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Gender Difference or Parallel Publics? The Dynamics of Defense Spending Opinions in the United States, 1965–2007

Richard C. Eichenberg¹ and Richard J. Stoll²

Abstract

Gender is now recognized as an important dividing line in American political life, and scholars have accumulated evidence that national security issues are an important reason for gender differences in policy preferences. We therefore expect that the dynamics of support for defense spending among men and women will differ. In contrast, several scholars have shown that population subgroups exhibit a “parallel” dynamic in which the evolution of their preferences over time is very similar, despite differences in the average level of support. Unfortunately, there is little time series evidence on gendered reactions to policy, including defense spending, that would allow one to arbitrate between these competing perspectives. In this research note, we assemble a time series of support for defense spending among men and women and model the determinants of that support for the period 1967–2007. We find that women are on average less supportive of defense spending than are men. However, we also find that the over time variation of support for defense spending among men and women is very similar—each is conditioned principally by the past year’s change in defense spending and occasionally by war casualties and a trade-off between defense and civilian spending.

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Gender is now widely recognized as an important dividing line in American political life. Studies of policy preferences, partisanship, political engagement, and voting behavior reveal substantial differences in what men and women want from government and how they translate these preferences into political action. Reflecting on this literature and summarizing their own research, Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson observe that “Gender has moved from a position of irrelevance to American political behavior to one of now substantial import. The possibility exists that it may become central” (2002, 176).

However, scholars also know that gender differences are contextual (Sapiro 2003). The magnitude of gender difference in preferences and behavior varies with circumstance. In some years, on some issues the gender divide is large, while on others it is small or nonexistent. Yet, while political and economic circumstances vary together with gender differences over time, with very few exceptions studies of the phenomenon focus on one point in time—usually an election year that produces a national election study. As a result, although we know from many snapshots in time that there are differences between women and men on a variety of political issues, there is little research that models the dynamic process that produces these differences.¹

The lack of time series evidence on gender differences is important for another reason: some studies of public opinion have shown that population subgroups exhibit a “parallel” dynamic in which the movement of subgroup policy preferences over time is very similar, despite differences in the average level of support. That is, although average levels of support for public spending programs (including defense) differ substantially among income, educational, and partisan subgroups within the population, the movement of preferences around these average differences is actually quite similar (Page and Shapiro 1991, 285-321; Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002; Enns and Kellstedt 2008; Soroka and Wlezien 2008). This body of research obviously challenges the hypothesis of a gendered dynamic to defense spending preferences.

However, gender differences on policy preferences have not been studied in the time-series context, so it is difficult to arbitrate between competing claims. In this article, we evaluate the gender hypothesis and the parallel public hypothesis by specifying a time-series model of variation in gender differences on the issue of defense spending in the United States. The rationale for this focus is straightforward. First, national security is a centrally important national issue and one on which cross-sectional studies have found significant gender differences. Second, the defense budget enjoys high salience, a fact reinforced by the yearly cycle in which the budget is introduced, debated, and appropriated, and previous studies have shown that public opinion is attuned to these debates. Third, there are indications in the literature that preferences on defense spending and social spending are an important part of gender differences, with men being relatively more favorable to defense, women relatively

more favorable to social spending, and the two genders divided on the question of whether defense or social spending should receive priority when the two come into conflict. Not only does this suggest that men and women might react differently to change in the defense budget; it also suggests that any clash in competing priorities will widen those differences.

We proceed as follows: in the following section, we briefly review evidence on the presence or absence of gender differences in three types of research: studies of citizen policy preferences, election studies, and studies of support for using military force. We find that gender differences are present in all three types of study, although they vary in magnitude. In a subsequent section, we describe a yearly time series of gender differences in attitudes toward defense spending constructed from opinion surveys administered over the period 1965–2007. These data reveal substantial variation in the magnitude of gender differences in support for defense spending. We subsequently specify a regression model of support for defense spending to explain these variations and estimate the model for men and women. We find substantial support for the parallel public thesis and less for the gender thesis: the over time variation of support for defense spending among men and women is very similar. Each is conditioned principally by the past year's change in defense spending and occasionally by war casualties and a trade-off between defense and civilian spending. The concluding section discusses the implications of our results.

Gender Difference and Parallel Publics

The 1980s saw the emergence of a substantial gender difference in voting behavior, and this development stimulated research on a number of important questions: Do women and men have fundamentally different policy preferences? Do they vote differently on the same issues, or do they base their vote on altogether different issues? What is the role of national security in producing gender differences?

