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The Role of Misogyny in the 2022 Korean Presidential Election: Understanding the Backlash against Feminism in Industrialized Democracies

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Abstract

Despite increasing scholarly attention to backlash against feminism, little is known about anti-feminist movements in East Asia. This study examines the 2022 South Korean presidential election campaign, in which the political parties sought to capitalize on political resistance to the perceived advance of feminism. This embrace of male grievance as a political force was arguably led by former People Power Party (PPP) chairman Lee Jun-seok, leading commenters to argue that support for Lee is rooted in misogyny. We examine this claim empirically by drawing on a novel survey to estimate the association between misogynistic attitudes, measured through devaluation, perception of women as manipulative, and distrust, and support for Lee. We find that misogynistic attitudes are positively correlated with support for Lee, but not with presidential vote choice. We interpret this as suggesting that the association between misogyny and support for Lee is a manifestation of the desire for symbolic representation. We discuss the implications of how this association can further influence the gender divide, both in Korea and beyond, and conclude with recommendations for further research.

Keywords: misogyny; elections; South Korea; anti-feminism; public opinion; Lee Jun-seok

Introduction

Studies show that there is often a realignment in gender policies in democracies that stem from generational shifts, where younger generations maintain egalitarian orientations towards gender roles and push for gender-equal practices that lead to important political consequences (Inglehart, Norris, and Welzel 2003). Yet consolidated democracies around the world are currently experiencing a backlash against gender equality as well as counterforces to feminism (Flood, Dragiewicz, and Pease 2021; Cohen 2020). Indeed, this conservative backlash can be seen through the rise of

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anti-feminist movements—resistance to feminism and gender equal policies (Roggeband 2018)—in consolidated democracies in Europe (Kuhar and Paternotte 2017; Kantola and Lombardo 2021; Rawłuszko 2021; Colella 2021; Donà 2021; Hertner 2021; Off 2023), Latin America (Biroli 2020; Zarembeg, Tabbush, and Friedman 2021), and even the United States (Elder, Greene, and Lizotte 2021; Sanbonmatsu 2008; Anduiza and Rico 2022).

Yet less is known about the growing support for prominent anti-feminist movements in East Asia, despite the region historically struggling with gender issues and the recent backsliding of gender equality. In particular, little attention has been given to the conservative backlash in South Korea, one of the most socioeconomically modernized democracies in the region, where much of the support for the movement comes from younger generations whose exposure of liberal democratic values should lead to increased gender egalitarian orientations. While Korea has historically maintained a traditional society, one with strict gender roles, this new anti-feminist movement differs from this long-standing traditional version of sexism. The traditional version suggests that men saw themselves as leaders while this new version suggests that men see themselves as victims of a society that excludes them and denies them opportunities (Park 2022). As a result, this new misogynistic trend has taken on a new form, one that differs from the traditional version of misogyny. Instead of functioning as a continuation of the past, it is developing into its own version that may continue on in the years to come.

Indeed, this new growing anti-feminist movement is being led by younger Korean men (Khil 2022), particularly through gendered political activity (Chan 2023), increasing grievances towards society (Kim 2023), increasing male-victim ideology (Jung 2023), and support for political leaders with misogynistic rhetoric (Kim and Lee 2022). In particular, the *idaenam* phenomenon, that is, the rise of young men in their twenties with an increasingly conservative approach to gender equality, has increased support for anti-feminist movements (Chan 2023). Thus, changing public sentiment towards gender is working alongside changing actions on the part of political leaders and parties.

The 2022 South Korean presidential election brought into full relief the importance of gender and the growing anti-feminist movement as an emerging political cleavage in Korean politics (Kim and Lee 2022). While previous elections focused on relatively predictable divides, such as regional identity politics, generation gaps, political loyalties, and views on North Korea, this election became the first to focus on the issue of gender (Koo 2023) to the degree that the pronounced gender division was described as a gender conflict, or *jendeo galteung* (Draudt 2022). Both presidential candidates sought to capitalize on the political backlash to the perceived advancement of gender equality by catering to a swing bloc of young male voters. Yoon Seok-yeol¹ of the People Power Party (PPP) denounced the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (Yeoseonggajokbu) and stated that discrimination against women is a “relic of the past,” which boosted support for him in the polls by over six percent by winning over young male swing voters, while Lee Jae-myung of the Democratic Party (DP) contended that the Ministry should drop the word “women” from its title. Ultimately, around 60 percent of young men supported Yoon, since Yoon seemed to focus on courting young male voters while around 60

percent of young women supported Lee Jae-myung since he ultimately switched his trajectory and began to court young female voters near the end of the campaign (Kim and Lee 2022). Such actions are indicative of the emergence of gender equality as a prominent political cleavage.

Gender has long been integral in explaining the causes and consequences of political conflict (Bae and Lee 2021). Nevertheless, the embrace of the gender divide and male grievance as a political force was arguably led by former PPP chairman Lee Jun-seok,² who not only emboldened backlash to feminism through misogynistic rhetoric, but also developed it into a key campaign issue in the 2022 elections (Koo 2023). Lee became a political symbol for the growing anti-feminist movement and empowered a group of young men, mostly *idaenam*, who believe that they face reverse discrimination in Korea; he is believed to be at least partly responsible for securing roughly 70 percent of the young male vote (Bae and Lee 2021; Park 2022). Indeed, increasing support among younger Koreans for anti-feminist movements was one of the reasons Lee was able to become a political symbol. This association has led commentators to argue that support for Lee is rooted in misogyny, in so far as he amplified the voices of those within the anti-feminist movement and validated their concerns (Blue Roof Politics 2021; Park 2021).

However, these claims have yet to be empirically supported. Although we know that there are significant gender divides with respect to vote choice, the specific sources of these divides remain understudied. Are misogynistic attitudes positively correlated with support for Lee Jun-seok? How much do they contribute to support for Lee versus other factors? Do different measurements of misogyny show increasing support for Lee? More broadly, do misogynistic attitudes correlate with support for conservative political leaders? Answering these questions is a crucial first step towards identifying the extent to which anti-feminism may be pointed to as a core factor in the gender divide, as well as assessing the broader significance for understanding political cleavages in years to come. The significance of gender-related attitudes to politics is likely to grow as the social and economic challenges posed by gender-related issues, such as gender inequality and Korea's low birth rate, continue to grow relative to traditional political cleavages, making it imperative to establish a firm and nuanced understanding of these attitudes. Moreover, misogyny is a multi-dimensional concept (Rottweiler and Gill 2021). If misogyny is found to be a determinant of vote choice, understanding in detail the specific sources of misogyny that predict political attitudes can aid in identifying the specific socio-psychological roots of this association.

Thus, in this study, we examine these questions empirically by drawing on a novel internet-based survey to estimate the association between misogynistic attitudes and support for Chairman Lee, using Rottweiler and Gill's (2021) three dimensional measure of misogyny. We find that misogynistic attitudes are indeed positively correlated with support for Lee. However, only the 'devaluation' dimension of misogyny identified by Rottweiler and Gill (2021) explains the variation in support for Lee. Further, we find that misogyny is not significantly associated with self-reported presidential votes for Yoon. Moreover, it explains only a small fraction of support for Chairman Lee. Taken together, these results suggest that the influence of misogyny on support for conservative political leaders is likely more of a matter of symbolic representation rather than a desire for substantive policy change.

