ORIGINAL ARTICLE

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Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy

SPSSi WILEY

Understanding the appeal of libertarianism: Gender and race differences in the endorsement of libertarian principles

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Abstract

There is a stereotype of libertarians being young, college educated, white men and that the Libertarian Party lacks appeal among women and individuals of color. There is a great deal of research investigating gender differences in public opinion on a number of issues including the provision of government resources and government spending (Barnes and Cassese; Howell and Day). Nevertheless, there is no work specifically investigating why women and nonwhites do not find libertarianism appealing. We test several hypotheses using 2016 American National Election Study data and 2013 PRRI data. We find a sizeable and significant gender gap and race gap in support for libertarian principles. We investigate several explanations for these gaps finding moderate support for self-interest, racial attitudes, and egalitarianism as reasons for women and African Americans being less supportive of Libertarian Principles. We believe that the modest success of and media attention garnered by Ron Paul and Rand Paul in recent years along with the success of the Libertarian Party presidential ticket in 2016 highlights the need to understand who is drawn to libertarianism and why.[1]

In the months leading up to the 2016 Presidential Election, the Libertarian Party nominee Gary Johnson and his running mate Bill Weld, based on Pew Research Center (2016) projections, were

polling around 10%; Johnson hit upward of 15% in a July *Washington Post* survey (*Washington Post* 2016). Johnson's success in staying relevant in the months leading up to election day posed a serious threat to both Clinton and Trump—not because Johnson had any shot at winning, but because votes cast for Johnson were votes lost by the major two party candidates. With Johnson's relative success in polling during the summer months of 2016, the two major party candidates took notice. While campaigning for Hillary Clinton, President Obama warned potential voters, "a vote for Gary Johnson is a vote for Donald Trump" (Olorunnipa, 2016). Donald Trump dismissed him as a fringe candidate despite poll numbers indicating mainstream support (Sherfinski, 2016). Johnson only received 4% of the popular vote; while this may seem inconsequential, 4% translates to four million votes.

To put it into perspective, Trump won Florida by approximately 115,000 votes; Johnson had 206,000 votes in Florida (Federal Elections Commission, 2017). Trump won Pennsylvania Avenue by a little less than 80,000 votes; Johnson had 142,000 votes in Pennsylvania (Federal Elections Commission, 2017). It is pure speculation as to which way these votes would have been cast without Johnson in the race, but it certainly does illustrate the profound impact the Libertarian Party had on the 2016 election. Moreover, the Libertarian Party and Libertarians continue to influence the platform of the Republican Party during a time when the Tea Party, the Religious Right, fiscal conservatives, Trumpers and Never Trumpers are fighting for the what the Republican Party will stand for going forward. And for these reasons, understanding why certain demographics identify with the Libertarian Party and why others do not, merits further investigation.

Single member districts and state electoral laws make it difficult for third parties to attract many voters even their platforms are appealing to voters. Single member districts result in the vast majority of voters choosing between the two major party candidates so as not to vote for a third-party candidate that has a very low probability of winning. Spatial voting theory contends and evidence in support of the theory shows that voters choose the candidate whose police positions are closest to their own (Jessee, 2009). A significant portion, 45%, of those holding consistently libertarian positions identify with the Republican Party compared to only 5% identifying as Democrats, 35% identifying as Independent, 15% with a third party, and 8% with the Libertarian Party (Jones et al., 2013). Most libertarians, 57%, feel favorably toward the Republican Party and the vast majority, 89%, feel unfavorably toward the Democratic Party (Jones, Cox, & Navarro-Rivera, 2013). Many states have electoral laws making it difficult for third-party candidates to run in elections for state-level or national-level seats.

A September 2016 *New York Times* article posed the question: who are Gary Johnson's supporters (Russonello, 2016)? The Libertarian Party platform includes the following policy positions: decreasing the size and scope of government through privatization, lowering taxes, shrinking social programs, protecting civil liberties, reducing nondefensive military spending, pro-choice, antideath penalty, and controlling inflation (Libertarian Party Platform, 2016). During a survey in which respondents were asked to self-identify their political ideology and "libertarian" was replaced with "fiscally conservative and socially liberal," 59% of respondents agreed with this descriptor (Kirby & Boaz, 2010). Meaning that over half of respondents agree that they fit the description of being a libertarian—despite not necessarily accepting the title of "libertarian." Another survey measuring the multiple facets of libertarianism found that only 7% of individuals gave consistently libertarian responses to nine survey questions, while 15% lean libertarian (Jones, Cox, & Navarro-Rivera, 2013).