Policy preferences. The pioneering study of gender difference in policy preferences was Shapiro and Mahajan (1986). Employing a large database of survey marginals from the 1960s to the 1980s, they found substantial gender differences that were largest for issues of national and domestic security (see also Smith 1984). Gender differences on what the authors called “compassion” or “caring” issues—such as income supports and health care—were also prominent but less so than on national security issues (p. 51). This finding was reinforced in a study of the role of policy preferences in explaining gender difference in President Reagan's job approval ratings (Gilens 1988). Strikingly, Gilens (1988) found that it was differential gender preferences on the issues of defense spending and social spending that produced the largest gender differences in Reagan's approval ratings. Moreover, these effects were stronger than partisanship in explaining Reagan approval. As a result, Gilens asserts that “gender differences in the evaluation of politicians will extend beyond President Reagan and are likely to appear whenever military or social welfare issues figure prominently in the public's assessment . . . ” (p. 45).

Table 1. Gender and the Peace Dividend

Question wording "If the defense budget is cut sharply, money would be available to be spent in other ways. Do you think this money should mainly be used to increase spending on social problems such as homelessness, poverty, drugs, and education: or should this money mainly be used to reduce the federal budget deficit?"

	Men	Women
Increase spending on social problems	52	70
Reduce the deficit	36	18
Both (volunteered)	10	8
Don't know	2	6

Note: $\chi^2 = 56.07$, prob = .000.

Source: Gallup Poll, January 4–7, 1990 ($N = 1,226$); Roper Center Study. USGALLUP.010890.R11.

Whether latent gender divisions on social and defense spending prove politically relevant is likely to depend on the policies that Presidents adopt—the Reagan defense increases were among the highest in the postwar period—but subsequent studies have demonstrated that gendered preferences themselves extend past the Reagan era. For example, studying a myriad of policy items from election studies over the period 2000–2004, Crowder-Meyer once again found large, consistent gender differences on defenses issues (including defense spending) and social welfare issues. Furthermore, Crowder-Meyer shows that men and women differ both in their prioritization of these issues and in their propensity to condition their voting behavior on these issues. Men are more likely to give defense a higher priority and to base their evaluation of candidates on the issue. Women, in contrast, rank social welfare higher and are more likely to condition candidate evaluations on the issue (Crowder-Meyer 2007).

Taken together, these studies provide evidence that women are less supportive of defense spending than men, more supportive of social spending and that women are less sensitive to the constraints of deficits and debt. This pattern is summarized nicely in a Gallup poll conducted in 1990, as the cold war came to an end and the prospect of a "peace dividend" from cuts in defense spending appeared on the public agenda (Table 1). The value of the question in Table 1 is somewhat diluted by the strong cue on social spending; it takes a rather heartless soul to oppose spending for "homelessness, poverty, drugs, and education." Nonetheless, despite this cue—or indeed perhaps because of it—the gender divide in this question is revealing. Although a slight majority of men do favor increasing social spending to reducing the deficit, the margin among woman in favor of social spending is overwhelming.

Issue voting, partisanship, and gender. Not surprisingly perhaps given the prominence of gender differences in policy preferences, studies have demonstrated that these differences often translate into gender differences in political behavior. For example, Kaufman and Petrocik (1999) studied the impact of gender difference in policy attitudes on both party identification and the vote in the 1992 and 1996 presidential elections. The results are clear: social spending and defense-related attitudes

are strong correlates of party identification and voting in 1992 and 1996 (along with other policy attitudes). The import of the study is the finding that the political judgments of both men and women are indeed rooted in defense, social, and other political issues, a finding that would suggest that over time variation in gender differences on these issues should be related to government policy in these areas (Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999; see also Chaney, Alvarez, and Nagler 1998).

In summary, just as studies show a consistent gender divide in policy preferences and priorities, scholarship also shows that these preferences translate into political behavior. Although the impact of specific issues varies over particular elections, either defense or social preferences are an important correlate of the vote in most elections. This suggests that voters pay attention to government policy in these areas, and the differences in the priorities of men and women on the issues suggest that their reaction to government policy should be gendered as well.

The use of military force. When research turns to the actual use of military force, gender differences are consistent and prominent. One of the most comprehensive studies documents the existence of significant gender differences in the United States and Great Britain on a number of national security issues, including the fear of war; the use of military force in Korea and Vietnam; and the testing, deployment, and potential use of nuclear weapons (Brandes 1994). Nincic and Nincic (2002) find the same gender difference concerning the wars in Korea and Vietnam, and they report the additional finding that women were less likely to support escalation and more likely to favor a negotiated settlement (2002, 550). Similar findings emerged in studies of the Persian Gulf War of 1991 (Brandes 1994; Conover and Sapiro 1993; Nincic and Nincic 2002).

