

Why Men Leave: Gender and Partisanship in the 1990s

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Prepared for delivery at the 2000 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Marriot Wardman Park, August 31-September 3, 2000. Copyright by the American Political Science Association. The author would like to thank Andy Kohut and the Pew Research Center for the People and Press, David King, participants of the Kennedy School's faculty research seminar, and the participants of the American Politics Workshop of the University of Colorado's Department of Political Science.

It is a well-established finding in the study of electoral politics that women are more likely than men to support the Democratic Party in national elections. Gender gap research dates this bias in voting preferences with the 1980 presidential election, in which women were less likely than men to cast their vote for Ronald Reagan. More recent research, however, notes that we can account for the gender gap by examining the flight of men from the Democratic Party. Starting in the 1960s, southern white men began voting Republican, a trend that was entrenched by the 1980s. In the 1990s, as the gender gap emerged in congressional elections, an examination of exit poll data reveals that this shift is rooted in the flight of white male voters rather than any movement among women.

In this paper, I ask, “Why did white men leave the Democratic Party?” as a way of accounting for the gender gap in American politics. I argue that the Democratic Party changed over time such that white men no longer see it as representing their interests. Men are more conservative than women in issue areas where the Democratic Party has moved to or represents the political left. In other words, women and men manifest political differences in precisely the areas where the parties have diverged since the 1960s, namely the role of government in people’s lives, defense spending and the use of force, race and affirmative action and protecting the environment. As a result, men’s attachment to the Democratic Party has diminished, leaving women voters as a major constituency.

I explore this gender gap in partisanship by looking at a number of data sources. First, I track changes in party identification since the 1950s with the National Election Study conducted at the University of Michigan. I analyze the contemporary gender gap using data collected since the mid-1990s by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press. I employ a model of partisanship that includes issue positions, demographic controls for historic group loyalties and parental political socialization.¹ I find that men and women’s partisan identification is determined by a similar set of issues – namely views about the efficacy and role of government, the primacy of protecting the environment, views about domestic roles and “family values,” attitudes about race, capitalism, the military and patriotism. Gender differences in partisanship emerge not because men and women think about the substance of partisanship in different terms, but because they position themselves differently in these policy areas.

Men Flee the Democrats

In popular political commentary and academic research, the gender gap is most commonly defined as the differences in men and women’s voting preferences in national elections. Traditionally scholars date the emergence of the gender gap to the 1980 presidential election when women were less likely than men to support Ronald Reagan’s candidacy

¹ I conduct my analysis on white men and women because I am interested in the defection of whites from the Democratic Party rather than the movement of African Americans into the Democratic Party. In the 1950s, African Americans began to support the Democratic Party despite their historic allegiance to the Republican Party. This trend accelerated in the 1960s and by 1964, 80 percent of black voters supported Democratic candidates. Currently, African Americans constitute the most loyal bloc of Democratic voters in the electorate (Gurin, Hatchett, and Jackson 1989; Tate 1993). Because African Americans represent a core Democratic constituency, they have a different relationship to the parties than white voters. This paper will focus its attention on the partisan dynamics among whites only.

(Bendyna and Lake 1994; Ladd 1997).² While the size the gender gap has varied, by the 1990s, it was firmly established in presidential and congressional races. Consistently surveys and exit polls showed that women were more likely than men to vote for Democratic candidates and identify with the Democratic Party. Women's hostility towards Reagan's candidacy, scholars argue, was rooted in the rise of women's autonomy through the entry into the labor force and divorce, greater attachment to the welfare state, opposition to militarism and stronger orientation toward humanitarian concerns (Mueller 1988). Other research roots the existence of the gender gap in differences in women and men's orientations toward feminism and the women's movement (Conover 1988), preferences around social welfare and an activist state (Shapiro and Mahajan 1986) and economic worldviews (Chaney, Alvarez, and Nagler 1998).

This gender gap research focuses almost exclusively on explaining women's preference for the Democratic Party rather than on why men might prefer the Republican Party or changes in men's political behavior over time. But important recent work shows that the gender gap in national politics stems from the departure of men from the Democratic Party rather than any major alteration in women's partisanship. Kaufmann and Petrocik (1999) convincingly demonstrate with data from the National Election Study that Democratic identification among men has been declining since 1964, while women overall remain relatively stable in their Democratic loyalties (Wirls 1986). As Figure 1 shows, men and women's identification with the Democratic Party was relatively even in the 1950s and early 1960s. In 1964, men's support for the Democratic Party dropped precipitously from 51 percent to the high 30s through out the seventies to a low of 28 percent in 1994. Overall, women remained more stable than men did in their Democratic loyalty -- women's identification hovers around the low 40s from the late 1970s to 1996.

INSERT FIGURE 1

More specifically, it was really the movement of Southern white men in the wake of the civil rights movement and the upheavals of the 1960s that initiated what we now think of as women's preference for the Democratic Party (Miller and Shanks 1996; Norrander 1999; Stanley and Niemi 1995). As Table 1 shows, there was a massive drop of Southern white male identification with the Democratic Party starting in 1960, which declined steadily until 1992. For instance, between 1964 and 1968, the Democratic advantage among Southern white men dropped fourteen points (+43 to +29 points); by 1992, a 58-point Democratic advantage among men fell to a 1-point Republican advantage. Southern white women also fled the Democratic Party in the mid-1960s, but came back to the Democratic Party by the mid-1980s.³

²Over time other "gender gaps" have emerged. There is a gender gap in partisanship and in congressional voting. There is also a small turnout gap, where women are slightly more likely than men to vote in presidential elections (Conway, Steuernagel, and Ahern 1997).

