

Comment on Edlund and Pande

“Why Have Women Become Left-Wing? The Political Gender Gap and the Decline in Marriage”

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Outline of Discussion

- Political Economy and the Family
- Theory
 - What is the model?
 - Sensitivity
- Empirics
 - What do we learn?
 - Statistical power
 - Sensitivity

A New Marriage: Political & Family Economics

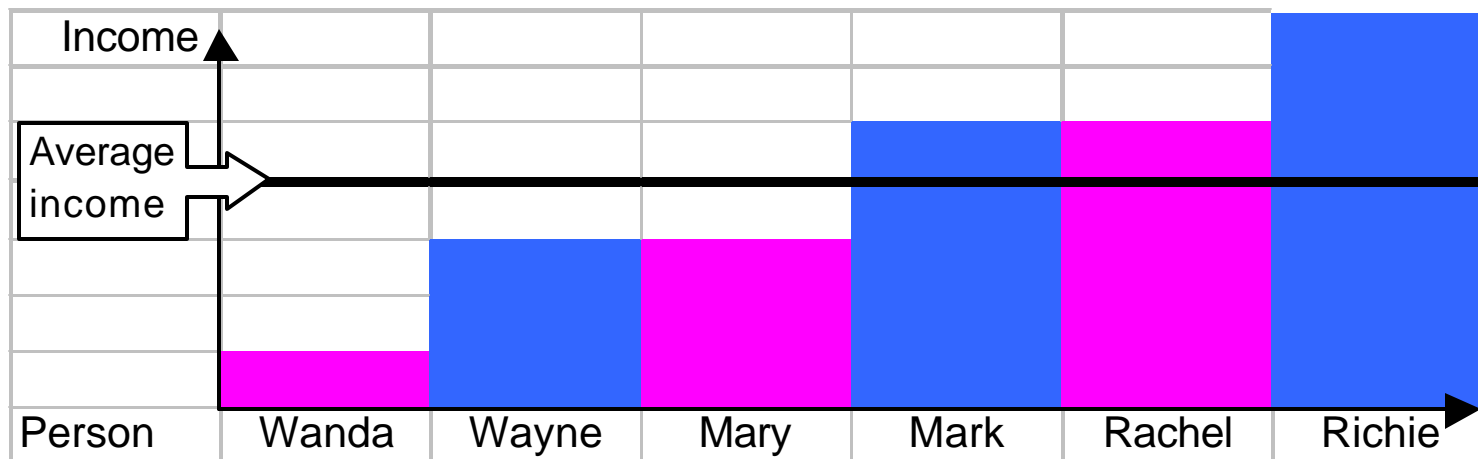
- An important institution
- Economic theory suggests families matter
- Dramatic changes in the family
 - Rise in divorce
 - Abortion and the pill
 - Single parenthood
 - Joint custody

The Question

- Why have women have moved left while men moved right?
- Robust fact
 - True in the US (NES data)
 - Checks out in GSS data
 - True in Europe (Eurobarometer Survey)

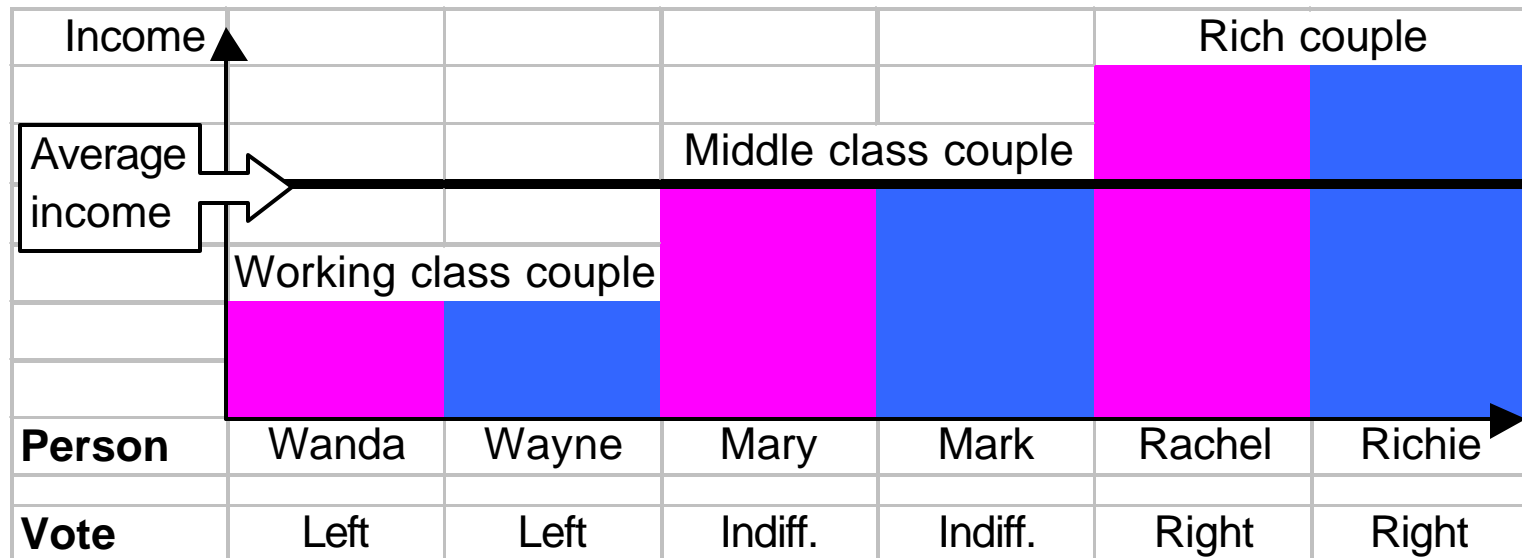
The Model: Assumptions

- Male wage distribution first-order dominates Female wages.



The Model: Assumptions

- Positive Assortive Mating
- Income sharing within Marriage
- Vote left if $\text{income} < \text{average}$; right if $\text{income} > \text{average}$



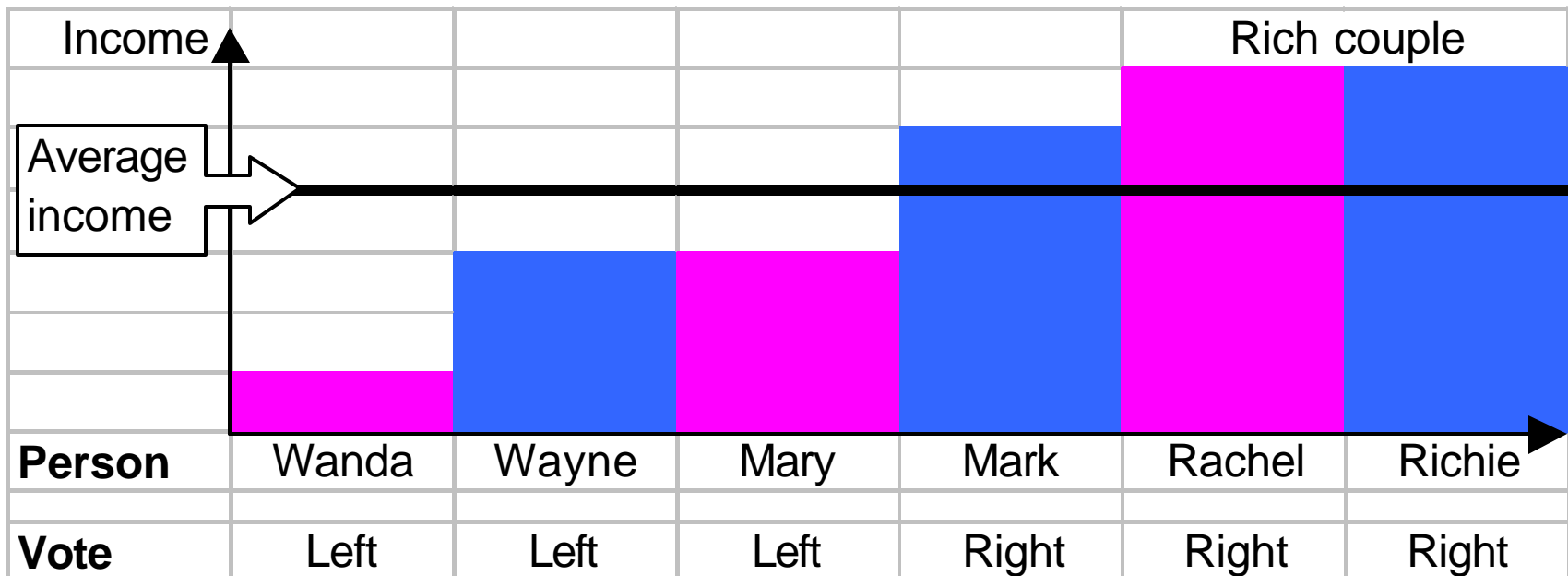
1960s: Working class divorce

- Working class men and women still vote left
- Political gender gap unchanged



1980s: Middle class divorce

- Middle class men move right (“*Reagan Democrats*”)
- Middle class women move left (“*Soccer Moms*”)
- ⇨ Political gender gap emerges



Where is the Family Economics?

