Women and the 2016 Democratic Presidential Nomination
February 12, 2016

Michelle Torres and Steven S. Smith
Washington University

In the days before the 2016 New Hampshire primary, former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and leading feminist Gloria Steinem were critical of young women for supporting Senator Bernie Sanders over former Secretary of State and Senator Hillary Clinton. Albright told a New Hampshire crowd that "there's a special place in hell for women who don't help each other," while Steinem told talk show host Bill Maher, "When you're young, you're thinking: 'Where are the boys?' The boys are with Bernie."[1] Clinton did not publicly acknowledged a problem with young women, but she addressed the issue of support among young adults many times.

Albright and Steinem were reacting to polling from Gallup, NBC-Marist, and others that showed that a majority of young Democratic adults, men and women, were supporting Sanders over Clinton. We were curious about support for Clinton and Sanders by men and women nationally, but we were wondering what the effect of age and gender were in a statistical estimate that controls for other considerations: ethnicity, education, and self-reported ideology. *The American Panel Survey*, which has a national probability sample, has the relevant data for December 2015.

Table 1 shows the statistical estimates for self-identified Democrats in the national sample. In the first column we can observe that the age and female coefficients are as predicted—Clinton attracts disproportionate support from older people and from women, controlling for ethnicity, education, and ideology.[2] She also attracts disproportionate support from black Democrats. Clinton's supporters have more education and are less liberal, but these differences with Sander's supporters are not statistically significant.

What about young men and women? The second column of Table 1 includes an estimate for a variable that is age multiplied by gender. The associated coefficient tells us whether the relationship between age and candidate preference is different for the two genders. It is not. That is, age has about the same relationship to candidate preference for Democratic men and women.

Table 1: Determinants of Support for Sanders among Democrats, December 2015.		
Age	-0.049* (0.009)	-0.039* (0.013)
Female	-0.523* (0.257)	0.504 (0.891)
Age * Female		-0.022 (0.018)
Black	-0.838* (0.368)	-0.833* (0.369)
Hispanic	-0.676 (0.363)	-0.660 (0.363)
Other	-0.190 (0.509)	-0.093 (0.509)
Education	-0.002 (0.063)	-0.016 (0.064)
Conservatism	-0.039 (0.092)	-0.050 (0.093)
Constant	1.957 (0.982)	1.614 (1.018)
N	443	443
AIC	359.434	360.499

Dependent Variable: 1-Sanders; 0=Clinton

Sample consists of panelists identifying as Democrats who participated in the December 2015 wave of TAPS. Statistically significant relationships indicated by * (* $p<0.05$). Estimates obtained using weighted logistic regression.[3] Standard errors in parentheses.

The statistical estimates reported in Table 1 allow us to calculate the probability of supporting Clinton (or Sanders) by age and gender, accounting for the effect of the other variables. The probabilities are illustrated in Figure 1. There are two lines, one for women and one for men, representing the probabilities that a subject in each group has of voting for Sanders depending on her/his age. Plainly, young men and women under 30 are predicted to support Sanders while others are predicted to supported Clinton. The predicted values for men and women are remarkably similar, although, in the older age groups, there is somewhat less support for Sanders among women than among men.

Age trumps gender in support for Clinton and Sanders among Democrats. Clinton performs disproportionately well among women overall, among older Democrats, and among blacks, but she loses badly among young men and women.

