

## Voting for Equality: The Gender gap in Voting in the 2013 Israeli Elections

### Abstract

Israeli women hold some more hawkish issue positions compared with those of men yet they support center and left parties at higher rates than men do. We address this puzzle by examining both issue positions and the salience of these positions in determining vote choice. Drawing on INES data from the 2013 elections, we show that compared with men, women support greater role of government in the economy. We also find that the economy affects women's vote choice more strongly than that of men. Security and foreign affairs, however, affect both groups in a similar way. Counterfactual analysis that isolates the effect of issue positions and their salience shows that differential salience rather than differences in issue positions drives most of the gender gap in vote choice. Lastly, we reflect on and offer an account of the differences.

## 1. Introduction

Perhaps the most striking result of the 2013 Israeli elections was the overwhelming success of the Likud party, and in particular its leader, Benjamin Netanyahu, above and beyond all predictions. An avid advocate of neo-liberal economic policy with a long record of dismantlement of the public sector and promotion of privatization, Netanyahu was broadly supported by the public in the first elections following the 2011 mass protests calling for social justice. This outcome, consistent with the truism that foreign affairs and security are the epicenter of Israeli politics, soon became the focus of attention in both the media and the public. When examined in depth, however, a curious gap of twelve percentage points in support for Likud Beiteinu between men and women is revealed.

This gap is not specific to the Likud party. As we establish below, women supported center and left parties at higher rates than men did with a cumulative gap of thirteen percentage points. The gap is even more curious when policy positions are considered: women hold some more hawkish positions on foreign affairs and security than their male counterparts. Why, then, do women support parties whose policies are more dovish while holding positions that in some instances are more hawkish compared to men?

In this paper, we address this puzzle. We contend that not only do women and men hold different policy positions, but also that positions translate differently to vote choice for women and for men. In particular, women are more egalitarian in their economic preferences and support policies that favor workers and families at higher rates than men do. Moreover, economic issues affect women's vote more strongly than that of men. Drawing on pre- and post-election surveys from the Israel National Election study, we find that women leaning in socialist direction are substantially more likely to support left and center parties compared with men who hold similar positions, while on the right side of the economic spectrum the vote is less polarized by gender. We further find that it is the difference in salience of economic issues rather than the difference in positions that accounts for most of the gap: economic positions affect women's votes more dramatically than they affect the votes of men.

The paper proceeds as follows. The next section provides a brief review of the literature of the gender gap in mass attitudes and voting behavior and lays out our argument and hypotheses. The following section presents our empirical analysis, examining attitudes and factors affecting vote choice. The final section discusses the finding and offers some explanations.

## 2. Gender Gaps in Israel and Beyond

Students of mass behavior have devoted much attention to the study of gender gaps in both attitudes and voting behavior in Western democracies. Analyses show that in the 1950s and 1960s women tended to support parties whose positions were conservative at higher rates than men did (the traditional gender gap). Along with a process of secularization (Inglehart and Norris 2000), during the past five decades the gap has narrowed and in a majority of western democracies even reversed (e.g., Giger 2009), with women backing more liberal parties than men (the modern gender gap).<sup>1</sup> Studies of political attitudes show that this is not limited to behavior. There is a secular trend in the gender gap in partisanship (Norrander 1999) and presently, there is a gender gap in policy preferences so that women support more progressive values compared to men (e.g., Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006).

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that while most studies attribute the change in gender gap to structural or cultural changes pertaining to women's lives, some (e.g., Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999, Norrander 1999) focus on change in voting behavior of men.

The literature offers several competing and overlapping explanations for these secular trends and in particular for the shift from the traditional to the modern gender gap in vote choice. Perhaps the most often empirically tested set of explanations are ones that focus on structural changes in the economy and the family. These changes, the argument goes, reshape interests of women compared to those of men and in turn affect their political behavior. In particular, studies show that increased levels of women's participation in the paid labor market leads to greater support for social-democratic values among women (Edlund & Pande 2002, Manza & Brooks 1998, Montgomery & Stuart 1999). Similarly, increases in the proportion of women employed in the public sector affects women's support for a large public sector (Andersen 1999; Bergh 2007, Box-Steffensmeier et al. 2004, Clark & Clark 1996, Deitch 1988, Erie & Rein 1988). Changes in family structure and in particular the possibility of divorce (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006) and the climbing rate of single mothers (Edlund & Pande 2002) lead to the differentiation of interests of women from those of men. Lastly, greater dependence of women on government welfare programs has shaped women's economic interests separately from those of men (Box-Steffensmeier et al. 2004; Drake 2007). If in the past men worked outside the home while women invested their efforts in nonmarket family work, today, with increasing divorce rates and female labor market participation, women are concerned about their labor market outside options (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006). Specifically they develop political preferences for welfare state policies and childcare policies that would facilitate their participation in the labor market (Manza & Brooks 1998).

An alternative approach focuses on cultural change. Inglehart and Norris' (2000, 2003) developmental theory harnesses the above structural changes to explain cultural changes that are the foundation of the shift to the modern gender gap. The authors posit that structural reforms in the paid labor market improved educational opportunities for women. Additionally, changes in family structure led to changes in values and to a convergence of gender roles, making women more prone to work outside the home and consequently more aware of gender inequalities in the paid labor market. Two of the most significant value shifts are the transition from material to post-material values and secularization processes (Greenberg 2001, Manow and Emmenegger 2012, Norris and Inglehart 2004). Both these shifts not only foster liberal attitudes but also directly affect women's political behavior.

