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To cite this article: Eric Swank (2018): Who Voted for Hillary Clinton? Sexual Identities, Gender, and Family Influences, Journal of GLBT Family Studies

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1550428X.2017.1421335>



Published online: 27 Feb 2018.



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## Who Voted for Hillary Clinton? Sexual Identities, Gender, and Family Influences

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### ABSTRACT

Sexual identities can influence political attitudes and actions. During political elections, gay men, lesbians, and bisexual individuals (GLB) have historically aligned with Democratic candidates. In the recent presidential election of 2016, this pattern persisted, as the vast majority of GLBs voted with the Democratic candidate for president in the 2016 elections (Hillary Clinton). This study tries to explain why lesbians and gay men overwhelmingly voted for candidate Clinton through Patrick Egan's (2012) theory of political distinctiveness. In using data the American National Election Survey of 2016 ( $N = 2,691$ ), this analysis determines if the tendency of sexual minorities to vote Democratic was due to three sets of variables: (a) selection, or the characteristics associated with GLB identities are also associated with political liberalism; (b) embeddedness, or increased involvement in the LGB community leads to greater liberalism; and (c) conversion, or public disclosures of LGB identities causes major changes in political outlooks and actions. Special attention is also given to the intersectional concerns of gendered heterosexism, given that voting for Hillary Clinton was the highest among lesbian women and lowest among heterosexual men.

### KEYWORDS

Gender; racial attitudes; sexism; sexual identities; voting

If voting depended on pure self-interest, it seems logical that most sexual minorities would align with the Democratic Party when selecting a candidate. Republican and Democratic candidates generally offer different understandings of social inequalities and, as seen in recent years, the parties are very polarized on gay, lesbian, and bisexuality (GLB) matters (Strolovitch, Wong, & Proctor, 2017). In the 1990s, the Republican Party sponsored state and federal laws that outlawed same-sex marriages (Soule, 2004) and Republican elected officials have played key roles in blocking the expansion of civil rights protections to sexual minorities (Bishin & Smith, 2013; Scheitle & Hahn, 2011).

The presidential campaign of 2016 highlighted issues of sexuality, race, and gender as major focal points (Schaffner, MacWilliams, & Nteta, 2017). Democratic

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candidate Hillary Clinton was the first female presidential nominee of a major political party; she largely framed her candidacy around breaking down racial, gender, class, and sexuality barriers. Candidate Donald Trump repeatedly uttered racist, xenophobic, and sexist appeals in public and private settings. Republican vice-presidential candidate Pence was also known as a Governor who signed a law that allows religious conservatives to discriminate against sexual minorities. Although some political pundits warned that Trump's rhetoric was too divisive and incendiary, researchers have argued that Trump's eventual victory was partly due to his ability to stoke resentment and hostility toward progressive sociopolitical changes (Pascoe, 2017; Rocha, Sabetta & Clark, 2017). Pre-election surveys found that Trump supporters liked authoritarian leaders and were impressed by Trump's "macho guy" ways, and feared terrorism; Clinton allies were concerned that Trump said things that were "downright xenophobic, racist, and sexist" (Blair, 2017; Choma, & Hanoch, 2017; Crowson & Brandes, 2017; Schaffner, MacWilliams, & Nteta, 2017). Post-election studies provided similar results, as research found that Trump supporters were especially angry over "Black people getting more than they deserve," undocumented workers who should be deported, the legalization of same-sex marriages, and feminists who "fabricate" the amount of sexism in society (Cech, 2017; Collingwood, Reny, & Valenzuela, 2017; Rocha, Sabetta & Clark, 2017; Schaffner, MacWilliams, & Nteta, 2017; Turney, Levy, Citrin, & O'Brian, 2017).

In earlier elections, sexual minorities have generally sided with Democratic candidates (Herek, Norton, Allen, & Sims, 2010; Lewis, Rogers, & Sherrill, 2011; Schaffner & Senic 2006). The sexuality gap in voting applied to the 2016 elections, as well. Pre-election studies found that lesbians and gay men held very unfavorable impressions of Donald Trump (Rothwell, & Diego-Rosell, 2016) and Election Day exit polls suggested that 78% of sexual minorities who voted did so for Hillary Clinton (Huang, Samuel, Strickland, & Lai, 2016). Later surveys confirmed a sexuality gap in voting during the 2016 election as GLBTs were four times more likely to vote for Clinton over Trump (Cech, 2017) and 92% of GLBs suggested that Trump made them "more concerned or worried about my rights based upon my sexual orientation and/or gender identity" (Hirsch et al., 2017).

GLB preferences for Democratic candidates can be partly modified by intersecting racial and gender backgrounds (Else-Quest, & Hyde, 2016; McCall, 2005). An intracategorical analysis of racial, gender, and sexual identities found that 95% of Black lesbian women voted for Clinton and around 76% of White lesbians and gay men voted the same way (Strolovitch, Wong, & Proctor, 2017). On the opposite side, White heterosexuals mostly supported Donald Trump, as 49% of heterosexual White women and 65% of heterosexual White men voted for Donald Trump in the 2016 general election.

In exploring presidential voting through a national random sample of voters (American National Election Study [ANES], 2016), this study uses *political distinctiveness* theories to explain the reasons why sexual minorities preferred Hillary Clinton over Donald Trump (Egan, 2012; Harnois, 2015; Lewis et al., 2011).