This article offers four primary contributions to the literature on gender on politics. First, this study applies both the broader theory on gender politics, as well as recent empirical tools such as Rottweiler and Gill's (2021) novel measure of misogyny to an East Asian context. To our knowledge, scholars have not empirically examined the relationship between misogynistic attitudes and support for political leaders in South Korea, let alone given specific attention to the multidimensional nature of misogyny. This study thus contributes to the growing literature on gender politics by assessing the extent to which these attitudes shape citizens' political preferences. Specifically, this study shows that the measure of misogyny developed by Rottweiler and Gill (2021) is also a reliable measure of misogyny in the Korean context, and that the 'devaluation' dimension of misogyny should be given specific attention when looking at the role of misogynistic attitudes in political attitudes and behavior—both in theory and empirically—when it comes to contemporary South Korea. This result raises a number of important questions that require further exploration. Above all, why 'devaluation'? Although we propose a tentative answer, this issue requires further investigation, as well as inquiry into the extent to which it generalizes to other contexts. Second, this study provides the first empirical evidence that misogyny is indeed a factor in Lee's political popularity. Pundits make associational claims routinely, but this is a claim—and a broadly shared social perception among Korean liberals—that carries important implications, and hence merits empirical examination. Additionally, this study examines the *magnitude* of the association between misogyny and support for Lee. The results suggest that misogyny is unlikely to be the most important factor behind support for Lee. Third, this study suggests that, whereas misogyny may be a significant factor in Lee's rise, it does not appear to be the basis of a new political cleavage. Finally, our results suggest that research on the role of misogyny in politics should pay special attention to the difference between symbolic and substantive political representation. Although misogyny may influence the political arena, there is a crucial distinction to be made between the relative strength of the desire for policies that achieve specific political goals, and the affinity for politicians that espouse misogynistic social attitudes, as well as the likelihood that each will contribute to the formation of long-lasting political cleavages.

Misogyny and leadership

Misogyny continues to be one of the world's oldest forms of prejudice (Kaul 2021) yet it also remains vague in conception. It has been variously defined as hatred, aversion, mistrust, and prejudice as well as aggressive behaviors towards women (Gartenlaub-González and Mayne-Nicholls 2022) that consists of "a particular kind of unjustified hatred or contempt for women in a man's world ... where men have more power and privileges than women" (Brogaard 2020). Holistically, misogyny can be defined as "the hatred or devaluation of, hostility to, or prejudice against women" (Rottweiler and Gill 2021). According to Manne (2017), misogyny is closely related to sexism, but it differs from sexism in that misogyny also refers to the manner in which male dominance continues to be maintained as the status quo. That is, "sexism is the ideology that supports patriarchal social relations, but misogyny enforces it when there's a threat of that system going away" (Illing 2020). Thus, misogyny plays a critical role as a barrier towards gender equality.

Existing studies on misogyny and leadership examine rhetoric among political leaders in contemporary democracies and find that the misogynistic attitudes of authoritarian-like leaders in democracies are seen as merely an incidental part of their personality and it in fact helps these leaders succeed. Kaul (2021), for example, examines the United States, India, Brazil, Philippines, and Turkey, and finds that misogyny and masculinity work together as a political strategy for leaders even within these democracies. Other studies show how misogyny works against female leaders, in areas such as Zimbabwe (Mateveke and Chikafa-Chipiro 2020), Australia (Wright and Holland 2014), and the United States (Boatright and Sperling 2019).

Leadership thus exemplifies the importance of representation of both women and men in politics, so that citizens from both groups are represented in political discussions even when they are not physically present. According to Pitkin (1967), political representation consists of four dimensions—formalistic, symbolic, descriptive, and substantive. Of the four dimensions, the symbolic dimension focuses on who is being represented, particularly in relation to certain physical attributes. As such, studies on symbolic representation focus on the importance of representation of under-represented groups in politics, particularly women (Burnet 2011; Childs 2008; Franceschet, Annesley, and Beckwith 2017; Lawless 2004; Lombardo and Meier 2016, 2019; Verge and Pastor 2018). Yet increasingly, we are seeing growing symbolic representation of misogynistic political leaders and the way in which they function to represent voters with prejudice against women.

In this way, misogynistic attitudes can have a significant influence on vote choice as well, with women candidates often disadvantaged in various ways, such as by pragmatic bias (Corbett et al. 2021). The 2016 US elections illuminated the growing influence of misogynistic attitudes by portraying how sexism hurt Hillary Clinton and led to her defeat while leading to Donald Trump's electoral victory (Cassese and Holman 2019; Conroy 2018; Knuckey 2019; Valentino, Wayne, and Ocen 2018; Utych 2020). Misogyny, anti-feminism, and both modern and traditional sexism were featured prominently in the elections, with Trump voters showing greater antagonism towards women (Creedon 2022; Elder, Greene, and Lizotte 2021; Knuckey 2019; Shook et al. 2020). Even online forums cultivated an extreme misogynistic collective identity to support Trump by pushing against feminism and getting a "real" man into presidency (Dignam and Rohlinger 2019), with Trump further escalating this sentiment by making sexist statements that Clinton was playing the "woman card" (Elder, Greene, and Lizotte 2021).

The influence of misogyny on leadership and support for leaders with misogynistic tendencies can be seen outside of the US as well. Yet existing studies on the relationship between misogyny and leadership remain limited in various regional contexts, particularly within East Asia where gender inequality continues to be one of the most formidable challenges to democratization. Moreover, existing studies have not examined the relationship between misogyny, vote choice, and leadership in South Korea, where misogyny and gendered rhetoric have recently become central to the political sphere. This is especially surprising since misogyny in Korea is nothing new. It has been around for centuries. Yet the explicit rise of misogyny, particularly among younger generations, and the way in which leadership is utilizing this sentiment is new to Korea and can have potentially negative repercussions to Korea's democratic future.

The role of misogyny in South Korean politics

The rapidly changing political environment in South Korea has shown increasing support for misogynistic leadership, and these misogynistic attitudes are not viewed merely as an incidental part of their personality, but as rhetoric that plays a critical role in their success. In fact, gendered rhetoric among political leaders does not negatively affect their success, as would be expected, but instead leads to increasing support. Politicians have weaponized misogyny by discussing the loss of privilege of men (Park 2021), by focusing on “a misguided perception that men face societal disadvantages in response to efforts to “break the glass ceiling”” (Hines and Song 2021), and by pinning the blame for these grievances on other groups. Young women are targeted with skewed views of gender equality, which emphasize a distorted sense of meritocracy where women supposedly earn less because they put in less effort than men rather than due to systemic gender inequality, and which insist that women receive preferential treatment. For example, the word “femi,” which is short for feminist, has become a derogatory label and is often described as a form of mental illness (Ahn 2022).