- Why get married?
- *Ricardian* theory of marriage:
 - He has market income
 - She can offer sex
- Marriage is the contract securing these gains from trade.

Taxable Income (if single)		

Marriage Market Assets		
virtue		

Marriage realizes gains from trade		
		sex
Marriage = trade sex for income		
Marriage equalizes market incomes		

An Alternative Family Model

1. Marriage is productive
 - Complementarities and joint production
 - Public goods (kids)
 - Specialization and economies of scale
2. Intra-household distribution matters – Nash bargaining
 - Relevant threat point incorporates divorce threat
 - Share marital surplus

If single...		Married outcomes	
			Marital rents
		Marital rents	
Earn market income		Nash bargained outcome: Each obtains outside option + a share of marital rents	

Implications for Voting Behavior

- 1950s – Stable marriage

Nash bargained distribution:

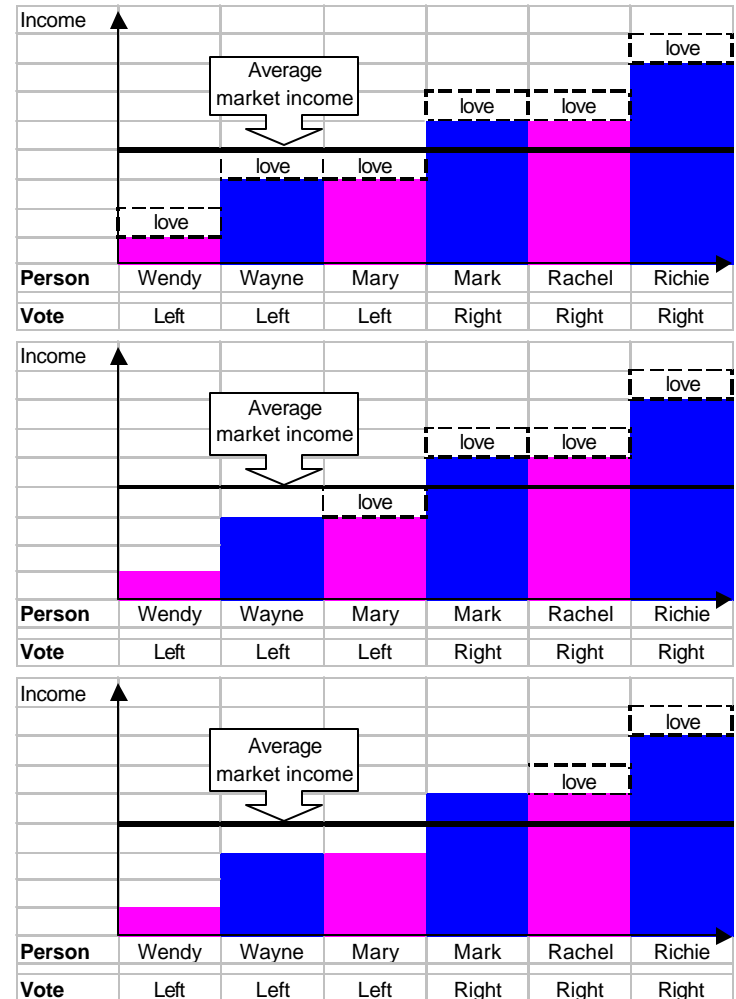
- Earn outside option
- + share of marital rents (“love”)

