

The Evolution of Women's (and Men's) Partisan Attachments
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The passage of the 19th Amendment nearly doubled the size of the electorate in the United States. At the time, few understood the impact this expansion would have on the partisan makeup of the electorate. Gender intersects with other important political identities such as race, class, and region, and therefore women, like men, were thought to have been too heterogeneous in political interests to form a distinct voting bloc benefiting a particular party. In fact many felt that women's votes would resemble their fathers', husbands', or brothers' votes (McConnaughy 2013). In contrast to this line of thinking, women's participation in the reform movements and entry into politics were structured by gender in important ways (Andersen 1996). Thus, gender informed and structured women's partisan preferences independent of family connections. In order to fully understand the influence of the 19th Amendment on the U.S. political system requires understanding the similarities and differences in men's and women's partisan attachments during the 100 years since the amendment's passage.

The enactment of the 19th Amendment not only codified voting rights for women, but also made gender a more salient political identity. In this essay, I examine how gender shaped men's and women's partisan identities in the century after the passage of the 19th Amendment. I contend that over time gender has become increasingly important in influencing both men's and women's partisan attachments. As a result, men's and women's preferences have diverged, forming a gender gap in partisanship.¹ Today women find the policy positions of the Democratic Party more attractive than men, making women a central group within the Democratic Party's coalition of voters. This has resulted in the gender gap in partisanship having important electoral consequences for the political parties.

Along with understanding the similarities and differences between men and women in partisan attachments, this essay will examine the unity and disunity of women's partisan attachments. Women (and men) are members of heterogeneous groups within the electorate, holding multiple social and political identities that intersect to shape their partisan attachments. By examining the similarities and differences in men's and women's partisan attachments among subpopulations in the electorate we can better understand how gender works to shape partisanship.

¹ The gender gap is a term used to capture differences in the behavior of men and women. The focus of this essay is on men's and women's identification with the political parties, or the gender gap in partisanship. In the course of discussing the gender gap in partisanship other gender gaps will be addressed, such as the gender gap in vote choice and the gender gap observed on different issues.

This essay proceeds as follows. First, I will review the research that examines men's and women's partisan attachments and voting behavior before and in the immediate aftermath of the passage of the 19th Amendment. Information on attitudes and behavior during this time period is limited due to a lack of systematic quantitative data; however, historians and political scientists provide us fascinating and unique insights into men's and women's political behavior during this period. I then examine the partisan attachments of men and women between 1950-2012. This provides us insight into the movement of men and women who came of age both before and after the passage of the 19th Amendment. In the third section I summarize the existing theories on why the gender gap came into existence and what has caused the gender gap to grow over time. To gain a more complete understanding of the gender gap, I explore how the gender gap varies in size and trajectory among demographic groups in the electorate in the fourth section. Specifically, I analyze generational gaps, gaps based on education, and gaps based on race and region. I conclude with some observations on how the gender gap shapes our modern political climate and how the gap will continue to influence politics in the future.

Partisanship and Suffrage to the New Deal

The first question newly enfranchised women faced was not which party to join, but whether to adopt a partisan label. Before suffrage, the very idea of a partisan identity was in opposition to the role of women in society as defined and shaped by the private sphere (Freeman 2000, Gustafson 1997). Politics were squarely located within the public sphere and, thus, the domain of men. As all politics were largely party politics, aligning oneself with a political party was part of male political identity (Gustafson 1997). The passage of the 19th Amendment therefore fundamentally altered women's political roles and identities. Anderson comments, "The boundary that delineated appropriate male and female behavior was no longer drawn so that political parties were exclusively male domains" (1996, page 97). Women's political identities were varied and vacillated as women were drawn into public politics. The passage of the 19th Amendment further transformed women's identities from non-partisan to partisan.

Women's struggle to gain voting rights and their participation in other social movements pulled women into public politics. Women's relationship to partisan politics through these movements was wide-ranging, as they oscillated between partisan politics and non-partisan identities. Initially, many activists and organizations of the suffrage movement had allegiances with the Republican Party based on the issue of abolition. However, these ties were challenged with the passage of the Civil War Amendments (14th-16th), which extended suffrage to black men and ignored the claims for female suffrage (Evans 1989, Wolbrecht 2000). After this critical moment the ties to the political parties became more varied. At the organizational level, many suffrage organizations took largely non-partisan, some might even say anti-partisan, stances (Gustofson 1997, Anderson 1996, Graham 1996). Several activists within the suffrage movement thought that partisan identification would hurt the movement. For example, Ida Husted Harper

of NAWSA argued that women's partisan activities would distract from the suffrage movement and divide women's loyalties (Gustafson 1997). Other suffrage organizations, such as the American Women Suffrage Association, continued to work with the Republican Party to achieve their goals (Freeman 2000).

In addition to the suffrage movement, many women were also involved in other social movement activities. These organizations tended to be on the periphery of partisan politics. For example, temperance was one of the largest social reform movements of the era. Women actively participated in this movement via The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), which was a major force within the Prohibition Party. After their defeat in the 1884 election, the Republican Party attempted to sway prohibition and WCTU supporters. Frances Willard, the leader of the WCTU, aided this move. Willard came under criticism for this behavior, with many arguing that the organization should maintain a non-partisan identity (Freeman 2000, Gustafson 1997). Women also were active in other third parties that aligned with the moral and social reform agenda such as the Populist Party (Freeman 2000) and the Progressive Party (Gustafson 1997).

While suffrage and other social movement organizations had a mixed relationship with the political parties, at the individual level many of the activists within the suffrage movement exhibited allegiances towards the parties. McConaughy (2013) observes that "Regardless of whether they believed their partisan leanings ought to be invoked in their suffrage work, prominent suffrage advocates were identified with nearly every political party that entered national electoral politics during the seventy-plus years of the movement (page 51)." When engaged in party politics, women did not necessarily do so as partisans. Both parties capitalized on women's talents and activities through auxiliary organizations. Women created banners, engaged in debates, wrote letters, and participated in other campaign activities (Gustafson 1997, Freeman 2000). Moreover, the parties felt that women could use their influence within the home to persuade their voting husbands (Freeman 2000). Despite their participation in party-sponsored events and activities, many women maintained a non-partisan identity (Gustafson 1997). Additionally, while both parties maintained women's auxiliaries, these organizations were marginalized and powerless within the major parties (Freeman 2000).

Women were more directly active in third parties that were tied to the social welfare and moral movements. Women served as delegates and on committees at the Prohibition Party convention in 1869 (Freeman 2000). Jane Adams, a leader in the social reform movement, seconded Theodore Roosevelt's nomination as the Progressive's presidential nominee in 1912 (Gustafson 1997). Women were more active in third or minor parties because these parties generally were more open to women's activities and their party platforms were aligned with social movements where women were highly engaged. Ultimately, though, women remained on the periphery of partisan politics because they were active in third parties in essentially a two party system.

The passage of the 19th Amendment represented a significant change as women subsequently took on the more traditional role of citizen as voter. Part of this role change also represented changes in female activists' perspectives on party politics. Kristi Andersen notes that Elizabeth Cady Stanton advocated that once women had the right to vote it was imperative for them to become involved in party politics, "inasmuch as our demands are to be made and carried, like other political questions, by the aid of and affiliation with parties (quoted in Andersen 1996, page 40)." Partisan identities appeared easier for women to adopt in the post-suffrage era. This was particularly true for women who were just coming of age politically. As McCormick explains, "Women who went through the fight for equal suffrage were inclined to be skeptical and more non-partisan than men... Women who inherited the vote without effort on their part are likely to be partisans; they were enfranchised into a party rather than into citizenship" (quoted in Andersen 1996, page 75). As women become socialized into their new roles as voters, they also took on a greater role in party politics and developed more crystallized partisan identities.

