

Revision Memo for “Cross-Pressures on Political Attitudes: Gender, Party, and the #MeToo Movement in the United States”

As we submit our revised manuscript, we begin by thanking the reviewers for their thoughtful comments on the first version and for their support for the manuscript. It is gratifying to have reviewers offer such positive evaluations, even as they offer ideas to strengthen aspects of the manuscript. In this memo, we detail the revisions we have made to address various comments from each reviewer. As with any manuscript, there are occasions when reviewers make similar comments or requests and others where their suggestions might be at odds with those of other reviewers. In producing the revision, we have tried to incorporate changes that address reviewer suggestions and strengthen the manuscript while maintaining the overall goals of the work. We believe that the revised manuscript is stronger and hope the reviewers agree.

Reviewer 2 – We are delighted that R2 was positive about the manuscript and appreciate the comments and suggestions. With regard to the theoretical framework, some of R2’s comments were in line with those made by R4, so we have expanded our arguments with both sets of comments in mind. R2 particularly pointed out the need to be more explicit about the cue-taking literature in linking elite and public reactions to #MeToo, which we have done in an expanded section that lays out the early reaction to the movement and then the shifts that occur as a result of the Kavanaugh nomination and the Republican attempts to save it in the face of the allegations of harassment and assault.

We have also expanded our discussion of the expectations of women’s reactions to #MeToo and the impact partisanship may have on those reactions by foregrounding Klar’s work on when and why women share a common identity and when they do not.

With regard to R2’s suggestions for additional variables in the analysis, we faced some limitations. As reviewers may remember, the data we analyze come from the 2018 American National Election Study (ANES) Pilot Study and the 2020 ANES Time Series Preliminary Release. The advantage of these exploratory datasets is that they include questions that go beyond those traditionally included on the ANES time-series. Here, the important focus is the availability of items on #MeToo and sexual harassment. A disadvantage is that these instruments are more limited in the number and kinds of questions that are included on the instruments, resulting in many fewer variables than might usually be available. There were no specific media usage variables available in both years. Instead, there was a variable measuring trust in the media, which we include in the analysis presented in the revision. Given that we also have a measure of political interest in the model, we believe that the two variables offer the best available way to capture the impact of interest and media attention.

Given R2’s comment about cue-taking, s/he asks us to consider the strength of respondent’s party identification. We offer the following explanation for our decision to retain the three-category measure of PID, which we code to include leaners as partisans. First, the correlation between the 7-point scale and the 3-point scale is .937 in 2018 and .938 in 2020, so they are essentially the same variable. Second, if we use the 7-point PID variable to measure strength of PID, the results are substantively the same but very hectic in presentation. Leaners, not very strong partisans, and strong partisans all have overlapping confidence bounds on the predictions for feeling towards

#MeToo. However, when using the 7-point measure, the confidence bounds are large, sporadic, and not as tight because we have fewer respondents in each category. Since the predictions are essentially the same for each category of partisans, strength of partisanship per se matters less, as there aren't substantive differences between partisans on #MeToo. Given this and the presentation reality, we retain the 3-point measure in our models.

R2 also suggested that we expand the discussion of the change in results from 2018 to 2020 and to strengthen the discussion of the importance of our findings. We have done so in the revision in several places, but try to be mindful of the fact that the time period involved is a short one and that we cannot make definitive conclusions about the importance of changes over a short period of time.

We have also given the revised manuscript a close copy-editing, fixing things that R2 pointed out, and, hopefully, producing a clear and readable manuscript.

Reviewer 3 – We thank R3 for their support for publishing the manuscript. As suggested by R3, we have expanded our discussion of some of the particular findings.

Reviewer 4 – We appreciate R4's support for the manuscript and for the thoughtful comments on how to improve the theoretical framework. Reviewer 2 made some similar comments, so we have expanded the framing of the manuscript to more clearly illustrate the basis for the arguments we make. We have included a more focused discussion of the process of public cue-taking from elites, adding information about the public and elite reactions to #MeToo in 2017 and 2018 and then showing the shift that took place in the public's reactions as a result of the Kavanaugh nomination and the Republican attempts to defend him from accusations of harassment and assault. We also expand the discussion of the impact of partisan polarization on cue-taking, given the current period of high polarization that is evident in Congress.

Also in line with R4's suggestions, we expand our discussion of party branding on gendered issues, outlining the process by which party positions on women's/gendered issues became a fault line between the parties. We also illustrate how the Democratic party has come to "own" gendered issues in general and sexual harassment in particular, at least in the minds of the general public.

We have also revised the discussion to connect the parallels between cross-pressured members of the public with more extensive consideration of these dynamics in Congress. We appreciate R4 highlighting some of the work on past Supreme Court nominations that illustrate these influences. In doing so, we include a discussion of how cross-pressures have operated in past Supreme Court nominations to highlight how these cross-pressures might work in the Kavanaugh case.

Finally, in a new section, we lay out a more detailed discussion of our expectations for how cross-pressures should affect Republican women and Democratic men, first by discussing how gender might operate to shape people's thinking about #MeToo and then including how partisanship might alter gendered patterns.

We thank R4 for the helpful comments and suggestions and do believe that the manuscript benefits from the expanded discussion of the framework issues.

Reviewer 1

We appreciate R1's support of the manuscript and the thoughtful comments and suggestions. R1 made a number of comments about the empirical analysis in the original version, calling for us to use interaction terms for party and gender to account for the possibility of what we call cross pressures. However, in considering several issues raised by this suggestion, we came to a different conclusion about the utility of interactions. We offer our thoughts on several aspects of our decision.