- 1960s – Working class divorce

- Political gender gap unchanged

- 1980s – Middle class divorce

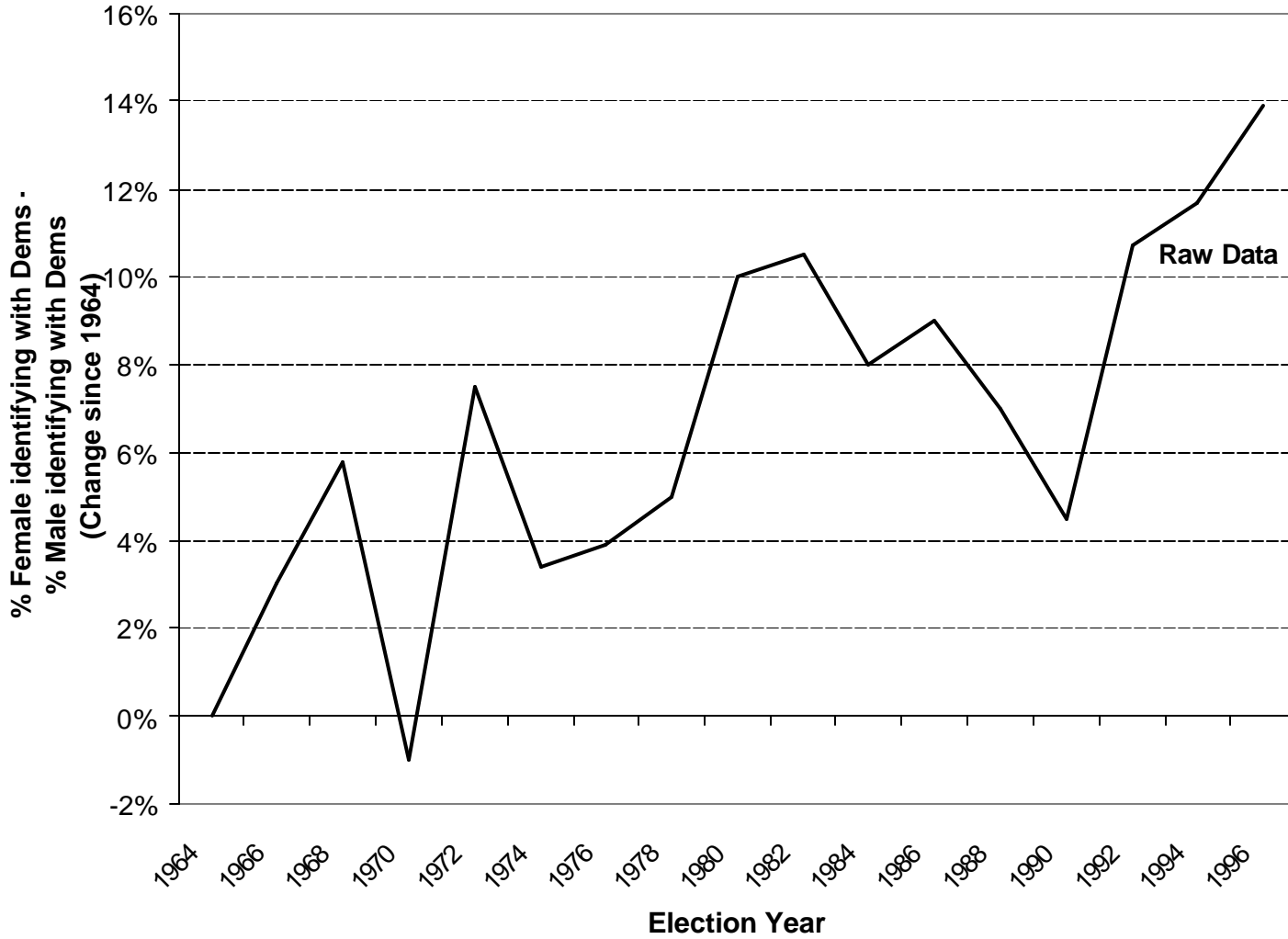
- Political gender gap unchanged



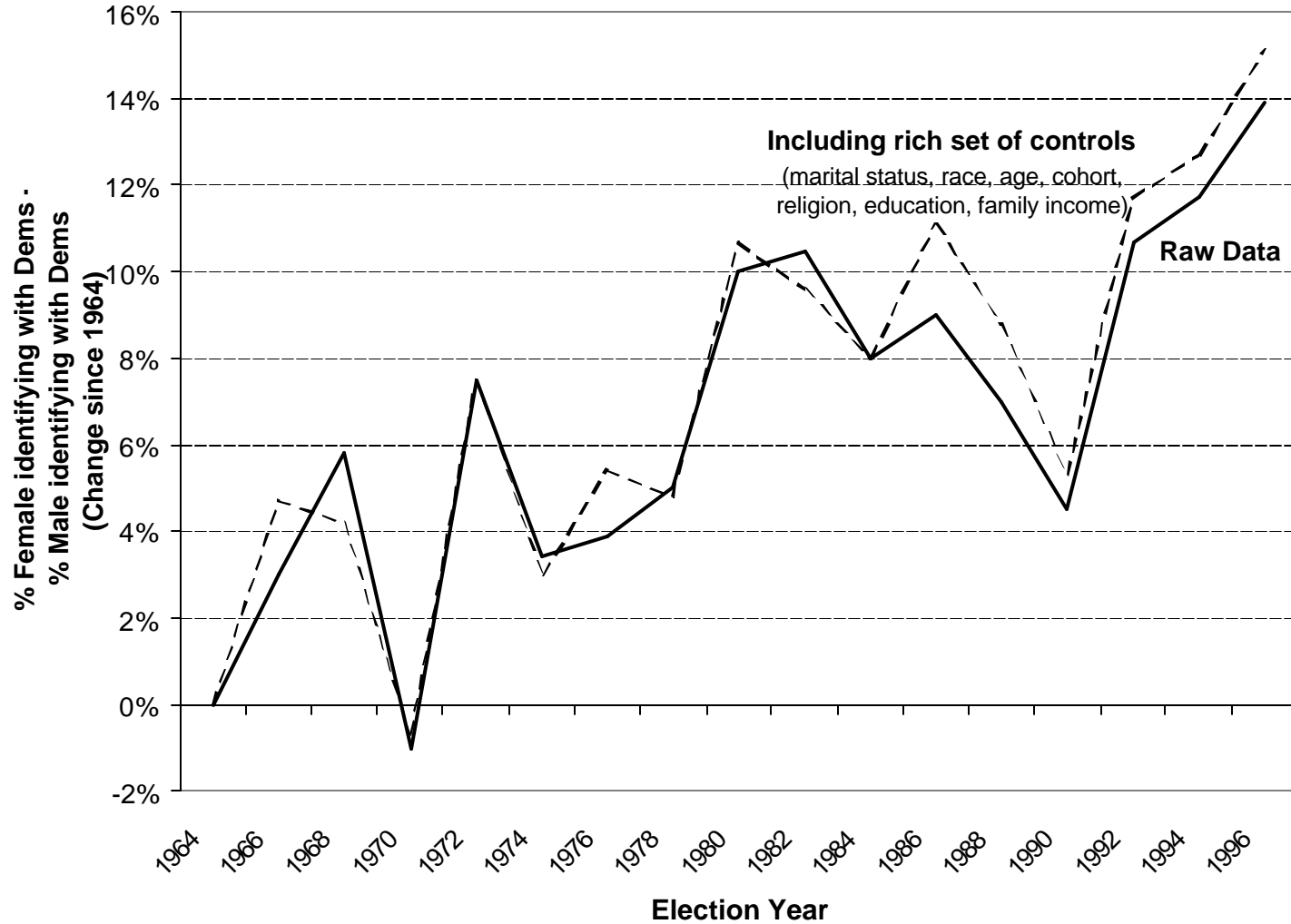
Sensitivity of Theoretical Model

- Despite a seemingly simple and appealing model, implications for voting behavior are extremely sensitive to small changes
 - Is marriage productive?
 - Efficacy of property division laws
 - Tax system
 - Policy space (redistribute all; don't redistribute)

