# The Demographics of the Modern American Senate and How It Reflects the Modern American Voter

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# The Demographics of the Modern American Senate and How It Reflects the Modern American Voter

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## ABSTRACT

As a body intended to accurately represent the people of the United States, the U.S. Senate is not a very diverse group. However, it is the people themselves who vote their representatives into office. In seeking to find what qualities American voters look for in a senator, senatorial longevity is an excellent gauge. Through the analysis of previous studies and literature and the gathering of original data on the senatorial longevity of the 115th Congress, independent variables such as sex, education, and children were analyzed to determine the demographic makeup of the successful American senator; thereby also analyzing the considerations of the American voter and how to appeal to him or her. This research has determined that the only variables of statistical significance with regard to senatorial longevity are sex and number or children. Higher numbers of children correlated positively with more terms served, while sex was determined to correlate negatively with senatorial longevity; thus implying that movements such as third wave feminism have yet to penetrate the modern political atmosphere.

*Keywords*: American Government, Senate, Education, American Voter, Sex, Political Party, Children

As defined by the Constitution, U.S. senators can serve an unlimited number of six-year terms. Recent political debates have shed a negative light on senatorial longevity. From none other than President Trump himself came the call to "drain the swamp." From the phrase's use in his oratory to its frequent appearance on his Twitter account, President Trump even catalyzed the creation of a new hashtag: #DTS (Harrington 2016). It quickly became one of his campaign promises, and many Americans could relate to the image of the old American senator bickering day in and day out in the stalemate that has become Washington. However, it is not the senator, but the voter who is to blame for making the office of the Senate a lifelong career for many men and women: politicians like Bernie Sanders and Thad Cochran have enjoyed long, successful careers in the U.S. Senate. This research explores what factors and qualities correlate with senatorial longevity. What factors influence how many terms a senator is elected to serve, and what do these demographics say about the modern American voter? For the sake of this study, the variables of sex, political party, level of education, and number of children will be explored. Empirically, the Senate has been a demographically closed-off group--white, male, and middle-aged--but perhaps there is a paradigm shift occurring within the American electorate that is changing priorities and encouraging different trends in voting behavior ("Members of U.S. Congress" 2017). As voting falls into the

hands of a new generation and a population wrestling with modern questions of racial and sexual equality, it could be time that qualities such as sex are less important to voters than attributes such as education and overall qualification.

The Senate has long been a focal point of the United States government. Just like the House of Representatives, the Senate is a body directly elected by the people; its purpose is to ensure that the values, opinions, and beliefs from every corner of the United States are represented and upheld in the law-making process. However, the Senate is the upper division house of the Legislative branch for its lengthy six-year terms, unlimited number of potential terms, and its direct work and connection with the Vice-President. While the American voter should thoroughly consider every candidate for every election he or she votes in on both the state and federal levels, special consideration should be taken in voting for a senator because the senator will have a six-year influence on the state-to-federal relations in the voter's state. The Senate is a focal point of the United States government because it is the epitome of democracy and meritocracy, and it exerts a lasting influence on all legislation. For a body that for so long has been a meritocracy, the past few decades have held it as a target of negative press and social commentary as well as dwindling approval ratings ("Congress and the Public"). Cries against the legislative body by President Trump have likely not helped its public image (Rucker 2017). Senators who have made life-long careers out of policy-making have been heavily criticized or called to retire for their age (Kim and Everett 2016). Perhaps the problem lies not within the senator and his or her motives, but with the U.S. voter and his or her preferences. What has enabled senators to sit in office for year on end, term after term? What factors do U.S. voters consider when voting for their senators?