Previous research has found that neither race nor gender alone can predict how a citizen will vote one way or another, but there is evidence that both are significant predictors of voting behavior (Bullock, 1984; Kaufmann & Petrocik, 1999). A Pew Research Center survey found that of the

respondents that self-identified as libertarian, only 7% were women; 3% of respondents identified as Black and libertarian (Kiley, 2014). Given that women and individuals of color are libertarians at much lower rates than white men, this study intends to understand potential reasons for why that is. Furthermore, a *Washington Post* exit poll from the 2016 election finds that white men under the age of 44 voted for Gary Johnson at the highest rate of any demographic; however, white men of all ages had a higher probability of voting for Trump, too. Another study found that 94% of libertarians are non-Hispanic whites, 68% are men, and 62% are below 50 years (Jones, Cox, & Navarro-Rivera, 2013). So this begs the question: why is it that women and people of color are less likely to support the Libertarian Party and/or vote for a Libertarian candidate?

The usual narrative for any third-party voter in the media is that they are angry with the major parties for partisan gridlock, about politicians' alienation from their constituents, or with the "status quo" in D.C. Prior studies have shown that there is not significant support for the "angry voter" hypothesis. In fact, Ross Perot, one of the most politically viable third-party candidates in American history, failed to win the votes of those angriest with the state of the government's handling of the economy or those most desiring change in D.C. (Alvarez & Nagler, 1995).

The extant research on the voting behavior of women has found that women are more likely to identify as a Democrat and support an activist government (Clark, & Clark, 2008). Prior research theorizes that women are more likely to support Democratic Party candidates when they are economically vulnerable or will disproportionately be affected by conservative social policies and tend to support the expansion of the welfare state when the political climate is more conservative (Box-Steffensmeier et al., 2004; Kanthak & Norrander, 2004). Social welfare issues are shown to be closely correlated with partisanship for women and men (Kaufmann & Petrocik, 1999). The Democratic Party makes social welfare a key part of the party platform and is generally one of the key policy points that separates them from the Republican Party in the eyes of the electorate (Nicholson & Segura, 2012). In addition, voters tend to lean toward the party that they feel best represents their interests (Abramowitz, 2010). For women and African Americans, the party that best represents their interests may not be the party with a platform advocating shrinking of the welfare state and decreasing government spending.

If the Democratic Party will pursue policies that are in the self-interest of women and could alleviate the brunt of conservative economic policies, that could explain why women do identify as Democrats at a higher rate. In addition, there is strong evidence that women support programs like the Affordable Care Act at a higher rate than men because of their own economic vulnerability (Lizotte, 2016). There is a disagreement in the literature whether or not self-interest influences policy preferences with some scholars finding it does not (Sears & Funk, 1990) and others finding that it does (Weeden & Kurzban, 2017).

There are also established race differences in vote choice and political behavior. Previous research has found that there is a "race gap" in wealth between whites and individuals of color (Killewald, 2013), suggesting that individuals of color are economically marginalized. The Democratic Party has championed minority rights for much of the past half-century. As Nicholson and Segura (2012) found, the visibility the Democratic Party receives as the party that helps minorities allows the electorate to separate Democratic ideology from the Republican ideology. Based on a theory of self-interest, previous research argues that whites do not have anything to gain from race-based policies, whereas individuals of color do, so we would expect to see them support these sorts of policies at a higher rate than whites (Bobo & Kluegel, 1993). The self-interest theory could also explain why individuals of color do not generally support the Libertarian Party. The Libertarian Party platform does not include race-based redistributive polices or federally enforced

race-based programs like affirmative action, so we would not expect to see individuals of color feel compelled to be libertarian if they are self-interested.

INVESTIGATING PUBLIC OPINION RATHER THAN VOTE CHOICE

One of the challenges for identifying supporters of any third-party candidate is that not all third-party supporters end up voting for that candidate (Boaz & Kirby, 2006). In the build-up to the 2016 election, Gary Johnson's polling numbers hit their ceiling during the early summer months. By September, his poll numbers had dropped to anywhere from 5% to 7%. Previous research predicted that Johnson's poll numbers would fall closer to the election when the candidate does not have a realistic chance of winning simply because of strategic defectors who support the third-party candidate, but choose to vote for a major party candidate—a common occurrence for third-party candidates (Lacy & Monson, 2002). In addition to strategic defectors, there are third-party supporters that forgo voting altogether in protest of the election (Lacy & Burden, 1999).

The Libertarian Party had nearly 500,000 registered voters in October 2016, while earning 8 times that in the 2016 election (Winger, 2016). This implies that either there are quite a few unregistered libertarians out there in the electorate, or nonlibertarians are voting libertarian. It should also be noted that voters cannot register to be a part of the Libertarian Party in certain states. The runner-up for the Libertarian Party presidential nomination, Austin Petersen, was not, in fact, even a registered member of the party. If libertarians are not actually voting for the libertarian candidate, or if nonlibertarians are voting for the libertarian candidate, any sort of analysis of libertarians would be based on an incomplete data set. In addition, any nationally representative data set would include so few voters for Johnson that it would be difficult to analyze vote choice including all of the necessary controls and mediation variables. We can, however, examine potential reasons why an individual might or might not endorse Libertarian principles.