After the enactment of the 19th Amendment, both parties started to recruit and appeal to female voters in an attempt to gain an electoral advantage. The success of these activities was largely dependent on the local partisan context in which women were recruited. That is, the Democratic Party benefited from newly enfranchised women registering in areas where they already had a strong partisan base, while the Republican Party benefited where they already had a strong partisan base (Anderson 1996). The result of this dynamic is that there is very little evidence that suggests men and women identified with the parties at different rates in the immediate post-suffrage era. For instance, after gaining the right to vote before the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1893, women in Colorado appear to have voted in similar patterns as men (McConaughy 2013). These findings suggest little gap between men and women in the party alignments immediately after suffrage.

The New Deal Realignment resulted in massive changes to party politics and partisan alignments. Modern party coalitions and partisan perceptions are based largely on the politics resulting from the New Deal realignment, the incorporation of, among other groups, the poor, unionized, urban, Roman Catholics, recent immigrants, and blacks into the Democratic Party's winning coalition (Brewer 2009, Key 1955).² Much of the research on the New Deal coalition makes little reference to sex. However, Andersen's (1979) analysis of the realignment process in Chicago between 1928 and 1936 places women within the Democratic Party's coalition. In particular, she shows that the newly enfranchised, including women, were key to the growth of the Democratic Party coalition during this time period. More recently Brewer and Stonecash (2009) also classify women as one of the social groups associated with the New Deal realignment. The lack of quality survey data makes it

² Interestingly, the coalition of voters that formed the New Deal was the same coalition of voters assembled by Massachusetts suffragists in their lobbying effects to secure the vote (Graham 1996).

difficult to conclude with any confidence if men and women were attracted to the Democratic Party at different rates during this time period. While we cannot determine if a gender gap emerged during the New Deal realignment, we can gain a better understanding of the similarities and differences of men's and women's partisanship starting in the 1950s using survey data. I now turn our attention to a discussion of the modern gender gap between 1950-2012.

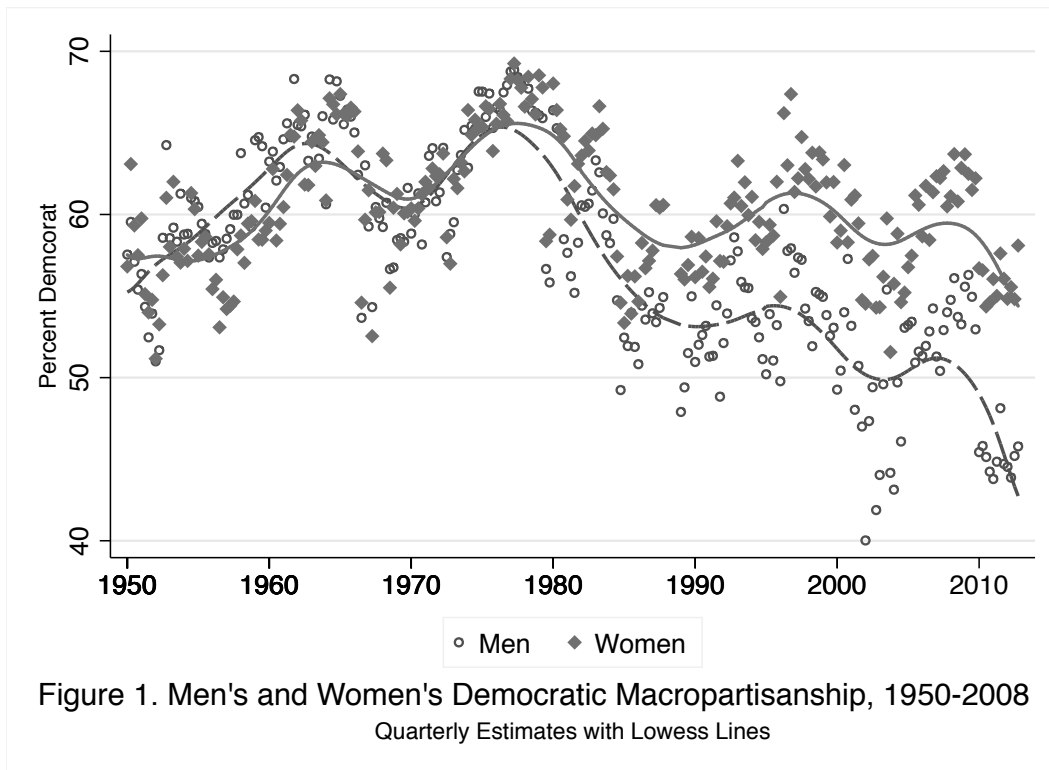
Partisan Attachments and the Modern Gender Gap

To trace the evolution of men's and women's partisanship, I have generated quarterly estimates of partisan attachments based on Gallup surveys between 1950-2012. Since the 1950s the Gallup Organization has had at least one survey in the field almost every month. While the topics of these surveys vary greatly, they generally include a question about the partisan identification of the respondent and basic demographic questions. All told, I was able to generate quarterly the estimates of men's and women's partisanship using 1451 surveys. These estimates are based, on average, on 6 surveys and 8362 respondents each quarter. The Gallup data have many advantages over existing data sets. First, no other data set exists back to the 1950s at a quarterly or even yearly basis. The National Election Studies was first administered in 1952, but only measure the electorate's preferences every two years. The CBS/New York Times provides more frequent estimates, but only started in the 1980s. Second, aggregating the surveys to create quarterly estimates creates large sample sizes for more detailed analysis of subpopulations in the electorate. On average the sample sizes of the National Elections Studies and General Social Survey are, respectively, 1,978 and 1,992. Thus, the quarterly estimates in this data set are based on sample sizes that are, on average, 8 times larger than the most commonly used surveys in social science research.

The quarterly estimates represent the percent of men or women who identify with the Democratic Party out of all two party identifiers.³ Details about these surveys and coding can be found in the data appendix. Figure 1 plots men's and women's identification with the Democratic Party between 1950 and 2012. Each diamond represents the quarterly estimate of women's Democratic macropartisanship and each circle represents the quarterly estimate of men's Democratic macropartisanship. Lowess smoothing lines are presented to help trace the

³ Box-Seffiensmeier et. al. (2004) use the same definition of men's and women's Democratic macropartisanship. This definition parallels the broader definition of Democratic macropartisanship by Erkison, MacKuen and Stimson (2002). This measure admits independent identifiers, who have increased considerably over the past several decades in the electorate. Additionally, those individuals who "lean" towards one of the major political parties but initially identify as independent are excluded from analysis. Norrander (1997) points out that in the National Elections Studies men are more likely fall into the leaning-independent category. As a result definitions of the gap that do not reclassify leaners into partisans highlights women's greater concentration in the Democratic Party. Reclassifying leaners highlights men's concentration in the Republican Party.

movement of men's (dashed) and women's (solid) Democratic macropartisanship.⁴ Early in the series, men and women held very similar partisan attachments. During the 1950s men held a slight preference for the Democratic Party compared to women: on average, 59% of men identified as Democrats compared to 57% of women. These differences are even smaller during the 1960s and 1970s when on average men and women differed in their partisan attachments by less than 1%.

