

The Gender Gap, the Marriage Gap, and Their Interaction

Betty D. Ray
Master's Student-Political Science
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
bettyray@uwm.edu

Prepared for presentation at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association.
April 3-5, 2008
Chicago, Illinois

The Gender Gap, the Marriage Gap, and Their Interaction

In previous literature there has been evidence that there is, in fact, a gender gap, and in some instances there is support for a marriage gap in voting behavior. This paper will focus on these gaps in presidential elections. For the gender gap it is expected that women tend to be more liberal and more Democratic than men. In the marriage gap, those who are married tend to lean more toward the conservative and Republican side. In both instances it is expected that their ideology and party identification play the largest role in their vote choice, but marital status and gender may have significant independent effects as well. Is it possible that the gender gap is smaller among individuals who are married and larger between men and women who have never been married? Although the evidence here is not as convincing as hoped, it does appear to be the case that the gender gap does narrow among married people and widen among those who have never been married.

As pointed out by Burrell (2006), women now make up a majority of voters, vote at higher rates than men, and can make the difference in who is elected (p.2). This makes it important to understand the underlying reasons for gender gap. If one group can change the outcome of a presidential election it should be examined closely. It is also important to understand that not all men vote the same, nor do all women. To better understand the gender gap it makes sense to look at other subgroups of men and women, to see if they also have distinct voting patterns that either contribute to or narrow the gender gap. Although there are several groups that would be of interest I choose to focus on one that seems create a gap of its own, married versus never been married.

This paper will be organized as follows: The first section will spell out what the gender gap in voting is. The next section will be an explanation of the marriage gap in voting, followed by a

section looking at gender and marital status working together. There will then be the presentation of a statistical model and results, and the paper will be concluded with a discussion of what the model is able to support, and where further work needs to be done.

The Gender Gap

The gender gap in voting behavior is the difference between the percentage of men and the percentage of women who voted for a particular candidate. For this study I will be looking at the percent difference between men and women who voted for the democratic candidate in each election from 1972 through 2004. It is important to note that this is not simply considered a difference between how the sexes vote. The differences in voting behaviors of men and women do not happen because they were born male or female, but instead the differences occur because of the different socialization processes of males and females (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001).

One of the first things to establish, when looking at the gender gap in voting, is that it largely results from the movement of males away from the Democratic Party. Some of the earlier literature on the gender gap had originally thought the gender gap was the result of women flocking to the Democratic Party, but many researchers have shown this is not the case (Carroll 1999; Kaufmann and Petrocik 1997; Miller 1991; Norrander 1999; and Schaffner 2005). Instead, men are moving away from the Democratic Party and into the Republican Party at a greater pace than women.

There have been plenty of studies done on the determinants of the gender gap. Though many of these scholars talk about different determinants of the gender gap, they are not in conflict with one another. They agree that the gender gap is more complex than being determined by single set of circumstances. Instead, the gender gap is determined by a variety of circumstances, and

each piece of the research puts another piece of the puzzle together. “We find some support for each explanation of the gender gap. We demonstrate that each explanation cannot in and of itself account for its magnitude” (Chaney, Alvarez, and Nagler 1998, pp 314)

Many researchers agree that there are a set of issues women care more about than men as well as a set of issues that affect women’s lives differently than men’s lives, and these are expected to be a large part of the gender gap. When speaking of women’s issues, they normally include education, childcare and healthcare (Chaney, Alvarez, and Nagler 1998; Schaffner 2005). Others also include the actual issues of reproductive rights, female equality, and legal protection for homosexuals as “women’s issues” (Kaufmann 2002). Either way, it is agreed that women are more liberal in all of these areas. When speaking of social welfare issues, women are often times said to be more liberal because they are the ones that benefit the most from social welfare policies (Piven 1985). Others say that women are more liberal on all issues, because women are generally more compassionate for those who are disadvantaged (Gilligan 1982; Piven 1985; Shapiro and Mahajan 1986).

Frankovic (1982) found another reason for the gender gap. She claims women preferred Carter to Reagan, in 1980, because women were worried that Reagan would get the country involved in some type of armed conflict (Frankovic 1982). Many others agree, “Women are significantly more likely than men to have an aversion to the use of force” (Chaney, Alvarez, and Nagler 1998, pp. 314; Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; Gilligan 1982; Shapiro and Mahajan 1986).

When looking for the difference in vote choice for men and women it is also important to examine the outlooks men and women have for the economy. Fiorina (1981) determined that people’s vote choice is often times based on their view of the economy. When determining who

to vote for they ask: “Has the economy gotten better or worse under the current administration?” When men and women decide this question they look at it from different perspectives (Welch and Hibbing 1992). According to Welch and Hibbing (1992), when women think about the economy they think of it more in terms of the national economy (sociotropically), whereas men think of their own person financial situation (egocentrically).

Chaney, Alvarez, and Nagler (1998) found another very interesting component of the gender gap. They found that women actually have an anti-incumbent bias. “Every year women had less favorable views of the national economy and their personal finances than did men,” (Chaney, Alvarez, and Nagler 1998, pp.329-30). Accordingly, this would make women less likely to vote for the incumbent, according to rational choice theory (Fiorina 1981). Since Chaney, Alvarez, and Nagler (1998) studied the elections of 1980, 1984, 1988, and 1992, this translated to an anti-Republican bias, since the incumbent was a Republican in three of those four elections (pp. 330).

The Marriage Gap

Looking at another gap in the way different groups come to their decision in voting is to look at the marriage gap. The marriage gap in voting is the difference in vote choice for those who are married compared to those who are not. For this paper the focus will be the gap in vote choice for those who are currently married compared to those who have never been married. Although it is also important to understand differences for those who are separated, divorced, or widowed, it is a discussion which must be left for another time.

The expectation of the marriage gap would be that those who have never been married are more likely to hold liberal views, associate with the Democratic Party and therefore vote for the Democratic candidate. On the other end, those who are currently married are more likely to hold conservative views, associate with the Republican Party, and vote for the Republican candidate

than those who are not married (Elder and Greene 2008). It is not simply the act of marrying that causes there to be a marriage gap in voting behavior. It is the many life changes included in the transition into married life, such as the possible changing of socio-economic status (since many resources are now shared), learning from one another, and the increased likelihood of having children, all of which can affect underlying reasons for voting for one candidate or the other (Sandell and Plutzer 2005; Stoker and Jennings 1995).

