

# The Gender Gap in Voting

Shaping American Politics



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## Resumé

I det amerikanske præsidentvalg i 2012 stemte størstedelen af de kvindelige vælgere på præsident Barack Obama fra Det Demokratiske Parti, mens størstedelen af de mandlige vælgere stemte på modkandidaten Mitt Romney fra Det Republikanske Parti. De nuværende kønsforskelle i vælgeradfærd, hvor kvinder foretrækker Demokraterne og mænd foretrækker Republikanerne, har været til stede i hvert præsidentvalg siden 1980. Formålet med dette speciale er derfor at opnå en forståelse for kvinder og mænds vælgeradfærd i det amerikanske præsidentvalg i 2012. Problemformuleringen er følgende:

- *Hvorfor var der signifikante kønsforskelle i det amerikanske præsidentvalg i 2012?*

Den kvantitative metode udgør grundlæggende tilgangen til specialets dataindsamling, idet den er kendetegnet ved at indsamle større mængder af numerisk data. Derved er det muligt at generalisere om en gruppe mennesker eller forklare et bestemt fænomen.

Fokusset i specialet er at analysere de forklaringer, som litteraturen giver for kønsforskelle i vælgeradfærd i USA. Disse forklaringer omhandler Det Republikanske Partis ”krig mod kvinder”, amerikanske mænds ændrede partitilknytning, økonomiske faktorer, forskelle mellem ansatte i den offentlige og den private sektor samt ægteskabsstatus. For at sætte mine resultater ind i den rette kontekst, anvender jeg tre teoretiske tilgange til vælgeradfærd. Hver især fremhæver de forskellige forklaringer på vælgeradfærd, henholdsvis betydningen af placering i den sociale struktur, psykologisk identifikation med partier og partiledere samt det rationelle nyttemaksimerende valg.

Kvindelige vælgere tog afstand fra Det Republikanske Parti i det amerikanske præsidentvalg i 2012 på grund af en række ekstreme udtalelser fra Mitt Romney og andre af hans partifæller. Kvinderne frygtede, at det sociale sikkerhedsnet var i fare og dermed deres økonomiske velfærd. Præsident Obama drog nytte af dette, og hans kampagne fokuserede primært på de kvindelige vælgeres problemstillinger.

Størstedelen af amerikanske mænd, i særdeleshed hvide mænd, har stemt på Det Republikanske Parti siden præsidentvalget i 1980, hvor de forlod Demokraterne. I 1970erne var USA præget af dårlig økonomi, internationale spændinger og en høj arbejdsløshed blandt hvide mænd fra arbejderklassen. Da præsident Jimmy Carter fra Demokraterne ikke havde været i stand til at løse problemerne, bakkede amerikanske mænd op om Ronald Reagan og Det Republikanske Parti i 1980. Reagan så potentialet i mænd og ønskede at forbedre deres økonomiske forhold.

I gennemsnit tjener amerikanske kvinder mindre end mænd og er mere tilbøjelige til at leve i fattigdom. Fordi kvinder er fattigere end mænd, er de mere afhængige af sociale ydelser. Desuden er størstedelen af kvinder ansat i jobs, hvor de hjælper andre, og i den offentlige sektor, som er to jobområder kendetegnet ved lavere lønninger. Økonomisk egeninteresse får dermed amerikanske kvinder til at favorisere Demokraterne, da Det Republikanske Parti ønsker at skære ned på størrelsen af den offentlige sektor.

Amerikanske vælgere, der er gift, stemmer fortrinsvist på Det Republikanske Parti. Ægtefolks værdier passer bedre med Republikanerne, da partiet repræsenterer et mere konservativt og traditionelt billede af en familie, som består af en mand og en kvinde med børn. Men fordi antallet af amerikanere, der bliver gift, er faldet, tiltrak vælgernes civilstand sig meget opmærksomhed i præsidentvalget i 2012. Størstedelen af ugifte kvinder er alenemødre, tilhører en etnisk minoritet og er fattigere end gifte kvinder. Disse demografiske grupper stemmer fortrinsvist på Det Demokratiske Parti.

På baggrund af analyserne konkluderes det, at kvinders ændrede værdier og interesser i forhold til tidligere præsidentvalg var den primære årsag til kønsforskelle i det amerikanske præsidentvalg i 2012. Den gennemsnitlige amerikanske kvinde har forandret sig relativt meget siden 1980, og det var afgørende for resultatet af præsidentvalget.

Kønsforskelle har afgjort påvirket amerikansk politik. Fremtidige præsidentkandidater er nødsaget til at vægte kvindelige vælgers problemstillinger højere, hvis de ønsker at vinde valget, eftersom en højere procentdel af amerikanske vælgere er kvinder end mænd.

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## 1 Introduction

The modern gender gap in voting was first noticed in the 1980 U.S. presidential election, but it was not until September 1981 that The National Organization for Women<sup>1</sup> coined the term “gender gap”. They were looking for a simple way to describe the difference in the political preferences between women and men. In October 1981, The Washington Post was the first American newspaper to cite the term “gender gap”. But the term caused a debate among feminists who wanted the word women to be highlighted, while others feared that the term would shift the focus away from the fact that it was Ronald Reagan’s problem with women that had caused the gender gap (Bonk 1988: 89-90).

Statistically, the gender gap in voting is defined as the difference between the proportion of women and the proportion of men who support any given candidate or party (Whitaker 2008: 1). In the 2012 U.S. presidential election, Barack Obama received 55% of the women’s votes and 45% of the men’s votes, resulting in a gender gap of 10 percentage points<sup>2</sup> (Center for American Women and Politics 2012). The modern gender gap in voting has been apparent in every election since 1980. It has ranged from a low of 4 percentage points in 1992 to a high of 11 percentage points in 1996<sup>3</sup>. The modern gender gap has emerged because women are more likely to vote for the Democratic candidate, whereas men are more likely to vote for the Republican candidate.

Prior to the 1980 election, the assumption was that gender did not matter in voting. It was assumed that women and men had similar opinions on most issues, similar political preferences, and similar voting habits. But as professor and senior scholar Susan J. Carroll states:

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<sup>1</sup> NOW is an American feminist organization trying to bring about equality for women.

<sup>2</sup> See appendix 1, p. 68, for table on the gender gap in support of the winning presidential candidate 1972-2012.

<sup>3</sup> See appendix 2, p. 69, for figures on the gender gap for the Democratic presidential candidate and the Republican presidential candidate 1972-2012.

Today, the assumption is exactly the opposite – that gender does matter for politics. Women and men, in the aggregate, have different positions on many issues and tend to vary in their party identification and support for political candidates. The gender gap is now viewed as an enduring part of the political landscape, and candidates, parties, and politicians must pay specific attention to women voters if they want to win elections. (Carroll 2014: 119-120).

The reason why women voters attract so much attention is attributable to two factors. First, women are the majority of adults in the United States. At present, 50.8% of the population is female (The World Bank 2014). Second, women have voted at slightly higher rates than men have since 1980. In the 1980 election, the turnout rate<sup>4</sup> for women was 61.9% compared to 61.5% for men, resulting in a small 0.4 percentage point gender gap. In the 2012 election, the turnout rate for women was 63.7% compared to 59.8% for men, resulting in a gender gap of 3.9 percentage points (Center for American Women and Politics 2015). In other words, about 9.8 million more women than men voted in the 2012 election (Carroll 2014: 144).

The catalyst for the gender gap was the nomination of Ronald Reagan and a shift to the right by the Republican Party in 1980. In the 1980 U.S. presidential election, Reagan received 47% of the women's votes and 55% of the men's, resulting in a gender gap of 8 percentage points (The New York Times 2008). Reagan polarized the genders in terms of party identification as his policies were in a stark contrast to the policies of the incumbent President Jimmy Carter. The 1980 election gave voters a clear difference between the two candidates compared to previous elections. Men shifted to the Republican Party and became more likely to identify themselves as Republicans, whereas women stayed with the Democratic Party (Huddy et al. 2008: 141). "Reagan stood clearly for a dismantling of the welfare state and for a tougher and more forceful foreign policy. On women's issues, [Reagan] refused to support the Equal Rights Amendment<sup>5</sup> and took a strong anti-choice position on abortion" (Carroll 1988: 242-243). Carter, on the other hand, was associated with minority rights.

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<sup>4</sup> The turnout rate for each gender is the proportion of eligible adults that voted.

<sup>5</sup> A proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would guarantee equal rights for women. It was never ratified.



## **1.1 Research Question**

The gender gap continues to be significant in U.S. presidential elections. Based on the latest U.S. presidential election, I will try to answer the following research question:

- *Why was there a significant gender gap in the 2012 U.S. presidential election?*

## **1.2 Research Objective**

The primary objective of this thesis is to reach an understanding of the gender gap in the 2012 U.S. presidential election. The answer to my research question will be a relevant contribution to the discussion of the gender gap in American politics, both in terms of future elections and how the gender gap has shaped politics.

## **1.3 Terminology**

Because there are different interpretations of the meaning of “the gender gap” and “election”, I find it relevant to describe my use of the terms. Up until the 1970s, a different gender gap existed in the United States, termed the “traditional gender gap”, in which women were slightly more likely than men to vote for the Republican candidate. When I use the term “the gender gap”, I refer to the “modern gender gap” in which women are more likely than men to vote for the Democratic Party. The modern gender gap has been present in every election since 1980. Regarding the term “election”, there are different definitions of the term. Therefore, when I use the term “election”, I refer to presidential elections in the United States. In addition, I will explain any individual technical terms in the relevant chapters.

## **1.4 Delimitation**

In this thesis, I will not address the explanation about inherent value differences between men and women. It is a field of research that I do not find relevant in answering my research question because it is in stark contrast to the other explanations of the gender gap in voting.

Furthermore, it is a relatively new approach to voting behavior and the literature is limited. However, I have included the explanation in the literature review since it contributes to the understanding of the gender gap. I am aware that this delimitation implies that the conclusion is going to be limited, but it was a necessary choice.

## **1.5 Thesis Structure**

The thesis is divided in six overall parts: introduction, literature review, methodology, theory, analysis and conclusion. Part 1 was the introduction to the subject of the thesis, research question and objective. Part 2 will give a summary of the relevant literature on the gender gap and the explanations of the gender gap provided by the literature. A preliminary answer to my research question will also be presented. Part 3 will deal with the reflections of the methodological choices. The methods of the thesis will be presented and substantiated. Part 4 will examine the theoretical choices of the thesis. Part 5 will present the analysis and findings of the thesis before the findings will be discussed in relation to the theory in part 4. Part 6 will sum up the main points of the thesis and reflect on the implications of my findings. Subsequently, the findings will be put into perspective.

## **2 Literature Review**

In this section, I will provide an overview of significant literature that has been published on the gender gap. In general, much has been written about the gender gap in voting by both scholars and journalists. First, I will give a summary of the literature that directly addresses my research question and what answers it is providing. Second, I will give a summary of the literature that addresses the gender gap in elections generally and what reasons it gives for the gender gap. Third, I will place my own research in the context of existing literature and account for what I expect the answers to my research question to be.

### **2.1 The Gender Gap in the 2012 U.S. Presidential Election**

Much of the literature on the gender gap in the 2012 U.S. presidential election seems to be concerned with the Republicans' "war on women" and marital status. Women voters did not vote for the Republican Party and Romney because of their "war on women". Republicans had voted against bills to promote better rights for women and wanted to dispose of the social safety net which was of great concern for many American women. Furthermore, Romney did not seem to understand contemporary women. In his campaign, Romney opposed women's reproductive rights, wanted to repeal ObamaCare<sup>6</sup>, and to cut funding for social services for women. But the top issues for women were the economy and a candidate who would fight for them. Therefore, women did not believe that Romney would improve their economic situation or cared for them. Ultimately, Obama was considered this type of candidate as he beat Romney by 63% among female voters whose most important criterion for a candidate was that he cared for them (Carroll 2014; Marcotte 2012; Omero and McGuinness 2012; Rosen 2012).

The other explanation for the gender gap in 2012 is the marriage gap. Researchers who support this argument state that the gap between unmarried and married voters was more important than the gender gap in 2012 because it divided more voters than gender. There are

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<sup>6</sup> ObamaCare is a healthcare reform law that expands and improves access to care, and curbs spending through regulations and taxes.

several explanations for the marriage gap, but married voters are generally more conservative than unmarried voters. Primarily, it is marriage and the transformation of a person's life afterwards that have the greatest effect on a person's political preference. In addition, married voters tend to be more religious, richer, older, and more concerned with household and family issues than unmarried voters – demographic groups that voted for the Republican Party in 2012. Marriage in itself is a more traditional relationship and the fact that Republicans promote a traditional image of a family comprised of a husband and a wife, appeals more to married voters. However, since marriage is on the decline, it may be a problem for the Republican Party in future elections as the prototype Republican voter is married. In contrast, unmarried voters are more likely to be women, single parents, belong to a minority group, less educated, younger and poorer than married voters are – demographic groups that voted for the Democratic Party in 2012 (Dugan 2012; Hymowitz 2012; Zengerle 2012).

## **2.2 Schools of Thought**

Explanations for the gender gap in general can be organized in four schools of thought. The first explanation focuses on inherent value differences between men and women which are based on biological differences. Researchers have examined how genes contribute to the gender gap and found that genes can help explain significant gender differences that remain even after controlling for other variables. The differences between males and females are likely due to a combination of hormonal and chromosomal differences and behavior differences. Modern roles and political behaviors are a result of evolution. In prehistoric societies, evolutionary forces in certain domains differed between males and females and, therefore, these differing forces have led to innate processes which contribute to behavioral differences between the sexes. As a result, female morality tends to be more caring, nurturing and cooperative. In contrast, male morality emphasizes justice, fairness, rules and individual rights (Hatemi et al. 2009; Howell and Day 2000).

The changing politics of men is the second explanation given for the gender gap. Before 1980 men tended to vote for the Democratic Party, but the election of 1980 was a turning point for men because the majority of men left the Democrats to vote for the Republican Party. Many men recalled the 1950s as a period of stability in the United States, but the stability slipped

away and it affected men the most. But the Democratic Party was more concerned with fighting for the equality of African-Americans and women causing their disregard of white men. Liberals paid little attention to the fact that white men had been affected the hardest as manufacturing factories began downsizing. Furthermore, President Carter had not been able to fix economic and national security issues during his first term. Compared to Ronald Reagan, Carter was not perceived as strong enough to lead the United States. Therefore, white men saw a future in Reagan and the Republican Party which was seen as the party of strength (Carroll 2014; Chaney et al. 1998; Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999; Kaufmann 2006; Kaufmann et al. 2008; Kuhn 2007).

A third explanation focuses on income and occupation. The majority of women earn less than men and are, therefore, in the lower-income groups. Research has shown that people from lower-income groups vote Democratic, whereas people from higher-income groups vote Republican. More women than men are also employed in the public sector, primarily in human services jobs – a sector which has a high amount of low-paid jobs. As a result, women are more dependent on social welfare services and are interested in promoting the public sector. Given that the Democratic Party favors government spending and social welfare programs, low-income women vote for the Democrats because it best reflects their interests (Blais et al. 1990; Carroll 1988; Carroll 2014; Howell and Day 2000; Huddy et al. 2008; Oakley et al. 2011; Rattsø and Sørensen 2012).

Marital status is the fourth explanation given for the gender gap. Unmarried voters have voted less Republican than married voters in every presidential election since 1972. The changes included in the transition into married life are what results in a marriage gap. Changes such as learning from one another, shared finances, and the likelihood of having children. Spouses tend to be a person's main source of political discussion and because each partner brings into the marriage their own political participation history, marriage reorders political preferences. Moreover, marriage tends to redistribute wealth from men to women and, therefore, husbands seem to exert influence on their wives' political preferences. Marital status is an indicator of traditional versus nontraditional family lifestyle. Consequently, people vote for the party that best reflects their family lifestyle (Edlund and Pande 2002; Hawley 2015; Jennings and Stoker 2001; Stoker and Jennings 1995; Weisberg 1987).

### **2.3 Expectations**

The genetic influence on political attitudes is a relatively new explanation for the gender gap, while the other explanations have been examined since the modern gender gap emerged. I have found no literature that claims that the gender gap does not matter in politics. But the literature tends to disagree on the primary explanation for the gender gap in voting. However, in my opinion, scholar Susan J. Carroll's research on the gender gap has made the greatest contribution to the understanding of the gender gap. She has studied the gender gap since the beginning of the 1980's. Given the existing literature, I expect the answer to the gender gap in general is the changing politics of men. The literature presents very convincing arguments. But in terms of the gender gap in the 2012 presidential election, I expect that the marriage gap was crucial to the outcome of that election. Nevertheless, the above explanations are interrelated and each contributes to the gender gap.