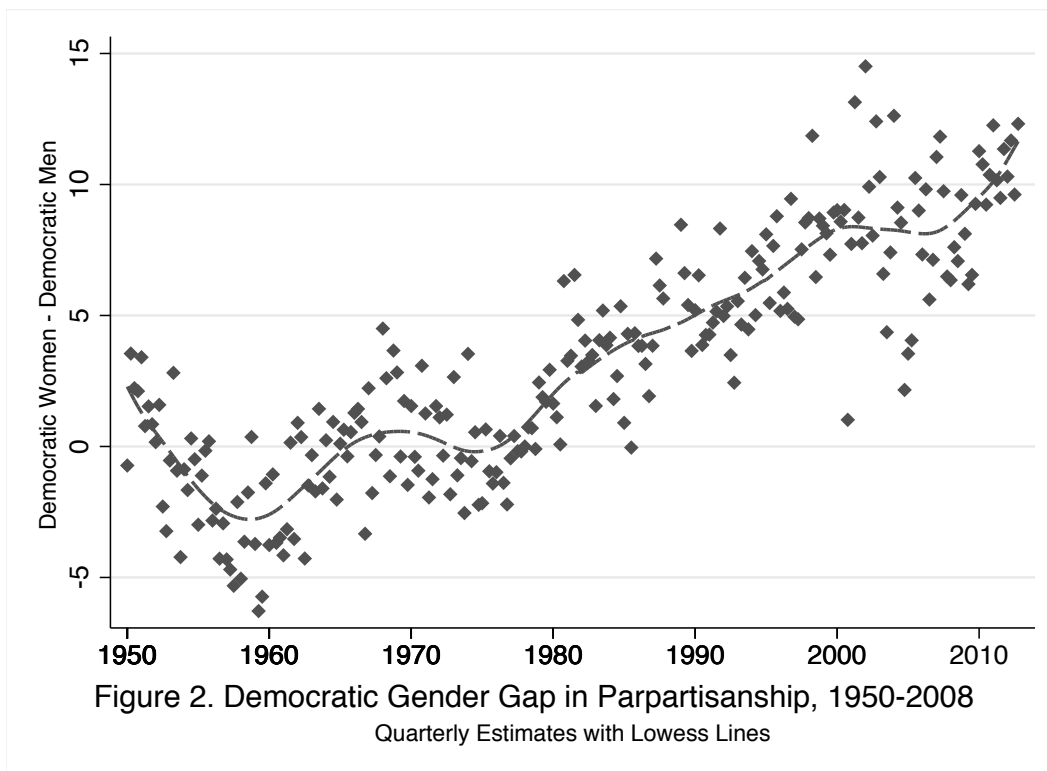


Starting at the end of the 1970s we begin to see men's and women's partisan attachments separate. Both men's and women's partisan identification with the Democratic Party starts to decline; however, men's attachments decline at a faster rate. The differences between men's and women's partisanship are moderate in the 1980s: on average 57% of men identified with the Democratic Party compared to 60% of women. The average across the entire decade masks the growing difference between men's and women's Democratic attachments. Starting in 1980, 64% of

⁴ Lowess smoothing lines are calculated using nonparametric locally weighted regression of the quarterly estimates. The lowess lines allow us to see the general trends in the movement of men's and women's macropartisanship. The smoothness of the line or how much it responds to each quarterly estimates is determined by the bandwidth. A bandwidth of .2 was used for all the lowess estimates reported here. Essentially, this means that the lowess line is a moving average of the quarterly estimates using 20% of the quarterly estimates to create each point in the lowess line.

men identified with the Democratic Party compared to 66% of women. By 1989, 51% of men and 57% of women identified with the Democratic Party. That is, the two percent difference in 1980 grew to a six percent difference by the end of the decade. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s men's Democratic partisanship continued to decline, while women's Democratic partisanship remained level. These different dynamics caused the difference between men's and women's partisan attachments to grow during these decades.

The emergence and growth of these differences are easy to see when we look at the gender gap in partisanship 1950 and 2012 in Figure 2. Starting in the 1980s it is clear that, one, women are more likely to identify with the Democratic Party than men and, two, that the gender gap has grown over time. While these differences started to emerge in the late 1970s, by the 1980s there were modest differences between men and women's partisanship, averaging about 4%. The gap between men and women has grown in each decade since the 1980s. In the 1990s the gap averaged about 6.5% and in the 2000s the gap averaged about 8%. Between 2010 and 2012, the gap has grown even larger, averaging about 11%.



Men's and women's partisanship have exhibited a considerable amount of shared movement since the 1950s. However, starting in the late 1990s we see the formation of a gap that continues to grow. The gender gap carries important political consequences as well. Differences in partisanship translate into men and women casting their ballots differently at the federal and state level (Carroll 2006).

Moreover, these differences are amplified by women's higher turnout rates in elections (Diekman and Schneider 2010, Huddy et. al. 2008).

Explanations for the Gender Gap

Differences between men's and women's behavior and attitudes captured the attention of scholars, political parties, and the media in the aftermath of the 1980 presidential election. In post-election analyses, the media and National Organization of Women (NOW) used the term "gender gap" to describe how men and women cast their ballots (Mansbridge 1985). Men were more likely (54%) than women (46%) to support Ronald Reagan in the 1980 election, creating a gender gap of 8% (CAWP 2012). After the gap in vote choice was identified, other gaps in partisanship and public opinion were also discovered. But what caused these differences?

Initially the gender gap was framed as a product of the second wave of the women's movement. Under this theory, the gender gap formed in the 1980 presidential election because women responded to the Republican Party dropping its support for the Equal Rights Amendment and adopting an anti-abortion plank. Subsequent analysis of the 1980 election has shown that neither of these issues played a significant role in the gender gap (Mansbridge 1985, Frankovic 1982). Instead, men and women tend to hold very similar opinions on both abortion policy and the Equal Rights Amendment (Shapiro and Mahajan 1986, Norrander 2008). While these issues do not contribute to the gender gap, differences in opinion on other issues do play a significant role in the formation of the gender gap partisanship and vote choice.

For decades modest but important differences between men and women have existed on a wide variety of public policies. Some of the largest policy differences between women and men revolve around the use of force, both domestically and abroad. On the domestic side, women tend to be more supportive of gun control and less supportive of the death penalty (Norrander 2008, Howell and Day 2000, Shapiro and Mahajan 1986). In terms of the international use of force women tend to be less supportive of sending troops to war and military spending (Norrander 2008, Huddy, Feldman, Taber, and Lahav 2005, Huddy, Feldman and Cassess 2007, Conover and Sapiro 1993, Shapiro and Mahajan 1986). Women also are more likely to wish to see peaceful, non-military resolutions to international events (Fite, Genest, and Wilcox 1990).

In addition to the use of force, women tend to hold more liberal domestic policy positions, supporting a larger role and scope of government (Shapiro and Mahajan 1986, Kellstedt, Peterson and Ramirez 2010). Differences have been found for general social welfare policies such as government-guaranteed jobs and expanded social services. Additionally, differences have been identified within the policy domains of health care, aid to the poor, social security, education, childcare, treatment for substance abuse, and programs for the homeless (Shapiro and Mahajan 1986, Schlesinger and Heldman 2001, Norrander 2008, Howell and Day

2000). Moreover, women and men hold different fiscal policy preferences. Men tend to be more supportive of tax cuts and paying down the national debt, while women are more supportive of fiscal policies that provide expanded public goods (Alvarez & McCaffery 2003). Differences between men and women have also been found when it comes to economic voting, with women more likely to vote socio-tropically and men more likely to rely on their own pocketbook (Chaney, Alvarez & Nagler 1998, Welch & Hibbing 1992).