³ Miller and Shanks conduct their analysis among voters rather than collapsing voters and non-voters. They show that the increase in identification as an Independent occurs most dramatically among non-voters. Similarly, Bartels (2000) argues that when non-voters are removed from the analysis of partisanship, the decline in partisan attachment, or "dealignment," has been overstated.

Table One
Partisan Balance in Party Identification, 1952-1992
White, Voters

<i>Election Year</i>	Non-South		South	
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
1952	4	3	58	54
1956	3	-2	58	38
1960	3	-2	47	34
1964	13	11	43	48
1968	4	4	29	39
1972	2	1	21	23
1976	3	-1	23	15
1980	2	5	6	15
1984	-8	-2	8	22
1988	-10	-9	-8	22
1992	-9	7	-1	11

Source Miller and Shanks (1996), American National Election Studies.

Proportion of Democrat identifiers minus the proportion of Republican identifiers. Negative sign indicates Republican plurality.

It is important to note that changes in partisanship stem from generational replacement rather than widescale conversion. Miller and Shanks (1996) show quite clearly that young, white post-New Deal voters are less likely to identify with a political party than older voters and that younger white Southern voters lead the march into the Republican Party. In the data considered here (see below for details of survey data), we see quite clearly that generational replacement is at work. Older white male voters (55 years and older) are nearly evenly divided between the parties. Middle aged white men (36-55 years) are almost 10 points less likely to identify with the Democratic Party and only 16 percent of young white male men (18-35 years) call themselves Democrats. On the other hand, there are few differences among white women of different generational cohorts. The white women who came of age between late 1950s and the late 1970s (29 percent), only are slightly less likely to identify with the Democratic Party than older (38 percent) or younger white women (32 percent).

INSERT FIGURES TWO AND THREE HERE

This analysis implies that “changes in social conditions and political context are more likely to produce changes in party identification among the young – or the newly identified – than the old” (Miller and Shanks 1996: 184). It means that we can account for both the long-term stability of partisan identification in American politics by considering group loyalty among older voters and aggregate shifts in partisanship by understanding how political events affect

younger voters.⁴ In the contemporary context, young people entering the electorate are increasingly unlikely to identify with a political party – a development with implications for the future of the gender gap.

Changes in the Parties

An analysis of “Why men leave” the Democratic Party needs to show that there have been changes in the political parties over time on the issues that inform men and women’s voting decisions (Norris forthcoming). In fact, there is an important literature that supports the notion that changes in partisanship follow changes in the agendas of the political parties. Gerber and Jackson (1993), for example, find that voters’ partisan preferences change in response to changing in party positions in particular elections, what they call “endogenous preferences” (Box-Steffensmeier and Smith 1996). They show in an analysis of school integration, equal opportunity in housing and jobs between 1956-1964, and the Vietnam War issue between 1968-1972 that Democratic and Republican preferences shifted in conjunction with changes in party positions.⁵

It is clear that the parties have changed since the early 1960s in ways that have affected loyalties among key constituencies. As many commentators argue, the Democratic Party alienated white voters, especially in the South, when Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson and Northern Democratic lawmakers began to champion civil rights and support federal intervention in the integration of schools and legislation such as the Voting Rights Act of 1964 and the Civil Rights Act of 1965.⁶ The presidential contest between Johnson and Republican Barry Goldwater linked the Democrats with racial liberalism and Nixon’s “Southern strategy” established the Republican Party’s political advantage on crime and laws and order (Dionne 1991; Edsall 1991). Carmines and Stimson (1989) show decisively that as the Democratic Party became associated with racial liberalism, white voters defected to Republican candidates. Initially this shift was limited to the national level with white Southern voters continuing to support anti-Civil Rights Democrats at the local level. But as the Democratic Party did not retreat from racial liberalism after the Johnson presidency, presidential policies and party platforms firmly linked racial liberalism with the Democrats and cemented the loss of Southern Democrats.

At the same time, there is a gender story to tell. If the partisan changes merely concerned race, then Southern white women should have departed the Democratic Party at the same rates as Southern white men.⁷ As Table 1 makes clear, men and women reacted differently to the political changes in the past 30 years. White Southern women voters do drop off in their

⁴ As Carmines and Stimson (1989) argue, we can account for changes in partisan identification with regards to racial issues by understanding both conversion and population replacement.

⁵ Carmines and Layman (1997) find issue polarization between the Democratic and Republican identifiers around social welfare, race and social conservatism. While the divergence on attitudes toward social welfare has been consistent since we have polling data (circa 1950s), polarization around social conservatism started in the 1980s and grew sharply in the early 1990s.

⁶ The Democratic association with civil rights began in an earlier era. For instance, President Truman’s tentative efforts to promote civil rights prompted the “Dixiecrat” revolt lead by Senator Strom Thurman at the 1948 Democratic National Convention.

⁷ We know, however, that at least in the contemporary context, women are more racially liberal than men (Seltzer, Newman, and Leighton 1997).

identification with the Democratic Party, but the decline levels off and actually increases such that they are more Democratic than their Northern counterparts. For example, while white Southern women's identification with the Democratic Party dropped in 1964 by nearly 10 points, the Democrats gained ground by the mid-1980s. In 1992, the Democrats had an 11-point identification advantage among white Southern women.

The political events and legislative innovations of the 1960s did not just change the politics of race in the United States, they altered the politics of gender in a number of respects. Prior to the Great Society welfare state, white men were major beneficiaries from the New Deal welfare state (Mink 1990). As the work of Susan Mettler makes clear, the bulk of the New Deal policies administered at the national level such as the Works Progress Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps benefited men, while the state level programs such as Aid to Dependent Children mainly targeted women (Mettler 1998). National programs were more generous and consistently administered than state level programs, which often had exclusionary rules such as "man of the house" clauses and uneven implementation across states. Other "universal policies" such as the GI Bill excluded domestics and farm workers -- in other words African Americans -- and de facto excluded women since they were rarely veterans.