Figure 1. Predicted Probabilities of Support for Sanders, by Age and Gender, December 2015.
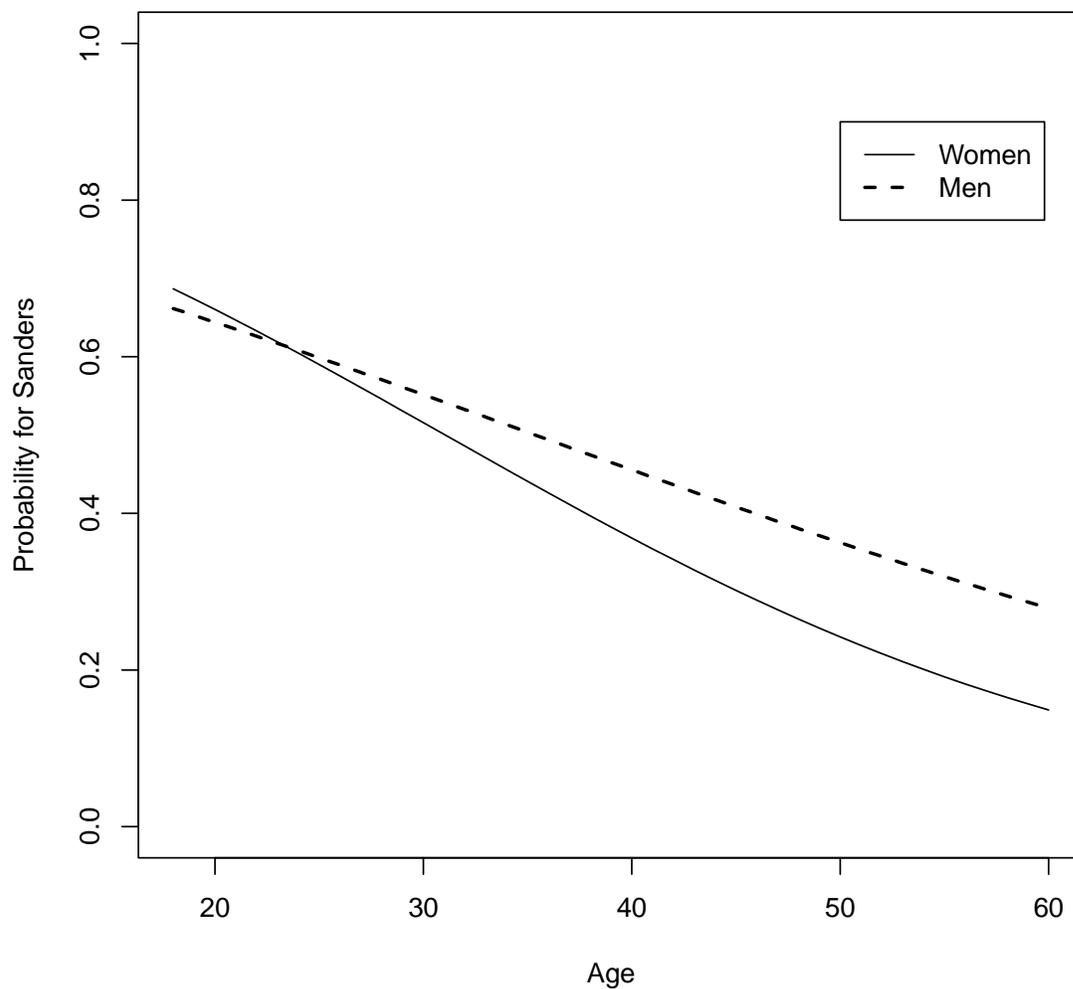
Note: Lines are predicted probability of supporting Sanders based on the equation reported in Table 1. Shaded zones show the confidence interval for each line. The overlapping confidence intervals indicate no statistical differences between men and women.

About the Authors

Michelle Torres is a PhD student in Political Science at Washington University in St. Louis. Steven S. Smith is the Kate M. Gregg Distinguished Professor of Social Sciences, Professor of Political Science, and Director of Weidenbaum Center on the Economy, Government, and Public Policy at Washington University in St. Louis.

About *The American Panel Survey*

The American Panel Survey (TAPS) is a monthly online panel survey of over 2,200 people. Panelists were recruited as a national probability sample with an addressed-based sampling frame. The survey is conducted by GfK Knowledge Networks for the Weidenbaum Center at Washington University. Individuals without Internet access were provided a laptop and internet service at the expense of the Weidenbaum Center. In a typical month, about 1,700 of the panelists complete the online survey. Analyses in this report use weights based on CPS benchmarks. Technical information about TAPS is available at taps.wustl.edu.

Notes

1. Quoted in http://www.nytimes.com/live/new-hampshire-primary-2016-election/hillary-clinton-backer-urges-pulling-gloria-steinem-and-madeleine-albright-from-campaigning/
2. Education is measured as the number of years of education; ideology is a 7-point scale that ranges from Very Liberal to Very Conservative.
3. The weights are based on sampling weights and demographic characteristics such as gender, age, education, ethnicity, region, metropolitan status, income and internet use. For more technical information, please refer to the following website http://taps.wustl.edu/technical