

The Ins Become the Outs: Investigating the Gender Gap in Supporting the MAGA Movement

Scholars have examined the rise of President Trump and the Make America Great Again movement, noting its tribal nature.¹ The primary purpose of this analysis is to investigate the gender gap in relation to the MAGA movement. Why are men drawn to MAGA more than women? Is gender the primary factor in explaining support for the MAGA movement? To lend understanding to these questions, this paper presents a theory that men may be attracted to MAGA in response to changing power dynamics. Traditional out groups and minorities, particularly women, have been gaining power in recent decades. The appeal of the MAGA movement may be a response to the ‘outs’ becoming ‘ins,’ while the ‘ins’ are becoming the ‘outs.’ MAGA is thus a vehicle for economic and societal challenges males have experienced in the United States in the twenty-first century.

This analysis begins with an overview of the characteristics of the MAGA movement. It then provides a brief history of the four waves of the feminist movement, which contributed to shifts in power between men and women throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The evidence presented in this section demonstrate while men still hold the majority of power positions, women have made clear strides in gaining access to that power structure. Next, it offers a theoretical framework by analyzing literature related to masculinity, and self-esteem. The data provided highlights obstacles that are often specific to male individuals. Next, gender is explored in the context of political ideology, party identification, and populism. The gender gap in voting is addressed, highlighting trends since 1980. The, this paper discusses factors that help explain the gender gap as it applies to MAGA. In conclusion, factors beyond gender that assist in explaining attraction to the movement are noted.

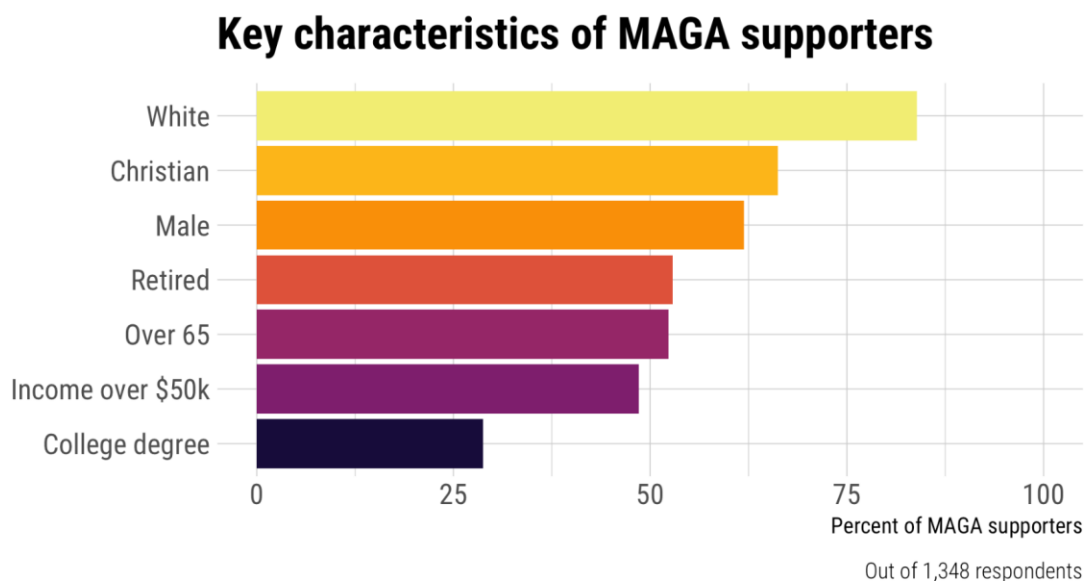
The MAGA Movement

The MAGA movement was officially established in 2015, when then candidate Donald Trump began his campaign for the U.S. presidency and used the phrase, “Make America Great Again.” Trump used the phrase during the summer of 2015 at the Republican National Convention. He filed a trademark for the phrase, which was granted in 2016.² Principles of the MAGA movement began well before the movement became attached to President Trump. For example, President Reagan used a similar phrase, “Let’s Make America Great Again,” and connected it to conservatism, in the 1980s. The phrase “Make American Great Again” implies there are problems in the U.S. that need to be fixed before American can be ‘great’ again. The MAGA movement often defines these problems as related to immigration, globalization, and multiculturalism. It emphasizes ‘America first’ government policies in terms of domestic, economic, foreign, and social policy.³ The MAGA movement is an example of populism.⁴

The MAGA agenda is outlined in the document *America First: A Return to Common Sense*. The agenda represented the 2024 Republican party platform. The preamble includes a lengthy discussion of what are identified as current problems in the U.S and it states, “America is now rocked by Raging Inflation, Open Borders, Rampant Crime, Attacks on our Children, and Global Conflict, Chaos, and Instability.”⁵ The document then lists twenty specific promises that range among domestic, economic, and foreign policies. The MAGA economic plan includes a pledge to increase manufacturing jobs, stop inflation, implement tax cuts for the working class, impose tariffs on countries that import products into the U.S., and expand domestic oil drilling. Examples of MAGA social policy include attention to K-12 and universities. Proposed actions in the document include cutting federal funding to schools that include certain curriculum, discontinuing gender related policies it labels as radical. Social policy also includes protecting the rights of gun owners, and policies designed to protect religious liberties.⁶ Foreign policy

assurances include reestablishing the strength of the U.S. military, building an iron dome missile defense shield over the country, and preventing World War III. Four of the twenty promises involve deportation and related migrant policy.

The MAGA movement is also associated with elements beyond policy. The movement asserts several suppositions. Most notable are the birtherism theory, which suggests former President Obama was not born in the U.S., replacement theory, asserting the Democratic party is seeking to replace U.S. voters with immigrants, and voter fraud, which claims the 2020 presidential election was fraudulent. Trump's popularity with his base since 2016 allowed the president significant influence with other Republican office holders and candidates. Traditional GOP members who spoke out against Trump often lost their own elections. Reuters points to thirty-nine occasions when Trump intimidated Republican officials.⁷



Graph 1. Demographics.