Studies of the gender gap in policy positions and political attitudes find polarized preferences by gender both in content and in the relative weights of their components. Crowder-Meyer (2007) finds that candidate evaluation by men is affected by foreign affairs and security issues more than that by women, who tend to give domestic and economic issues greater weight. Consistently, Kaufmann and Petrocik (1999) show that the salience of domestic affairs is higher in affecting women's vote compared to that of men, and conversely, foreign affairs affect men's vote more strongly than women's. As for positions themselves, Eichenberg and Stoll (2012) find that women are less supportive of security spending and more supportive of social spending compared with men. Gidengil (1995) finds that compared to men, women are more likely to express concern and responsibility for the well-being of others and especially toward the less privileged. Consequently, they tend to hold more liberal policy positions on social and economic matters.

The literature offers two explanations for gender-based polarization in political attitudes. The first draws on socially constructed expectations and roles. According to this explanation, the difference stems from the expectation that women show concern for others and help ones in need. This is consistent with the fact that in practice women spend more time caregiving both at home and in the marketplace (Beutel and Marini 1995,

Gidengil 1995), and hence the assumption is that gender roles translate to differences in political preferences.

The second explanation focuses on difference in the interests of men and women. Since women on average benefit from welfare programs more than men do, they tend to support these programs at higher rates (Schaffner 2005). The particular combination of increase in divorce rates and decline in marriage rates on the one hand and increase in women's participation in the labor force on the other hand crystalizes women's interests to oppose the retrenchment of the state and its responsibilities of caregiving for children, the ill, and the elderly (Edlund and Pande 2002, Finseraas, Jakobsson and Kotsadam 2012).

In the Israeli context, the gender gap in voting received little attention. It is only in recent elections that the gender of candidates is explicitly at the forefront, and women voters have emerged as a defined constituency. Shamir and Gedalya-Lavy (2015) find evidence for the modern gap as of 1996. They show this gap to be significant in the 2013 elections even when controlling for the usual suspects predicting voting behavior in Israel. The authors find a positive correlation between a preference for women (rather than men) in politics and support for left parties. They also find that such preference is both more prevalent among women and has stronger effect on vote choice of women compared to that of men. They conclude that part of the explanation for the modern gender gap in the 2013 elections can be attributed to the importance that women ascribe to gendered descriptive representation in politics.

Although security and foreign affairs is the principal policy cleavage in Israeli politics (Arian & Shamir 2008, Rahat 2007), the economic dimension took center stage in the mass protests of summer 2011. The 2013 elections were the first elections to take place after what has come to be known as **the** social protest. Indeed, more than eighty percent of respondents in the INES survey considered the 2013 elections to be mainly about economic issues brought up in the 2011 protests<sup>2</sup>. It seems that domestic politics in the months leading to the 2013 elections highlighted economic issues, and in particular inequality, housing, and public spending, which consequently gave salience to that issue dimension in the elections.

Whether due to social expectations or interests, these documented differences can be drawn upon to explain voting behavior of women compared to that of men in the Israeli case. In particular, we seek to explain the discrepancy between women's relatively hawkish positions on foreign affairs and their support for parties promoting dovish solutions compared with men.

Our first hypothesis is thus:

H1. Compared with men, women hold social-democratic positions.

Our second and third hypotheses are thus:

H2. Economic policy affects women's vote more strongly than men's, while

H3. Issues of foreign policy affect men's vote more strongly than that of women.

We expect to find differences, then, both in the policy positions and in their translation to vote choice. We now turn to examining these hypotheses.

### **3. Our Data**

We utilize data from the 2013 Israel National Election Study (INES). The survey, conducted in Hebrew, Arabic, and Russian, covered 1,718 respondents, a representative sample of the

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<sup>2</sup> See section 4.2.

adult Israeli population. The design of the study was a pre-election study of which a substantial sub-sample was also interviewed post-election (N=1292). Interviews were conducted between December 2012 (pre-election) and February 2013 (post-election). Due to data constraints and particularly the combination of the number of respondents and the parties they support, our analysis below does not include Arab respondents.

Our variables of interest in our analysis are attitudes and vote choice. For the former, we focus on two dimensions: security and foreign affairs and economic policy. We also include in our analysis state and religion – a key cleavage in Israeli politics (Arian & Shamir 2008). Following Shamir and [Gedalya-Lavy \(2015\)](#), we expect to find positive correlation between support for separation of state and religion and support for center and left parties, though we remain agnostic as for the differential gendered effect of this dimension on vote choice. We measure vote choice utilizing the post-election wave of the survey. The high fragmentation of the Israeli party system, combined with data limitation, constrain our ability to analyze vote choice party by party in a fully specified model. We thus dichotomize vote choice to right and center-left, keeping in mind that both (and in particular the latter category) contain a broad ideological range. Importantly, we take a conservative approach and conduct the dichotomization on the security-foreign affairs dimension, thereby making it harder for our second hypothesis to find traction in the data. Thus, the right category includes Likud Beiteinu, HaBayit HaYehudi, Shas, and Yahadut HaTora, and the center and left includes Yesh Atid, Hatnuah, Labor Party, Meretz and Kadima.

#### **4. Empirical analysis: voting for equality**

Our empirical analysis takes place in several stages. We first establish the gender gap in voting. We then shift to analyzing gender gap in issue positions on the three policy dimensions. We then estimate a vote-choice model including, among other variables, the three dimensions (a single indicator per dimension) and conduct an analysis of the likelihood of supporting center-left as a function of positions on these dimensions. Based on the results of this analysis, we proceed to analyze the effect of positions on the economic dimension and their translation to vote choice utilizing a counterfactual analysis.

##### **4.1 The gender gap in vote choice**

Table 1 presents aggregate figures of vote choice by women and men. Entries in the table are the proportions of female and male voters who supported each party out of all female and male voters. The table includes all parties that gained a seat in the Knesset with the exception of Arab (and Jewish-Arab) parties, which are omitted because, as we explain above, we had to exclude Arab respondents due to data limitations. The shadowed rows are parties which we coded as center or left.