### **3 Methodology**

In this section, I will state the reasons for my methodological choices. My research objectives of this thesis are to identify possible reasons for the gender gap in the 2012 U.S. presidential election and how the gender gap has shaped American politics through the interpretation of data.

#### **3.1 Research Approach**

I have chosen an inductive approach to answer my research question. Inductive reasoning is defined as “theory is the outcome of research. In other words, the process of induction involves drawing generalizable inferences out of observations” (Bryman 2008: 12). Thus, working inductively implies moving from empirical data to the development of theory. By working inductively, I have interpreted empirical data to develop knowledge and a pattern of the gender gap in presidential elections in the United States. This research approach has affected my choice of research strategy. The choice of research strategy is essential for the results of this thesis.

#### **3.2 Research Strategy**

As a result of my research question and the inductive approach, I found the quantitative research method most suitable in order to generate knowledge about the gender gap in voting. The quantitative research method is characterized by gathering numerical data to generalize about a group of people or to explain a particular phenomenon. Furthermore, the data is based on large sample sizes that are representative of the population and, therefore, the study can usually be replicated because of its high reliability. This method is especially suitable to determine the relationship between one thing and another within a population (University of Southern California 2016).

Within the quantitative research method, I have used statistical analysis to find answers to my research question. I have used preexisting statistical data from different organizations since I have not been able to produce my own data. For consistency, I have attempted to gather data from the same organizations when I have looked at statistics over time. The data has been collected through polls, questionnaires and surveys. However, some of it has been highly statistical and incomprehensible, particularly in the American journals. They tend to use linear regression and equations which I have no knowledge of. In these cases, I have gathered data from other sections of the journals. I have used the data to describe and interpret differences in voting behavior among American men and women.

### **3.3 Validity**

Validity refers to the research method's ability to measure and examine what it intends to study. There are two aspects of validity: internal and external validity. Internal validity is "the extent to which the findings and the research account accurately reflect the social world of those participating in the study" (Daymon and Halloway 2011: 79). Thus, internal validity is concerned with the degree to which the study reflects a true reproduction of the respondents' reality. On the other hand, external validity is about the generalizability of the study and whether "findings and conclusions are applicable to other contexts, settings or a larger research population" (Daymon and Halloway 2011: 80).

The accuracy of the data is determined by several factors. First, the sample size affects the margin of error in polls. As the sample size increases, the margin of error is expected to decrease. Research has shown that a sample size exceeding 1,100 respondents does not enhance the accuracy significantly. With 1,100 respondents the margin of error is +/- 3% (DeSart and Holbrook 2003: 431). Most organizations use a confidence level of 95% when calculating the margin of error. Using a 95% confidence level means that if the sample was to be repeated 100 times under the same conditions, 95 times out of 100 the measure would be within the margin of error (Survey Monkey 2016). Second, the date of the poll affects the results. As opinions can change up to election day, polls taken closer to an election will provide more accurate estimates of the eventual outcome than polls taken earlier (DeSart and Holbrook 2003: 432). Third, how the sample is collected affects the results. Opinion polls are



mainly conducted by landline telephone, but the number of people who have landlines are decreasing. In particular, young adults only have cell phones. This may result in a bias in the surveys. Therefore, the larger polling organizations have started to conduct cell phone surveys together with landline surveys to improve coverage. But most cell phones have caller identification that allow people to see the number calling before deciding to answer. As a result, the response rate tends to be lower for cell phone surveys than for landline surveys (Pew Research Center 2016a). In contrast to opinions polls are exit polls. In general, exit polls are more accurate than opinion polls because they get actual voters. They are conducted as people come out of the polling place. The problem is that people's votes vary from state to state and some people vote by mail, while others vote online. Therefore, an exit poll cannot be sure to capture all these people (Bump 2016). Fourth, the wording of questions in opinions polls affects the results. Comparisons between polls are often difficult because surveys word questions differently and the order in which questions are asked is also different (Pew Research Center 2016b).

I have been aware of possible problems with statistical data and have, therefore, chosen my empirical data carefully by studying the survey methods used. The data has been retrieved from opinion and exit polls by major polling organizations, such as Gallup and The Roper Center, and actual voting results from news sites, such as CNN and The New York Times. Furthermore, I have retrieved empirical data from U.S. government agencies. This data represents a cross section of the population in the form of averages. However, these averages may obscure outliers. First, the figures on income may obscure the fact that some men in the private sector have huge salaries. As a result, these men will skew the figures. Second, the figures on marital status include widowed women in the group unmarried. Widowed women may obscure the fact that women live significantly longer than men and that widowed women are fairly financially stable. Third, there has been a third party candidate, e.g. Ross Perot in 1992 and 1996, in some presidential elections which may have a negative effect on the final result of the main candidates. Consequently, averages are used as indications of what is taking place in the United States.

## **4 Theory**

In this section, I will account for the three main theoretical voting models that have been developed to try to explain voting behavior. The three models include the sociological model of voting behavior, the party identification model of voting behavior, and the rational choice approach. These models are based on different studies conducted in the United States in the 1940s and 1950s. They will provide a foundation for analyzing the voting behavior of men and women in the 2012 U.S. presidential election.

### **4.1 School of Columbia**

The theory behind the sociological model of voting behavior is based on the study of four U.S. presidential elections in the 1940s and 1950s. It was conducted by Paul Lazarsfeld and his associates at Columbia University. The first goal was to study how voters make up their minds and the role of the media in that process, and the second goal was to test the effect of successive interviews with a panel of 600 respondents. The hypothesis of Lazarsfeld and his associates was that the act of voting is an individual act, but the mass media has a significant effect on vote choice. The results of the study, however, suggested that the media had a minimal effect on voters and that the decisive factor was the social groups the voters belonged to (Antunes 2010: 146-147). As Lazarsfeld et al. state:

There is a familiar adage in American folklore to the effect that a person is only what he thinks he is, an adage which reflects the typically American notion of unlimited opportunity, the tendency toward self-betterment, etc. Now we find that the reverse of the adage is true: a person thinks, politically, as he is, socially. Social characteristics determine political preference. (Lazarsfeld et al. 1968: 69).

Despite the fact that the results contradicted the initial hypothesis, several important findings emerged from the study – a study that provided concepts and models that are used in contemporary voting research. First, people tend to vote as they always have, often as their families have. Second, social group memberships influence voting choice. People vote for parties that best reflect the interests of their groups, such as their social class, ethnic group,

religious group, by the associations they belong to, and by the area they live in (Lazarsfeld et al. 1968: 148). Third, change does occur as 54 respondents out of the 600 changed their minds. People who belong to one or more social groups are subject to cross-pressures because each group tries to persuade these voters to vote for a particular candidate. As Lazarsfeld et al. state:

In short, the party changers – relatively, the people whose votes still remained to be definitely determined during the last stages of the campaign, the people who could swing an election during those last days – were, so to speak, available to the person who saw them last before Election Day. The notion that people who switch parties during the campaign are mainly the reasoned, thoughtful, conscientious people who were convinced by the issues of the election is just plain wrong. Actually, they were mainly just the opposite. (Lazarsfeld et al. 1968: 69).

Fourth, opinion leaders, i.e. the informal leaders of the social groups, are influenced by the media. They disseminate the media messages that are favorable to their group's political standards, and the individual voter follows the opinion leaders. It is a process called “two-step-flow of communication” (Lazarsfeld et al. 1968: 151).

## **4.2 School of Michigan**

The party identification model of voting behavior is based on the study of the 1948, 1952, and 1956 U.S. presidential elections, and the results were published by Angus Campbell, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes (1960) in the book “*The American Voter*”. Campbell and his associates sought to combine the sociological model with a psychological model that would be able to account for a change in voting behavior. This model is used in most election studies conducted in the United States today (Antunes 2010: 153). The party identification model can be seen as similar to the sociological model because voters see themselves as members of political groups, i.e. Democrats or Republicans, in the same way as other people incorporate a social group membership into their self-concepts. On the other hand, in contrast to the sociological model, the relationship between group membership and attitudes is assumed to be similar to the relationship between group membership and vote (Andersen and Heath 2000: 2). As Campbell et al. state:

In the competition of voices reaching the individual the political party is an opinion-forming agency of great importance. [...] The strength of relationship between party identification and the dimensions of partisan attitude suggests that responses to each element of national politics are deeply affected by the individual's enduring party attachments. (Campbell et al. 1960: 128).

Campbell and his associates were especially interested in three factors: party identification, issue orientation and candidate orientation. Party identification refers to what political party a voter identifies with. People tend to vote as they always have. This is due to a socialization process, influenced by the partisanship of their parents. Contrary to party identification, issue orientation and candidate orientation depend on the context of each election. Issue orientation refers to issues that are important to a voter and which may be affected by the outcome of an election. Candidate orientation refers to a voter's interest in the personality of the candidates (Campbell et al. 1966: 146).

They made an explanatory model, the “funnel of causality”, based on a chain of events that would lead up to a person casting his vote<sup>7</sup>. The funnel gives a picture of the different influences and circumstances affecting a person's vote. At the entrance of the funnel the long-term and underlying factors of the vote are located, such as socio-economic and historical factors, values and attitudes, and membership groups. At its narrow end the short-term determinants of the vote are located, such as issues, candidates, political and economic situation, election campaign, government action and influence of friends. According to the funnel of causality, the sociological and social characteristics influence the next element which is partisanship. Partisanship, on the other hand, influences the evaluation of candidates, issues, campaign events that are reported in the media, and conversations with friends and family about the election. The output of the funnel is the vote (Antunes 2010: 155).

### **4.3 School of Rochester**

The rational choice theory is an economic explanation for voting behavior submitted by Anthony Downs (1957) in the book “*An Economic Theory of Democracy*”. The premise is that if rational choice is able to explain the market, then it is also able to explain how politics

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<sup>7</sup> See appendix 3, p. 70, for figure on the funnel of causality.

function. This theory establishes a direct analogy between consumers and voters and between businesses and political parties. If businesses seek to maximize profits and consumers act to maximize their utility<sup>8</sup>, then voters seek to maximize the utility of their vote as political parties act to maximize electoral gains obtained from their political policies (Antunes 2010: 157). As Downs states:

Our main thesis is that parties in democratic politics are analogues to entrepreneurs in a profit-seeking economy. So as, to attain their private ends, they formulate whatever policies they believe will gain the most votes, just as entrepreneurs produce whatever products they believe will gain the most profits for the same reason. In order to examine the implications of this thesis, we have assumed that citizens behave rationally in politics. This premise is itself a second major hypothesis. (Downs 1957: 295-296).

This theory is based on three fundamental premises. First, voters and political parties make rational decisions guided by their own interests and enforced in accordance with the principle of maximizing the action's utility. Second, the democratic political system implies that the voters, parties and government are responsible and trustworthy. Therefore, it is possible to make predictions about the consequences that result from different choices. Third, the democratic system assumes a level of uncertainty, sufficiently significant to allow different choices, despite the consistency stated in the second premise (Antunes 2010: 158).

Contrary to the sociological and party identification models, the rational choice theory is individualistic. Rationality is the assumption that voters and political parties act according to their self-interests. Voters' rational behavior in an election is only oriented towards electing a government, whereas the main objective of political parties is to win elections to gain prestige and profits inherent to being in power (Downs 1957: 28). The rationality of the political system derives from the fact that there are always several options available to choose from. When faced with two alternatives, voters will evaluate pros and cons of each party and candidate and consequently vote for the party or candidate that can give them the best deal. According to Downs, if the voter "is rational, he knows that no party will be able to do everything that it says it will do. Hence he cannot merely compare platforms; instead he must estimate in his own mind what the parties would actually do were they in power" (Downs 1957: 39).

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<sup>8</sup> The total satisfaction received from consuming a good or service.

## **5 “War on Women”**

In this section, I will try to show the link between the “war on women” and the gender gap. My main argument is that the majority of women did not vote for the Republican Party in the 2012 election because of the party’s effort to restrict women’s rights. To support this argument, I will show how women voted in the 2012 U.S. presidential election and compare it to women’s voting behavior in previous elections. Furthermore, I will outline the different explanations for the “war on women”. Lastly, I will discuss how significant the “war on women” was in relation to the gender gap in 2012.

Since the presidential election in 1992, the majority of women have voted for the Democratic candidate<sup>9</sup>. In 2012, 55% of women voted for Obama, whereas 44% of women voted for Romney (Center for American Women and Politics 2012). Compared to the election in 2008, women were less likely to vote for Obama in 2012. 56% of women voted for Obama in 2008, while 43% of women voted for John McCain. But in contrast to the election in 2004, women were more likely to vote for Obama in 2012. John Kerry received 51% of women’s votes in 2004, whereas George Bush received 48% (The New York Times 2008). However, women determined the outcome of the presidential election in 2012. Obama won the presidency by winning with women and losing with men, while women did not decide the elections in 2008 and 2004. The last time a candidate succeeded by winning with women and losing with men was Bill Clinton in the 1996 presidential election (Omero and McGuinness 2012: 2).

### **5.1 Explanations**

#### **5.1.1 Controversies**

A series of extreme statements and missteps by Republicans led the media to start calling it a Republican “war on women” (Rosen 2012). It all started with Senator Rick Santorum in early 2012 when he asserted that he disapproved of contraception. Contraception is “not okay because it’s a license to do things in the sexual realm that is counter to how things are

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<sup>9</sup> See appendix 1, p. 68, for table on the gender gap in support of the winning presidential candidate 1972-2012.

supposed to be” (Scherer 2012). When the Obama administration mandated that employers must offer free contraceptives for women in their health care coverage, Republicans tried to stop it by having the Blunt Amendment passed in Congress. The amendment would have allowed employers and health insurance companies to deny contraception coverage due to moral or religious objections. But the amendment did not pass (Carroll 2014: 121). At the same time, conservative talk-show host Rush Limbaugh called law student Sandra Fluke a slut and a prostitute because she had testified at a congressional hearing on contraception coverage (Carroll 2014: 122). For the people who wanted to portray Republicans as anti-woman, these statements and the attempt to pass the Blunt Amendment provided ammunition for their cause.

But that was not the end of the Republicans’ “war on women”. A few months later, Republican Senate candidate Todd Akin stated in a television interview that “[i]f it’s a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut the whole body down” (Eligon and Schwirts 2012). Even though many Republicans publicly disagreed with Akin, he refused to step down as a Senate candidate, but he ultimately led a resounding defeat. Another Republican Senate candidate, Richard Mourdock, stated that “even when life begins in that horrible situation of rape, that is something that intended to happen” (Carroll 2014: 122). These incidents just added more fuel to women’s view that the Republican Party did not understand contemporary women. Moreover, it did not help Republican Party nominee Mitt Romney that he did not seem to know how to deal with these incidents effectively when he was asked about his views on the incidents (Carroll 2014: 122).

Romney’s only way to appeal to women was to state that his policies would help grow the economy and create new jobs so employers would hire women. He claimed that female voters did not care about the “war on women” because women were only concerned about the economy. But the two were not mutually exclusive. The fact that the Republicans had voted against bills to promote better rights for women and wanted to dispose of the social safety net was of great concern to many women. No social safety net would worsen women’s economic well-being (Marcotte 2012). In addition, Romney tried to convince women that Obama was the source of their problems because of excessive government spending. Yet Romney supported Republican efforts to block stimulation of the economy which would help women.

Therefore, women did not believe Romney when he stated that a strong economy would help them (Rosen 2012).

Furthermore, Romney did not appear to have any convictions. As a Governor of Massachusetts, he had supported women's right to abortion and created a health care program to which everyone had to contribute, but because he wanted to attract the votes of the extreme right-wing during the primaries, he changed his views. As a Republican Party nominee, he opposed women's reproductive rights, swore to repeal ObamaCare which was based on his own health care program for Massachusetts, and eliminate federal funding for Planned Parenthood<sup>10</sup>. As a result, it infuriated women voters that Romney's agenda was to repeal or block women's rights and the media began calling him a "flip flopper" (Rosen 2012).