Do unmarried people vote differently than those who are married? Weisberg (1987) found that they did. In fact, he found that married people voted ten to fifteen percent more Republican than unmarried people (Weisberg 1987, pp.335). “When one so examines voting in the 1984 American Presidential election, one finds the largest differences on the basis of race and income, followed in order by differences based on marital status, religion, gender, and region,” (Weisberg 1987, pp335).

Burns, Schlozman, and Verba (2001) when studying political participation found, “considerable-but not complete-agreement on political issues [between spouses]. Husbands and wives tend to think alike on policy regarding government assistance programs; they are quite a bit more likely to be in agreement when it comes to party identification and social issues such as abortion and school prayer” (p.309-10). According to Stoker and Jennings (1995), spouses are most often cited as a person’s main source of political discussion and that family members are likely to attempt to persuade one another who to vote for. So it only seems to follow that those who are married are more likely to vote the same way as their spouses. If this is true it would decrease the size of the gender gap in vote choice for those who are married.

Although Stoker and Jennings (1995) and Burns, Schlozman, and Verba (2001) focus on participation, many of those same items that effect participation levels of those who are

transitioning in and out of married life, are also likely to have an influence on who they vote for. “The entry into marriage creates new opportunities for husbands and wives to learn from and influence each other and thus either to encourage or discourage political involvement on the part of the other” (Jennings and Stoker 1995, p.421). Once married, the couple now shares finances, social circles, and they also must learn to adapt to one another’s differences. All of these can have effects on vote choice. Jennings and Stoker (1995) and Burns, Schlozman, and Verba (2001) find that the decision to vote is likely to be a joint decision. If the decision to vote is a joint decision, it is also likely that a person will tend to, but not always, vote for the same person as their spouse.

Weisberg (1987) points out that the marriage gap is different than other demographic voting differences because most other demographic differences result from early socialization. Weisberg (1987) says, these marital status differences are, “due to decisions and events from the teenage period through middle and old age,” (pp.338). Fiorina (1981) and Campbell et al (1960) also found party identification, a large determinate of vote choice, begins being formed early in life with cues from family, social class, neighbors, etc (or socialization). Weisberg contends marital status, is determined later in life, but as many others agree it can reflect earlier socialization (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001).

Plissner (1983) finds that married people are more likely to agree with the conservative ideology of the Republicans because, “married people are more likely to own property and worry about protecting it,” they are also more likely to, “have, or to expect children, and if so, to take a benign view of authority and a dim view of social disorder,” (Plissner p.53; Elder and Greene 2008).

Gerson (1987) explains that women, because of different life-style choices will gravitate toward the party that best protects the life-style they currently lead. If the woman is single and working, she will seek more gender equality. If a woman adopts a more traditional married life-style she will support candidates that defend “traditional life-styles” (Gerson 1987). The party that normally supports the traditional married lifestyle is the Republicans, and those who are non-traditional will find more support in the Democratic Party’s candidate. Though, this piece of work is focused on the study of women, it tends to lend support to the idea that the gender gap and the marriage gap may actually work together.

Plutzer and McBurnett (1991) argue, along the same lines as Gerson’s (1987) study of women, men will also show differences between those who are married and those who are not. They argue that married men who have wives who work will be more concerned with equal pay for women, and those with children will be more concerned with childcare. This is in agreement with Klein’s (1984) work that shows men and women differ in their support of women’s issues depending upon whether or not they live a “traditional” life-style. This leads to the possibility that the gender gap is smaller among those who are married.

This brings us to my research. Is there a link between the marriage gap and the gender gap? And, more specifically, is the gender gap smaller among those who are married than those who have never been married?

Hypotheses

The hypotheses here are simple:

1. It is expected that women will be more likely than men to vote for the Democratic candidate.

2. It is expected that those who have never been married will be more likely to vote for the Democratic candidate than those who are currently married.
3. If there is a relationship between the marriage gap and the gender gap, it would be expected that a single woman will be the most likely to vote for the Democratic candidate, followed by single men, whereas, married men will be the least likely to vote for the Democratic candidate followed by married women.
4. Finally, it is expected that the gender gap will be narrower among those who are married and wider among those who have never been married. The reason this final hypothesis is included is that I have deduced from the prior literature, though I did not find it explicitly stated, that those who are married will share closer thoughts on politics, and along the lines of socialization, later in life, they are more likely to discuss with their spouse, and come to agreement on who to vote for. Therefore, I would expect the gender gap to narrow for those who are currently married.

Looking at the Gender Gap and the Marriage Gap

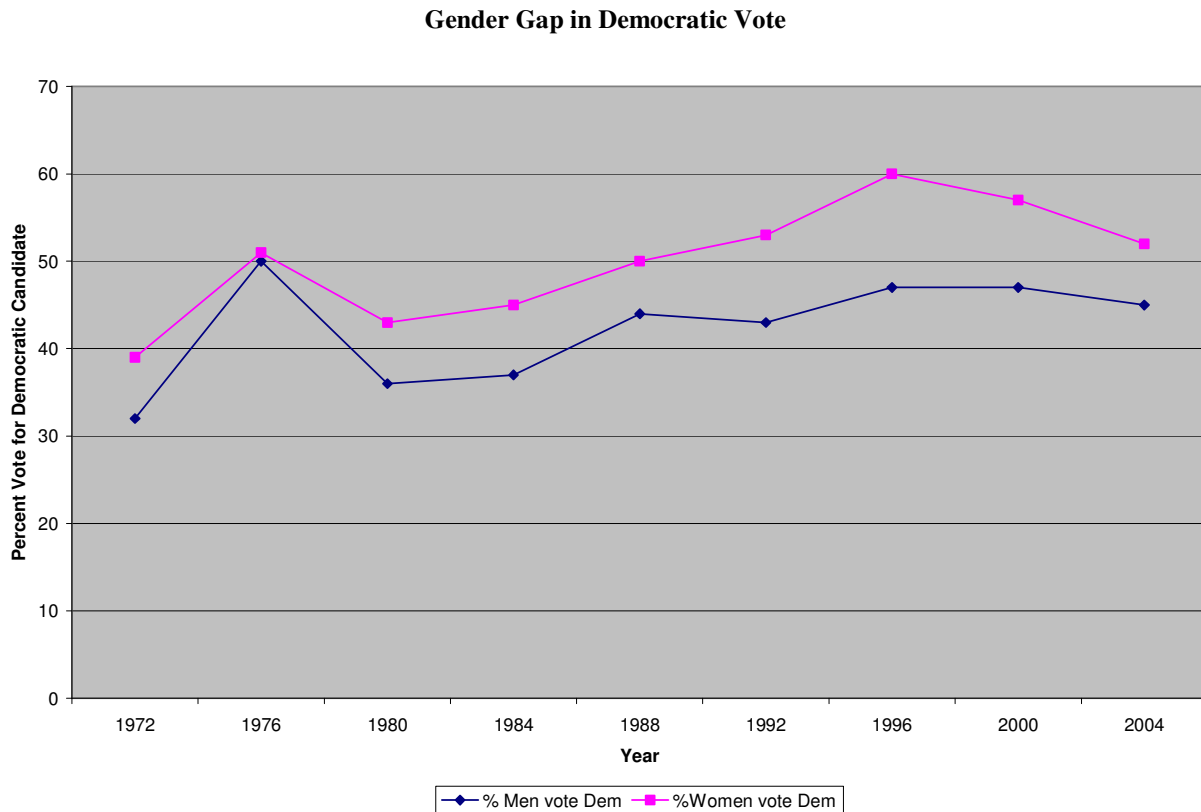
Before looking at the results of the statistical model it is important to look at the relationships between gender and marital status and the vote.