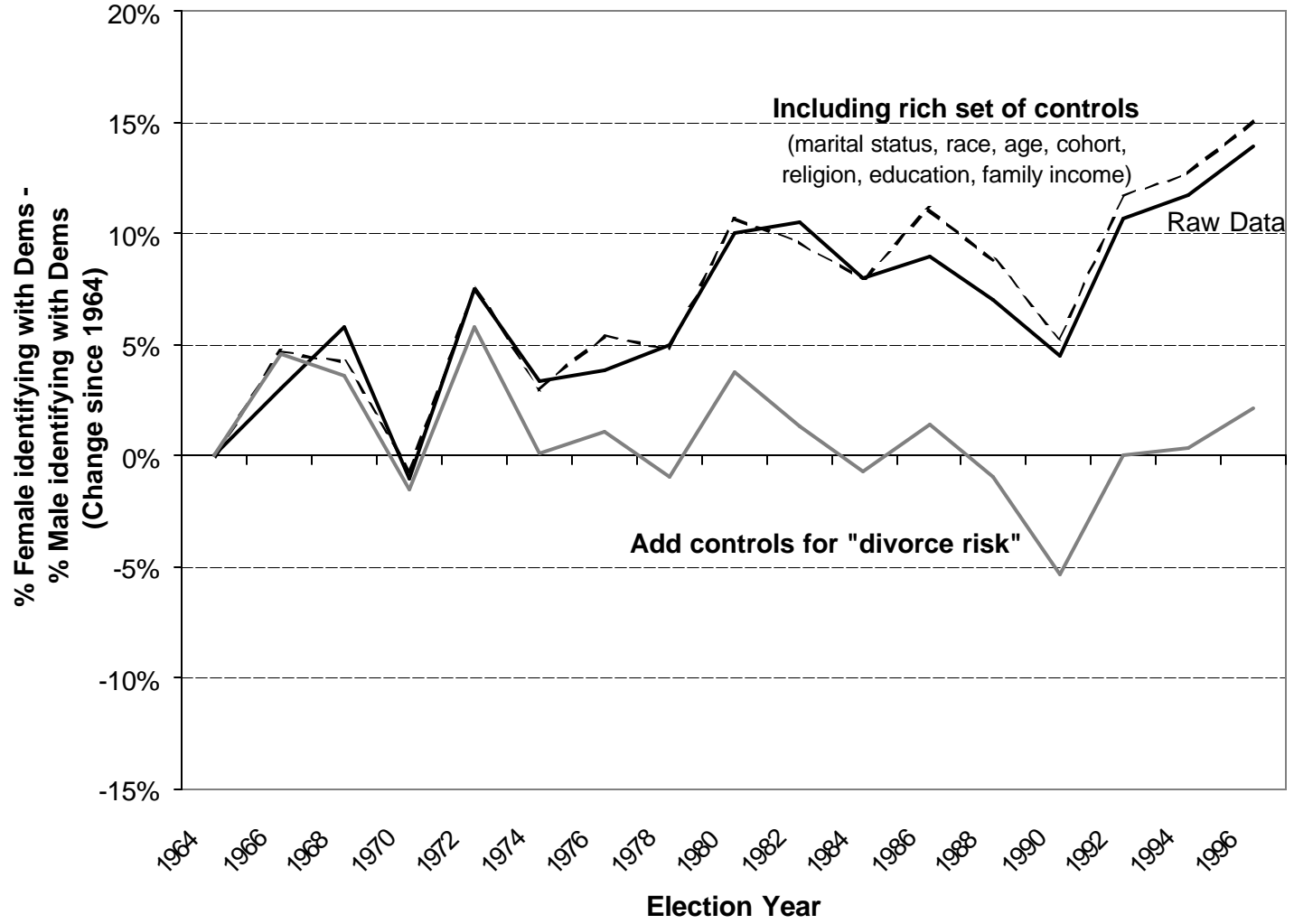
Evolution of the Political Gender Gap



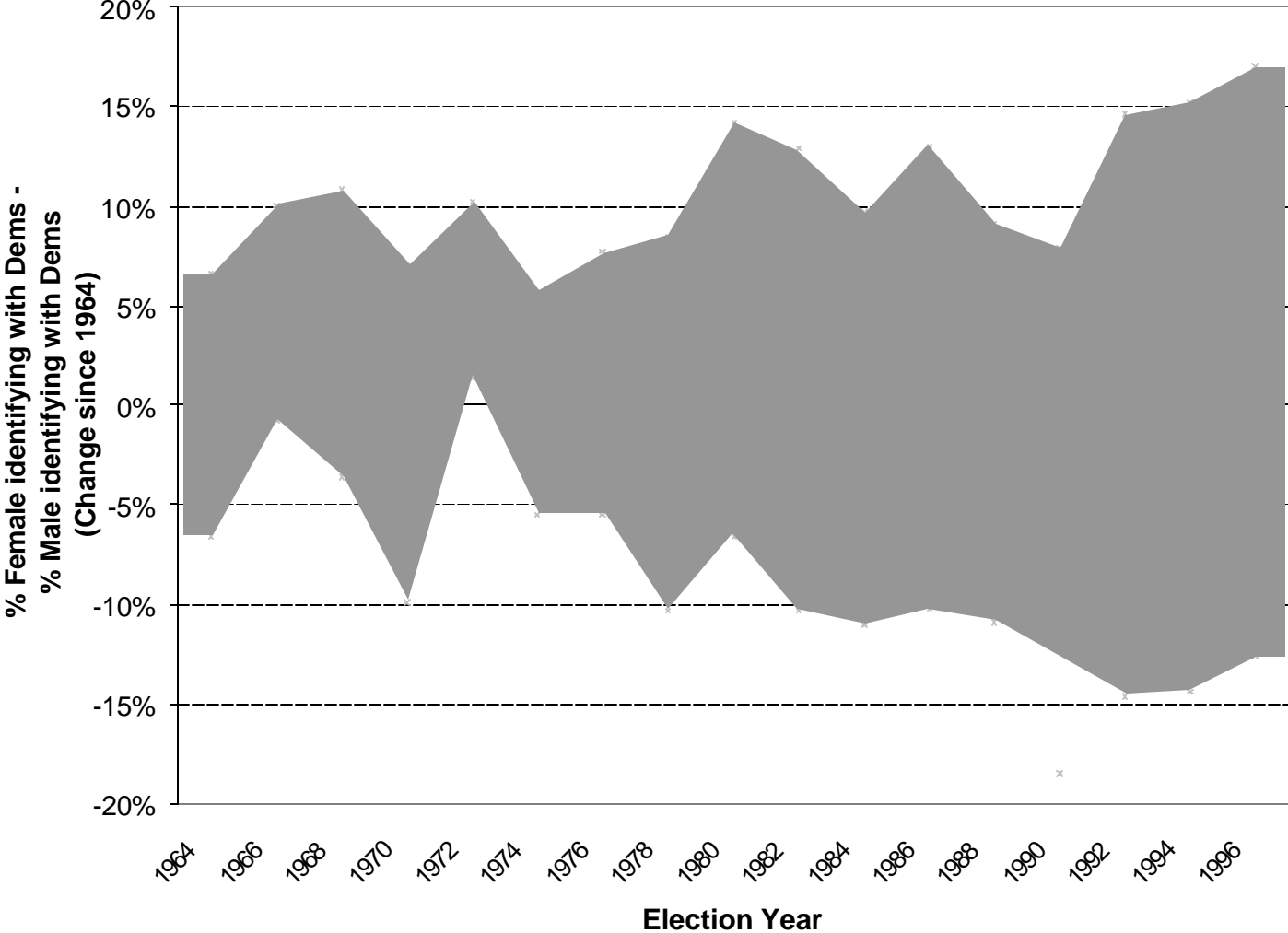
Evolution of the Political Gender Gap