HYPOTHESES

To test why women and African Americans would be less likely to endorse libertarian principles, we developed a set of hypotheses that may explain the race and gender gaps. First, the feminization of poverty, a phenomenon where in women are make up a disproportionate percentage of those in poverty (Kimenyi & Mbaku, 1995; Pressman, 1988) could mean that women with lower incomes are less likely to support Libertarian Principles. Similarly, African Americans tend to express support for redistributive policies due to concerns about socioeconomic differences between racial groups (Dawson, 1995). Hence, we believe that self-interest may lead to greater support for government services and thus lower levels of support for Libertarian Principles among women and African Americans. Furthermore, prior research finds that libertarians report less empathetic concern and feel less bonded to as well as less loving toward others (Iyer et al., 2012). This constellation of characteristics may influence how libertarians view the needs and treatment of others in society. Finally, the gender gap (Lizotte, 2020) and racial gap (White & Laird, 2020) in favor of the Democratic Party is well established, which could lead women and African Americans to oppose Libertarian Principles. Our hypotheses are as follows:

> *Self-interest Hypothesis*: Individuals that qualify for government services because of a low income should be more likely to oppose Libertarian Principles.

Racial Attitudes: Individuals with feelings of racial resentment will be more likely to endorse Libertarian Principles, because these individuals do not want government interventions into the treatment of marginalized groups.

Egalitarianism Hypothesis: Individuals who value societal equality and want a greater emphasis on ensuring equal treatment and equal opportunity should be more likely to oppose Libertarian Principles because they see government intervention as way to promote equality.

Feelings toward the two major parties: Individuals who are favorable toward one of the two major parties are less likely to endorse Libertarian Principles. Specifically, we expect that favorability toward the Democratic Party will mediate the gender and racial effect on Libertarian Principles.[2]

DATA, MEASURES, AND ANALYSIS PLAN

2016 ANES

We use the 2016 American National Election Study (ANES) to test our hypotheses. We create an additive scale of three questions, in which missing values are replaced with the item average, to measure Libertarian Principles. The first question asks respondents to choose between two options coded as follows: 1 = "gov't bigger because it's involved in things people should handle themselves" or 0 = "gov't bigger because problems are bigger." The second question also provides respondents with two options coded as: 0 = "need a strong gov't to handle complex economic problems" or 1 = "free market can handle without gov't involvement." The third question provides respondents with the following options coded as 1 = "less government the better" or 0 = "more things government should be doing." These items create a reliable scale with a Cronbach's alpha of .72 and interitem covariance of 0.11 and have been used as a measure of libertarianism in prior research (Filindra & Kaplan, 2017).

2016 Measures

The female variable equals 1 for female and male is coded as 0. We create two dummy variables from the racial identification item. The Black variable is coded 1 for Black and 0 otherwise while the white variable is coded 1 for white and 0 otherwise. Therefore, the baseline categories are Asian, Native American, Hispanic, and other.

To test the self-interest hypothesis, we test three different types of self-interest. First, we test whether income is associated with support for Libertarian Principles. The income variable measures household gross yearly income and ranges from 1 = under $5000 to 28 = $250,000 or more.

To test the racial resentment hypothesis, we use the well-established Racial Resentment scale. This is an additive scale of four questions measuring negative attitudes toward government treatment of Blacks. The four items create a reliable scale ranging from 1–5 with a Cronbach's alpha of .75 and interitem covariance of 0.70. Each item asks respondents to give a degree of agreement

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[2] We also investigated a *Voter Efficacy Hypothesis*: Individuals who do not have confidence in government should be more likely to endorse Libertarian Principles because of a preference for smaller government. We found little support for the efficacy hypothesis. Individuals with high levels of confidence in government and government officials are significantly less likely to support Libertarian Principles, but there was no mediation effect of efficacy for gender or race.

or disagreement with the following statements: slavery and discrimination have made it hard for Blacks to succeed, Blacks should be given special treatment to succeed, Blacks need to try harder to succeed, and Blacks have gotten less than they deserve. These questions are coded and combined so that higher values on the Racial Resentment scale indicate more negative attitudes.

For the egalitarian hypothesis, we include the standard measure of egalitarianism with a scale of six items. These items create an additive scale. The items ask respondents for their degree of agreement or disagreement with the following: society's responsibility to make sure everyone has an equal opportunity; that we have gone too far pushing equal rights; that it's a problem that we don't give an equal chance to succeed; that we should worry less about equality; that it is not a problem if some have more of a chance in life; and that treating people more fairly would lead to fewer problems. These items create a reliable scale with a Cronbach's alpha of .78 and an interitem covariance of 0.56.

For the feelings toward the two major parties hypothesis, we include the feeling thermometer measures of both parties. These questions ask respondents to place their feelings toward the Democratic and Republican parties on a scale from 0, corresponding to very cold feelings, to 100, corresponding to very warm feelings.