Figure 1 represents the gender gap in the Democratic vote for the years 1972-2004. The actual gender gap in Democratic vote would be the space between the two lines. Many scholars believe that the gender gap became evident in the 1980 election, and here it is clear to see that there has, in fact, been a sizable gap in the percentage of women who voted for the Democratic candidate versus men who voted for the Democratic candidate. In fact women have been more likely to vote for the Democratic candidate than men in every single election in this study (1972-2004),

which supports the first hypothesis that women are more likely than men to vote for the Democratic candidate.

Figure 1 also shows that the gender gap is not the same size in every year. This gap is not static; it fluctuates from one election to the next. Since 1980 the size of the gender gap in Democratic vote has ranged from its smallest (six percentage points) in 1988 to its largest (thirteen percentage points) in 1996. The thirteen percentage point gap in 1996 supports Burrell's (2006) contention that women were the reason that Clinton won the election.

Figure1



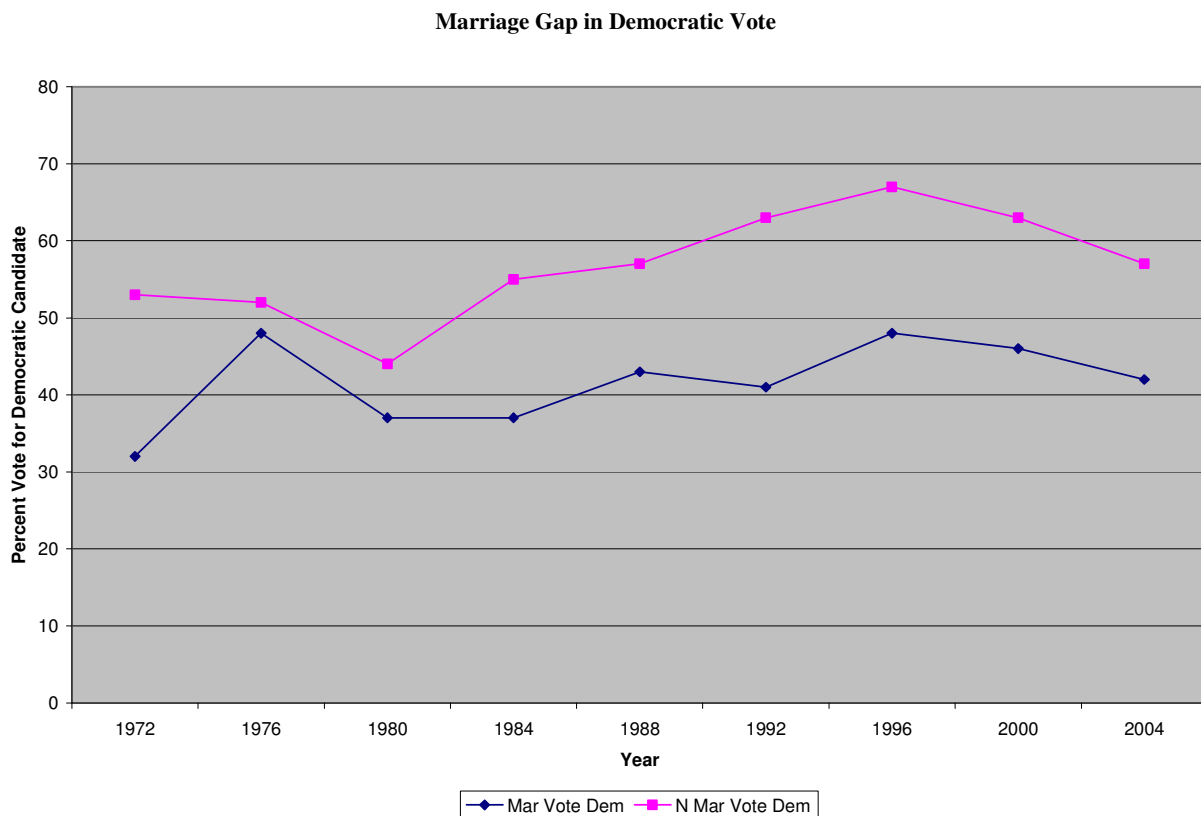
Data gathered from the NES for election years 1972 through 2004.

This graph shows the percent of men/women who voted for the Democratic candidate in each election

It is also important to note that in 1980, 1992, and 1996 there were third-party candidates that received a noticeable percentage of the vote. There were third-party candidates in other elections, as well, but they did not receive as noticeable percentage of the vote.

According to the 1996 American National Election Study sixty percent of women voted for Clinton, and women made up fifty-five percent of the electorate, this makes it easy to see how Clinton won. Is this gap due to the issues the campaigns are focusing on, or maybe people's view of the economy, or something else? That is something that will have to be left for another study.

Figure2



Data gathered from the NES for election years 1972 through 2004.

This graph shows the percent of those married and those who have never married who vote for the Democratic candidate in each election.

It is also important to note that in 1980, 1992, and 1996 there were third-party candidates that received a noticeable percentage of the vote. There were third-party candidates in other elections, as well, but they did not receive a noticeable percentage of the vote.