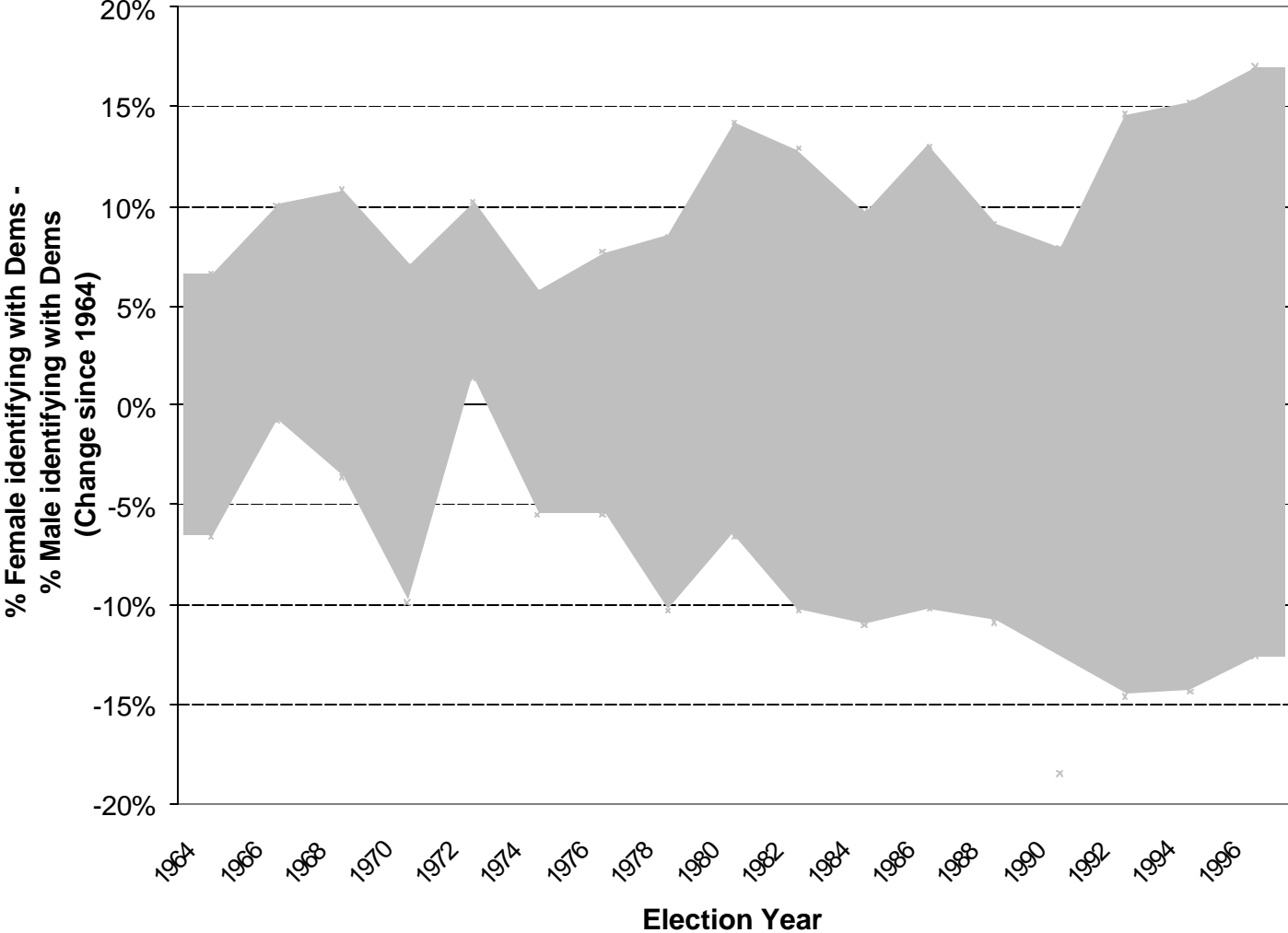
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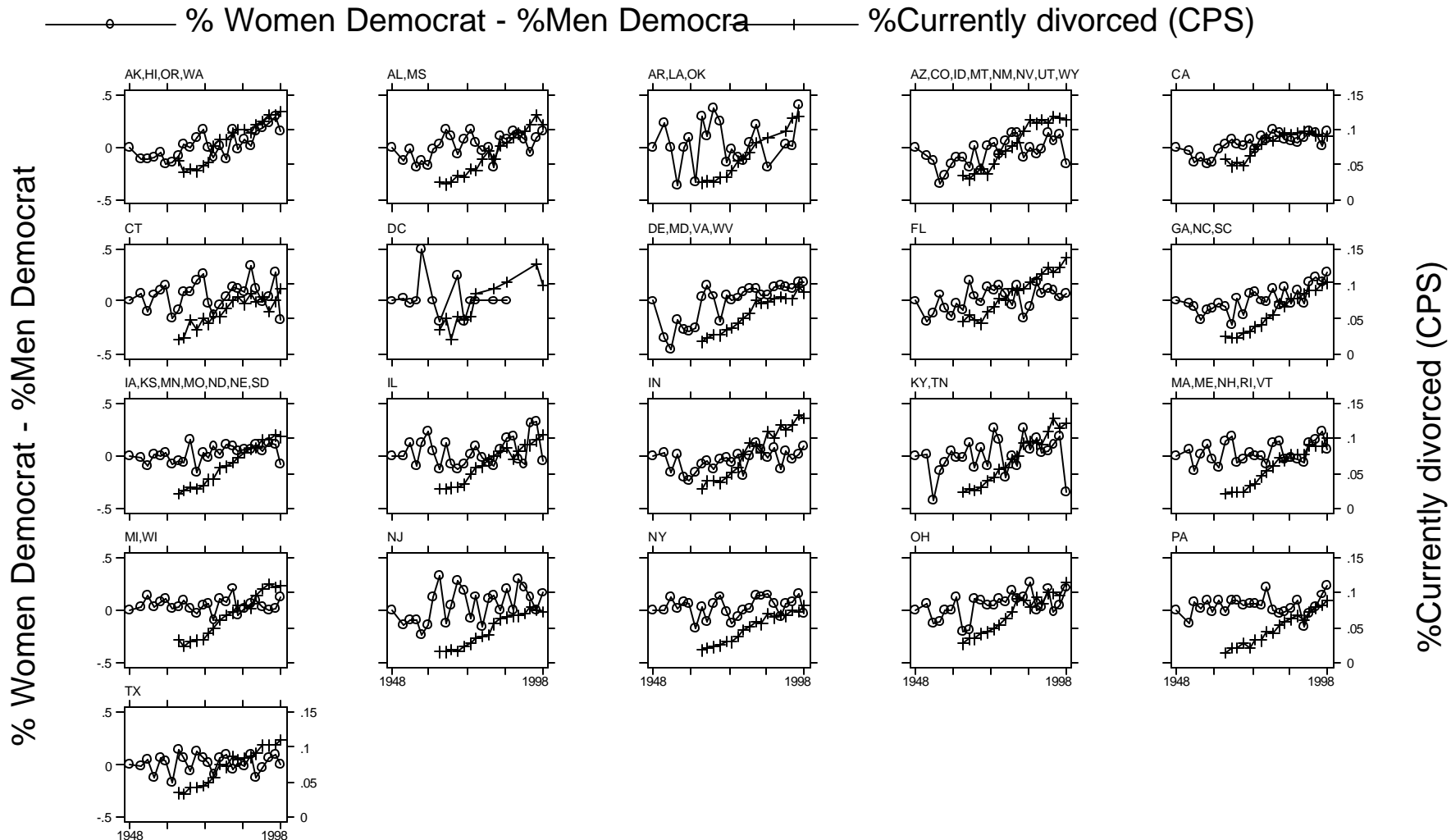


