

Divorce and the Political Gender Gap*

Raj Arunachalam

University of Michigan

Sara Watson

The Ohio State University

April 2015

Abstract

This paper uses a quasi-experimental approach to test the hypothesis that the political gender gap is driven by rising divorce risk. We exploit a largely unexpected legal change in Britain, the *White v White* case, which in 2000 established a rule of parity for the split of assets upon divorce. Using a difference-in-differences approach, we find that the gender gap in political preferences declined sharply for affected groups, consistent with the economic divorce-based explanation.

*Corresponding author: Watson at watson.584@osu.edu.

1 Introduction

The past thirty years have witnessed a dramatic transformation of women's political preferences in the advanced industrialized countries. In vote choice and along an array of public policy issues, women's political positions relative to men's have moved secularly to the left. Understanding the roots of this rising political gender gap is critical for several reasons. First, the gender gap has important consequences for the practice of politics. As politicians respond to gendered differences in political behavior, electoral strategies may diminish the equality of consideration associated with 'good' democracy (Box-Steffensmeier, de Boef and Lin, 2004). Second, since even small variations in the gendered distribution of preferences can have a decisive impact on parties' electoral success, the polarization of issue preferences across genders is likely to shape patterns of state spending. Iversen, Rosenbluth and Soskice (2005) suggest that translating women's preferred public policy outcomes into actual spending would substantially increase social spending as a percentage of GDP in many countries.

What accounts for this rising political gender gap? A provocative recent explanation has energized the debate by proposing a new source: rising divorce rates. This explanation, grounded in a perspective of politics as deriving from economic self-interest, starts from the observation that, typically, women's income upon divorce tends to fall. As divorce rates rise, women's expected lifetime income also falls. Thus, the leftward drift in political preferences has as its root the growing impoverishment of women relative to men.

While intriguing, empirical evidence in favor of the divorce-based explanation for the political gender gap is limited, in part due to difficulties in identifying the causal effect on political preferences of changes in expected income after divorce. Existing evidence is based largely on a broad historical sketch highlighting the confluence of rising divorce rates and the political gender gap cross-nationally. However, many confounding factors that are poorly observed by researchers also affect political behavior, and particularly apply when considering broad cross-country patterns.

An ideal test of the divorce-based mechanism for diverging gendered patterns of political behavior would be a situation in which the returns to divorce discontinuously change for some

groups, thereby altering their expected future income. A prominent British court case, *White v White*, offers just such a test. By prescribing a new rule for allocating assets upon divorce, the decision dramatically increased women's expected lifetime income. Since the case applied to maintenance beyond simple needs, wealthy households were disproportionately affected by the case. Furthermore, due to the structure of family law in the United Kingdom, married couples in England and Wales were exposed to the new legal regime, while Scotland and Northern Ireland were unaffected. We exploit the unique features of the *White* decision to isolate a test of the divorced-based explanation for gendered differences in political behavior. If the posited divorce-based mechanism holds, the sharp rise in the returns to divorce for affected women should drive them to support conservative parties.

This paper finds evidence confirming that this is indeed the case. When we look at married women affected by the *White v White* case, we see they become more conservative relative to single women, and also relative their peers in Scotland, who were not affected by the legal change. We furthermore find that this effect is much stronger among wealthier women, which is precisely the group that was targeted by the court case. And we finally find that the effect generates a thirty percent increase in conservative preferences among wealthy married women living in England and Wales relative to wealthy married men living in the same region.

2 Explaining The Political Gender Gap

We begin this section with an overview of the stylized fact of the rising political gender gap in industrialized countries. We then situate our paper at the intersection of two literatures. The first literature explores the sources of the gender gap in political preferences. Here, we discuss prominent explanations, with a focus on arguments based in economic roots of political preferences. The second literature studies the effects of changing marital patterns—in particular the rise of divorce—on women's decision-making, both in intrahousehold allocations and in the political domain. At the intersection of these literatures, on the political gender gap and on the consequences of changing marital patterns, lies our central question of interest: the effect of rising divorce rates

on political behavior.

2.1 Overview: The Political Gender Gap

When women first earned suffrage in western countries, feminists' widespread expectation was that women would form a distinctive voting bloc, pushing for radical change in the political sphere. To the surprise of most observers, this did not happen. Women's early voting patterns remained similar to men's, and to the extent that they differed, women tended to vote more conservatively than men. Foundational studies by Tingsten (1937) and Duverger (1955) opened a literature aimed at explaining the conservative bent of female voters.

Beginning in the 1970s, political scientists observed a process of 'de-alignment' (Inglehart and Norris, 2000): a clear leftward shift in women's political preferences and voting behavior. By the late 1990s, the gendered pattern of voting and ideological self-placement had altered dramatically, with women in the advanced industrialized societies converging with and often moving to the left of men (Inglehart and Norris, 2003). Figure 1 displays the rising gap in left-party support in the United States and in aggregated survey results in Europe. The same pattern of a rising gender gap holds when respondents are asked about support for redistribution and other measures of ideology. Figure 2 displays the trend in European countries of ideological self-placement on a left-right scale. Men's ideological position has remained stable, with trendless fluctuations about the mean, while women have consistently drifted left in their ideological self-placement. The broad trend of a rising gender gap also holds in Britain, the case we study here. In the early postwar period, British women's voting and ideological positioning was more conservative than men (Norris, 1985; Hayes, 1997), and over the last three decades, women's political preferences relative to men drifted secularly to the left (Campbell, 2004, 2006; Norris, 1986, 1988, 1993, 1999).

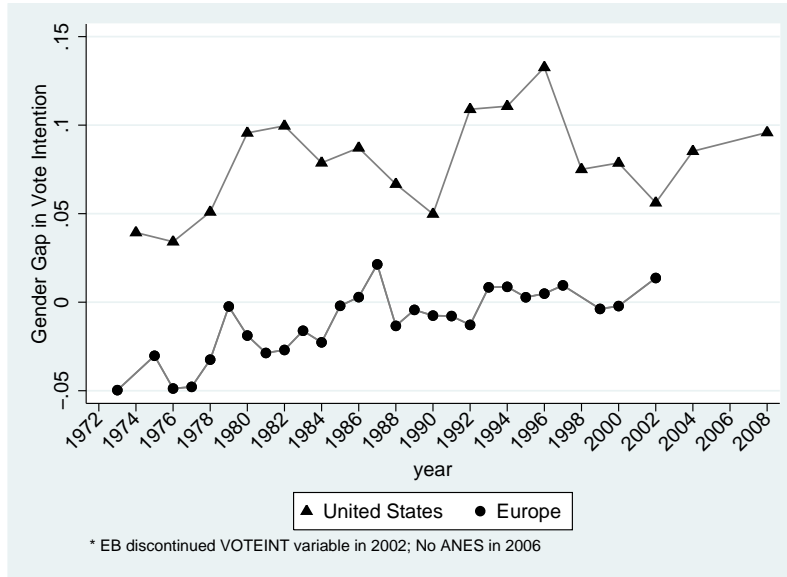


Figure 1: Political Gender Gap in Vote Intention: Europe and the United States

Notes: The gender gap is defined as the difference between the proportion of women versus men who favor left parties, so that a positive number indicates that women are more left-leaning. The data for Europe aggregates data from eight Western European countries (Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, and West Germany) from Eurobarometer surveys.

