

Cover story

Democrats risk alienating men

Continued from 1A

Among women has been an important source of strength, party insiders warn of the becoming so "feminized" that other half of the electorate increasingly out of reach. Men made up 52% of the vote in the 1996 presidential election, but only 48%.

Democrats can make gains in the electorate by reaching non-educated white women and children; they've been a key target, says Stan Greenberg, a Bill Clinton's pollster in the 1992 presidential campaign. "Democrats will not get a majority unless they reach better among men," he says. "It's not become a real majority yet to recapture men."

Pollster Bill McInturf says White men have voted Republican by a 20-point margin, almost all the Clinton era. "It's that is an enormous problem for Republicans."

The problem has more than one face. Democratic candidates built-in disadvantage among white men as a group tend to be conservative, more Republican than women. Men also are less forgiving of Clinton's personal indiscretions than white women. "It's a factor that colors their view of Gore," says McInturf. "It seems to have his own problem with male voters of whom question his abilities and even react negatively as a person."

Neither men nor women are a monolith, of course, and Gore's supporters include millions of men. But as a group, men and women tend to see the world, the presidency and their lives differently. Those different perspectives affect the way they assess the candidates and cast their votes.

"The 1980 election was the sharp dividing line," says James Campbell, a political scientist at the State University of New York in Buffalo who has studied gender voting patterns. "We saw a movement of white males toward the Republican Party in that election." Men were drawn to the GOP both by Reagan's conservative positions and a "tough, no-nonsense, cut-to-the-bottom-line" leadership style.

how the dispute over 6-year-old Elian Gonzalez should be settled, because of political calculation.

Even his personality comes under fire by some.

"There's the Eddie Haskell factor," says Andrew Kohut, director of the independent Pew Research Center, referring to the annoyingly solicitous kid in the old TV series *Leave it to Beaver*. "Gore reminds some people of the smartest kid in the class with all the answers, and a lot of men remember how much they disliked those kids."

In an interview this month, Gore dismissed a question about his lack of support among men and said polls at this point in the campaign aren't meaningful. Gore's strategists say he'll make a strong bid for male voters as the campaign progresses.

But the vice president will face a challenge getting the support of men such as Tom Minervini, 68, a semiretired businessman from Yonkers, N.Y., who was called in the survey. He has voted for Republicans and Democrats for president in the past, including Bill Clinton, George Bush and Ronald Reagan.

"He just seems very indecisive," Minervini says of Gore. "Whichever way the wind blows, that's the way he goes." Gov. Bush, he says, "seems to be more decisive on a lot of matters."

Different perspectives draw the dividing line

What do men want?

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The perception that Jimmy Carter wasn't tough enough to handle

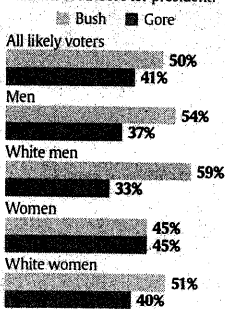


By Don Helny for USA TODAY

One man's view: Don Helny says some appeals to female voters are 'just fluff.'

Support split

Percentage of various groups of likely voters who say they support George W. Bush or Al Gore for president:



Source: USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup Poll of 502 likely voters April 7-9. Margin of error: ±5 percentage points.

By Genevieve Lynn, USA TODAY

the Iran hostage crisis or competent enough to manage the economy caused an exodus of men from Democratic ranks that year.

In 1976, exit polls showed Carter received 50% of men's votes. But in 1980, Carter got just 36% of men's votes. Since then, no Democratic presidential candidate has fared better than the 43% Clinton got in his victory over Bob Dole in 1996.

That was the first election in which men and women would have elected different presidents: Men supported Dole by a single point, and women voted for Clinton by 16 points. Some analysts worry about the repercussions for the major parties of one being dominated by women and the other by men. And there are even larger cultural implications if that sort of sharp gender divide became routine in the nation's body politic.

"I think the Democrats are seen as pro-women, and that has consequences," Greenberg says. "Democrats have run behind women having greater rights and expanded opportunity. It's not an odd conclusion men would say that Democrats reflect women's interests."