Thus, misogyny has become used as a political strategy and tool among political candidates to gain support from certain groups within society and to avoid competition with the opposition party. The recent election seemingly relied on exploiting anxious young men who believe they are the victims of “reverse discrimination.” This is notably the case among groups of civilians who harbor growing grievances towards proponents of gender equality (Kim and Lee 2022). Various groups of young men have made claims of misandry and founded movements that channel their frustrations—with the stagnant economy, lack of employment opportunities, increasing housing prices, difficult loan opportunities, and mandatory military service—towards women. This group may view women as an outgroup that is taking away their resources and that is one of the fundamental causes of their problems (Kim and Kweon 2022). It is possible that this feminist/anti-feminist divide may be contributing to the formation of a new political cleavage and an additional source of political polarization in an already polarized nation.

Different forms of misogyny in Korea are especially visible on online and digital platforms (Youngmi Kim 2021), through online fringe groups such as *Dang Dang We*, *Anti-Feminist Organization*, *FM Korea* and *New Men on Solidarity*. *New Men on Solidarity* uses a slogan that states “feminism is a mental illness” and runs a YouTube channel which has more than 500,000 subscribers (Choe 2022). Moreover, they take advantage of these online platforms to initiate anti-feminist street protests and also to counter nationwide protests against gender-based violence, by organizing ways to follow them. While these groups contend that they aim to defend men’s rights, particularly regarding those that are wrongly accused of various forms of harassment, they also exemplify misogyny in multiple ways. First, members of this movement commonly assert that women are manipulative, as evidenced by the use of such derogatory phrases and concepts as “seolgeojiron,” (dishwashing theory), used to describe women in their thirties who they believe will manipulate innocent men with stable jobs by cajoling them into marriage so that these men will be forced to “clean up” their past (Lee Yeon-sook 2022). Second, they often claim that women

cannot be trusted because they take advantage of men. For example, the male-dominated online community *Ilbe* has spawned a number of misogynistic viral phrases, such as “kimchi-nyeo” or “doenjang-nyeo,” terms that are designed to express the financial burdens they believe ill-intentioned women impose upon vulnerable men (Kim 2018). Third, they consistently state that women are difficult to be around because women get special privileges, such as avoiding mandatory military service (Kim and Lee 2022).

While cyber misogyny is not new, some political leaders have used this misogynistic sentiment to gain political support by appealing to young men who are anxious about losing economic and social ground to women (Fairchild 2015). Lee Jun-seok, a young conservative-leaning politician whose presence in the political sphere has grown in the last few years, stands out as perhaps one of the first politicians to have made appeals to misogynistic voters a central aspect of his political career. While Lee has been prominent on the political platform in Korea for some time, he spent the last several years building his platform on anti-feminism. Through this, Lee has become a prominent figure of this movement by openly criticizing feminism and by contending that feminists spread hatred (Khil 2022). He further asserted that radical feminist groups are “as toxic as terrorism” (Kang 2019) and criticized the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family by stating that it only favors women and is biased against men because women no longer face discrimination or deprivation of opportunities. According to Lee, affirmation action should be abolished because it promotes reverse discrimination and prevents meritocracy. He also used the issue to challenge the opposition party by saying that the Democratic Party lost the elections because it had a “fixation on a pro-women agenda” which underestimated the power and support of young men (Kim 2021). In this way, Lee’s rhetoric has led him, to a certain extent, to become a symbol of the rise of misogyny as a political force.

Indeed, Lee’s rhetoric, as divisive as it may be, made the recent elections about anti-feminist by giving this anti-feminist community a political voice, emboldening them by reinforcing their criticisms, and turning them into a major and mainstream political force (Sung 2021). Support for Lee among members of this group grew rapidly and robustly because he amplified the voices of those within the movement and validated their concerns. According to Kim (2021), he “catered to the untapped pool of angry young men who felt they lacked representation in politics, and made feminism ... the scapegoat of their problems.” In fact, Lee became a symbol through his divisive rhetoric for many fringe groups, including New Men on Solidarity, where the group’s president stated that seeing Lee was empowering and he showed that men can have a prominent voice in politics. Through Lee’s influence, members of these groups sided with Yoon and the PPP this past election. According to Park (2022), while these young misogynistic voters did not turn politically conservative nor did they suddenly become more interested in politics, they appear to have begun voting for the conservative party due to the influence from Chairman Lee.

Observing these trends, political commentators have contended that support for Lee and support for conservative leaders are generally rooted in misogyny (e.g., Blue Roof Politics 2021; Park 2021). This is quite an extraordinary claim—if true, it would mean that misogyny is not merely the motivating force of a sizable but

relatively fringe political movement, but rather a general motivating force among disaffected males or those who believe that feminism poses a threat to the stability of Korean society. This could potentially lead to long-term consequences for Korean women.

This would be a significant departure from our previous understanding of the determinants of candidate support, hence is important as an empirical and theoretical claim. First, the importance of misogyny is likely to continue to increase as democratic societies across the world reckon with progressive political trends. Various movements have impacted a wide range of democratic societies, such as the #MeToo movement that took place around the world and the #WithYou movement in Korea and Japan (Shin 2021). This movement was particularly “strong and militant” in Korea, and it significantly impacted a number of prominent politicians, such as the former Busan mayor (Huang 2021, 484). Additionally, women in Korea also mobilized around the issue of voyeurism, documenting more than 30,000 cases of illegal filming of women with hidden cameras (Tan 2019). Moreover, women of all ages mobilized in less gender-focused protests, such as the 2016 Candlelight protests. This indicates that an increasing mobilization of women, and the role of gender politics—and identity politics more broadly—in vote choice and other key political outcomes, is likely to become a prime theoretical focus, making it important to understand when, how, and to what extent gender influences such outcomes. As an advanced industrialized democracy, Korea can be considered a kind of bellwether for the development of these phenomena.

Secondly, it is important to know to what extent misogyny is becoming an important determinant of vote choice, or whether the rise of politicians like Lee Jun-seok is more indicative of a symbolic expression of male backlash that is not likely to last. Korea is a politically polarized nation with deep societal divisions (Mosler and Chang 2019). The dearth of female political leaders, and the backlash against women’s political engagement (Liu 2018), as well as the increasing prominence of anti-feminist leaders shows the growth of misogyny in Korea. The emergence of feminism in this context has created a political cleavage that could be a dangerous development, as Korea seeks to navigate the enormous political challenges posed by declining birth rates, national security, and other such issues amid a divided society.

Main Argument

To date, however, the connection between misogyny and support for conservative politicians has not been empirically substantiated. Nor is it clear whether the preference for misogynistic public officials is purely an expression of the desire for symbolic representation among those dissatisfied with the direction of Korean gender policies and social trends, or whether it represents an underlying preference for substantive policy changes that may override other potential political considerations. These two questions constitute the core theoretical and empirical focus of this study. A first step towards evaluating these questions is to measure the correlation between misogyny and support for Lee Jun-seok to show clearly and empirically the association between the two. The existing political commentary notwithstanding, given the lack of empirical evidence we pose the following research question:

RQ1: Are misogynistic attitudes positively correlated with support for Lee Jun-seok?