Control Variables: We included a number of control variables in the analysis. We include a number of demographic variables including race, education, region, age, having children, and being a mother. These are dummy variables: race is 1 for white; education is 1 for bachelor's degree or more; region is 1 for South; and marital status is 1 for married. We include a dummy variable for Mainline Protestant, a dummy for Evangelical Protestant, and an item for frequency of church attendance. It is important to control for religious factor; in one study, 27% of libertarians identified as Mainline Protestant, 27% were unaffiliated, 11% were Catholic, and 0% as Black Protestant (Jones, Cox, & Navarro-Rivera, 2013). The measure of having children asks respondents how many children under the age of 18 are living in their household. This variable has been coded as dichotomous so that 1 equals having children and 0 equals not having children. The mother variable is an interaction between female and the children variable.

2013 PRRI

We supplement our analysis with limited additional analyses of the 2013 American Values Survey conducted by Public Religion Research Institute (Jones, Cox, & Navarro-Rivera, 2013). This is a random sample of 2317 adults, who are a part of the Knowledge Networks nationally representative probability sample called the Knowledge Panel, residing in the United States. We use this data because it includes a more comprehensive measure of libertarian principles. One criticism of the ANES measure of Libertarian Principles could be that it does not measure the civil liberties and isolationist tenets of libertarianism. The PRRI measure includes these aspects. This data, however, does not include measures to test some of our hypotheses mainly racial resentment and egalitarianism.

Our outcome variable is an additive scale of nine items with mean replacement for missing values. All items require individuals to place themselves on a 7-point continuum with one end indicating the libertarian response and the other end indicating the opposite to the libertarian response. The first item asks about government monitoring of private telephones and email in order to protect citizens from terrorism. The second item asks about the U.S. responsibility to help other countries in crisis. The third item asks when the United States should use military force either to promote interests or only for security reasons. The fourth item asks about the best

way to promote economic growth either to lower taxes or increase spending on education. The fifth item asks whether or not the federal government should guarantee health insurance. The sixth item asks if the federal government should guarantee jobs and a good standard of living. The seventh item asks if government should protect the traditional institution of marriage or not prohibit gay and lesbian marriage. The eighth item asks if the government should regulate the sale of guns. The ninth item asks if the government should keep people from harming themselves. The scale has a respectable Cronbach's alpha of .74 and an interitem covariance of 0.97.

Measures

The female variable is based on self-reported sex with 1 equal to female to 0 otherwise. We created two dummy variables for race with the Black variable equal to 1 for African Americans and 0 otherwise and the white variable equal to 1 for Caucasian Americans and 0 otherwise.

We use gross yearly household income as an indicator of self-interest. This variable ranges from 1 = less than $5000 to 19 = $175,000. To measure feelings toward the two major parties, we include two items. Both items have the same question stem: "Now we'd like your views on some political leaders and groups. Please say whether your overall opinion of each of the following is very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, or very unfavorable. The Democratic/Republican Party." The response options range from 1 very favorable to 4 very unfavorable.

Controls

We control for a number of typical demographic variables. We control for parental status with a dummy variable equal to 1 for has children and 0 otherwise. We include an interaction between the parental status and female variables to measure being a mother. We control education with a dummy variable coded 1 for college degree or greater and 0 for less than a college degree. We control for Protestant identification, Catholic identification, and frequency of church attendance. Finally, we also control for age.

Analysis plan

Throughout the analysis, we test mediational hypotheses. For the mediational analysis, we investigate if the inclusion of the hypothesis indicators will eliminate the gender and/or race gap in endorsement of Libertarian Principles. According to Barron and Kenny (1986), there are four parts of mediational analyses. First, the predictor variable, gender and race, must be a significant predictor of the outcome variable. Second, the predictor variable must be a predictor of the mediational variable. Third, the mediational variable must be significantly associated with the outcome variable without the predictor variable, gender or race, in the model. Finally, for mediation to exist the effect of the predictor variable, gender and race, on the outcome variable should reduce to zero with the inclusion of the meditational variable. It is also possible with respect to this final step that complete mediation may not exist, but that gender or race reduces in size/significance signifying partial mediation. For the mediational analysis, we report the results of the Hicks–Tingley mediation test to provide an overall percent mediation (Hicks and Tingley, 2011, mediation package based on the mediation procedure from Imai et al., 2011). Mediational analyses

with cross-sectional data it not always appropriate because of the importance of the causality assumption of the predictor variable's temporal ordering coming prior to the dependent variable (Fairchild & McDaniel, 2017). Mediational analyses using cross-sectional data with sex or race as the predictor variable, however, does not violate the causality assumption of the temporal ordering because one's sex and race come before their political attitudes. In addition, existing published research investigating sex differences in political attitudes and behavior employs mediational analyses (Barnes & Cassese, 2017; Lizotte, 2016; Ondercin & Lizotte, 2020).