Moreover, this analysis explores intersectional concepts of *gendered heterosexism* to see if lesbian women who occupy two positions of oppression are more likely to vote for female Democratic candidate than gay, bisexual, or heterosexual men who occupy less stigmatized social positions (Friedman & Leaper, 2010; Herek et al., 2010; Strolovitch, Wong, & Proctor, 2017)

## Literature review

Theories of political distinctiveness try to explain the relative liberalism of sexual minorities, as compared to heterosexuals (Egan, 2008; Egan, 2012; Lewis et al., 2011; Grollman, 2017; Swank & Fahs, 2017). According to this theory, greater LGB liberalism could be due to three major reasons: (a) *Selection forces* suggest that early familial and educational factors can facilitate the acceptance of GLB identities and liberal political commitments, (b) *embeddedness* arguments suggest that youthful and adult involvement in the GLB community inspires the acceptance of liberal sentiments, and (c) *conversion factors* highlights the liberalizing effects of facing heterosexist discrimination from the heterosexual majority. By exploring these different reasons for GLB liberalism, this study can ascertain if specific selection, embeddedness, and conversion variables were responsible for the GLB affinity with Hillary Clinton.

### ***Selection factors: family and educational differences by sexualities***

Selection factors connect sexual identities, family dynamics, and educational experiences, to political liberalism. Familial structures and practices can explain greater GLB liberalism. Heterosexuals are more likely to be married than GLBs (Herek et al., 2010) and marital obligations often make spouses more politically conservative (Fahs, 2007; Stoker & Jennings 1995; Greenlee, 2010). Marriage can reduce gender and sexual liberalism for all partners, but heterosexual marriages seems especially adept at stunting a feminist consciousness among women who marry men (Coffé & Bolzendahl, 2010; Stout, Kretschmer, & Ruppner, 2017). In the voting booth married women are more likely to vote for conservative Republican candidates than single or divorced women. Moreover, early reports suggest that married people liked Trump more than single people (Rothwell, & Diego-Rosell, 2016) and only 38% of White married women voted for Clinton (Strolovitch, Wong, & Proctor, 2017).

The division of labor within families can also be related to feminist tendencies among married women. Simply having children does not seem to make women more politically conservative (Elder & Greene, 2007), but the transition out of the paid workforce often does (Burns, Schlozman, & Verba, 1997). Wives who are primarily stay-at-home moms, as compared to employed wives with children, often endorse more conservative attitudes on abortion, premarital sex, and the division of labor in the family (Bolzendahl, & Myers, 2004; Hamilton, Geist, & Powell, 2011; Moore & Vanneman, 2003). Likewise, heterosexual stay-at-home mothers

are financially dependent on husbands and their mothering imperatives seems to generate greater distrust of feminist goals or female political candidates (Greenlee, 2010; Plutzer & McBurnett, 1991; Stout, Kretschmer, & Ruppanner 2017). The reasons for this relationship is complicated and multifaceted but stay-at-home mothers are less likely than working mothers to (a) have strong relationships with other women, (b) be exposed to workforce gender biases, and (c) be alarmed by injustices around *second shift* issues for mothers in the paid workforce.

Educational experiences are also related to sexual identities and political sentiments. Access to higher education often liberalizes young adults (Webb & Chonody, 2014) and gay men and lesbians are typically more educated than heterosexuals (Fine, 2015; Herek et al., 2010; Mollborn & Everett, 2015; Ueno, Roach, & Peña-Talamantes, 2013). Moreover, sexual minorities are more likely than heterosexuals to take multicultural classes that liberalize students and diminish biases against female political candidates (Bowman, 2011; Case, Hensley, & Anderson, 2014; Doan & Haider-Markel, 2010; Gortmaker, & Brown, 2006; Simien, & Hampson, 2017; Swank & Fahs, 2017). Attending college seems especially important in the 2016 elections, given that Donald Trump's rhetoric resonated especially well with White people who had never attended college (Rocha, Sabetta & Clark, 2017; Rothwell, & Diego-Rosell, 2016; Turney, Levy, Citrin, & O'Brian, 2017), and Hillary Clinton was able to attract less than 30% of White voters who had a high-school degree or less (Schaffner, MacWilliams, & Nteta, 2017).

### ***Embeddedness: Sexual identities and access to liberal social networks***

Sexual minority youth often are silenced and ostracized by heterosexist parents (Reeves et al., 2010). Parental preferences for heterosexual children reinforces heteronormativity and can produce offspring who are afraid to disclose GLB identities (Kroeper, Sanchez, & Himmelstein 2014). To shield oneself from negative family members, resilient GLB adolescents and adults often seek out GLB groups and friendships to find greater acceptance of stigmatized identities (Carpenter, 2009; Frost & Meyer, 2012; Longerbeam et al., 2007).

Conversations in queer social circles often sensitizes sexual minorities to the benefits of embracing their sexual identities, the pervasiveness of discrimination, and the necessity of challenging heterosexual privilege (Bernstein, 1997; Poteat, Sinclair, DiGiovanni, Koenig, & Russell, 2013). People with gay or lesbian friends were significantly more likely to attend gay pride or feminist events than those without such friends (Burgess & Baunach, 2014; Fingerhut, 2011, Friedman & Leaper, 2010; Goldstein & Davis, 2010; Swank, Woodford & Lim, 2013) and having GLBT "best friends" seems especially crucial for heterosexuals who join public demonstrations against homophobia (Calcagno, 2016). Moreover, sexual minorities seem to join more political groups than heterosexuals (Swank, Woodford & Lim, 2013; Swank & Fahs, 2017) and people with strong connections to GLB communities generally vote for Democratic candidates (Herek et al., 2010; Lewis et al.,

2011). Studies have not yet tested the role of GLB community connections in the last presidential election, but Clinton endorsers rejected heteronormativity and approved of same-sex marriages much more than Trump supporters in the 2016 elections (Blair, 2017; Rocha, Sabetta & Clark, 2017).