The programs of the War on Poverty and Great Society, on the other hand, largely aided women and minorities.⁸ The expansion and nationalization of Aid to Families with Dependent Children and alterations to inequities in laws such as Unemployment Insurance meant that women and minorities could benefit as men had from welfare policies. These changes to the welfare state meant that Democratic policies fundamentally changed the role of government in white men's lives. At the same time, these changes associated the Democrats with a more expansive and "targeted" welfare programs, a linkage solidified by the New Right's attack on "welfare queens" and "welfare dependency." The confluence of the Civil Rights movement, the women's movement, and the changes in the welfare state meant that men's departure was from the Democratic Party "overdetermined." As Mettler argues, "Just as the civil rights and women's movements were prompting the Democratic Party to act on behalf of African Americans and women, however, white men -- the original, primary beneficiaries of the New Deal -- began to defect from party ranks" (225).

White voters, particularly white Southern male voters, came to understand the Democratic Party as failing to represent their interests with regards to race and the role of the state in their lives. This trend accelerated in the 1970s and was entrenched by the mid-1990s. In fact, by the 1990s, Northern and Southern men came to resemble one another politically. The Pew data show that there is little regional variation among men, though Southern men retain a bit of their Democratic loyalty and Western men identify heavily as Republican. In 1994, the Democratic Party experienced a massive defection of white male voters from the Democratic Party in the congressional elections, a drop off of the gains the Democrats made under Clinton's centerist campaign in 1992. The election was dubbed the year of "the angry white men," a characterization immortalized by Susan Faludi (1999) in her popular work *Stiffed*.

⁸ This is not to argue, however, that Great Society programs did not continue to include gendered and racialized assumptions about women's employment and dependence on male breadwinners (Mink 1990).

Table Two
Congressional Elections in the 1990s
Whites, Percent Republican

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
1990	52	48
1992	51	49
1994	63	53
1996	60	51
1998	59	54

Source: Voter News Service, *New York Times* 1998

Understanding the Gender Gap

The evidence presented here suggests that the gender gap in American politics results from white men's departure from the Democratic Party rather than just the movement of women into the Democratic Party. The important question remains why do men reject the Democratic Party? As I argued earlier, the parties have become polarized⁹ around the issues that matter for how men and women cast their votes. I have already recounted the Democratic Party's association with the liberal welfare state and racial liberalism (Carmines and Layman 1997), but the parties changed in other areas where there are significant gender differences. For example, partisan divisions emerged over national security issues when Democrats such as Eugene McCarthy and George McGovern expressed their opposition to the Vietnam War (citation). Ronald Reagan solidified this association, as he was seen as tougher and more decisive on military and foreign affairs in the wake of Carter's handling of the Iranian hostage crisis (Cavanagh and Sundquist 1985). Since the 1970s, the parties have diverged over social issues or the so-called "family values" debate. Interestingly enough, however, there are few gender differences in this policy area. For example, men and women hold nearly identical views about abortion and the women's movement (Seltzer, Newman, and Leighton 1997).

Gender differences in partisanship and voting preferences are rooted in the different policy preferences that men and women hold (Chaney, Alvarez, and Nagler 1998; Manza and Brooks 1998; Seltzer, Newman, and Leighton 1997). Men are more conservative than women in their views toward the proper role of government and scale of social welfare programs (Page and Shapiro 1992; Shapiro and Mahajan 1986). Men support the use of force in international matters and supportive of defense spending (Miller 1988) in greater numbers than women.¹⁰ Men are more conservative on racial matters, though women are more conservative with regards to civil liberties (Seltzer, Newman, and Leighton 1997). Men and women also divided in other areas

⁹ Thanks to Doug Rivers for this insight. In fact, it is clear that the parties are increasingly politically polarized. Research by David King (1997) shows that since the 1960s and the breakdown of the New Deal Coalition, the parties have become more ideologically extreme. In Congress, for instance, there is more party unity and a decline in the number of centerist legislators.

¹⁰ A poll by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press (April 24-May 6, 2000, 2,186 adults) shows a wide gender gap on support for developing a missile defense system -- 45 percent of men support developing this capacity even if it alienates Russian compared to 27 percent of women.

important to our current partisan debate. For instance, women are more supportive of gun control legislation than men (Ladd 1997).¹¹

I explore these gender differences in party identification in the contemporary context with data collected for the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press by Princeton Survey Research Associates. The data are pooled, consisting of three national samples from 1999, 1997 and 1994. These surveys include an extensive battery of “values” statements that represent the issue areas where parties have become polarized as well as demographic variables tapping traditional explanations for the gender gap. I construct additive scales from these values statements to tap anti-government sentiment, social conservatism, militarism, patriotism, social welfare orientation, anti-capitalism, racial liberalism and environmental protection. I expect people who express anti-government, socially conservative, pro-military and patriotic views to be more likely to identify with the Republican Party. I expect people who express pro-social welfare, anti-capitalist, racially liberal and pro-environment views to be more likely to identify with the Democratic Party.

As the argument suggests, gender differences exist not because a model of partisanship functions differently for men and women, but because men and women have divergent policy preferences in these areas (see Table Three). As Table Three shows, men and women differ to varying degrees across issue areas. The largest gender differences arise around views toward regulation of environment and the use of military, while the smallest differences emerge around patriotism, social conservatism and views toward government. But what Table Three makes clear is that white men overall are more conservative than white women across the range of issues considered here.