In addition, studies highlight the greater sensitivity of women to casualties in war (Brandes 1994; Conover and Sapiro 1993). A unique tracking study conducted during the Persian Gulf crisis from August through December 1990 queried almost 17,000 respondents on their opinions of President George H. W. Bush's handling of the crisis, support for an eventual attack against Iraq, and willingness to absorb the costs of the war. The results were striking: gender differences on all of these questions were high, but on the question of the human costs of war, gender was the single most important influence on public opinion (Wilcox, Ferrara, and Alsop 1993, 343-59).

A summary conclusion would be that it is rare to find scholarship in which gender differences on the question of using military force are not present (Eichenberg 2003). This pattern alone would suggest gendered reactions to the defense budget, since it is the monetary instrument of armed conflict.

The competing hypothesis of parallel publics. That women and men often differ in their preferences and political behavior is well established. However, there is growing evidence that this sort of difference between population subgroups does not vary over time. In their early work, for example, Page and Shapiro found that subgroup differences, once established, change only little. Instead, opinions—including those of women and men—move largely in tandem, a pattern they characterize as “parallel publics” (Page and Shapiro 1991, 294). Page and Shapiro speculate that the

parallel movements of opinion are attributable to centralization of the mass media—all segments of the population receive essentially the same information at the same time (p. 295). This hypothesis receives support in the work of Enns and Kellstedt, who find—surprisingly—that citizens of both high and low political sophistication respond to information in a similar fashion: “. . . the subgroups generally changed opinion at the same time, in the same direction, and to about the same extent . . . for predominantly the same reasons” (2008, 433; see also Enns 2006). Similar results for subgroups representing income, education, and partisanship were found by Soroka and Wlezien (2008). In all of these works, the conclusion is that substantial differences may characterize the preferences of population subgroups, but these gaps change only little. Thus, despite the substantial evidence that women and men do differ in their national security preferences, there remains the possibility that there will be little over time variation in these differences.

Describing Gender Differences over Time

The largest challenge to evaluating the ideas discussed above is the task of assembling a time series of gender marginal on the question of support for defense spending. As noted previously, there has been little time series research on gender politics generally. The major reason is that historical gender breakdowns are not always published by survey organizations or scholarly studies. The data exist, but they must be retrieved from a number of print and electronic sources or downloaded and tabulated from original data sets that in some cases require reprocessing from older data storage formats.

There are two candidate time series. The Gallup Organization has been asking an identically worded question on defense spending since 1969, and the General Social Survey (GSS) has asked a similar question since 1973, although the utility of the latter is limited by a number of gaps and by the shift to biyearly administration of the survey since 1994. We chose the Gallup question as the “core series” for our inquiry, because the series begins earlier than GSS, because the question has been asked in identical form, and because the question has been administered almost yearly. It is also helpful that the Gallup question has been administered during the first half of the year in most years since 1980. As Wlezien has shown (1996), public opinion on defense spending is quite attuned to the information that is available at particular phases of the budgetary process (presidential requests, appropriations). Using a question administered in the first half of the year, we ensure that respondents have been exposed to the publicity and debate that surrounds the announcement of the president’s budget in February. When the Gallup question was not available for a particular year, we sought first to substitute the GSS series—the most similar available alternative and one that is also administered early in the year. When the GSS question was not available, we employed questions from other survey organizations with wording as similar to the Gallup question as possible. Details on each data point are described in Appendix A.

The exact wording of the Gallup question is as follows:

There is much discussion as to the amount of money the government in Washington should spend for national defense and military purposes. How do you feel about this: do you think we are spending too little, too much, or about the right amount?

Following a widely used measure in past research (Wlezien 1995, 1996, 2004; Stimson 1999), we operationalize support for defense spending as *net support*, computed as follows:

$$\text{Net support} = \% \text{ increase} / (\% \text{ increase} + \% \text{ decrease}) * 100$$

In the analyses to follow, we compute and specify this measure of the dependent variable for women and men separately. By employing this measure of net support, we focus on what might be called *crystallized* opinion—an active stand on the issue. Our measure is essentially the percentage of crystallized opinion that prefers an increase in the current defense budget.²

The over time evolution of net support for defense spending among men and women is shown in Figure 1. The top half of the figure shows the trend in net support, while the bottom half shows the gender difference (men net support – women net support). Two features of the graphics stand out. First, women and men do represent parallel publics. That is, although there are differences between men and women in the level of net support at particular points in time, both genders appear to be responding to a common set of stimuli overtime. Nonetheless, the question is whether the lower net support among women and the occasionally large gender differences shown in the figure are produced by differential responses to the same stimuli or—perhaps less likely—by different correlates of net support.