The inclusion of interactive terms in empirical models can be helpful in a number of instances and contexts. However, we believe there are three overarching reasons in favor of using the current empirical analysis setup instead of models with an interaction term between gender and party identification. Employing interaction models would lead to issues regarding the organization/type of analysis being conducted, violate our theoretical assumptions, and contain model specification and estimation problems.

Organization/Type of Analysis

An interaction term for party*gender would oversimplify our analysis and not allow for the same nuanced exploration. Currently, we are able to explore gender gaps in support for #MeToo, gender gaps within each party, and partisan gaps among women and among men. An interaction coefficient would only allow us to calculate predictions, and plot a singular point, for Democratic women, Democratic men, Republican women, and Republican men. We would not be able to explore the changes in predicted probabilities when looking within gender grouping and within partisan groupings. Thus, we would not be able to explore fully the pull of the social and political identities. The nuance and structure of the exploration and analysis is lost.

Theoretical Assumptions

The particular focus in our study is on the potential for identities to cross-pressure individual attitudes about political issues. In this analysis, we focus on how an individual's social and political identities might pull in opposing directions with regard to gender and partisanship predicting feeling towards #MeToo. An implication from the theory is that other variables of interest might affect men and women, and Democrats and Republicans, in different ways when attempting to predict feeling towards #MeToo. An interaction model with a singular interaction between sex and party identification is operating under the assumption that every other variable in the multiple regression model affects these groupings in the exact same way. As our analysis demonstrates, this assumption does not hold, as we see places in the model where variables such as education, age, and political interest influence support for #MeToo differently for different groups. These differences are important for exploring the gender and partisan gaps. In an interactive model, there would only be one coefficient estimated for each of these independent variables when we know there are substantive and statistically significant differences in how these variables affects respondents based on their group identities. For example, in 2020 political interest has the opposite effect on Democrats and Republicans. A singular coefficient estimated based on the overall impact of political interest on the full sample ignores these differences.

Empirical Implications

As we have discussed, a model with a singular interactive term contains the theoretical assumption that all other independent variables impact our groupings in the exact same way, an assumption that does not hold. Since the assumption is incorrect, the calculated coefficients in a model with a singular interaction would be inaccurate. If the estimated coefficient for the covariates in the model are inaccurate, this has implications for the estimation of other covariates, including an interaction term. To more accurately estimate a model with interactions, we would need an interaction between gender, and party identification, and every independent variable - 21 interaction coefficients and 32 coefficients. We believe that this type of analysis would be less interpretable to the reader and distract from the focus of our analysis. The current format is more interpretable and straight-forward without compromising the validity of the results.

It is also important to highlight that we are not comparing across models that have differing model specification. The models that are estimated with the samples split by gender (and by party identification) include the exact same independent variables. The only difference is that the samples are different. The samples may differ in terms of their descriptive statistics on the independent variables. However, in the population, these groups also differ in terms of the population parameters of these characteristics. By incorporating in the survey weights into the models with the split samples, we already accounting for any systematic bias that might exist between the sample statistics and population parameters, while also leveraging the differences between these groupings. In fact, we also calculated predicting probabilities for the samples split by gender (and party identification) while holding all other variables at the full samples survey weighted means. The predictions were substantively the same.

Additional comments from R1:

R1 suggests we eliminate political ideology from our models because of the correlation with party. We do not remove ideology since one of the reviewers and the editor were concerned about the exclusion of covariates from the models. Since political ideology is statistically significant in the models, removal of political ideology would be overestimating the impact of party identification. For reference, party identification and political ideology are correlated at around .5 in the two years.

The intercept is higher in 2020 because average support for #MeToo is higher in the 2020 sample.

For the revision, we now present the analysis for 2020 utilizing survey weights and have noted this in the manuscript and tables/figures.

At different points in the manuscript, we have revised the discussion of findings as suggested to more accurately place what we can draw from them in context and we have softened a few declarative statements that R1 thought were too broad.

The abstract identified the focus as being the U.S., but we added a reference to the U.S. to the title to make it immediately clear to readers.

We added a footnote to more fully explain the origins of the MeToo movement in 2006 and its popularization in 2017.

We now use “partisan polarization” instead of simply “polarization” throughout the manuscript where appropriate.

We changed “gender” to “woman” in the tables.

We broadened the discussion of political figures accused of harassment to include examples of Democrats like Al Franken and John Conyers to make clear that people in both parties can be influenced by these dynamics.

R1 is unclear why we would expect differences between Republicans and Democrats, offering a 0,1 illustration for his/her suggestion that the “gender gap is the same in each party and the party gap is the same for both women and men.” To better illustrate that Democratic men and Republican women are not the same on support for #MeToo, we add a figure that illustrates how the four party/gender groups sort on support for #MeToo and include more discussion of the size of the gaps in the text.

In conclusion, we thank R1 for their helpful comments and suggestions.

Suggestions from the Editor – In the decision letter discussion of R2’s suggestion for additional variables in our model of attitude toward #MeToo, the editor suggested that we consider respondent religion and region of residence. We conducted our analysis with variables that measured each of these and none of the measures were significantly related to attitude toward #MeToo. For religion, we used a measure of whether R was an evangelical (2018) and a traditional measure of religiosity (2018 and 2020). Region was coded based on the state in which R lived. Since we had not theorized about either of these variables in the original manuscript and found that neither was significant in any analysis, we do not include them in the revised version. We do include a footnote to say that we did conduct the analysis with these variables, but that they were not significant.

We are very pleased to submit this revised manuscript and are grateful to the reviewers and editors for the opportunity to do so.