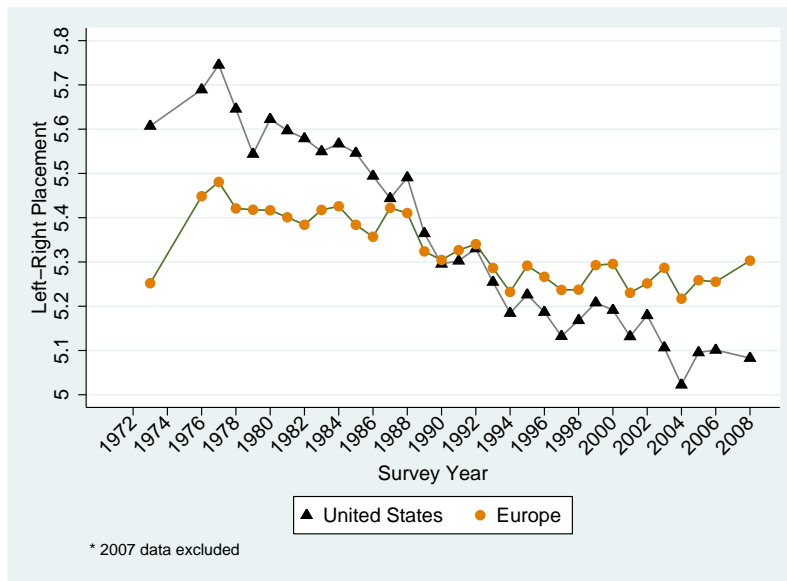


Figure 2: Political Gender Gap in Left-Right Placement: Europe and the United States

Notes: Respondents place themselves along on a 10-point scale ranging from extreme left (1) to extreme right (10). The data comes from Eurobarometer and ANES surveys. The gender gap is defined as the difference between the proportion of women versus men who place themselves on the left, so that a positive number indicates that women are more left-leaning. The data for Europe aggregates data from eight Western European countries (Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, and West Germany) from Eurobarometer surveys.

2.2 Explanations for the Political Gender Gap

Broadly speaking, there are two main explanations in the literature for the modern political gender gap: values and economic self-interest.¹ The values explanation takes several forms. Several scholars view sex-role differentiation as causing a ‘compassion gap,’ in which women are more likely than men to exhibit an ‘ethic of caring.’ This argument is rooted in the work of feminist theorists who posit that sex-role conditioning in childhood and adulthood creates distinctive moral psychologies between genders. According to Gilligan (1982), for example, women are socialized from a young age to view society as a web of connection, which in turn generates a set of values that stresses caring and the importance of meeting social obligations. Others locate women’s ‘ethic of caring’ in the experience of motherhood (Sapiro, 1983; Ruddick, 1989). In this view, motherhood generates a separate sphere of moral and political activity, with women being more likely than men to value nurturing activities such as support for the poor, elderly and others in need of special protection. Drawing upon difference feminism to interpret gendered differences in political preferences and voting behavior, Welch and Hibbing (1992) find that women’s voting choices are more motivated by ‘sociotropic’ concerns about the economic health of the nation as a whole than ‘egocentric’ concerns relating to their own family’s economic situation; see also Baxter and Lansing (1983), Gidengil (1995), and Gidengil et al. (2005) for variants of the sex-role differentiation explanation for the gender gap.

Another strand of the values tradition locates the source of the rising political gender gap in liberal feminist attitudes (Conover, 1988; Wilcox, 1991; Hayes, 1997; Rinehart, 1992; Gurin, 1985). For example, Conover (1988) suggests that the compassion gap has long existed, but that only recently—with the rise of the feminist movement—have women felt able to politically express their previously latent values. Generally speaking, feminist accounts of the gender gap offer two mechanisms. Some scholars posit that feminist support for gender equality extends to championing

¹Given the appearance of a political gender gap in nearly all advanced industrialized countries over the past thirty years, we discuss here only a selection of the vast literature on the topic. For reviews of the cross-national gender gap see Inglehart and Norris (2000); see Shapiro and Mahajan (1986), Manza and Brooks (1998), Chaney, Alvarez and Nagler (1998), and Box-Steffensmeier, de Boef and Lin (2004) for the United States.

egalitarianism in other areas of political and social life, translating into increasing support for left parties. Others emphasize the reverse mechanism: left parties support feminist policies at least in part to draw the support of the rising number of women holding feminist views. Conover's (1988) study of the gender gap in US presidential elections found that feminism is a strong predictor of women's political loyalties and policy preferences—also see Cook (1993) and Manza and Brooks (1998). Considering a range of cases beyond the United States, Inglehart and Norris (2000, 2003) use data from multiple waves of the World Values Survey to argue that the modern gender gap is the result of women having embraced egalitarian values such as feminism and postmaterialism.

The second major explanation for the emergence of the gender gap is grounded not in gendered value differences but in economic self-interest. Several strands of this literature base the rising gender gap in increasing female labor force participation. Manza and Brooks (1998) relate the gender gap in voting to women's position in the labor market. Since women tend to earn less than men and are more likely to be poor, their entry into the labor market has made them more likely to vote like lower-income voters. Others also emphasize the importance of women's entry into the labor market, but highlight other mechanisms. Togeby (1994) and Carroll (1988) suggest that new entrants to the labor market face heightened awareness of persistent patterns of gender inequality, both in the labor market and in political life. This in turn draws women to support left parties. A closely related set of explanations links the gender gap to both demand- and supply-side results of rising female labor force participation. On the demand side, Deitch (1988) and Piven (1985) suggest that as women enter the labor force they have a greater need for childcare and other social services, leading them to vote for parties which support the expansion of the welfare state. On the supply-side, Erie and Rein (1988) make the case that since women are disproportionately employed in public and social services, they have a clear economic self-interest in maintaining the welfare state. Knutsen (2001) offers support for this explanation in the context of the gender gap in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.

2.3 Intrahousehold Bargaining, Divorce Risk, and the Political Gender Gap

The second literature with which this paper engages studies the effects of changes in marriage patterns—in particular, the rise of divorce—on intrahousehold bargaining and economic and political outcomes. The workhorse model of intrahousehold allocation, Becker’s (1991) ‘unitary’ model of the household, assumes that family members pool income and allocate consumption so as to maximize a single objective function. A substantial body of empirical work rejects this model, indicating instead that allocations are partly determined by the resources that each family member brings to the table. For example, Lundberg, Pollak and Wales (1997) study the effects of a policy change in the United Kingdom which changed the recipient of state-provided child allowance from the husband to the wife. They find that this redistribution of income within marriage led to a shift to higher spending on expenditures relating to women’s and children’s goods. These findings are echoed in other studies which find that as women’s share of household income increases, so too do expenditures on women’s clothing (Browning et al., 1994), personal care, and childcare expenditures (Phipps and Burton, 1998).

A key subset of the literature on intrahousehold allocations focuses on the effect of changes in the outside options facing married women, particularly upon divorce.² Based on this idea, several studies exploit variation in divorce law across U.S. states to examine the effects on resource allocation within the household. Gray (1998) finds that the labor supply of married women responds to their state adopting unilateral divorce laws, and argues that a wife’s labor supply is an increasing function of her bargaining power within marriage. Similarly, Stevenson and Wolfers (2006) find that the rise of unilateral divorce laws reduces both suicides and domestic violence. Closer to our concerns in this project, Chiappori, Fortin and Lacroix (2002) show that laws regarding property division in the event of divorce (which vary by state and have evolved differently over time) affect married women’s labor supply decisions.

²In the generalized collective model of the household (Chiappori, 1992), ease of marital dissolution and the rules for property division upon divorce affect resource allocation within marriage by operating on Pareto weights in the household utility function. The same effects hold in a more parametrized framework based on Nash’s cooperative bargaining model (McElroy and Horney, 1981).

If changing marital patterns affect bargaining and allocation within the household, it stands to reason that they may play an important part in shaping gendered political preferences (Iversen and Rosenbluth, 2006). The rise of divorce is particularly important since in both Europe and the United States, women suffer greater losses of income than do men in the wake of marital breakups (Bianchi, Subaiya and Kahn, 1999; Andress et al., 2006; Andress and Brockel, 2007; Poortman, 2000; Jarvis and Jenkins, 1999; Holden and Smock, 1991). Thus, scholars have recently begun to investigate whether rising divorce rates, through their effects on women's economic well-being, have contributed to the political gender gap.