### ***Conversion: Heterosexist discrimination discredits gender and race hierarchies***

Unfair treatment because one's sexual identity can translate into a general distrust of social hierarchies (Egan 2012; Friedman & Leaper, 2010). According to "conversion" and "common in-group identity" theories (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000), belonging to devalued groups sometimes increases a tendency to reject social inequalities and feel empathy toward other lower status social groups. This empathy, combined with a sense of shared oppressions across social identities, can, in turn, lead to embracing policies that try to counteract social injustices. As Egan (2008) wrote, adopting "a 'stigmatized' or 'outsider' status [may] lead gay people to sympathize with those who belong to other marginalized groups and thus support politicians and policies that they believe help these groups" (p. 14–15).

Elements of common in-group theories have been confirmed in quantitative studies of sexual minorities. Gay men and lesbians call themselves liberals more than heterosexuals (Swank, Woodford & Lim, 2013) and GLBs take more liberal stances than heterosexuals on the death penalty, legalization of marijuana, defense and domestic spending, affirmative action, and the war in Iraq (Egan, Edelman, & Sherrill, 2008; Lewis, et al., 2011; Worthen, Sharp, & Rodgers, 2012). The ways that sexual identities influence racial and gender attitudes are a little less certain. Some works contend that White GLBs have fewer racial biases than White heterosexuals (Grollman, 2017; Kleiman, Spanierman, & Grant-Smith, 2015; Swank & Fahs, 2017) and that gay men are less sexist than heterosexual men (McDermott & Schwartz, 2013; Grollman, 2017; Haywood & Swank, 2008; Holland, Rabelo, Gustafson, Seabrook, & Cortina, 2016). However, other studies contend that gay men are not as feminist as lesbian women (Andersen & Jennings, 2010) or that sexual identities do not predict a person's commitment to gender equality (Harnois, 2016; Swank & Fahs, 2017).

The general liberalism of sexual minorities can also extend to their voting preferences. In general, Trump supporters revere traditional social institutions and authoritarian orientations more than Clinton voters (Choma & Hanoch, 2017; Crowson & Brandes, 2017; MacWilliams, 2017). Racial and gender attitudes that justify the status quo are also central to their tendency to vote for Republican or Democratic candidate (Bonilla-Silva and Ray, 2009; Huddy & Carey, 2009; Tarman & Sears, 2005). Some studies suggest that the liberal race and gender attitudes of GLBs influences their tendency to be involved in social justice movements (Andersen & Jennings, 2010; Harris & Battle, 2013; Friedman & Ayers, 2013; Holland et al., 2016; McDermott & Schwartz, 2013; Swank & Fahs, 2017; VanDaalen, &

Santos, 2017; White, 2006) and vote for democratic political candidates (Herek et al., 2010; Lewis et al., 2011; Schaffner & Senic 2006).

The role of racial and gender attitudes may be especially important to the voting practices of citizen in the 2016 elections (Rocha, Sabetta, & Clark, 2017). Trump's rhetoric frequently violated color-blind norms that frown upon explicitly racist appeals. Talk of good jobs for blue-collar workers, alarmist messages about an Islamic menace, or the use of ominous border-wall language all played into narratives about threat and loss among working-class Whites who felt vulnerable. Early studies suggest that these race-mongering messages resonated among voters who supported White privilege and resented greater racial equality. In comparison to Clinton voters, Trump supporters were more likely to consider racism against people of color a rare event (Collingwood et al., 2017), believe Blacks were bad parents who do not try hard enough at work (Cech, 2017; Turney, Levy, Citrin, & O'Brian, 2017), whine about people of color being too pushy in demanding social change (Cech, 2017), distrust Muslims (Blair, 2017), want to deport undocumented immigrants (Rocha, Sabetta & Clark, 2017), and decry that White people had less economic opportunities than racial minorities (Rocha, Sabetta & Clark, 2017; Schaffner, MacWilliams, & Nteta, 2017; Turney, Levy, Citrin, & O'Brian, 2017).

Traditional gender roles also seem important to the 2016 elections. Earlier studies suggest that Clinton voters were proud of having a female candidate and very attuned to sexist practices in society (Sharrow, Strolovitch, Heaney, Masket, & Miller, 2016; Simien, & Hampson, 2017). Clinton's opponents often saw her as a competent but unlikeable woman who did not display the traditional female prerequisite of emotional warmth and deferring to men (Huddy & Carey, 2009; McThomas & Tester, 2016). Donald Trump separated himself from other candidates by invoking language that was explicitly hostile and demeaning toward women. Candidate Trump implied that female reporters asked bogus questions because they were menstruating, hinted that he had a large penis, and called Hillary Clinton a "nasty woman" because she was not deemed polite enough for him. Late in the campaign, *Access Hollywood* released a video in which Donald Trump could be heard bragging about his attempt to have sex with a married woman and how his star status lets him "grab 'em [women] by the pussy" (Pascoe, 2017). Although these misogynistic sentiments angered voters with feminist sensibilities, his old-style sexism appealed at a core level to many Trump proponents. In pre- and postelection surveys, Trump supporters expressed high levels of hostile and benevolent forms of sexist attitudes (Blair, 2017; Schaffner, MacWilliams, & Nteta, 2017) and believed that elected officials spent too much time worrying about gender biases that did not exist (Cech, 2017; Rocha, Sabetta & Clark, 2017).

By incorporating *political distinctiveness* claims into testable hypotheses, this study explores how the LGB tendency to vote for Democratic candidates could be the consequences of selection, embeddedness, and conversion factors. More

precisely, this study sees if the GLB propensity to vote for Hillary Clinton was partially due to their higher education levels and their lower marital rates than heterosexuals (selection factors). The study also investigated the roles of friendship ties, warmth toward sexual minorities, and rejection of heterosexist assumptions as a source greater Clinton support among sexual minorities (embeddedness factors). Finally, this study sees if greater feminist sensibilities as well as the rejection of colorblind or xenophobic narratives was the source of GLB Democratic leanings (conversion factors).