The data presented in Graph 1 are part of a panel study conducted by political scientists Rachel Blum and Christopher Sebastian Parker. The purpose of the study was to survey the attitudes and behaviors of individuals who labeled themselves as MAGA supporters. The researchers surveyed participants in relation to a range of policy questions and demographic information.⁸ The data in Graph 1 show the largest demographic predictor of MAGA supporters is race, followed by religion, and gender. Twenty-five percent of respondents reported having a college degree. These data reinforce the hypothesis that men are more likely to be drawn to the MAGA movement than women. The next section provides a brief history of the women's movement. We then examine changes between men and women in the workforce, education, and political representation.

Historical Review of the Waves of Feminism

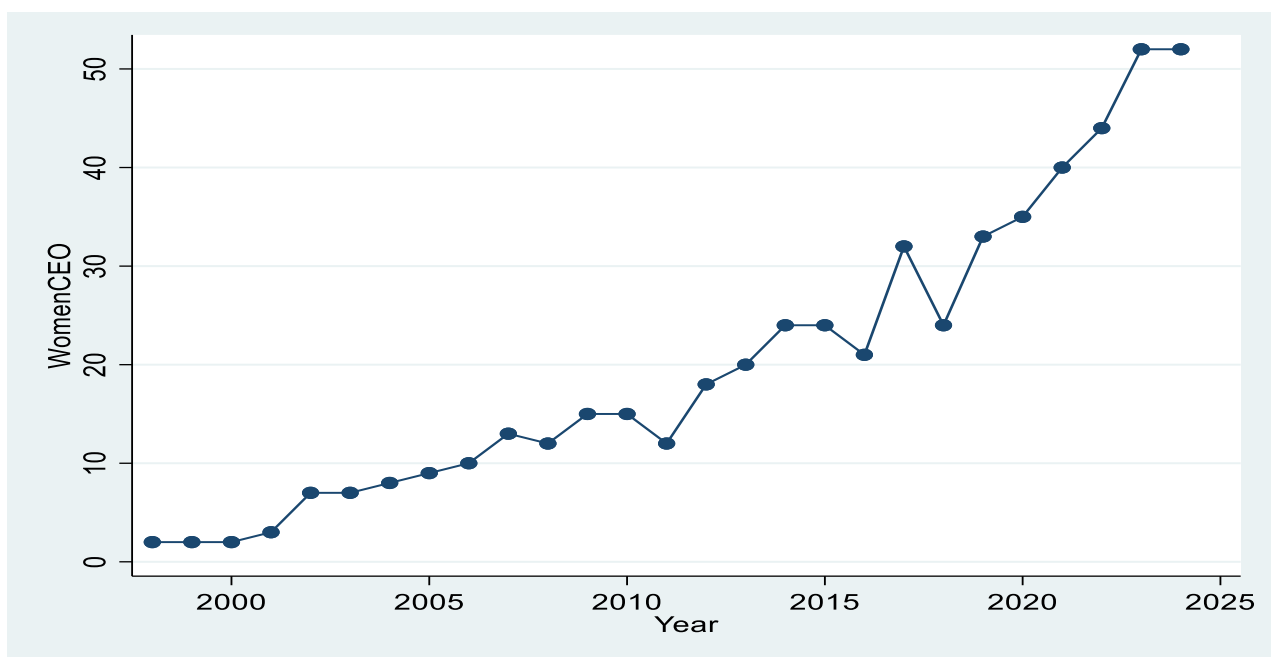
One way to understand the current gender gap is to review how the United States arrived here. A brief overview of the twentieth century and early twenty-first century in the U.S. points to key 'waves' of social movements. These waves and their outcomes have contributed to the diversification of the traditional power structure, and the evolving role of women in two spheres: the private sphere (home and family) and the public sphere (the workforce and political participation).⁹ The Progressive Era of the early 1900s included the first wave of the feminist movement. One key outcome from this era was women earned the national right to vote. Twenty-one years later, the U.S. entered World War II. This led to an increase of women in the work force. In the post-WW II era, when men returned to their jobs, women, particularly white women, due to economic factors and social norms, returned to their traditional places in the private sphere.¹⁰

A second wave of the feminist movement evolved in the 1960s and 1970s. This movement was concurrent to, and grounded in, principles from the civil rights movement.¹¹ Outcomes of this era included FDA approval of the birth control pill (1960), legislation including *The Equal Pay Act* (1963), Title IX (1972), and the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision (1973). In sum, these legal actions ensured women more rights in the areas of education, reproduction, and the workforce. In the 1980s, a backlash against the feminist movement of the prior decades occurred. Faludi (1991) asserts this conservative movement against feminism sought to blame it for the new struggles facing women who were balancing their roles in the public and private spheres.¹²

The third wave of the movement began in the 1990s. It focused on themes like body autonomy, the intersectionality of gender and race, and the reconstruction of social norms associated with gender. It continued to draw attention to the role of women in the workplace and emphasized issues including the lack of women in positions of power, the ongoing pay gap, and workplace problems like sexual harassment. Recent scholarship highlights a fourth wave of feminism, beginning in the mid two thousand tens. Its focus includes sexual harassment, emphasis on the intersectionality of gender and age, and challenges to gender norms. The fourth wave has broadened to be more inclusive of the LGBTQI population. Outcomes include the Me-Too movement and greater participation in political representation. The fourth wave of feminism has made significant use of social media, and thus its reach has been wider than the first three waves. This brings us to the question of men as the U.S. moved into the twenty-first century. In what ways have the four waves of feminism, as well as economic and societal power shifts, impacted the experiences of men and male identity?