Second, the variation in the magnitude of gender differences is noteworthy (bottom half of Figure 1). The average absolute gender difference in net support is 7.6 percentage points, slightly higher than the difference indicating statistical significance between two survey subsamples.³ In addition, as expected, men are more supportive of defense spending on average. Support among men is greater than women in about three-quarters of the years in the series. In years when men are more supportive of defense, they do so by almost 9 percentage points; when women are more supportive, it is by a lesser amount (5.3 percentage points).

These initial findings have important implications for our analysis and for studies of gender difference in national security more generally. First, the data show that gender differences are not categorical: it is not the case that women are always and in large measure less supportive of defense spending. What this means, of course, is that explanations for gender differences that are rooted in categorical hypotheses—such as biological differences or differences in socialization of men and women—are not supported by the evidence. This is an important finding and one that highlights the importance of analyzing time-series data. If categorical explanations were true, gender differences would be uniformly large and would vary little over time. Second, the variations in gender difference are presumably related to contextual factors that move the opinions of men and women in different directions—or by

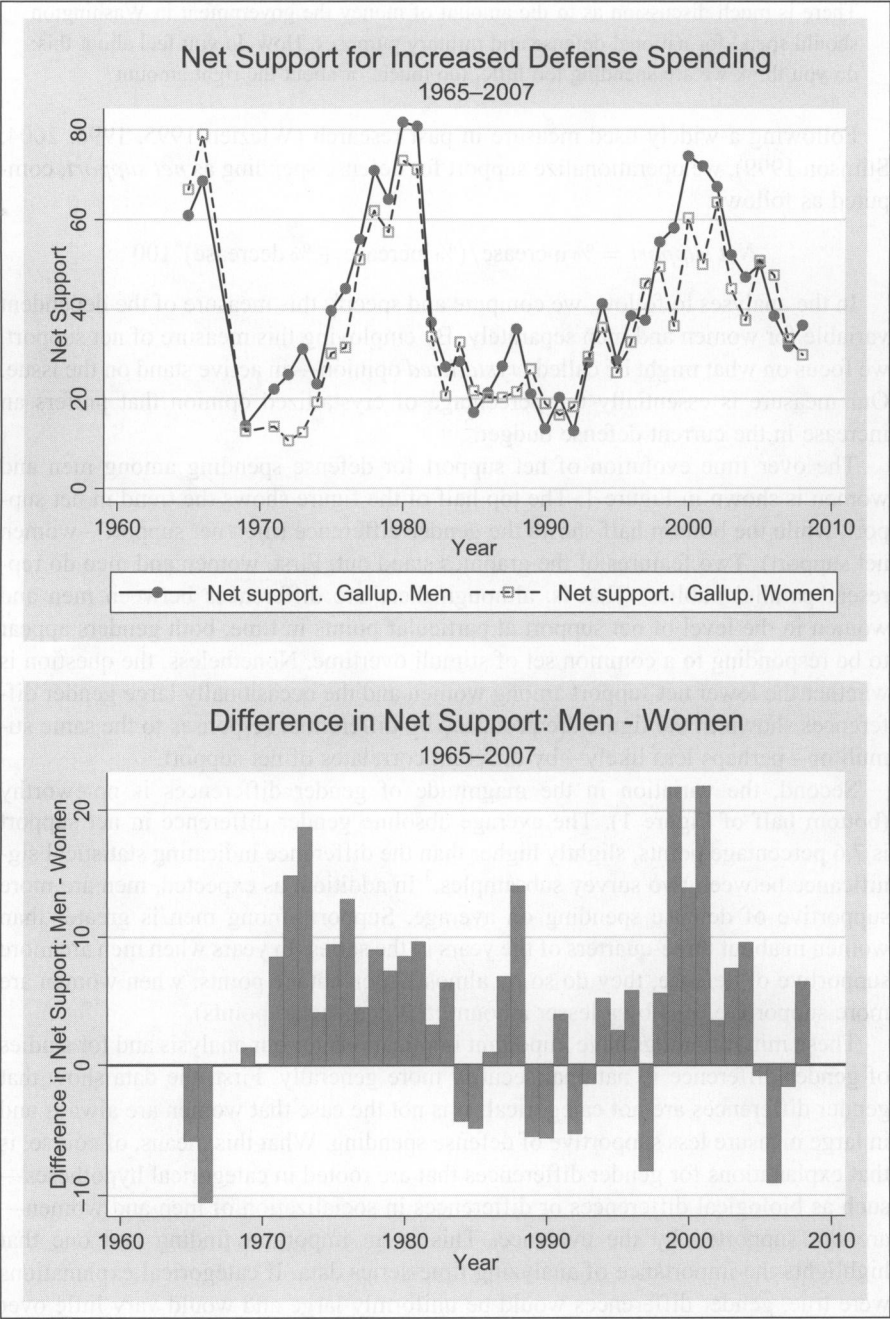


Figure 1. Net support for increased defense spending, 1965–2007, difference in net support, men - women, 1965–2007

different degrees—in particular circumstances. From what has been said above, there is reason to believe that these differences are rooted in spending priorities and differential reactions to war and its cost. We take up the task of modeling these factors in the following section.

A Model of Gender Difference on Defense Spending

Our theoretical interest is clear. We are interested in the impact of policy change and other factors on change in the net support of women and men for defense spending. Following the literature reviewed above, we specify and evaluate a regression model of net support for women and for men that includes change in defense spending, the occurrence of guns/butter spending trade-offs, unemployment, and the occurrence and human cost of wars (casualties). Because the error terms in the equations for men and women are likely to be correlated, we employ seemingly unrelated regression (see Enns and Kellstedt [2008] for a similar application).

Defense spending and spending trade-off. We specify the constant price percentage change in defense spending in our regression model of change in the net support of women and men (notes and sources of this and other variables are provided in Appendix A). The reaction of public opinion to this sort of policy change is now well understood. As Wlezien and others have shown in a number of works, the public responds in a “thermostat” fashion to spending change; that is, it responds by preferring less spending when the budget increases and more spending when the budget is cut. Supporting evidence for the “thermostat” response is quite robust (Wlezien 1995, 1996; Eichenberg and Stoll 2003; Soroka and Wlezien 2004, 2005). As is true in this literature, we expect a negative sign on the parameter for defense spending change.