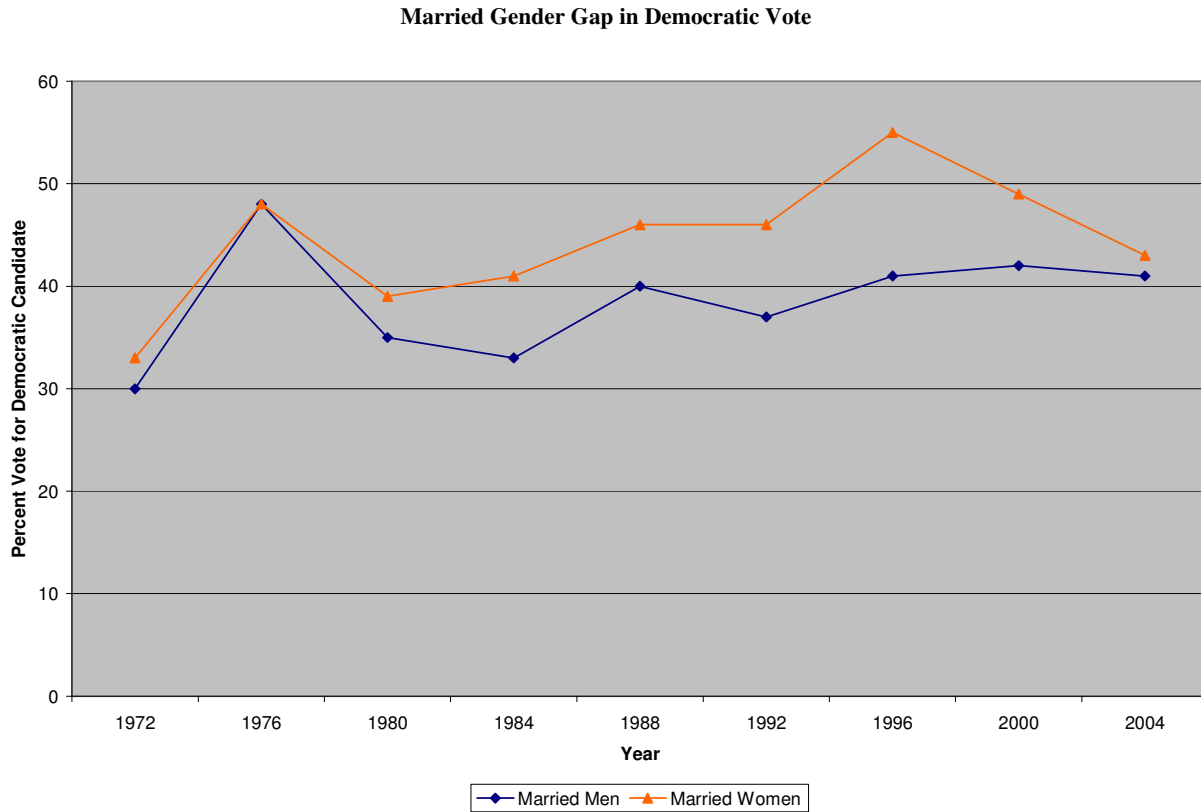
Figure 2 is the marriage gap in the Democratic vote. Again, the actual gap would be the distance between the two lines. This gap shows the difference in Democratic vote for those who are currently married compared to those who have never been married. As hypothesized, those

who have never been married are more likely to vote for the Democratic candidate than those who are currently married. It is also interesting to note that the marriage gap is larger than the gender gap, so it is something well worth studying. At its smallest, 1976, the marriage gap is four percentage points, and at its largest, 1992, the marriage gap is twenty-two percentage points. When it comes to who wins an election that can definitely make or break a candidate.

The largest gap between those who are married compared to those who have never been married occurred in 1992 when those who were never married were twenty-two percent more likely to choose the Democratic candidate than those who were married. This would need to be looked at closely to come to any strong conclusions because of the third party candidate in 1992. Ross Perot won about nineteen percent of the vote in 1992, and it is suspected that he actually helped Bill Clinton by attracting more conservative voters who would have otherwise voted for Bush. This may also be reflected in the only two elections, since 1972, where married people were more likely to favor the Democratic candidate than the Republican candidate, 1992 and 1996. Ross Perot was the third-party candidate in both of these elections.

Is there something to be said about the gender gap and the marriage gap working together? Figure 3 shows the gender gap for those who are married and figure 4 shows the gender gap for those who have never been married. As is expected married women are more likely than married men to vote for the Democratic candidate. This relates with Burn, Schlozman, and Verba (2001) who find, "Wives taken together, are more favorably disposed than husbands, taken together, to various forms of government assistance-in providing a decent standard of living, in providing daycare, and in helping women. They are also more likely to think of themselves as Democrats" (p. 163).

Figure 3



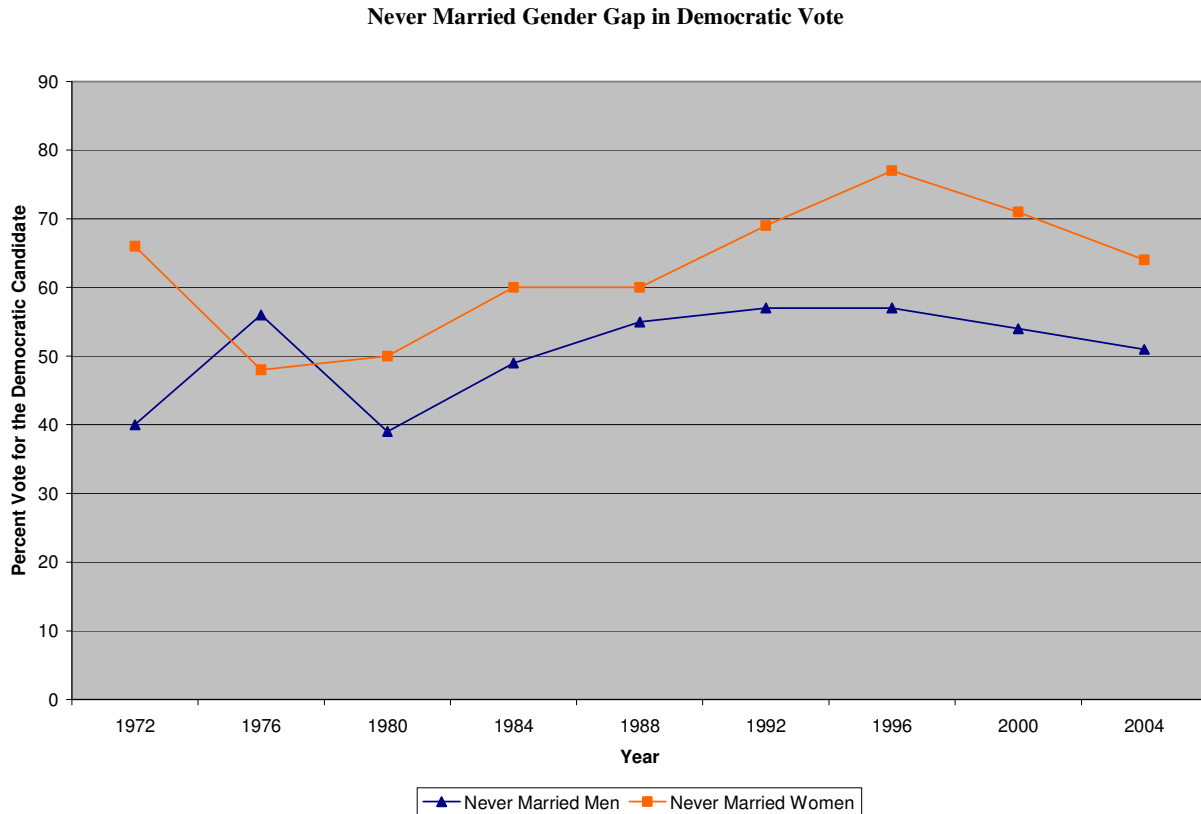
Data gathered from the NES for election years 1972 through 2004.