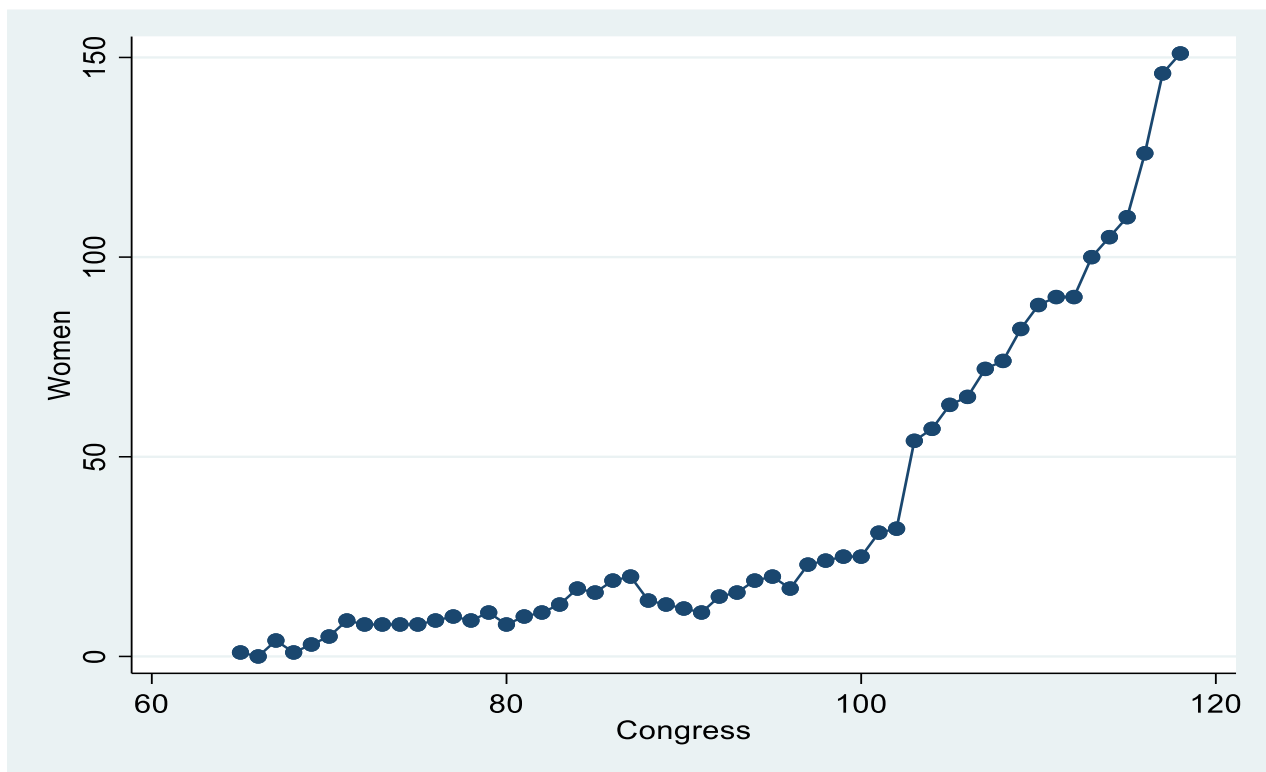
Gender and Employment Trends

In the 2020s men are in many ways still the center of power, which can be seen in measurable ways. The current positions of power that males comprise in the business realm. For example, 89.6 percent of the CEOs on the Fortune 500 are men.¹³ In addition, in 2020, men owned the majority of businesses.¹⁴ Moreover, women earn 84 cents to the dollar compared with men.¹⁵ Finally, an important measure of power can be observed by noting power in the U.S. government. Men currently comprise 384 out of 535 seats in Congress.¹⁶ Despite these statistics, data show women in the twenty-first century have made strides in the areas of the workforce, Congress, and in higher education. The number of female CEOs in Fortune 500 companies have risen from two in 1998, to fifty-two in 2024. The overall growth in the number of CEOs can be seen in Graph 2, which details the number of women CEOs of Fortune 500 companies from 1998 to 2024.¹⁷ The graph demonstrates an observable increasing trendline over time.



Graph 2. The Number of Women CEO's in the Fortune 500 by year, 1998-2024.

As of 2024, women also accounted for 40 percent of all businesses in the U.S.¹⁸ There is also an increasing trend of women in positions of power in government. As stated, men hold most seats in Congress. However, the number of women elected to Congress has grown steadily over the past 100 years. This rise can be seen in Graph 3, which shows one woman in Congress during the 65th Congress (1917-1919), and 151 women in the 118th Congress. The trend in Congress parallels the trends in gender differences among CEO's. During the same time that women were increasing in power in the business realm, and in Congress, they have outpaced men when it comes to education. For instance, as of 2021-2022, women accounted for 66.8 percent of associate degrees, 58.5 percent of bachelor's degrees, 62.6 percent of master's degrees, and 57 percent of doctoral degrees.¹⁹



Graph 3. The Number of Women in Congress by Congressional Session, 65th – 118th

Women have also surpassed men in professional degrees. This can be seen, for example, in law school, where women made up 48.4 percent of those enrolled in 2000, but by 2023 composed 55.7 percent.²⁰ Women are increasing their numbers in professional jobs, including practicing lawyers, law school deans, federal judges, and practicing doctors. Regarding practicing law, women made up 3 percent of the profession in 1950. This increased to 8 percent in 1980, 29 percent in 2000, 31 percent in 2010, and 39 percent in 2023.²¹ A similar upward trend exists with law school deans, of which 10 were female in 2000. This increased to 21 in 2009, 31 in 2016, and 43 in 2023.²² The percentage of female federal judges has increased over time as well. This trend can be seen in Table 1.²³

President	percent of Women Judges Confirmed
Carter	16
Reagan	8
GHW Bush	19
Clinton	28
GW Bush	22
Obama	42
Trump	24
Biden	66

Table 1. Percentage of Women Judges Confirmed by President.