RESULTS

2016 ANES

In sum, we find moderate support for self-interest, feelings toward the major political parties, and egalitarianism as reasons for women and African Americans being less supportive of Libertarian Principles.[3] We do not find support for the Racial Resentment hypothesis. In Table 1, we display the percent mediated for each of the mediational variables tested in both data sets. The percent mediated is the proportion of the total effect of gender or race on support for Libertarian values that is mediated, which is then converted to a percentage (Hicks & Tingley, 2011; Imai et al., 2011).

In Model 1 of Table 2, we see there are significant gender and race difference in endorsement of Libertarian Principles. Women are significantly less likely than men and Blacks are significantly less likely than non-Blacks to support Libertarian Principles. Moreover, whites are significantly more likely to endorse Libertarian Principles.[4] In terms of control variables, education level is not a predictor nor is Mainline Protestant identification, having children, or being a mother. Older individuals, Evangelicals, and frequent churchgoers are also more likely to endorse the small government principles of Libertarianism. The outcomes for these control variables stay very consistent throughout the different model specifications.

In hierarchical regressions, not shown, we look at how the gender and race gaps change with the inclusion of each of indicators. The coefficient for the income is variable is quite small indicating that an increase in one level of income produces only a very small increase in support for Libertarian Principles. The gender and race variables continue to be significant with income in the model. According to mediational analyses, income mediates 3.72% of the effect of gender and 8.29% of the effect of being Black. Overall this provides weak to moderate support for the self-interest hypothesis that one of the reasons for the lack of appeal of libertarianism for women and African Americans might be lower average incomes, which may denote reliance on government services and programs.

Racial Resentment has a positive relationship with Libertarian Principles. Those holding racially resentful attitudes toward Blacks are more likely to support the small government principles of Libertarianism. Although racial resentment is a significant predictor, the mediational

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[3] In analysis not shown, we test to see if a white variable, a male variable, and a college educated variable and interactions between all three variables is significantly associated with endorsement of Libertarian Principles; we also perform the same analysis limiting the sample to those under 45, those under 40, those under 35, and those under 30. The results do not support the stereotype that Libertarianism is particularly appealing to young, college educated white men. It may be the case that those in the Libertarian Party or at Libertarian candidate rallies are predominantly young, college educated white men, but Libertarian Principles do not appear to particularly appeal to that subset of the population.

[4] Removing the white dummy variable does not change the Black dummy variable results and vice versa.

TABLE 1 Mediation results for all hypotheses

	Percent mediated	
2016 ANES	**Female**	**Black**
Income	3.72%	8.29%
Racial resentment	0%	1.69%
Egalitarianism	23.54%	75.54%
Feeling thermometer Democratic party	34.04%	88.93%
Feeling thermometer Republican party	0.83%	25.77%
2013 PRRI		
Income	8.33%	19.28%
Unfavorable toward Democratic party	62.25%	82.33%
Unfavorable toward Republican party	2.54%	45.45%

Note: Data are from the 2016 American National Election Study. Libertarianism scale, the outcome variable, is an additive scale of three items. Data are from the 2013 American Values Survey. Libertarianism scale, the outcome variable, is an additive scale of nine items. We use the medeff procedure in Stata to calculate the percent mediated including control variables and other mediating variables. It is typical for the percentages not to add up to 100%.

TABLE 2 ANES 2016: gender and race differences in the endorsement of libertarian principles

	Model 1	Model 2	Squared semipartial correlation
Female	−0.118	−0.070	0.005**
	(0.016)**	(0.014)**	
Black	−0.139	−0.017	0.000
	(0.026)**	(0.023)	
White	0.116	0.014	0.000
	(0.017)**	(0.016)	
College	−0.001	0.005	0.001
	(0.003)	(0.003)	
Age	0.002	0.001	0.001**
	(0.000)*	(0.000)*	
Mainline	−0.022	0.009	0.000
	(0.041)	(0.036)	
Evangelical	0.182	0.097	0.004**
	(0.025)**	(0.022)**	
Church	0.010	0.001	0.000
	(0.004)*	(0.004)	
Children	0.012	−0.027	0.000
	(0.021)	(0.019)	
Mother	0.003	0.023	0.000
	(0.028)	(0.024)	

(Continues)

TABLE 2 (Continued)

	Model 1	Model 2	Squared semipartial correlation
Income		0.002	0.001
		(0.001)	
Resentment		0.044	0.002**
		(0.015)**	
Egalitarian		−0.105	0.038*
		(0.008)**	
Democratic		−0.005	0.087**
		(0.000)**	
Republican		0.001	0.001*
		(0.000)*	
Constant	0.360	0.826	
	(0.041)**	(0.065)**	
R^2	0.09	0.32	
N	3456	3302	

Note: Data are from the 2016 American National Election Study. Libertarianism scale, the outcome variable, is an additive scale of three items; we use OLS regression

*$p < .05$;

**$p < .01$.

analyses do not provide much support for the racial resentment hypothesis. Racial resentment mediates 0% of the effect of being female and 1.69% of the effect of being Black on support for Libertarian Principles. Not listed in Table 1, it mediates 8.56% of the effect of being white on support for Libertarian Principles. White individuals holding racially resentful attitudes toward African Americans appear to be more likely to support the small government principles of Libertarianism.