Less certain is the expected timing of the impact. On one hand, we have been careful to measure the net support series using as many surveys as possible from early each year because of the publicity that surrounds the announcement of the budget. We therefore expected that the change in spending from the past to the current year (percentage change year T) would have the strongest impact. However, our initial tests of the model revealed that it is spending change in the *past* year ($T - 1$) that has the greatest impact, perhaps because that budget has been fully debated and appropriated, thus setting in motion the adjustment of public opinion that becomes visible in the following year. We report the impact of percentage change in defense at $T - 1$ in the tables to follow.

We also specify and evaluate two measures of spending trade-off, one each for (federal government) spending on health and social security—both programs on which the priorities of men and women have been shown to differ in previous research (see, for example, Crowder-Meyer, 2007, p. 10, 24-25). We operationalize a trade-off as a dummy variable for any year in which defense spending grows faster than each category of social spending. This occurs more frequently than might be expected: in 17 years for health spending and 14 years for social security spending. What we seek to tap with this measure is an indicator of the sentiment expressed in the mythical headline reporting that “defense grows, while social spending is

restrained.” Obviously, we expect a negative sign on these trade-off variables among women, and a further expectation based on our earlier review is that the effect should be stronger for women than for men.⁴

Unemployment. We observed earlier that there is some evidence that men and women differ in their assessment of economic performance, with women demonstrating more sensitivity to national economic conditions than men. We therefore specify the national unemployment rate in each equation below (tests of separate unemployment rates for men and women proved no different in their results and are not reported here).

War and its human cost. During the period under study, the United States suffered serious levels of battle deaths in two wars, Vietnam and Iraq. Research has shown that the cumulative level of American deaths has a significant impact on approval of the wars and the approval level of the president (Mueller 1973). We also noted above that casualties appear to magnify gender difference in support for war. Because the level of deaths is the most visible measure of cost of these wars, we include the log to the base 10 of the cumulative yearly sum of American deaths in Vietnam and (as a separate variable) in Iraq.⁵ Appendix discusses the details of how these two variables were constructed.⁶