The data show that political party is an intervening variable in this trend. Republican presidents have been less likely to nominate female judges than Democratic presidents. However, the number of women nominated has continued to grow, despite the party of the president. For example, President GHW Bush nominated more women than President Reagan, and President GW Bush nominated more women than GHW Bush. President Biden was the first president to nominate more women than men to the federal bench. Women also increased their presence in the medical field. In 20 of the largest fields of medicine, 17 had a significant increase

in female practitioners.²⁴ This can be seen in Table 2, which shows several of the most popular fields of medicine, and the percentage of women practicing in each between 2004 and 2022.

Specialty	2004	2022
Internal Medicine	30	40
Family Medicine/General	28	43
Pediatrics	52	66
Emergency Medicine	20	30
Obstetrics and Gynecology	38	62
Psychiatry	30	42
General Surgery	11	24
Pathology	32	44
Neurology	21	33
Dermatology	35	53

Table 2. The Percentage of Women practicing by Specialty, 2004 and 2022

In sum, the data in Graphs 2 and 3, and Tables 1 and 2 show a steady rise of women in positions of power in the public sphere.

Table 3 presents the percentage of change in total nonfarm employment from 1979-2019. These data indicate several key areas of the economy lost jobs, including the areas of manufacturing, durable and nondurable goods, and utilities.

Industry	1979 - percent of Nonfarm Employment	2019 - percent of Nonfarm Employment	Change in percent in Total Nonfarm Employment
Manufacturing	22	9	-13
Durable Goods	14	5	-8
Nondurable Goods	8	3	-5
Mining and Logging	1	0	-1
Construction	5	5	0
Trade, Trans., Utilities	20	18	-2
Information	3	2	-1
Financial Services	5	6	0
Professional and Business Services	8	14	6
Education and Health Services	8	16	8
Leisure and Hospitality	7	11	4
Other Services	3	4	1
Government	18	15	-3

Table 3. Percentage of and change in Nonfarm Employment, 1979-2019.²⁵

Several areas of employment did increase in the number of jobs during this time, including professional and business services, education and health services, and leisure and hospitality. As previously indicated, women have made gains in attaining degrees and professional employment, which has prepared them for the sectors of employment that are gaining. In short, the jobs associated with men are following a negative trend while those being filled by women at higher rates are gaining over time. Data also show a rise in unemployment among men. Economist Alan Krueger examined trends in workforce participation among working age young men, prime age men, and women. The findings demonstrate a troubling trend: more than 10 percent of men ages 25–54 during the period of analysis were unemployed, and they were not seeking work.²⁶ He finds the decline in participation precedes the Great Recession of 2007–2009. Krueger states, “the decades-long slide in labor force participation by prime age men should be a national priority.”²⁷ Krueger points to a variety of findings relevant to our analysis. Like other scholarship

presented, Krueger states change in the workforce have affected both men and women, but notes they are affected differently, and these effects are related to gender. In addition, his analysis asserts the decline in labor force participation is not just an economic concern, but also a social concern. Kreuger's connection between the economic standing of men and their perceptions of a lack of meaning in their lives further emphasizes challenges facing men in the twenty-first century. The following section further examines identity from the perspective of self-esteem, and evolving descriptions of masculinity.

Gender: Self-Esteem and Socialization

Research that analyzes how individuals think about themselves is longstanding. American philosopher and psychologist William James formally introduced the term self-esteem in his groundbreaking work, *The Principles of Psychology* in 1890. Twentieth-century research indicates self-esteem tends to increase with experience and age. In other words, adolescents and young adults often exhibit lower self-esteem than older adults.²⁸ One longitudinal study of self-esteem across lifespan indicates it tends to peak at about age 60.²⁹ Broadly, twentieth and twenty-first century research that compares self-esteem between males and females finds individuals tend to have different levels of self-esteem, depending on the domain in question. For example, one meta-analysis found males have higher self-esteem in the domain of physical appearance, while another meta-analysis found females reported higher self-esteem in the domain of morality.³⁰ Rentzsch, et al specifically analyzed self-esteem among adults. They found distinct differences in self-esteem based on gender, noting women had lower self-esteem in academic, physical and social domains.³¹ These findings indicate the factors that influence male self-esteem can differ from the factors that influence female self-esteem.

Much of the research that has found differences in female and male self-esteem is based on the gender stereotypic model, which is grounded in a theoretical framework that asserts

differences in male and female self-esteem is rooted in socialization.³² This framework asserts men's and women's perception of success is related to gender roles that are formed through socialization, which is the process of "largely informal learning that almost everyone experiences throughout life as a consequence of interactions with parents, family, friends, neighbors, peers, colleagues, and so forth."³³ Agents of socialization refer to the people, processes, and institutions that influence individuals. Each person has a unique life experience, and thus individuals are not socialized in exactly the same manner. At the same time, psychology research emphasizes the human nature to divide into groups.³⁴ Individuals are socialized in ways that correspond with values that may be typical of a given group, like a gender group. The first agents of socialization for most individuals are family members, particularly parents and other primary caregivers. Children are exposed to an increasing number and variety of agents of socialization as they move into adulthood: community leaders, friends, religious institutions, schools, and teachers are all examples of individuals and entities that contribute to socialization. Media, in a variety of forms can be a particularly persuasive agent of socialization for both children and adults.³⁵ Scholars note socialization is a lifelong process.³⁶ The gender stereotypic model suggests men will have higher self-esteem when they perceive they have succeeded in domains typical of males, and women will have higher self-esteem when they perceive they have succeeded in roles typically assigned to women. The sum of these studies suggests self-esteem is complex and multi-dimensional.