This graph shows the difference in Democratic vote by gender for those who are married.

It is also important to note that in 1980, 1992, and 1996 there were third-party candidates that received a noticeable percentage of the vote. There were third-party candidates in other elections, as well, but they did not receive a noticeable percentage of the vote.

The difference in the percent of married women compared to married men who voted for the Democratic candidate is not as large as when looking at the gender gap or the marriage gap alone. The married gender gap runs from a low of zero percentage points in 1976 to a high of fourteen percentage points in 1996. In 1996 the fourteen percentage point gap is slightly larger than the gender gap (thirteen percentage points) in 1996, but in any other election the married gender gap never exceeds nine percentage points. Looking at figure 4, unmarried women are consistently more likely than unmarried men to vote for the Democratic candidate in every election since 1976.

Figure 4



Data gathered from the NES for election years 1972 through 2004.

This graph shows the difference in Democratic vote by gender for those who have never been married.

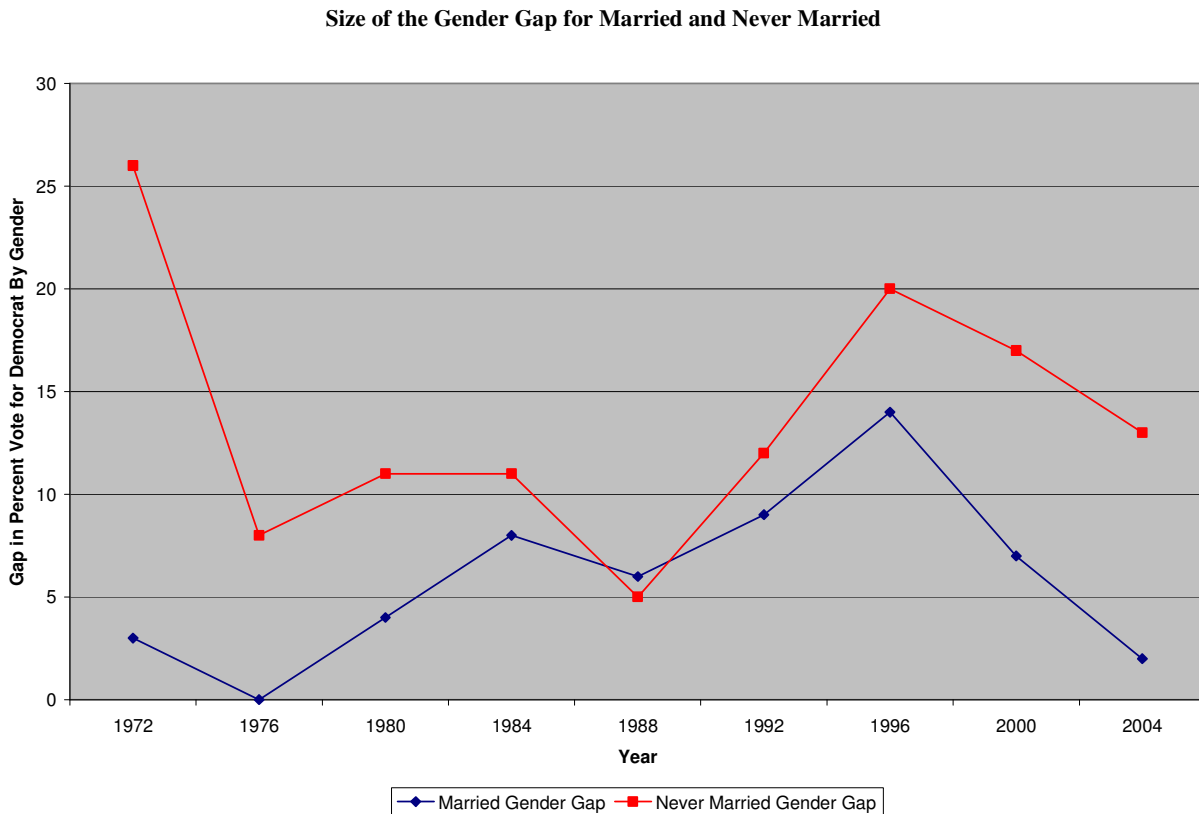
It is also important to note that in 1980, 1992, and 1996 there were third-party candidates that received a noticeable percentage of the vote. There were third-party candidates in other elections, as well, but they did not receive a noticeable percentage of the vote.

In both the married gender gap and the never married gender gap it is clear to see in both circumstances that the women are still more likely than men to vote for the Democratic candidate. Yet, by viewing the two separately it is not easy to see whether the gap is, in fact, smaller among those who are married than for those who have never been married. Figure 5 is a graphic representation of the size of the gap for those who are married compared to those who have never been married. The size of the married gender gap was created by taking the absolute value of the difference between the percent of married women who voted for the Democratic candidate and the percent of men who voted for the Democratic candidate. The same was done for those who have never been married. In every election except 1988 the unmarried gender gap

is consistently larger than the married gender gap (figure5), which supports hypothesis 4 that the gender gap will be narrower for those who are married than those who have never been married.

To put things into perspective, the married gender gap was only larger than ten percentage points once (1996), whereas the never married gender gap was only smaller than ten percentage points twice (1976 and 1988). The mostly likely reason that the married gender gap did reach fourteen percentage points in 1996 is because of the increased likelihood of women, in general, to vote for Bill Clinton.

Figure 5



Data gathered from the NES for election years 1972 through 2004. This graph represents the size of the gender gap for those who are married compared to those who have never been married.