Results

The regression results, displayed in Table 2, are presented for men and women for the entire time period and also with interactive terms representing three time periods: the cold war years prior to the Reagan administration (the coefficients without time-related interaction terms), the years encompassed by the Reagan defense budgets (1982–1989), and the post-cold war years (1990 onward). We present separate, time-bound estimates for two reasons: first, the research literature on gender differences reviewed above point to the Reagan years as the beginning—perhaps even the stimulus—for gendered reactions to national security policy. Second, as noted earlier (note 5), we evaluated several perceptual measures of external threat and fears of war on support for defense spending, but some of these measures were available in consistent form beginning only in the 1980s. Although we ultimately concluded that perceptual measures do not perform better than the war death variables reported here, in the process we observed substantially different coefficients for defense spending change and for other variables during the 1980s.⁷

The results in Table 2 provide strong evidence for the dominance of the “parallel public” hypothesis. Although there are some minor exceptions, and although the correlates of support for defense spending vary by period, the effects of the variables in the model are very similar for men and women. Consider the effects of the change in defense spending and the trade-off variables; as we expect from the literature on the “thermostat” phenomenon, the impact is strongly negative for both women and men for the period taken as a whole and for each combination of the parameters and interaction terms (although the significance of the impact varies by period). Notably,

Table 2. Regression Analysis of Support for Defense Spending

Variable	Entire period		Separate periods	
	Male net support	Female net support	Male net support	Female net support
Percentage change in defense spending	-0.420** (0.164)	-0.335** (0.163)	-0.492** (0.149)	-0.347** (0.157)
Percentage change in unemployment	-0.486 (1.355)	-0.353 (1.342)	-2.116 (2.373)	-2.976 (2.512)
Log10 Vietnam battle deaths	-0.770 (1.288)	-0.181 (1.276)	-3.511** (1.308)	-2.780** (1.384)
Log10 Iraq battle deaths	0.314 (2.194)	2.225 (2.174)	-1.267 (1.796)	2.055 (1.901)
Defense increased more than health	-7.213* (3.939)	-7.882** (3.902)	-6.858 (4.892)	-2.289 (5.178)
Defense increased more than social security	-5.708 (3.870)	-5.836 (3.834)	-4.514 (5.147)	-5.406 (5.449)
Dummy: 1982-89			-84.19** (23.61)	-68.36** (25.00)
1982 × Change in Defense			-1.220* (0.645)	-0.858 (0.683)
1982 × Unemployment			10.48** (3.427)	8.698** (3.628)
1982 × Defense/Health Trade-off			-6.527 (8.310)	-17.82** (8.797)
1982 × Defense/Social Security Trade-off			-4.146 (7.773)	5.975 (8.228)
Dummy: 1990-on			-11.93 (19.88)	-9.060 (21.04)
1990 × Change in Defense			0.860** (0.343)	0.631* (0.363)
1990 × Unemployment			0.174 (3.085)	0.152 (3.266)
1990 × Defense/Health Trade-off			3.606 (6.347)	-4.217 (6.718)
1990 × Defense/Social Security Trade-off			-9.169 (6.843)	-11.20 (7.244)
Constant	9.567 (8.709)	8.743 (8.628)	29.95* (16.16)	32.64* (17.11)
	36	36	36	36
	.298	.273	.697	.642

Note: Coefficients are seemingly unrelated regression; standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < .01$. ** $p < .05$. * $p < .1$.

the dramatic thermostat reversal of support during the Reagan years (the 1982–1989 dummy) is actually larger for men, although it is negative for both men and women. As a result, contrary to the gender hypothesis, the effect of the Reagan defense increases was to *reduce* rather than increase the absolute value of the gender difference in support for defense spending (from 8.9 percentage points during the years prior to 1982 to 5.8 percentage points during the Reagan years). The same is true for the effect of Vietnam War casualties (significantly negative for both men and women) and for Iraq War casualties (insignificant for both, although the parameters for men and women do differ).

True, there are some specific differences: in the cold war period, the strongest effect is defense spending change itself—the trade-off variables are not significant—while in the Reagan period the defense/health care trade-off is large and significant for women and much smaller and insignificant for men. Similarly, although the coefficients for the Social Security trade-off in the post-cold war years are mildly different for men and women, neither is statistically significant. In summary, what is important for our analysis is that the overall pattern of effects is very similar in the equations for men and women.

The equivalence of the parameters is confirmed by tests of inequality for each of the equations in Table 2. With two exceptions, these tests showed that one could not reject the hypothesis that the parameters for men and women are essentially equal. The most important exception is the trade-off for health care spending in the Reagan years, which is much more strongly negative and significant for women. The second is the trade-off for Social Security in the years after 1990, but in the latter case neither coefficient is significant. Thus, across all the years analyzed here, the single case of a divergent parameter for men and women—when men and women did not move quite parallel—is that for the health/defense spending trade-off during the Reagan years.