When Alexis de Tocqueville arrived in the United States in 1831 to study American government, he fell into a deep admiration of the Senate, which he claims, "contains within a small space a large proportion of the celebrated men of America" (Tocqueville, Mansfield, Winthrop 2002). As the upper house of the United States government, the Senate has always been seen as a meritocracy and often times an environment of cultivation for great political careers. The Senate is now, and has always been predominantly male, predominantly white, and predominantly Christian. In addition, the ever-increasing median age of the U.S. Senate falls today between 60 and 69 years (Desilver 2013). But perhaps there are other factors to consider in the pursuit of senatorial longevity. Author William G. Jacoby (2010) asserts that factors such as political affiliations, public policy controversies, and candidates' personal characteristics influence the American voter's choice as well. While race, sex, and religion play an undeniable role in the number of terms a senator serves, perhaps, as Jacoby argues, more personal factors such as level of education and number of children have an impact as well.

This research is relevant and essential for American society as a whole, as distortions in representations could have severe repercussions. This research will provide a view into not only the basic demographics of American senators but a deeper view into their level of education and family life. It will also provide an idea of what trends American voters follow and perhaps into what other factors contribute to votes beside political affiliation. Should this research determine a pattern, this information could be helpful to those seeking political

careers or, specifically, senatorial longevity. Previous studies have not targeted these issues. Much research has been done on the demographics of the Senate year after year, but little exploratory research has been done to delve deeper into the personal demographics of senators: elements such as religion, education level, and family life. There have also been many studies on the American people as voters, but these studies have not analyzed the relationship deep enough, and many have utilized methodologies that do not survey a large enough part of the population of eligible U.S. voters, thus skewing their findings.

## Literature Review

For the United States, the end of World War II marks the entry of mass amounts of women into the workforce. Most modern studies of women in the U.S. labor market begin here. Author Myles Godfrey (2015) uses World War II as a starting point for his article in which he examines all aspects of the female workforce. Using the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics as his primary resource, Godfrey examines labor trends through the peak of female participation in 1999, when 60% of the labor market was female, through 2012. While Godfrey thoroughly examines the various professions, age groups, and education levels that describe the female workforce over time through stratification, no information is provided or analyzed regarding female representation in government or female participation in political work. With solid research on the backgrounds and demographics of women in the private sector, the limitations of the study include the comparison of the private and public sectors and statistics from the public sector and public offices as a whole. Between the research of Myles Godfrey (2015) and Willliam G. Jacoby (2010) lies a substantial

discrepancy. The gap in research lies within the role of women in the public sector; while Jacoby (2010) argues that "personal factors" influence senatorial longevity, he fails to explore the issue of sex and how it determines the length of a senator's tenure. Likewise, while Godfrey (2015) explores the female workforce over time, he does not analyze women in public office. Therefore, the focus of this study will be on the role of sex and senatorial longevity. For the purpose of this study, sex will be defined in its most basic, biological form: the binary divide between male and female. Other variables, however, are to be considered such as level of education, number of children, and political party.

Sex is perhaps the most studied variable in all research areas of the professional world, and it is certainly the variable in this study with the most literature. With the relevance of feminism in society and high female participation in the workforce, it seems all statistics regarding professional women reflect the wage gap and the challenges modern American women face in maintaining both a family and a career. The wage gap's juxtaposition to public polling results can be seen as odd when one considers a study by the Kaiser Family Foundation which reports that 60% of women and 33.3% of men call themselves "feminists" or "strong feminists" (Weiyi and Clement 2016). While the wage gap is not an issue within the Senate, a great discrepancy does exist: in the U.S., female representation at the federal level is at a high of just 20% in the House of Representatives and 21% in the Senate ("Members of the U.S. Congress" 2017). With this dramatic difference in representation, one could make the assertion that being female lessens one's chances of becoming or staying a senator. These statistics may appear shocking as our society is the product of three waves of Feminism.

First Wave Feminism was the initial push for enfranchisement, which began at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848. The second wave swept the U.S. in a time of radical political change: the 1960s. It was deeply intertwined with civil rights and anti-war movements, and it emphasized reproductive rights. The third and current wave of feminism picked up where the second left off: the end of the 1990s. As it is still evolving, the third wave has yet to be defined but has most notably been viewed as a push for empowerment and a redefining of "feminine beauty" (Rampton 2015). In theory, the three waves of feminism have secured equality for women in American society, but if this is the case, then why in 2017 do only 21 women serve on a 100-member Senate? The most senior female senators, Patty Murray and Dianne Feinstein, have served five terms to date while Patrick Leahy, the most senior male senator, has served eight. On the official website of the United States Senate, not one of the 25 longest-serving Senators is female ("Longest Serving Senators").