Secondly, given that misogyny has different dimensions, it is possible that some of these dimensions are more important determinants of political attitudes than others. Identifying the relative importance of each dimension of misogyny may help us link specific social and economic trends to levels of support for Lee. As theory does not provide sufficient guidance in establishing *a priori* hypotheses, we pose the following research question:

RQ2: Do different measurements of misogyny show increasing support for Lee?

Lastly, whereas Lee is the official leader of the party, he does not hold a popularly elected post in the government. In order to evaluate the extent of the influence of misogyny, we may also want to see if misogynistic attitudes are positively correlated with citizens' preferences for particular candidates for public office. President Yoon Seok-yeol is part of the same right-wing party as Lee, and he is similarly affiliated with the anti-feminist movement, as he pushed his anti-feminist agenda by stating that the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family treated men like "potential sex criminals" (Ahn 2022). Although the extent of the role of misogyny in Yoon's campaign was arguably lower than that exhibited by Lee, it certainly played a role in his campaign, and young male voters became a part of his key voting bloc. Hence, to the extent that misogynistic attitudes are associated with voting for Yoon, we can say that the anti-feminist movement is impacting actual political outcomes. Accordingly, we pose the following research question:

RQ3: Are misogynistic attitudes positively correlated with voting for Yoon Seok-yeol?

Data and Methods

We evaluate our research questions through a descriptive analysis of a novel internet survey data set collected in South Korea on June 1, 2022 (N = 434). The survey was designed with the Qualtrics survey tool, and it was approved by Gyeongsang National University's human subjects review board on February 11, 2022 (approval code: GIRB-A22-Y-0010). The Lucid Corporation recruited respondents using quota sampling based on government census data for sex and age (Korean Statistical Information Service 2022). Lucid was chosen as it has been shown to produce samples that are roughly equivalent to probability samples (Coppock and McClellan 2019). An attention check was included in the survey to ensure respondent attentiveness (See appendix for full survey details). We received a total of 708 responses, yielding a valid response rate of about 61.3 percent.³ The sample is not perfectly representative, but it is broadly inclusive of major demographic groups. A comparison of sample descriptive statistics and 2022 Korean census data is shown in Table A1 in the Appendix.

Measuring Misogyny

Broadly speaking, misogyny can be operationalized as the extent to which one feels hatred or ill-will towards women qua women. But misogyny comes in various forms, and despite increasing public discourse on the subject, measuring misogyny continues to be a difficult task with methodological inconsistencies (Rottweiler and Gill 2021). Rottweiler and Gill (2021) developed a psychometric scale to assess the

construct of misogyny and identified the dimensions pertaining to the construct of misogyny that focus on three dimensions using the methodological protocol suggested by Carpenter (2018). They identify three dimensions of misogyny: the *distrust* of women, the *devaluation* of women, and the *perception of women as manipulative* and exploitative in nature. We adopt these dimensions to test our study in a novel context, as this has not been utilized in the South Korean context, nor have other measures been used to test misogyny in recent studies.

Accordingly, misogyny is measured through three survey items that ask respondents the extent to which they agree with a given statement, where each item corresponds to one of the dimensions identified by Rottweiler and Gill (2021). Agreement is given by a Likert scale that takes on the following values: “strongly disagree” (assigned a value of 1), “disagree” (assigned a value of 2), neither agree nor disagree (assigned a value of 3), “agree” (assigned a value of 4), and “strongly agree” (5). Each item is designed to tap into one of the dimensions of misogyny as discussed above. The first statement is designed to measure respondent perceptions that women are *manipulative*: “Women use their sexuality to manipulate men.” Respondent agreement with the following statement is designed to measure *distrust* of women: “Generally speaking, it’s safer not to trust women.” *Devaluation* attitudes are measured by asking for respondent agreement with the following statement: “Women sometimes bother me just by being around me.” Respondent agreement with each of the items is averaged to produce a measure of overall misogynistic attitudes (Mean: 2.311, SE: 0.944, Cronbach’s Alpha: 0.780). The Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.780 indicates that the measure is sufficiently reliable.

Support for Lee Jun-seok

Support for Lee Jun-seok is measured by a feeling thermometer that asks respondents the extent to which they like or dislike Lee Jun-seok. The responses range from 0 (strongly dislike) to 100 (strongly like) (Mean: 36.850, SD: 29.476). In addition to the reasons mentioned above, we can view Lee as a “most likely” case—in the sense of Seawright and Gerring (2008)—for the argument that misogyny explains support for conservative politicians that appeal to gender attitudes, in so far as Lee is arguably the conservative politician that has most overtly and comprehensively incorporated these appeals into his political persona.

Control Variables

Following the advice of Cinelli, Forney, and Pearl (2020), we only include controls that we believe will reduce omitted variable bias and increase the precision of regression coefficients without introducing additional confounders, such as colliding variables. To this end, we include three sets of controls. The first set contains demographic variables that might confound the association between misogynistic attitudes and support for Lee Jun-seok. These include age, gender, self-reported highest level of schooling completed, monthly household income, occupation, and region of residence. Age is indicated by an ordinal variable that ranges from 18–25 to 65+. This is re-coded as an integer that ranges from one to five. Gender is indicated by a nominal variable with two values: male and female. Region of residence is included

because region is a major socio-political cleavage, hence is a potential confounder (Kwon 2004). The second set of controls includes indicators of political awareness and ideology. Specifically, we control for political interest (1=Not interested in politics at all, 5 = Very interested in politics), news consumption (1=Don't consume news, 4 = Consume news every day), frequency of political discussion (1=Don't discuss politics with others at all, 4 = Often discuss politics with others), and political ideology (1=Very liberal, 5 = Very conservative). These are included in the analysis because political attitudes tend to emerge through news consumption and political discussion (Shah et al. 2017). Failing to control these variables might cause us to underestimate the association between misogyny and support for Lee Jun-seok.

Analytical Method

We estimated the association between misogynistic attitudes and support for Lee Jun-seok by regressing respondents' 0–100 warmth ratings on the misogyny index using ordinary least squares regression (OLS). We estimate three separate regressions: one with only the main independent variable, one with demographic controls, and one with the full set of controls.

Results

The results of the regression of support for Lee Jun-seok on our independent variables are displayed in [Table 1](#). The first column shows the results obtained when no controls are included. Column 2 shows the results obtained when only demographic controls are included, and column 3 shows the results for when all controls are included. Looking at the first column of [Table 1](#), we see that the coefficient on the misogyny index is positive and statistically significant at the 0.01 level. The coefficient associated with misogyny is 5.220 (95% CI: [2.131, 8.309]), indicating that each additional one-unit increase on the 1–5 misogyny index results in a roughly 5.2 increase in warmth towards Lee Jun-seok on the 0–100 scale. Further, this association is robust to both sets of controls, as revealed in columns 2 and 3 of [Table 1](#).