It is worth pausing to reflect on the broader meaning of the results. The literatures on gender and policy priorities and gender and war led us to consider the hypothesis that men and women would be differentially affected by these variables (women more sensitive to war and spending trade-offs). The evidence here is that men and women react to the same stimuli over time in very much the same way, a finding that matches recent research on the dynamics of population subgroup opinion. Put differently, the gender hypothesis would predict that the determinants of the views of men and women would be either entirely different or different in their magnitude or significance for men and women. This is not the case.

We should caution that this does not mean that men and women favor defense spending to the same degree; we have shown that, on average, women are less supportive of defense, and this is true to varying degrees for each of the three periods displayed in Table 2. Nonetheless, it does mean that these differences are not differentially affected by defense spending, the state of the economy, defense/welfare trade-offs, or casualties in wars. There is only one significant exception: during the Reagan years—the period of the highest defense spending increases for the period studied here—the trade-off for defense and health spending affected women more than men.

Conclusion

The literatures on gender politics and gender and national security contain a strong suggestion that change in defense spending and in the financial and human cost of war will have a differential impact on the support of women and men for the defense budget. Our analysis—the first performed in the time series context—indicates that this is not the case. Rather, the support of women and men for the defense budget move largely in parallel, or to borrow the words of Enns and Kellstadt, their views “generally changed at the same time, in the same direction, and to about the same extent . . . (2008, 433).

This is a particularly strong finding in support of the parallel public thesis, for the documented gender divergence in policy preferences would otherwise provide a plausible expectation that women and men would react differently to contextual changes in national security policy or to a shift in budgetary priorities. Indeed, as we noted at the outset, some scholars have characterized gender as an increasingly defining cleavage of American politics, and there are substantial arguments that national security is an important part of that cleavage.

What explains the strength of the parallel thesis? One answer acknowledges the existence of subgroup (gender) difference and combines this knowledge with assumptions about the uniformity of information available to members of different subgroups. Thus, as Page and Shapiro observe, the difference in preferences among subgroups at any point in time captures the “equilibrium” difference arising from political interests and preferences (1991, 295), but if members of the subgroups receive uniform information about policy change, their reactions are also likely to be uniform, with no significant change in the difference between them. That process is visible in the similarity of coefficients for men and women presented earlier.

Of course, this does not mean that gender differences on defense budget issues have no political import. We have seen that on average women are less supportive of defense spending, and other research shows that this difference sometimes translates into politically relevant attitudes and behavior (such as partisanship and voting). Nonetheless, our findings do suggest that the ups and downs of defense budget debates are unlikely to rearrange the gender basis of political preferences unless the growth of defense spending is so prodigious as to produce clear-cut trade-offs. This conclusion is not one that would be derived from the literature on gender and politics or gender and national security, but it is one that is now rooted in substantial evidence.

Appendix

This appendix describes the data definitions and sources for the variables listed in Figure 1 and Table 2.

Net Support for Defense Spending

As we noted in the text, the default “core” time series of opinion surveys on defense spending are drawn from the Gallup Organization. Gender breakdowns

for Gallup surveys were taken from the *Gallup Poll Monthly* (Gallup Organization monthly) supplemented through downloads of Gallup Polls from the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research at the University of Connecticut. We are also grateful to the Gallup Organization for providing the gender marginals for the most recent years. Gallup surveys represent thirty-two of the forty-one time points included in the analysis. In four years, we employed a similar question (variable name NATARMS) from the General Social Survey (ICPSR Study Nr. 4697); the years are 1975, 1984, 1988, and 1996. The remaining questions in the time series are as follows: 1965, 1966 (surveys by the General Electric Corporation); 1992 (survey for *NBS/Wall Street Journal*); 1995 (survey for the Americans Talk Issues Foundation/ Market Research Strategies); and 1997 (Pew Center for the People and the Press). All of these latter surveys are available from the catalog of the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, and summary marginals and sampling information can be displayed from the Center's IPoll database. Our replication data set includes the precise end date of survey sampling and the sample size for each question used in the analysis.

Spending Variables

All of the spending data employed in the analysis were taken from the files of the Policy Agendas Project at the University of Texas. In every case, we employed the data expressed in constant 2006 dollars of budget authority. The data and associated codebook can be downloaded here:

<http://www.policyagendas.org/datasets/index.html>

The specific categories employed are as follows.