### **5.1.2 The Obama Campaign**

The Obama campaign actively appealed to women, whereas the Romney campaign tried to take focus off issues that mattered to women in an attempt to shrink the gender gap. Obama reversed Romney's economic argument and stated that helping women get equal pay would help the economy and American families (Carroll 2014: 124). In contrast to Romney, Obama also talked frequently about women's issues, in particular women's reproductive health care and pay equity, in an attempt to appeal to women voters. In the second presidential debate, Obama linked these issues to the health of the economy:

In my health care bill, I said insurance companies need to provide contraceptive coverage to everybody who's insured, because this is not just a health issue, it's an economic issue for women. [...] Romney says that we should eliminate funding for Planned Parenthood, there are millions of women all across the country who rely on Planned Parenthood for not just contraceptive care, they rely on it for mammograms, for cervical cancer screenings. That's a pocketbook issue for women and families all across the country, and it makes a difference in terms of how well and effectively women are able to work. [...] These are not just women's issues. These are family issues. These are economic issues. (The American Presidency Project 2012).

While Romney tried to appeal to women voters by arguing that he would attempt to improve the overall economy in the United States, Obama's strategy was to win support from women

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<sup>10</sup> Planned Parenthood is a nonprofit organization that provides reproductive health services.



by appealing to them in terms of general economic policy and issues of women's health and pay equity. Sometimes he highlighted the economic implications of these issues as well (Carroll 2014: 125). In the end, the most important value for the majority of women voters were a candidate that "cares about people like me". Ultimately, Obama was considered this type of candidate as he beat Romney by 63% among female voters who said "cares about people like me" was the most important value (Omero and McGuinness 2012).

### **5.1.3 The Profile of Women**

The average American woman today looks very different from the average American woman in 1980. Women have changed in ethnic terms and are much more likely to be Hispanic. The number of Hispanic women have almost quadrupled since 1980. There were 7.3 million Hispanic women in 1980, while there were 26 million in 2012, thereby representing 3.2% of the U.S. population in 1980 and 8.3% in 2012. In terms of white, African-American, and Asian women, the average woman today is less likely to be white, almost equally likely to be African-American, and a little bit more likely to be Asian. In 1980, white women represented 44.1% of the U.S. population, whereas they represented 39.8% in 2012. The number of African American women has increased from 6.2% in 1980 to 7.1% in 2012, while the number of Asian women has increased from 0.8% in 1980 to 3% in 2012<sup>11</sup> (National Center for Health Statistics 2012).

Furthermore, the average American woman today is more likely to be either single or unmarried, i.e. living together without being married<sup>12</sup>, than the average woman in 1980. However, the fact that people live alone may be a little bit deceptive because people are living longer. Women, in particular, live longer than men and often single households consist of elderly women. In 1980, the life expectancy for women was 77.4 years, while it was 70 years for men. In 2012, it had increased to 81.2 years for women and 76.4 years for men (National Center for Health Statistics 2016: 95). When women do get married, they are getting married at an older age. In 1980, the median age for first marriage was 23.5 years for women. In contrast, it was 26.5 years in 2010<sup>13</sup> (Elliot et al. 2012: 18). Also, more children were born out

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<sup>11</sup> See appendix 4, p. 70, for table on population of women and ethnic groups 1980 and 2012.

<sup>12</sup> See chapter 8, p. 42, on marital status.

<sup>13</sup> Latest year available.

wedlock in 2012 than in 1980<sup>14</sup>. The median age of American women having their first child has also gone up. In 1980, the average woman had her first child at 22.7 years old, whereas she had her first child at 26 years old in 2012 (Kincaid 2015).

In terms of income, the average woman today has a higher income than the average woman in 1980. Women's earnings represented 64.2% of men's median weekly earnings in 1980. In contrast, they represented 80.9% in 2012 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2014: 58). Moreover, while the average woman had a lower college attainment rate than the average man in 1980, the average woman had surpassed men in 2012. In 1980, the rate was 21% for women and 24% for men. But in 2012, the rate was 37% for women and 30% for men (Ryan and Bauman 2016: 9). On the whole, the profile of women has changed drastically on a long-term basis. This has had an enormous effect on voting behavior because the interests and values of women have also changed.

## **5.2 Significance**

In the 2012 U.S. presidential election, the majority of women abandoned the Republican Party because of the Romney campaign. Romney led a "war on women" against women's economic equality and their reproductive rights. Even though Romney tried to take focus off issues that mattered especially to women, the extreme statements of fellow Republicans and Romney's lack of convictions, reduced his appeal with women voters. While women were less likely to vote for Obama in 2012 than in the 2008 presidential election, women voters decided the election. Given that women are a much bigger part of the American population of voters, even a relatively small gap in the support they throw to a candidate or another can play a big role in the outcome of an election.

Moreover, the profile of women has changed significantly since 1980. This has influenced women's voting behavior because the interests of the average woman in 1980 were somewhat different in comparison to the interests of the average woman in 2012. The fact that the average woman in 2012 was more likely to be Hispanic than white was beneficial to the

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<sup>14</sup> See chapter 8, p. 42, on marital status.

Democratic Party. In 2012, Obama received nearly seven in ten Hispanic votes, more than nine of ten African-American votes, a solid majority of votes from women, and two thirds of votes from unmarried women – all demographic groups that have changed to the benefit of the Democrats since 1980 (MacManus 2014: 82).

In terms of female voters in 2012, women's voting decisions were based on the rational choice approach to voting. Women's voting behavior was determined by economic calculation. They voted for the Democratic Party because it was beneficial to their economic self-interests. Women are more likely to be on Medicaid<sup>15</sup> and because they tend to live longer than men, they have more years of needing Medicare<sup>16</sup> (Marcotte 2012). Therefore, a vote on Romney in 2012 would have put the social safety net and their economic well-being at risk. Furthermore, the changing profile of women made women aware of the fact that their concerns were more relevant to their political choices.

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<sup>15</sup> Medicaid is a social health care program for families and individuals with limited resources.

<sup>16</sup> Medicare provides health insurance for people aged 65 and older who have worked and paid into the system, and certain younger people with disabilities.

## 6 Changing Politics of Men

In this section, I will try to show the link between the changing politics of men and the gender gap. My main argument is that men vote for the Republican Party because the Democratic Party forgot about men, in particular white men, in their fight for black and female equality. Consequently, they pushed men to the Republican Party. To support this argument, I will show how the voting behavior of men has changed by means of statistics from 1948-2012. Furthermore, I will explain why men have changed their political preferences in the United States. Lastly, I will take into account how significantly the changing politics of men have affected the gender gap.

The first hints of the emerging white male gap came in 1964. Since 1948 a larger percentage of white men than white women had voted for the Democratic Party. However, in 1964 slightly more white women (57.9%) than white men (55.8%) supported the Democratic candidate, Lyndon B. Johnson. The presidential election in 1980 was the turning point for white men as a vast majority of white men left the Democratic Party to vote for the Republican candidate, Ronald Reagan, while white women stayed with the Democratic Party. In 1980, 61.2% of white men voted for the Republican Party, whereas 53.4% of white women supported Reagan<sup>17</sup>. The election of 1980 marked the beginning of the modern gender gap and white men have never looked back (Kuhn 2007: preface). The presidential election in 2012 confirmed this as the Republican Party had an advantage of 27 percentage points among white men (CNN 2012). However, there are two exceptions to the white male gap. White Jews, both men and women, vote for the Democratic Party primarily due to religious and cultural values. They are the only upper-class sociological group who continues to vote for the Democrats. Moreover, a majority of white gays support the Democratic Party because they believe that the Democrats will help promote legal equality for gays (Kuhn 2007: 11).

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<sup>17</sup> See appendix 5, p. 71, for table on white male and female presidential voting 1948-2012.

## **6.1 Explanations**

### **6.1.1 Cultural Change**

The 1950s was a very idyllic period in the United States. America had saved Europe from Nazi Germany and caused freedom. There was no threat to the country. Women took care of the home and the children, and they were comfortable with the stability despite tedious days. Men had one job for life and went to work proud because they were supporting their family. Americans witnessed the progress of mankind as President Kennedy promised a man on the moon, men reached the summit of Mount Everest, and pilot Charles Yeager exceeded the speed of sound. With the assassinations of President Kennedy and Martin Luther King many Americans felt that the United States fell apart. After that came the African-American Civil Rights Movement, the crime, the riots, the gangs, the drugs, AIDS, a rise in premarital sex and teen pregnancy, divorce, the loss of jobs, stagnant wages, debt, the Vietnam War, communism, racism, sexism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, and the fear of nuclear war (Kuhn 2007: 85-86).

White men were blamed for the instability in the United States and believed the world around them was erupting. They were expected to not only make a living for themselves, but also support their family. However, it was difficult to make a living as more than half of the 9.2 million Americans that were added to the poverty rolls between 1979 and 1983 were from white families headed by men (Harrington 1987). If they failed, white men were not given a second chance to succeed. They were disrespected in the media, called racists, angry white males, dead white males, male chauvinist pigs and similar degrading terms, and portrayed as dumb down dads on television shows. White men heard every word and felt they had lost their manhood (Kuhn 2007: 242). As a result, white men turned to the political party that acknowledged their struggle, had a solution, and wanted to give back what they had lost.

### **6.1.2 Jimmy Carter**

In the 1976 U.S. presidential election, Democrat Jimmy Carter defeated incumbent President Gerald Ford. Carter saw Ford as just another corrupt politician and based his election campaign on antigovernment rhetoric. He emphasized the negative side of the last three years under the Republican Party and in Congress. This was popular with American voters because

they distrusted politicians in Washington after the Watergate scandal<sup>18</sup> in which Ford pardoned Richard Nixon. In contrast, they considered Carter as not being a part of corrupt Washington. Carter was a unifying candidate who won the election with strong support from minorities, Southern men, and evangelicals. As for evangelicals, Carter gained much support because he was a very religious person and described himself as a “born again” Christian (Meenagh 2014a).

However, Carter failed to restore confidence in the position of President and lost the election in 1980. The United States looked enfeebled as Carter was unable to combat the energy crisis, stagflation, and free the Americans held hostage in Iran. First, Carter’s energy bill did nothing to solve the three central problems that caused the 1973 and 1978-79 energy crises. They were caused by the devaluation of the dollar accompanied by the depletion of American oil sources, the rise of OPEC<sup>19</sup>, and no European competition on the American car market which would have introduced smaller cars and trucks as well as improved performance. His policy balanced tax credits with price deregulation and undermined consumer interests. With this bill Carter proved that he was unable to negotiate with a Congress full of his own party members and ignored that it is Congress that controls taxes and spending (Meenagh 2014b).

Second, Carter tried to fight stagflation<sup>20</sup> with a spending program and by having the Federal Reserve Board to expand the money supply, but it was mainly unsuccessful. Then Carter appointed Paul Volcker as new Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board. Volcker pursued a tight monetary policy and tried to fight inflation with high interest rates with the result that the U.S. experienced a steep decline in the GDP<sup>21</sup> in the first half of 1980, but it was ultimately

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<sup>18</sup> Burglars broke into the Democratic Party’s National Committee offices to wiretap phones and steal secret documents, but they were caught. They were connected to President Nixon’s reelection campaign. Nixon participated in the cover-up of the scandal to block investigations. Ultimately, Nixon resigned as President.

<sup>19</sup> Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries. OPEC’s mission is to coordinate and unify the petroleum policies of its member countries in order to secure an efficient, economic and regular supply of petroleum to consumers, a steady income to producers, and a fair return on capital for investors.

<sup>20</sup> A combination of slow economic growth, high inflation, and relatively high unemployment.

<sup>21</sup> The Gross Domestic Product is all goods and services produced in a period (quarterly or yearly).

successful. Furthermore, Carter rejected Keynesian<sup>22</sup> solutions to the economic problems. Instead, he focused on deficit reduction and austerity. He declared that he would attempt to veto government spending projects and call for spending cuts, but they were never carried out. However, he did manage to deregulate the air industry, transportation, utilities, and power. This put Carter at odds with the federation of unions the AFL-CIO<sup>23</sup> and the union organization the Teamsters. Union organization and money had been critical to help win the election in 1976 (Meenagh 2014b).

Third, Carter made a show of staying in Washington to rescue the 52 American diplomats held hostage in Iran. He ordered a highly dubious rescue operation, Eagle Claw, which failed and then was aborted. Afterwards Carter was publicly humiliated by the media and his opponents on the issue. In the eyes of the public, America was shaped by the events instead of shaping them. Carter had opponents both within and outside his party who wanted to get rid of him and they knew how to do it. He had united Kennedy supporters, the AFL-CIO, the Teamsters, and the remaining people of the southern religious right in the Democratic Party against him which contributed to Carter losing the election in 1980 (Meenagh 2014b).

During the 1980 presidential race, Carter's campaign advertised that "the life of every human on Earth can depend on the experience and judgment and vigilance of the person in the Oval Office" (Kuhn 2007: 24). Carter thought that he could win reelection because he was the smarter man and his strategy was to attempt to portray Reagan as "dumb, dangerous, and a distorter of facts" (Kuhn 2007: 106). However, Carter's male support fell 14.8 percentage points between 1976 and 1980 (Kuhn 2007: preface). Carter was not perceived as masculine, tough, and strong enough among white men. They expected a strong leader for America that they would follow, but instead they got a man of faith who preached and was not able to lead his flock (Kuhn 2007: 69-70). Carter did not listen to the Americans and "thought that his own self-righteous perspective on politics was the only moral one around" (Meenagh 2014b). His wish for control and inability to work with Congress were devastating to his reelection. It is necessary for a president to show optimism and appear full of confidence. It did not help

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<sup>22</sup> Interest rates do not matter because aggregate demand is the driver of the economy. When demand is low, budget deficits and government spending can stimulate growth. Only then allow for revenues to repay borrowing or for the reduction of the money supply.

<sup>23</sup> The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations.

that vice president Mondale publicly reported despair with Carter's attitude to politics (Meenagh 2014b).

### **6.1.3 Ronald Reagan**

White men found a future in Ronald Reagan and the Republican Party. Reagan was a man of the 1950s, a traditional man, and personified patriotism. He believed that the backbone of America was the same and men should not be defined by past or present mistakes, but by how they rose back up (Kuhn 2007: 116). Furthermore, Reagan was clear and bold in his language, he knew how to communicate his message, and he spoke the same language white men grew up with (Kuhn 2007: 73). During a debate with President Carter in the 1980 presidential race, Reagan may have secured the presidency when he turned to the camera and said the following:

[A]re you better off than you were four years ago? Is it easier for you to go and buy things in the stores than it was four years ago? Is there more or less unemployment in the country than there was four years ago? Is America as respected throughout the world as it was? Do you feel that our security is as safe, that we're as strong as we were four years ago? (The Commission on Presidential Debate 1980).

White men did not feel they were better off so Reagan phrased exactly what was on many male voters' minds. He radiated masculinity and was a man they admired. His campaign focused on reinforcing the strength among men by projecting him as a man of action, capable of making tough decisions. Furthermore, Reagan was to show that he had concern for and understood the problems facing the common man. Ultimately, white men voted for the candidate who offered honor to the common man, still believed America was good, appeared like a strong, competent leader, and spoke of less taxes and a smaller government (Kuhn 2007: 105). It did not matter whether the voter never attended church or was a churchgoer, never attended college or graduated from college, or was a man of the south or of the north because Reagan appealed to all manner of white men (Kuhn 2007: 106). His election marked the beginning of the modern Republican majority among men. A majority "built on the ballots of white men who still called themselves Democrats[,] but no longer saw their future in liberalism" (Kuhn 2007: 1).



Reagan continued to talk male talk throughout his presidency, but the “evil empire” address defined Reagan’s presidency<sup>24</sup>:

[I]n your discussions of the nuclear proposals, I urge you to beware the temptation of pride – the temptation of blithely declaring yourselves above it all and label both sides equally at fault, to ignore the facts of history and the aggressive impulses of an evil empire, to simply call the arms race a giant misunderstanding and thereby remove yourself from the struggle between right and wrong and good and evil. (Reagan 1983).

Reagan showed that he was not afraid of calling the Soviet Union an “evil empire”. He also appealed to Americans by implicitly distinguishing the “evil” Soviet Union from the “good” America. By doing so, he ensured Americans that the United States was right and the Soviet Union was wrong. White men appealed to Reagan because of his clear stance against communism and his strong foreign policy (Kuhn 2007: 90). In the 1984 presidential election, an even larger percentage of white men (68.2%) voted for Reagan than in 1980 (61.2%), thereby resulting in the biggest white male gap of 37.3 percentage points recorded in U.S. presidential elections, in part because of Reagan’s policies (Kuhn 2007: preface).