As one might expect, the results shown in the third column of [Table 1](#) indicate that males are on average more supportive of Lee Jun-seok by about 7.795 points on the 0–100 warmth scale ($p < 0.05$). On the other hand, the coefficients associated with income and education are not statistically significant, suggesting that support for Lee is probably not related to socioeconomic status (SES). In the second set of controls, only discussion frequency and left-right ideological placement exhibit a statistically significant association with support for Lee Jun-seok, with each additional one-unit movement from left to right being associated with a 6.321 increase in support for former Chairman Lee ($p < 0.001$).

In RQ2 we asked if the relationship between misogyny and support for Lee Jun-seok varied by the specific dimension of misogyny. To find out which of the dimensions of misogyny exhibits the most consistent association with support for Lee we regressed respondent feeling thermometer scores on each misogyny indicator separately. The results, displayed in [Table 2](#), show that *devaluation* of women (Devaluation) is the only statistically significant predictor of support for Lee among the misogyny variables. The perception that women are *manipulative*

Table 1. Results of Regression of Warmth toward Lee Jun-seok on Misogyny Index.

<i>Dependent variable: Warmth toward Lee Jun-seok</i>			
Misogyny	5.220*** (1.571)	4.466** (1.623)	3.703* (1.589)
Male		6.414 (3.266)	7.795* (3.225)
Age		-0.701 (1.235)	-1.191 (1.251)
Education		-5.111* (2.362)	-4.844* (2.337)
Income		0.211 (0.542)	-0.043 (0.537)
Job		0.509 (0.613)	0.425 (0.600)
Gyeonggi		5.439 (6.893)	7.254 (6.776)
Gyeongsang		0.960 (7.289)	2.980 (7.156)
Jeju		66.020* (29.299)	69.469* (28.753)
Jeolla		-3.655 (7.964)	-2.092 (7.766)
Kangwon		17.006 (10.071)	15.422 (9.813)
Seoul		13.411* (6.720)	14.211* (6.565)
Political Interest			-0.457 (1.815)
News Consumption			0.002 (1.158)
Discussion Frequency			6.487** (2.111)
Ideology			6.321*** (1.610)
Constant	24.614*** (3.924)	37.839** (14.143)	5.996 (17.076)
Observations	381	381	380
Adjusted R ²	0.026	0.068	0.118
Residual Std. Error	28.971 (df = 379)	28.332 (df = 368)	27.537 (df = 363)
F Statistic (df)	11.041*** (1; 379)	3.319*** (12; 368)	4.183*** (16; 363)

*p<0.05;**p<0.01;***p<0.001

(Manipulation) is also positive and nearly statistically significant ($p = 0.07$). By contrast, as shown in column 2 of Table 2, the coefficient on *distrust* of women (Distrust) is negative and far from statistical significance ($p = 0.29$).

Results for Analysis of Relationship between Misogynistic Attitudes and Presidential Vote Choice

In RQ3 we asked whether misogynistic attitudes predict support for politicians more broadly. We assess this by regressing respondent self-reported presidential vote choice on respondent misogyny score using OLS and logistic regression. Presidential vote is indicated by a binary variable that takes on the value of 1 if the respondent indicated that they voted for Yoon and a value of zero otherwise, following the reasoning mentioned above. Controls are as before. The results are shown in Table 3. The results shown in Table 3 indicate that misogyny does not appear to be associated with voting for Yoon. Indeed, as indicated by the low R-squared, the two variables are hardly correlated.

Table 2. Regression Results for Individual Misogyny Measures.

<i>Dependent variable: Warmth toward Lee Jun-seok</i>			
Perception of Manipulation	2.307 (1.261)		
Distrust		-1.308 (1.231)	
Devaluation			2.804* (1.332)
Male	8.123* (3.148)	7.152* (3.218)	7.511* (3.184)
Age	-0.920 (1.218)	-1.556 (1.217)	-1.434 (1.258)
Education	-5.020* (2.303)	-3.904 (2.332)	-4.275 (2.353)
Income	-0.070 (0.525)	-0.227 (0.522)	-0.204 (0.530)
Job	0.444 (0.583)	0.492 (0.590)	0.415 (0.598)
Gyeonggi	8.019 (6.721)	3.632 (6.581)	3.721 (6.618)
Gyeongsang	2.378 (7.101)	0.172 (6.987)	1.298 (6.983)
Jeju	73.765* (28.745)	68.727* (29.264)	59.860* (29.357)
Jeolla	-1.668 (7.682)	-5.105 (7.517)	-6.107 (7.493)
Kangwon	16.255 (9.808)	13.857 (9.636)	12.704 (9.797)
Seoul	15.158* (6.521)	11.047 (6.398)	10.661 (6.401)
Political Interest	0.061 (1.769)	0.152 (1.744)	-0.493 (1.762)
News Consumption	-0.111 (1.120)	-0.600 (1.054)	-0.058 (1.133)
Discussion Frequency	6.374** (2.085)	5.313** (2.044)	5.840** (2.076)
Ideology	6.376*** (1.564)	5.925*** (1.555)	5.953*** (1.565)
Constant	6.695 (16.496)	23.950 (16.551)	14.516 (16.917)
Observations	396	408	394
Adjusted R ²	0.117	0.089	0.096
Residual Std. Error	27.554	28.118	27.977
F Statistic (df)	4.260***	3.486***	3.606***

*p<0.05;**p<0.01;***p<0.001

As a supplementary analysis, we also investigated the extent to which there is an association between misogyny and support for the PPP more broadly. This is another way of identifying the extent to which misogyny is connected to broader political attitudes, rather than being solely connected to support for Lee. To do this, we regressed support for the PPP, as measured by a binary variable indicating whether a respondent identified as a supporter of the PPP or another party, on our measure of misogyny, along with the same set of controls used in the other analyses. The results are shown in Table 4. When examined in isolation, the coefficient on misogyny is statistically significant. However, when controls are included, the relationship between misogyny and support for the PPP loses statistical significance, suggesting that misogyny is not a fundamental correlate of party identification.

Table 3. Results of Regression of Presidential Vote Choice on Misogyny Index.