The table shows a clear pattern. Examine the parties on the right first. For every two women supporting Likud Beiteinu, the joint list of Likud and Yisrael Beiteinu, three men support this list, with an overall gap in rate of support of twelve percentage points. Consistently, albeit more weakly by comparison, the religious party Habayit HaYehudi and the orthodox party Shas show one percentage point gap both while Yahadut HaTora shows one percentage point gap in the opposite direction. The gap on the left and center complements the picture. Each of Kadima, Hatnuah, Yesh Atid, Labor, and Meretz show greater support by women with the gap ranging from one to five percentage points. Overall, and consistent with what is observed comparatively, our data indicate that in the 2013 Israeli elections there was a statistically significant thirteen percentage point modern gender

gap which also appeared in almost all parties examined – men support right parties more than women do.<sup>3</sup>

- Table 1 -

#### 4.2 Gender differences in political attitudes: hawkish women, socialist women

In line with previous studies (Shamir & Arian 1999), we include three policy dimensions around which key cleavages of Israeli politics are organized: security and foreign affairs, the economy, and state and religion. We utilize multiple indicators to measure each as described below (question wording of all items are available on Appendix A1).

**Security and foreign affairs.** We draw on three survey items on the security—foreign affairs dimension. These include (i) consent to the establishment of a Palestinian state, (ii) withdrawal from Arab neighborhoods in Jerusalem, and (iii) willingness to evacuate all settlements. Each of the three items has four categories. Here, too, we focus on the top two categories, the proportion supporting or strongly supporting the statement (see question wording in Appendix A1).

**The economy.** For economic positions, our analysis draws on four items. The first is agree/disagree statement regarding perceptions of government responsibility (“the government should make sure that everyone has work and reasonable standard of living”). Additionally, we utilize (ii) a spending battery in a variety of policy areas, and (iii) an item about willingness to have taxes raised. Lastly, for a more general predisposition, we measured (iv) support for socialist vs. capitalist approaches. In this four-category item we calculated the proportion supporting the two positions leaning in a social-democratic direction.

**State – religion.** The survey offered two items for measurement of attitudes on state and religion. The first is a four-point agreement scale that examines whether the state should make sure that public life is conducted according to Jewish religious tradition. Coding it, we focus on the top two agreement categories. The second asks whether democratic or Jewish law should prevail in case of tension between these principles. We focus on the proportion of respondents who think democracy should prevail.

Table 2 presents political positions of men and women on each policy item. The table presents several interesting findings. Let us begin with security – foreign affairs. On all three policy items, and perhaps contrary to what one might expect, women hold more hawkish positions compared to men. Support for a Palestinian state is lower among women (fifty-seven percentage points compared to sixty-three among men), as is willingness to evacuate settlements (sixty percent compared to seventy-one percent among men).<sup>4</sup> Finally, support for withdrawal from Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem is slightly lower among women (forty-one percentage points compared to forty-five among men), though this difference does not reach standard levels of statistical significance.

The economic dimension shows a different picture. Women perceive government responsibility for the standard of living of citizens as slightly broader than men do (albeit results are not statistically significant). Women also support greater spending than men do

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<sup>3</sup> The gap is calculated on respondents included in our multivariate model presented in Table 3 below (N=691).

<sup>4</sup> For analogous results regarding gender gap in attitudes about immigration in Europe see Hartevelde et al (2015).

on education, health, unemployment stipends, and creating places of employment, as well as elderly stipends, children, and housing, although results for the latter three items do not reach standard levels of statistical significance. At the same time, only twenty percent of women compared to thirty-nine percent of men expressed willingness to have their taxes raised to fund such causes. The discrepancy between willingness to raise spending and unwillingness to raise taxes might be due to the income gap between women and men.

Lastly, on a general question of support for a socialist vs. capitalist approach women support and strongly support a socialist approach at substantially higher rates (seventy-two compared with fifty-nine percentage points among men). In addition to these positions, it is worth mentioning that women, more than men, see the 2013 elections as being about the 2011 social protests (eighty-seven percentage points compared to eighty among men, not reported in table).<sup>5</sup>

The state and religion dimension shows mixed findings. Both women and men support separation of state and religion to the same degree (fifty-eight percentage points). When asked whether democracy should prevail in cases of tension between democracy and Jewish religious law fewer women respond positively compared with men (seventy-one and seventy-seven percentage points, respectively,  $p$ -value = 0.126).

This comparison provides an initial indication as to the mechanism underlying different vote choice by women and men. Israeli women hold positions more hawkish than those of men but – in line with our first hypothesis -- they also think that government should have greater role in the economy compared to men. If the two dimensions were negatively correlated in terms of ideological placement of parties in the Israeli parliament, this discrepancy would not have challenged voters and this could have been the end of our investigation. Given, however, that positions of political parties in Israel are positively and strongly (albeit not perfectly) correlated along the two dimensions -- dovish parties tend to hold more egalitarian positions compared to those holding hawkish positions -- an inevitable tension ensues. After all, the electoral choice boils down to a single ballot with a single party. We now turn to analyzing how these positions affect vote choice.

- Table 2 here -

### **4.3 How women and men vote**

To investigate the effect of issue positions on the gender gap in voting, we estimated a vote choice model using Logistic regression. As explained above, our dependent variable is dichotomized to center-left and right. We examine four models. The first, a reference only, includes gender alone on the right hand-side. Model 2 adds respondents' demographic background. The last two models incorporate respondents' issue positions.

Not surprisingly, our baseline model confirms the descriptive statistics reported above. Women are more likely to support center-left parties than men do. And the gender coefficient (0.51), once converted to predicted probability of voting left, shows a gap of thirteen percentage points between women and men. The background variables incorporated into Model 2 are consistent with previous studies (Arian & Shamir 1999). These include age, education, religiosity (measured as observance on a four-category scale), rooms per person in the household which in the Israeli context is a customary

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<sup>5</sup> Respondents were presented with six alternatives regarding the focus of the elections: the social protests, negotiations with Palestinians, economic policies, Iran, security threats and military draft.

measure of income, and respondent's (and her father's) country of origin. On the latter, we make a distinction between four groups: (i) second generation Israeli born (reference category), (ii) those who immigrated (or their father immigrated) from the former Soviet Union, (iii) from Asia/Africa, and (iv) from Europe or America.