#### **6.1.4 Policy Attitudes**

In the case of Reagan, women were very opposed to his foreign policy, in particular his attitude towards defense spending and his showings of military force, in this case the Reagan arms buildup<sup>25</sup>. In addition, Reagan’s opposition towards healthcare and the Equal Rights Amendment made women at odds with Reagan because women tend to be more dependent on the welfare state (Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999: 872). Therefore, women stayed with the Democrats because the Democratic Party stands for big government and social welfare liberalism, whereas men were attracted to the Republicans as the Republican Party stands for a small government, low taxes, and fiscal conservatism (Kaufmann et al. 2008: 102). Men, especially white men, also decided their vote based on the character of Reagan. It is important for white men that the candidate portrays honesty, strength, and clarity of language. In some

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<sup>24</sup> See appendix 6, p. 72, for transcript of the full speech.

<sup>25</sup> Reagan increased defense spending to build up a massive military to wear down the Soviet Union. In the case of a nuclear war, the United States would have the capability to fight and win.

presidential elections, character is more important for men than issues, whereas it is a more complex decision for women (Kuhn 2007: 126).

In general, men are more conservative than women on most policy attitudes. They prefer a small government and are less supportive of government funded social programs, whereas women are more concerned about social welfare issues. Furthermore, men tend to be more concerned about world affairs and show higher levels of support for a strong foreign policy, use of military force, and defense spending. On the other hand, men and women are very likeminded regarding female equality, race/minority-related policies, and abortion rights (Kaufmann et al. 2008: 100-101). Thus men and women who are pro-choice support the Democratic Party, whereas men and women who are pro-life support the Republican Party (Chaney et al. 1998: 335). Regarding economic policy attitudes men tend to vote based on their personal finances (“pocketbook” voting), whereas women are more prone to vote based on the national economy (Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999: 872). At times, men and women may attach varying levels of priority to certain political issues and as a result the size of the gender gap may change (Kaufmann 2006: 447-448).

### **6.1.5 Loss of Jobs and Union Membership**

Before 1980, men were employed in relative stable jobs in the manufacturing industry, in particular in the car and steel industries. They had a job for life that paid very well and were earning enough to support a family. The wife was able to stay at home or only go out to work for a few hours a week. Men’s earnings in 2012 were practically the same as their earnings in 1970, when adjusted for inflation. A man working in the manufacturing industry earned on average \$19.07 hourly in 1970. By 2012, he earned on average \$19.08 hourly<sup>26</sup> (Trading Economics 2016). However, in the 1980s, there was a decline in heavy manufacturing as factories in Pittsburgh and Detroit began downsizing. This was caused by the recession of the 1970s, and male life became much more insecure in the United States. There was a 53% loss of high-paying jobs for white men, while they experienced a 97% increase in low-paying jobs (Kuhn 2007: 217). Whereas 24% of workers were employed in the manufacturing industry in

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<sup>26</sup> See appendix 7, p. 79, for table on average hourly wages in manufacturing 1950-2012.

1960, the figure had decreased to 19% in 1980, and only 8% of workers were employed in the sector in 2012 (Long 2016).

Considering that the American labor force<sup>27</sup> increased from 69.6 million working age Americans in 1960 to 157.7 million working age Americans in 2010, the job loss in the manufacturing industry is even worse when the total growth of the American labor force is considered (Toossi 2002: 24). In the 1990s factories began to replace workers with robots and technology, but they also began to outsource because China was able to undercut American workers with cheap labor (Long 2016). Since the 1960s, jobs in the manufacturing industry have paid substantially more than the minimum wage. In 2012, manufacturing jobs paid nearly three times the minimum wage which was \$7.25<sup>28</sup> (U.S. Department of Labor 2012). Jobs in the manufacturing industry are particularly important for workers without college degrees because it provides good wages compared with the minimum wage.

Since the decline in manufacturing, male life for many working class men has become much more insecure as they have had to find much more insecure forms of employment, such as in the health care, construction, and retail industries (Long 2016). They can no longer expect a job for life. Furthermore, the wages are no longer enough to keep a wife at home and a family needs joint household incomes to support the entire family. In some households the woman will be earning the same or more than the man. Therefore, male life relative to that of women has also gotten worse. Women have started to become independent earners to a much higher degree. The ratio between male and female earnings has changed. Whereas women's wages rose by 20% between 1979 and 2003, the wages of men without a college degree in the working class remained stagnant<sup>29</sup> (Kuhn 2007: 223). Considering that white men ruled supreme in the 1950s and 1960s, they no longer rule supreme now, and this might help to explain male anger. The Republican Party has become a much more effective instrument for male anger.

The decline of jobs in the manufacturing industry has also caused a decline in union membership. For some white men it was only union membership that made them vote for the

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<sup>27</sup> 16 years and older.

<sup>28</sup> See appendix 7, p. 79, for table on minimum wage 1950-2012.

<sup>29</sup> See chapter 7, p. 35, on income and occupation.

Democratic Party. Therefore, fewer white men in unions means fewer votes from white men for the Democratic Party. In the 1950s, 35% of the labor force were union members (Blumner 2005). But the percentage of American workers in a union has drastically declined since then. In 1983, 20.1% of the labor force was union members and in 2015, only 11.1% of the labor force was union members (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2016). Not every member of a union is a supporter of the Democrats, but members tend to be better educated on issues affecting their work and lives which favors Democrats (Blumner 2005). Moreover, workers in the public sector have a union membership rate (35.2%) more than five times higher than workers in the private sector (6.7%) (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2016). Given that workers in the public sector already favors the Democrats, the loss of union membership in the private sector benefits the Republican Party to a great extent<sup>30</sup>.

#### **6.1.6 The Great Backlash**

Thomas Frank's book "*What's the Matter with Kansas?*" has caused a lot of debate. He writes about the "Great Backlash" that has led the white working class, in particular "angry white men", to abandon the Democratic Party in the United States. He is born in Kansas, and his book is based on Kansans as they are the most average of all Americans (Frank 2004: 29). The backlash is a form of conservatism that focuses on social issues instead of economics and it was a response to the protests in the late 1960s. "[B]acklash leaders systematically downplay the politics of economics. The movement's basic premise is that culture outweighs economics as a matter of public concern" (Frank 2004: 6). However, the movement's main motivation is to achieve economic ends. They are able to mobilize voters with "explosive" cultural issues, such as guns and abortion, to redirect anger towards liberals and thereby obtain pro-business economic politics (Frank 2004: 5).

The backlash is about authenticity and it divides America. On one side is red-state/authentic America who protect the traditional values of America's founding, who are humble, reverent, courteous, kind and loyal. On the other side is blue-state/conceited America who are liberal, pretentious, bookish, run the United States, and live far away from "real" America (Frank 2004: 27). In addition, red-state Americans know that the liberal elite in blue-state America

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<sup>30</sup> See chapter 7, p. 35, on income and occupation.

hates them because of what they see on TV and read in highbrow modern fiction. But they also know that the Republican Party is the true party of workers because a Republican Congressman is more likely to have a beer with a common man than a wealthy Democratic Congressman is (Frank 2004: 117-118).

There is a class war in the United States, and the backlash sees itself as an enemy of the elite and as a protector and voice of the righteous people in “real” America (Frank 2004: 5-6). According to the conservatives, “[c]lass is about what one drives and where one shops and how one prays, and only secondarily about the work one does or the income one makes” (Frank 2004: 113). Basically, the backlash is “a theory of how the political world works”, but it also provides people with an identity based on authenticity and victimhood. It gives people an opportunity to see justice done just like every other group treated unfairly (Frank 2004: 157-158).

The angry white men are not blue-collar workers, but successful and self-made men. However, something went wrong in the 1960s and they became bitter at how the world had changed. Neither the media nor the politicians let them forget the state of the country with stories about “foul-mouthed kids, crime in the streets, rabid feminists, out-of-control government agencies, crazy civil rights leaders, obscene art, welfare cheats, foolish professors, and sitcom provocations” (Frank 2004: 140-141). As a result, conservatives were able to convince these men to defend traditional values, but no matter how many times their candidates win or how rich they become, they always lose in the end because their way of life is under attack. The angry men believe they are the last people who can remember how great America was before it fell apart (Frank 2004: 141-142).

Larry Bartels’ paper “*What’s the Matter with What’s the Matter with Kansas?*” examines Frank’s claim that the Republican Party has been able to attract voters from the white working class because of “class animus” and “cultural wedge issues like guns and abortion” (Bartels 2006: 201). Bartels confirms that the Democratic Party has lost support from white voters without college degrees (Bartels 2006: 206). However, class distinctions between white college graduates and white people without a college degree have not become more

significant in recent elections. Instead, the opposite has happened as class has become less politically relevant (Bartels 2006: 207).

On the other hand, income differences have become much more politically relevant. Since the 1970s there has been “a large and fairly consistent gap in partisan preferences between richer and poorer white voters” regardless of educational attainment. Since 1976, 50% of the voters from the lower-income group of Frank’s white working class, 43% from the middle-income group, and 35% from the upper-income group have voted for the Democratic presidential candidates (Bartels 2006: 208). Consequently, income has become a strong predictor of partisanship. Republican gains since the 1950s have come from middle- and upper-income white working class voters. This has led to a big gap in partisanship and voting between mainly Democratic lower-income groups and mainly Republican upper-income groups (Bartels 2006: 209).

In general, Democratic presidential candidates have indeed lost support from middle- and upper-income groups of Frank’s white working class without college degrees. However, the Democratic Party has received increased support from white working class voters without college degrees in the lower-income group (Bartels 2006: 210). Moreover, the overall decline in Democratic support among Frank’s white working class voters is a result of the loss of the Democratic South. In the early 1960s Democratic leaders supported the advancement of civil rights, but it was not well received among white Southerners who shifted to the Republican Party instead (Bartels 2006: 211).

Regarding values, Bartels finds no support for the notion that cultural issues are more important than economics among white working class voters. Instead, they attach more than twice as much weight to government spending (1.47)<sup>31</sup> than to abortion (0.56) (Bartels 2006: 212). Furthermore, Frank’s white working class voters without college degrees do not attach more weight to cultural issues than white voters with a college degree. It is quite the opposite because white voters with college degrees attach more than twice the weight to abortion as white voters without college degrees do (1.21 versus 0.56) (Bartels 2006: 214).

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<sup>31</sup> Bartels uses probit analyses to examine how much weight each group of voters attaches to a certain issue.

However, at the most basic level, evidence supports Frank's thesis that white working class voters without college degrees attach more weight to cultural issues than they used to. The probit coefficient for abortion has increased from 0.29 in 1984 to 0.80 in 2004. But the same is accurate for white voters with college degrees. The probit coefficient for abortion among white voters with college degrees has increased substantially from 0.55 in 1984 to 1.66 in 2004 (Bartels 2006: 215). Therefore, as the figures illustrate, the growing importance of cultural issues in American politics is not just important for Frank's white working class. Cultural issues are slightly more important for white voters with a college degree.

## **6.2 Significance**

The changing politics of men are very significant in explaining the gender gap in voting. It has mainly been white men who have changed political preferences. Before 1980 the majority of white men voted for the Democratic Party, while they vote for the Republican Party today. In the 1970s, many white men yearned for the stability of the 1950s. The gap between past circumstances and present circumstances was fast becoming the largest for them. Jimmy Carter tried to improve the state of America, but his austerity melted his appeal with the white working class and the Democrats' focus on groups and classes instead of the individual. The culture of liberalism stood against white men and, therefore, they found in the Republicans and Ronald Reagan a future that could be theirs. The Democrats have not been able to reverse the movement of white men to the Republican Party.

But because white men's political preferences have been constant since 1980, this has not been more significant in determining the gender gap in the 2012 U.S. presidential election than in previous elections. What was decisive for men's voting behavior in 2012 was the continuing loss of jobs in the manufacturing industry, the declining union membership rate, and cultural change in the form of an increasing number of immigrants and the threat of terror in the United States. Factors that contribute to more men voting Republican. However, the demographic of the United States has changed substantially in recent years. In 1992, 87% of the portion of the presidential electorate consisted of white people, but it was just 72% in 2012. Meanwhile African-Americans accounted for 13% in 2012, up from 8%, while Hispanics only accounted for 10% in 2012, up from 2%. Despite Hispanics are the largest

minority group in the United States, many are not eligible to vote (Wolff 2012). This change in the demographic of the United States may be a problem for the Republican Party because its white base is dwindling.

In terms of male voters, men's voting decisions are based on the party identification approach to voting. Men have been motivated by issue orientation, candidate orientation and party identification in their voting behavior. According to the party identification model, party identification does not change in the long term, but a voter realignment took place in the 1980 presidential election which has had a long-term effect on party identification for men. Partly because of the short-term factors, national security and economic issues and Ronald Reagan, that influenced party identification. Since the 1980 presidential election, white men have had a strong party identification and, therefore, have adhered to the Republican Party's position on issues. Their party identification has not wavered during election campaigns.



## 7 Income and Occupation

In this section, I will try to show the link between income and the gender gap. My main argument is that women vote for the Democratic Party because they earn less than men do. To support this argument, I will show how men and women vote by income level using statistics from only the 2012 U.S. presidential election because I have not been able to find statistics by income and gender from other elections. However, I will include some statistics on vote by income and party to show that it was not an isolated incident in 2012. Furthermore, I will explain why there is an income gap in the United States and how it relates to my research question. Finally, I will discuss how significant the income gap is in relation to the gender gap and why it matters in answering my research question.

Income tends to affect whether a person votes for the Democratic or the Republican Party. While people from lower-income groups vote Democratic, it is the opposite for people from higher-income groups as they vote Republican. According to a survey conducted in 2012<sup>32</sup>, men earning \$50,000 or more per year preferred Romney, whereas men in the lowest earning brackets preferred Obama. By comparison, women preferred Obama in most wage levels with the exception of the highest earning bracket, the top 1% of female earners, who preferred Romney. Women earning \$200,000 or more per year preferred Romney by 58%, whereas only 42% preferred Obama (Thompson 2012). This is not a new trend as people in the three lowest earning brackets have consistently voted Democratic in presidential elections since 1996, whereas the two highest earning brackets have voted Republican<sup>33</sup> (Roper Center 2012).

In 2012, women who were full-time wage and salary workers had median usual weekly earnings of \$691, whereas the figure for men was \$854. Thus, women earned 80.9% of what men earned in 2012<sup>34</sup>. Among women, Asians (\$770) and white women (\$710) earned more than African-Americans (\$599) and Hispanics (\$521) did in 2012. Considering that women's

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<sup>32</sup> See appendix 8, p. 79, for figure on vote by income and gender 2012.

<sup>33</sup> See appendix 9, p. 80, for table on vote by income and party 1996-2008.

<sup>34</sup> See appendix 10, p. 80, for table on median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by gender 1980-2012.

earnings represented 62.3% of men's median weekly earnings in 1979, the income gap between men and women has definitely diminished since 1979<sup>35</sup>. However, it is quite astonishing that women's earnings as a percentage of men's have only risen 0.5 percentage point since 2004 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2014: 57-58).

## **7.1 Explanations**

### **7.1.1 Glass Ceiling**

The glass ceiling is an unseen and unbreakable barrier that hinders minorities and women to climb up the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications. In 2012, 38.1% of women in the labor force were college graduates, whereas 34.1% of men in the labor force were college graduates (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2014: 28-30). Yet women only hold 16% of Board of Directors seats at large companies, more than 25% of the Fortune 500 companies have no female executive officers, and only 3.6% of the Fortune 500 companies have female CEOs. Furthermore, women earned 63% of master's degrees and 54% of doctoral and professional degrees in 2012, but they only comprised 20% of university professors and 25% of college presidents. Internationally, the United States ranks 85<sup>th</sup> in the world in its share of women in national legislative bodies. In 2012, women only comprised "17% of the U.S. House of Representatives, 16% of the U.S. Senate, 16% of state governors, and 24% of all state legislators" (Williams 2012). Clearly, the United States has taken steps backwards with respect to gender equality as women are underrepresented in high-earning fields.