Evolution of the Political Gender Gap



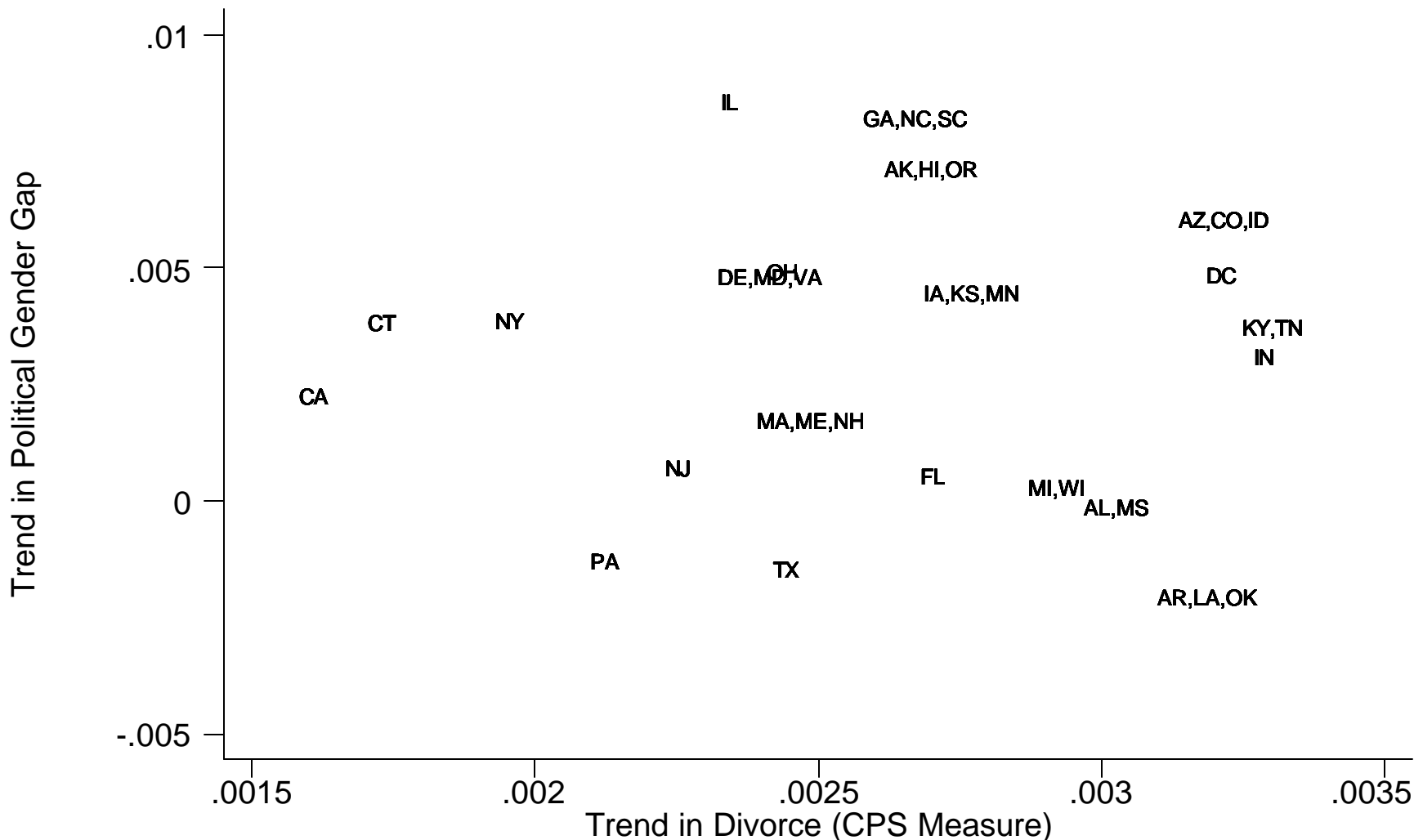
Evolution of the Political Gender Gap





Year
 Graphs by States in this CPS state grouping

Each point represents a CPS-state grouping



Trends in State Divorce Rates and Political Gender Gaps

Measuring *Divorce Risk*

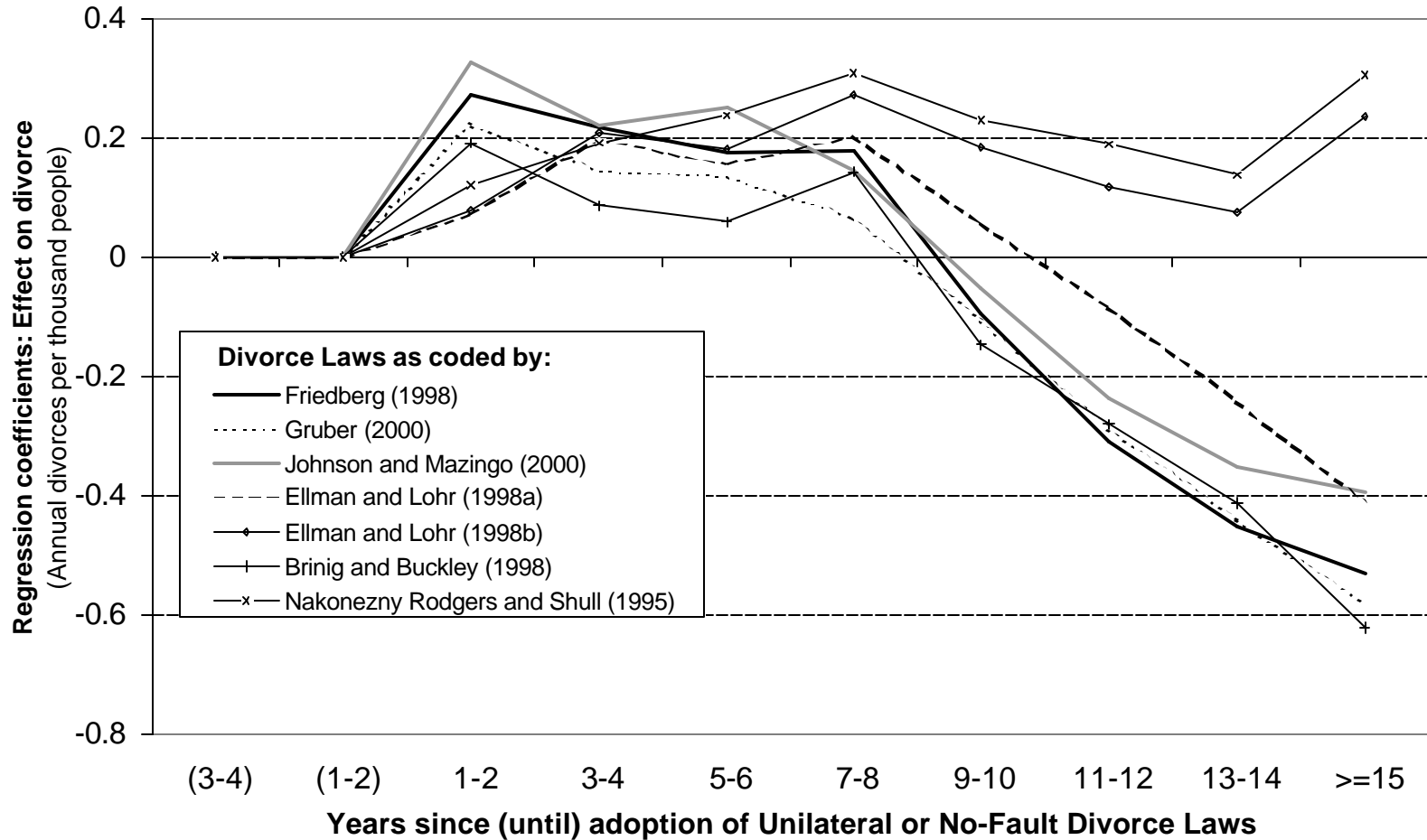
Two measures:

1. March CPS data on *stock* of the population that are *currently divorced*
 - Backward-looking measure
 - Restricts sample to 1964 onward
 - Restricted to 21 state-groupings
 - Small samples and large measurement error
2. Unilateral (no-fault) divorce laws
 - Not much of an effect on divorce rate
 - Main effects on bargaining within marriage

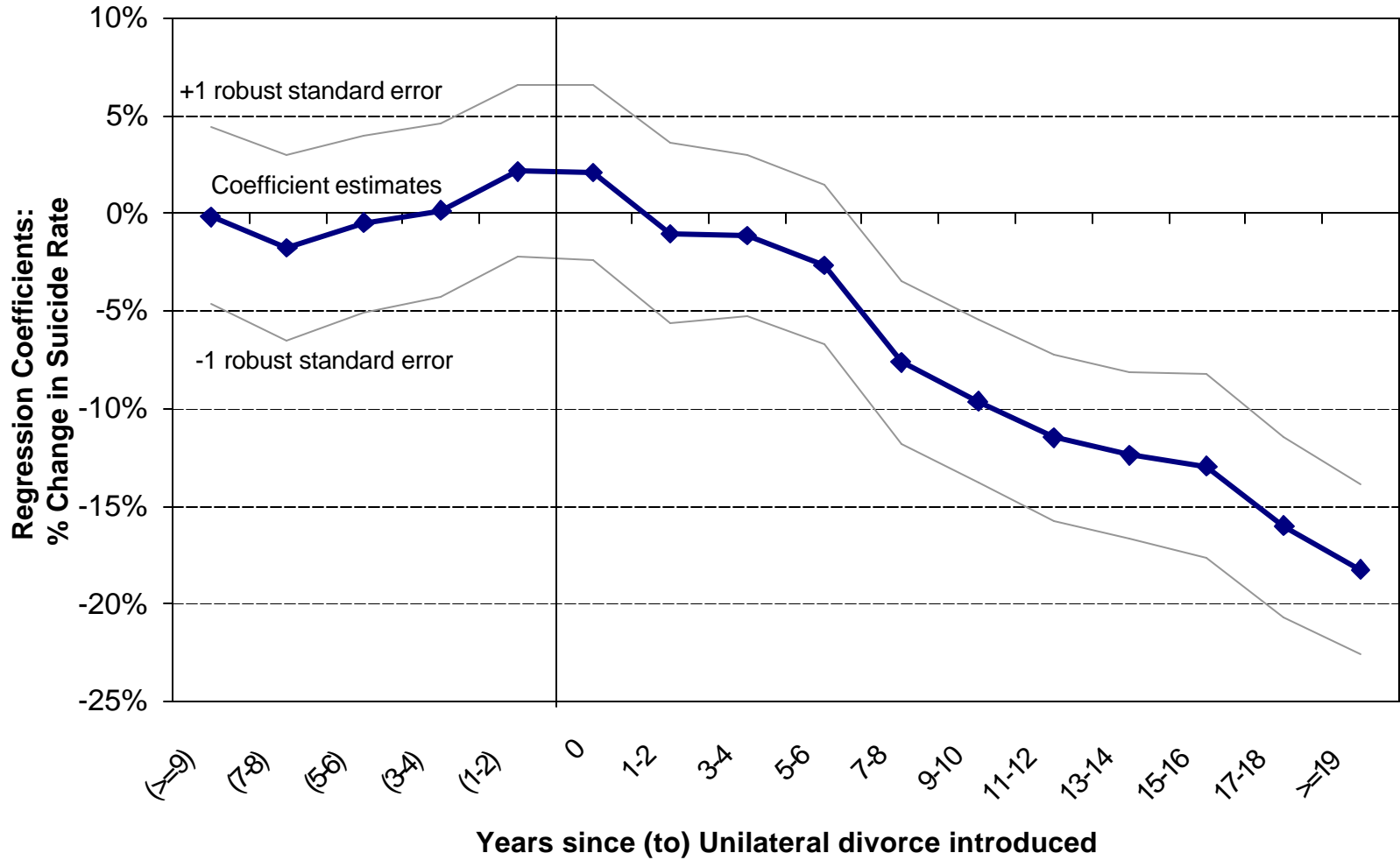
Response of Divorce Rate to Divorce Law Reforms