Edlund and Pande (2002) offer the clearest mechanism linking divorce to gendered patterns of political behavior. Because rising divorce rates create a higher risk of lifetime income loss for women than men, women are more likely to vote for left parties. Put more provocatively, Edlund and Pande claim that women's increasing propensity to favor left-wing policies and parties is a form of post-divorce insurance. If married women could credibly expect to be compensated for their future income loss upon divorce, political preferences would not respond to aggregate trends in the divorce rate. However, because marriage is an incomplete contract in that asset allocation is typically renegotiated upon divorce, married women thereby turn to an alternate form of divorce insurance: support for welfare state programs. Exploiting variation in divorce rates across U.S. states, Edlund and Pande (2002) find that 'divorce risk' is related to the likelihood of women voting more to the left than their socio-economic status warrants. In a subsequent paper, Edlund, Haider and Pande (2005) extend the empirical analysis to Europe, with similar findings.³

However, the broader empirical evidence in support of a divorce-related source of the gender gap is mixed. Some studies offer suggestive evidence in favor of the hypothesis. Chapman (1985) and Togeby (1994), among others, find that divorced and separated women are more left-wing than are married women and divorced men. Similarly, Iversen and Rosenbluth (2006) find that the gender gap in issue preferences depends on the probability of divorce, among other factors.

³A related argument is made by Susan Carroll, whose 'autonomy' thesis attributes the political gender gap to the distinctive stance of women who are economically and psychologically independent from men (Carroll 1988). Her approach is unusual in that it integrates the feminist values and the divorce-risk approaches to the gender gap.

Other studies, however, cast doubt on the claim that the gender gap is driven by changing marital patterns. Kern's (2010) analysis of British general elections finds that marital dissolution causes a large decline in turnout but has no systematic effect on policy preferences and vote choice. With respect to the specific claim that women's support for the left is a form of divorce insurance, Iversen and Rosenbluth (2006) find that women who do not work outside of the home, whose income is most at risk in the event of divorce, are in fact less likely to vote left than are working women.

This lack of clear consensus as to the relative importance of rising divorce risk in shaping the political gender gap may be partly linked to the methodological limitations of existing studies, and particular problems stemming from omitted variables and selection bias. Using variation in divorce rates to identify causal effects of divorce risk on outcomes of interest suffers from a key problem of identification, since many unobservable correlates of divorce may affect women's political preferences. Comparisons between married and divorced women or between entrants and non-entrants into the labor market are also open to concerns about selection. As the authors themselves note, the findings in Iversen and Rosenbluth (2006) may be driven by the fact that women who feel most at risk for divorce are more likely to seek outside employment; if their resulting increase in income only partly offsets their perceived divorce risk, they would be more likely to vote left. Kern (2010) attempts to control for systematic differences between married and divorced women using a propensity score matching estimator, but such an approach is sustainable only if the selection process is observable. To this end, this attempts to circumvent problems with inference by locating a natural experiment which provides plausibly exogenous variation in the economic effect of divorce.

3 Research Design and Data

The economic explanation for the effect of divorce on the gender gap naturally lends itself to empirical testing. The core of the economic argument is that the allocation of resources upon divorce affects women's political preferences through women's expected lifetime income. This claim relies crucially on household members' ability to anticipate various future states of the world, so that

a legal change that improves women’s allocation of resources upon divorce will immediately shift women’s political preferences to the right, by increasing their expected lifetime income. A recent legal change in the United Kingdom, the decision in *White v White*, offers a quasi-experiment with which we can test the claim. Specifically, we frame the test as follows: if women who were affected by the decision shifted their political preferences to the right, this would confirm the claim that divorce shapes gendered political preferences through an economic mechanism.

In the remainder of this section, we discuss the recent changes to British divorce law and elaborate on the specific features of the court decision which we will exploit in our empirical framework. We then outline in greater detail the various empirical specifications to be implemented, as well as the data we will employ.

3.1 Background of the Legal Change

The decision in the *White v White* case, handed down by the House of Lords in 2000, marked a significant break in British divorce law by dramatically altering the distribution of marital assets upon divorce. Whereas the previous divorce regime granted women the right to have only their ‘reasonable requirements’ met, *White* shifted focus to ‘fairness’ in determining the division of marital assets. As a result, women are now entitled to an equal share of both pre-marital and marital assets.⁴

In England and Wales, divorce involves three separate legal issues: the actual dissolution of marriage; questions affecting children of the marriage (child support and the like); and ‘ancillary relief.’ This last part of the divorce process settles financial issues between the two spouses, and includes the allocation of existing assets as well as future income. The legal change we exploit in this research involves a transformation of the rule for ancillary relief. Before *White*, English courts divided marital assets in a way meant to meet the ‘reasonable needs’ of the financially weaker party (typically the wife).⁵ Although the notion of reasonable requirements was originally

⁴The court did rule that equality can be departed from, but that it must be done so only if there is sufficient justification, i.e., in cases in which the welfare of the children from a marriage requires an uneven split. See Eekelaar (2001).

⁵The divorce law regime in England and Wales is distinct from that in Scotland and Northern Ireland. These

intended to ensure that the ex-wife's and children's needs were maintained at a level beyond 'bare needs' (Kum, 2001), in practice it produced a glass ceiling on the amount that women could receive in divorce settlements. No matter how extensive, assets in excess of the wife's 'reasonable need' were typically retained by the husband on the grounds that the wife did not 'reasonably need' them (Wilson and Wilson, 2006-2007; Diduck, 2001). Thus, for example, even a woman who had made equal contributions to the family business would typically exit marriage with less than half of the marital assets (Duckworth and Hodson, 2001).

All this changed with the ruling of England's top court in *White v. White*, which reversed three decades of case law. No longer, said the House of Lords, was the wife's share of the marital assets to be determined by reference to her 'reasonable requirements.' Rather, English courts should use a 'yardstick of equality' in dividing marital assets. The ruling established a new framework for splitting the financial assets between divorcing spouses, setting a benchmark of a 50:50 split. Equality rather than reasonable needs became the new byword. As the author of the opinion observed: "where the assets exceed the financial needs of both parties, why should the surplus belong solely to the husband?" (*White v White* [2000] 2 FLR 981).

By construction, *White v. White* affected predominantly wealthier households, as the 'yardstick of equality' was explicitly applied in cases where assets outstrip needs. That is, the *White* decision left unchanged the existing case law in cases where needs outstrip assets, wherein the courts' primary goal in dividing marital property is to ensure the welfare of any children in the marriage. The case was therefore widely interpreted in the media as affecting more affluent individuals.⁶

For our purposes, then, what is important is that *White*'s shift from 'reasonable needs' toward 'fairness' implied a large transfer of resources to wealthier divorcing women. Moreover, the case was widely reported in the press, with the media reporting the case as 'shifting the balance' in

subnational variations will provide useful cases for comparison in our empirical strategy.

⁶For example, a senior British judge recently commented in a news article that, particularly among affluent couples "the *White* factor has more than doubled the levels of award and ... London has become the divorce capital of the world for aspiring wives" (Rozenberg, 2007) Similarly, divorce lawyer Mark Harper from the firm Hughes Fowler Carruthers recently told a journalist: "If you're the person with the money then most people will move heaven and earth to avoid a divorce in England because the law is much more generous to, typically, the wife, the person without the money." (Saner 2015)

divorce settlements toward wives (Potter and Williams, 2007; Eekelaar, 2006). Furthermore, although there was some initial uncertainty in the wake of *White* about how far the Court was willing to go with respect to the ‘yardstick of equality’, the legal principles at work were soon cleared up in a series of follow-up cases. *Cowan v Cowan* in 2001, for example, while arguing that fairness rather than ‘strict equality’ should be the new yardstick, nevertheless argued that the traditional role of women should not be valued less than the male breadwinner role when determining divorce settlements. Here, the Court argued that ‘reasonable requirements’ should no longer be used to establish a ceiling to the wife’s award; any discriminatory bias in favor of the wealth-creator should be discarded; and the wife’s legitimate wish to leave money in her will should be recognized by the courts.

By 2002, in *Lambert v Lambert*, a case in which a wealthy divorcing husband appealed a previous court ruling in which the family fortune had been divided 63/37 percent, the Court found not that the wife’s settlement had not been too generous (as the husband had claimed), but had in fact been based on discriminatory principles and violated the yardstick of equality. The settlement was therefore revised to reflect a 50-50 split of marital assets.⁷ Given the relative rapidity with which English High Court clarified the legal principles at work in determining a wife’s divorce settlement, we think it entirely plausible that one would see a shift in the gender gap in the post-*White* era among the relevant sub-populations affected by the case.