These opinion differences serve as the basis for gender differences in both vote choice and partisanship. Differences of opinion and salience on social welfare issues explain the gender gap in vote choice in the 1992 and 1996 elections (Kaufman and Petrocik 1999). Additionally, men and women weigh their social welfare positions differently in their decisions about party identification (Kaufman 2004). Generally, differences in men's and women's opinion on national and personal financial situations, foreign affairs, use of force, ideology, and social programs explain about three-quarters of the gender gap in vote choice between 1984-1992 (Chaney, Alvarez & Nagler 1998).

Understanding why men and women hold different opinions on these issues is more complex. Diekmann and Schinder (2010) argue that the social roles an individual plays in society shape individual-level psychological processes that influence political attitudes. The social role argument then suggests two different, but not mutually exclusive, explanations for the gender gap. First, the gender gap in attitudes and behavior result from the gendered division of labor in the family and the economy. Second, the gender gap could result from men's and women's social roles, creating differences in personality and values.

Women's and men's social roles have evolved considerably over the past several decades, differentially positioning men and women socially and economically. A driving force behind these changes has been demographic changes that include women's increased participation in the paid labor force and women remaining single for longer in their lives. The extant research identifies two important implications of these changes. First, women have developed greater psychological and economic independence from men (Carroll 1989). This creates the potential for different political orientations from men and non-working women to emerge (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2010). Second, women's workforce participation has not been on equal grounds with men. Women tend to be located in lower paying jobs and therefore have greater dependence on government services (Erie and Rein 1989). Thus, these demographic changes imply that women are more likely to benefit from expansive social welfare programs both directly and indirectly than are men.

There is considerable evidence that these demographic changes and changes in women's social roles have resulted in changes in opinion, voting, and partisanship. In general these macro-level demographic changes have been linked to working women's greater support for social welfare programs cross-nationally (Iversen and

Rosenbluth 2010). In the United States women's workforce participation specifically has been linked to the gender gap in vote choice via changes in social welfare attitudes (Manza and Brooks 1998). Moreover, women in the workforce tend to hold different attitudes than women not in the workforce (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2010, Andersen and Cook 1985). There is also evidence that these changes may be a function of women and men endorsing policy positions and parties that best match their self-interest. At the aggregate level, Box-Steffensmeier, DeBoef, and Lin (2004) show that the increase in single women increases differences between men's and women's partisan attachments. The logic behind this result is that single women are likely to be the most economic vulnerable. Additionally, men in occupations that rely more directly on government tend to be more supportive of social welfare programs, thus reducing the opinion differences between men and women (Howell and Day 2000). At the same time, women are more likely to be in redistributive occupations, leading to more feminist attitudes and less support for conservative ideological positions (Howell and Day 2000). This suggests that part of the gender gap is formed by men's and women's self-interest.

Along with creating differences in self-interest, differences in men's and women's social roles generate differences in personality and values (Eagly 1987). Small but consistent differences have been found between men and women on the Big Five personality traits, with women exhibiting more neuroticism, agreeableness, warmth and openness to feelings and men demonstrating more assertiveness and openness to ideas (Costa, Terracciano and McCae 2001). These difference in personality translate into different values that are linked to political attitudes (Eagly, Kiekman, Johannesen-Schmidt and Koenig 2004, Schwartz and Ruble 2005). Values play an important role in shaping differences in public opinion. Women are more likely to feel it is important to help others, which contributes to their more liberal positions on social welfare. More support for helping others actually appears to make men take a more conservative ideological position (Howell and Day 2000).

Differences in opinions are clearly linked to the political parties and lay the groundwork for ideological changes that also contribute to the gender gap. The issue differences discussed above more closely align women with the policies endorsed by the Democratic Party after the New Deal realignment, while men are more closely aligned with the policies endorsed by the Republican Party. Some of the differences we observe in men's and women's partisanship attachments reflect the process of individuals aligning and realigning with the political parties in the aftermath of both the New Deal realignment and Southern realignment (Ondercin unpublished).

Generational Differences

Did women who came of age politically after the passage of the 19th Amendment align with the political parties differently than women who came of age before the passage of the 19th Amendment? Did women who came of age political before and after suffrage hold different political preferences than men? What influence did the

2nd wave of the women's movement have in shaping men's and women's partisan attachments? The passage of the 19th Amendment had significant symbolic meaning for women's orientation towards partisan politics. Examining how different political generations aligned with the political parties provides insight into the 19th Amendment's influence on women's partisan identities.

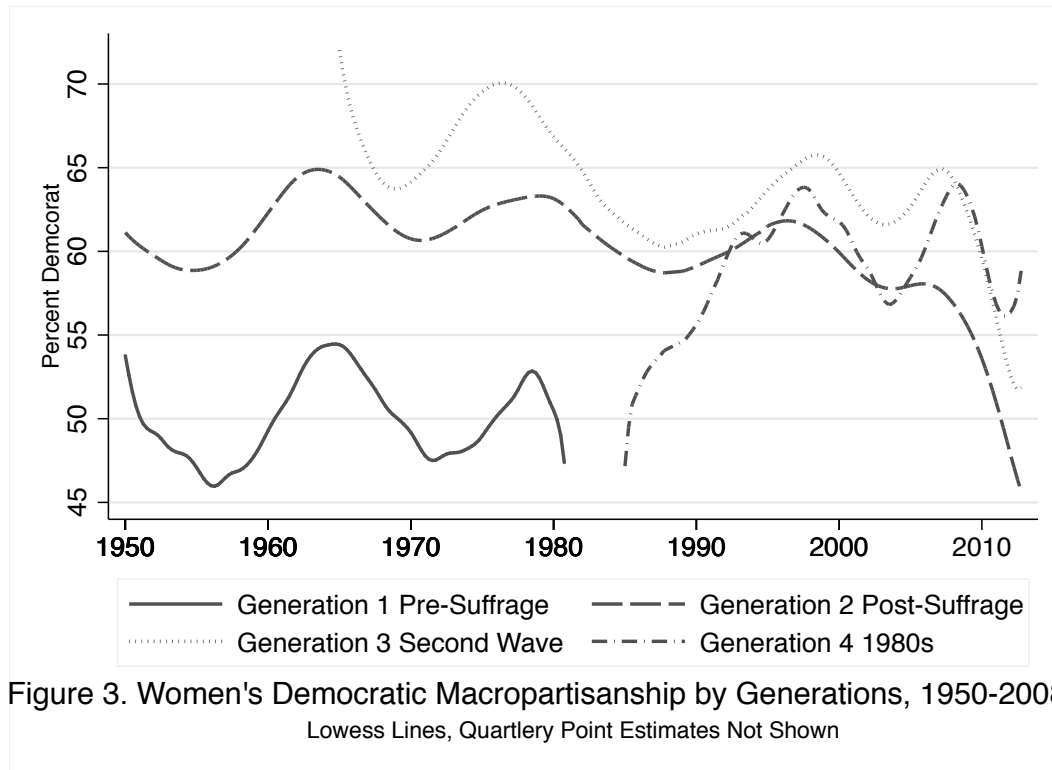
The data set for this project provides unique leverage in understanding generational differences in partisanship before and after the passage of the 19th Amendment. Most studies of the gender gap have focused on a post-1980 time period, meaning that very few individuals who came of age politically before the passage of the 19th Amendment remain in the population. The first observations in the data set used here are recorded only 30 years after the passage of the 19th Amendment, allowing us to better trace the partisan attachments of both the pre-suffrage generation and multiple post-suffrage generations.