Table Three
Mean Values on Issue Scales

	<i>White Men</i>	<i>White Women</i>	<i>F-Statistic/P-value</i>
Anti-Government*	.50	.52	12.22 (.00)
Social Conservatism*	.61	.63	10.35 (.00)
Pro-Military*	.40	.46	62.42 (.00)
Patriotism*	.18	.19	8.62 (.00)
Pro-Welfare**	.61	.57	59.65 (.00)
Anti-Capitalism**	.53	.49	103.08 (.00)
Racial liberalism**	.70	.66	53.38 (.00)
Pro-Environment**	.32	.23	155.21 (.00)

Source: Pew Research Center for the People and the Press

*lower values indicates conservative position

**lower values indicates liberal position

At the same time, traditional group loyalties matter to people’s orientation toward the parties (Mattei and Mattei 1998). Despite the decline of the New Deal coalition, Catholics, union members, working class citizens and seniors are still marginally more likely to be

¹¹ Two recent polls show quite dramatic differences between men and women in their attitudes toward gun control. In an Associated Press poll conducted between August 27-31, 1999 (1026 adults), 45 percent of men compared to 66 percent of women favored “stricter gun laws.” In a CBS News poll conducted between July 13-14, 1999 (722 adults, half sample), 54 percent of men compared to 36 percent of women believe “the Second Amendment of the Constitution guarantees all Americans the right to own guns”.

Democrats than Republicans (Stanley and Niemi 1995). The Republican Party attracts religious, affluent and well-educated voters. Regional variation plays an important role in partisan behavior despite the leveling of regional differences in recent years. There may be some residual Democratic effect of living in the South, even though white Southerners vote heavily Republican. The West, moreover, is quite libertarian and Republican in its orientation. Finally, models of party identification must include some measure of parental partisanship (Campbell et al. 1960). While I argued earlier that partisan change occurs via generational replacement, political socialization in families will have an effect on partisanship with varying degrees of strength depending upon prevailing political conditions (Beck 1993).

I use this combination of values, group loyalties, regional ties, as well as controls for recalled parent's partisanship to predict men and women's partisan identification. I employ a multinomial logit model with three categories – Republican, Independent and Democrat. The Republican and Democratic categories include only strong and weak identifiers, but not party “leaners.” The exclusion of leaners is a conscious choice despite the fact that Independents may have partisan proclivities. Keith et al. (1992) argue that Independents who lean toward a party might decline a party label, but vote in consistently partisan ways. In this project, however, I am concerned with the kinds of political values and group loyalties that generate partisan identification. When leaners are collapsed with party identifiers, Independents comprise a very small number of observations, hiding the dynamics of foregoing partisan identification. When I conducted the analysis in the collapsed form, however, the substantive results concerning the dynamics of Democratic and Republican identification remained the same. As I noted earlier, the analyses are conducted among white adults only.

Results

The first thing to observe is that consistent with other research in this area, the models for men and women are remarkably similar. Nearly the same sets of issues predict men and women's party identification meaning that there is nothing inherently “gendered” about the process of identifying with a political party. People who hold anti-government views, socially conservative attitudes and pro-military predilections are likely to identify as Republicans. People who favor an activist welfare state and environmental regulation and hold racially liberal views are likely to identify with the Democrats.

Not surprisingly, white men are more likely to identify as Republican ($p = .33$) than Democrat ($p = .18$), but most likely to call themselves Independents ($p = .50$).¹² Men who are socially conservative, anti-government and anti-welfare are most drawn to the Republican Party. Men who are racially liberal and pro-government most drawn to the Democratic Party. While certain issues draw white men away from the Republican Party, they do not lead them necessarily into the Democratic Party. For example, anti-military men prefer to identify as Independent than embrace the Democratic Party. White women are more likely to identify with the Democrats ($p = .30$) over the Republicans ($p = .25$), but also have a significant probability of calling themselves Independent ($p = .44$). Women who are pro-capitalism and socially conservative are most drawn to Republicans. Pro-government, anti-capitalist and racially liberal women are the strongest Democrats. As with men, certain values draw women away from the

¹² These predicted probabilities are generated by setting all values of the independent variables at their sample means.

Democrats, but do not dramatically increase support for the Republican Party. If women express anti-government sentiment, for example, they are equally drawn to Independent and Republican identification.

INSERT TABLES FOUR AND FIVE HERE

Values and Partisanship

Belief in or distrust of government is highly partisan value. People who believe the government is inefficient and meddles in the lives of citizens and the practices of businesses are highly unlikely to identify with the Democratic Party. Believers in the efficiency and value of the government's role in society vastly prefer the Democrats to identifying as an Independent or Republican. Consequently, white men who are strongly anti-government have a .05 chance of identifying with the Democrats, while strongly pro-government white men have a .44 probability of being a Democrat. White women with strong anti-government views are unlikely to identify with the Democratic Party (p= .10 probability), but they move in equal numbers to the Independents (p= .56 probability) and the Republican Party (p= .35). This tendency emerges more specifically with regard to the welfare state. Opposition to activist government around support for the poor draws white men (p=.44) and women (p= .33) to the Republicans. Finally, for white women, a strong belief in fairness of market solutions exerts an important Republican pull (p= .48). In fact, of all the values considered here, pro-capitalist sentiment most strongly influences white women's Republican leanings. These women may be the fiscal conservatives that Klatch (1990) identified as a pillar of the New Right.