3.2 Empirical Strategy: *White v White* as a Quasi-Experiment

The central idea behind the empirical strategy is that the legal change in the post-divorce allocation of assets represents a change in expected lifetime income of wealthier spouses. Therefore, the *White* case allows for credible identification of the effect of the economic channel through which divorce is purported to affect political preferences. In this sense, we are employing a strategy similar to Lundberg, Pollak and Wales (1997) and Stevenson and Wolfers (2006), who exploit

⁷By *Miller v Miller* in 2006, the High Court awarded a divorcing wife who had brought no significant wealth of her own to the marriage five million of her husband’s 30 million pounds of assets, despite the fact that they had been married for less than three years and had no children.

changes in family and divorce law to examine intrahousehold consumption allocations and violence toward women. That said, one advantage of *White v. White* is that, unlike the anticipated legal changes used in these aforementioned studies, the outcome of the case was not widely anticipated before the ruling. Thus, there is less concern about the endogeneity of the legal change, as is the case in other quasi-experimental studies.

Exploiting a quasi-experimental design has another advantage: we are not looking at differences in the voting behavior of divorced versus married women, a strategy employed by Kern (2010), who uses a propensity score matching framework to attempt to control for (observable) differences among the two populations. We view our strategy as complementary to his. While Kern more directly tests the effect of marital dissolution on voting preferences, implementation of matching to identify causal effects requires that the selection process is observable by the researcher. In contrast, our test is in line with a series of studies, mostly in the economics literature, which exploit changes in expected benefits on current decision-making. Insofar as members of the couple fail to predict their expected benefits from the legal change, this would attenuate any effect that we do find. Therefore, our estimates will represent a lower bound on the effect of the court case on voting preferences.

Beyond providing a convenient natural experiment, Britain is an excellent case for testing claims about the effects of divorce on political preferences. As described above, British political trends with respect to the gender gap are similar to those in other cases from Europe and North America. Likewise, as in the other advanced industrialized countries, marital dissolution rates in Britain have rapidly risen in recent decades. In 1964, 81 percent of the voting-age respondents to a nationally representative survey were married and only 9 percent divorced, widowed or separated; by 2001, only 55 percent of respondents were married and 26 percent reported being divorced, widowed or separated (Kern, 2010). Indeed, Britain's is currently the highest divorce rate in Europe (Gonzalez and Viitanen, forthcoming). Furthermore, micro evidence on the economic consequences of divorce suggests that these are disproportionately borne by women. Data from the 1990s reveals that showed that divorced women in Britain experience a substantial decline in real

income averaging 18 percent, while their husbands saw income decline by only 2 percent (Jarvis and Jenkins, 1999).⁸ Finally, an advantage of the British case is that prenuptial agreements are not legally binding and are therefore uncommon (Lowe, 2008), limiting the possibility that such unobservable contracts confound the bargained outcomes we hope to observe.⁹

Formally, we produce a research design that draws from the central idea of comparing subgroups likely to be affected by the court case, before and after its implementation, with the rest of the population. We use a difference-in-difference estimator where we treat each observation in our panel dataset as arising from a pooled cross-section and estimate the difference in propensity to support/vote conservative for affected versus unaffected populations, before and after the court case. In our setting, we leverage several distinct features of the *White* case— including the fact that the *White* case was widely viewed as more likely to affect wealthier individuals, applied only to England and Wales, and was likely to have disproportionately affected people who were already married—and explore whether we see stronger effects in those sub-samples. The advantage of the difference-in-difference strategy is that we can directly compare the change in political support for the different subgroups in a single estimation framework, where we interact identifiers for likely affected subgroups with a dummy indicating after the policy change. There are some drawbacks of this approach, of course: mainly that we depend on assumptions about parallel trends across subgroups that are often, and in our setting, somewhat difficult to test. We also cannot directly employ individual fixed effects to control for unobserved heterogeneity across individuals since the subgroup identifiers of interest (such as sex, marital status and location) are largely or wholly time-invariant characteristics. Despite these limitations, the design allows a fairly strong test of the hypothesis.

⁸Using data from the same period, Andress et al. (2006) show that the gender asymmetry of income declines upon divorce is sharper in Britain than in most other European countries.

⁹Historically, the British courts eschewed the use of prenuptial contracts because they viewed marriage as an indissoluble contract; more recently, the logic has been that prenuptial agreements interfere with the autonomy of family courts in carrying out their primary duty: determining the appropriate division of marital assets in the case of divorce. It was not until 2010 that the High Court acknowledged that there may be some role for prenuptial contracts in determining ancillary relief, but even here it emphasized that courts should consider not only the marital property agreement, but must also continue to make an assessment of fairness. See Munby et al. (2011) for further discussion of the history and current status of pre- and post-nuptial agreements in British marital law.

3.3 Data

The research design outlined above requires longitudinal data on wealth, income, political outcome measures, and other demographic characteristics before and after the legal change. We use the British Household Panel Study (BHPS), a nationally representative samples of the adult population in the United Kingdom. This dataset has clear attractions for our purposes. First, the BHPS contains excellent income and wealth data, including open-ended questions about income from wages, profits, investment returns, and social benefits. Moreover, in addition to party support questions, the BHPS asks a range of questions on specific public policy preferences. As Iversen and Rosenbluth (2006) observe, women gain bargaining power within marriage via the socialization of public services such as childcare and eldercare; such services allow women to invest more in marketable skills, which in turn make them less dependent on their husbands for their financial livelihood. Thus, if outside options are important determinants of political preferences, a natural area of disagreement within the couple should be over the availability of publicly subsidized social services. In addition to broad questions about support for taxation and social spending, the BHPS also asks questions specifically relating to public provision of childcare and care for the elderly, both of which should be an area of gender conflict. The BHPS data also has a rich set of control variables, including household characteristics, marital status, and location information; the coding of these variables are detailed in the Appendix. Finally, the panel structure of the dataset allows us to link wives' and husbands' responses.

The central dependent variable in our study is a binary “support Conservatives” or not.¹⁰ The variable is coded as 1 if the respondent supports the Conservative party, and 0 if he or she supports a non-Conservative party. We focus on party support rather than vote choice because vote choice

¹⁰As mentioned above, the political gender gap is a catch-all term used to capture gender differences in three broad areas: public opinion, partisan identification, and vote choice. There is some controversy in the political science literature over whether one should use vote choice or partisan identification as the dependent variable of interest—see Studlar, McAllister and Hayes (1998) for a discussion of this issue in the context of European parliamentary systems, and Box-Steffensmeier, de Boef and Lin (2004) in the context of the United States. In part, this is a question about endogeneity of vote choice when partisan identification is used as the independent variable, but some additionally claim that vote choice is subject to shorter-term influences that are particularly difficult to measure, so that party identification is preferable.

occurs only every few years. Moreover, we believe that partisan support offers a harder test of the proposition that divorce-driven changes in income drive political preferences, since individuals often announce greater desire for redistribution than revealed in the actual support for a party which would likely redistribute income away from them (Norton and Ariely, 2011).

To order British parties according on a left-right scale, we use the “Economic Dimension” (dimension 1) from Benoit and Laver’s (2006) Party Policy in Modern Democracies (PPMD) project. As Huber and Stanig (2009) note, this measure is useful for positioning parties on the dimension most relevant for testing preferences for redistribution as it gets at parties’ positions on the tax-and-transfer scale. Given that we are interested in examining the sources of gendered differences in both patterns of partisan support and in public policy positions relating to the provision of public services, this tax-and-transfer scale seems more useful than other left-right dimension which focus, for example, on broader social and environmental issues. In the PPMD data, country experts place parties on a scale ranging from 1 (a given party “Promotes raising taxes to increase public services”) to 20 (a given party “Promotes cutting public services to cut taxes”). The data support our ordering of the parties into conservative versus non-Conservative: while the Conservative Party receives a score of 15.32, the average of the other parties is 6.29, with a standard deviation of only 1.25. This ordering of British parties, with the Conservatives most far to the right, is thus well in line with other studies of party positioning in Britain based on party manifestos rather than expert surveys (Budge, 1999; Bara and Budge, 2001).