Defense spending. Subfunction 051 Department of Defense-Military (i.e., *excluding* expenditures for Atomic Energy related activities [053] and "Defense-related activities" [054]). The subfunction *does* include supplemental appropriations for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Health spending. Function 550 Health, which includes spending for (551) Health care services, (552) Health research and training, and (554) Consumer and occupational health and safety. This category includes Medicaid spending under 551 but not Medicare spending.

Social Security spending. Function 650, which includes spending for Social Security (single subfunction 651 Social Security). This function (and single subfunction) funds the Old Age, Survivors Insurance (OASI), Disability Insurance (DI), and program administration. The Policy Agendas Project has redefined budget authority to include all authority listed separate in on-budget and off-budget documents.

Unemployment

This is the civilian unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted, taken from table 42 of Economic Report of the President: 2009 Report Spreadsheet Tables

<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/eop/tables09.html>

War and Casualty Variables

Data for Vietnam monthly battle deaths is taken from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund website (<http://www.vvmf.org/index.cfm?SectionID=110&AdvancedForm=true>). Data for Iraq battle deaths is taken from the Iraq Coalition Casualty Count (<http://icasualties.org/oif/>).

Vietnam war battle deaths. One complication for the Vietnam War data is to specify a starting date for the US involvement in the war. US military personnel were present in Vietnam for many years; the first death recorded by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund is that of Capt. Harry Cramer who died on October 21, 1957. The Correlates of War Project codes the start of the US involvement as February 7, 1965 (Correlates of War Project 2009). Another option is the date of the Gulf of Tonkin incident which took place in August 1964 and represents perhaps the clearest political indication of the American commitment in Vietnam. For this reason, we measure battle deaths beginning September 1964 and ending January 31, 1973 (the Correlates of War Project dates the end of the US involvement as of January 27, 1973). Monthly totals were obtained from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, and the cumulative yearly death total was calculated. Following Mueller (1973), we then logged (base 10) the yearly death totals. We coded zero for all non-Vietnam War years.

Iraq war battle deaths. Yearly totals from 2003 through 2007 were calculated from the Iraq Coalition Casualty Count (<http://icasualties.org/oif/>), and the cumulative yearly death total was calculated. Like the Vietnam death totals, we logged (base 10) the war years and coded zero for all non-Iraq War years.

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Notes

1. The limited exceptions are the dynamic analyses of gender difference in partisan identification reported by Box-Steffensmeier, DeBoef, and Lin (2004) and by Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson (2002). To our knowledge, there are no studies of the yearly dynamics of gender difference on policy preferences such as the one reported here, although Elder and Greene (2007) provide some description of NES items on defense spending for several years.
2. We prefer the net support measure because of its intuitive interpretation as the percentage of crystallized opinion that prefers an increase in defense spending. However, as an empirical matter the “increase” and “decrease” responses are essentially mirrors—with negative correlation of $-.90$ (men) and $-.83$ (women).
3. For subsamples of about 500 subjects, differences in the range of 6.3–7.9 percentage points are significant (Freedman, Whelpton, and Campbell 1959). Because Gallup actually used substantially larger samples for much of the period of our analysis (an average sample size of 1,337), our conclusion that the difference is significant is actually on the conservative side. We also conducted a t test to evaluate the hypothesis that the means of the two series are equal, and rejected the hypothesis.
4. We also investigated the impact of the budget deficit (and public opinion on the deficit) on net support, but their influence proved very weak, perhaps because any competition among spending categories is captured directly by the trade-off variables. The deficit was therefore excluded from further analysis.
5. Responding to the suggestion of an anonymous reviewer, we also collected a yearly series of perceptual measures based on the Gallup Organization’s “most important problem” questions. Specifically, we evaluated the impact of the Gallup percentage who thought that international threats, war generally, or specific wars was the “most important problem.” The impact of these measures was inferior to the measure of war casualties reported here, so they were discarded from further analysis.
6. We also tested to see whether another form of external behavior, crisis involvement, had an impact on male and female net support. We created three variables from the International Crisis Behavior (ICB) data set (Brecher and Wilkenfeld, 2000): the yearly number of crises involving the United States, the yearly number of crises involving Russia, and the yearly number of ICB crises. Lagging these variables, none of them had any impact on male or female net support.
7. The broader literature on gender differences in partisanship and voting behavior focus on the 1980s as the period in which differences began to widen. See Kaufmann and Petrocik (1999).

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