	<i>Dependent variable: Vote for Yoon</i>			
	<i>OLS</i>		<i>Logit</i>	
Misogyny	0.044 (0.026)	0.033 (0.025)	0.2 (0.109)	0.178 (0.134)
Male		0.059 (0.051)		0.291 (0.272)
Age		0.038 (0.020)		0.187 (0.108)
Education		0.037 (0.037)		0.195 (0.208)
Income		-0.002 (0.008)		-0.016 (0.046)
Job		0.002 (0.009)		0.013 (0.051)
Gyeonggi		-0.077 (0.105)		-0.399 (0.535)
Gyeongsang		-0.004 (0.112)		-0.026 (0.568)
Jeju		-0.161 (0.458)		-13 (882.744)
Jeolla		-0.266* (0.121)		-1.6* (0.701)
Kangwon		-0.064 (0.155)		-0.345 (0.792)
Seoul		0.004 (0.102)		0.002 (0.515)
Political Interest		0.020 (0.028)		0.107 (0.151)
News Consumption		-0.024 (0.018)		-0.121 (0.103)
Discussion Frequency		0.080* (0.033)		0.440* (0.180)
Ideology		0.207*** (0.025)		1.1*** (0.154)
Constant	0.311*** (0.066)	-0.77** (0.269)	-0.7** (0.3)	-6.6*** (1.527)
Observations	393	392	393	392
Adjusted R ²	0.004	0.207		
Log Likelihood			-264.948	-213.293
Residual Std. Error	0.49 3(df:37,391)	0.42		
F Statistic	2.7	7.4***		

*p<0.05;**p<0.01;***p<0.001

Discussion

The analysis presented here shows that there is a strong positive association between misogynistic attitudes and warmth toward former PPP chairman Lee Jun-seok. This association is statistically significant at conventional levels and robust to a variety of control variables. These results lend some support to the claim that misogynistic attitudes may have been an important factor in Lee's ascendance as an arguably popular conservative leader. However, we cannot assert that misogyny causes individuals to support Lee; it is possible that misogyny is correlated with unobserved variables

Table 4. Results of Regression of Party Identification on Misogyny Index.

	Dependent variable: p(PPP Supporter)			
	OLS	Logit	OLS	Logit
Misogyny	0.073** (0.025)	0.331** (0.115)	0.039 (0.024)	0.236 (0.139)
Male			0.134** (0.049)	0.762** (0.283)
Age			-0.009 (0.019)	-0.073 (0.110)
Education			-0.017 (0.036)	-0.099 (0.191)
Income			-0.012 (0.008)	-0.072 (0.047)
Job			0.006 (0.009)	0.037 (0.052)
Gyeonggi			0.042 (0.102)	0.114 (0.557)
Gyeongsang			0.110 (0.109)	0.443 (0.586)
Jeju			-0.134 (0.445)	-12.8 (882.711)
Jeolla			-0.098 (0.118)	-0.881 (0.727)
Kangwon			0.101 (0.151)	0.422 (0.806)
Seoul			0.076 (0.099)	0.296 (0.534)
Political Interest			0.042 (0.028)	0.200 (0.156)
News reading			-0.013 (0.018)	-0.069 (0.100)
Discussion frequency			0.046 (0.032)	0.279 (0.182)
Ideology			0.197*** (0.025)	1.072*** (0.157)
Constant	0.160* (0.062)	-1.498*** (0.298)	-0.139896	-5.4*** (1.447)
Observations	393	393	392	392
Adjusted R ²	0.019		0.179	
Log Likelihood		-244.529		-202.723
Residual Std. Error	0.5		0.4	
F Statistic	8.6**		6.3***	

*p<0.05;**p<0.01;***p<0.001

that we are unable to account for with the present research design. Furthermore, as shown in column 1 of Table 1, variation in misogyny alone accounts for only about 2.6 percent of the variation in support for Lee, as indicated by the adjusted R-squared. Adding the full set of control variables increases the adjusted R-squared to 11.8 percent, meaning that factors other than misogyny account for about 9.2 percent of the variation in support for Lee. This suggests that, although misogyny is a fairly substantively important correlate of support for Lee, it does not appear to be the most important predictor of support for Lee.

Regarding the question of what aspect of misogyny is most strongly associated with support for Lee, the results in Table 2 show that the dimension of *devaluation*, in particular, had a statistically significant effect on positive feelings towards Lee, whereas the *perception of manipulation* and *distrust* did not. There are many reasons why this might be the case. The *devaluation* dimension entails two interrelated views of women: the notion of women threatening others as a group, and the perception that women are more highly valued than men. The first indicates that misogyny may stem from being bothered by women just by their presence as a group. Many within this ingroup feel that they are victims of gender-related policies (Kim and Kweon 2022), with proportional representation systems allowing politicians, particularly female leaders (Lee and Jalalzai 2017; Lee Young-Im 2022), to increase their substantive representation of women (Kweon and Ryan 2022), and thus, their misogynistic attitudes are directed at women for just existing as a group. Similarly, Lee Jun-seok often focused his antagonistic views of women as a group—rather than individuals—who receive additional benefits which take benefits away from men. The second view of *devaluation* indicates that women receive special privileges, such as not serving in mandatory military service (Kim and Lee 2022). In fact, in 2021, 79 percent of young men felt serious discrimination because of their gender (Bicker 2022). In this way, misogynistic attitudes are a response to perceived societal valuation of women, and the natural response is to support political figures who devalue women and increase/preserve men's social standing. Those who viewed Lee favorably may thus have done so because their misogyny stems less from particular actions from women or stereotypical characteristics that are emphasized by the *perception of manipulation* and *distrust* dimensions, but because of the unfairness men might feel due to women as an outgroup and the perception that women are more highly valued than men. In addition, our results showed that misogyny was not associated with voting for President Yoon, indicating that this is not strictly a partisan phenomenon, but rather one focused on a particular political leader. While many men and misogynistic voters voted for Yoon, this may have been mostly due to influence from Lee Jun-seok as the main political figure that emboldened and validated the concerns of this group (Blue Roof Politics 2021). Indeed, while Yoon did make negative comments related to gender equality, and particularly towards feminism, both presidential candidates during the election campaign period utilized the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family as part of their election strategies by making statements to appeal to this group of voters (Kim and Lee 2022). The Korean name of the ministry, Yeoseong Gajok-**bu**, can be directly translated as the Ministry of Women and Family, yet the official English name is the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family. While Yoon proposed to dismantle the ministry altogether due to the emphasis on women, Lee Jae-myung proposed to change the name of the ministry to one that focuses on the equal-ness of men and women more so than just women's rights. Interestingly, however, both political candidates contended that these changes to the ministry, as different as they are, would lead to an improvement in women's rights because these proposals would strengthen the protection of women and children, though in many ways these changes could potentially lead to a setback for women's rights (McCurry 2022).

Despite some differences, moreover, Yoon Seok-yeol and Lee Jae-myung emphasized similar objectives when it came to gender rhetoric, especially in the initial stages

of the election campaign. Moreover, Yoon utilized many different campaign strategies during his election campaign that were unrelated to gender. For example, he made pledges to address domestic problems, such as resolving the housing problem by creating more than one million homes in Seoul and around the country and incentivizing private sector jobs and investment capital to promote start-ups and SMEs (Cha and Kim 2022), while also committing to make foreign policy changes such as reducing dependence on China, supporting the QUAD and seeking membership, and cooperating closely with the US in South Korea's deterrence against North Korea (Snyder 2022).