Greater endorsement of egalitarianism is associated with lower levels of support for Libertarianism. Those believing in equality and wanting society to promote equality appear to be less likely to support small government. Perhaps, this is because of seeing a role for government in the promotion of equality in society. Egalitarianism mediates 23.54% of the effect of being female and 75.54% of the effect of being Black on support for Libertarian Principles. This provides moderate to strong support for the Egalitarianism Hypothesis.

Now, we turn to the Feelings toward the two major parties Hypothesis. The Democratic Party feeling thermometer is negatively associated while the Republican Party feeling thermometer is positively associated with support for Libertarian Principles. In other words, warm feelings toward the Democratic Party predict less support and warm feelings for the Republican Party predict greater support for Libertarian Principles. Feelings toward the Democratic Party mediate 34.04% of the gender effect and 88.93% of the effect of being Black; feelings toward the Republican Party mediate 0.83% of the effect of being a woman and 25.77% of the effect of being Black. These results provide moderate to strong support for the Feelings toward the two major parties Hypothesis.

Model 2 includes all of the variables for all of the hypotheses. In Model 2, income is not significant. The rest of the hypothesis variables remain significant. Gender remains significant, but the coefficient is reduced in size suggesting partial mediation. The Black variable and the white variable are no longer significant signifying full mediation. We use the margins command to calculate the predicted values included in the figures. The gender gap reduces in size on the left in comparison to on the right. Without indicators in the model and holding all control variables at their means, women have a predicted value of 0.41 and men have a predicted value of 0.53 on the Libertarianism Principles scale which ranges from 0–1. When all the indicators are included, women's predicted value is 0.43 and men's predicted value is 0.50. The gap went from 0.12 to 0.07.

There are even stronger results for the reduction of the race effect. Without indicators and holding control variables at their means, non-Blacks' predicted value is 0.34 and Blacks have a predicted value of 0.48. When the indicators are included, the predicted value of non-Blacks is 0.47 and the predicted value of Blacks is 0.45. The gap went from 0.14 to 0.02. Again, this is a substantial reduction in the size of the race gap in support of Libertarian Principles. We also provide the partial and semipartial correlations including the squared semipartial correlations, which represent the unique contribution of each variable to the overall R^2. This gives us an indication of the effect size of each of the variables we use to test our hypotheses. The effect size for income, racial resentment, and the Republican Party feeling thermometer are very small. The effect size for egalitarianism and the Democratic Party feeling thermometer are larger in comparison signifying a greater contribution to the overall model R^2.

2013 PRRI

The analyses we perform on the 2013 PRRI data are consistent with the 2016 ANES results. The results are in Table 4. In general women and African Americans are significantly less likely to hold libertarian beliefs. Whites are more likely to endorse libertarian principles. Again, we performed hierarchical regression, not shown, to see how including each of our indicators separately influ-

TABLE 3 PRRI American Values Survey 2013:gender and race differences in endorsement of libertarian principles

	Model 1	Model 2	Squared semipartial correlations
Female	−0.153	−0.023	0.000
	(0.069)*	(0.062)	
Black	−0.454	−0.095	0.001
	(0.081)**	(0.077)	
White	0.482	0.219	0.006**
	(0.053)**	(0.050)**	
College	−0.083	−0.106	0.002**
	(0.043)	(0.041)**	
Age	−0.003	−0.002	0.001
	(0.001)*	(0.001)	
Protestant	0.089	−0.020	0.000
	(0.043)*	(0.040)	
Catholic	−0.024	−0.024	0.000
	(0.042)	(0.038)	
Church	−0.001	−0.042	0.004**
	(0.012)	(0.012)**	
Children	0.008	−0.039	0.000
	(0.061)	(0.056)	
Mother	0.064	−0.003	0.000
	(0.084)	(0.076)	
Income		0.013	0.003**
		(0.004)**	
Democratic		0.436	0.131**
		(0.022)**	
Republican		−0.116	0.009**
		(0.023)**	
Constant	4.121	3.380	
	(0.078)**	(0.136)**	
R^2	0.10	0.33	
N	2240	2075	

Note: Data are from the 2013 American Values Survey. Libertarianism scale, the outcome variable, is an additive scale of nine items; we use OLS regression
*$p < .05$;
**$p < .01$.

ence the size and significance of the gender and race variables. Individuals with higher incomes are significantly more likely to hold libertarian beliefs. In the PRRI data, income mediates 8.33% of the gender gap and 19.28% of the race gap.[5] This provides moderate support for the Self-Interest