O'Neill and O'Reilly (2004, 23) conclude that it is not gender or sex that determines the success of one's career, but "compliance with organizational preferences and hard work." While this study was completed in the private sector and did not deny the existence of the wage gap, it concluded that women are given equal opportunities to succeed in their respective careers. The main behaviors the authors concluded that the women studied did not express were those of leadership and ambition for higher-up and leadership positions. This study certainly goes against the battle cries of female empowerment and pride so commonly seen in the news and on social media today, and because it took place in the private sector, it is not as applicable to this research project. It also focused on the role of gender in the private workplace—a topic that will not be addressed in this study. The approach authors O'Neill and O'Reilly (2004) take on the issue seems to border on stereotyping, as the sexes cannot be broken down strictly into "masculine" and "feminine" attributes. In addition, their study did not analyze potential confounding variables. Although, two other points could be used to support O'Neill and O'Reilly's argument. The first point is that the 115th congress of 2017 marks an all-time high for female representation in not just the Senate, but the House of Representatives too. According to Desilver (2015), since the first woman was elected to serve in the Senate in 1916, female representation has been rising in gradual chunks. Another point Desilver (2015) makes brings in political party as a factor: women make up one-third of all House Democrats and 32% of all Senate Democrats, while they make up only 9% of House Republicans and 11% of Senate Republicans. The second point that sheds light on O'Neill and O'Reilly's findings is based on a survey presented by Weiyi and Clement (2016). This aforementioned survey makes the claim that 60% of women and 33% of men consider themselves to be Feminists or strong Feminists. With such strong support for equality, perhaps a study needs to dig deeper into the discrepancy than a generalized answer can provide.

O'Neill and O'Reilly's (2004) approach to the topic is also not the only perspective. There are many arguments as to why the wage gap and other such discrepancies exist. Another relevant argument that could potentially impact the careers of women in both the private and public sector is the "motherhood penalty." Seen as a common phenomenon in the business world, the motherhood penalty paints women as "easily distractible" on the job while fathers are viewed as quite the

opposite: more responsible and less likely to be "flaky" (Miller 2014). This issue has not been examined in the public sector at all, but number of children will later be analyzed as an independent variable in this study; confirmation or dissolution of this theory in the public sector could be determined by this research.

There are many approaches to the issue, and many schools of thought hail from the patriarchal development of both the private and public sector. Author Brad Seligman (2005) wrestles with the issue of patriarchy in the epitome of the U.S. private sector: Wal-Mart. Investigating six class-action employment discrimination lawsuits filed against Wal-Mart, Seligman delves deep into every tier of the all-American company to confirm, "negative gender stereotypes permeate Wal-Mart at all levels." Seligman's research also found that since 1997, in every different company district, female employees earned less per year despite higher performance reviews and company rank. Seligman's study is an insight to just one—although massive—American business structure. His findings cannot be generalized to match the structures and business models of every American firm, but they are nonetheless disturbing and definitive support for the role of patriarchy in stunting women's career development. Overall, there are many studies on female workforce participation in the private sector, and there are flat statistics on women in public office, but no study has sought to further explore this issue. Women in the Senate do not obtain their careers based upon only hard work or leadership ambitions: they rely on the votes of the American people. Historically, women have occupied fewer seats in the Senate than their male counterparts. Considering that 2017 boasts the highest portion of women that have ever been in the Senate—21%-- it is easy to hypothesize that sex plays a role in

senatorial longevity, a topic that has never been researched or studied from the female perspective.

Education, too, plays a substantial role in American careers and society. Even in 1831, Alexis de Tocqueville labeled the American Senate a meritocracy: the same could be assumed today (Tocqueville, Mansfield, and Winthrop 2002). However, the impact of education on senatorial longevity has yet to be explored, and this is the second hypothesis to be tested. The rationale is clear behind this hypothesis: those with higher education, and therefore, presumably high levels of determination, work ethic, and intelligence, will serve more terms than those with lower levels of education.