Models 3 and 4 incorporate issue positions on the three dimensions. Due to limitations of statistical power, we draw on a single indicator for each dimension. In particular, we include support for the formation of a Palestinian state on the foreign affairs – security dimension, support for socialist vs. capitalist approaches on the economic dimension, and separation of state and religion. We also incorporate self-definition as a feminist ("How much do you define yourself as feminist?") as a control variable. While feminist positions are not the focus of this study, they may be relevant for the gender gap in voting (Shamir and Gedalya-Lavy 2015) and correlate with gender and hence should be included on the right hand side. Model 4 allows us to test our hypothesis regarding attitudinal and salience differences in detail. In it, we interact each of the three positions with gender. Doing so, we allow them each to have a gender-specific coefficient. In substantive terms, we allow the effect of issue positions on the vote to vary between women and men. Thus, the model can be written as:

$$(1) \text{Logit}(CL) = \mathbf{X}\beta + \varepsilon$$

where  $CL$  is the group of center and left parties,  $\varepsilon$  is a random component, and

$$(2) \mathbf{X}\beta = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{gender} + \beta_2 \text{issue1} + \beta_3 \text{issue2} + \beta_4 \text{issue3} + \beta_5 \text{gender} * \text{issue1} + \beta_6 \text{gender} * \text{issue2} + \beta_7 \text{gender} * \text{issue3} + \sum_{j=8}^K \beta_j z_j$$

where  $z_i$  is a vector of background variables specified above.

Results of this latter component are as expected, whereby religiosity increases one's likelihood of supporting the right, while higher income (spacious home) and feminist values increase the likelihood of supporting center-left. Also, family ancestry from the USSR and education have a negative and positive effect, respectively, on one's likelihood of supporting center and left leaning parties, albeit this effect dissipates when issue positions are included (Models 3 and 4).

- Table 3 here -

To examine the effect of issue positions on the vote, and in particular a differential effect between women and men, we calculated the predicted probability of voting left-center based on Model 4 for different values of issue positions for both women and men.<sup>6</sup> We then compared the probabilities between women and men and across positions. Each such predicted probability, then, is calculated as:

$$(3) \widehat{Pr}(y = CL) = \frac{1}{1 + \exp(-\mathbf{X}\beta)}$$

We let each of the issue position variables take the values of one through four while holding all other variables constant at their general mean. We then examine the change in the predicted probability as gender, issue positions, and the gender-specific salience coefficients change.

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<sup>6</sup> Although the three interaction coefficients do not reach standard levels of statistical significance (see Table 2), it is possible for the marginal effect to be significant for some values and non-significant for others (Brambor et al. 2006).

Figure 1 presents the results of this analysis. On the vertical axis is the probability of supporting center-left, and on the horizontal axis is the position on foreign affairs – security (panel a), the economy (panel b) and state and religion (panel c). The solid line represents women’s predicted vote and the dashed line represents that of men (ninety-five percent confidence intervals in parentheses). Let us start with foreign affairs. As expected, as the position becomes more dovish (consent to the formation of a Palestinian state), the probability of supporting center and left parties substantially increases: from about 0.2 for those objecting to the formation of a Palestinian state to about 0.8 for those supporting it. In all positions women are more likely to support center and left parties compared to men, but the change in probability is almost identical in magnitude for women and men, suggesting that contrary to our hypothesis, the effect of this policy dimension on vote is similar for the two groups.

The effect of economic positions shows a somewhat different picture. As one’s predisposition becomes more socialist, the likelihood of supporting center and left parties increases. The effect, however, is substantially larger among women than men. While among avid supporters of capitalist policies women are more inclined to turn to center and left parties (Pr=.45 for women compared with Pr=.22 for men), among those supporting socialist policies the vote is more polarized (Pr=.79 for women compared with Pr=.42 for men). Consistent with our second hypothesis, then, economic policy is more salient in women’s decision making compared to that of men.

Lastly, the effect of state and religion tells yet a somewhat mixed story. As expected, women and men are both more likely to support center and left parties if they support separation of state and religion. While the predicted effect is stronger among men than it is among women, the difference does not reach standard levels of statistical significance. This is somewhat curious given that in the Israeli context women are disadvantaged by the merging of state and religion.

To summarize, all three policy domains have a significant (both substantively and statistically) effect on vote choice, and among them the foreign affairs – security dimension has the strongest effect (see Shamir and Gedalya-Lavy 2015 for similar finding). While this effect is similar in magnitude among both men and women, women’s vote choice is more dramatically affected by their economic tendency than that of men.

- Figure 1 here -

The analysis so far demonstrates several things. First, although women hold more hawkish positions than those of men, they support parties whose positions are more dovish. The effect of foreign affairs and security on vote choice, however, is similar among women and men. Second, on the economic dimension, women hold more socialist views compared to those of men *and* these views translate more strongly to vote choice. Lastly, on state-religion, women and men hold similar views, and their effect on vote choice is not significantly different. Given this configuration, in the next step we focus on the economic dimension. In particular, we isolate the effect of positions and their translation to vote choice and analyze the effect they each have on the gender gap in voting. To this aim, we conducted a counterfactual analysis which we present in Table 4. This analysis is similar to that conducted by Kaufmann and Petrocik (1999). In their article, the authors isolate the effects of both attitudes on the welfare state and their translation to vote choice (and partisanship) in the US.

First, as a reference, we calculated the predicted probability of supporting center and left parties for both men and women, letting each group has its own average position and salience coefficient and holding all other variables at their general mean. The predicted gender gap due to this dimension alone is large – thirty-seven percent. This is due to the fact that effects of other factors, such as the hawkish positions of women compared to those of men that presumably pull for a gender gap in the opposite direction, are muted here (for a similar interpretation, see Shamir and Gedalya 2015). Thus, the figures presented in this section should not be taken at face value, but rather as hypothetical and isolated effects.