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[5] We also looked at whether or not being employed, being retired, or being disabled mediates the gender gap or the race gap in support for libertarian principles. We did not find that any of these mediated more than 1.5% and only being retired

TABLE 4 Descriptive statistics

ANES 2016			PRRI: American Values Survey 2013		
Variable	**Mean**	**SD**	**Variable**	**Mean**	**SD**
Libertarian	0.466	0.007	Libertarianism	4.254	0.021
Female	0.530	0.009	Female	0.489	0.011
Black	0.097	0.005	Black	0.089	0.006
White	0.730	0.008	White	0.735	0.010
College	11.247	0.040	College	0.338	0.010
Age	49.004	0.305	Age	49.555	0.375
Mainline	0.026	0.003	Protestant	0.505	0.011
Evangelical	0.071	0.004	Catholic	0.367	0.011
Church	1.485	0.027	Church	2.244	0.038
Children	0.336	0.008	Children	0.671	0.010
Mother	0.190	0.007	Mother	0.342	0.010
Income	15.565	0.139	Income	12.047	0.095
Resentment	3.040	0.007	Democratic	2.684	0.022
Egalitarian	3.619	0.015	Republican	2.825	0.021
Democratic	48.491	0.523			
Republican	43.232	0.475			

Hypothesis. Being unfavorable toward the Democratic Party is positively associated with support for Libertarian Principles; this mediates 62.25% and 82.33% of the gender and race effects. In contrast, being unfavorable toward the Republican Party is negatively associated with the outcome variable, mediating 2.54% and 45.45% of the gender and race effects. These results provide additional support for the Feelings Hypothesis that part of the reason for women's and African American's lower endorsement of Libertarian Principles is because of their feelings toward the two major parties.

Model 2 includes all the indicators, which all remain significant. Here we see that the effect of gender and the effect of being Black have been reduced to zero indicative of full mediation; this appears to be because of the inclusion of feelings toward the Democratic Party, because both are insignificant in Model 3 as well. The white variable, however, remains significant in Model 2; the smaller coefficient suggests partial mediation. Also included in Table 3 are the squared semipartial correlations. Again these provide the effect size because they represent the unique contribution of each variable to the overall R^2. Similar to the ANES analysis, the effect size for income is quite small. This is also true of the feelings toward the Republican Party. Feelings toward the Democratic Party, on the other hand, contribute considerably to the overall R^2 signifying a moderate effect size.

Table 4 includes the means and standard deviations for each variable in the ANES 2016 and the PRRI analysis. Finally, Tables 5 and 6 provide the correlation matrices of the variables for both data sets.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Our results provide insight into support for Libertarian Principles. We find low levels of support for our Racial Resentment Hypothesis. The other hypotheses receive greater support suggesting that self-interest, egalitarianism, and feelings toward the two major parties each partially explain the gender and race differences in support of Libertarian Principles.

Our findings have important implications for the Libertarian Party and Libertarian Party candidates as well as the two major parties and their candidates. If the Libertarian Party wants to be more successful in the future, it would be beneficial to attract more supporters including more women and people of color. This could mean emphasizing their views on the military industrial complex and their support of LGBT rights, because women are more likely to oppose military interventions, oppose increased defense spending, and support gay rights (Clark & Clark, 2008). In order to attract more African American support, the Libertarian Party could highlight its position that the criminal justice system is flawed, on which the majority of African Americans agree (Anderson, 2014; Newport, 2014). The Libertarian Party also seeks criminal justice reform, decriminalization of recreational drugs, and abolishing mandatory sentencing—all of which prior research has found to disproportionately impact individuals of color (Tonry & Melewski, 2008). The Democratic Party should continue to stress its support for welfare state spending and its historical championing of the rights of disadvantaged groups to maintain support from women and people of color; the Republican Party, on the other hand, should continue its support for free markets and smaller government so as not to lose support to the Libertarian Party.

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was significantly associated with libertarianism: retired individuals appear more likely to endorse libertarian principles. This is somewhat perplexing given that retired individuals benefit from a big government that provides Social Security and Medicare.