## **Methods**

### ***Participants***

Data came from the Time Series Study of the 2016 ANES. As a multisplit research design, ANES modified its survey items and data gathering modes throughout its 2016 sample (data was collected before and after the election and information was obtained through face-to-face interviews and web-based surveys). In seeking information on actual voting behaviors, this analysis is limited to the 2,691 individuals who indicated that they voted during the post-election sample (November 9, 2016 to early January 2017).

Both the face-to-face and web mode used random sampling techniques. People in the face-to-face interviews were found through a random sampling of addresses within *Census block groups* throughout the United States. The web version of ANES draws upon Knowledge Networks for respondents. Knowledge Networks (KN), currently known as GfK Custom Research, created and maintains a panel of people who have previously agreed to complete on-line surveys. When building a list of 40,000 US households, KN recruited people through random-digit dialing and address-based approaches. Although issues of race, gender, and education selection biases are found in KN samples, their selection biases are equivalent to random telephone surveys (Chang & Krosnick 2009) and they have much better response rates than the face-to-face interviews of ANES (Weinberg, Freese, & McElhattan, 2014).

### ***Measures***

Suitable measures were found for independent and dependent variables in the post-election version of ANES 2016. All of the items were close-ended questions that offered different Likert-scale and categorical answers for each prompt.

### ***Dependent variable: Democratic presidential vote***

Every person who voted in the 2016 general election was asked: "For whom did you vote for President?" Votes for Candidate Clinton were coded as 1 and votes



for Candidate Trump were coded as 0 (people who voted for Libertarian Gary Johnson, Green Party Jill Stein, or anybody else was removed from the analysis).

### **Independent variables**

#### **Sexual identity variables**

When addressing personal sexualities, ANES asked people to classify their sexual identity. The three answers of *heterosexual*, *bisexual*, and *gay or lesbian* were transformed into two sorts of dichotomous variables. One variable broke the sample into three dummy variables: lesbian or gay, bisexual, or heterosexual. With this coding scheme, 92.5% of the sample were considered heterosexual ( $n = 2,490$ ), 4.5% were treated as lesbian or gay ( $n = 73$ ), 2.5% were grouped as bisexual ( $n = 67$ ), and 61 people did not answer this question. Although this measure traces current sexual identities, it does not indicate if people based their sexual classifications on actions, desires, or any other criteria. Egan (2008) argued that the analysis of GLB identities are preferred to sexual behaviors because identity formation is closely connected to selection and embeddedness factors. For example, adolescents who publicly call themselves GLB are more likely to come from liberal families than heterosexually identified youth who engage in same-sex sexual behaviors.

To explore gender variance within sexual identities, the researcher merged the sexual and gender identities items (Anderson & Jennings; 2010; Herek et al., 2010). In asking for the self-identified gender of participants, ANES 2016 provided a sample that leaned slightly more female than male (52.9% to 45.8%) and less than 1% did not indicate a gender (28 skipped this item and 6 suggested *other* for gender). In the end, 49.4% of this cisgender sample identified as heterosexual women ( $n = 1,329$ ), 34.2% as heterosexual men ( $n = 924$ ), 1.7% as bisexual women ( $n = 47$ ), .7% as bisexual men ( $n = 19$ ), .9% as lesbian women ( $n = 26$ ) and 1.7% as gay men ( $n = 47$ ).

#### **Selection variables**

Educational attainment, marital status, and participation in the paid labor force serve as the selection factors. Educational attainment was recorded through a question about their highest level of schooling. Responses of elementary school to a doctoral degree were collapsed into three categories (*high school degree or less* = 1, *some college or bachelor's degree* = 2, *masters, professional, or Ph.D. degrees* = 3). Marital status was revealed by the question: "Are you currently—married, widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never been married?" Being single is often correlated with being a sexual minority and voting Democratic, so I coded this answer 1 = *never married* and *all other answers* = 0. Current work status focused on a person staying out of the paid workforce to run a household (caretaking or domestic chores). In practicing the strong split between private and public

employment for adults in a family, respondents were considered a *homemaker* if they mentioned that term when responding to the question: “What is your main occupation?” (*homemaker* = 1, *other* = 0).

### **Embeddedness variables**

Connections and solidarity with sexual minorities were addressed through four variables (knowing a GLB person, emotional closeness to lesbians and gay men, seeing heterosexism, and supporting legal protections of sexual minorities). GLB social ties were established through a dummy variable of knowing at least one GLB relative or close friend (56% of the sample indicated that they had a GLB friend or relative). Interpersonal contact with gay men or lesbians person seems connected to voting practices (Barth, Overby, & Huffmon, 2009) and sexual minorities frequently know and befriend more gay men and lesbians than heterosexuals (Galupo & Gonzalez, 2013). Emotional ties to sexual minorities was determined via a feeling thermometer that rates emotional warmth or coldness toward gays and lesbians (similar to Harris & Battle, 2013). With scores ranging between 0 and 100, lower scores indicated distance or disgust; higher scores suggest fondness or attachments to gays and lesbians. This ANES gay-feeling thermometer has been successful in predicting a wide range of political stances (Iyengar, Sood, & Lelkes, 2012).