The analysis examines men's and women's partisan attachments in four different political generations. Generation 1 is the pre-suffrage generation, defined as those who turned 21 before the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920.⁵ Generation 2 is the immediate post-suffrage generation, defined as those who turned 21 between 1921 and 1960. Generation 3 captures those who came of age politically during the 2nd wave of the women's movement in the United States. Individuals are coded as part of generation 3 if they turned 21 between 1961 and 1970 or if they turned 18 between 1971 and 1980. Generation 4 captures the last age group analyzed and are individuals who turned 18 after 1980. To allow for enough respondents in each generation, the analysis of Generation 1 ends in 1980. Additionally, the analysis of Generation 3 starts in 1965 and Generation 4 starts in 1985.

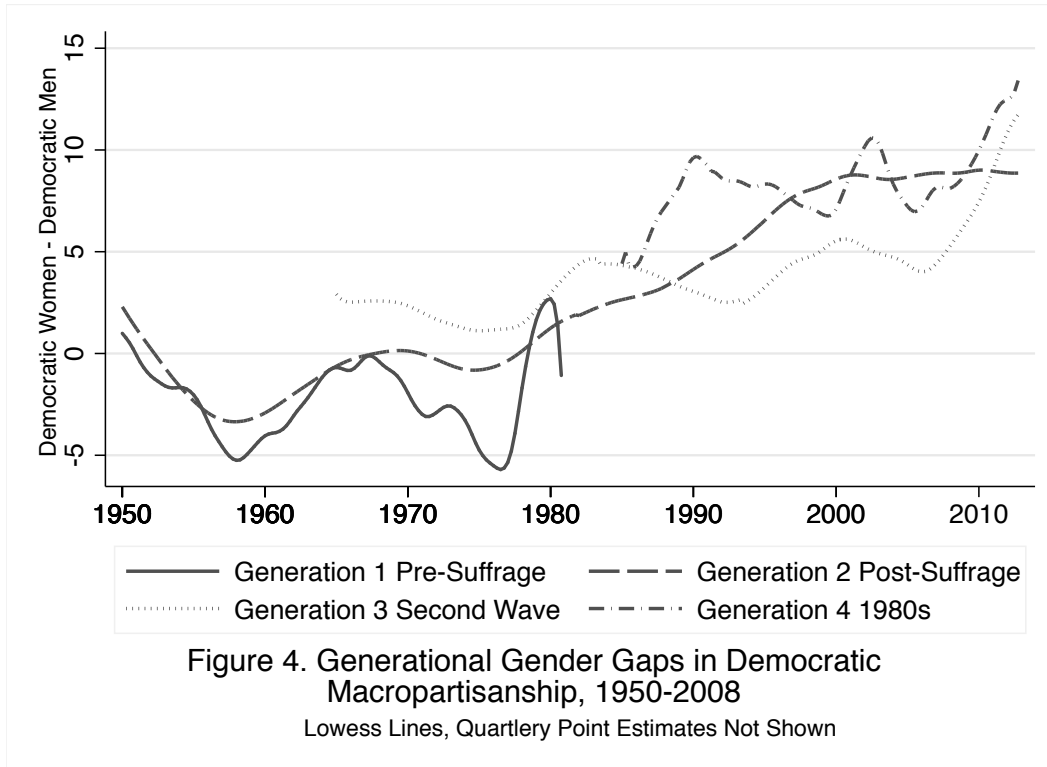
Figure 3 examines women's Democratic partisan identification by generation. Focusing only on women allows us to consider whether different time periods had differential effects on women's allegiances to the political parties. For clarity's sake, Figure 3 presents the lowest estimates but omits the quarterly estimates of women's partisanship. Women who came of age politically before suffrage (Generation 1, solid line) exhibit different attachments with the political parties than the other political generations. In addition to gender, the larger political context should influence the partisan attachments of the different generations. As a result we would expect that the partisan attachments of the post-suffrage generation (Generation 2, dashed line) to be influenced by the New Deal realignment, making them more Democratic than the pre-suffrage generation (Miller and Shanks 1996). This expectation is confirmed. The pre-suffrage generation is less likely to identify with the Democratic Party than the immediate

⁵ Some of the women in this generation would have had full or partial suffrage before the passage of the 19th Amendment. At the time the 19th Amendment was ratified three-quarters of states had some form of voting rights for women (McConaughy 2013). As a result many of the women in this generation were likely to have some form of voting rights.

post-suffrage generation. Interestingly, the immediate post-suffrage generation (Generation 2) does not differ significantly from women who came of age politically during the 2nd wave of the women’s movement (Generation 3, dotted line). Generation 4 (dashed-dot line) starts off less democratic than Generations 2 and 3, but quickly increases its level of Democratic Party identification.



Did women in these different political generations significantly differ from men in the same generation? Figure 4 explores the Democratic gender gaps of the four political generations. The pre-suffrage generation exhibits a small, negative gender gap; on average men in the pre-suffrage generation were 2% more likely to identify with the Democratic Party than women in the pre-suffrage generation. The modern gender gap emerges with the immediate post-suffrage generation in the 1980s. Interestingly, when we start to observe the 2nd wave generation in the mid-1970s, a gender gap already exists between men and women in this generation. The gender gap in both Generations 2 and 3 continue to grow into the 2000s. Women in Generation 4 also appear to be more Democratic than men in this generation. The upward trend for both Generations 3 and 4 in the 2010s suggests that the gender gap is likely to continue to grow in the future. The larger political environment clearly shapes men’s and women’s partisanship, but the shared movement of both the women’s partisanship series and generational gender gaps show that gender influences men’s and women’s reaction to the larger political context.



Education and the Gender Gap

For most of the first 50 years after the passage of the 19th Amendment women encountered limited opportunities in higher education. For the women who had the resources to attend college during this time period, the curriculum offered to women in higher education prepared them to take on traditional social roles. As the century progressed more and more women sought a higher education that was equal to men. The passage of Title IX in 1972 greatly increased women's opportunities in higher education, mandating that colleges and universities that received public funds could not discriminate on the basis of sex. As a result, the number of women pursuing a college education has greatly increased. Women's increased educational attainment contributed to the transformation of women's social roles. Not only did it lead to women's increased workforce participation, but women entered different positions in the workforce. Notably, previously men had largely occupied many of these occupations. Examining women's partisan attachments among those with a college and without a college education, therefore, can provide us further insight into how the changing social roles of women transformed their political behavior.

The Democratic partisan attachments of women by level of education are plotted in Figure 5. Lowess lines are used to highlight the overall trends in the data, with the dashed line representing women with a college degree and the solid line representing women without a college degree. In the 1950s, women without a

college education were considerably more Democratic than women with a college education. The difference between women with and without a college education decreases through the 1960s, but a gap remains until 2000. During this time period the Democratic macropartisanship of non-college educated women declined slightly, while the Democratic identification of college educated women increased. Since 2000, college educated women are slightly more likely to identify with the Democratic Party than non-college educated women.