To isolate the effect of difference in policy positions, we calculated the predicted probability of supporting center and left parties for both men and women, this time imposing on both groups identical salience of economic positions while letting each group score its group average position on economic policy (and holding all other variables constant at their general mean). We repeat this exercise twice, imposing either women’s salience or that of men on both female and male respondents. Thus, while the two groups have the same issue salience (either that of women or that of men), they differ in their positions. We therefore refer to the difference in predicted probabilities as positions effect.<sup>7</sup>

Not surprisingly, for both groups the likelihood of supporting center and left parties is higher when assigned the salience of women. At the same time, the gap between the probability of women and that of men to support center – left is not statistically significant. It seems, therefore, that economic positions alone do not account for the gender gap in voting.

To isolate the salience effect we repeat this procedure, this time imposing identical economic position on both groups and letting each have its own estimated salience. The last section of the table presents this analysis. The estimated gender gap in voting due to the difference in salience is about thirty-three percentage points when positions of men are imposed on both groups and hardly changes when positions of women are imposed. We thus infer that even if men and women had identical views on desired economic policy, the difference in the translation of their positions to vote choice would have resulted in substantial gender gap in voting. Women’s economic positions simply translate more powerfully to vote choice than those of men.

- Table 4 here -

## 5. Discussion

This analysis has focused on unpacking the reasons for the gender gap in vote choice in the 2013 general elections in Israel. It first establishes the existence of a modern gender gap of thirteen percentage points in 2013. It then seeks to link this pattern to differences in political attitudes. As predicted in our first hypothesis, Israeli women do hold more socially-conscious economic positions than their male counterparts. But in contrast to what is common in the comparative literature, while Israeli women are more socioeconomically progressive than men, they are also more hawkish on security and foreign affairs. This creates an unfamiliar anomaly which requires further investigation, as it is difficult to

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<sup>7</sup> Note that Kaufmann and Petrocik (1999) refer to the effects based on the manipulated variable rather than the one on which the two groups differ.

reconcile hawkish positions on security and foreign affairs with a more center-left vote choice.

This puzzle led us to a careful examination of the effects of issue position on the gender gap in voting. We find that economic, foreign policy, and state-religion positions all affect vote choice. We further find that, consistent with our second hypothesis, economic concerns do affect women's vote more significantly than that of men. But, in contrast to what we predicted in our third hypothesis, we do not find that men are more strongly affected by foreign policy considerations than women (indeed, both men and women were similarly influenced by these concerns). Through the use of counterfactual analysis, we analyze the impact of both differences in economic positions and in the translation of these positions to vote choice on the gender gap in voting. We find that it is not different gender positions or their translation into votes that is important, but their salience which affects party preferences.

Why do women's economic positions translate so much more powerfully into vote choice than do those of men? Some may find it useful to go back to the comparative literature, which consistently shows that women tend to grant more importance to domestic economic issues than men do (Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999). But this general preference is only partly confirmed in the Israeli case, as both women and men give equal weight to matters of foreign affairs and defense (and the separation between these and domestic affairs is, at best, blurred).

For similar reasons, the two candidate explanations for gender-based differences in political attitudes are only partly satisfactory. The first, which attributes women's preferences for economic matters to socially-constructed gender roles which make women more attentive to the needs of others, may be of some use. But in the Israeli case this concern does not extend to matters of foreign affairs or security (which have an immediate and personal impact), nor is it particularly visible in the field of religion and state. The second, interest-based explanation, is also of limited use. It argues that women have a greater interest in state involvement in welfare and services than men. Although their preoccupation with these issues is supported by our analysis, this fact does not help to account for why this concern overrides others in the translation into vote preferences.

This leads us to suggest an alternative, although by no means contradictory, explanation, which relates to the pragmatism with which women perceive their vote and how it can best be utilized. A possible interpretation of our findings is that women give greater importance to practical issues at the polls than men -- they weigh these issues more heavily in their vote choice. It might very well be that they find other, more effective and concrete, outlets for expressing their social concerns for others or their specific welfare interests than the ballot box. In other words, women may vote for equality in Israel precisely because they see this as an efficacious use of their vote, suggesting a pointed—and undoubtedly down-to-earth—view of the possible uses of their electoral power. This pragmatism may extend to other forms of political behavior as well, such as voluntarism, communal activism and specific issue-oriented lobbying, suggesting a nuanced approach among women to the use of the various tools of political participation at their disposal.

Clearly, this explanation, along with other partly corroborated reasons, requires further investigation. This challenge is particularly important given the nuanced and weighted use of vote choice by women as compared to men in Israel and the gender gap in voting which it generates.