### **7.1.2 Maternity Leave and Children**

When women take maternity leave or time off from a job to care for a child, their work experience is abbreviated. They encounter a "motherhood penalty" because of their time out of the labor force. In the United States, women do not have the right to paid maternity leave and only 12% of American workers had access to paid family leave in 2012. When women have to take unpaid time out of the labor force, it results in longer gaps in their work experience which have a negative impact on wages, compared to women who have access to paid leave. Given that women have no choice than to take time off from work after having children, and so few women have access to paid maternity leave, they spend more time out of

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<sup>35</sup> The first year with comparable data.

the labor force than men with children which contributes to the income gap. In contrast, men tend to receive a pay raise when becoming fathers because they are assumed to be the main provider for their families even though most women return to work after maternity leave (Glynn 2014).

Research has documented that employers are less likely to hire women with children than women without children. When employers do hire women with children, they tend to offer a lower salary than they do to women without children. In contrast, men with children do not suffer a penalty compared to men without children (The American Association of University Women 2014: 9). Women are perceived as less dedicated to their work after having children because employers believe that they will be distracted by their home lives. In fact, women are more likely than men to stay home with sick children, but they are also concerned about staying home with a sick child because they do not know how it will affect their jobs or wages. (Glynn 2014). Considering that women earn less than men and workers do not have the right to paid sick leave in the United States, it makes economic sense for women to stay at home and take care of sick children.

### **7.1.3 Working Hours**

In 2012, 26.3% of women in the labor force worked part-time which is less than 35 hours per week. In comparison, 13.3% of men in the labor force worked part-time (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2014: 76-78). In general, women work fewer hours per week than men. On average, women worked 35.8 hours per week and men worked 40.8 hours per week in 2012 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2014: 79). Among women and men working full-time, men worked 35 minutes more per day than women. But when the time spent on taking care of the home and children is included, the time gap is different. Employed women with a child under 6 years old spent 47 more minutes per day caring for the child compared to the employed fathers. Women with older children spent 22 more minutes per day caring for the child. (Glynn 2014). Therefore, the reduction in women's working hours may be explained by the fact that women provide more unpaid care in the home, in the case of homes with children. Furthermore, as women earn less than men, it makes economic sense for men to continue working full-time, whereas women reduce their working hours.

#### **7.1.4 Occupational Segregation**

During the period 1950 through 2012, the percentage of all women in the labor force increased from 23.9% to 57.7% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2014: 11-12). Despite more women being employed outside the home, these figures obscure the fact that the sectors women work in have not changed in recent times. Women are more likely to work with other women in occupations traditionally held by women, aptly termed “pink collar ghettos”; occupations which are primarily low-paying and of low status (Oakley et al. 2011: 31). In 2012, women comprised 99.3% of dental hygienists, 97.9% of dental assistants, 98.1% of preschool and kindergarten teachers, 91.1% of teacher assistants, 92.8% of hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists, 88.1% of maids and housekeeping cleaners, 90.6% of registered nurses, and 95.3% of secretaries and administrative assistants. Examples of occupations with low percentages of women are firefighters (3.4%), pest control workers (4.7%), brick, block, and stone masons (0.1%), carpenters (1.6%), and electricians (1.8%) (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2014: 35-40).

Since women are disproportionately employed in human services jobs, tend to earn less than men, and are more likely to live below the poverty line, they are more dependent on government social services and more affected by cuts in these services. In 2012, 16.3% of women lived below the poverty line, whereas the figure was 13.6% for men (DeNavas-Walt et al. 2013: 14). Although most women in jobs that involve the delivery of human services are not directly employed by the government, “their employers often receive substantial government funding, and thus their jobs are, to varying degrees, dependent on the continuation of government subsidies” (Carroll 2014: 139-140). Moreover, women are the primary providers (and recipients) of social welfare services and, therefore, they are also more likely to lose their jobs if government funded programs are cut (Carroll 2014: 140).

According to public choice theory, public sector employees want to promote their own sector and tend to have different political preferences than people employed in the private sector. They want a bigger government and increased public expenditure because an increase in budgets may lead to “higher salaries, better working conditions, greater job security, more promotions, better pensions funds, and more perquisites, power, and prestige” (Blais et al. 1990: 382). For these reasons, public sector employees tend to vote for the left as candidates

and parties of the left are in favor of greater state intervention and higher public expenditures (Blais et al. 1990: 382-383). In fact, research has documented that private sector employees are approximately 15% more likely to vote for a right-wing party than a public sector employee (Rattsø and Sørensen 2013: 16).

In the United States, women are nearly 50% more likely to work in the public sector than men are. In 2011, 18.2% of women in the labor force worked in public sector jobs, whereas the figure for men was 12.4% (U.S. Department of Labor 2011: 1). Starting with Reagan who claimed that America's economic problems were caused by "excessive government spending, taxation, and an overregulated private enterprise sector" and, therefore, wanted to reduce taxes and cut social programs, the Republican Party has been the "greatest threat to the job security of public sector employees" (Blais et al. 1990: 385). Due to the fact that the Republican Party wants to cut back on big government (with the exception of defense) and the welfare state, rational self-interest may lead women to vote for the Democratic Party because they depend upon the public sector and any cuts will fall heavily on them.

## **7.2 Significance**

Despite the fact that the income gap has diminished, it is still very significant in explaining the gender gap in voting. My argument that women vote for the Democratic Party because they are on low incomes still holds, but it seems that the gender gap is driven by three types of women. First, women from lower-income groups vote for the Democratic Party because they rely on government assistance. Second, women who are economically autonomous from men vote for the Democratic Party because they are very likely to be employed in the public sector or in human services occupations. Third, women employed in higher-status and male-dominated occupations vote for the Democratic Party because they benefit the most from "specific legislation concerning job discrimination and affirmative action and court decisions mandating redress of pay inequities" (Huddy et al. 2008: 143-144). However, women who are on high incomes, earning \$200,000 and over per year, tend to vote for the Republican Party.

In terms of income, women's voting decisions are based on the rational choice approach to voting. Women conduct a cost-benefit analysis and match their individual preferences with

the Republican and Democratic party platforms. They vote for the Democratic Party because it is beneficial to their economic self-interests, i.e. they engage in pocketbook voting. If women's earnings continue to rise at the same slow pace as it has done previously, "it will take 44 years – or until 2058 – for women to finally reach pay parity" (Institute for Women's Policy Research 2015). Consequently, women's voting decisions in terms of income will not change in the near future.

In terms of occupational segregation, women's voting decisions are based on the sociological approach to voting. More women are employed in the public sector, excluding the armed forces, while there are more men employed in the private sector. People who are employed in the public sector want a reasonably healthy sector and, therefore, want more government spending. Thus, women vote for the Democratic Party because that party best reflects the interests of public sector employees. The more people employed in the public sector, the more people vote for the Democratic Party, whereas the Republican Party benefits from a reduced number of people employed in the public sector.

Based on the evaluation of why there is an income gap in the United States, women are mainly poorer because they have children and not necessarily because they are employed in low-income occupations. This creates a vicious spiral in the American labor force. It starts with the fact that women are overrepresented in low-earning fields and earn less than men. When they take time off from work after having children, the majority of women do it unpaid because women have no right to paid maternity leave in the U.S. and thereby it creates gaps in work experience and puts women behind in the promotion race. After they have children, women are seen as less dedicated workers. It is often women who stay at home to take care of ill family members because they earn less than men. Since workers in the U.S. are not entitled to paid sick leave, women take unpaid sick leave to take care of ill family members and thereby create further gaps in work experience. To take care of the home and family, women work fewer hours than men because it does not make economic sense for men to have reduced hours at work as women earn less than men. Ultimately, women with children find it difficult to rise beyond a certain point at work because they unconsciously contribute to the glass ceiling by having children. When women have children, they are seen as more dedicated to their family than their work. As a result, employers are more interested in hiring women

without children and if they hire women with children, they are often offered lower salaries. This brings women back to the starting point in which they earn less than men.

## 8 Marital Status

In this section, I will try to show the link between marital status and the gender gap. My main argument is that married people are more likely to vote for the Republican Party than unmarried people. To support this argument, I will show that the marriage gap is sustained over time by means of statistics from the last three presidential elections. The marriage gap in voting is the difference in vote choice between married and unmarried voters<sup>36</sup>. The marriage gap does not create the gender gap in voting, but it makes the gender gap much bigger as unmarried women lean so heavily toward the Democratic Party. Furthermore, I will outline the different explanations for the marriage gap and explain how they relate to my research question. Lastly, I will discuss how significant marital status is in relation to the gender gap. Fewer Americans are getting married and, therefore, marital status may have become less politically significant.

In the 2012 U.S. presidential election, the gap between married and unmarried voters was 21%. Married voters supported Romney over Obama by 10 percentage points, whereas unmarried voters favored Obama overwhelmingly by 32 percentage points. However, the gender characteristics of the marriage gap give a more accurate picture of how marital status affected men's and women's voting behavior. Whereas the marriage gap for men was 19%, the gap was particularly sizeable for women in 2012. There was a 23% jump between married and unmarried women. In addition, married men backed Romney by 18 percentage points and married women preferred Romney by 4 percentage points. By contrast, unmarried women preferred Obama by an enormous 42-point margin. Among unmarried men, Obama was favored by 20 percentage points (Gallup 2012).

The marriage gap in voting is not a new phenomenon as it first became apparent in the 1972 U.S. presidential election with a 15% voting difference. Unmarried voters have voted less Republican than married voters in every presidential election since 1972 (Weisberg 1987: 336), with the one exception of 1996 when married women favored President Bill Clinton by 4 percentage points (Hymowitz 2012). The 2004 and 2008 U.S. presidential elections also

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<sup>36</sup> Single, separated, divorced or widowed.



show a significant marriage gap compared to 2012. In 2004, the gap between married and unmarried voters was 20%, while the marriage gap was 21% in 2008<sup>37</sup> (Gallup 2012). These figures clearly help to illustrate that there is a marriage gap in American politics and it has been sustained over time.

## **8.1 Explanations<sup>38</sup>**

### **8.1.1 Influence**

The main explanation for the marriage gap is the act of getting married because the wife becomes politically assimilated to her husband's views. Even after controlling for other demographics<sup>39</sup>, marital status has proven to be a strong indicator of voting behavior (Dugan 2012). It is the transition into married life that results in a marriage gap because marriage brings many life changes, such as learning from one another and shared finances. Spouses are most frequently a person's main source of political discussion and family members are likely to try to persuade one another who to vote for. Each partner brings to the marriage his or her own political participation history and there is a desire for marital harmony rather than disharmony (Stoker and Jennings 1995: 422-423).

"The entry into marriage [...] creates new opportunities for husbands and wives to learn from and influence each other and thus either to encourage or discourage political involvement on the part of the other" (Stoker and Jennings 1995: 421). Therefore, it seems to follow that marital partners are more likely to vote the same because they adapt to each other after marriage, either directly as a result of the altered circumstances (resources are now shared) or indirectly through influence processes (Stoker and Jennings 1995: 422). However, research has documented that husbands exert more influence on their wives by pulling them rightwards than the wives influencing husbands (Jennings and Stoker 2001: 20).

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<sup>37</sup> See appendix 11, p. 81, for table on candidate support by marital status and gender 2004-2012.

<sup>38</sup> One explanation for the marriage gap in voting is that when people get married, they are more likely to buy a home. Homeownership is associated with voting Republican because owning property makes you worry about protecting it (Sailer 2012). However, I have not been able to prove it statistically and, therefore, I have excluded it as an explanation.

<sup>39</sup> A special multivariate statistical analysis found that marriage remains an important predictor of support for Romney vs. Obama even after controlling for age, race, income, gender, education, religiosity, region, and whether a voter has minor children.

Even though people seldom use politics as a criterion for selecting a partner, they tend to find like-minded spouses because of a selection process that brings them together in the first place, such as class, religion, and race. If the spouses do not attempt to influence each other, couple similarity increases automatically over time because the spouses react to common experiences and shared influences (Jennings and Stoker 2001: 10). Moreover, marital duration increases pair agreement because the spouses become more influential due to three reasons. First, when a couple enters a more settled period, usually in their middle years, they are subject to fewer new external influences. Second, spouses may become more influential in the later years of marriage because their attitudes are more mature and meaningful political views in contrast to their views they articulated in their younger years. Third, as spouses become more important in the lives of their partner, they can exert more political influence (Jennings and Stoker 2001: 19).

As marriage influences voting behavior, divorce or widowhood ought to support this explanation by changes in voting behavior. In 2012, 54% of married voters supported Romney, while 40% of divorced voters and 45% of widowed voters supported Romney<sup>40</sup> (Dugan 2012). These figures clearly indicate that divorce and widowhood make people more Democratic, whereas marriage tends to make people more Republican. Divorce or Widowhood typically forces people to undergo an adjustment in their personal lives, both emotionally and in terms of their lifestyle. This creates a disruption in a person's political life (Stoker and Jennings 1995: 430).

### **8.1.2 Income**

Income affects the marriage gap because people tend to share finances when they get married. In general, married couples have higher family incomes than unmarried people and care more about their pocketbooks and security than reproductive issues (Weisberg 1987: 339). Higher family incomes are generally associated with voting for the Republican Party, in part because married couples are more financially stable and, therefore, less reliant on government assistance (Weisberg 1987: 342). Furthermore, marriage tends to redistribute wealth from

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<sup>40</sup> See appendix 12, p. 82, for table on candidate support among unmarried voters 2012.

men to women because men, on average, have higher incomes than women do<sup>41</sup>. Therefore, marriage may be seen as a contract under which men transfer resources to women in exchange for sex and access to children and as a result, married women become less likely to favor redistributive policies (Edlund and Pande 2002: 922-923). On the other hand, unmarried people tend to be limited to a single income. Given that women earn less than men, unmarried women experience lower levels of economic security. Lower incomes are generally associated with voting for the Democratic Party, in part because single women favor government support and progressive economic policies (Edlund and Pande 2002: 920-921).

### 8.1.3 Age

Age and marriage are correlated because older people are more likely to be married than younger people. In 2012, 65% of Americans aged 50 to 64 years were married, whereas 61% of Americans between 30 and 49 years were married. However, only 58% of Americans aged 65 years and older were married. The lower figure for Americans aged 65 years and older is likely to be the result of widowhood (Dugan 2012). Furthermore, the median age of first marriage has changed in the United States. In 1960, men got married at 22.8 years old and women at 20.3 years old. This is in stark contrast to 2010 where men got married at 28.7 years old and women at 26.5 years old. This change likely reflects that women are pursuing education and careers before getting married. Therefore, women in their twenties are most independent from men and they prefer more untraditional relationships (Elliot et al. 2012: 11).

Older people tend to vote for the Republican Party, while younger people tend to vote for the Democratic Party. In 2012, voters under 30 years preferred Obama over Romney by 24 percentage points, while voters aged 65 and older supported Romney over Obama by 8 percentage points<sup>42</sup> (Gallup 2012). In the United States, senior citizens – those aged over 65 – have been moving further rightwards in recent years, in part because 85% of those aged 65 and older are white people, while younger age groups are more diverse. Members of the Republican Party have more conservative values. On the other hand, they are absolutely committed to social security pensions and Medicare (Jones 2014). The difference in candidate

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<sup>41</sup> See chapter 7, p. 35, on income and occupation.

<sup>42</sup> See appendix 13, p. 82, for table on candidate support by age 2012.

support by age suggests that age is only a better determinant than marriage until people get married.

#### **8.1.4 Religiosity**

Married people tend to be more religious and religious people are more likely to vote for the Republican Party, in part because Republicans are seen as promoting a more traditional type of relationship and traditional values. They promote a family as consisting of a husband and wife with two or more children (Zengerle 2012). In 2012, highly religious and married voters supported Romney over Obama by a huge 36-point margin. Among moderately religious and married voters, Romney's support was weaker, but he beat Obama by 14 percentage points. However, Obama performed better against Romney among unmarried voters within the categories moderately religious and highly religious. Moderately religious and unmarried voters supported Obama over Romney by 19 percentage points. Even among unmarried voters who were highly religious Obama performed better than Romney by 6 percentage points<sup>43</sup> (Dugan 2012). These results suggest that religion alone cannot explain the marriage gap in voting. But the results do not take into consideration that African-Americans (86%) tend to be more religious than white people (65%) and that the majority of African-Americans vote for the Democratic Party (Winn 2011).

#### **8.1.5 African-Americans and Hispanics**

African-Americans and Hispanics are less likely to marry than white people are. In 1960, 9% of African-Americans aged 25 and older had never been married compared with 8% of white people (Wang and Parker 2014). Because of societal equalities and an increase in African-American men's interracial marriage rates, there has been a decline in African-American women's marriage rates (Elliot et al. 2012: 4). In 2012, 36% of African-Americans had never been married, whereas only 16% of white people had never been married. Among Hispanics, the share has doubled since 1980, from 12% to 26% (Wang and Parker 2014). Earlier, the median age of first marriage for African-Americans was similar to that of white people, but the trend has reversed and the median age of first marriage has risen substantially more for

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<sup>43</sup> See appendix 14, p. 82, for table on candidate support by marital status and religiosity 2012.