Table Six
Predicted Probability of Partisan Identification
White Men and Women

	<i>Anti-Government</i>	<i>Social Welfare</i>	<i>Capitalism</i>
White Men			
Republican (.33)	.44/.18	.44/.18	.40/.25
Independent (.50)	.50/.37	.45/.51	.46/.53
Democrat (.18)	.05/.45	.11/.31	.14/.22
White Women			
Republican (.25)	.35/.13	.33/.16	.48/.14
Independent (.44)	.56/.26	.41/.47	.39/.46
Democrat (.30)	.10/.61	.26/.36	.21/.40

Source: Pew Research Center for the People and the Press

Predicted probabilities calculated by setting the appropriate scale at its extreme values (either zero or one) and the remaining variables at their sample means.

Social conservatism strongly draws white men and women into the Republican Party -- even more strongly than views towards government and the market. This result is not surprising given the Republican Party's strong association with the Christian Right (Wilcox 1996; Rozell

and Wilcox 1995). Since the late 1970s, conservative Christian activists have been building the infrastructure to support a network of grassroots activists and domination of television and radio broadcasting (Hadden 1993). Activists mobilized this network in the 1980s, particularly around the candidacy of Pentecostal preacher Pat Robertson and created organizations with strong ties to the Republican Party such as the Christian Coalition (Wilcox 1992). In fact, over time, Republican activists have become increasingly religious, while Democratic activists have become increasingly secular (Layman 1999).

Extremely socially conservative men ($p = .51$) and women ($p = .41$) identify with the Republican Party, drawing support away from both the Democrats and identification as an Independent. Similarly, religiosity measured by high levels of worship draws support from Democrats and Independents to the Republicans. Interestingly, social liberalism or secularism does not automatically lure people into the Democratic Party. Secular white men, for example, have a high probability of being Independent ($p = .60$) and only a slightly higher probability of being Democrat ($p = .19$) than white men at the sample mean. This finding is entirely consistent with evidence that third party voters in the 1990s are secular and socially liberal. Perot voters for instance were motivated by fiscal conservatism, nationalism and opposition to free trade rather than “family values” (Greenberg 1995).

Table Seven
Predicted Probability of Partisan Identification
White Men and Women

	<i>Social Conservatism</i>	<i>Church Attendance</i>
White Men		
Republican (.33)	.51/.23	.44/.21
Independent (.50)	.40/.54	.40/.60
Democrat (.18)	.10/.23	.16/.19
White Women		
Republican (.25)	.41/.18	.33/.15
Independent (.44)	.37/.47	.39/.51
Democrat (.30)	.22/.35	.28/.33

Source: Pew Research Center for the People and the Press

Predicted probabilities calculated by setting the appropriate scale at its extreme values (either zero or one) and the remaining variables at their sample means.

Just as social conservatism strongly pulls white men and women into the Republican Party, racial liberalism exerts the strongest pull to Democratic identification. As I argued earlier, Democratic Party remains the repository of racial liberalism and white men who are very racially liberal are much more likely to identify as Democrat ($p = .38$) than men at the sample mean ($p = .18$). Racially liberal white women only have a .14 chance of supporting the Republican Party. Racial liberalism has a curiously equalizing effect – the gender gap in partisanship among racially liberal men and women is relatively small (4 points) than the gender gap in partisanship overall.

Table Eight
Predicted Probability of Partisan Identification
White Men and Women

<i>Race</i>	
White Men	
Republican (.33)	.39/.17
Independent (.50)	.49/.45
Democrat (.18)	.12/.38
White Women	
Republican (.25)	.32/.14
Independent (.44)	.43/.44
Democrat (.30)	.25/.42

Source: Pew Research Center for the People and the Press

Predicted probabilities calculated by setting the appropriate scale at its extreme values (either zero or one) and the remaining variables at their sample means.

Not surprisingly, views towards the use of military in international affairs influence partisan identification. White men ($p = .39$) and women ($p = .35$) who believe the “best way to ensure peace is through military strength” have a higher probability of identifying with the Republican Party than individuals at the sample mean. On the other hand, disagreement with this sentiment does not draw individuals into the Democratic Party. Men who disagree with this statement, for instance, would prefer to call themselves Independent ($p = .58$) than Democratic ($p = .19$). Patriotism increases Republican identification among men ($p = .38$), but does not have much impact on women’s preferences (increases GOP identification by 3 points).

Table Nine
Predicted Probability of Partisan Identification
White Men and Women

	<i>Military</i>	<i>Patriotism</i>	<i>Environment</i>
White Men			
Republican (.33)	.39/.23	.38/.11	.44/.26
Independent (.50)	.44/.58	.47/.57	.47/.50
Democrat (.18)	.17/.19	.15/.32	.09/.24
White Women			
Republican (.25)	.35/.16	.28/.16	.36/.22
Independent (.44)	.40/.47	.41/.61	.48/.42
Democrat (.30)	.25/.36	.32/.24	.17/.36

Source: Pew Research Center for the People and the Press

Predicted probabilities calculated by setting the appropriate scale at its extreme values (either zero or one) and the remaining variables at their sample means.

Support for regulation to protect the environment, an area with significant gender differences, exerts a strong impact on Democratic identification among white women though it has a weaker impact on white men. Pro-environment men are less likely to identify with the Republican Party ($p = .26$) and slightly more likely to identify with the Democratic Party ($p = .24$) than men at the sample mean. Among white women, the effect is stronger -- only anti-government sentiment draws women away as strongly from the Democratic Party as anti-environmental views ($p = .17$). This result may be a function of question wording where environmental protection is framed in terms of support for "government regulation." Generally, people see the Democrats as more trustworthy on environmental protection issues than the Republicans.¹³

Group membership and Regional Variation

Group membership, and the traditional loyalties, that accompany them continue to matter for partisanship. Union membership predicts Democratic identification over Republicanism or Independence. Older white men and women are more likely to be Democrats than Republicans or Independents. Affluent white women and white well-educated white men are more Republican than their poorer and working class counterparts.¹⁴

Regional variation creates differences among white men and women. White Southern ($p = .26$) and Midwestern ($p = .25$) men are more likely to identify as Democrats than Northeastern and Western men. This result may appear odd, but occurs because Northeastern men in the Pew data have the highest identification with the Republican Party. In fact, these data show that white Southern men are still marginally more Democratic than the total population. Living in the West increasing the probability than white women will identify with the Republican Party ($p = .36$).