One study compares the levels of education of the U.S. population with the population of U.S. elected officials, and the results are unsurprising: only 19% of the average American population holds a Bachelor's degree with the percentage for further advanced degrees trailing even lower. However, the average elected official, including senators, representatives, and governors, boasts a remarkable 45% with professional degrees (Ashaboglu and Jackson 2015). Based on these results, I expect that higher levels of education will correlate with the number of terms a senator serves in office. Previous literature for this variable, however, is more focused on the role of education and how it impacts the public's civic activity and duty. Campbell (2006) found that higher levels of electorate education improve rates of social capital and civic engagement. No studies have really been conducted on the reverse: how the education levels of civic actors influence the choices voters make in the polls or how many terms they serve.

The last area of analysis is more personal: number of children. A point that remains to be analyzed is the shifting image and functionality of the American family. With both parents working, and often times, both parents pursuing enduring, active career paths, where does the role of family fit in--particularly in the world of elected officials where the victory and security of one office means a quick celebration and then a leap back onto the campaign trail? Although senators serve six-year terms, their relationship and availability to their electorate can never be compromised. In one study, the authors found that, at least for the private sector, those with children can be seen as less committed or determined in their work efforts than those without children (Almerm, Cohen, and Single 2004). It is logical to presume that those with large families may seek careers with greater flexibility and sustainability than public offices. It is also logical that voters may take into account how much a senator has on his or her plate before voting in his or her favor. Having more children, and therefore more responsibility at home, could signify to some voters that the senator may not have as much time to dedicate to his or her career.

It is not to be forgotten, however, that sex plays a role here as well. Perhaps like in the private sector, male senators with children will receive the "fatherhood bonus" while female senators with children will bear the "motherhood penalty" (Miller 2014). Therefore, it will be necessary to consider sex as an omnipresent, influential factor. Essentially all research done on the impact of family life on career has taken place in the private sector. Although, it is logical to believe that in the public sector, the impact of children or large families could be multiplied due to the nature of public service and all of its demands.

## Theoretical Perspective

Given the previous literature, it is clear to see that many limitations exist within the studies of modern voter behavior and the modern American senator. This research study could show that voters are prioritizing qualities such as education and family-orientation over historically-considered factors like race and sex. Through three independent variables: sex, education, and children, there could be a correlation with senatorial longevity. I hypothesize that all of these variables will have an impact on the number of terms a senator is elected to serve. Being female will likely decrease the number of terms a senator serves, as historically so few women have served in the Senate, and no woman makes the United States Senate's list of the top 25 longest serving senators ("Longest Serving Senators" 2017). The percentage of female representation today is also severely low despite the movements for equality that have been active for so long. Higher education will likely have a positive impact on senatorial longevity. It is rational, based on previous research, to believe that higher levels of education will correlate with longer careers in this public office. Especially since research indicates that on average, elected officials have substantially higher levels of education than the American public. The history of the Senate and its senators also plays a role here. As Tocqueville, Mansfield, and Winthrop (2002) claim, senators are of America's "best and brightest." Lastly, having a larger family may lower the number of terms one serves in the Senate, as this career may not suit the lifestyle of large families. The American voter may also perceive this as a weakness in a potential representative.

## Methodology, Data Collection and Analysis

To operationalize the aforementioned terms, the dependent variable, senatorial longevity, is defined as the number of full, six-year terms a senator serves. Should the senator not complete one of his or her terms, whatever the reason may be, that term will not be counted. One six-year term will be accounted for as a "1" in the dataset, two six-year terms will be accounted for as a "2" in the dataset, and so on. The independent variable of sex will be simply operationalized, as for this project, gender will not be considered. All male senators will be assigned the number "1", and all female senators will be assigned the number "2". The independent variable of education will be categorized into numerical levels: those with a high school education and no more will be counted as a "1" in the dataset, those with some college or a bachelor's degree in any field will be counted as a "2" in the dataset, those with a master's degree in any discipline will be counted as a "3" in the dataset, and those with a professional degree in any field will receive a "4" in the dataset. Less than a high school education will be filled with a "0". The discipline in which the senator received his or her degree will not be analyzed, nor will the place of education or time in which the senator attended school (as a traditional or nontraditional student). Lastly, the independent variable of children will be numerically accounted for, and step-children will be counted. One child will be denoted with a "1", and so on. For all variables, if data is missing, it will be programmed as a ".".