African-Americans than for white people. In 2010, the median age of first marriage for African-American men was 30.7 years, while it was 30 years for African-American women (Elliot et al. 2012: 13), in part because of worsening economic prospects for African-American men in the postwar period (Elliot et al. 2012: 7).

Given that more than 9 out of 10 African-Americans and 7 out of 10 Hispanics voted for Obama in 2012, the marriage effect may be confined to white people (MacManus 2014: 82). In 2012, 68% of married non-whites voted for Obama, while the figure for unmarried non-whites was 80%, thereby creating a gap of 12 percentage points<sup>44</sup>. However, the gap between unmarried and married white people voting for Obama was 11 percentage points (Dugan 2012). Therefore, marriage seems to be insignificant in terms of voting behavior for married non-whites because the gaps between unmarried and married people within the different ethnic groups are nearly the same. Consequently, married women are more likely to be white.

#### **8.1.6 Children**

Married people are more likely to have or to expect children and having a child makes a voter 10 percentage points less likely to vote for the Democratic Party. When people have children, their values change (Edlund and Pande 2002: 952). In 2012, 54% of married voters with children voted for Romney, whereas 53% of unmarried voters with children voted for Obama (CNN 2012). This indicates that children do not have an effect on voting behavior for married people. Instead, these results suggest that income may be an underlying motive. With only one income, single mothers are more dependent on government assistance and, therefore, vote for the Democratic Party. In addition, more than 30% of single mothers are Hispanic and 28% are African-American; two groups in which the majority are Democrats (Hymowitz 2012). In 2012, 56% of mothers voted for Obama (CNN 2012). However, children may have acted as an intervening factor between marital status and political orientation in the past. More children were born out of wedlock in 2012 compared to 1980. Whereas 18.4% of all births were out of wedlock in 1980, the figure has more than doubled to 40.7% in 2012 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2015: 7).

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<sup>44</sup> See appendix 15, p. 83, for table on candidate support by marital status and ethnic group 2012.

## 8.2 Significance

The decisive factor of the marriage gap is being married. Marriage reorders women's political preferences because of the many life changes included in the transition into married life. Changes like shared finances, learning from one another, and the likelihood of having children. But without being married, these changes would not take place and, therefore, marriage influences voting patterns to such a great extent that it cannot be attributed solely to common demographics among married people. Generally, people who are married are more likely to be older, be white, be more religious, have children, and have higher family incomes which are all factors that tend to make people more conservative and more likely to vote for the Republican Party.

However, current trends show that fewer Americans are getting married and that the marriage rate has declined to a historic low in the United States, thereby affecting the gender gap by widening the gap between men and women. Actually, conservatives may be more likely to get married and the marriage gap has increased because more progressive Americans are deciding not to get married. In 1960, 72% of Americans over the age of 18 were married, whereas this was true of only 51% of American adults in 2010 (Hawley 2015: 131). Even though the marriage gap in voting is not new, the number of single women is new. There are 89 unmarried men for every 100 unmarried women (McDonnell 2012). This decline in marriage should be a major concern for the Republican Party as it has been accelerating in recent years. Therefore, the gap between married and unmarried voters could become equally important as the gender gap in elections.

In terms of marital status, married women's voting decisions are based on the sociological approach to voting. Early in life, women may have been influenced by the partisanship of their parents, but once they marry, their partisanship changes. Concerned with protecting traditional family, married women vote for the Republican Party because that party promotes traditional values and relationships. The more people are married, the more people vote for the Republican Party, whereas the Democratic Party will benefit from declining rates of marriage. Conversely, unmarried women's voting decisions are based on the rational choice approach to voting. Since more children are born out of wedlock than previously, a higher

percentage of African-Americans and Hispanics are unmarried, and women tend to earn less than men, the majority of unmarried women vote for the Democratic Party because it is beneficial to their economic self-interest.

## 9 Conclusion

I will now sum up the conclusions I have reached in this thesis and provide a final answer to the research question. My research question was: *Why was there a significant gender gap in the 2012 U.S. presidential election?* The objective was to investigate the explanations for the gender gap and thereby reach an understanding of the motives for men's and women's political preferences in the 2012 election.

The research question was empirically investigated through the quantitative research method in which statistical data was interpreted to explain the gender gap. I identified two explanations for the gender gap in the 2012 election and four explanations for the gender gap in general. I chose to investigate five of the explanations in which I gathered the two explanations concerning the marriage gap in voting in one chapter. In addition, to put my findings into context, I used three theoretical approaches as a foundation to analyze the voting behavior of men and women. They were the sociological approach to voting, the party identification approach to voting, and the rational choice approach to voting.

First, in the chapter "War on Women" my findings suggested that the majority of women in the 2012 election disassociated themselves from the missteps and extreme statements of Mitt Romney and other Republicans. Women feared that the social safety net was in danger and thereby their economic well-being. These incidents handed the Democratic Party a weapon to use against Romney in the battle for women's votes. Therefore, Obama's support of women's rights became one of the major themes in his campaign. Women voters were offered a clear choice on women's issues, namely the outdated perspective of Romney or the contemporary perspective of Obama. Since the values and interests of the average American woman in 2012 had changed significantly in comparison to the values and interests of the average American woman in 1980, she opted for Obama and his stance on women's issues.

Second, in the chapter "Changing Politics of Men" my findings indicated that the reason why men left the Democratic Party to vote for the Republican Party in the 1980 election was a mix of interrelated incidents. Many men, in particular white men, recalled the stability of the



1950s America through rose-colored glasses. The gap between how things had been and how they were turning out was widest for them. During his term, President Carter had not been able to fix the American economy, national security issues, or the loss of jobs for men in the manufacturing sector. These were top issues for men in the 1980 election. Since the late 1960s, the Democratic Party had been so focused on minority rights that they forgot about white men. As a result, white men no longer saw a future in liberalism, but they found in Ronald Reagan a future that could be theirs. Compared to Carter, Reagan possessed all the qualities white men yearned for in a president. He was very masculine, tough in his policies, and he saw what men could become. When men chose to shift party identification, women chose not to follow them to the Republican Party.

Third, in the chapter “Income and Occupation” my findings suggested that women vote for the Democratic Party because they earn less than men. The fact that women earn less than men is primarily a result of occupational choices. Women are more likely to be employed in human services jobs and in the public sector which tend to pay less than jobs in the private sector. The majority of men occupy jobs in the private sector. Moreover, women are often subject to discrimination because of the “glass ceiling”. When women take time out to start a family and work fewer hours than men, it puts them behind in the career race. Because the majority of people in the low-income groups are women who tend to be dependent on government assistance, they are more favorable towards the policies of the Democratic Party.

Fourth, in the chapter “Marital Status” my findings indicated that married Americans vote for the Republican Party because their values match the values of the Republicans. The Republican Party represents a more conservative and traditional image of a family which consists of a husband, a wife and children. My findings also indicated that it is the transition into married life that changes a person’s political preferences, but the husband exerts more influence on the wife’s political preferences. However, married people are more likely to be white, be older, be more religious, and have higher incomes than unmarried people. They are demographic groups that traditionally vote for the Republican Party. In contrast, a large number of unmarried women are single mothers and single mothers are more likely to be younger, be poorer, and belong to an ethnic minority than married women are. All these

groups went Democratic in the 2012 election. But because marriage is on the decline, the marriage gap received more attention in the 2012 election than in previous elections.

In the literature review, I expected that the answer to my research question would be a result of marital status, but after the analysis of the different explanations for the gender gap, I have come to realize that I was wrong in my expectation. The gender gap in the 2012 U.S. presidential election was a result of the changed profile of women. Women had different interests and values in 2012 than in past elections and, therefore, they decided the outcome of the election. However, they did not vote as members of a social group, but individualistically which is consistent with Anthony Downs's rational choice approach to voting. Women's voting decisions were based on cost-benefit analyses where they matched their individual issue preferences with the party platforms of the Republicans and the Democrats. But this does not rule out that individual preferences may be determined by American women's position in society.

The gender gap has definitely shaped American politics as presidential candidates have to take notice of women's issues if they hope to win an election because women vote at higher rates than men. But elections are generally profoundly gendered in the United States. Most obviously, the majority of presidential candidates are men, but the majority of campaign strategists and consultants are also men. Likewise, gendered language characterizes American politics. Most often metaphors and analogies are drawn from the masculine domains of war and sports (Carroll and Fox 2014: 5-6). Americans even have gendered expectations about the qualities of candidates as they want their leaders to be tough, dominant, and assertive. These qualities are much more associated with masculinity than femininity. Finally, the strategies that candidates employ to reach out to the American public are gendered. Candidates strategize about the way they should present themselves to voters of the same sex and voters of the opposite sexes. Even when gender is not explicitly acknowledged, it operates in the background and affects American voters' assumptions about the candidates (Carroll and Fox 2014: 7-8).

## **9.1 A Look Toward the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election**

Women voters will most likely play an interesting and important role in the 2016 election. Early polls show that Republican presidential candidate, Donald Trump, has a 70% disapproval rating among women (Newport and Saad 2016). It seems that Trump has a “woman problem” even though he argues against changes to Social Security and for health care coverage for the poor. Furthermore, he has also taken a softer stand on Planned Parenthood in which he points out that “the abortion provider provides a lot of other important health services to women” (Cadei 2016). Therefore, when it comes to female voters, it may be Trump himself that is influencing the female vote.

On the other hand, Democratic presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton, is talking about being a woman and appealing to women voters which may weaken her support among men, but it may also draw more female support (Cadei 2016). Clinton has focused this campaign much more on women’s issues, such as equal pay and reproductive issues, than she did in the 2008 election (Milligan 2016). Also, the latest round of polls suggests that the gender gap in the 2016 election may be even bigger than in any modern election. Women favored Clinton by 11 percentage points, while men favored Trump by 7 percentage points (Kurtzleben 2016). Therefore, the gender gap has all the potential to be the driving factor in the 2016 election. Even though Clinton may not become President, she has already made history by becoming the first woman nominee of a major political party in the United States. As she stated at the Democratic National Convention:

What an incredible honor that you have given me. And I can’t believe we just put the biggest crack in that glass ceiling yet. [...] And if there are any little girls out there who stayed up late to watch me, let me just say: I may become the first woman president, but one of you is next. (“Biggest Crack in Glass Ceiling Yet” 2016).

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## Appendix 1

Table 1: The gender gap in support of the winning presidential candidate 1972-2012

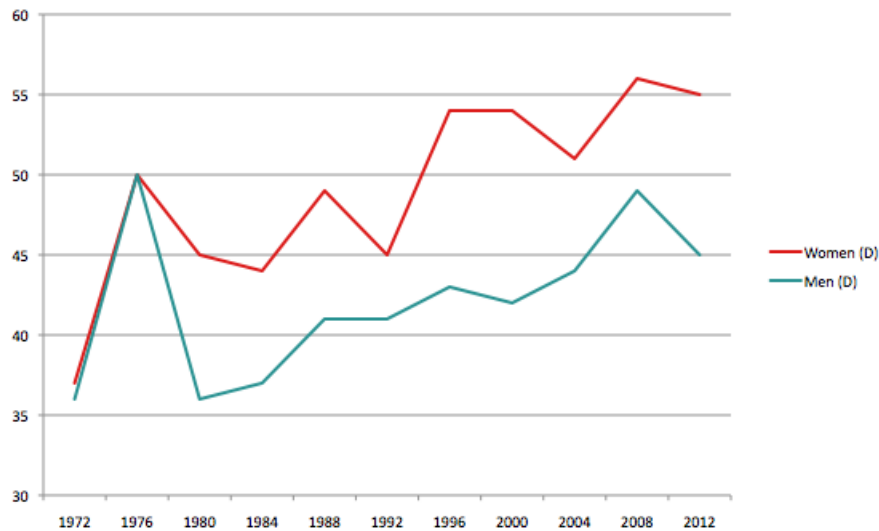
<b>Year</b>	<b>Presidential Candidates</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Gender Gap (Percentage Points)</b>
<b>2012</b>	Obama (D)	55%	45%	10 pts.
	Romney (R)	44%	52%	
<b>2008</b>	Obama (D)	56%	49%	7 pts.
	McCain (R)	43%	48%	
<b>2004</b>	Bush (R)	48%	55%	7 pts.
	Kerry (D)	51%	44%	
<b>2000</b>	Bush (R)	43%	53%	10 pts.
	Gore (D)	54%	42%	
	Nader (Green)	2%	3%	
<b>1996</b>	Clinton (D)	54%	43%	11 pts.
	Dole (R)	38%	44%	
	Perot (Reform)	7%	10%	
<b>1992</b>	Clinton (D)	45%	41%	4 pts.
	Bush (R)	37%	38%	
	Perot (Reform)	17%	21%	
<b>1988</b>	Bush (R)	50%	57%	7 pts.
	Dukakis (D)	49%	41%	
<b>1984</b>	Reagan (R)	56%	62%	6 pts.
	Mondale (D)	44%	37%	
<b>1980</b>	Reagan (R)	47%	55%	8 pts.
	Carter (D)	45%	36%	
	Anderson (I)	7%	7%	
<b>1976</b>	Carter (D)	50%	50%	0 pts.
	Ford (R)	48%	48%	
<b>1972</b>	Nixon (R)	61%	62%	1 pts.
	McGovern (D)	37%	36%	

Sources: adapted from The New York Times (2008) and Center for American Women and Politics (2012)

It is important to take into consideration that in the years 1948, 1968, 1980, 1992, 1996, and 2000 there was a third party candidate that got a big percentage of the vote and thereby affect the results for the Democratic and the Republican candidates.

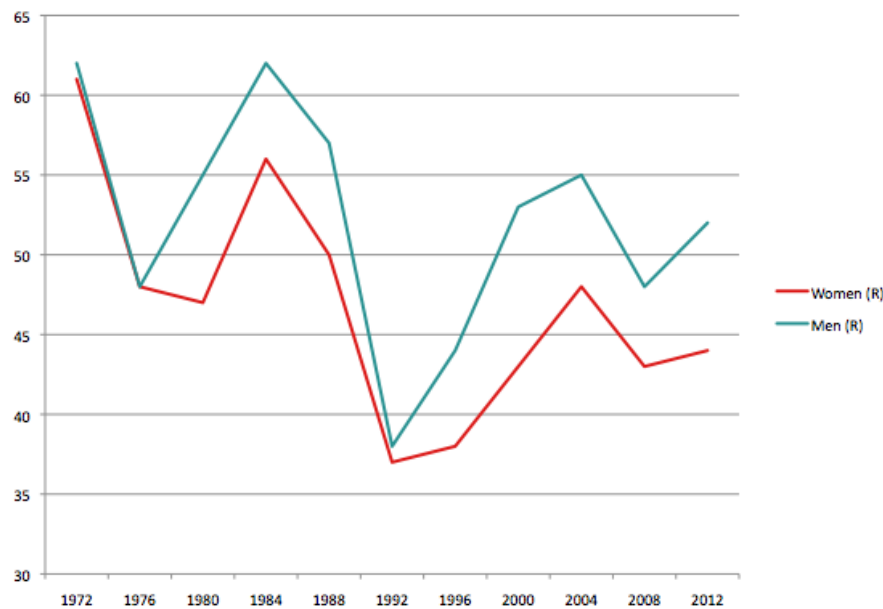
## Appendix 2

Figure 1: The gender gap for the Democratic presidential candidate 1972-2012



Sources: adapted from The New York Times (2008) and Center for American Women and Politics (2012)