## Appendix A1

### INES Question wording

#### Question wording

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sex	1. Male 2. Female
V23	Some think it is the government's responsibility to take care that everyone has work and reasonable standard of living. Others think the government should not get involved and should let everyone make do for themselves. What is your opinion? 1. The government should make sure that everyone has work and reasonable standard of living 2. It depends 3. The government shouldn't interfere because everyone should make do for themselves
V26	In your opinion, should Israel consent or not consent to the establishment of a Palestinian state in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza strip under the framework of a permanent agreement? 1. Definitely should consent 2. Think they should consent 3. Think they should not consent 4. Definitely should not consent
V27	Under a permanent agreement with the Palestinians should Israel be prepared to return or should it continue to occupy the Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem, even if the price is prevention of a permanent agreement? 1. Definitely should return 2. Should return 3. Should continue to occupy 4. Definitely should continue to occupy
V29	What is your view on the evacuation of Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria in a final status agreement with the Palestinians? 1. There should be no evacuation under any circumstances. 2. Willing to evacuate all the small and isolated settlements 3. Willing to evacuate all settlements, including the large settlement blocs.
V30	In your opinion, should the government of Israel make sure that public life in the country is conducted according to Jewish religious tradition or not? 1. The government should definitely make sure of it 2. The government should perhaps make sure of it 3. I don't think the government should see to it 4. The government should definitely not be concerned with it
V31	About the structure of economic life in the country, do you support a capitalist or socialist approach more? 1. Capitalist definitely 2. More capitalist than socialist 3. More socialist than capitalist 4. Socialist definitely
V133	Country of origin: 1. Asia/Africa 2. Europe/America 3. USSR/FSU 4. Native born Israeli, Father- native born Israeli 5. Native born Israeli, Father - Asia/Africa 6. Native born Israeli, Father - Europe/America 7. Native born Israeli, Father - USSR/FSU
V137	Highest Level of Education: 1. Elementary school or less 2. Partial high school 3. Full high school - without matriculation exams 4. Full high school with matriculation exams 5. Post high school, non academic (teachers seminar, nursing school, engineering school, yeshiva) 6. Partial academic degree 7. Full academic degree – BA 8. Full academic degree - MA or higher
V146	How many rooms do you have in your house?
V147	How many people live in your household (including soldiers)?
Age	How old are you? _____

A_v2	Who did you vote for in the last elections? 1 Likud - Israel Beiteinu 21 HaYisraelim 2 Labor 22 The Hope for Change 3 HaTenuah, headed by Tzippi Livni 23 Social Justice 4 Yesh Atid, headed by Yair Lapid 24 Haim B'Kavod 5 HaBayit HaYehudi headed by Naftali Benet 25 Kulanu Haverim 6 Yahaduth HaTorah (Agudath Israel + Degel HaTorah) 26 Koach L'Hashpia 7 Shas 27 Moreshet Avot 8 Meretz 28 The Economy Party 9 Kadima 29 Achim Anachnu 10 Otzma L'Yisrael 30 Liberal Democratic Progressives 11 The Greens 31 Brit Olam 12 Green Leaf 32 The Pirates 33 Or Party 14 Dor Bonei Ha'aretz headed by Ephraim Lapid (Pensioners) 15 Am Shalem headed by Rabbi Chaim Amsellem 16 Da'am 91 Do not know 17 Balad 95 Other 18 Ra'am-Ta'al 96 Blank ballot 19 Hadash 98 Did not vote 20 Eretz Hadasha 99 Refuses to respond
A_v13	The elections were mainly about the issues brought up in the Summer 2011 social protests, mainly affordable housing and cost of living.
V132	To what degree do you observe religious traditions? 1. Not at all 2. A little bit 3. A lot 4. I observe all of it
V114	How much do you define yourself as feminist? 1. Not at all 2. A little 3. To a great degree 4. To a very great degree
V71	Would you be prepared or not prepared to have taxes in the country raised, meaning that you would also pay more taxes, in order to take care of the different problems facing the country? 1. Yes 2. No  In regards to the following branches, do you think the government should spend more, less, or the current amount of money? Should spend more Should spend less Should spend what it does now
V72	Education
V74	Health
V77	Unemployment stipends
V79	Elderly stipends
V82	Children stipends
V82	Creating places of employment
V83	Housing solutions

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## Tables and Figures

**Table 1. Women’s and men’s vote choice in the 2013 Israeli elections**

<b>Vote:</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Gender gap</b>
Left-wing bloc	45%	58	-13 (.001)*
HaBayit HaYehudi	13	12	1
Likud Beiteinu	34	22	12
Shas	5	4	1
Yahadut HaTora	3	4	-1
Kadima	2	3	-1
Yesh Atid	18	21	-3
Labor	12	17	-5
Hatnuah	8	8	-1
Meretz	6	9	-3

Note. Data are drawn from postelection survey. Parties marked in gray are categorized as center and left block. Entries are rounded. Respondents whose votes are reported in the table (N=691) are those on which the multivariate analysis below (Table 3) is conducted. These are respondents who provided answers to all items included in the analysis. Arab respondents are excluded (see discussion in Section 3). \* P value of a Chi square test.

**Table 2. Women and men's attitudes: foreign affairs, economics, and state-religion affairs**

	Men	Women	P value*	N
<b>Security and foreign affairs</b>				
(i) Consent to the establishment of a Palestinian state in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza strip under the framework of a permanent agreement	63%	57	.039	1,206
(ii) Under a permanent agreement with the Palestinians Israel should be prepared to return the Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem.	45	41	.366	589
(iii) Willing to evacuate all settlements, including the large settlement blocs.	71	60	.008	598
<b>The economy</b>				
(i) The government should make sure that everyone has work and reasonable standard of living	65	70	.259	652
(ii) Think the government should spend more on:				
Education	81	87	.040	600
Health	84	91	.008	603
Unemployment stipends	31	39	.062	584
Elderly stipends	86	88	.438	593
Children stipends	47	54	.116	586
Creating places of employment	90	94	.041	601
Housing solutions	89	93	.139	592
(iii) I would be prepared to have taxes in the country raised, and to pay more taxes, in order to take care of the different problems facing the country	39	20	<.001	587
(iv) Support a socialist approach more than a capitalist one.	59	72	<.001	1,180
<b>State – religion</b>				
(i) The government of Israel should not make sure that public life in the country is conducted according to Jewish religious tradition.	58	58	.773	1,165
(ii) In a situation of a contradiction between democracy and Jewish religious law, preserving the principles of democracy should prevail	77	71	.126	475

Note. Source: INES 2013 pre-election survey. Responses were dichotomized such that on security and foreign affairs items high values represent dovish orientations, on the economy high values represent greater social responsibility, and on state-religion items high values represent support for separation of state and religion. \* P value of a Chi square test.