One gender norm that appears regularly in the research is the concept of masculinity, which is "built on a set of gender norms that endorses features such as toughness, dominance, self-reliance, heterosexual behaviors, restriction of emotional expression and the avoidance of traditionally feminine attitudes and behaviors."³⁷ Studies indicate gender norms develop before

adulthood, which supports socialization theories. Case and Deaton found increased death rates specifically among white non-Hispanics in the U.S. since the beginning of the twenty-first century. They attribute the increase to a significant increase in deaths related to alcohol, opioids, and suicide.³⁸ The authors, who expanded their research to discuss the influence of flaws in capitalism on the working class, label the phenomena deaths of despair.³⁹ Case and Deaton's study found a relationship between deaths among both men and women. However, research on self-esteem suggests challenges may be exacerbated among male individuals, due to gender specific factors. These findings emphasize the significance of socialization in the development of traits identified as masculine. Gradman's 1990 analysis of the relationship between male identity and work states the subjects chosen for the study had met the social expectations for men by achieving mid-management level. The subject selection itself implies male identity is tied to workforce success.⁴⁰

This body of literature is important to our study for two specific reasons. Masculinity is an important part of the MAGA movement. Understanding how socialization contributes to perceptions of masculinity assists in understanding the gender gap in a political context. This literature is also important because it explains a psychological link among men between self-esteem and the work force. The collection of studies on self-esteem and masculinity-identity repeatedly point to male gender norms including self-reliance, toughness, and the expectation of a provider role in society. Meanwhile, employment trends in the U.S. across the last forty years show a pattern of under/unemployment among a sector of traditionally male jobs. Scholars note populism is often associated with feeling disregarded.⁴¹ The data presented here support this assertion. The data indicate economic and societal changes across recent decades have included a variety of negative outcomes for some men. A key part of the MAGA agenda is a promise to

increase economic opportunities and return to traditional gender norms. This particular promise could be especially appealing to these men.

Political Ideology

Are the agents of socialization discussed in this paper relevant to political decisions? Previous research indicates yes. Campbell et al.'s seminal 1960 book *The American Voter* introduced the role of socialization in predicting voting decisions.⁴² Political socialization exists within the academic study of socialization. Agents of socialization influence political dispositions. The ideological expressions to which children are exposed are numerous and can range from reactions to media reports to participation in the political process. The amount of exposure to politics is in itself an act of political socialization.⁴³ Some families address the political world regularly, while in other families, politics is rarely mentioned. The values and attitudes individuals develop due to this type of socialization ultimately result in political ideology, which can be described as the sum of values and attitudes toward political issues, parties, and politicians themselves. Since political ideology is rooted in values, it has long been considered a deep psychological attachment.⁴⁴

Political ideology in democracies is often measured along a liberal-conservative spectrum. Not every individual develops a coherent political ideology. For example, an individual may have what might be described as liberal attitudes toward some policies while holding more conservative attitudes toward other policies. Political ideology is more complex than party identification. However, politics in the U.S. is conducted within a strong two-party system. Thus, while liberals, moderates, and conservatives exist along the ideological spectrum, most Americans make a binary voting decision between a Democrat or a Republican. Relatedly, scholars note the relationship between ideology and political party may be different for women than men, particularly among Republican women.⁴⁵

The Gender Gap and MAGA

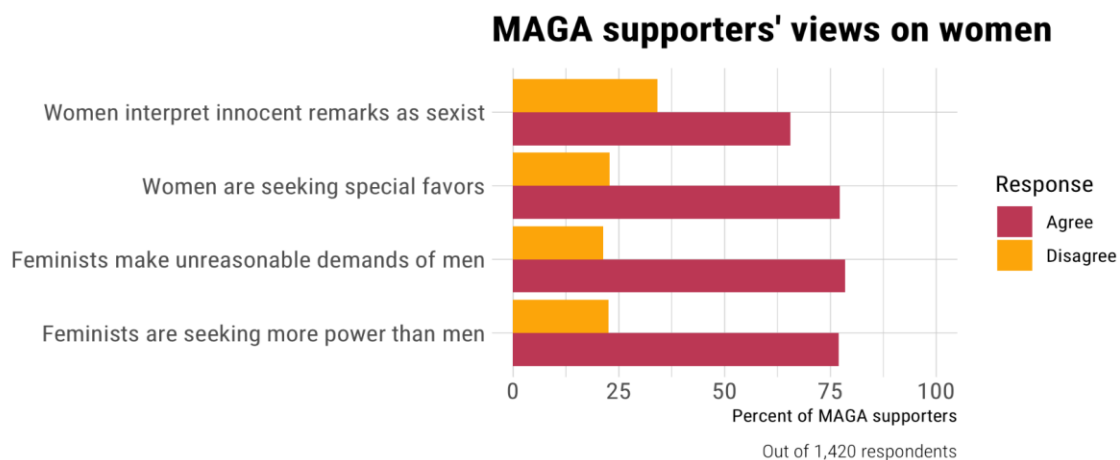
The previous sections have addressed different obstacles faced by men and women. How do these differences relate specifically to the voting decision? Women have been more likely to vote for Democrats and men more likely to vote for Republicans since 1980.⁴⁶ The *World Economic Forum* defines the gender gap as, “the difference between women and men as reflected in social, political, intellectual, cultural, or economic attainments or attitudes.”⁴⁷ In voting, the gender gap refers to the difference between the percentage of men and the percentage of women voting for a candidate. *The Center for the American Woman and Politics* reports there has been a pronounced gender gap in presidential elections since 1980.⁴⁸

Table 4 shows the highest gender gaps between 1980 and 2016 was 11 percent during both the 1996 and 2016 elections. In 2018 *PEW Research* presented follow up analysis of the 2016 election through an investigation of validated voters. The data indicate only 41 percent of those who voted for Clinton were men. The gap was even wider among younger voters.⁴⁹ This information is relevant to our study because it notes among voting gaps, both gender and age are important variables to consider. The highest gap was the 12 percent gap in 2020.