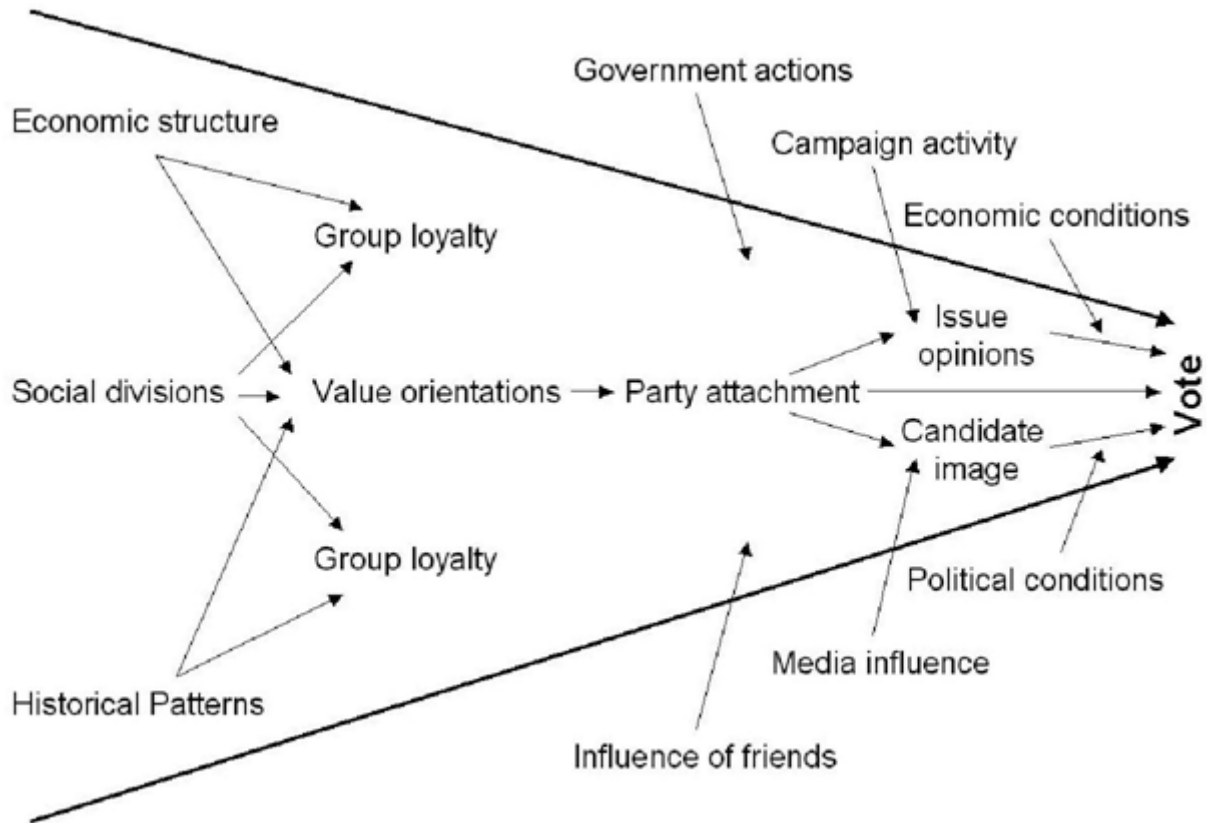
Figure 2: The gender gap for the Republican presidential candidate 1972-2012



Sources: adapted from The New York Times (2008) and Center for American Women and Politics (2012)

### Appendix 3

Figure 3: The funnel of causality



Source: Jakobsen (2013)

### Appendix 4

Table 2: Population of women and ethnic groups 1980 and 2012

	White	African-American	Hispanic	Asian
<b>1980</b>	99.8 million	14 million	7.3 million	1.9 million
<b>% of population</b>	44.1%	6.2%	3.2%	0.8%
<b>2012</b>	125.3 million	22.5 million	26 million	9.4 million
<b>% of population</b>	39.8%	7.1%	8.3%	3%

Source: adapted from National Center for Health Statistics (2012) and U.S. Census Bureau (2016)

## Appendix 5

Table 3: White male and female presidential voting 1948-2012

<b>Year</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Republican Advantage</b>	<b>Democratic % of Vote</b>	<b>Republican % of Vote</b>	<b>Independent % of Vote</b>
<b>1948</b>	Male	1.1	47.4	48.5	4.1
	Female	5.4	43.4	48.8	7.8
<b>1952</b>	Male	15.2	41.9	57.1	-
	Female	19.4	40.3	59.7	-
<b>1956</b>	Male	13.7	42.8	56.5	-
	Female	29.6	35.2	64.8	-
<b>1960</b>	Male	-0.2	49.9	49.7	-
	Female	11.3	44.2	55.5	-
<b>1964</b>	Male	-11.8	55.8	44.0	-
	Female	-16.0	57.9	41.9	-
<b>1968</b>	Male	14.1	33.0	47.1	19.9
	Female	13.0	37.7	50.7	11.7
<b>1972</b>	Male	35.7	31.2	66.9	-
	Female	37.3	30.8	68.1	-
<b>1976</b>	Male	5.0	47.0	52.0	-
	Female	7.3	46.1	53.4	-
<b>1980</b>	Male	29.0	32.2	61.2	6.5
	Female	14.2	39.2	53.4	7.3
<b>1984</b>	Male	37.3	30.9	68.2	-
	Female	26.7	36.4	63.1	-
<b>1988</b>	Male	29.0	34.9	63.9	-
	Female	14.8	42.2	57.0	-
<b>1992</b>	Male	4.6	36.3	40.9	22.8
	Female	1.9	39.6	41.5	18.9
<b>1996</b>	Male	12.2	38.3	50.5	11.2
	Female	-4.5	48.3	43.8	7.9
<b>2000</b>	Male	26.5	35.2	61.7	3.1
	Female	3.4	47.1	50.5	2.4
<b>2004</b>	Male	26.1	36.8	62.9	-
	Female	12.7	43.5	56.2	-
<b>2008</b>	Male	16.0	41.0	57.0	-
	Female	7.0	46.0	53.0	-
<b>2012</b>	Male	27.0	35.0	62.0	-
	Female	14.0	42.0	56.0	-

Sources: adapted from David Kuhn (2007), The New York Times (2008), and CNN (2012)

It is important to take into consideration that in the years 1948, 1968, 1980, 1992, 1996, and 2000 there was a third party candidate that got a big percentage of the vote and thereby affect the results for the Democratic and the Republican candidates.

## Appendix 6

### “Evil Empire Speech” by Ronald Reagan (1983, 8 March)

[1] President Reagan: Thank you...[Applause]...Thank you very much...Thank you very much...[Applause subsides]...Thank you very much...and, Reverend Clergy all, and Senator Hawkins, distinguished members of the Florida congressional delegation, and all of you:

[2] I can't tell you how you have warmed my heart with your welcome. I'm delighted to be here today.

[3] Those of you in the National Association of Evangelicals are known for your spiritual and humanitarian work. And I would be especially remiss if I didn't discharge right now one personal debt of gratitude. Thank you for your prayers. Nancy and I have felt their presence many times in many ways. And believe me, for us they've made all the difference.

[4] The other day in the East Room of the White House at a meeting there, someone asked me whether I was aware of all the people out there who were praying for the President. And I, had to say, “Yes, I am. I've felt it. I believe in intercessory prayer.” But I couldn't help but say to that questioner after he'd asked the question that—or at least say to them that if sometimes when he was praying he got a busy signal, it was just me in there ahead of him. [Laughter] I think I understand how Abraham Lincoln felt when he said, “I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go.”

[5] From the joy and the good feeling of this conference, I go to a political reception. Now, [Laughter] I don't know why, but that bit of scheduling reminds me of a story—[Laughter]—which I'll share with you:

[6] An evangelical minister and a politician arrived at Heaven's gate one day together. And St. Peter, after doing all the necessary formalities, took them in hand to show them where their quarters would be. And he took them to a small, single room with a bed, a chair, and a table and said this was for the clergyman. And the politician was a little worried about what might be in store for him. And he couldn't believe it then when St. Peter stopped in front of a beautiful mansion with lovely grounds... many servants, and told him that these would be his quarters.

[7] And he couldn't help but ask, he said, “But wait, how—there's something wrong—how do I get this mansion while that good and holy man only gets a single room?” And St. Peter said, “You have to understand how things are up here. We've got thousands and thousands of clergy. You're the first politician who ever made it.” [Laughter and Applause]

[8] But I don't want to contribute to a stereotype. [Laughter] So I tell you there are a great many God-fearing, dedicated, noble men and women in public life, present company included. And yes, we need your help to keep us ever mindful of the ideas and the principles that brought us into the public arena in the first place. The basis of those ideals and principles is... a commitment to freedom and personal liberty that, itself is grounded in the much deeper realization that freedom prospers only where the blessings of God are avidly (mispronounces and corrects himself) sought and humbly accepted.

[9] The American experiment in democracy rests on this insight. Its discovery was the great triumph of our Founding Fathers, voiced by William Penn when he said: “If we will not be governed by God, we must be governed by tyrants.” Explaining the inalienable rights of men, Jefferson said, “The God who gave us life, gave us liberty at the same time.” And it was George Washington who said that “of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports.”

[10] And finally, that shrewdest of all observers of American democracy, Alexis de Tocqueville, put it eloquently, after he had gone on a search for the secret of America’s greatness and genius—and he said: “Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness did I understand the greatness and the genius of America. America is good. And if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.” [Applause]

[11] Well, I’m... [Applause] ..Well, I’m pleased to be here today with you who are keeping America great by keeping her good. Only through your work and prayers and those of millions of others can we hope to survive this perilous century and keep alive this experiment in liberty, this last, best hope of man.

[12] I want you to know that this administration is motivated by a political philosophy that sees the greatness of America in you, her people, and in your families, churches, neighborhoods, communities—the institutions that foster and nourish values like concern for others and respect for the rule of law under God.

[13] Now, I don’t have to tell you that this puts us in opposition to, or at least out of step with, a—a prevailing attitude of many who have turned to a modern-day secularism, discarding the tried and time-tested values upon which our very civilization is based. No matter how well intentioned, their value system is radically different from that of most Americans. And while they proclaim that they’re freeing us from superstitions of the past, they’ve taken upon themselves the job of superintending us by government rule and regulation. Sometimes their voices are louder than ours, but they are not yet a majority. [Applause]

[14] An example of that vocal superiority is evident in a controversy now going on in Washington. And since I’m involved, I’ve been waiting to hear from the parents of young America. How far are they willing to go in giving to government their prerogatives as parents?

[15] Let me state the case as briefly and simply as I can. An organization of citizens, sincerely motivated, deeply concerned about the increase in illegitimate births and abortions involving girls well below the age of consent, some time ago established a nationwide network of clinics to offer help to these girls and, hopefully, alleviate this situation. Now, again, let me say, I do not fault their intent. However, in their well-intentioned effort, these clinics decided to provide advice and birth control drugs and devices to underage girls without the knowledge of their parents.

[16] For some years now, the federal government has helped with funds to subsidize these clinics. In providing for this, the Congress decreed that every effort would be made to maximize parental participation. Nevertheless, the drugs and devices are prescribed without getting parental consent or giving notification after they’ve done so. Girls termed “sexually

active”—and that has replaced the word “promiscuous”—are given this help in order to prevent illegitimate worth/birth (quickly corrects himself) eh or abortion.

[17] Well, we have ordered clinics receiving federal funds to notify the parents such help has been given. [Applause] One of the nation’s leading newspapers has created the term “squeal rule” in editorializing against us for doing this, and we’re being criticized for violating the privacy of young people. A judge has recently granted an injunction against an enforcement of our rule. I’ve watched TV panel shows discuss this issue, seen columnists pontificating on our error, but no one seems to mention morality as playing a part in the subject of sex. [Applause]

[18] Is all of Judeo-Christian tradition wrong? Are we to believe that something so sacred can be looked upon as a purely physical thing with no potential for emotional and psychological harm? And isn’t it the parents’ right to give counsel and advice to keep their children from making mistakes that may affect their entire lives? [Slight crescendo of voice and emphasis—Long Applause]

[19] Many of us in government would like to know what parents think about this intrusion in their family by government. We’re going to fight in the courts. The right of parents and the rights of family take precedence over those of Washington-based bureaucrats and social engineers. [Applause]

[20] But the fight against parental notification is really only one example of many attempts to water down traditional values and even abrogate the original terms of American democracy. Freedom prospers when religion is vibrant and the rule of law under God is acknowledged. [Applause] When our founding fathers passed the First Amendment, they sought to protect churches from government interference. They never intended to construct a wall of hostility between government and the concept of religious belief itself. [Murmurs of agreement, Applause]

[21] The evidence of this permeates our history and our government. The Declaration of Independence mentions the Supreme Being no less than four times. “In God We Trust” is engraved on our coinage. The Supreme Court opens its proceedings with a religious invocation. And the members of Congress open their sessions with a prayer. I just happen to believe the schoolchildren of the United States are entitled to the same privileges as [Continues over applause] Supreme Court Justices and Congressmen.

[22] Last year, I sent the Congress a constitutional amendment to restore prayer to public schools. Already this session, there’s growing bipartisan support for the amendment, and I am calling on the Congress to act speedily to pass it and to let our children pray. [Applause]

[23] Perhaps some of you, read recently about the Lubbock school case, where a judge actually ruled that it was unconstitutional for a school district to give equal treatment to religious and nonreligious student groups, even when the group meetings were being held during the students’ own time. The First Amendment never intended to require government to discriminate against religious speech. [Applause]

[24] Senators Denton and Hatfield have proposed legislation in the Congress on the whole question of prohibiting discrimination against religious forms of student speech. Such legislation could go far to restore freedom of religious speech for public school students. And



I hope the Congress considers these bills quickly. And with your help, I think it's possible we could also get the constitutional amendment through the Congress this year. [Applause]

[25] More than a decade ago, a Supreme Court decision literally wiped off the books of fifty states, statutes protecting the rights of unborn children. Abortion on demand now takes the lives of up to one and a half million unborn children a year. Human life legislation ending this tragedy will someday pass the Congress, and you and I must never rest until it does.

[Applause] Unless and until it can be proven that the unborn child is not a living entity, then its right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness must be protected. [Applause]

[26] You... You may remember that when abortion on demand began, many, and indeed, I'm sure many of you, warned that the practice would lead to a decline in respect for human life, that the philosophical premises used to justify abortion on demand would ultimately be used to justify other attacks on the sacredness of human life—infanticide or mercy killing. Tragically enough, those warnings proved all too true. Only last year a court permitted the death by starvation of a handicapped infant.

[27] I have directed the Health and Human Services Department to make clear to every health care facility in the United States that the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 protects all handicapped persons against discrimination based on handicaps, including infants. [Applause] And we have taken the further step of requiring that each and every recipient of federal funds who provides health care... services to infants must post and keep posted in a conspicuous place a notice stating that “discriminatory failure to feed and care for handicapped infants in this facility is prohibited by federal law.” It also lists a twenty-four-hour; toll-free number so that nurses and others may report violations in time to save the infant's life. [Applause]

[28] In addition, recent legislation introduced by—in the Congress—by Representative Henry Hyde of Illinois not only increases restrictions on publicly financed abortions, it also addresses this whole problem of infanticide. I urge the Congress to begin hearings and to adopt legislation that will protect the right of life to all children, including the disabled or handicapped.

[29] Now, I'm sure that you must get discouraged at times, but there you've done better than you know, perhaps. There's a great spiritual awakening in America, a [Applause]...a renewal of the traditional values that have been the bedrock of America's goodness and greatness.

[30] One recent survey by a Washington-based research council concluded that Americans were far more religious than the people of other nations; 95 percent of those surveyed expressed a belief in God and a huge majority believed the Ten Commandments had real meaning in their lives, and another study has found that an overwhelming majority of Americans disapprove of adultery, teenage sex, pornography, abortion, and hard drugs, and this same study showed a deep reverence for the importance of family ties and religious belief.

[31] I [Applause]...I think the items that we've discussed here today must be a key part of the nation's political agenda. For the first time the Congress is openly and seriously debating and dealing with the prayer and abortion issues—and that's enormous progress right there. I repeat: America is in the midst of a spiritual awakening and a moral renewal. And with your biblical keynote, I say today, “Yes, let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream.”

[32] Now, [Applause]...obviously, much of this new political and social consensus I've talked about is based on a positive view of American history, one that takes pride in our country's accomplishments and record. But we must never forget that no government schemes are going to perfect man. We know that living in this world means dealing with what philosophers would call the phenomenology of evil or, as theologians would put it, the doctrine of sin.