As mentioned above, the *White v White* case, by construction, affected primarily wealthier individuals. A central part of our analysis, therefore, involves analyzing the political behavior of the rich. Our measures are based on per capita household income and wealth during the pre-*White* period. Ideally we would like to define our ‘rich’ sample based on overall wealth rather than simply income, as this is what the *White* case targets. The BHPS does ask periodic questions related to financial wealth, but one drawback of the survey is that it lacks detailed information about housing wealth.¹¹ Due to the limitations of the wealth variable, we report results using both income and

¹¹More specifically, it is difficult to determine outstanding mortgage liabilities— and hence, housing wealth—from the survey due to the use of endowment mortgages in the UK. Endowment mortgages are a form of interest-only

asset-based measures of wealth.¹²

4 Main Results

In order to evaluate the posited mechanism linking the expected economic returns to divorce to gendered patterns of political behavior, we start with a simple difference-in-difference, in which we compare the differences in Conservative support among wealthy married women, before and after White and among treated/non-treated regions, across the income distribution. Each additional specification will then add a different comparison group of individuals unaffected, or less affected, by the *White* decision.

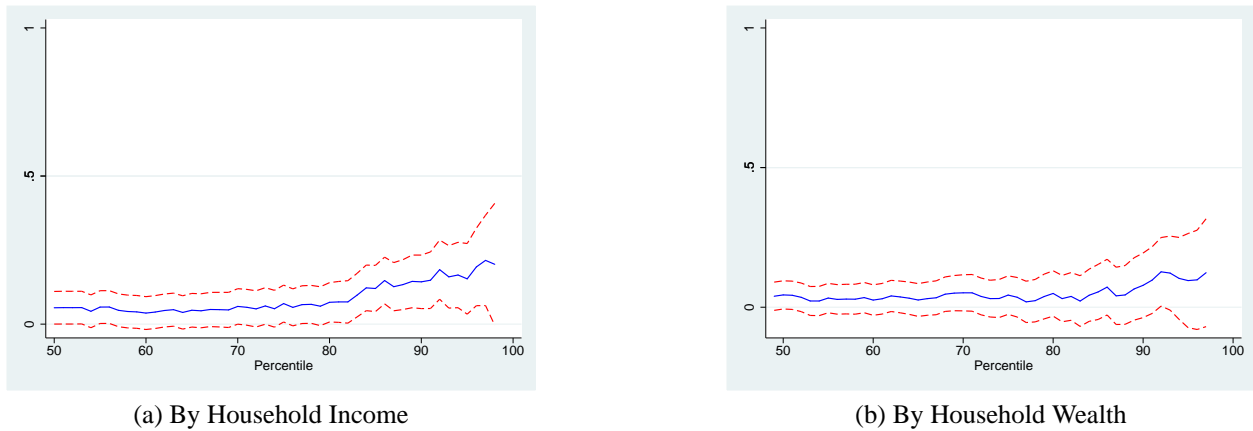


Figure 3: Married Women: Post x Treated x Rich

Note: Dependent variable is support for the Conservative Party. Figure plots point estimates with 95 percent confidence intervals from separate regressions, where each point corresponds to the coefficient on the interaction of 'Post x Treated x Rich' among married women, where treatment is a dummy indicating whether the respondent lives in England or Wales; post is a dummy variable indicating if the year is after the White decision; and rich is an indicator for being above a given income or wealth percentile. All models include age, ethnicity, years of schooling, religion and region as controls, and year dummies. Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors, clustered by household.

Our difference-in-difference analysis begins by first looking to see if we obtain expected effects among the population most likely to be affected by the *White v Whitecase*: wealthier married

mortgages, where a mortgage loan is linked to an investment vehicle which is to be used to repay the loan principle upon maturity. See Banks, Smith and Wakefield (2002); Crossley and O'Dea (2010) and Cocco (2010) for a discussion of the limitations of the BHPS with respect to measuring housing wealth.

¹²As detailed in the appendix, we use a measure of per capita household wealth, which includes reports of savings, investments and home values; for income, we use a measure of per capita household income.

women in England and Wales. Here, we employ two sets of restrictions—based on geography and income—anchored in the anticipated effects of the court case. The logic behind the geographic restriction is that, unlike England and Wales, Scotland saw no change in divorce law after 2000; its regime governing the division of marital property has been in effect since the Scottish Matrimonial Act of 1985 (Bissett-Johnson and Barton, 1999, 2000).¹³ The existence of separate divorce law regimes within the United Kingdom means that we can compare the pre- and post-*White* preferences in England and Wales with the pre- and post-*White* preferences in Scotland, while controlling for time trends using year dummies. If the divorced-based explanation for political preferences is correct, we should expect to see a post-*White* shift in the preferences of wealthier married women, but no significant change among similarly wealthy women in Scotland, where the divorce settlement regime remained constant. Another advantage of leveraging geographic variation in the effects of *White* is that it enables us to deal with other trends (such as the invasion of Iraq) which might be expected to drive Conservative support.

Similarly, with respect to wealth, although it was widely acknowledged that the *White* decision would affect only more affluent individuals, the case did not specify a clear wealth cutoff for affected households. One empirical strategy would be to select a cutoff that is sufficiently high. In the figures, we adopt a different strategy: we plot the specification using each percentile to define rich. More specifically, Figures 3 through 5 plot point estimates from separate regressions where each point corresponds to the coefficient on the interaction of ‘treatment x post x rich’, where rich is an indicator for being above a given percentile. This latter strategy enables us to explore whether, and how, behavior changes across the income distribution.

Turning first to the triple-difference results presented in Figure 3, we see that when we define as wealthy those with household incomes above the 50th through 85th percentiles, there is a small positive effect of living in regions affected by the *White* case, but that statistically the effect is indistinguishable from zero. However, when we define rich as having an income above approximately the 85th percentile, there is a large increase in probability of Conservative support. For

¹³Northern Ireland was also not affected by *White v White*. However, because the Northern Ireland sub-sample was added to the BHPS only after the advent of *White*, we exclude residents of Northern Ireland from our analysis.

example, the women in the 90th percentile and above are 14 to 20 percent more likely to support the Conservatives than their less affluent counterparts.

We now investigate whether we find a similar effect among all women, or whether as given by the logic of the case, the effect is stronger for married women. Here, rather than conditioning on being a married woman, we add single women to our sample and then examine whether married women become more conservative after the *White* case relative to single women. The logic of comparing married versus single women is that the latter should be less affected or even wholly unaffected by this change in divorce law. Broadly speaking, single women bear greater uncertainty over the probability of ever being affected by *White v White* for several reasons. First, those who plan never to marry should be completely unaffected by the case. Moreover, those who do plan to marry at some point are likely to face significant uncertainty as to their future spouse (and hence marital income). Finally, there also exists the problem of limited contractability within marriage. Whereas in the wake of *White* single women should be able to adjust their matching strategy on a different margin, married women are essentially stuck in the present contract and can only exit through divorce. Thus, compared to single women, their political preferences are more likely to shift in response to the change in expected income. In this sense, unlike divorcees, single women provide a valid comparison group even under unobservable selection into marriage. Furthermore, as with the Scotland comparison, the use of single women allows us to check for time-varying changes in political preferences that may be independent of *White v White* but happen to coincide with the year of the decision.

When we additionally interact a dummy variable indicating married to the previous model, we see a similar trend, shown in Figure 4. As the dummy variable defining rich is set at a higher wealth percentile, we see that, compared to their single counterparts, wealthy married women are more likely to support the Conservative party. This is clearest in the estimates defining wealth based on per capita household income but the trends are similar, if less precisely estimated, when we define ‘rich’ based on household income.