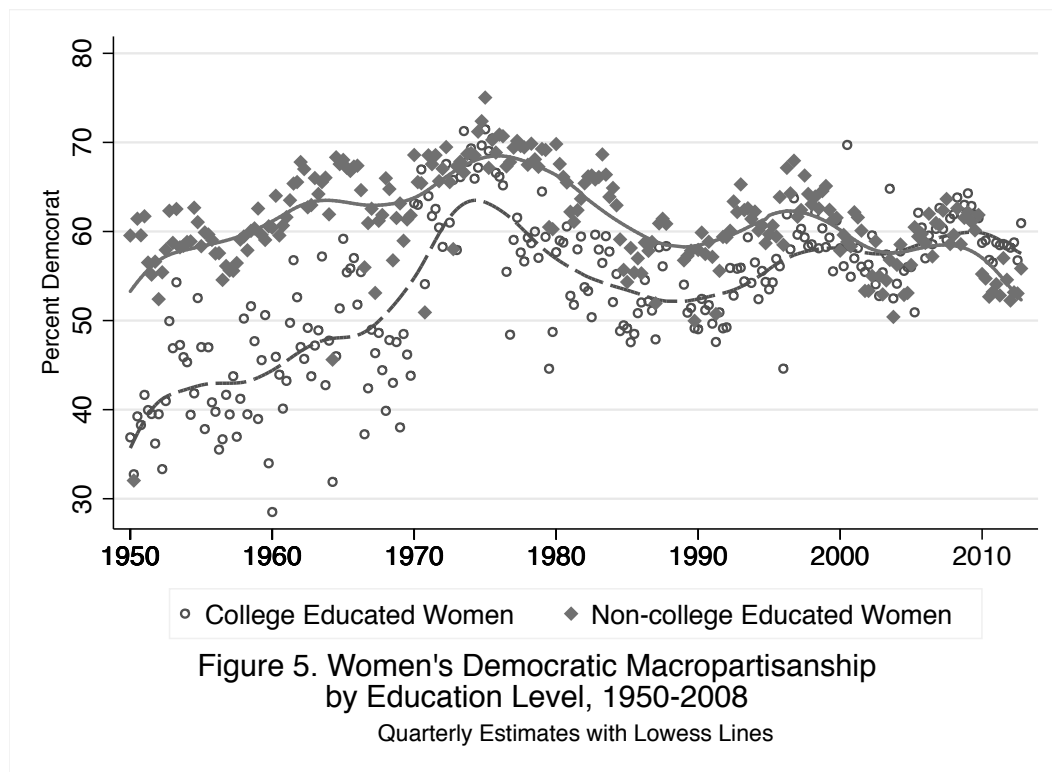
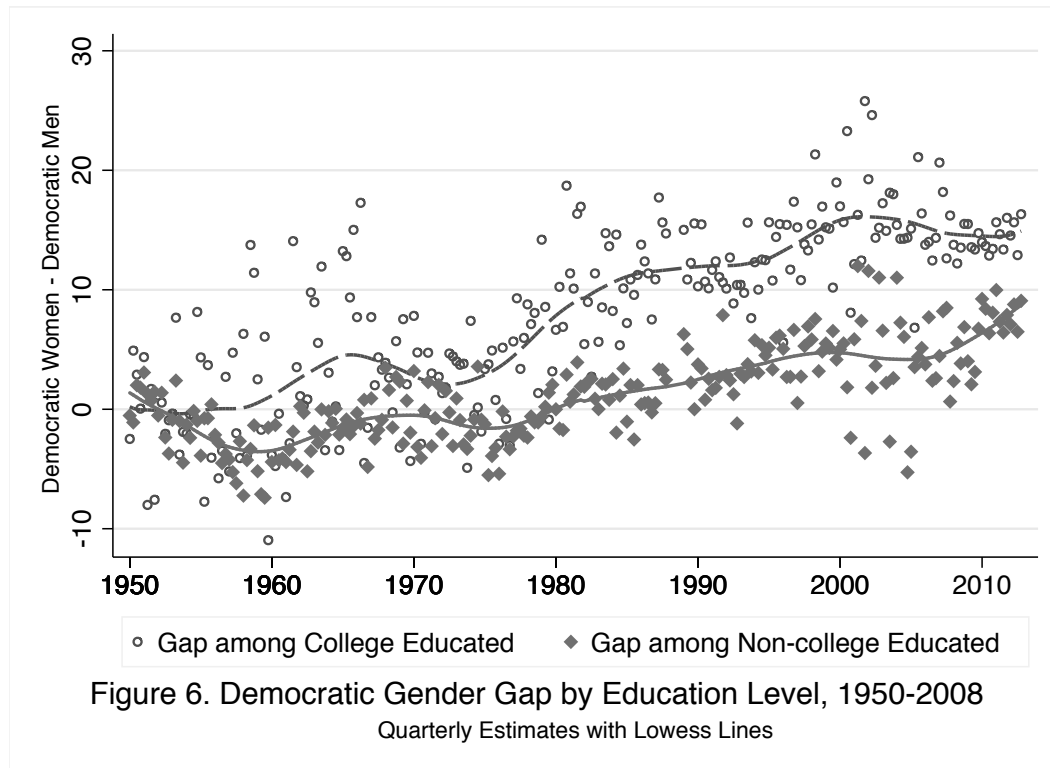


Figure 6 shows the gender gap in Democratic partisanship among individuals with a college education and individuals without a college education. The gender gap in partisanship emerges earlier among those with a college education than those without a college education. Starting in the 1960s the partisan preferences of men and women with a college education begin to diverge to form the modern gender gap. During the 1960s and 1970s the gender gap among the college educated averaged 3%. At the same time, a smaller gender gap in the opposite direction existed among the non-college educated. On average, non-college educated men were approximately 1.5% more Democratic than non-college educated women during the 1960s and 1970s. In 1980, a substantial gap of almost 11% existed between college educated men and women, but no gap existed between non-college educated men and women. A small gap among the non-college educated emerged in the 1980s and then slowly grew over the next several decades. Among the college educated the gap also grows, but at a faster rate than the non-college educated. Between 2010 and 2012 the gender gap among the college educated was almost

twice the size of the gender gap among non-college educated. The larger and earlier gender gap among the college educated highlights the importance of changes in men's and women's social roles in shaping partisan attachments and the formation of the gender gap.