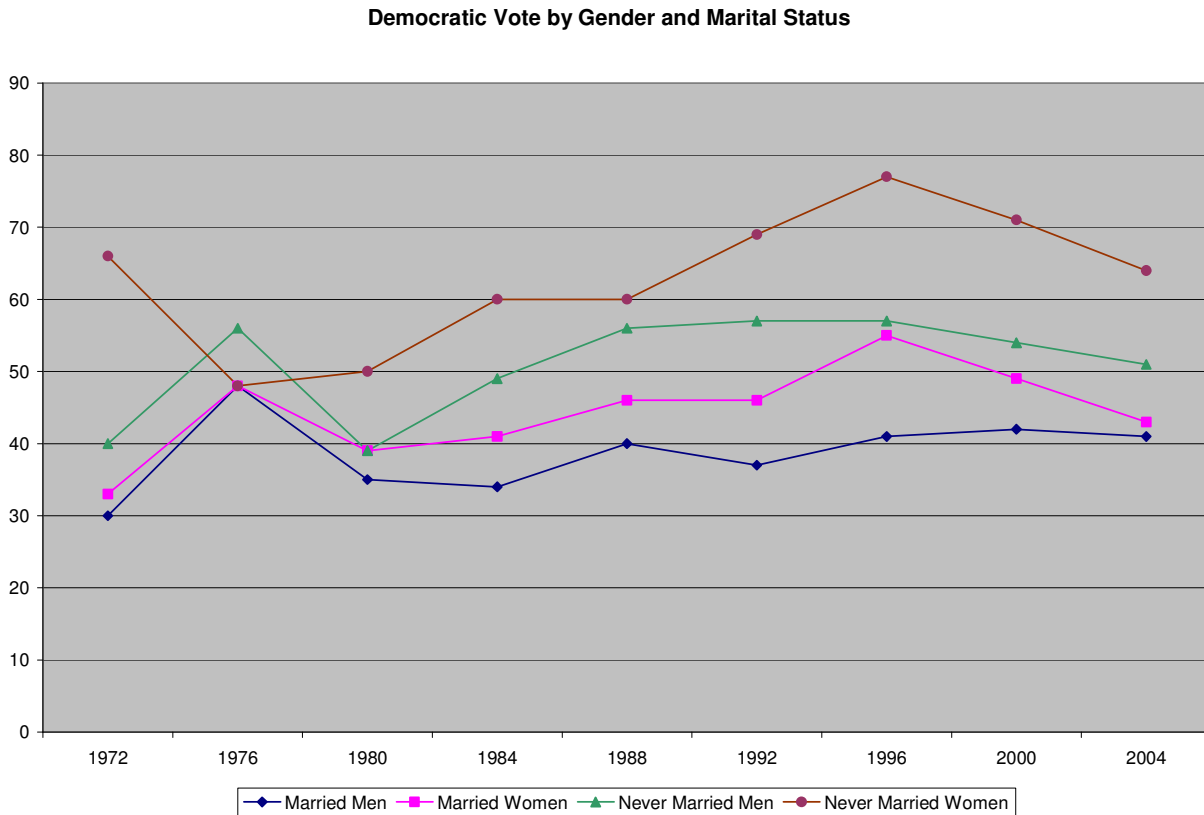
The fact that the married gender gap in the Democratic vote is smaller than the never married gap (except in 1988) supports Burns, Schlozman, and Verba’s (2001) contention, there are,

“many reasons we might expect husbands and wives to be like-minded when it comes to political

matters. For one thing, they share many attributes that are generally related to political commitments and behavior: most notably, class and residential location, usually, ethnicity and religion. Thus they have in common many of the circumstances that shape political views. Furthermore, they may have had similar views from the outset-either because they explicitly selected one another on that basis or because underlying their relationship is agreement on broader sets of values in which political view are embedded” (p. 162-63) A major distinction in their research is that they have survey data from married couples, whereas the data here is on individuals, so I can not make inferences about couples from this data, but it still follows a similar pattern that those who are married share similar attributes.

One final relationship of interest is to determine if there is a consistent scale of who is the most likely to vote for the Democratic candidate to who is the least likely to vote for the Democratic candidate. It would seem that never married women would be the most likely to vote for the Democratic candidate and married men would be the least likely to vote for the Democratic, but what about married women and never married men? Where do they fall on the scale? Hypothesis 3 suspects that never married men would be more likely to vote for the Democratic candidate than married women. Figure 6 supports this hypothesis almost perfectly. The only real deviation is in 1976 when never married men were the most likely to vote for the Democratic candidate, and all others were tied. This is not too important since most agree that the gender gap appeared in 1980, where single men tied with married women. In all remaining years the scale ranges from married men being the least likely to vote for the Democratic candidate, followed by married women, then never married men, and finally never married women are the most likely to vote for the Democratic candidate.

Figure 6



Data gathered from the NES for election years 1972 through 2004.

This graph shows the difference in THE Democratic Vote by gender and marital status.

It is also important to note that in 1980, 1992, and 1996 there were third-party candidates that received a noticeable percentage of the vote. There were third-party candidates in other elections, as well, but they did not receive as noticeable percentage of the vote

From the Figures above it would seem evident that there is a gender gap, a marriage gap and a marriage gender gap. Looking at the gap between married men and never married women it would seem to indicate that these groups of people have drastically different evaluations of who to vote for. Although, visually, this seems to be the case we still need to test this in a statistical model, controlling for other variables, to see if these marital status combined with gender are, in fact, significant factors in determining vote choice.

Data and Methods

I use the American National Elections Studies (ANES) for presidential elections from 1972 through 2004 to examine the relationship between gender and marital status, simultaneously, with voting. The NES is a good choice for this study since it has comparable information across each of these elections, and it has also been used in several of the studies I used as a backdrop for the current study.

Logistic regressions are run for election years from 1972 through 2004, as well as a pooled dataset for 1972-2004. The reason for including these years when running the regressions is this is when the ANES began including an ideology variable. Since 1980 is the year that most suggest the gender gap emerged it seemed logical to also include a couple elections prior to this point to see if these factors made a difference before 1980.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable for this study is vote for the Democratic candidate constructed from the respondent's self-reported presidential vote from the ANES. The variable is a dichotomous variable coded one for a Democratic vote and zero if they voted for anyone else. Those who did not vote are not included in this study. The Plutzer and McBurnett (1991) study explored whether or not it made a significant difference when leaving out the possibility that someone voted for a third-party candidate. They found that it did not significantly change the result. For simplicity, I continue to use a dichotomous variable, but instead of excluding those who may have voted for a third party candidate I code it so that they either voted for the Democratic candidate or they voted for someone else (meaning they either voted for the Republican or a candidate from a third party).