Finally, we turn to the question of whether the effect we have identified in the previous the exis-

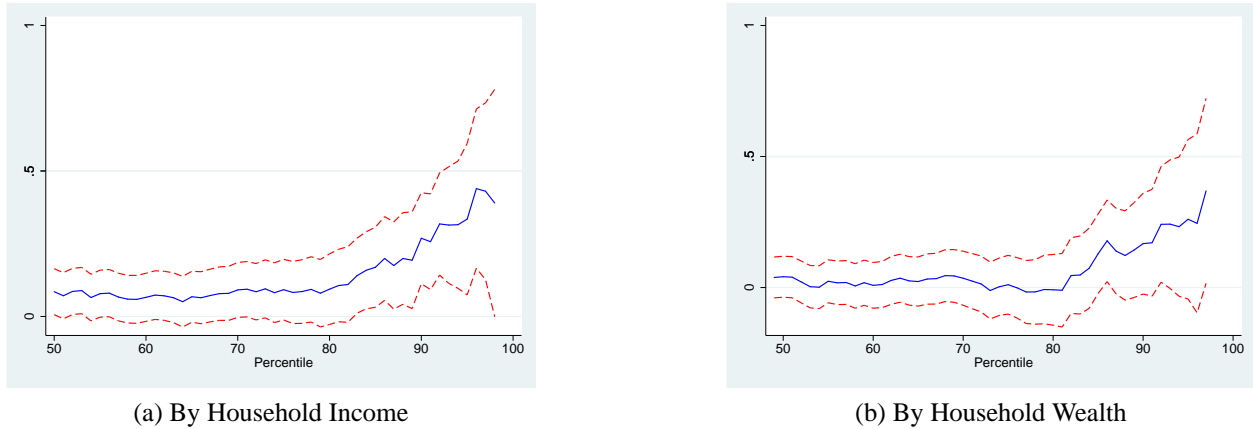


Figure 4: Women: Post x Treated x Rich x Married

Note: Dependent variable is support for the Conservative Party. Figure plots point estimates with 95 percent confidence intervals from separate regressions, where each point corresponds to the coefficient on the interaction of ‘Post x Treated x Rich x Married’ among women where treatment is a dummy indicating whether the respondent lives in England or Wales; post is a dummy variable indicating if the year is after the White decision; and rich is an indicator for being above a given income or wealth percentile. All models include age, ethnicity, years of schooling, religion and region as controls, and year dummies. Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors, clustered by household.

tence of an explicitly divorce-based political gender gap. The point estimates shown in Figure 5 are taken from a quintupled differences estimator of the effect of the White case on political outcomes by additionally interacting a dummy indicator for female to the previous quadruple interaction (giving us Female x Married x Post x Rich x England/Wales). Here, we find a dramatic increase in propensity to support the Conservatives. Relative to wealthy, married men in the treated region, the *White v White* effect for women is a three-fold increase in propensity to support the Conservative Party. The result is similar when we consider both the income-based and wealth-based measures of wealth and are statistically significant.

Are the political preferences identified above reflected in actual voting outcomes? Given that values and actual voting behavior can differ dramatically (Kriesi et al., 2008; Gingrich, 2014), we also consider whether the various sub-samples identified above show similar patterns of Conservative *voting*. We are able to measure voting behavior for those who turned out in the 1992, 1997, 2001 and 2005 General Elections. Results for Conservative voting, conditional on turnout, are reported in Figure 6. As with Conservative support, we see a similar trend of rising propensity to

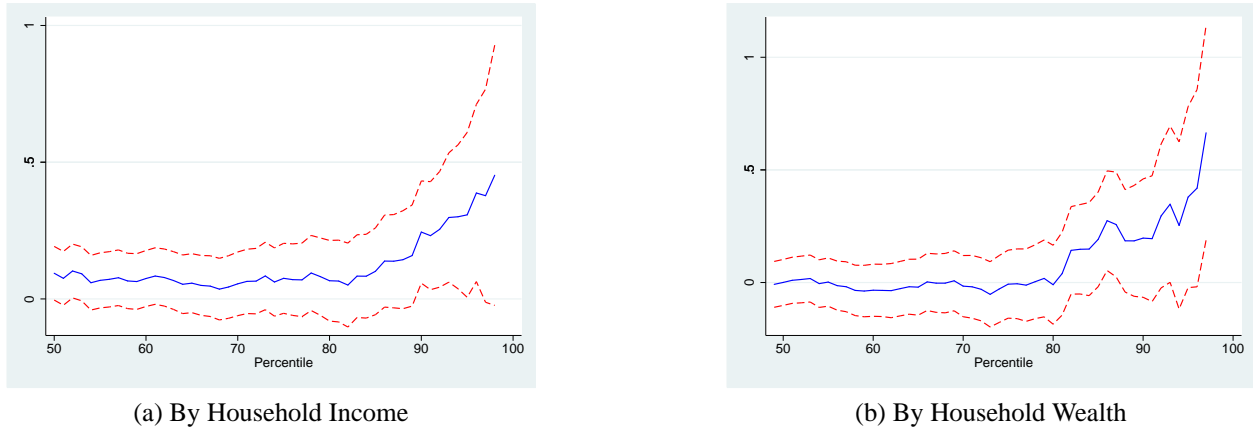


Figure 5: Post x Treated x Rich x Married x Female

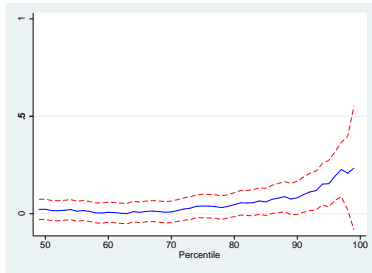
Note: Dependent variable is support for the Conservative Party. Figure plots point estimates with 95 percent confidence intervals from separate regressions, where each point corresponds to the coefficient on the interaction of ‘Post x Treated x Rich x Married x Female’ where treatment is a dummy indicating whether the respondent lives in England or Wales; post is a dummy variable indicating if the year is before or after the White decision; rich is an indicator for being above a given income or wealth percentile. All models include age, ethnicity, years of schooling, religion and region as controls, and year dummies. Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors, clustered by household.

vote Conservative among treated sub-samples. In panel (c), for example, we see substantial evidence of a political gender gap in the predicted direction: compared to wealthy married men living in regions affected by the *White* case, married women in the post-*White* period are substantially more likely to vote Conservative. /comment

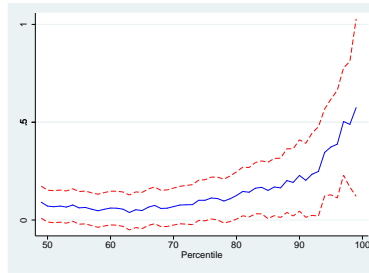
5 Conclusions

The gender gap remains a central division in contemporary politics. Barack Obama’s 2012 victory was due in large part to his ability to attract female voters; current analyses of the upcoming 2015 British General Election similarly point to David Cameron’s ‘women problem’. What are the sources of this gendered political divide?

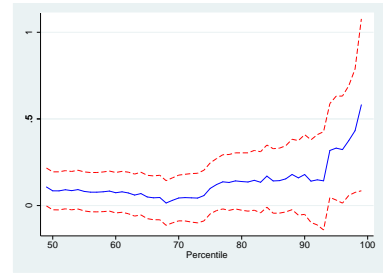
This paper has offered a quasi-experimental test of the claim that rising divorce rates, through their effect on women’s expected lifetime income, are a central driver the political gender gap. Our findings suggest substantial evidence of a divorce-based explanation. In a series of difference-in-difference analyses, we found that Conservative support and voting were higher in the post-White



(a) Married Women: Post x Treatment x Rich



(b) Women: Post x Treatment x Rich x Married



(c) Post x Treatment x Rich x Married x Female

Figure 6: Conservative Voting

Note: Dependent variable is reported vote for the Conservative Party in general elections held in 1992, 1997, 2001, and 2005. Figure plots point estimates with 95 percent CI's from separate regressions, where each point corresponds to the coefficient on the relevant interaction term. Treatment is a dummy indicating whether the respondent lives in England or Wales; post is a dummy variable indicating if the year is before or after the White decision; and rich is an indicator for being above a given income or wealth percentile. All models include age, ethnicity, years of schooling, religion and region as controls, and year dummies. Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors, clustered by household.

period among wealthier women affected by the case; that the effect was stronger among married than single women; and that wealthy married women living in affected regions were more likely than their wealthy male counterparts to support and vote Conservative.