While group loyalties such as union membership matter for partisanship, the breakdown of the New Deal coalition (e.g., the flight of white Southerners) means we need to think about the parties' constituencies in narrower terms encompassing both issue positions and demographic characteristics. Social and religious conservatives represent the pillars of the Republican Party. For example, a religious socially conservative white man has a .57 probability of identifying with the Republican Party (compared to .33 at the sample mean). Affluent younger men are also a core constituency of the GOP. A young college educated white with anti-government views man has only .04 chance of identifying with the Democratic Party ($p = .18$ at the sample mean). On the other side of the aisle, supporters of the social safety net and activist government supply the Democrats with vital support. An older white woman (60 years old) with pro-government views is highly unlikely to identify with the Republican Party ($p = .17$). A young feminist secular (30 years old) woman is also loath to identify with the GOP ($p = .17$), though she is likely to be an Independent ($p = .54$) rather than Democratic ($p = .29$).

¹³ According to a national poll conducted by Celinda Lake and Ed Goas, for instance, 56 percent of people have confidence in the Democrats in Congress to handle the environment compared to 23 percent who favor the Republicans in Congress (January 3-5, 2000, 1,000 likely voters)

¹⁴ It is interesting that education does not predict partisanship for women. As some people argue, when women achieve higher levels of education, they adopt more liberal attitudes towards "women's issues" and feminism. It may be that working, educated women face "cross cutting pressures" (Norris forthcoming) that militate against the class concerns associated with rising socio-economic status (Manza and Brooks 1998). Therefore, there is no necessary relationship between education level and partisanship as we see among men.

Young People, the Gender Gap and Independents

The gender gap in partisanship occurs because men and women hold different sets of preferences around the role of the state and market capitalism, protecting the environment, race and the role of the military in international affairs. In other words, they diverge in areas where the parties have staked out clear positions. But younger white men and women look different from their elders. Younger people are less polarized on the issues that divide older people, namely race, the military and capitalism. On the other hand, younger people are more divided on social conservatism, the efficacy of government and social welfare. Given that the strongest predictors of identifying as an Independent are anti-government and social liberal attitudes, younger white Americans may not find a comfortable home in either party for the foreseeable future.

At the same time, young white people are less likely than older generations to identify with the Democratic Party, as they are drawn to both the Republicans and political independence. As Table Eleven shows, the Democrats lose 7 points with men under 25 years of age and 6 points with women under 25 years of age. The GOP makes smaller gains among young people (3-4 points). This slight inclination toward the Republicans and this libertarian orientation means the position of the Democratic Party among young men and women is uncertain.

Table Eleven
Predicted Probability of Partisan Identification by Age and Gender
White Men and Women

	<i>Total Men/Women</i>	<i>Men, 25 years</i>	<i>Women, 25 years</i>
Republican	.33/.25	.36	.28
Independent	.50/.44	.52	.47
Democrat	.18/.30	.12	.24

Table Ten
Mean Values on Issue Scales
Age and Gender

	<i>Anti Gov't*</i>	<i>Social Cons*</i>	<i>Military *</i>	<i>Patriot*</i>	<i>Pro-welfare **</i>	<i>Anti-cap**</i>	<i>Race**</i>	<i>Environment**</i>
Men (25<)	.54	.64	.56	.27	.61	.53	.64	.27
Women (< 25)	.59	.71	.57	.30	.55	.52	.64	.17
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Men (18-35)	.53	.65	.48	.22	.61	.56	.68	.28
Women (18-35)	.56	.69	.54	.24	.56	.52	.64	.19
Men (35-55)	.49	.62	.39	.16	.61	.53	.71	.32
Women (35-55)	.51	.66	.45	.20	.58	.50	.68	.25
Men (55>)	.48	.55	.30	.14	.60	.51	.72	.38
Women (55>)	.48	.52	.39	.13	.56	.45	.67	.26

Source: Pew Research Center for the People and the Press

*lower values indicates conservative position

**lower values indicates liberal position

Conclusion

White men left the Democrats over the past thirty years because they ceased to see the party as representing their interests on racial issues, the role of the state in their lives and society in general, the use of the military and the importance of patriotism. The base of the Republican Party rests upon the support of white men, particularly the educated and young, who prefer minimalist government, embrace traditional “family” values and value patriotism. Women, on the other hand, stayed because they preferred a stronger role for government in their lives, the poor and in protecting the environment. Moreover, they were less certain that market and corporate America operate fairly or for the larger benefit of society. These differences create a “gender gap” in partisanship that was a regular feature of the political landscape in the 1990s.

The future of the gender gap, however, is not clear. Younger Americans look different politically from their elders. They are less polarized over race, national security and market capitalism, but more polarized over social issues and social welfare. Some of these differences may disappear as Generation Y ages, experiencing the various events intrinsic to the lifecycle.

For instance, it is well known that as marriage has a conservative effect on people's attitudes -- young women may alter their views on traditional domestic roles as they marry and have children. Regardless, as the Democratic Party moves to the political center and the Republican Party grapples with its internal tensions between economic conservatives and social conservatives, these young voters are up for grabs.