The constant variables analyzed in this project include: political party, state, and congress. Political party is programmed as follows: A Democratic senator will receive a "1", a Republican senator will receive a "2", and an Independent party senator will receive a "3." The home state of the senator is not coded numerically, but nominally by the initials of the said state. The congress number of the senator is the number of convention for the year in which they were first elected to the U.S. Senate ("Years of the 1st Through 115th Congress (1798-2018)" 2017). For example, a senator elected to office for the first time to serve in January of 2017 will receive the number "115", as January 2017 marks the convention of the 115th congress.

Most of the data retrieved for this project was original research. Through the official website of the U.S. Senate, basic statistics such as congressional year, political party, state, and sex were obtained. However, the official website of the U.S. Senate also provides links to the official websites of all U.S. senators. The websites of the individual senators mark the reference point for the more personal data such as education level and children. Information on all 100 members of the 115th Congress was accessed in this way. The data were then compiled into SPSS for analysis.
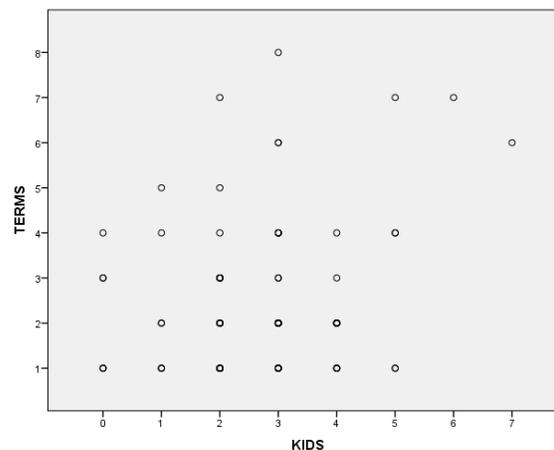
## Results



*Figure 1.* Number of Children vs. Number of Served Terms

The scatterplots made from the data do indicate trends. Figure 1 examines the relationship between senatorial terms served and the number of children or stepchildren a senator has. This graph indicates that there is a weak positive relationship (0.283) between the two variables. Most of the data lies in the lower portion of the graph, situated around four or fewer children. This graph would likely produce a Bell curve where the majority of the data lies in the middle.
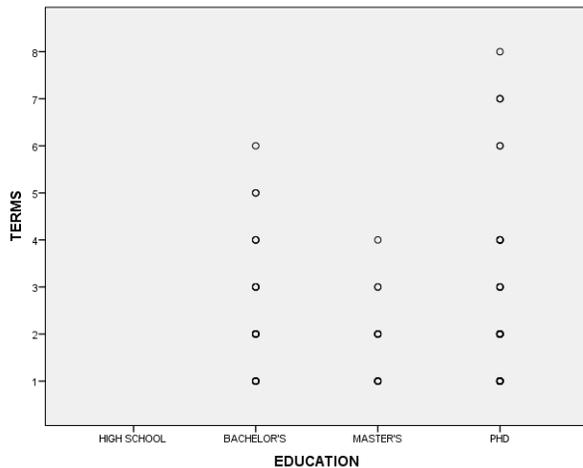


*Figure 2*. Level of Education vs. Number of Terms Served

The second scatterplot (Figure 2), displays terms served versus level of education. It shows a positive relationship: as education increases, the number of terms served increases by 0.015. This graph is heavily weighted in favor of higher levels of education. In terms of sex and terms served (Figure 3), the scatterplot indicates a negative relationship as it appears that being female lessens one's stay in the Senate by approximately 0.430. Lastly, for the impact of one's political party on terms of service in the Senate (figure not shown), there is not an identifiable linear relationship, although this is to be expected. This correlation coefficient can be expected to fluctuate, as the number of Democrats and Republicans in the senate do