Women are more likely than men to rank education for their kids and Medicare for their aging parents as top concerns. Men are more likely than women to focus on the economy and defense. Women are more likely to see the government as a safety net they might need one day. Men are inclined to see government as a hindrance that could vex them.

"Men are designed to fight for survival, so their choices in life are fairly ruthless: 'Which candidate will lower my taxes so I can put more food on the table?'" says Greg Gutfeld of *Men's Health* magazine. "Women are more nurturing, more susceptible to emotional pleas, the fallback that I call 'what-about-the-children?' That really does tug at women. Men think, 'I can take care of my children, so lower my taxes and get out of my way.'"

In a USA TODAY survey last month, one-third of men mentioned economic issues when asked to name the most important problem facing the country today. In contrast, only one-quarter of women gave that response to the open-ended question. Twenty-three percent of women said education was the nation's top problem, but just 13% of men agreed.

"Obviously education is important, and I have children of my own," says Don Zewinski, 46, an electrician from Rocky Hill, Conn. But he sees education as a state and local issue, not a federal one. Appeals by candidates to female voters by focusing on education or campaigning at child-care centers are "just fluff," he says.

Even on the controversy over the future of Elian, men and women see the issue differently. Women were more likely to say the Cuban boy's best interests were to be reunited with his father in Cuba than stay with his relatives in Miami. But they also were more likely to protest that the government used too much force in seizing him to bring about that reunification.

Beyond specific issues, men tend to put a higher priority than women on strong leadership in a potential president. Analysts say Gore may be paying a special price with men for his nearly eight years in the supportive role of vice president. At least at the moment, men are less likely than women to see Gore as a strong leader.

Men and women can look at the same characteristics in a candidate but see them through distinctly different filters, says McInturf, who worked for Arizona Sen. John McCain's presidential campaign. In

1983, McInturf recalls conducting focus groups of undecided voters in which many men saw Reagan as a strong and decisive leader. Women were more likely to see him as a stubborn person who refused to listen to other people's opinions.

With Gore, McInturf says, some men see "wobbly" leadership while women see empathy.

Pat Buchanan, the outspoken conservative commentator who is seeking the Reform Party nomination, says many men and women identify different issues as belonging in the Oval Office.

"I grew up with the idea that the president was somebody like (Dwight) Eisenhower and Jack Kennedy — we were dealing with Communists, we were dealing with the missile crisis," says Buchanan, whose own support is disproportionately male. And education and health care? "Those issues were dealt with by HEW (the former Department of Health, Education and Welfare). Presidents don't deal with them."

Employing elements of the 'alpha male' approach

Gore's aides predict the vice president will gain support among men as the campaign progresses by using the same strategies that will build support among women.

"We have a good six to seven months to get out our message, and I think as more voters, both men and women, understand the differences between Gore's experience and agenda and Bush's, they'll swing our way," spokesman Doug Hattaway says. Strategist Bob Shrum says Gore will gain support among men by "talking about the issues he cares about and taking it to the people."

Gore's advisers now gingerly distance themselves from the advice given last year by feminist writer Naomi Wolf, who told Gore he needed to become the "alpha male," the aggressive top dog.

But at the same time, Gore aides and other Democrats also outline some specific steps that sound reminiscent of Wolf and are designed to help Gore among men. He has adopted a more casual style, often wearing cowboy boots and sometimes donning jeans, and has sought to come across to voters as a regular guy.

He's also aiming to display the self-confidence and authority.

Among the tactics:

► Doing more to introduce men to appealing aspects of Gore's background, notably his service as an Army journalist during the Vietnam War. Bush served in the Texas Air National Guard during the Vietnam era. "When the voters learn about Al Gore's life story — reporter, Vietnam vet, very strong marriage and great family — that will

help garner support from men," Gore campaign spokesman Chris Lehane says.

► Targeting men who belong to labor unions, especially in such key electoral states as Michigan, Ohio and Missouri. That's one reason Gore's strategists believed it was so critical to gain the early endorsement of the AFL-CIO.

► Performing powerfully in next fall's presidential debates. Knocking Bush off-balance or making him seem uncertain could help Gore by raising questions about Bush's leadership abilities and his competence to be president.