Putting our results in perspective, although the use of the *White* case as a quasi-experiment allows us to ask important questions about the relationship between rising divorce rates and the political gender gap, it also has some limitations. Our research design hinges on the fact that, since it pertained to maintenance beyond needs, *White*'s effect was limited to wealthy couples. Yet this feature of the case may also limit the generalizability of our findings. We find that the political preferences of the affluent respond dramatically to the shock to expected income, yet if the wealthy are more sensitive to economic incentives than others, it remains an open question whether divorce risk is a substantial driver of the gender gap more broadly.

References

- Andress, Hans-Jurgen, Barbara Borgloh, Miriam Brockel, Marco Giesselmann and Dina Hummelsheim. 2006. "The Economic Consequences of Partnership Dissolution: A comparative analysis of panel studies from Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, Italy and Sweden." *European Sociological Review* 22(5): 533–560.
- Andress, Hans-Jurgen and Miriam Brockel. 2007. "Income and Life Satisfaction after Marital Disruption in Germany." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 69(5): 500–512.
- Banks, James, Zo e Smith and Matt Wakefield. 2002. "The distribution of financial wealth in the UK: Evidence from 2000 BHPS data." Working Paper no. 02/21, London: Institute for Fiscal Studies.
- Bara, Judith and Ian Budge. 2001. "Party policy and ideology: Still New Labour?" *Parliamentary Affairs* 54(4): 590–606.
- Baxter, Sandra and Marjorie Lansing. 1983. *Women and Politics*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Becker, Gary S. 1991. *A Treatise on the Family: Enlarged Edition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Benoit, Kenneth and Michael Laver. 2006. *Party Policy in Modern Democracies*. New York: Routledge.
- Bianchi, Suzanne M., Lekha Subaiya and Joan R. Kahn. 1999. "The Gender Gap in the Economic Well-Being of Nonresident Father and Custodial Mothers." *Demography* 36(2): 195–203.
- Bissett-Johnson, Alastair and Chris Barton. 1999. "The similarities and differences in Scottish and English family law in dealing with changing family patterns." *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law* 21(1): 1–21.
- Bissett-Johnson, Alastair and Chris Barton. 2000. "Financial Provision on Divorce in Scots Law: Does It Need Reform?" *Juridical Review* pp. 265–284.
- Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Suzanna de Boef and Tse-Min Lin. 2004. "The Dynamics of the Partisan Gender Gap." *American Political Science Review* 98(3): 515–528.
- Browning, Martin, Francois Bourguignon, Pierre-Andre Chiappori and Valerie Lechene. 1994. "Income and Outcomes: A Structural Model of Intrahousehold Allocation." *Journal of Political Economy* 102(6): 1067–1096.
- Budge, Ian. 1999. "Party policy and ideology: Reversing the 1950s?" In *Critical elections: British parties and voters in long-term perspective*, ed. Pippa Norris. London: Sage.
- Campbell, Rosie. 2004. "Gender, Ideology, and Issue Preference: Is There Such a Thing as a Political Women's Interest in Britain?" *British Journal of Political and International Research* 6: 20–44.
- Campbell, Rosie. 2006. *Gender and the Vote in Britain*. Wivenhoe Park: ECPR Press.
- Carroll, Susan J. 1988. "Women's Autonomy and the Gender Gap: 1980 and 1982." In *The Politics of the Gender Gap: The Social Construction of Political Influence*, ed. Carol M. Mueller. Newbury Park: Sage pp. 265–290.
- Chaney, Carole R., R. M. Alvarez and Jonathan Nagler. 1998. "Explaining the Gender Gap in the 1992 US Presidential Election." *Political Research Quarterly* 51(2): 311–339.

- Chapman, Jenny. 1985. "Marital Status, Sex and the Formation of Political Attitudes in Adult Life." *Political Studies* 33: 592–609.
- Chiappori, Pierre-André. 1992. "Collective Labor Supply and Welfare." *Journal of Political Economy* 100: 437–467.
- Chiappori, Pierre-André, Bernard Fortin and Guy Lacroix. 2002. "Marriage Market, Divorce Legislation, and Household Labor Supply." *Journal of Political Economy* 110(1).
- Cocco, Joao F. 2010. Understanding the Tradeoffs of Alternative Mortgage Products. Technical report London Business School.
- Conover, Pamela J. 1988. "Feminists and the Gender Gap." *Journal of Politics* 50(4): 985–1010.
- Cook, Elizabeth A. 1993. "Feminist consciousness and candidate preference among American women, 1972-1988." *Political Behavior* 15(3): 227–246.
- Crossley, Thomas F. and Cormac O’Dea. 2010. "The wealth and saving of UK families on the eve of the crisis." London: Institute for Fiscal Studies.
- Deitch, Cynthia. 1988. "Sex Differences in Support for Government Spending." In *The Politics of the Gender Gap: The Social Construction of Political Influence*, ed. Carol M. Mueller. Newbury Park: Sage pp. 192–216.
- Dickson, Matt. 2013. "The Causal Effect of Education on Wages Revisited." *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics* 75(4): 477–498.
- Diduck, Alison. 2001. "Fairness and Justice for All? The House of Lords in *White v. White* [2000] 2 FLR 981." *Feminist Legal Studies* 9(2): 173–183.
- Duckworth, Peter and David Hodson. 2001. "White v White: Bringing Section 25 Back to the People." *Family Law* 31.
- Duverger, Maurice. 1955. *The Political Role of Women*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Edlund, Lena, Laila Haider and Rohini Pande. 2005. "Unmarried Parenthood and Redistributive Politics." *Journal of the European Economic Association* 3(1): 95–119.
- Edlund, Lena and Rohini Pande. 2002. "Why Have Women Become Left-Wing? The Political Gender Gap and the Decline in Marriage." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 117(3): 917–961.
- Eekelaar, John. 2001. "Back to Basics and Forward Into the Unknown." *Family Law* 31.
- Eekelaar, John. 2006. "Property and Financial Settlement Upon Divorce: Sharing and Compensating." *Family Law* 36.
- Erie, Stephen P. and Martin Rein. 1988. "Women and the Welfare State." In *The Politics of the Gender Gap: The Social Construction of Political Influence*, ed. Carol M. Mueller. Newbury Park: Sage pp. 173–191.
- Gidengil, Elisabeth. 1995. "Economic Man, Social Woman: The Case of the Gender Gap in Support of the Canada–United States Free Trade Agreement." *Comparative Political Studies* 23(3): 384–408.
- Gidengil, Elisabeth, Matthew Hennigar, Andre Blais and Neil Nevitte. 2005. "Explaining The Gender Gap in Support for the New Right: The Case of Canada." *Comparative Political Studies* 38(10): 1171.
- Gilligan, Carol. 1982. *In a Different Voice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gingrich, Jane. 2014. "Visibility, Values and Voters." *Journal of Politics* .
- Gonzalez, Libertad and Tarja K. Viitanen. forthcoming. "The Effect of Divorce Laws on Divorce