TABLE 5 ANES 16 correlation matrix

	Libertarian	Female	Black	White	College	Age	Mainline	Evangel	Church	Children	Mother	Income	Resent	Egalitarian	Dem	Rep
Libertarian	1.000															
Female	−0.151	1.000														
Black	−0.178	0.057	1.000													
White	0.185	0.000	−0.538	1.000												
College	0.024	0.008	−0.097	0.147	1.000											
Age	0.094	0.011	−0.073	0.159	0.022	1.000										
Mainline	0.007	−0.054	−0.027	0.013	0.022	0.042	1.000									
Evangelical	0.126	−0.011	−0.010	0.013	0.013	0.037	0.037	1.000								
Church	0.025	0.000	0.077	−0.080	0.008	−0.033	0.038	0.021	1.000							
Children	−0.038	0.049	0.056	−0.111	−0.022	−0.390	−0.022	−0.023	0.047	1.000						
Mother	−0.093	0.455	0.085	−0.085	−0.022	−0.283	−0.030	−0.025	0.043	0.681	1.000					
Income	0.101	−0.124	−0.194	0.183	0.405	0.036	0.001	0.037	0.005	0.054	−0.052	1.000				
Resentment	0.053	0.062	−0.009	0.048	−0.021	0.066	−0.040	0.009	0.003	−0.026	0.001	−0.021	1.000			
Egalitarian	−0.406	0.114	0.156	−0.145	0.087	−0.059	−0.002	−0.061	−0.057	−0.025	0.049	−0.019	−0.015	1.000		
Democrat	−0.503	0.120	0.269	−0.289	−0.010	−0.068	0.016	−0.115	−0.022	0.010	0.070	−0.107	−0.019	0.415	1.000	
Republican	0.303	−0.019	−0.186	0.161	−0.102	0.067	0.001	0.081	0.078	−0.007	−0.017	−0.008	0.025	−0.390	−0.464	1.000

TABLE 6 PRRI 2013 correlation matrix

	Libertarian	Female	Black	White	College	Age	Protestant	Catholic	Attend	Parent	Mother	Income	Dem	Rep
Libertarian	1													
Female	−0.0638	1												
Black	−0.2492	0.0322	1											
White	0.2854	−0.0119	−0.5216	1										
College	−0.0252	−0.0008	−0.0557	0.0964	1									
Age	−0.0244	0.0285	0.0047	0.1447	0.0178	1								
Protestant	0.0325	0.0585	0.1879	0.0487	−0.0704	0.1157	1							
Catholic	−0.0377	−0.0015	−0.0103	−0.1437	−0.1306	−0.01	−0.1637	1						
Church	−0.0151	0.1099	0.0829	−0.0466	0.0313	0.1386	0.3314	0.0905	1					
Children	0.011	0.0587	−0.0331	0.0408	−0.109	0.4027	0.1323	0.0712	0.2392	1				
Mother	−0.0376	0.737	0.0167	−0.0234	−0.0992	0.1918	0.1105	0.0301	0.1809	0.5046	1			
Income	0.1174	−0.0608	−0.1275	0.1678	0.3223	−0.0563	−0.0556	−0.08	−0.0252	0.0452	−0.0572	1		
Dem	0.5438	−0.0742	−0.2945	0.3247	0.0016	0.0277	0.1126	−0.0302	0.1328	0.0801	−0.0069	0.1009	1	
Rep	−0.3588	0.0097	0.2185	−0.19	0.0553	−0.0493	−0.1915	−0.0531	−0.2138	−0.1325	−0.0657	−0.0327	−0.5299	1

There are limitations to our investigation. First, our outcome variable does not necessarily only measure support for Libertarian Principles but also mainstream Republican attitudes about the proper role of government. In particular, the items do not reference libertarianism or the Libertarian Party at all. We believe that our results still provide insight into why the Libertarian Party is less appealing to women and people of color, because our outcome variable taps into the core principles—less government the better and confidence in the free market—of the Libertarian ideology. The second analysis, which produces similar results, includes a better outcome variable that measures additional aspects of Libertarian ideology including civil liberties and isolationism. Second, our self-interest measures are imperfect. Specifically, we would ideally like to measure receipt of government aid rather than preference for government services or income. Because of the feminization of poverty, in which women are make up a disproportionate percentage of those in poverty (Kimenyi & Mbaku, 1995; Pressman, 1988), we believe that self-interest as measured by past or present receipt of government aid would mediate a greater percentage of the gap among women. Finally, the use of mediational analyses is best suited with experimental data where researchers can ensure the temporal ordering of the predictor variable first, mediating variable second, and outcome variable last so as not to violate the causality assumption underlying this type of analysis. As we argue earlier, we can be sure that the predictor variables of sex and race come first but for some of the mediating variables such as racial resentment may not be second in the causal chain as theorized within this paper.

In addition to future work addressing the limitations that we point out above, we believe that much insight could be gained from oversampling Libertarian Party members. This would be difficult to do, but perhaps a partnership with the Libertarian Party to collect data among its members would be possible. In terms of female and nonwhite lack of affinity for the Libertarian Party, it might be useful to ask an open-ended question similar to the likes/dislikes ANES questions of the two major parties to get at what women and people of color think and feel about the Libertarian Party. Such a question may work best with an introduction summarizing the Libertarian Party platform for those unfamiliar with it.

In conclusion, the basis for Libertarianism support and opposition is multifaceted and varied according to our results. There is no single hypothesis that fully mediates the gender or race gap on its own. Understanding the underlying reasons for the attraction or lack of appeal of Libertarian Principles is important given the recent successes of Libertarian Party candidates. The modest success of and media attention garnered by Ron Paul and Rand Paul in recent years as well as the success of the Libertarian Party presidential ticket in 2016 highlights the need to understand who is drawn to libertarianism and why.

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