► Emphasizing his experience when it comes to dealing with the economy — a top issue for many men — and foreign affairs. After all, campaign aides note that white men are the demographic group that has prospered most from the expanding economy during the Clinton-Gore administration.

"Men vote much more on management of the economy and control of government spending," Greenberg, the Democratic pollster, says. "One thing that may emerge late in the campaign is that a big tax cut is like big spending."

Meanwhile, Bush will be making his own appeal to men, in part by emphasizing economic issues and his tax-cut proposal and by showing himself as a self-confident leader. Bush's easy manner and background with a pro sports team — he was managing partner of the Texas Rangers — have helped make many men see him as the more likeable candidate.

The male vote might be a work in progress

Earlier this year, a USA TODAY poll found that men were more likely to say they would enjoy having dinner with Bush; women chose Gore. Men were more likely to choose Bush to baby-sit their children; women chose Gore. Men said they'd prefer to have Bush in a foxhole with them during combat; women chose Gore.

But voters, both men and women, are still getting to know Bush, and their impressions aren't firmly set. Republican analysts caution. Campbell says men in particular may be less anchored than usual with either candidate this year. Both Bush and Gore succeeded in winning their nominations with strong support from women in the primaries while their challengers — war hero McCain and former NBA star Bill Bradley — received disproportionate support among men.

For male voters, "their first choices did not get the nomination, so they may not be completely enthusiastic about their party's nominees," Campbell said. "In this election, men probably are more persuadable."

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Computers in schools

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Miami protest

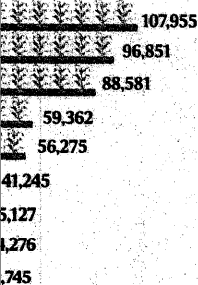
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Note: 1997 data

cultural Outlook, April 2000

asson and Marcy E. Mullins, USA TODAY

Crossword 11D
Editorial/Opinion 16-17A
Lotteries 11D
Marketplace Today 10-11D
State-by-state 14A
Stocks 4-6, 8-10B

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Heading to USA: Talexi, looking up, with other babies at the Cau Clay orphanage in Hanoi. The child, who was born in August, is being adopted by Tammy and Jarred Gasal of Jamestown, N.D.

Thursday Witnesses recall the final hours in Saigon

Friday USA TODAY staffer returns to Vietnam

Gates slips to No. 2 in tech wealth

By Edward Iwata
USA TODAY

PALO ALTO, Calif. — Bill Gates, who is facing a possible breakup of Microsoft and a slump in its stock, finally was eclipsed Tuesday as No. 1 in high-tech wealth.

Oracle CEO Larry Ellison, whose company's software powers most Web sites, won bragging rights as his stock fortune zipped past Gates' by a half-billion dollars or so.

Ellison's nearly 690 million hot Oracle shares, valued at \$75.56 each, were worth \$52.1 billion by the end of trading. Gates' 742 million shares of Microsoft at \$69.38 each totaled \$51.5 billion.

The outspoken Ellison, a legendary playboy and adventurer in Silicon Valley, has long ranted against rival Gates and the "evil" Microsoft monopoly. Neither Oracle nor Microsoft would comment on Ellison passing Gates in high-tech wealth.

The stock holdings of the two

tech titans come from recent filings made by Oracle and Microsoft to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

The most recent proxy filed by Microsoft shows Gates held 787 million shares last September. Since then he has given 44 million to foundations run by the Gates family.

If you throw in total wealth, though, Gates still leads Ellison. The Microsoft chief holds \$10 billion in assets outside of Microsoft shares, and Ellison owns \$200 million in assets beyond his Oracle stock, according to *Forbes* magazine.

At Oracle's gleaming emerald high-rises in Redwood City, Calif., employees crowded at the success of their CEO and their high-flying company, which makes e-commerce software for businesses. The Microsoft era of personal computers is ending, they said, while the



Reuters

New No. 1:
Oracle's Ellison

Age of the Internet and Oracle's Web-based software is rising.

Wall Street seems to agree. Battered by its legal war with the Justice Department, Microsoft has seen its stock dive more than 40% from its 52-week high of \$118.

Meanwhile, Oracle shares have exploded more than 500% from their 52-week low of \$11.