- Rates in Europe.” *European Economic Review* .
- Gray, Jeffrey S. 1998. “Divorce-Law Changes, Household Bargaining, and Married Women’s Labor Supply.” *American Economic Review* 88(3): 628–642.
- Gurin, Patricia. 1985. “Women’s Gender Consciousness.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 49(2): 143–163.
- Hayes, Bernadette. 1997. “Gender, Feminism and Electoral Behaviour in Britain.” *Electoral Studies* 16(2): 203–216.
- Holden, Karen C. and Pamela J. Smock. 1991. “The Economic Costs of Marital Dissolution: Why Do Women Bear a Disproportionate Cost?” *Annual Reviews in Sociology* 17(1): 51–78.
- Huber, John D. and Piero Stanig. 2009. “Individual income and voting for redistribution across democracies.” Working Paper, Columbia University.
- Inglehart, Ronald and Pippa Norris. 2000. “The Developmental Theory of the Gender Gap: Women and Men’s Voting Behavior in Global Perspective.” *International Political Science Review* 21(4): 441–462.
- Inglehart, Ronald and Pippa Norris. 2003. *Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change Around the World*. Cambridge University Press.
- Iversen, Torben and Frances Rosenbluth. 2006. “The Political Economy of Gender: Explaining Cross-National Variation in the Gender Division of Labor and the Gender Voting Gap.” *American Journal of Political Science* 50(1): 1–19.
- Iversen, Torben, Frances Rosenbluth and David Soskice. 2005. “Divorce and the Gender Division of Labor in Comparative Perspective.” *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 12(2): 216–242.
- Jarvis, Sarah and Stephen P. Jenkins. 1999. “Marital Splits and Income Changes: Evidence from the British Household Panel Survey.” *Population Studies* 53(2): 237–254.
- Kern, Holger Lutz. 2010. “The Political Consequences of Transitions Out of Marriage in Great Britain.” *Electoral Studies* 29(2): 249–258.
- Knutsen, Oddbjørn. 2001. “Social Class, Sector Employment, and Gender as Party Cleavages in the Scandinavian Countries: A Comparative Longitudinal Study, 1970-95.” *Scandinavian Political Studies* 24(4): 311–350.
- Kriesi, Hanspeter, Edgar Grande, Romain Lachat, Martin Dolezal, Simon Bornscheier and Timotheos Frey. 2008. *West European Politics in the Age of Globalization*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kum, Leong W. 2001. “The Laws in Singapore and England Affecting Spouses’ Property on Divorce.” *Singapore Journal of Legal Studies* pp. 19–52.
- Lowe, Nigel V. 2008. “Prenuptial Agreements: The English Position.” *InDret* 1.
- Lundberg, Shelley J., Robert A. Pollak and Terence J. Wales. 1997. “Do Husbands and Wives Pool Their Resources? Evidence from the United Kingdom Child Benefit.” *Journal of Human Resources* 32(3): 463–480.
- Manza, Jeff and Clem Brooks. 1998. “The Gender Gap in US Presidential Elections: When? Why? Implications?” *American Journal of Sociology* 103(5): 1235–1266.
- McElroy, Marjorie B. and Mary Jean Horney. 1981. “Nash-Bargained Household Decisions: Toward a Generalization of the Theory of Demand.” *International Economic Review* 22(2): 333–

- Munby, The Rt Hon Lord Justice, Elizabeth Cooke, David Hertzell, David Ormerod and Frances Patterson. 2011. *Marital Property Agreements*. Technical report London: The Law Commission Consultation Paper 198.
- Norris, Pippa. 1985. "The Gender Gap in Britain and America." *Parliamentary Affairs* 38(2): 192–201.
- Norris, Pippa. 1986. "Conservative Attitudes in Recent British Elections: An Emerging Gender Gap?" *Political Studies* 34(1): 120–128.
- Norris, Pippa. 1988. "The Gender Gap: A Cross-National Trend?" In *The Politics of the Gender Gap: The Social Construction of Political Influence*, ed. Carol M. Mueller. Newbury Park: Sage pp. 217–234.
- Norris, Pippa. 1993. "The Gender-Generation Gap in British Elections." In *British Elections and Parties Yearbook 1993*, ed. David Denver, Pippa Norris, David Broughton and Colin Rallings. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf pp. 129–157.
- Norris, Pippa. 1999. "Gender: A Gender-Generation Gap?" In *Critical Elections: British Parties and Voters in Long-Term Perspective*, ed. Geoffrey Evans and Pippa Norris. London: Sage pp. 148–163.
- Norton, Michael I. and Dan Ariely. 2011. "Building a Better America — One Wealth Quintile at a Time." *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 6: 9–12.
- Phipps, Shelley A. and Peter S. Burton. 1998. "What's Mine is Yours? The Influence of Male and Female Incomes on Patterns of Household Expenditure." *Economica* 65(260): 599–613.
- Piven, Frances F. 1985. "Women and the State: Ideology, Power, and the Welfare State." In *Gender and the Life Course*, ed. Alice S. Rossi. New York: Aldine Transaction pp. 265–290.
- Poortman, Anne-Rigt. 2000. "Sex Differences in the Economic Consequences of Separation A Panel Study of the Netherlands." *European Sociological Review* 16(4): 367–383.
- Potter, Gary and Catherine Williams. 2007. "Fairness in Ancillary Relief." *The Web Journal of Current Legal Issues* 1.
- Rinehart, Sue T. 1992. *Gender Consciousness and Politics*. New York: Routledge.
- Rozenberg, Joshua. 2007. "Call for divorce reform after record payout." *Daily Telegraph* May 25.
- Ruddick, Sara. 1989. *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Sapiro, Virginia. 1983. *The Political Integration of Women: Roles, Socialization, and Politics*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Shapiro, Robert and Harpreet Mahajan. 1986. "Explaining the Gender Gap in Voting: A Cross-National Analysis." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 50: 42–61.
- Stevenson, Betsey and Justin Wolfers. 2006. "Bargaining in the Shadow of the Law: Divorce Laws and Family Distress." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 121(1): 267–288.
- Studlar, Donley, Ian McAllister and Bernadette Hayes. 1998. "Explaining the Gender Gap: A Cross-National Analysis." *Social Science Quarterly* 79(4): 779–798.
- Tingsten, Herbert. 1937. *Political Behaviour: Studies in Electoral Statistics*. London and Stockholm: P.S. King.
- Togebly, Lise. 1994. "Political Implications of Increasing Numbers of Women in the Labor Force." *Comparative Political Studies* 27(2): 211.

- Welch, Susan and John Hibbing. 1992. "Financial Conditions, Gender, and Voting in American National Elections." *Journal of Politics* 54: 197–213.
- Wilcox, Clyde. 1991. "The Causes and Consequences of Feminist Consciousness among Western European Women." *Comparative Political Studies* 23(4): 519–545.
- Wilson, Barbara and Alastair Wilson. 2006-2007. "Why is Fairness 'Grubby'?" *Texas Wesleyan Law Review* 13: 795–817.

Appendices

Variable	BHPS variable	Description
Supports Conservative Party	vote3, vote4	Binary measure of “supports Conservative Party”: supports Conservative party=1; supports non-Conservative Party=0. Constructed from BHPS variable “Political Party Supported.” For Northern Ireland sub-sample, we code supporters of Ulster Unionists, which is the most conservative party in Northern Ireland on the Benoit and Laver scale, as “support Conservative.” Missings, “refused”, “don’t know”, and proxy answers coded as missing.
Conservative Vote	vote7	Among those who voted in the 2005 General Election, dummy variable indicating whether individual voted for the Conservative Party.
Household Income	fihhyr, windf*	Includes annual labor and non-labor income received between Sept of previous and current year. We add the value of financial windfalls (e.g., bequests). To deflate, we use retail price index obtained from http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/tsdataset.asp?vlnk=7172 .
Household Wealth	hsowr1, hsowr2, h sval, hs2val, mgtot, windf*, nvest*, svac*, and debt*	Includes savings, investment, and housing wealth. Some individuals report wealth in brackets; following Banks et al. (2002) we use conditional hot deck imputation to assign values.
Age	age	Age (years) as of date of interview.
Ethnic Background	xw_race, xw_race1	Dummy variable constructed from “ethnic background” variables (<i>race</i> and <i>race1</i>). Coded as white==1; non-white=0.
Marital status	mlstat	Respondents are coded as married=1 if they self-identify as “legally married;” else 0.
Satisfaction with spouse	lfsat4	7-point ordinal scale indicating increasing satisfaction with spouse/partner, where 1=not satisfied at all; 7=completely satisfied. Missings, “refused”, and “can’t choose” are coded as missing.
Years of Schooling	scend, feend, qfedhi	We construct years of schooling as “school leaving age”-5. Because the BHPS does not allow us to generate years of schooling for older people returning to school, we cap years of schooling at 22 (see (Dickson, 2013)). For (rare) respondents who report 0 or missing years of schooling but who report a qualification (e.g., A levels), we impute using the average years of schooling for that qualification.

Variable	BHPS variable	Description
Religion	oprg11, oprg15	Three dummy variables: Catholic; non-Catholic Christian (Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, and other non-Catholic Christian); non-Christian religion (Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish, other non-Christian religion). The omitted category in regressions are respondents who report “no religion.”
Region	region and region2	Region dummies: London; North East; North West; Yorkshire and the Humbers; East Midlands; West Midlands; East of England; South East; South West; Wales; Scotland.

Table 1: Variable Descriptions