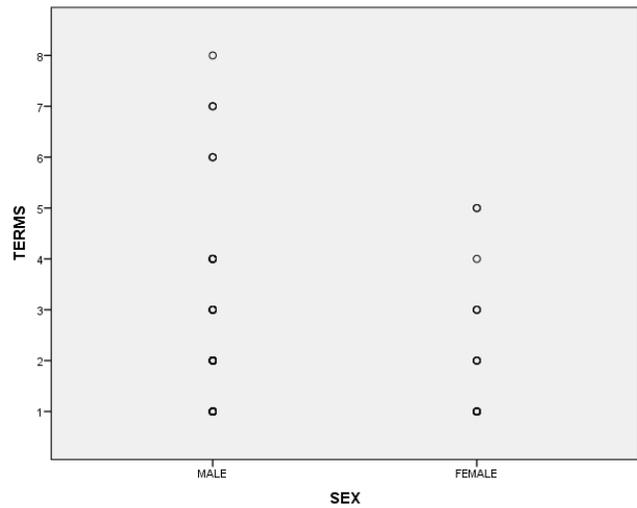each year. For this test, the correlation coefficient was -0.041.



*Figure 3*. Sex vs. Number of Terms Served

| Variable | R-Squared | F-Value | Un-standar-dized Beta | Sig. Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sex | 0.002 | 2.768 | - 0.430 | 0.012 |
| Kids | 0.052 | 5.104 | 0.283 | 0.026 |
| Education | 0.000 | 0.006 | 0.015 | 0.936 |

*Figure 4*. Regression Analyses

According to Figure 4, there is no statistical significance for the impact of education on number of served terms. The significance level, 0.936, lies above the 0.05 threshold. Because the F value for these two variables lies on the lower side, 0.006, this indicates that the "treatment" or level of education does not have as much of an effect as hypothesized. For the relationship between kids and terms served, the results were statistically significant with a significance level of 0.026. This variable also had the highest F value, meaning that it creates the largest treatment effect of the explored variables. In terms of sex, the test proves to

be statistically significant with a significance value of 0.012: less than the alpha value of 0.05. The F value is 2.768 which displays a moderate treatment effect in comparison to the other independent variables. Lastly, the test on party proved to be statistically insignificant as it passes the alpha threshold with a significance level of 0.373. The F value for these variables is 0.996, which is on the lower side meaning that treatment has less effect.

$$Kids: Terms = 1.629 + 0.283 + E$$
$$Education: Terms = 2.291 + 0.015 + E$$
$$Sex: Terms = 2.861 - 0.430 + E$$

For the first independent variable, children, a one unit change in children predicts a 0.283 increase in terms served. This means that for every additional child a senator has, he or she will likely increase his or her served terms by 0.283. The second independent variable, education, shows that for each additional level of education achieved, a senator increases his or her length in office by 0.015. Lastly, the independent variable of sex, predicts that per unit change of X, terms served decreases by 0.430. This variable hinges on the way it was coded. In the dataset, men were coded as "1" and women as "2", so essentially being female decreases the length of stay in office by 0.430.

All of the R-squared values are low. They are all far from a linear relationship, meaning that they are very scattered. This is evident in the scatterplots shown at the top of the results section (Figures 1-3). The regression output and the ANOVA tests complement each other. For the aforementioned variables of education and children, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. For the variable of sex, we reject the null hypothesis.

$$Terms = 1.571 + 0.44 (education) + 0.285 (kids) - 0.026 (sex) - 0.041(political\ party) + E$$