Gates and Ellison are far ahead of legendary investor Warren Buffett, the chairman of Berkshire Hathaway, who is worth \$28 billion, according to *Forbes*.

Meanwhile Tuesday, Justice Department officials briefed White House economic advisers on their plan to ask a federal judge to split Microsoft into two companies as a penalty for antitrust violations.

► Milestone meeting, 9A

suggested Tuesday as the issue returned to the court for the first time in eight years.

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, whose vote was critical in a decision in 1992 that affirmed a woman's right to an abortion, said she was "not certain whether the (Nebraska) statute might not prohibit" constitutionally protected procedures used after the first trimester. "It is difficult to read the statute and conclude" otherwise.

If O'Connor votes to strike Nebraska's law, it probably would provide a court majority that would doom the state's ban on the procedure as well as similar restrictions in 30 other states. That would be a significant victory for abortion rights supporters, who have been on the defensive since 1995, when abortion opponents began fighting the seldom-used procedure.

The "partial birth" bans by legislatures across the USA represent the most successful assault on abortion since the court's decision in 1992 gave states some leeway in regulating it.

The Nebraska decision, which probably will come by early July, could thrust the contentious issue of abortion into the presidential campaign. Republican nominee George W. Bush supports bans such as Nebraska's; Democratic nominee Al Gore opposes them.

"All women and families across the country have a stake in the outcome," said Vicki Saporta, director of the National Abortion Federation. "This case is about whether abortion will remain safe and legal."

James Bopp Jr., attorney for the National Right to Life Committee, said the ban's opponents "now want abortion rights extended beyond the womb."

Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer, David Souter and John Paul Stevens appeared hostile to the Nebraska ban. Chief Justice William Rehnquist and Justice Antonin Scalia appeared supportive.

Justice Clarence Thomas, who often votes with Rehnquist and Scalia, did not speak during the arguments. Justice Anthony Kennedy, like O'Connor usually a swing vote, did not indicate a preference.

► Case focuses on the 'how' of abortions, 3A

The male vote stands as Gore's Achilles' heel

By Susan Page
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — Ferocious campaigning by both presidential candidates for female voters is overshadowing the other side of the gender gap and a worrisome weakness for Al Gore.

What about men?

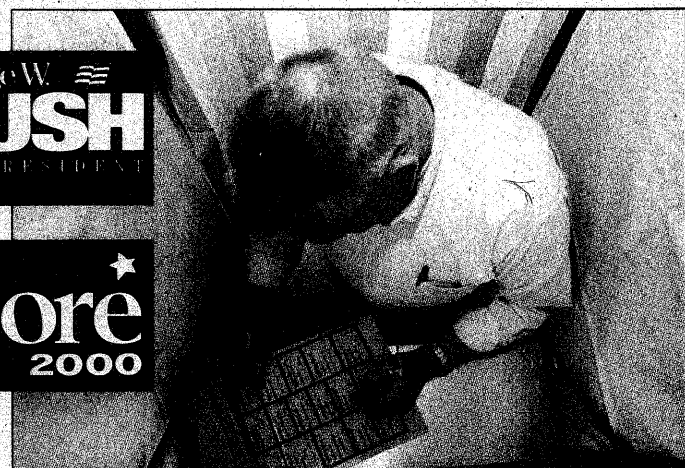
Gore has seen George W. Bush cut into the Democrats' traditional support among female voters, but the vice president also finds himself distantly trailing the Texas governor among men — a situation that has gotten less attention but presents a fundamental hurdle in his bid for the White House.

In the latest USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup Poll, Gore and Bush split the female vote evenly, but Bush led among men by 17 points and among white men by a stunning 26 points, 59%-33%.

To win in November, independent pollsters calculate that Gore must cut that gap among white men in half. Even though he would still trail among men, he could win if he built an advantage among white women and generated strong turnout among African-Americans, the Democratic Party's most loyal supporters.

Improving his standing with men looms as critical not only for Gore but for the Democratic Party in general. Although the party's

Cover story



By Steven E. Frischling, The Battleboro Reformer, via AP

Please see COVER STORY next page ►

Target vote: Donald Washburn at polls in Jacksonville, Vt.; at left, campaign posters.

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