The analysis also determined if respondents aligned with GLB political interests. A recognition of biased and unfair treatment of sexual minorities was traced through the question: “How much discrimination is there in the United States today against gays and lesbians?” (*great deal* = 5, *none at all* = 1). Support of GLB rights centered on workplace biases against GLBs: “Should laws protect gays and lesbians against job discrimination?” (*favor strongly* = 4, *favor not strongly* = 3, *oppose not strongly* = 2, *oppose strongly* = 1).

### **Conversion variables**

The conversion factors focused on universal critiques of gender-racial hierarchies and specific perceptions of race and gender biases in actual political candidates. Gender liberalism was handled through the acceptance of a feminist identity and the assessment of Donald Trump’s gender practices. Embracing a feminist identity often links to liberal activism and voting for female candidates (Huddy & Carey, 2009; Yoder, Tobias, & Snell, 2011), so this analysis used the question: “Do you consider yourself a feminist?” (*strong feminist* = 3, *feminist* = 2, *not a feminist* = 1). Donald Trump’s comments, tweets, and demeanor are often read as a masculinity based on dominance, competitiveness, and aggression (Wilz, 2016). This hegemonic masculinity can be seen as a proper way to act around women, so ANES asked: “How does the Republican presidential candidate treat women?” It is assumed that Trump’s gender insults and conservative gender policies would be seen as detrimental to liberals (*treats women extremely poorly* = 3, *moderately poorly* = 2, *neither poorly or well, moderately well, extremely well* = 1).

Three variables dealt with issues of the recognition and affirmation of White privilege. Colorblind and symbolic racism often denies the existence of contemporary racial biases (Bonilla-Silva & Ray, 2009; Tarman & Sears, 2005) and I created a two-item scale on “how much discrimination” Blacks and Hispanics face in the United States (*great deal* = 5, *none at all* = 1,  $\alpha = .79$ ). Throughout much of the campaign, Trump also played into fears about White people’s vulnerabilities and loss of privilege. To address a scapegoating and threat-based logic of White voters, one variable dealt with the racial resentment of Blacks having “too much influence in US politics” and supporting the construction of “a wall on the U.S. border with Mexico” (the wall item showed disapproval of these sentiments, *oppose a wall a great deal* = 7, *support a wall* = 1 and racial resentment was coded as *Blacks have too much influence* = 3 and *not enough influence* = 1).

### **Control variables**

A variable for White racial background was added to all regressions because the disclosure of GLB identities (Groves, Bimbi, Nanín, & Parsons, 2006), voting for Democratic Candidates (Tarman & Sears, 2005), and supporting Donald Trump are often related racial identities (Crowson & Brandes, 2017).

### **Analytical plan**

The analysis was done through several statistical procedures. One-way univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) and post hoc tests ascertained significant sexuality differences for voting practices and all of the independent variables. Subsequent logistic regressions try to determine if significant links between sexual identities and voting practices remain after controlling for the selection, embeddedness, and conversion factors. If GLB attachments to Hillary Clinton becomes negligible under these circumstances, one can assume that sexuality differences in voting are guided by the underlying factors of education-family arrangements (selection issues), emotional-political connections to GLB individuals-communities (embeddedness), or liberal-left understandings of race and gender hierarchies (conversion process). Logistic regressions are well suited at analyzing dichotomous dependent variables and they are not confined by many of the strict requirements other sorts of regressions (e.g., a normal distribution in the dependent variable or no problems of homoscedasticity).

## **Results**

### **Simple sexuality differences**

Table 1 compares the means of each variable for the entire sample and by the separate sexual identities (GL vs B vs H). When exploring differences by sexual identity, all but one of the variables showed some sort of statistical difference ( $F$ -ratio,  $p < .01$ ). For every measure of political liberalism, lesbians and gay men were

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics for full sample and sexual identity comparisons.

Variable	Full Sample		Lesbian-Gay		Bisexual		Heterosexual	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Clinton Vote	.47	.49	.91 <sup>a</sup>	.27	.62	.48	.46 <sup>c</sup>	.49
Educational Attainment	1.93	.62	2.12	.60	1.89	.63	1.99	.62
Never Married	.21	.40	.63 <sup>a</sup>	.48	.56 <sup>b</sup>	.49	.19 <sup>c</sup>	.39
Homemaker	.05	.21	.01	.11	.01	.12	.05	.27
LGB Friends or Family	.55	.49	.86 <sup>a</sup>	.34	.77 <sup>b</sup>	.41	.55 <sup>c</sup>	.49
Warmth toward LG	63.5	52.0	90.2 <sup>a</sup>	16.2	83.7 <sup>b</sup>	22.0	62.3 <sup>c</sup>	53.3
Sees LGB Discrimination	3.51	1.06	4.08 <sup>a</sup>	.84	4.06 <sup>b</sup>	1.01	3.49 <sup>c</sup>	1.05
Support LGB Protections	3.50	.76	3.94 <sup>a</sup>	.32	3.82 <sup>b</sup>	.49	3.47 <sup>c</sup>	.77
Feminist Identity	1.50	.65	2.04 <sup>a</sup>	.75	1.98 <sup>b</sup>	.72	1.48 <sup>c</sup>	.64
Sees Trump as Sexist	1.88	.92	2.57 <sup>a</sup>	.74	2.38 <sup>b</sup>	.86	1.85 <sup>c</sup>	.92
Resent Power of Blacks	1.62	.64	1.30 <sup>a</sup>	.56	1.45 <sup>b</sup>	.60	1.64 <sup>c</sup>	.62
Sees Racist Discrimination	6.43	1.85	7.82 <sup>a</sup>	1.86	7.67 <sup>b</sup>	2.12	6.37 <sup>c</sup>	1.82
Oppose Building Border Wall	4.43	2.43	6.12 <sup>a</sup>	1.74	5.49 <sup>b</sup>	2.13	4.34 <sup>c</sup>	2.49
White Race	.74	.43	.68	.46	.64	.48	.75 <sup>c</sup>	.43
Female	.52	.49	.34 <sup>a</sup>	.48	.70 <sup>b</sup>	.46	.53 <sup>c</sup>	.49