Year of Presidential Election	Gender Gap
1980	8
1984	6
1988	7
1992	4
1996	11
2000	10
2004	7
2008	7
2012	10
2016	11
2020	12

Table 4. Gender Gap in Voting for President by Year of Presidential Election, 1980-2020.⁵⁰

Table 4 also demonstrates a steady increase in the gender gap. In the weeks preceding the 2024 presidential election, the gender gap was predicted by multiple polling organizations to be large among several metrics ranging from policy priorities to candidate choice.⁵¹ An NBC poll released the day before the election pointed to a gender gap of 16 percent among women. Post election data indicate the gender gap in the 2024 presidential election was closer to 10 percent.⁵² The *Center for American Women and Politics* offers insight into this statistic. Polling data indicate Black, Latino, college educated, and younger women maintained their support for the Democratic candidate, former Vice President Harris, while white non-college educated, and evangelical women maintained support for the Republican candidate, President Trump.⁵³ Put differently, women are not a monolith, and scholars caution against a reductive explanation of the role of gender in explaining political questions.⁵⁴ but the gender gap persists. What specific factors point to thing ongoing gap? We return to the 2021 panel study completed by Blum and Parker.



Graph 4. Views on Women ⁵⁵

Graph 4 presents MAGA respondents' views on women. The respondents were asked if women interpret innocent remarks as sexist, if women sought favors, if feminists make unreasonable demands of men, and whether feminists were seeking power. Graph 4 shows for three of the four questions, more than seventy-five of the respondents said yes. These findings point to a level of prejudice among MAGA supporters, which helps explain the wide gender gap. The prejudice can also be seen in those representing MAGA. Multiple, public, negative comments about women have been attributed to former President Trump. President Trump criticized Supreme Court Justices Sonia Sotomayer and the last Justice Ruth Ginsberg for their bodies, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton for her appearance, Senator Elizabeth Warren for her ethnicity and 'nasty' mouth, and former Hewlett-Packard CEO and 2016 presidential candidate Carly Fiorina for her face.⁵⁶ Additionally, the former president has verbally attacked women he perceives as unsupportive including journalists, spouses of political opponents, former employees, and celebrities. This rhetoric is a feature that is typical of populist movements.⁵⁷

Darweesh and Abdullah examined what the researchers framed as sexist ideology.⁵⁸ The authors analyzed twenty-five comments made by the former president leading up to 2016. They conclude Trump's statements were ingrained in a masculine point of view, and an ideology rooted in the belief that men are superior to women. There are also multiple instances of sexist language among MAGA surrogates. For example, at a crowded October 2024 Trump rally at Madison Square Garden, speakers used language to infer his opponent, then Vice President Harris, is the antichrist, a prostitute, and possesses a low IQ.⁵⁹

The statements made by both President Trump and other MAGA officials contribute to our understanding of the gender gap. Polling organizations including Gallup and PEW are among dozens of institutions that predicted the most important issues to women in 2024. The economy

was listed as the top concern followed by the related issue of inflation. Reproductive rights and healthcare were also regularly listed as top concerns. What is not recorded in these polls is the significance women put on the MAGA rhetoric. The fact that a significant percentage of women voted for President Trump, and that there are differences among women in their vote choice, it is reasonable to suggest the rhetoric mattered more to some women than others.

Attraction to MAGA – Beyond Gender

The primary purpose of this paper has been to explain the potential role of the gender gap in voting for MAGA candidates, particularly President Trump. We traced changes in economic and social gender norms, impacts of these changes, and their potential influence on support for the MAGA movement. Perhaps the main explanation offered is that men, while still maintaining positions of power, have seen economic and social shifts across the past several decades. These shifts have contributed to changing self-esteem and have implications for socialization. The evidence we presented indicates these shifts are impacting men differently than women, and recommends these differences are relevant to political ideology.

Robert F. Levant states: “In red states and blue states alike, many men are struggling to figure out their place in 21st century America.”⁶⁰ Levant explains globalization, automation, and evolutions in manufacturing have increased income disparities, and these realities have had a negative impact on men, particularly those from the working class. Multiple implications can be drawn. It is important for future study to expand the analysis beyond men and women. The survey data presented in our analysis suggest further attention should be given to other demographic variables, including race, ethnicity, and the intersectionality of gender and age. Polling data leading up to the 2024 election suggested Black men were moving toward the MAGA movement in increasing numbers.⁶¹ Does this potential change in voting patterns suggest Black men identify more with gender related economic and social challenges than race? Ongoing

research might seek to explain gender specifically within the Black community. Polling data from the 2024 election President Trump lost the Latino vote to Harris, but only by three points.⁶² Future research might explore the ongoing impact of President Trump's immigration policies on popularity among the Latino community.

The literature and data reviewed in our analysis also found there is an intersectionality between gender and age. As previously indicated, polling data stipulate the gender gap differs between younger and older women. Is this difference policy based or a response to MAGA culture? A 2024 *Atlantic* article explores the role of age in how men and women see themselves and each other, and the effect on vote choice⁶³ The article points to a rise in conservatism among young men. Since MAGA is the current movement for conservatives, future studies should further examine the role of age in influencing political ideology. A related and reasonable question relates to location. Recent research asserts themes related to male anger are especially pronounced in rural America.⁶⁴ Is the driving force behind this anger rooted more in the economy or changing gender related social norms? How do these forces differ among rural, suburban, and urban locations?

An additional salient implication is whether evolving employment opportunities or changes in social norms has a bigger influence on the gender gap. The data we present find the majority of MAGA supporters report not having a college degree. This segment of American society is most impacted by an economy less dependent on manufacturing jobs. The data have demonstrated college enrollment among men is not up, it is down. Non-college educated men make up a substantial subset of society; a subset who have seen their employment options shrink. And, while women are attending college in larger numbers, and are thus perhaps better prepared

for the changing economy, not all women pursue higher education. The trends identified with education and job opportunities are likely to continue.