Independent Variables

Consistent with the Plutzer and McDermott (1991) study I include a dummy variable for race (white=1 and non-white=0); a dummy variable for whether or not a respondent lives in the south (south=1 and not south=0); an ordinal variable for family income based on what percentile they fall in (0 to 16th percentile=1, 17th to 33rd percentile=2, 34th to 67th percentile=3, 68th to 95th percentile=4, and 96th to 100th percentile=5); age in years; and education (grade school=1, high school=2, some college=3, and college or advance degree=4).

The above variables are mainly used as controls. They have all been determined to be demographic variables that play a role in determining vote. The variables of main concern are the gender and marital status variables, these variables will be given more explanation in a moment. Before moving on to the variables of interest, these control variables should still be given a brief justification for inclusion in the model. The Hypothesized direction of the relationships for the variables borrowed from the Plutzer and McDermott (1991) model are as follows: Non-whites would be expected to vote more Democratic than whites. Those who live in the south will be more likely to vote for the Republican candidate. As family income increases the person is more likely to vote Republican. As age increases it is expected that your probability of voting Republican increases. Finally, the education variable does not have a hypothesized direction of relationship.

Religiosity is also included as a control in the model. In prior research it has been shown that the more often a person attends church the more likely they are to have a more conservative ideology and therefore more likely to vote Republican (Elder and Greene 2008). (Religiosity is coded: every week=1; almost every week=2; once or twice a month=3; a few times a year=4; and never=5.)

The two control variables that are expected to have the largest effect are ideology and party identification. Obviously if a person identifies with the Democratic Party they are more likely to vote for the Democratic candidate, and the more liberal a person is the more likely they are to vote for the Democratic candidate. (Ideology is coded on a seven-point scale from extremely liberal to extremely conservative, and party identification is on a seven-point scale from strong Democrat to Strong Republican)

Slightly different than Plutzer and McDermott (1991), I use dummy variables for marital status combined with gender. I include dummy variables for never married women, never married men, and married women. Married men will be the excluded group. It seemed most appropriate to have married men as the excluded group because both men and those who are married are considered to be the most likely to vote for the Republican, however, it is not as obvious how the other groups will behave. Those who fell in the categories of divorced, widowed, separated, or partnered are not likely to act the same as those who are married or those who have never been married (Plutzer and McDermott 1991). Yet, the number of people in those categories is very small and I am more concerned with the extremes of being married and never being married therefore no analyses will be presented on these groups at this time. It is thought that if you are married you are more likely to vote for a Republican than if you are not married. Plutzer and McDermott (1991), Gerson (1987), and Elder and Greene (2008) and agree that if you are married you are more likely to be older, have children, and have higher family incomes; which are all things that tend to make you more conservative and more likely to vote Republican.

The explanatory power of gender and/or marital status does not need to explain a large portion of the variation in vote choice to be important, because as we have seen in recent presidential elections, the elections come out very close, so being able to sway the vote, even a few percent,

can completely change the outcome of the election. If this shows that any of these groups have explanatory power on vote choice holding all else constant, even if it explains only a few percent of the total vote, it may indicate that it is worthwhile for a campaign to directly target these groups of voters to increase their vote share.

Results

The first column of table 1 shows the results of the logistic regression for the entire time period from 1972-2004. Both the variable for never married men and never married women are significant. This means that the likelihood of these two groups voting for the Democratic candidate is significantly different than the likelihood of married men (the excluded group) voting for the Democratic candidate. Not only is the married women variable not significant, the coefficient is very small indicating that they do not vote significantly different than married men, supporting the hypothesis that the gap between those who are married is smaller than the gap for those who are not married.

Table 1: Logistic Regression for Vote Choice for 1972-2004 Sample, and 1972-1984

| | 1972-2004 | 1972 | 1976 | 1980 | 1984 |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Ideology | -.468*** | -.6*** | -.521*** | -.303*** | -.383*** |
| Party Identification | -.795*** | -.712*** | -.685*** | -.746*** | -.926*** |
| Age | .007** | -.008 | -.002 | -.001 | .007 |
| Education | .184*** | .121 | -.124 | -.143 | .142 |
| South | .222** | .843*** | -.203 | -.037 | .728** |
| Religiosity | .105*** | .149** | .053 | -.022 | .061 |
| White | -.249*** | -1.572*** | -.627* | -.913** | -1.127*** |
| Family Income | -.135*** | -.091 | -.239** | -.017 | -.376** |
| Never Married Men | .512*** | -.115 | -.106 | .099 | 1.233** |
| Never Married Women | .402** | .689* | .051 | .12 | .416 |
| Married Women | .07 | .037 | -.294 | .017 | .322 |
| Pseudo R-Sq | .43 | .38 | .38 | .35 | .50 |
| N | 7283 | 1107 | 877 | 558 | 884 |

* significant at .05 level ** significant at .01 level *** significant at .001 level

The most interesting finding in both tables 1 and 2 is that the variable for married women is never significant. This indicates that at no time between 1972 and 2004 has the likelihood of voting for the Democratic candidate ever been significantly different between married women and married men. Married men and married women are likely to be facing similar life situations, which shape their choice of who to vote for, whereas never married men and women may face drastically different life circumstances not only from one another but also from those who are married, and possibly shaping their vote choices on very different sets of concerns (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001).

Table 2: Logistic Regression for Vote Choice 1988-2004

| | 1988 | 1992 | 1996 | 2000 | 2004 |
|----------------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Ideology | -.467*** | -.418*** | -.268*** | -.099* | -.746*** |
| Party Identification | -.888*** | -.816*** | -.794*** | 1.223*** | -1.025*** |
| Age | .002 | .05*** | .011 | .016* | -.001 |
| Education | .045 | .164 | -.066 | .285*** | .094 |
| South | .756** | -.137 | -.162 | -.363 | -.438 |
| Religiosity | .043 | .177** | .060 | .212** | -.106 |
| White | -1.324*** | -1.25*** | 1.288*** | -.546* | -1.034 |
| Family Income | -.175 | -.056 | -.006 | -.040 | -.048* |
| Never Married Men | .621 | .782** | .374 | .082 | -.567 |
| Never Married Women | .437 | .657* | .769* | .537 | -.852* |
| Married Women | .195 | .266 | .320 | .272 | .228 |
| Pseudo R-Sq | .51 | .46 | .47 | .58 | .57 |
| N | 785 | 1216 | 1000 | 894 | 722 |

* significant at .05 level
 ** significant at .01 level
 *** significant at .001 level

The never married men and never married women variables are not significant in every single election, and this is not surprising. Different elections bring up different issues and maybe different groups are mobilized. As never married women are the least likely to actually vote, it would make sense that may this variable is only significant in years where something in the

campaign was able to spark their attention and mobilize them as a whole to come out and vote. Being the most likely to vote for the Democratic candidate it would be wise of Democratic campaigns to spend extra effort to motivate them to vote. Many elections are won by very small margins so more if more single women vote, they could be a determining factor in who wins the election. It is also true that single men are less likely to vote than their married counterparts, so if a candidate is trying to swing the vote away from the Republican candidate it would also be wise to mobilize this group to vote, as they are the second most likely to vote for the Democratic candidate.