Note: Comparisons were made between three groups (LG vs B vs H). <sup>a</sup>indicates significant F-test of lesbian and gay men compared to others ( $p < .01$ ); <sup>b</sup>indicates significant F-test of bisexual individuals compared to others ( $p < .01$ ); <sup>c</sup>indicates significant F-Test of heterosexuals compared to others ( $p < .01$ ).

distinctly more liberal than bisexual individuals, and bisexual individuals were, in turn, more liberal than heterosexuals. For the dependent variable of presidential vote, 91% of lesbian and gay men voted for Hillary Clinton; 62% of the bisexual individuals and 46% of the heterosexuals followed that tendency. For most of the conversion factors, lesbians and gay men were decidedly more liberal than bisexual individuals and bisexual individuals were more liberal than heterosexuals (supporting laws that protected GLBs against discrimination, having a feminist identity, seeing sexism in Donald Trump, resenting the power of African Americans, recognizing contemporary forms of racism, and opposes the construction of a wall along the border with Mexico). The embeddedness variables mostly followed the same order of lesbians and gay men being more connected to the GLB community and bisexual individuals displaying greater GLB ties than heterosexuals (having lesbian and gay friend or family, warmth toward lesbian and gay individuals) expect for the recognition of heterosexism. Lesbians, gay men, and bisexual individuals were equally aware of discrimination against sexual minorities and heterosexuals were much less cognizant of heterosexual privilege. Differences among the sexual identities for the selection variables were less pronounced as the only statistical difference was found for marriage patterns; the tendency to achieve educationally and being a homemaker did not significantly vary by sexuality. For the control variables, White individuals showed a greater proclivity toward heterosexuality and women were disproportionally higher with bisexual identities.

### **Sexual Differences in Binary Logistic Regressions**

Several logistic regressions analyses tested the claim that selection, embeddedness, and conversion factors would lessen or eliminate a significant relationship between

sexual identities and voting for Hillary Clinton. Log odds and standard errors are first presented for the gendered sexuality and selection variables by themselves; the second regression focuses the associations for the sexuality and embeddedness variables together, and the last regression concentrates on the role of conversion factors in the sexuality voting gaps. Finally, the sexual identities are coded through gendered sexualities because some factors might have gender-specific effects. For example, being a homemaker, educational attainment, feminist identification, and identifying Trump as a sexist might vary by gender. When using gendered sexualities, heterosexual men work as the reference category because heterosexual men were overwhelmingly attracted to Donald Trump (Strolovitch, Wong, & Proctor, 2017).

Regression 1 suggests that the selection variables did not fundamentally explain the sexuality gap in voting as lesbians, gay men, and bisexual women displayed significant preference to a Clinton vote (see model 1 in Table 2). Net the effects of education levels, marital status, and being a stay-at-home partner, lesbian women were 17 times more likely to vote for Clinton than heterosexual men; gay men were 11 times more likely to vote for Clinton ( $OR\ 17.20$  and  $11.72$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Seeing such massive odds ratios for lesbians and gay men suggests that the family and educational factors in this selection regression did not wipeout the massive differences of voting for Clinton with heterosexual men. Bisexual individuals were somewhat more aligned with Clinton in the selection variables regression, but there were some noticeable gender contingencies. Bisexual women still significantly backed Clinton more than heterosexual men ( $OR\ 2.60$ ,  $p < .01$ ) but bisexual men

**Table 2.** Binary logistic regressions for Clinton voting, gendered sexualities and selection, embeddedness, and conversion factors.

Variable	Selection		Embeddedness		Conversion	
	OR	SE	OR	SE	OR	SE
Lesbian Women	17.20***	.75	8.23**	.78	6.07	1.01
Gay Men	11.72***	.53	7.42**	.59	3.31	.74
Bisexual Women	2.60**	.34	1.24	.39	.49	.50
Bisexual Men	.93	.50	.41	.52	.06*	.77
Heterosexual Women	1.50**	.08	1.17	.09	.90	.44
Educational Attainment	1.77***	.07				
Never Married	1.47***	.07				
Homemaker	.42***	.21				
LGB Friends or Family			1.29**	.09		
Warmth toward LG			1.10***	.00		
Sees LGB discrimination			1.88***	.04		
Support LGB Protections			1.95**	.07		
Feminist Identity					1.42**	.12
Sees Trump as Sexist					4.12***	.08
Resents Power of Blacks					.69**	.11
See Racist Discrimination					1.00	.04
Oppose Building a Wall on Border					1.34**	.03
White Race	.25***	.09	.23***	.11	.28***	.05
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.14***		.34***		.75***	

Note: Odds ratios (OR), standard errors, and Nagelkerke Pseudo R<sup>2</sup> are reported in the cells. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

were less likely to vote for Clinton after controlling for education and family factors (*OR* .93). This negative relationship for bisexual men suggest that bisexual and heterosexual men differ on their Clinton vote due to different educational and marriage rates among bisexual and heterosexual men. Notable gender differences were also found among heterosexuals as heterosexual women were one-and-a-half times more likely to vote for Clinton than heterosexual men even after controlling educational attainment, marital status, and division of labor within families (*OR* 1.50,  $p < .01$ ). Finally, all of the selection factors had significant direct links to presidential voting as the people who sided with Clinton were more educated (*OR* 1.77,  $p < .001$ ), never married (*OR* 1.47,  $p < .001$ ), and rarely stay-at-home partners (*OR* .42,  $p < .001$ ). Finally, the accumulative effects of the sexuality and selection variables could account for 14% of the variance in this presidential election (as indicated by the Nagelkerke Pseudo  $R^2$ ).