Sensitivity to Different Coding of Family Law Regime

Regression results controlling for state and year fixed effects



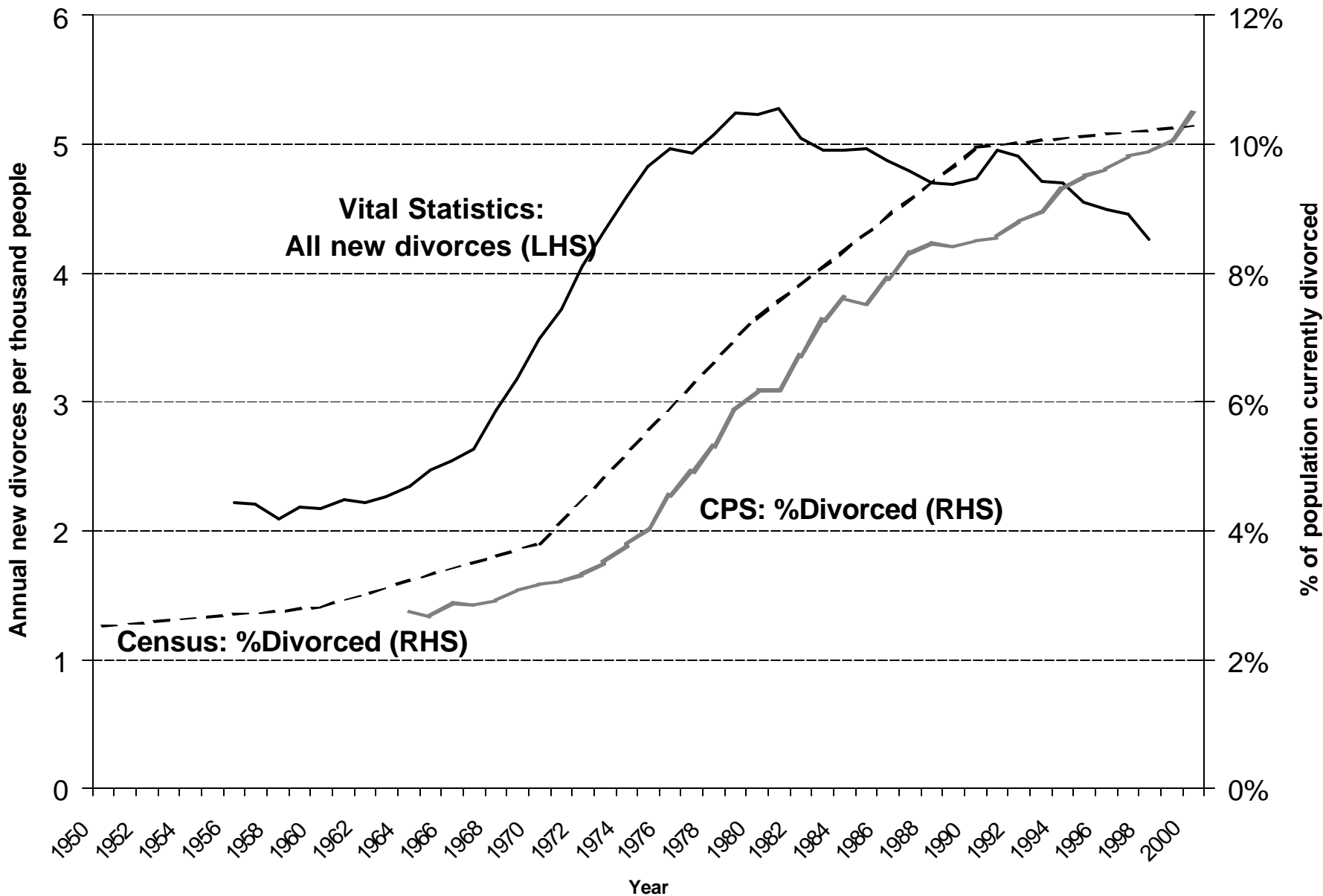
Effect of Unilateral Divorce on Female Suicide



Empirical Robustness

- Statistical power is the main issue
- ⇒ Explore in four main directions:
 - Intra-Occular Impact Test (Look at the data)
 - Measuring *divorce risk*
 - Stocks or flows?
 - Reduce measurement error
 - Interpretation of *unilateral divorce laws*
 - Increase N
 - CPS has 21 regions
 - Census and administrative data have 51 states
 - Increase T
 - Start at 1948, end 1998 (CPS starts 1964)

Measures of "Divorce Risk"



Could this be true?

- Show long-run evolution of the divorce rate
- What does this say about the evolution of the political gender gap?

Explaining the Political Gender Gap

From 1964-96:

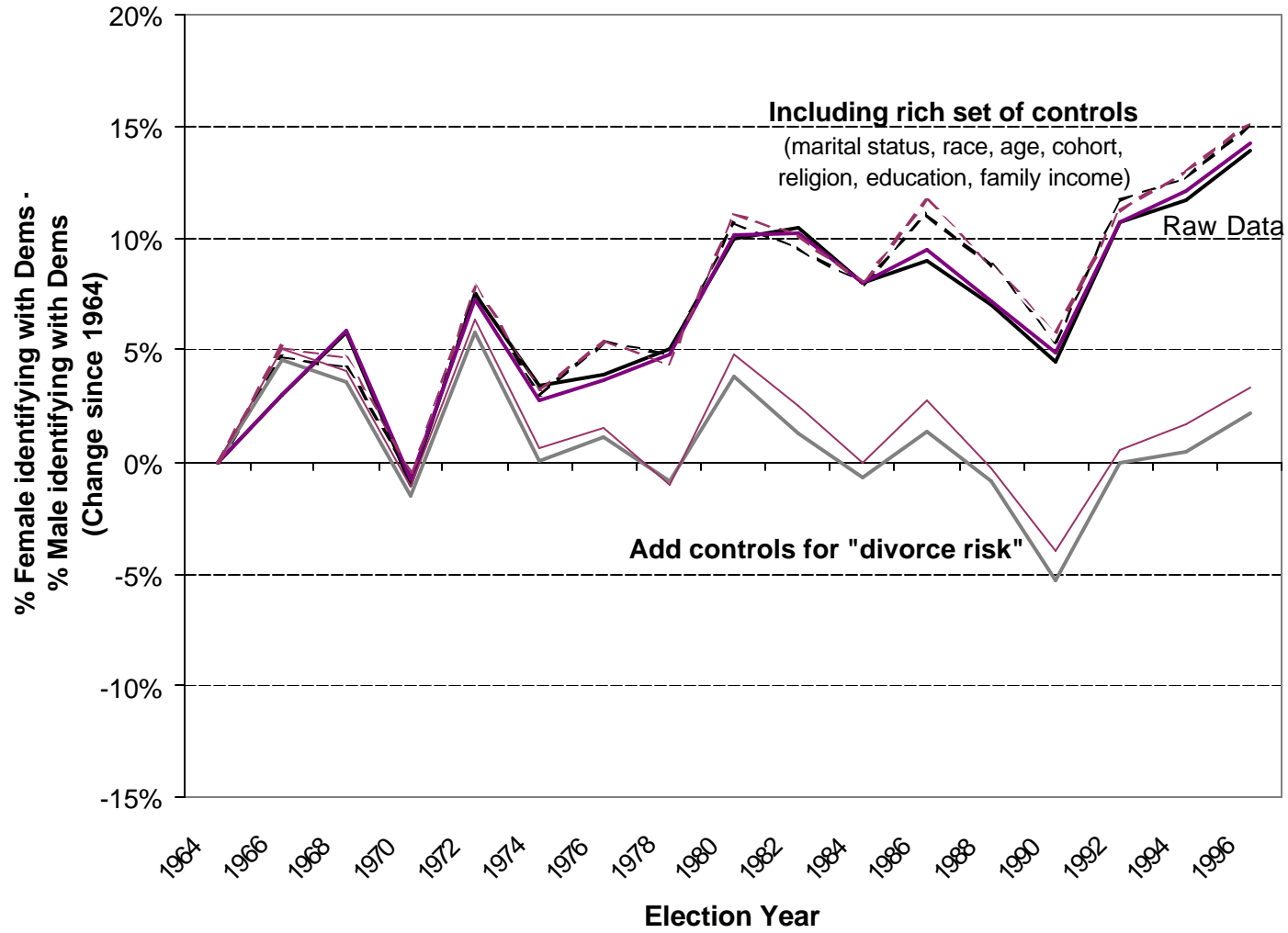
- Political gender gap increased 13.4%;
- Divorcees rose from 3% to 10% of the population
- Coefficient on *female*pdivorce*: 1.8 (se=0.9)
- Point estimate: political gender gap rose $1.8 * (.10 - .03) = 12.6\%$
- 95% confidence interval: 0% to 25%

