first step, we might consider the impact of these beliefs on support for other women running for president, especially given Clinton's loss in 2016. Further, as the discussion above suggests, context should play an important role in either intensifying or alleviating the impact of gender-based fears given the extent to which the candidates and media highlight gender. Partisanship may also be important, in light of some evidence that voter gender bias is more likely to harm female Democratic politicians than female Republican politicians (Dolan 2014; Holman et al. 2011, 2017). Ultimately, is it undeniable that Hillary Clinton is a singular figure in American politics, leaving some to suggest she is of "limited generalizability" (Lawless 2009, 70); others, however, argue that the Clinton campaign is, in fact, quite generalizable (Carroll 2009). Indeed, one reason Clinton has been a lightning rod for debates about gender has been that the public appears to project their own anxieties on her (Burrell 2001). If so, then insofar as those anxieties remain, their effects on other women candidates should remain as well.

Although the effects of fear of gender favoritism may not be specific to Clinton, gender-based attitudes may be especially influential among candidates seeking national office (Fowler and Lawless 2009; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993a). Insofar as men's opposition to women candidates depends on fears of losing resources and power to women, then candidates seeking more powerful offices should be more intensely harmed. This could implicate campaigns for national office and perhaps national executive offices in particular. The flurry of recent studies finding limited voter gender bias in gubernatorial, House, and Senate elections is consistent with this possibility (e.g., Brooks 2013; Dolan 2014; Hayes and Lawless 2016). Yet all of these studies focused on traditional concerns about gender stereotyping. The potential impact of fear of gender favoritism on vote choice in these contexts remains to be tested.

My findings strongly suggest that fear of gender favoritism is a serious harm to female candidates' campaigns for elected office. In fact, recent gains in women's political influence may ironically promote stronger feelings of threat toward female candidates. And the same could be said for other historically underrepresented groups in the United States, too. Fear of group favoritism may help to explain opposition not only toward women candidates but also toward LGBT, Latino, Asian American, and black candidates (Baek and Landau 2011; Goldman 2017). Ultimately, we have only just begun to understand the effects of fears of group favoritism on political behavior.

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