It is also possible education, and the changing economy is not the main variable to consider when considering the MAGA gender gap. The research included in our study notes the significance in changing gender norms beyond the economy. As noted, surveys of potential voters in 2024 revealed that, for example, the issue of reproduction was a relevant policy, particularly among women. Interestingly, reproductive policy is not included in the 20 specific promises outlined in the preamble of the *America First: Common Sense* document.⁶⁵ In addition, social issues ranging from the rights of the LGBTQI community to debates about curriculum may influence whether individuals vote for MAGA candidates. A large part of the MAGA movement centers on masculinity. The impact of this centering is worth continued study. Contemporary scholarship that has examined masculinity and other gender concepts in the context of MAGA has thus far found a relationship.⁶⁶ Agius and Kinnvall (2021) who examined the broader trend of populism, label this concept as gendered nationalism.⁶⁷ Future research might delve further into the question of whether voting choices among women are motivated more by the tendency for MAGA to use negative, gendered rhetoric. It might also delve further into the intersectionality of gender and populism amidst current ideological and political differences. Much of the literature on populism suggests it is inherently threatening to women.⁶⁸ Some scholars argue that in a democratic form of government, populism is always gendered, and impacts women negatively.⁶⁹ How does this statement relate to the reality that a significant percentage of women in the U.S. voted for a populist movement?

This study has presented research from economists, the fields of political science, psychology, and sociology. This suggests answers to ongoing questions about MAGA and its

supporters are better answered through a multidisciplinary approach. The gender gap will be an important factor in analyzing the outcome of future elections, both in terms of choice of president, and choices in Congress, state, and local elections. Political ideology is a deep psychological attachment, which suggests some populist version of the MAGA movement will continue well past President Trump's administration. What implications does this trend have for politicians, particularly as they try to garner the support of various voting demographics? Ongoing investigation is necessary to help better explain recent trends in political ideology, and to better understand the views of all peoples living in an uncertain political landscape.

ENDNOTES

¹ Morone, James. 2020. *Republic of Wrath: How American Politics Turned Tribal*. Basic Books.

² Kerrick, Katherine. 2020. "(Trade)mark America Great Again: Should Political Slogans Be Able to Receive Trademark Protection?." 18 U.N.H. L. Rev. 309.

³ We note domestic, economic, and foreign policy often overlap with one another.

⁴ Conley, R. S. (2020). *Donald Trump and American Populism*. Edinburgh University Press.

⁵ 2024 Make America Great Again platform. <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/2024-republican-party-platform>

⁶ The full list of domestic, economic, foreign, and social policies can be read in the 2024 Make America Great Again platform.

⁷ Eisler Peter and Ned Parker. August 16, 2024. "How Trump's intimidation tactics have reshaped the Republican Party." Reuters.

⁸ Blum, Rachel and Christopher Sebastian Parker. "Panel Study of the MAGA Movement: Demographics & Group Affinities." 2021. University of Wisconsin.

⁹ These terms refer to idea of separate spheres for men and women. Early use of the terms is associated with French political philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville during his visit to the U.S. in 1835.

¹⁰ McDermott, Annette. 2018. "How World War II Empowered Women." The History Channel Archives.

¹¹ Gonzalez, Carmen & Harris, Angela. (2012). *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia*. Utah State University Press.

¹² Faludi, Susan. 1991. *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*. Anchor Books.

¹³ Hirschliffe, Emma. 2023. "Women CEO's run 10.4 percent of Fortune 500. A Quarter of the 52 Leaders Became CEO in the Last Year." Fortune 500.

¹⁴ Cook, Alex. 2022. "Business Owner Demographics: Gender, Race and More." Lending Tree.

-
- ¹⁵ Biden, Joseph. 2024. "National Equal Pay Day" Presidential Proclamation in the Federal Register.
- ¹⁶ Center for American Women and Politics. 2024. "History of Women in the U.S. Congress."
- ¹⁷ Data derived from: Hirschliffe, Emma. 2023. "Women CEO's run 10.4 percent of Fortune 500. A Quarter of the 52 Leaders Became CEO in the Last Year." Fortune 500.
- ¹⁸ Buttle, Rhett. 2024. "The Economic Impact of Women-Owned Businesses." Forbes.
- ¹⁹ Nietzel, Michael. 2024. "Women Continue to Outpace Men In College Enrollment and Graduation." Forbes.
- ²⁰ ABA Profile of the Legal Profession 2023. Accessed 10/28/24.
- ²¹ Id.
- ²² Id.
- ²³ Id.
- ²⁴ AAMC News. 2024. "Women are Changing the Face of Medicine in America."
- ²⁵ Table derived from Table 1, Harris, Katelynn. 2020. "Forty Years of Falling Manufacturing Employment." Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- ²⁶ Krueger, Alan P. 2017. "Where Have All the Workers Gone? An Inquiry into the Decline of the U.S. Labor Force Participation Rate." Brookings Institute.
- ²⁷ Krueger, Alan P. 2017. Page 31.
- ²⁸ Shavelson, R. J. et al. 1976. "Self-Concept: Validation of Construct Interpretations." Review of Educational Research, 46(3), 407–441.
- ²⁹ Orth, Ulrich et al. "Self-esteem development from young adulthood to old age: a cohort-sequential longitudinal study." Journal of Personality and Social Psychology vol. 98,4 (2010)
- ³⁰ Wilgenbusch, T., & Merrell, K. W. (1999). "Gender differences in self-concept among children and adolescents: A meta-analysis of multidimensional studies." School Psychology Quarterly. 14(2), 101–120. Gentile, B. et al. 2009. "Gender Differences in Domain-Specific Self-Esteem: A Meta-Analysis." Review of General Psychology. 13(1), 34-45.
- ³¹ Rentzsch, Katrin et al. 2016. "The structure of multidimensional self-esteem across age and gender." Personality and Individual Differences. Volume 88. Pages 139-147.
- ³² Tobin, D et al. 2010. "The Intrapsychics of Gender: A Model of Self-Socialization." Psychological review. 117. 601-22.
- ³³ Neundorf, Anja and Kaat Smets. 2017, "Political Socialization and the Making of Citizens." Oxford Handbooks Online in Political Science.
- ³⁴ Van Bavel, Jay and Dominic J. Packer. 2021. *Us Versus Them: The Power of Us*. Little Brown Spark.
- Morone, James. 2020. *Republic of Wrath: How American Politics Turned Tribal*. Basic Books.
- ³⁵ Paus-Hasebrink et al. 2019. "The Role of Media Within Young People's Socialization: A Theoretical Approach." In: Social Inequality, Childhood and the Media. Transforming Communications – Studies in Cross-Media Research.
- ³⁶ Niemi, Richard and Barbara Sobieszek. 1977. "Political Socialization." Annual Review of Sociology 3: 209-33.
- ³⁷ Weir, K. (2017, February 1). "The Men America Left Behind." Monitor on Psychology, 48(2). Page 34.
- ³⁸ Case, Anna and Angus Deaton. 2015. "Rising morbidity and mortality in midlife among white non-Hispanic Americans in the 21st century." PNAS. Vol. 112. No. 49.
- ³⁹ Case, Anna and Angus Deaton. 2020. *Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism*. Princeton University Press.