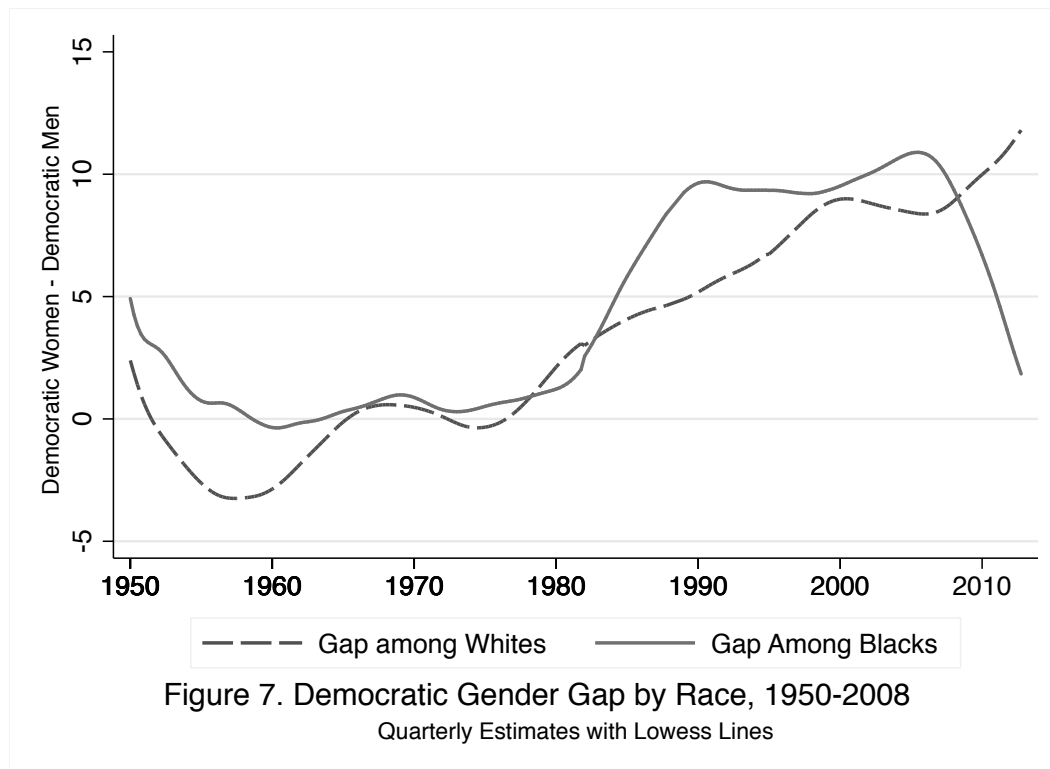


Race and the Gender Gap

Some of the largest differences in both partisanship and voting are along racial lines. Since Southern realignment, African American have overwhelmingly identified with the Democratic Party and supported Democratic candidates. Given the cohesive political behavior of African Americans there is likely little opportunity for gender differences in partisanship to emerge. However, some studies suggest that African American women are more likely to turnout to vote and are even more likely to support Democratic candidates than African American males (Lien 1998, Huddy et. al. 2008).

Figure 7 examines that gender gap in Democratic partisanship among whites and African Americans between 1950 and 2012. Surprisingly, the gender gap among whites and African Americans show similar trends over time. The gender gap among African Americans emerges slightly before the gender gap among whites. Additionally, the gender gap among African Americans is larger than the gender gap among whites for most of the series. This is not to say that African Americans and whites hold Democratic partisan attachments at the same level; rather, these results indicate that the difference in Democratic Party identification between white men and women and African American men and women is similar. An analysis of men's

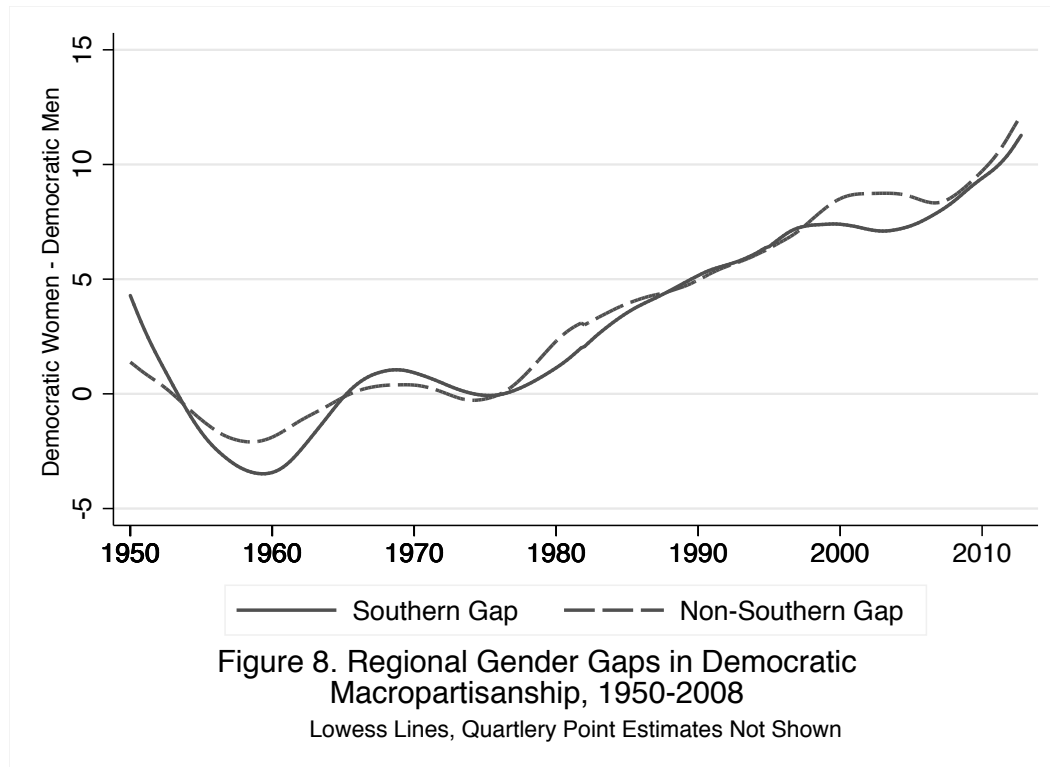
and women's partisanship not show here demonstrates that since Southern realignment African Americans identify with the Democratic Party at much higher rates than whites. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s identification with the Democratic Party increased considerably until it reach, on average, around 90% for men and women. However, African American women's identification with the Democratic Party is even greater than that of African American men. Between 1970 and 2012, on average 94% of African American women identified with the Democratic Party, compared to 87% of African American men.



Regional Variation in the Gender Gap

In the post-New Deal political system one of the most important events shaping the partisan attachments of the electorate was Southern realignment. Southern realignment saw elites within the Democratic Party in the South shifting alliances to the Republican Party over the issue of the federal government's role in civil rights (Carmines and Stimson 1989). Moving at a slower pace in response to the elites, the white electorate in Southern states shifted their allegiances away from the Democratic Party. The impact of Southern realignment can be seen in Figure 1, when both men's and women's Democratic Partisan declines in the 1970s and 1980s. As a result of this regional realignment process the south went from being solidly dominated by the Democratic Party to strongly favoring the Republican Party (Black and Black 2002, Miller 1991).

Did men and women respond to the elite cue in the same manner, meaning there would be no gap in the South? Or do gender gaps in partisan identification exist across the different geographical regions? Norrander (1999a, 1999b) argues that the gender gap we observe in the population as a whole is largely about southern realignment. Additionally, white women in the South have been more likely to retain their Democratic identification than white men (Ondercin 2013, Miller 1991).



Despite these possibilities, the gender gap in the South looks very similar to the gender gap in other regions of the country. Figure 8 examines the gender gap in partisanship in Southern states and non-Southern states.⁶ The solid line is the lowess estimate for the Southern gap and the dashed line is the lowess estimate for the non-Southern gap (quarterly point estimates were omitted for presentational purposes). We can see the estimates of the gaps are virtually on top of each other, meaning that, essentially, there was no difference in the gap in Southern and non-Southern states. Analysis of men’s and women’s partisanship shows that both men’s and women’s partisanship declined in the South as a result of Southern realignment. Moreover, that decline was larger among men compared to women, forming the gender gap in the south and offering aggregate confirmation to the individual level findings. At the same time, gaps between men’s and women’s

⁶ The south is defined based on Gallup’s classification of regions. States classified as the south are: Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas.

partisanship also were formed outside the South, with women maintaining their level of Democratic Partisanship while men's Democratic Partisanship declined.

In addition to Southern realignment, partisanship has varied in other geographical regions. Thus, grouping everyone not living in the South together might mask other interesting regional patterns in the gap. In analyses not shown here, I examined men's and women's partisanship and the gender gap in partisanship across four geographical regions: the Midwest, East, West and South. There are remarkable similarities across the south, east, and west in the size of the gender gap and the dynamics of the gender gap. The Midwest is the exception to this pattern. On average the gender gap in the Midwest was slightly smaller than in other regions through most of the post-1950 period. By 2010, though, the gap in the Midwest reaches the approximate size of the gap in other regions of the country.