**Table 3. Vote choice and the effect of issue positions**

	Model-1	Model-2	Model-3	Model-4
Woman	0.51*** (0.15)	0.43** (0.18)	0.60*** (0.21)	0.87 (1.07)
Age		0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Education		0.14*** (0.05)	0.08 (0.06)	0.07 (0.06)
Religiosity		-1.08*** (0.12)	-0.39** (0.16)	-0.38** (0.16)
Rooms per persons in household		0.35** (0.14)	0.40** (0.16)	0.41** (0.16)
Former USSR		-0.98*** (0.29)	-0.25 (0.34)	-0.26 (0.34)
Asia/Africa		-0.16 (0.24)	-0.38 (0.28)	-0.40 (0.29)
Europe/America		0.22 (0.26)	0.09 (0.31)	0.05 (0.31)
Feminist			0.34*** (0.11)	0.33*** (0.11)
Position: cap'list-soc'list			0.40*** (0.11)	0.31** (0.15)
Women x cap.-soc				0.19 (0.22)
Position: Palestinian state			0.98*** (0.12)	0.98*** (0.17)
Women x Pal. State				0.05 (0.23)
Position: state-religion			0.63*** (0.11)	0.80*** (0.16)
Women x state-relig				-0.33 (0.21)
Constant	-0.20* (0.11)	0.83* (0.50)	-5.82*** (0.87)	-5.99*** (1.04)
Observations	691	691	691	691
Pseudo R-squared	0.0116	0.177	0.354	0.357

Note. The dependent variable is a dichotomized vote choice whereby center-left takes the value of 1 and right the value of zero. The three issue position categories are coded such that high values mark a socialist approach, support for the establishment of a Palestinian state, and support for separation of state and religion. Ethnicity is coded as respondent's or respondent's father country of origin (reference category= Israel). Standard errors in parentheses. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1.

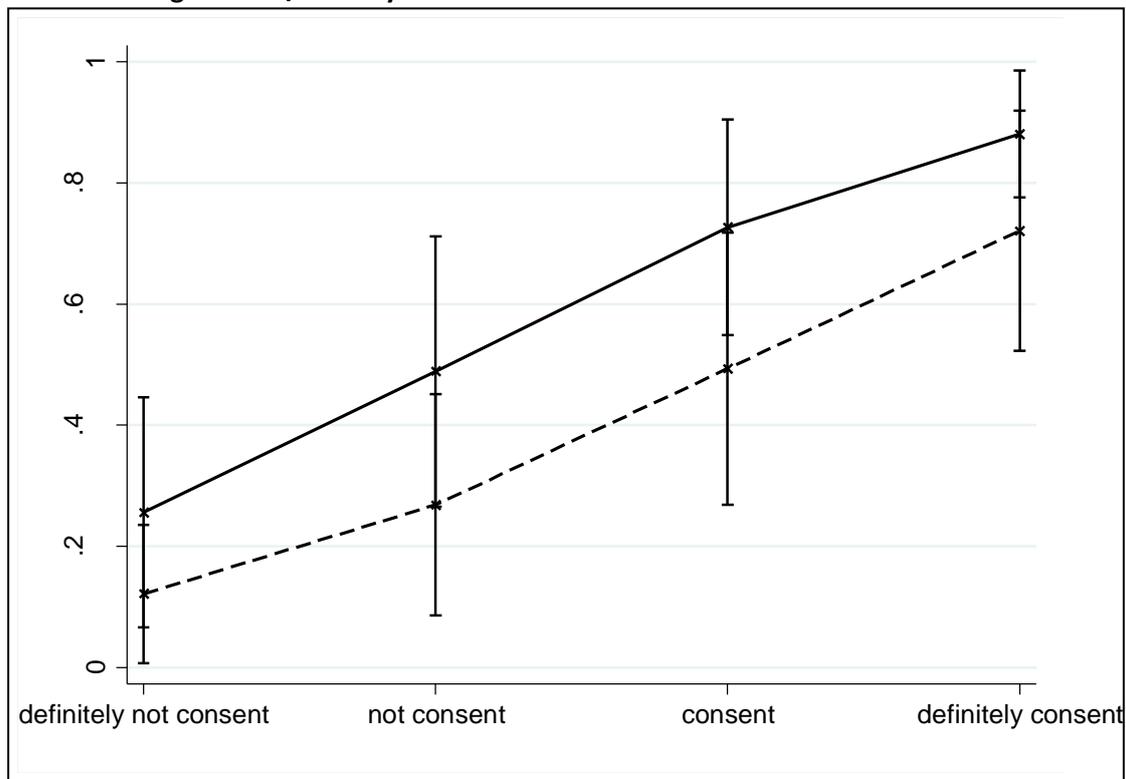
**Table 4. Counterfactual analysis of positions and salience effects**

	<b>Men's Pr(vote=ctr.-left)</b>	<b>Women's Pr(vote=ctr.-left)</b>	<b>Gap</b>
Observed	45	58	13
Predicted based on positions and salience	32 (.13, .52)	69 (.51, .87)	37
<b>Position effect</b>			
Given women's salience	44 (.08, .80)	69 (.51, .87)	25
Given men's salience	32 (.13, .52)	56 (.19, .94)	24
<b>Salience effect</b>			
Given positions of women	35 (.15, .55)	69 (.51, .87)	34
Given positions of men	32 (.13, .52)	65 (.46, .84)	33