The second regression explores the Clinton vote by sexual identities and embeddedness variables. Connections to the LGB community altered the association of sexualities to voting in several ways. Lesbian and gay men still were still more likely than heterosexual men to vote for Clinton (*OR* 8.23 and 7.42,  $p < .01$ ), but holding the embeddedness variables constant created smaller log odds than for the selection factors. The embeddedness variables eliminated significant differences for bisexual individuals and heterosexual men (*OR* 1.24 and .41). This suggests that the increased bisexual vote for Hillary Clinton was partially due to their greater levels of sexual minority friends, emotional bonds to lesbians-gays, and perception of heterosexist discrimination. Significant gender differences within heterosexuals also disappeared when attending to the embeddedness factors. Accordingly, the small gender gap in voting for Clinton among heterosexuals (*OR* 1.17) can partially be attributed the lesser sexual prejudice of heterosexual women. Lastly, every dimension of LGB community connections were significantly associated to voting for Clinton regardless of a person's sexual identity. The odds ratios of having GL friends, expression emotional closeness to GLs, recognizing discrimination against GLBs, and wanting laws to stop heterosexism in the work settings were between 1.95 and 1.10 were significant at least .01 alpha level. Moreover, the embeddedness factors had stronger connections to voting than the selection factors as the overall strength of the model grew to a pseudo  $R^2$  of .34

The third regression explores the suppressive qualities of the conversion factors. Although lesbians and gay men were still more likely to vote for Clinton (*OR* 6.07 and 3.31), the role of gender and racial attitudes removed significant associations with voting proclivities. This suggests that lesbians and gay men of any gender were more aligned with Hillary Clinton partially because of their opposition to conservative gender and race prescriptions. Or more precisely, a major source of lesbians and gay men siding with Hillary Clinton deals their general rejection of traditional gender prescriptions (*OR* 1.42,  $p < .01$ ), detesting Donald Trump's gender displays (*OR* 4.12,  $p < .001$ ), their absence of resentment over possible black power (*OR* .69,  $p < .01$ ) and their distaste for Trump's immigrant bashing in his

border wall declarations ( $OR .38, p < .001$ ). For bisexual individuals, the conversion factors reversed the direction of the relationship with heterosexual men, suggesting the bisexual men who lack a feminist and critical race consciousness voted more often for Trump than heterosexual men ( $OR .06, p < .05$ ). Similarly, this regression suggests that heterosexual women preferred Clinton more than heterosexual men because they were more willing to call themselves feminists, saw Trump's actions as chauvinistic, noticed racial biases, and were less enthralled by Trump's border wall stories. Interestingly, the direction of Trump voting changed for heterosexual women in this regression, which means that heterosexual women who disavowed feminism, minimized Trump's sexism, downplayed White advantages, and preferred restrictions to immigration were slightly more likely to vote against Hillary Clinton for president than heterosexual men who held such positions ( $OR .90$ ). Last, with odds ratios of 4.12 to .75, the variables of feminist identities, seeing sexism in Trump's treatment of women, fearing Black power, and opposing the border wall had significant direct links to Clinton voting and the goodness of fit score rose to pseudo  $R^2$  of .75 ( $p < .001$ ).

## Discussion

This study showed that sexual identities are related to voting practices. Like previous research, this study reveals a tendency of GLBs to vote for Democratic presidential candidates (Lewis et al., 2011; Schaffner, MacWilliams, & Nteta, 2017). However, sexuality effects are not totally universal, because gender identities informed and slightly modified the voting tendencies of people within a given sexuality. Support for the Democratic presidential candidate was the strongest among people who have more than one disadvantaged status. Lesbian women were especially likely to vote for Hillary Clinton, but gay men were also overwhelmingly Clinton voters. Bisexual individuals were not as strong of Clinton backers as gay men and lesbians, but bisexual women mostly chose Clinton over the other options. Bisexual men and heterosexual women were mostly divided on their vote and heterosexual men were Trump's biggest stalwarts. These findings would not surprise feminist scholars who have argued that lesbian women are consistently more liberal than gay or bisexual men (Anderson & Jennings, 2010; Brooks & Quina, 2009; Herek et al., 2010; Szymanski, & Chung, 2003; White 2006). Moreover, this work also confirms the notion that heterosexual women were divided in their voting preference and heterosexual men are overwhelmingly attracted to male candidates who typified the practices of old-style racism and hegemonic masculinity (Anderson & Jennings, 2010; Haywood & Swank, 2008; White, 2006).

After recognizing the role of gendered sexualities in predicting voter preferences, this study employed a political distinctiveness model to explain sexuality divisions in voting. This is the first study to utilize this model in the 2016 elections, and this model provided some interesting insights (Lewis et al., 2011 studied political distinctiveness for the 2000 election). The blocks of selection, embeddedness,

and conversion factors did not have equivalent effects on the gay and lesbian alliance with Clinton. Conversion factors, or the ways that being a sexual minority can influence one's interpretation of race, class, and gender hierarchies, became the best explanation of greater Democratic tendencies among sexual minorities. Lesbians, gay men, and bisexual women were more inclined to select Hillary Clinton than heterosexual men because of their greater commitment to feminist goals, disgust of Trump's sexist antics, displeasure with racism, respect of Black activists, and distrust of punitive migration politics. Conversely, heterosexual men were especially pleased by Trump's macho ways and screeds about improper Black activism and undocumented "criminals" who were "stealing their jobs" (Blair, 2017; Rocha, Sabetta & Clark, 2017). Accordingly, this constellation of retrograded assessments of racial and gender problems were a crucial linchpin in the sexuality divide during this presidential election. That is, sexual minorities were more likely to vote for Clinton than heterosexual men because of their deep suspicions of current racial and gender order, as well as their contempt for Trump's derisive comments about women, people of color, and undocumented workers.