Discussion

Hypothesis one, that women are more likely to vote for the Democratic candidate is supported in figure 1, but the statistical model does not test the independent effect of gender on vote choice as the relationship of most interest is that of marital status and gender combined. (The same model was run with gender and marital status separately, and after controlling for party identification and ideology gender is rarely significant. The results of this model are not shown here.)

Hypothesis two; those who have never been married will be more likely to vote for the Democratic candidate than those who are currently married is supported in figure 2. (This hypothesis is supported in the model that does not include the dummy variables, which is not shown here).

Hypothesis three which is examined most clearly in figure 6 shows that never married women are the most likely to vote for the Democratic candidate followed by never married men, then married women, with married men being the least likely to vote for the Democratic candidate. In the statistical model this is not necessarily easy to tell since in many elections these variables are

not significant, and married men are the excluded group. As for hypothesis four, the gender gap for those who are married is smaller than for those who are not married is clearly the case in figure 5 which shows the difference in the size of the gender gap for those who are married and those who are not. The gender gap is larger for those who have never been married in every election except for one. The statistical model would lend support to this hypothesis; the married women variable is never statistically significant, meaning that the likelihood of a married woman voting for the Democratic candidate is not significantly different from the likelihood of a married man voting for the Democratic candidate in any year, nor in the pooled sample. On the other hand, even though the never married men and women variables are not significant in every election year they are significant in the pooled 1972-2004 data which indicates they vote in distinguishable different ways than married men.

Conclusion

Though I am not able to achieve strong support for the hypotheses, this study still shows some important differences in how different demographic groups vote. To improve this study it would be ideal to also include a variable as to whether or not a person has children, because along with marriage this is another lifestyle change that could alter not only participation but also vote choice (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; Elder and Greene 2008). Unfortunately the ANES does not consistently ask whether a respondent has children. It would also be interesting to use survey data of married couples, as well as individuals, so if they are married you can link them with their spouses to see if they are in fact, significantly more likely to vote for the same candidate. This is a topic area that I have much future research planned for. My next step will be to form several, more complete models that will also include the different social and economic issues, as well as views of the candidates. From there I will then gather information

for each election year being studied as to who the candidates were, what issues they pushed in their campaigns, and the basic state of the United States. With this information I will be able to form a more complete model for the determinants of the vote, including what factors were involved in men's versus women's vote choices, as well as the vote choice for those who are married versus those who are not married. Once these factors are determined I will then be able to put these determinants into the context of each of these elections and a better picture will be formed of the relationships between gender, marital status and the vote.

References

- Burns, Nancy, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Sidney Verba. 2001. *The Private Roots of Public Action: Gender Equality and Political Participation*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Burrell, Barbara. 2006. *The Gender Gap in Presidential Voting: An Electoral College Perspective*. Presented at the 2006 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association. Chicago Illinois.
- Campbell, Angus, Converse, Philip, Miller, Warren, and Donald Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Chaney, Carole Kennedy, R. Michael Alvarez, and Jonathan Nagler. 1998. "Explaining the Gender Gap in U.S. Presidential Elections 1980-1992." *Political Research Quarterly* 51(2):311-39.
- Conover, Pamela Johnston. 1988. "Feminists and the Gender Gap." *Journal of Politics* 50(4):985-1010.
- Elder, Laurel and Steven Greene. 2008. "Parenthood and the Gender Gap" in Duke Whitaker, Lois. 2008. *Voting the Gender Gap*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Fiorina, Morris P. 1981. *Retrospective Voting in American Elections*. New Haven: Yale University Press
- Gerson, Kathleen. 1987. "Emerging Social Divisions Among Women: Implications for Welfare State Policies" *Politics and Society* 15(2) 213-21.
- Gilligan, Carol. 1982. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Kaufmann, Karen M. 2002. "Culture Wars, Secular Realignment, and the Gender Gap in Party Identification." *Political Behavior* 24(3)283-307
- Kaufmann, Karen M., and John R. Petrocik. 1999. "Changing Politics of American Men: Understanding the Sources of the Gender Gap." *American Journal of Political Science* 43(3):864-87
- Klein, Ethel. 1984. *Gender and Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Norrander, Barbara. 1997. "The Independence Gap and the Gender Gap." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 61(3):464-76.
- Norrander, Barbara. 1999. "The Evolution of the Gender Gap." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 63(4):566-76.

- Piven, Frances F. 1985. "Women and the State: Ideology, Power and the Welfare State." In Alice S Rossi, ed., *Gender and the Life Course*, pp.265-87. New York Aldine.
- Plutzer, Eric, and Michael Mc Burnett. 1991. "Family Life and American Politics: The Marriage Gap Reconsidered." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 55(1):113-27.
- Sandell, Julianna and Eric Plutzer. 2005. "Families, Divorce, and Voter Turnout in the US." *Political Behavior* 27(2):133-162
- Schaffner, Brian F. 2005. "Priming Gender: Campaigning on Women's Issues in U.S.Senate Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 49(4)803-817
- Shapiro, Robert Y., and Harpreet Mahajan. 1986. "Gender Differences in Policy Preferences: A Summary of Trends from the 1960s to the 1980s." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 50(1):42-61.
- Stoker, Laura and M. Kent Jennings. 1995. "Life Cycle Transitions and Political Participation: The Case of Marriage." *American Political Science Review* 89(2):421-433
- Weisberg, Herbert F. 1987. "The Demographics of a New Voting Gap: Marital Differences in American Voting." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 51(3):335-43.
- Welch, Susan, and John Hibbing. 1992. "Financial Conditions, Gender and Voting in American National Elections." *Journal of Politics* 54(1):197-213
- Wirls, Daniel. 1986. "Reinterpreting the Gender Gap." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 50(3)316-30