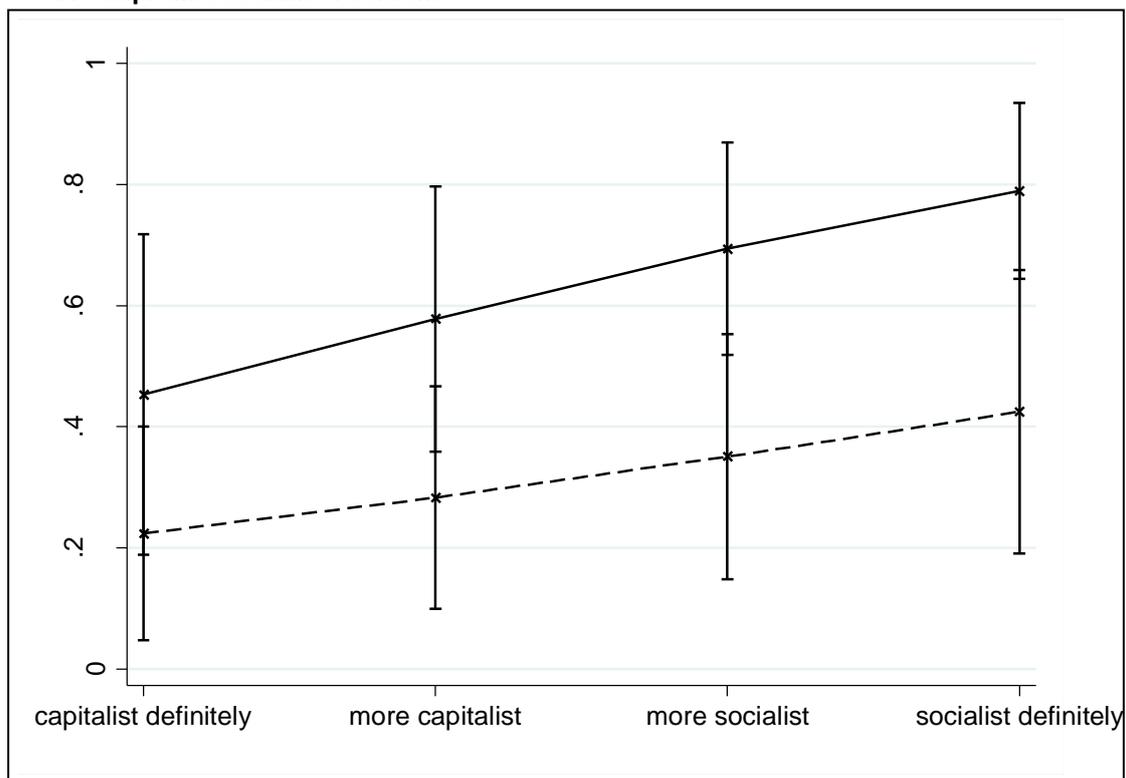
Notes: the observed gender gap is the difference between the proportion of women and the proportion of men voting for center and left parties based on survey responses. The predicted gap is based on the group's mean positions and salience. The salience effect produces the gender gap based on salience differences alone (assuming identical positions). The positions effect produces the gender gap based on differences in positions alone (assuming identical salience). All results are based on Model 4 in Table 2 where all other variables are held at their grand mean.

**Figure 1. Predicted probability of supporting center-left parties (vs. right) by gender and issue position**

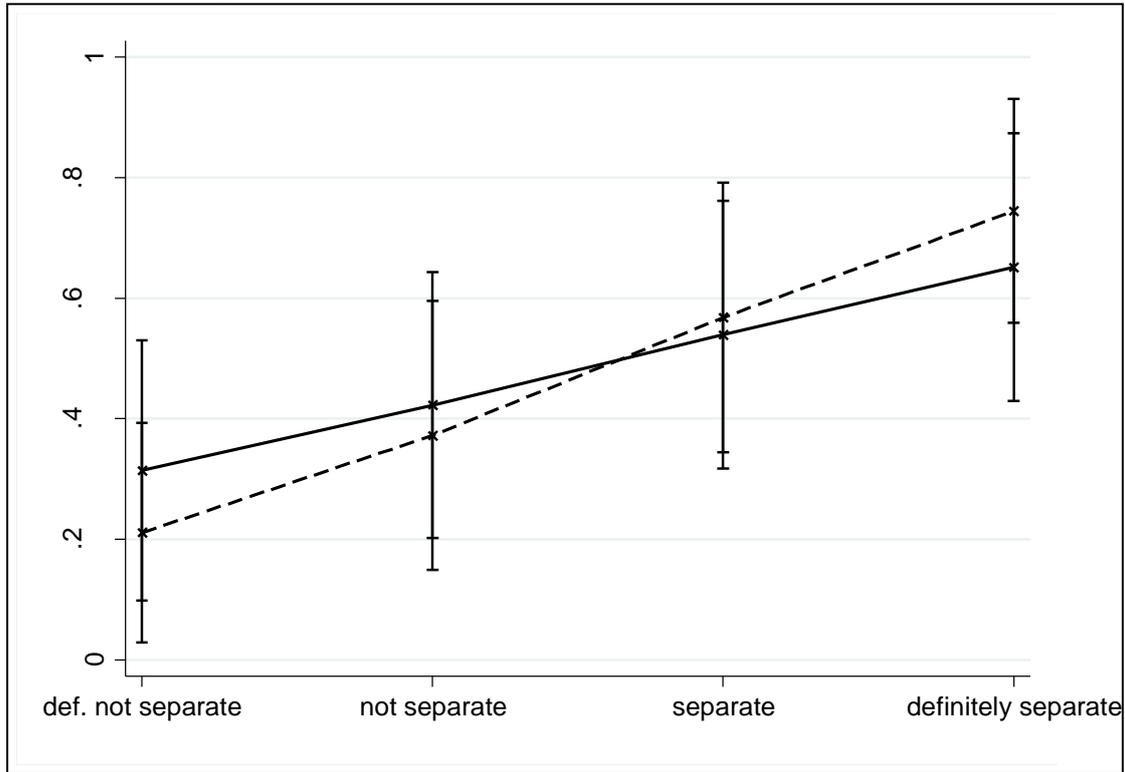
**a. Foreign-affairs/Security**



**b. Capitalist-Socialist Positions**



c. State-religion Affairs



Note. Solid lines represent predicted probabilities of women and dashed lines represent those of men. Predicted probabilities and 95% confidence intervals are calculated based on estimation of Model 4 in Table 3.