Table Four

White Men
Multinomial Logit – Coefficients and Standard Errors
Weighted Data

	Rep/Dem	Ind/Dem	Ind/Rep
Anti-government	3.12** (.71)	2.51** (.61)	-.604 (.55)
Social conservatism	1.72** (.65)	.614 (.59)	-1.11* (.49)
Military strength	.654* (.35)	-.151 (.31)	-.806**(.28)
Patriotism	1.96** (.52)	.562 (.41)	-1.40** (.43)
Pro-welfare state	-1.91**(.59)	-.876 (.53)	1.03* (.45)
Anti-capitalism	-.954 (.65)	-.307 (.59)	.647 (.48)
Racial liberalism	-2.00**(.58)	-1.25**(.49)	.752 (.46)
Protect environment	-1.44**(.41)	-.865* (.37)	.574 (.29)
South	.900** (.30)	.668* (.27)	-.232 (.23)
West	.168 (.34)	.325 (.30)	.157 (.25)
Midwest	.765* (.31)	.409 (.27)	-.356 (.24)
Married	.325 (.23)	.335 (.20)	.001 (.18)
Age	2.56** (.65)	2.20** (.57)	-.356 (.51)
Education	1.36** (.42)	.872* (.38)	-.489 (.32)
Income	.103 (.47)	-.328 (.41)	-.430 (.35)
Union	-.897**(.28)	-.664**(.23)	.233 (.24)
Church attendance	.918* (.40)	-.231 (.34)	-1.15**(.32)
Born again	.263 (.25)	.359 (.22)	.100 (.19)
Catholic	.115 (.25)	-.250 (.21)	-.365 (.20)
Parent's ID	2.41** (.26)	1.40** (.23)	-1.01**(.19)
Constant	-3.96**(.98)	-2.97**(.75)	.987 (.88)
Log likelihood	-900.55		
Chi Square	374.48		
Significance	.0000		
Percent Predicted	56%		
Cases	1021		

Data Source: Pew Research Center for the People and the Press

**p<.01

* p<.05

Table Five

White Women
Multinomial Logit
Weighted Data

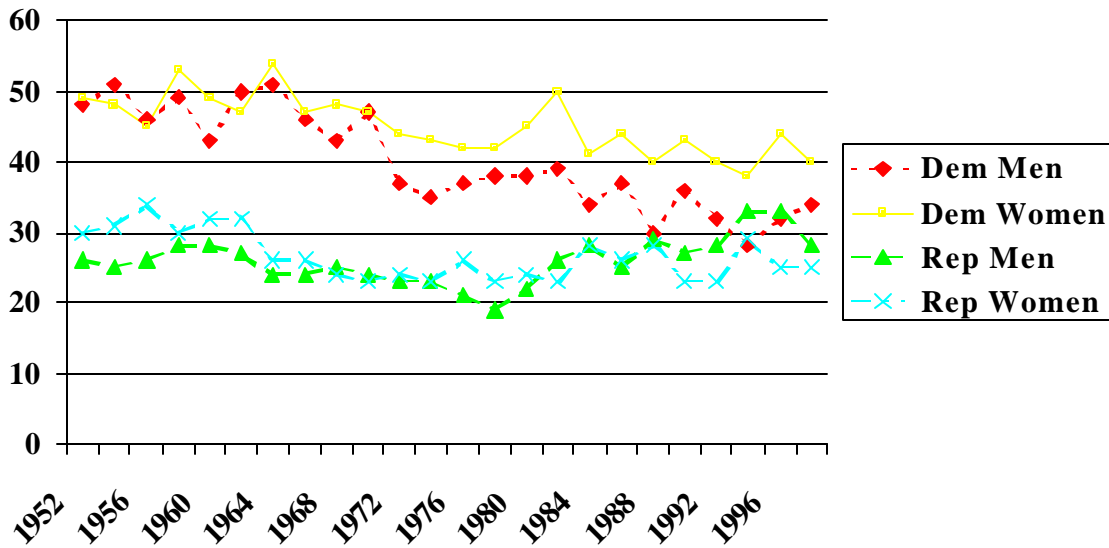
	Rep/Dem	Ind/Dem	Ind/Rep
Anti- government	2.78** (.63)	2.59** (.55)	-.190 (.57)
Social conservatism	1.25* (.54)	.215 (.47)	-1.03* (.48)
Military strength	1.14** (.32)	.210 (.27)	-.931** (.29)
Patriotism	.278 (.47)	-.694 (.38)	-.972* (.43)
Pro-welfare state	-1.09* (.50)	-.211 (.44)	.876 (.45)
Anti-capitalism	-1.63** (.65)	-.475 (.57)	1.16* (.57)
Racial liberalism	-1.34** (.49)	-.466 (.41)	.879* (.45)
Protect environment	-1.27** (.38)	-.903** (.35)	.364 (.33)
South	-.021 (.29)	-.023 (.24)	-.002 (.27)
West	-.555* (.29)	.145 (.26)	.703** (.27)
Midwest	-.125 (.29)	-.532* (.23)	-.398 (.26)
Married	.040 (.21)	.043 (.17)	-.036 (.19)
Age	1.59** (.61)	1.35** (.51)	-.246 (.56)
Education	.382 (.39)	.143 (.33)	-.239 (.35)
Income	1.52** (.42)	.557 (.36)	-.962** (.37)
Union	-.673** (.26)	-.349 (.22)	.324 (.25)
Church attendance	.956** (.36)	-.076 (.30)	-1.031** (.33)
Born again	.265 (.22)	-.115 (.18)	-.381* (.20)
Catholic	-.049 (.24)	.322 (.19)	.371 (.22)
Parent's ID	2.21** (.23)	1.35** (.20)	-.862** (.20)
Constant	-2.82** (.91)	-2.28 (.79)	.535 (.82)
Log likelihood	-996.49		
Chi Square	357.84		
Significance	.0000		
Percent Predicted	56%		
Cases	1079		