[33] There is sin and evil in the world, and we're enjoined by Scripture and the Lord Jesus to oppose it with all our might. Our nation, too, has a legacy of evil with which it must deal. The glory of this land has been its capacity for transcending the moral evils of our past. For example, the long struggle of minority citizens...for equal rights, once a source of disunity and civil war is now a point of pride for all Americans. We must never go back. There is no room for racism, anti-Semitism, or other forms of ethnic and racial hatred in this country. [Long Applause]

[34] I know that you've been horrified, as have I, by the resurgence of some hate groups preaching bigotry and prejudice. Use the mighty voice of your pulpits and the powerful standing of your churches to denounce and isolate these hate groups in our midst. The commandment given us is clear and simple: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." [Applause]

[35] But whatever sad episodes exist in our past, any objective observer must hold a positive view of American history, a history that has been the story of hopes fulfilled and dreams made into reality. Especially in this century, America has kept alight the torch of freedom, but not just for ourselves, but for millions of others around the world.

[36] And this brings me to my final point today. During my first press conference as president, in answer to a direct question, I pointed out that, as good Marxist-Leninists, the Soviet leaders have openly and publicly declared that the only morality they recognize is that which will further their cause, which is world revolution. I think I should point out I was only quoting Lenin, their guiding spirit, who said in 1920 that they repudiate all morality that proceeds from supernatural ideas—that's their name for religion—or ideas that are outside class conceptions. Morality is entirely subordinate to the interests of class war. And everything is moral that is necessary for the annihilation of the old exploiting social order and for uniting the proletariat.

[37] Well, I think the refusal of many influential people to accept this elementary fact of Soviet doctrine illustrates an historical reluctance to see totalitarian powers for what they are. We saw this phenomenon in the 1930s. We see it too often today.

[38] This doesn't mean we should isolate ourselves and refuse to seek an understanding with them. I intend to do everything I can to persuade them of our peaceful intent, to remind them that it was the West that refused to use its nuclear monopoly in the forties and fifties for territorial gain and which now proposes 50 percent cut in strategic ballistic missiles and the elimination of an entire class of land-based, intermediate-range nuclear missiles. [Applause]

[39] At the same time, however, they must be made to understand: we will never compromise our principles and standards. We will never give away our freedom. We will never abandon our belief in God. [Long Applause] And we will never stop searching for a genuine peace, but

we can assure none of these things America stands for through the so-called nuclear freeze solutions proposed by some.

[40] The truth is that a freeze now would be a very dangerous fraud, for that is merely the illusion of peace. The reality is that we must find peace through strength. [Applause]

[41] I would a-[Applause continuing]...I would agree to a freeze if only we could freeze the Soviets' global desires. [Laughter, Applause] A freeze at current levels of weapons would remove any incentive for the Soviets to negotiate seriously in Geneva and virtually end our chances to achieve the major arms reductions which we have proposed. Instead, they would achieve their objectives through the freeze.

[42] A freeze would reward the Soviet Union for its enormous and unparalleled military buildup. It would prevent the essential and long overdue modernization of United States and allied defenses and would leave our aging forces increasingly vulnerable. And an honest freeze would require extensive prior negotiations on the systems and numbers to be limited and on the measures to ensure effective verification and compliance. And the kind of a freeze that has been suggested would be virtually impossible to verify. Such a major effort would divert us completely from our current negotiations on achieving substantial reductions. [Applause]

[43] I, a number of years ago, I heard a young father, a very prominent young man in the entertainment world, addressing a tremendous gathering in California. It was during the time of the cold war, and communism and our own way of life were very much on people's minds. And he was speaking to that subject. And suddenly, though, I heard him saying, "I love my little girls more than anything—" And I said to myself, "Oh, no, don't. You can't — don't say that." But I had underestimated him. He went on: "I would rather see my little girls die now; still believing in God, than have them grow up under communism and one day die no longer believing in God." [Applause]

[44] There were... There were thousands of young people in that audience. They came to their feet with shouts of joy. They had instantly recognized the profound truth in what he had said, with regard to the physical and the soul and what was truly important.

[45] Yes, let us pray for the salvation of all of those who live in that totalitarian darkness—pray they will discover the joy of knowing God. But until they do, let us be aware that while they preach the supremacy of the State, declare its omnipotence over individual man, and predict its eventual domination of all peoples on the earth, they are the focus of evil in the modern world.

[46] It was C.S. Lewis who, in his unforgettable "Screwtape Letters," wrote: "The greatest evil is not done now...in those sordid 'dens of crime' that Dickens loved to paint. It is...not even done in concentration camps and labor camps. In those we see its final result, but it is conceived and ordered; moved, seconded, carried and minuted in clear, carpeted, warmed, and well-lighted offices, by quiet men with white collars and cut fingernails and smooth-shaven cheeks who do not need to raise their voice."

[47] Well, because these "quiet men" do not "raise their voices," because they sometimes speak in soothing tones of brotherhood and peace, because, like other dictators before them, they're always making "their final territorial demand," some would have us accept them at

their word and accommodate ourselves to their aggressive impulses. But if history teaches anything, it teaches that simpleminded appeasement or wishful thinking about our adversaries is folly. It means the betrayal of our past, the squandering of our freedom.

[48] So, I urge you to speak out against those who would place the United States in a position of military and moral inferiority. You know, I've always believed that old Screwtape reserved his best efforts for those of you in the Church. So, in your discussions of the nuclear freeze proposals, I urge you to beware the temptation of pride—the temptation of blithely..uh..declaring yourselves above it all and label both sides equally at fault, to ignore the facts of history and the aggressive impulses of an evil empire, to simply call the arms race a giant misunderstanding and thereby remove yourself from the struggle between right and wrong and good and evil.

[49] I ask you to resist the attempts of those who would have you withhold your support for our efforts, this administration's efforts, to keep America strong and free, while we negotiate—real and verifiable reductions in the world's nuclear arsenals and one day, with God's help, their total elimination. [Applause]

[50] While America's military strength is important, let me add here that I've always maintained that the struggle now going on for the world will never be decided by bombs or rockets, by armies or military might. The real crisis we face today is a spiritual one; at root, it is a test of moral will and faith.

[51] Whittaker Chambers, the man whose own religious conversion made him a witness to one of the terrible traumas of our time, the Hiss-Chambers case, wrote that the crisis of the Western world exists to the degree in which the West is indifferent to God, the degree to which it collaborates in communism's attempt to make man stand alone without God. And then he said, for Marxism-Leninism is actually the second-oldest faith, first proclaimed in the Garden of Eden with the words of temptation, "Ye shall be as gods."

[52] The Western world can answer this challenge, he wrote, "but only provided that its faith in God and the freedom He enjoins is as great as communism's faith in Man."

[53] I believe we shall rise to the challenge. I believe that communism is another sad, bizarre chapter in human history whose last—last pages even now are being written. I believe this because the source of our strength in the quest for human freedom is not material, but spiritual. And because it knows no limitation, it must terrify and ultimately triumph over those who would enslave their fellow man. For in the words of Isaiah: "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no...might He increased strength. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary." [Applause]

[54] Yes, change your world. One of our founding fathers, Thomas Paine, said, "We have it within our power to begin the world over again." We can do it, doing together what no one church could do by itself.

[55] God bless you, and thank you very much. [Long Applause]

## Appendix 7

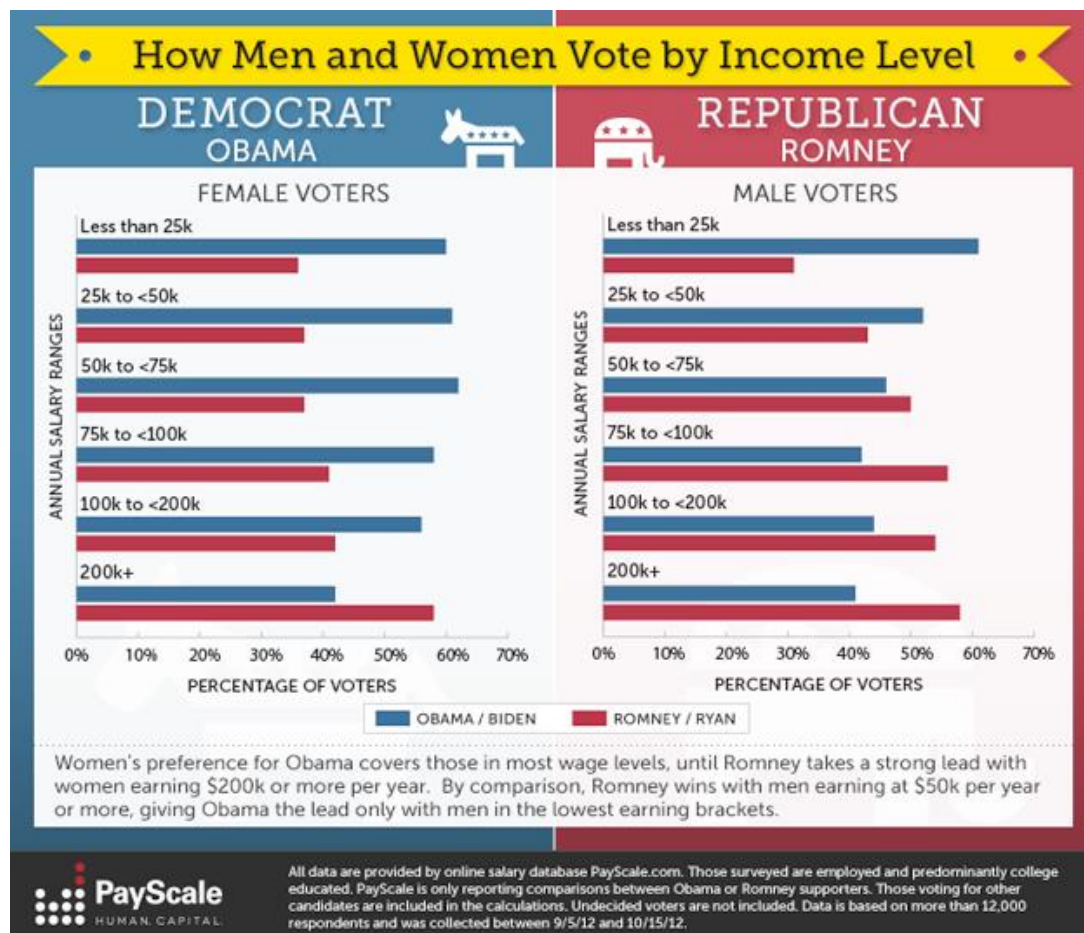
Table 4: Average hourly wages in manufacturing and minimum wage 1950-2012

Year	Average Hourly Wages	Inflation-Adjusted (2012 dollars)	Minimum Wage (2012 dollars)
1950	\$1.32	\$12.58	\$7.01
1960	\$2.14	\$16.60	\$7.59
1970	\$3.24	\$19.07	\$9.28
1980	\$7.17	\$19.98	\$8.46
1990	\$10.78	\$18.94	\$6.66
2000	\$14.30	\$19.07	\$6.90
2012	\$19.08	\$19.08	\$7.25

Sources: adapted from Trading Economic (2016) and U.S. Department of Labor (2012)

## Appendix 8

Figure 4: Vote by income and gender 2012



Source: Thompson (2012)

## Appendix 9

Table 5: Vote by income and party 1996-2008

<b>Year</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>&lt;\$15,000</b>	<b>\$15,000- 29,999</b>	<b>\$30,000- 49,999</b>	<b>\$50,000- 74,999</b>	<b>\$75,000- 99,999</b>	<b>\$100,000 &amp; over</b>
<b>2008</b>	Democrat	73%	60%	55%	48%	51%	49%
	Republican	25%	37%	43%	49%	48%	49%
<b>2004</b>	Democrat	63%	57%	50%	43%	45%	41%
	Republican	36%	42%	49%	56%	55%	58%
<b>2000</b>	Democrat	58%	54%	49%	46%	46%	43%
	Republican	38%	42%	48%	51%	52%	55%
<b>1996</b>	Democrat	60%	54%	49%	47%	45%	39%
	Republican	29%	37%	41%	46%	49%	55%

Source: adapted from Roper Center (1996, 2000, 2004, 2008)

## Appendix 10

Table 6: Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers 16 years and older, in current dollars, by gender 1980-2012

<b>Year</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women's earnings as a percentage of men's</b>
<b>1980</b>	\$201	\$313	64.2%
<b>1984</b>	\$265	\$392	67.6%
<b>1988</b>	\$315	\$449	70.2%
<b>1992</b>	\$380	\$501	75.8%
<b>1996</b>	\$418	\$557	75.0%
<b>2000</b>	\$493	\$641	76.9%
<b>2004</b>	\$573	\$713	80.4%
<b>2008</b>	\$638	\$798	79.9%
<b>2012</b>	\$691	\$854	80.9%

Source: adapted from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014), pp. 57-58

## Appendix 11

Table 7: Candidate support by marital status and gender 2012<sup>45</sup>

<b>2012</b>	<b>Barack Obama</b>	<b>Mitt Romney</b>	<b>Gap (percentage points)</b>
<b>Married</b>	45%	55%	-10
<b>Not married</b>	66%	34%	32
<b>Married men</b>	41%	59%	-18
<b>Unmarried men</b>	60%	40%	20
<b>Married women</b>	48%	52%	-4
<b>Unmarried women</b>	71%	29%	42

Source: adapted from Gallup (2012)

Table 8: Candidate support by marital status and gender 2008<sup>46</sup>

<b>2008</b>	<b>Barack Obama</b>	<b>John McCain</b>	<b>Gap (percentage points)</b>
<b>Married</b>	44%	56%	-12
<b>Not married</b>	65%	35%	30
<b>Married men</b>	42%	58%	-16
<b>Unmarried men</b>	63%	37%	26
<b>Married women</b>	47%	53%	-6
<b>Unmarried women</b>	66%	34%	32

Source: adapted from Gallup (2012)

Table 9: Candidate support by marital status and gender 2004<sup>47</sup>

<b>2004</b>	<b>John Kerry</b>	<b>George W. Bush</b>	<b>Gap (percentage points)</b>
<b>Married</b>	40%	60%	-20
<b>Not married</b>	60%	40%	20
<b>Married men</b>	39%	61%	-22
<b>Unmarried men</b>	55%	45%	10
<b>Married women</b>	42%	58%	-16
<b>Unmarried women</b>	64%	36%	28

Source: adapted from Gallup (2012)

<sup>45</sup> Actual vote outcome.

<sup>46</sup> Actual vote outcome.

<sup>47</sup> Actual vote outcome.

## Appendix 12

Table 10: Candidate support among unmarried voters 2012<sup>48</sup>

<b>2012</b>	<b>Barack Obama</b>	<b>Mitt Romney</b>	<b>Gap (percentage points)</b>
<b>Total not married</b>	56%	35%	21
<b>Domestic partnership</b>	62%	31%	31
<b>Single/Never married</b>	61%	30%	31
<b>Separated</b>	58%	34%	24
<b>Divorced</b>	51%	40%	11
<b>Widowed</b>	45%	45%	0

Source: adapted from Dugan (2012)

## Appendix 13

Table 11: Candidate support by age 2012<sup>49</sup>

<b>Age</b>	<b>Barack Obama</b>	<b>Mitt Romney</b>	<b>Gap (percentage points)</b>
<b>Under 30 years</b>	62%	38%	24
<b>30 to 49 years</b>	53%	47%	6
<b>50 to 64 years</b>	50%	50%	0
<b>65 and older</b>	46%	54%	-8
<b>50 and older</b>	49%	51%	-2

Source: adapted from Gallup (2012)

## Appendix 14

Table 12: Candidate support by marital status and religiosity 2012<sup>50</sup>

<b>2012</b>	<b>Barack Obama</b>	<b>Mitt Romney</b>	<b>Gap (percentage points)</b>
<b>Married</b>			
<b>Highly religious</b>	28%	64%	-36
<b>Moderately religious</b>	39%	53%	-14
<b>Not religious</b>	57%	36%	21
<b>Not married</b>			
<b>Highly religious</b>	49%	43%	6
<b>Moderately religious</b>	55%	36%	19
<b>Not religious</b>	64%	26%	38

Source: adapted from Dugan (2012)

<sup>48</sup> Registered voters.

<sup>49</sup> Actual vote outcome.

<sup>50</sup> Registered voters.



## Appendix 15

Table 13: Candidate support by marital status and ethnic group 2012<sup>51</sup>

<b>2012</b>	<b>Barack Obama</b>	<b>Mitt Romney</b>	<b>Gap (percentage points)</b>
<b>Married</b>			
<b>Non-Hispanic white</b>	34%	59%	-25
<b>Nonwhite</b>	68%	23%	45
<b>Not married</b>			
<b>Non-Hispanic white</b>	45%	45%	0
<b>Nonwhite</b>	80%	11%	69

Source: adapted from Dugan (2012)

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<sup>51</sup> Registered voters.