With racial and gender sentiments being a crux of lesbian and gay male support for Hillary Clinton, the other explanations of the sexuality voting gap were less fruitful. The embeddedness position insists that sexual minorities prefer the Democratic Party because they belong to GLB social networks and groups that support liberal causes and progressive social change. It was true that lesbians and gay men had more social ties to other lesbians and gay men than heterosexuals, but affinity with the GLB community, being conscious of GLB mistreatment, and wanting laws to end heterosexist discrimination were not the major factors behind the lesbian and gay democratic voice choice. On the other hand, connections to the GLB community erased significant links of bisexuality to the Clinton vote. This suggests that bisexual individuals are not inherently more connected to the Democrats than heterosexuals, but rather that bisexual individuals gravitate slightly toward the Democratic party because of they have more same-sex friendships and reject heterosexism more than heterosexuals.

Knowing why the embeddedness measure had a smaller effect on lesbians and gay men is beyond the privy of the data assembled. Egan, himself, found little embeddedness effects in his empirical studies (Egan, 2012) but other studies have found that GLB political distinctiveness can be the result of living in LGB neighborhoods, talking politics with sexual minorities, or belonging to GLB advocacy groups (Duncan 1999; Lewis et al., 2011; McClendon, 2014; Swank & Fahs, 2017). Accordingly, researchers might discover stronger embeddedness effects if they use these factors in future studies of sexual identities and presidential voting.

Finally, this study tested the selection argument that sexual minorities are drawn to democratic candidates because of their educational and familial backgrounds. Although sexual minorities were less likely to marry than heterosexuals, this fact did not explain the tendency of GLBs to vote for Hillary Clinton. The reasons for this are multiple. Getting and staying married may not reinforce gender



conservatism among heterosexuals as much as expected. However, longitudinal studies suggest that heterosexual families are less responsive to feminist demands than workplaces or schools (England, 2010). Conversely, it is possible that lesbian marriages and domestic partnerships could circumvent the conservative elements of marriage and create more equitable families (Kurdek, 2007). Future research should determine if these other reasons can explain the lack of a marital status effect for GLB voting in a liberal direction. Finally, this survey did not establish that sexual minorities were better educated than heterosexuals and this factor had little sway over sexuality voting differences.

It is possible that other selection factors could have generated stronger results. Egan (2008) emphasized the importance of childhood political socialization because out GLB youth have more liberal parents than children who do not disclose a GLB identity (D'Amico & Julien, 2012). Similarly, educational factors could have had a stronger effect if researchers traced the content in their classes. GLBs might enroll in more multicultural classes that contest heterosexist tenets more than heterosexuals.

Every research design has strengths and weaknesses. On the positive side, data was gathered in a large random sample right after the November 2016 election. Moreover, this study uniquely compared voting gender differences within three gendered sexual identities. Studies on political activism often collapse GLBs into a single cluster and ignored gender differences within sexual identities (Egan, 2012; Schaffner & Senic, 2006; Swank & Fahs, 2017). Collapsing GLB interest into a single block may lead to stronger political coalitions (Murib, 2017), but it is clear that all of these groups have different commitments to Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. ANES also had adequate measures for different aspects of selection, embeddedness, and conversion processes. Nevertheless, embeddedness factors might have had an even stronger effect if the legal protections measures went beyond workplace conditions. Moreover, some of the measures of selection factors can be improved upon. Use of the term *homemaker* might be too archaic and the measure of marital status lacked a domestic partnership option. Finally, I had initially wanted to address race, gender, and sexuality interactions in the analysis, but such combinations made many cell sizes that were too small for a proper regression analysis (i.e., Latina bisexual women or gay Black men).

In the end, this study reveals sexuality, gender, and race cleavages in voter presidential preferences. Lesbians and gay men were overwhelmingly behind Hillary Clinton, mostly due to their commitment to gender and racial justice. Moreover, they were especially bothered by the sexist posture of Donald Trump and his insistence on restricting immigration of people from Central and South America. On the other hand, heterosexual men seemed to welcome these reactionary messages as they voted for Trump. In fact, much of the White heterosexual vote for Trump can be seen as a backlash by people who previously saw themselves as privileged but now felt threatened or victimized by the advances of progressive social movements and liberal social change (Rocha, Sabetta & Clark, 2017).

As a president, Donald Trump has already ushered in a large number of dangerous laws and presidential mandates. In one July day of 2017, Trump announced a ban on transgender people serving in the military, nominated a vocal opponents of gay rights to international ambassador of religion position, and had the Justice Department argue in a private lawsuit the protection of the 1964 civil rights act does not apply to lesbians or gay men (Shear & Savage, 2017). However many of Trump's efforts have been contested by Democratic governors, liberal advocacy groups, and political protests from the left. Demonstrations and rallies have been held over Trump's travel bans, his Supreme Court nominee, the attack on science, and environmental deregulation. The biggest of these protests was the Women's March, in which over 4 million people attended 653 feminist rallies in the first month of Trump's presidency (Chenworth & Pressman, 2017). Although we do not have systematic studies of who attended these protests just yet, one survey found that 37% of protesters were attending for GLBT rights (Dow, Fisher, & Ray, 2017). As a final example, when I attended the Women's March in Los Angeles, I saw a large contingency of people wearing red hats that countered Trump's mantra with their own eloquent form of resistance: "Make America Gay Again."

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