Data Source: Pew Research Center for the People and the Press

**p<.01

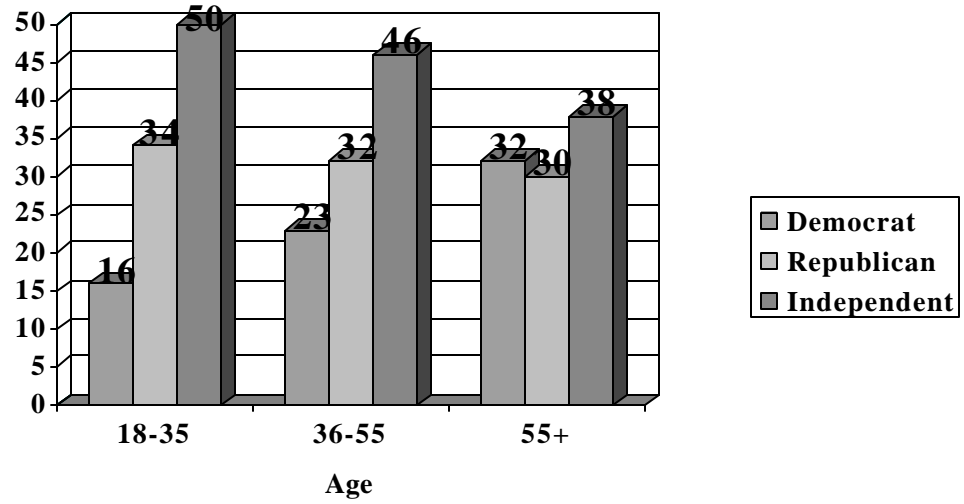
* p<.05

Figure One
Party Identification 1952-1998



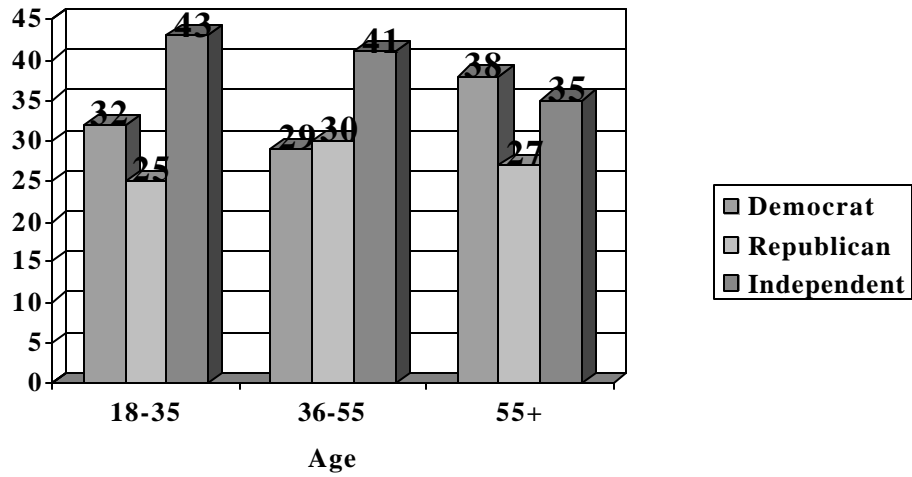
Source: National Election Study, adapted from Seltzer, Newman, Leighton (1997)

Figure Two
Party Identification: White Men



Source: Pew Research Center for the People and Press

Figure Three
Party Identification: White Women



Source: Pew Research Center for the People and Press

Appendix

Scales

Anti-government

Government regulation of business usually does more harm than good.
When something is run by the government it is usually inefficient and wasteful.
The federal government controls too much of our daily lives.
Dealing with a federal government agency is often not worth the trouble.
Alpha=.73

Social Conservatism

Women should return to their traditional roles in society.
School boards ought to have the right to fire teachers who are known homosexuals.
Too many children are being raised in day care centers these days.
Alpha=.59

Military

The best way to ensure peace is through military strength

Patriotism

I am very patriotic.

Anti-Capitalism

Today it's really true that the rich just get richer while the poor get poorer.
There is too much power concentrated in the hands of a few big companies.
Business corporations make too much profit.
Alpha=.72

Pro-social welfare

It is the responsibility of the government to take care of people who can't take care of themselves.
The government should help more needy people even if it means going deeper into debt.
The government should guarantee every citizen enough to each and a place to sleep.
Alpha=.76

Regulate environment

There needs to be stricter laws and regulations to protect the environment.

Race

In the past few years there hasn't been much real improvement in the position of black people in this country.
We should make every possible effort to improve the position of blacks and other minorities, even if it means giving them preferential treatment.
Alpha=.50

Demographics

South – Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, DC, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia.

Marriage – Are you married, divorced, separated, widowed, or have you never been married?

Age – What is your age?

Education - What is the last grade or class that you completed in school?

Income – Last year, that is in 1998, what was your total family income from all sources, before taxes?

Union – Are you, or is your (husband/wife), a member of a labor union?

Church attendance – Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services ...more than once a week, once a week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, seldom, or never?

Born again – Would you describe yourself as a “born again” or evangelical Christian, or not?

Catholic – What is your religious preferences – Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, Mormon, or an orthodox church such as the Greek or Russian Orthodox Church?

Race – What is your race? Are you white, black, Asian or some other race?

Parents ID – When you were growing up, did you parents usually vote for Republicans or Democrats? (How did the parent you felt closer to usually vote?)

Party Identification – In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent? Do you consider yourself a strong Republican or not a strong Republican? Do you consider yourself a strong Democrat or not a strong Democrat? As of today, do you lean more to the Republican Party or the Democratic Party?

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