Sensitivity Testing

Definition of divorce risk	Source	<i>n</i>	<i>T</i>	Coefficient	Explains
Stock of divorcees	CPS	21 CPS-state groupings	1964-96	1.802	-0.921
Stock of divorcees				1.66	-0.953
Stock of divorcees	Census (in	21 CPS-state groupings	1964-96	1.28	-1.501
Stock of divorcees	Census (in	51 states	1964-96		
Stock of divorcees			1952-98		
Rate of divorce	Vital Statis	51 states	1964-96		
Rate of divorce	Vital Statis	51 states	1952-98		
Rate of divorce	Vital Statis	21 CPS-state groupings	1964-98	0.0147	-0.0177

Replication

Evolution of the Political Gender Gap



Limitations of the CPS

- Available only since 1964
 - Election data extends back to 1948
- Not unique state codings
 - Only 21 CPS state-groupings identified
- Small samples \Rightarrow Measurement error
- Backward-looking measure of divorce risk

Summary

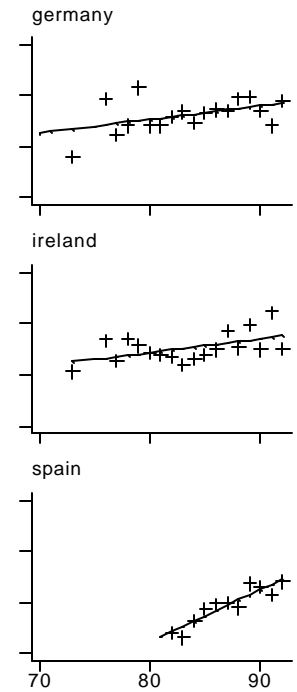
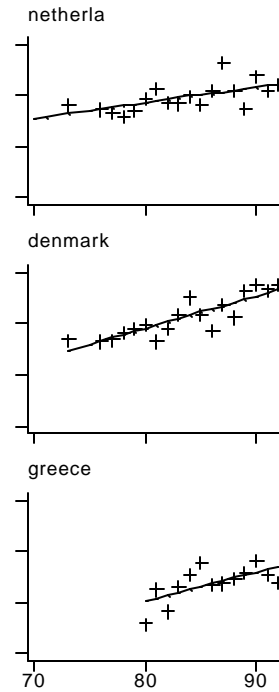
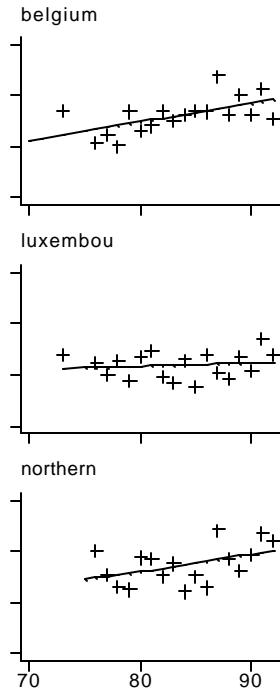
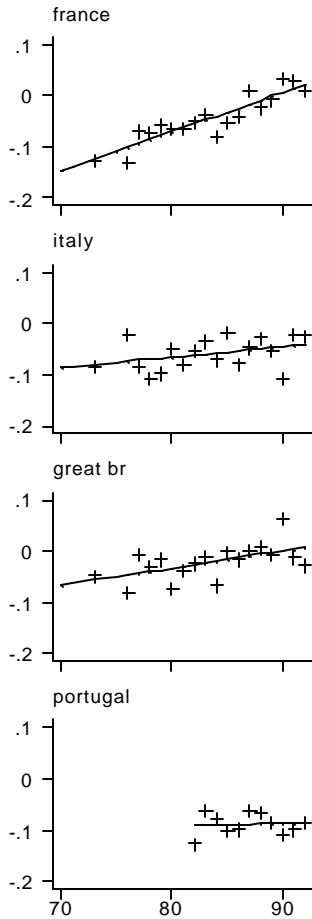
- Marries political and family economics nicely
- Theory: Models taking within-household distribution seriously yield different results
- Empirically: Statistical power is a big issue
- Results are sensitive to specification of “divorce risk”

Interpretation

- Authors show that women shift left following divorce
- But is divorce the intervening variable?

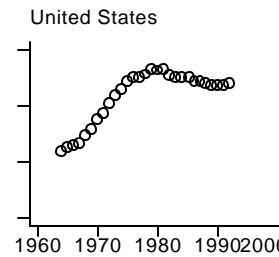
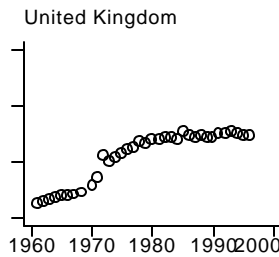
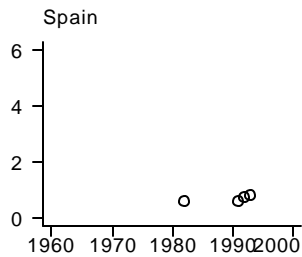
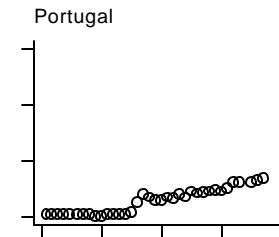
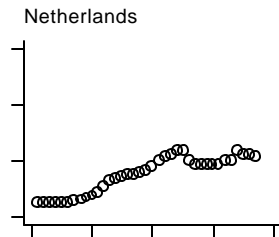
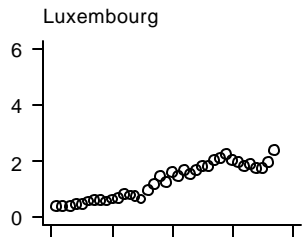
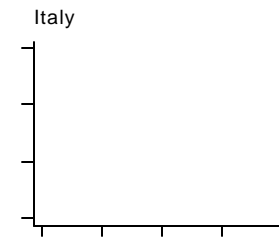
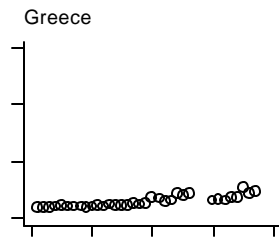
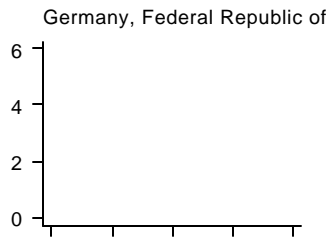
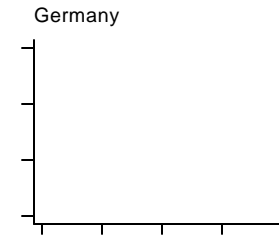
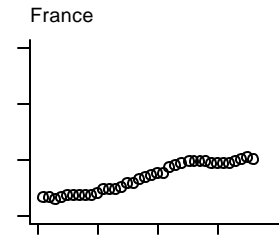
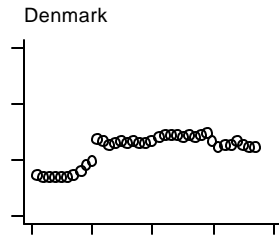
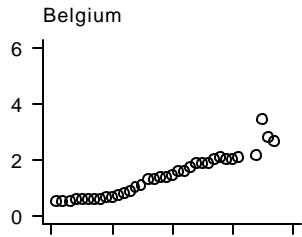
— Fitted values

+ %Women left - %Men left



Survey Year (Eurobarometer)
Political Gender Gaps Opening Up in Europe

Annual divorces per 1000 people



1960 1970 1980 1990 2000

year

Rising Divorce Rates Across Europe