-
- ⁴⁰ Gradman, T.J. 1990. "Does work make the man: masculine identity and work identity during the transition to retirement." Rand Corporation.
- ⁴¹ Webber J. 2023. Understanding Populism. *Social & legal studies*, 32(6), 849–876.
- ⁴² Campbell, Angus. 1960. *The American Voter*. 1960. The University of Chicago Press.
- ⁴³ Valenzuela, Sebastián et al. 2019. "Socialized for News Media Use: How Family Communication, Information-Processing Needs, and Gratifications Determine Adolescents' Exposure to News." *Communication Research* 46.8.
- ⁴⁴ Sullivan, John, et al. 1975. "The Development of Political Ideology: Some Empirical Findings." *Youth & Society*.
- Devine, Christopher 2015. "Ideological Social Identity: Psychological Attachment to Ideological In-Groups as a Political Phenomenon and a Behavioral Influence." *Political Behavior*.
- ⁴⁵ Swers ML, Thomsen DM. Understanding the Policy Priorities of Republican Women in the US House of Representatives. *Politics & Gender*. 2025;21(2):306-332.
- ⁴⁶ Center for Women in Politics. 2024. "Gender Gap: Voting Choices in Presidential Elections."
- ⁴⁷ Harris, Briony. 2017. "What is the gender gap (and why is it getting wider)?" *World Economic Forum*.
- ⁴⁸ Center for American Women and Politics. 2017. "Fact Sheet: The Gender Gap: Voting Choices In Presidential Elections."
- ⁴⁹ PEW Research Center. 2018. "An examination of the 2016 electorate, based on validated voters."
- ⁵⁰ CAWP – Center for Women in Politics. 2024. "Gender Gap: Voting Choices in Presidential Elections." Accessed 10/30/24.
- ⁵¹ Gallup: Women and Gender. 2024.
- PEW Research Center: 2024 Election.
- Survey Center on American Life. 2024. "The Politics of Progress and Privilege: How America's Gender Gap Is Reshaping the 2024 Election."
- ⁵² Based on a review of several polling organizations with slightly different percentage points.
- ⁵³ Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP). "Gender Differences in 2024 Vote Choice Are Similar to Most Recent Presidential Elections." 2025. New Brunswick, NJ: Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University-New Brunswick.
- ⁵⁴ Cassese EC, Friesen A. A Look Back At 20 Years of Research on Gender and Voting in Politics & Gender. *Politics & Gender*. 2025;21(1):51-65.
- ⁵⁵ Graph reproduced from Blum, Rachel, and Christian Sebastian Parker. 2021. "Panel Study of the MAGA Movement. MAGA and Differences." A <https://sites.uw.edu/magastudy/maga-difference/> Accessed 11/1/24.
- ⁵⁶ Kight, Stef W. 2017. "A list of Trump's attacks on prominent women." *Axios*.
- ⁵⁷ Webber, Jeremy. "Understanding Populism." *Social & legal studies* vol. 32,6 (2023): 849-876.
- ⁵⁸ Darweesh, Abbas Degan and Nesaem Medhi Abdullah. 2016. "A Critical Discourse Analysis of Trump's Sexist Ideology." *Journal of Education and Practice*.
- ⁵⁹ PBS Newshour. 2024. "Trump faces major backlash for New York rally rife with racist and sexist rhetoric."
- ⁶⁰ Levant, Robert F. in "The Men America Left Behind." by Weir, K. 2017. *American Psychology Association*. Page 34.

⁶¹ Harper, Tyler Austin. 2024. “*Of Course Black Men Are Drifting Toward Trump.*” November 1. The Atlantic.

⁶² Harting, Hanger, Scott Keeter, et al. PEW Research Center. 2024. “Voting Patterns in the 2024 Election.”

⁶³ Demsas, Jerusalem. 2024. “*Are Young Men Really Becoming More Sexist? In some places, young men are voting to the right of their grandfathers.*” The Atlantic. June 25.

⁶⁴ Waldman, Paul and Thomas Schaller. 2024. *White Rural Rage*. Random House.

⁶⁵ The full platform is a 14-page, single spaced document. Reproduction is mentioned on Page 13 in the context of the 14th amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

⁶⁶ Vescio, T. K., & Schermerhorn, N. E. C. 2021. “*Hegemonic masculinity predicts 2016 and 2020 voting and candidate evaluations.*” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*.

⁶⁷ Agius, C., Rosamond, A. B., & Kinnvall, C. 2020. “*Populism, Ontological Insecurity and Gendered Nationalism: Masculinity, Climate Denial and Covid-19.*” *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, 21(4), 432–450.

⁶⁸ Mostov J (2021) Populism Is Always Gendered and Dangerous. *Front. Sociol.* 5:625385.

⁶⁹ Id.