Of the four types of representation identified by Pitkin (1967), we can perhaps interpret the result above as an expression of the desire for symbolic (rather than substantive) representation among those high in misogynistic attitudes. In Korea, party leaders have tended to play a role in galvanizing support for the party through charismatic leadership (Lee Young-Im 2022). Lee Jun-seok appears to have played such a role for the conservative party in so far as he has given voice to those who feel threatened by the changing statuses of men and women in Korean society. Yet, such concerns appear to play a smaller role in shaping policy preferences. In order to further strengthen our confidence in this interpretation, we conducted a multinomial logit regression of the misogyny index on candidate choice. The results, shown in Table A2 of the appendix, confirm that misogyny is not significantly correlated with candidate choice, even when considering all of the candidates simultaneously. Further, as shown above, misogyny is not consistently associated with party identification. Because misogyny tends to go along with discrimination, we can cautiously interpret the results of this study as suggesting that the influence of discriminatory attitudes is limited, in so far as it suggests that misogynistic attitudes do not trump other concerns when it comes to choosing the leader of the country or one's preferred political party.

Importantly, the results of the present study suggest that the misogyny index developed by Rottweiler and Gill (2021) works reasonably well in South Korea, in so far as it exhibits a sufficiently high degree of reliability. At the same time, the findings regarding *devaluation* raise questions about the underlying nature of the connection between misogyny and support for politicians like Lee. We have interpreted this finding as indicating that the connection between misogyny and support for Chairman Lee is a result of the perception that women's social status relative to men's social status has increased. Perhaps in order to counter this relative loss of status, a certain subset of Korean men—or women who value traditional gender roles—may support politicians that embody or symbolize opposition to this loss in so far as they espouse ideas or attitudes that may inhibit the rise of women in Korean society. However, verification of this interpretation requires further analysis, as does the question of whether this phenomenon generalizes to other societies.

Conclusion

The Gender Gap and Democracy in South Korea

Despite being a consolidated democracy and an advanced economy, Korea continues to struggle with the gender gap. According to the 2021 World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index, for example, Korea ranks 102 out of 153 countries.

Specifically, it ranks 123 in terms of economic participation and opportunity, 104 in education attainment, 54 in health and survival, and 68 in terms of political empowerment. During the 2020 21st National Assembly election, moreover, there were a total of 19 percent female lawmakers. Of these, there were 30 female and 150 male elected members in the progressive party while there were 18 female and 85 male elected members in the conservative party. And despite being the highest in Korea's political history, it still ranked at the bottom of OECD countries.⁴ Before the 2024 parliamentary elections, the 21st National Assembly members consists of 20 female members and 83 male members in the conservative party and 28 female members and 139 male members of the progressive party, resulting in 58 female members out of 298 members overall.⁵ In the April 2024 parliamentary elections, 36 female candidates and 218 male candidates were elected into the 22nd National Assembly

Moreover, though existing studies show that support for gender equality increases among the youth in postindustrial democracies (Inglehart and Norris 2003), the recent growth of anti-feminist movements in South Korea suggest that democracy is not increasing support for gender equality. According to Kim and Lee (2022), 39 percent of Korean citizens support anti-feminist sentiments, and younger Koreans in their twenties and thirties support anti-feminism more than older Koreans. In fact, nearly half (47 percent) believe that women get preferential treatment (Kim and Lee 2022). In a similar vein, the results of this study suggest that misogynistic attitudes among this group may be positively associated with support for leaders who have been explicit in their anti-feminist rhetoric.

Misogyny and Leadership in South Korea and Beyond

Examining the relationship between misogyny and leadership is crucial to South Korea because it seems to be related to leaders and their rhetoric, rather than to partisanship. After leaving the PPP, Lee announced in December 2023 that he would launch a political party of his own, and this new party received support of 21.1 percent even before it was founded (Hoon 2023). On January 20, 2024, he announced the launch of his own political party, the Reformist Party or New Reform Party (Gaehyeokshindang), where he would be the first Chief as well as the chairperson of the party's platform (Korea Broadcasting System 2024). As in the past, Lee continued to use a divisive strategy, one that focuses on supporting his primary support base, disaffected young men in their twenties and thirties, and marginalizing other groups such as young women and the elderly, in order to appeal to young male voters (Lee 2024). This strategy won him his first parliamentary seat, in the 2024 legislative election. In this way, the "Lee Jun-seok syndrome" will mostly remain consistent and possibly grow among his young male voters. The growing prominence of both generational and gender divisions in politics and society indicate that misogyny will continue to play an evolving role in Korea.

These concerns related to the growing misogyny in politics are not restricted to Korea. Like Lee, various political leaders worldwide are making similarly gendered comments to appeal to those who have a desire for this type of symbolic representation. Turkish President Erdoğan described women who reject motherhood as deficient and incomplete; Brazil's health minister Barros said "men work harder than women" while

Korwin-Mikke, a European Parliament member, stated that women must earn less because they are smaller, weaker, and less intelligent; and a US Republican party leader in Utah opposed wage equality stating that it was because men need to support their families while women need to raise children (Margolis 2017). In this way, anti-feminist rhetoric seems to be increasingly prominent among leaders in countries all over the world, and misogyny may continue to play a critical role as a barrier towards gender equality as well as other broader political cleavages in both Korea and beyond.

Going Forward

In this study, we utilized a unique method to measure misogynistic attitudes by adopting Rottweiler and Gill's (2021) construct of misogyny through three different dimensions—the *distrust* of women, the *devaluation* of women, and the *perception of women as manipulative* and exploitative—and we examined these dimensions through different political leaders. We interpreted our findings to suggest that support for former chairman Lee may be a symbolic expression of dissatisfaction with social trends that are perceived to elevate females above males. While the party chairman does have a certain amount of influence on the party's image and direction, they typically do not have the ability to exert a direct influence on policy making. By contrast, when it comes to choosing the highest political office in the country, it may be that misogynistic attitudes take a backseat to other concerns, like corruption, the economy, and national defense. The extent to which misogyny plays a role in vote choice is an important question that we leave to future researchers to explore more fully.

We see three ways for future studies to improve on this study. First, in order to establish a causal connection between misogynistic attitudes and support for politicians who appeal to these attitudes, it will be necessary to conduct an experiment or employ some other method that can be used to remove the potential influence of unobserved confounds. We urge researchers inclined to conduct such an experiment to consider the role of context, because the supply of appeals to gender may wax and wane depending on the broader political context. The abrupt decline in President Yoon's popularity, for example, may have dampened the effect of appeals to gender or the extent to which they are moderated or mediated by misogynistic attitudes. Secondly, although our results suggest that misogynistic attitudes are not correlated with vote choice, it is possible that they influence vote choice at lower levels of government, as well as support for specific policy positions. Finally, while our findings regarding the relationship between specific dimensions of gender are suggestive, we urge future researchers to explore this question further. In particular, we hope that researchers continue to investigate other possible political manifestations of the devaluation of women, as well as other possible sources of misogynistic attitudes beyond misogyny itself.

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Notes

1. Yoon Seok-yeol and Yoon will be used interchangeably throughout the manuscript.
2. Lee Jun-seok, Lee, and Chairman Lee are all used interchangeably to describe former PPP chairman Lee Jun-seok.