Conclusion

The electorate's partisan attachments have changed considerably since the passage of the 19th Amendment. The New Deal realignment, Southern realignment, and de-alignment in the later part of the century have slowly caused both men and women to adjust their partisan attachments. In addition to these events, one important characteristic of the partisan changes over the past 100 years has been the emergence and growth of the gender gap in partisanship. After the passage of the 19th Amendment women appear to have shared their partisan identities and voting preferences with their husbands, fathers, and brothers. But approximately 60 years after achieving the right to vote, women's and men's partisan preferences began to diverge. Today, the gender gap in partisan represents an important electoral cleavage.

The 1980 presidential election represented a significant milestone for the gender gap in partisanship because it was the first election where women's and men's preferences clearly differed. The analysis presented above also suggests that it was the first election where all groups of groups of women, regardless of age, region, race, or education level favored the Democratic Party compared to men. The analyses above points out an often-overlooked fact: the gender gap in partisanship existed before the 1980s among certain subgroups in the population. Both college educated women and women coming of age politically during the second wave of the women's movement favored the Democratic Party compared to men prior to 1980. Interestingly, these sub-groups of women would be the ones most likely to experience or expect changes in their social role as women.

Men and women are not homogenous groups and their partisan attachments are shaped by many other political identities that intersect with gender. The analysis above explored how the political identities based on when someone came of age politically, their level of education, race, and region intersect with gender to shape their partisan attachments. While the level of Democratic Party identification varied for both men and women across all of these groups, the men and women within these subgroups still differed in their partisan identification. Put differently, a

gender gap in partisanship exists within all of the subgroups explored here. Additionally, the different gaps exhibited considerable shared movement over time. The presence and dynamics of the gender gap across different sub-groups in the population highlight the significance of gender in shaping the political identities of women and men.

What will the next 100 years look like in terms of women's and men's partisan attachments? The trends observed during the last ten years suggest increasing differences between men and women. Women continue to be more attracted to the Democratic Party while men appear to be shifting their attachments to the Republican Party. The generational analysis suggests that differences in men's and women's partisan attachments among the youngest generation are some of the largest and growing. If these trends continue, as this generation becomes a larger portion of the electorate we are likely to see even larger differences in men's and women's partisan attachments.

Another factor to consider regarding the future of the gender gap is how the demographic makeup of the country is changing and how this may influence the gender gap. The analysis above focuses on the gender gap between whites and African Americans. However, the racial and ethnic makeup of the electorate is becoming increasingly diverse. More research is needed to understand the gender gap among different racial and ethnic groups. Christina Bejarano (2014) finds that in the 2012 election Latina women held distinct policy preferences than Latino men. This work indicates that continued growth of the gender gap may be related to the changing demographic patterns in the electorate.

The future of the gender gap will also depend on the political parties and the packages of policies they assemble to attract voters. The current issue advantages of the political parties are based on the New Deal realignment. Men and women have adjusted their partisan attachments as their social roles have evolved. When new issues enter the political agenda or old issues are reframed it offers the opportunity for political parties to solidify existing voting blocs or try to attract new voters. While men and women exhibit significant differences in their partisan attachments, there is also a considerable amount of similarities. Thus, parties and politicians are likely to focus on gender differences to influence their electoral chances. We therefore may see some of the largest changes in the gender gap in the future as men and women respond to changes in the policies championed by the political parties.

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Data Appendix

The Gallup Organization has extensively surveyed the American public since the 1950s. The data for this project are based on a collection of Gallup Surveys archived with the Roper Center. First, I started with all surveys that had as a sampling frame a national adult sample. This excluded surveys with an oversample of certain populations and surveys that were only conducted of registered voters. Second, given the importance partisanship and sex for the analysis the survey had to include both the partisan identification question and the respondent's sex.

Overall, 1451 Gallup surveys were used to create the quarterly estimates.⁷ There is at least one survey every quarter and on average there are 6 surveys per quarter. The third quarter of 2000, the fourth quarter of 2001, and the fourth quarter of 2004 only have 1 survey. The fourth quarter of 1992 has the largest number of surveys in the quarter at 19. On average there were 8,362 respondents per quarter. The smallest sample size was 1002 respondents in the fourth quarter of 2004. The largest sample size was observed in the first quarter of 1964, which had a sample size of 22,262 individuals.

Some scholars have criticized the use of Gallup surveys because the partisanship question is different from the question used by other survey houses (Converse:1976, Abramson and Ostrom1991). Gallup asks "In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent" They argue the phrase "In politics today" results in greater short-term variation than questions that use the phrase "Generally speaking." While there is evidence that the Gallup series do exhibit greater variation, this variation does not appear to greatly influence substantive results (Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002, MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson 1992, Bishop, Tuchfarber, Smith, and Abramson1994). Unfortunately, other surveys do not offer the rich time series that can be compiled from the Gallup surveys.

One potential obstacle with basing the time series on Gallup surveys is that Gallup changed their mode of interview from in-person to telephone. Many have observed that the telephone interviews produced samples that tended to be more Republican (Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002, Green, Plamquest and Shickler 2002, Hugick 1991). If left uncorrected, there would be a drift towards the Republican Party starting in the 1980s not present in the in-person interviews or other survey houses. Past estimates of the bias reflected the population as a whole and did not examine whether there are differences in the bias for men and women. I estimated the Republican bias introduced by telephone interviews for men and women

⁷ The analysis conducted in this draft of the manuscript is based on all Gallup Surveys that are national adult samples and contain measures of sex and partisanship between 1950-1999 and 2010-2012. Between 2000 and 2009 a sample of surveys are used based on one month each quarter. The remainder of the data will be incorporated during the next draft of the manuscript.

separately and then adjusted the telephone samples before incorporating them into the time series.

Gallup continued to use both modes of interviews in the 1980s and 1990s, with the majority of the transition occurring between 1984 and 1995. Following Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson (2002), I use the in-person interviews as the base line. I then estimate the difference between surveys with in-person interviews and those conducted over the telephone within the same quarter. The estimates of Democratic macropartisanship for telephone interviews are then corrected based on the estimated bias.

Democratic macropartisanship is calculated as the percent of respondents who identify as Democrats out of two party identifiers. Women's Democratic macropartisan is the percent of women who identify with the Democratic Party out of all women who identify with the Democratic or Republican Party. Men's Democratic macropartisanship is the percent of men who identify with the Democratic Party out of all men who identify with the Democratic Party or Republican Party. The gender gap is calculated by subtracting men's Democratic macropartisanship from women's Democratic macropartisanship. Positive gaps mean that women are more likely than men to identify with the Democratic Party. Negative gaps mean that men are more likely than women to identify with the Democratic Party. The same logic was used to calculate the Democratic attachments in subpopulations of the electorate. For example, to calculate the partisan attachments of women from the pre-suffrage generation I calculated the percent of women in Generation 1 out of all women in Generation 1 that identified with the Democratic or Republican parties. Male Democratic partisanship for Generation 1 reflects the percent of men in Generation 1 who identified with the Democratic Party out of all men in Generation 1 identifying with the Democratic or Republican parties. The gender gap in Generation 1 reflects the percent of women who identify in Generation 1 with the Democratic Party minus the percent of men identifying with the Democratic Party.