3. Note that this is a high response rate relative to other traditional polling methods, such as computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI), which can have response rates of about 40 percent or lower (see, for example, Hansen 2007).
4. The next parliamentary election will be taking place in 2025, so there are only minor changes to the 2020 election as of now.
5. The conservative party is 국민의힘 (The People Power Party), while the progressive party is 더불어민주당 (The Democratic Party).

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Appendix: Misogynistic Attitudes and Support for Lee Jun-seok

A. Description

Data come from an online survey conducted on June 1, 2022. Participants were recruited from Lucid panels using quota sampling based on age and sex. The survey included a mid-survey attention check. The final data set includes only respondents that passed the check. The survey instrument was programmed in Qualtrics. The total number of responses received was 708, indicating a valid response rate of about 61.3%.

B. Ethics

The survey experiments were conducted according to standard ethical procedures. The research was approved by the human subjects review boards of principal researcher's institution. Participants were informed at the beginning of the survey that they were being asked to take part in an academic study, and were provided a broad overview of the nature of the study. They were asked to provide their voluntary consent to take part before completing the survey, and they were afforded the opportunity to withdraw from the survey at any time. There was no deception involved. Respondents were provided additional information about the purpose of the survey at the end of the survey.

C. Variable Descriptions

1. Age is measured as an ordinal variable with five categories: 18–25 (1), 26–35 (2), 36–55 (3), 56–65 (4), and 65< (5).
2. Sex is a dichotomous variable that equals 1 for male and 2 for female.
3. Income is an ordinal variable that ranges from 1 (self-reported monthly household income less than 500,000 Korean Won) to 10 (monthly household income greater than 5,000,000 Korean Won). Values are as follows:

1	Less than 500,000 Korean Won
2	500,000 to \$990,000 Korean Won
3	1,000,000–1,490,000 Korean Won
4	1,500,000–1,990,000 Korean Won
5	2,000,000–2,490,000 Korean Won
6	2,500,000–2,990,000 Korean Won
7	3,000,000–3,490,000 Korean Won
8	3,500,000–3,990,000 Korean Won
9	4,000,000–4,990,000 Korean Won
10	5,000,000 Korean Won

4. *Education* indicates respondent self-reported level of education. Values are as follows:

1	No Formal Schooling
2	Elementary School Graduate
3	Middleschool Graduate
4	Highschool Graduate
5	College Graduate and Above

5. *Job*: self-reported occupation. Choices include: farming/fishing (1), self-explored (2), serice industry (3), professional/office worker (4), manager (5), homemaker (6), student (7), other (8).
6. *News Frequency*: self-reported frequency of following the news (1 = Never, 4 = Almost every day).
7. *News Discussion*: self-reported frequency of following the news (1 = Never, 4 = Often).
8. Discussion Network Oppositionality (*Disc. Opp.*): self-reported frequency of discussing the news or politics with people who have different opinions than self: 1 = Never, 4 = Often.
9. Left-Right Ideological Score (*Ideology*): Self-placement on 1–5 ideology scale, where 1 = “Very Liberal,” 5 = “Very Conservative,” and 3 = “In-between (Moderate).”
10. Attention check: In order to ensure respondent attentiveness, the following question item is included mid-way through the survey:

“민철씨는 농장에서 일합니다. 민철씨는 매일 딸기를 따서 갈색 통에 담습니다. 민철씨는 하루에 3통을 수확할 수 있습니다. 5일 동안 몇 통을 수확할 수 있을까요?”

[Mincheol works on a farm. Everyday Mincheol picks strawberries and puts them into a brown barrel. Mincheol can pick 3 barrels of strawberries in a single day. How many can he pick over the course of five days?]

Table A1. Descriptive Statistics with Census Comparison

	Frequency	Relative Frequency	2022 Census
Sex			
Male	196	45.2%	49.8%
Female	238	54.8%	50.2%
Region			
Seoul/Gyeonggi	290	66.8%	51.2%
Gyeongsang	65	15.0%	24.7%
Jeolla	38	8.8%	9.7%
Chungcheong	25	5.8%	10.0%
Kangwon	14	3.2%	3.0%
Jeju	2	0.5%	1.3%
Age			
18-25	71	16.4%	11.0%
26-35	84	19.4%	15.2%
36-55	126	29.0%	18.5%
56-65	66	15.2%	18.5%
65<	87	20%	19.0%

Table A2. Multinomial Regression Results

	<i>Dependent variable: Presidential Vote Choice (Reference Category is Abstention)</i>				
	Ahn	Lee	OTHER	Shim	Yoon
Misogyny	0.734 (0.430)	0.175 (0.289)	0.018 (0.417)	0.330 (0.385)	0.370 (0.295)
Gender (Male)	0.108 (0.910)	0.195 (0.574)	0.644 (0.823)	-0.128 (0.808)	0.470 (0.585)
Age	-0.040 (0.349)	0.270 (0.209)	0.020 (0.319)	0.189 (0.298)	0.387 (0.216)
Education	-0.084 (0.435)	0.319 (0.317)	-0.174 (0.417)	0.270 (0.500)	0.374 (0.334)
Income	-0.022 (0.135)	-0.001 (0.086)	0.021 (0.134)	0.023 (0.121)	-0.018 (0.089)
Job	-0.066 (0.163)	-0.005 (0.100)	-0.114 (0.150)	-0.029 (0.138)	-0.005 (0.103)
Gyeonggi	17.548*** (1.200)	-0.095 (0.952)	19.632*** (0.875)	-0.293 (1.427)	-0.382 (0.951)
Gyeongsang	19.389*** (1.052)	0.718 (1.117)	19.820*** (1.041)	-0.379 (1.765)	0.672 (1.118)
Jeju	-0.911*** (0.000)	11.161*** (0.00000)	-0.860*** (0.000)	-2.438*** (0.00000)	-5.847*** (0.000)
Jeolla	-6.385*** (0.000)	0.833 (1.080)	19.662*** (1.103)	-11.944*** (0.0002)	-0.924 (1.153)
Kangwon	32.251*** (1.166)	12.401*** (0.700)	-2.366*** (0.000)	13.778*** (1.024)	12.244*** (0.700)
Seoul	19.900*** (1.008)	0.717 (0.969)	19.467*** (0.954)	0.971 (1.395)	0.798 (0.960)
Political Interest	0.233 (0.459)	0.489 (0.284)	0.851 (0.452)	0.517 (0.413)	0.552 (0.290)
News	0.066 (0.211)	-0.115 (0.149)	0.087 (0.226)	-0.032 (0.212)	-0.188 (0.159)
Discussion	0.510 (0.509)	0.682* (0.318)	0.365 (0.482)	0.090 (0.457)	0.977** (0.332)
Ideology	-0.187 (0.503)	-0.409 (0.331)	0.102 (0.468)	-0.165 (0.456)	0.760* (0.334)
Constant	-22.261*** (3.000)	-3.149 (2.677)	-23.365*** (2.821)	-4.415 (3.955)	-8.321** (2.789)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	985.002	985.002	985.002	985.002	985.002

*p<0.05;**p<0.01;***p<0.001

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