The results from the multiple regression test differ from the linear regression test. Overall, for the multiple regression test, the independent variables of education and kids had a larger impact on the dependent variable, whereas sex had a lesser effect. It is likely that the difference of results comes down to the control variable added: party. However, even with the addition of the control variable, the R-squared value is still weak. This shows that while all of these variables do have an impact on the length of terms a senator serves, none of them have a massive impact. The variable with the greatest standardized beta coefficient, and therefore the greatest effect on the dependent variable overall is the number of kids a senator has.
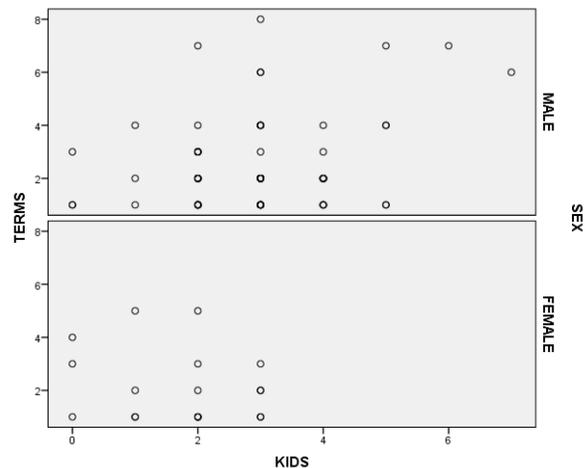


*Figure 5*. Number of Children vs. Number of Served Terms Stratified by Sex

Figures 5 and 6 will be examined further in the section of discussion, but essentially, they analyze the relationship between the sex of a senator, the number of children he or she has, as well as the number

of terms he or she served. Figure 5 displays the significant skew is male senatorial longevity as well as in number of children. Figure 6 reinforces Figure 5.

| SEX | KIDS | TERMS | EDUCATION | PARTY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male Mean | 2.91 | 2.43 | 3.33 | 1.65 |
| Male Std. Dev. | 1.248 | 1.654 | 0.873 | 0.532 |
| Female Mean | 1.74 | 2.00 | 3.29 | 1.24 |
| Female Std. Dev. | 1.046 | 1.654 | 0.873 | 0.436 |
| Total Mean | 2.68 | 2.34 | 3.32 | 1.56 |
| Total Std. Dev | 1.294 | 1.597 | 0.875 | 0.538 |

*Figure 6.* All Variables Stratified by Sex

## Discussion

Overall, the only variables analyzed that have a statistically significant impact on the dependent variable of senatorial terms served are number of children and sex. This is surprising because it is particularly logical to think that level of education would have a substantial effect on the number of terms a senator serves. The original hypothesis, that higher levels of education lead to longer stays in office, can be refuted. The claim that more children will decrease the length of one's stay in office can be refuted as well, as the testing found that having more children actually correlates with serving more terms in office. The claim that being a male senator leads to a longer stay in office cannot be refuted. For sex, the findings were as predicted: being female correlates with fewer terms in office. For education, the findings were as predicted, but they were not statistically significant. For number of children, however, the hypothesis was completely overturned because the data shows that having more children statistically increases one's length of stay in office.

One of the most telling findings of the study can be seen in Figures 5 and 6. Figure 5 very clearly displays not only the discrepancy of served terms that lies between male and female senators, but it also illustrates that on average, female senators have fewer children than male senators. This finding can serve as confirmation that the "motherhood penalty" and "fatherhood bonus" are applicable concepts in the public sector. Visually, the large blank space in the female category of Figure 5 is very telling to the differences between the sexes. Figure 6 simply supports Figure 5 by confirming that the mean number of children per male senator is 2.91 while the mean number of children per female senator is 1.74.

## Conclusion

There is still more research to be done on this topic. This study was limited in timeframe and could not delve into the evolution of the American Senate over time. A more extensive study, perhaps beginning with the convention of the very first Congress in 1789, could really trace the changing demographics of the Senate, thus providing an image of how the American voter has changed over time as well. There is also a limitation on the resources available for the more personal variables such as education level and number of children, as there is no official, published documentation regarding any aspect of the Senators' personal lives. A study of greater depth would require much more extensive and personal research.

The greatest factor not targeted in this study was race. There is extensive research to be done regarding voting trends since the Civil Rights movement and Voting Rights Act of 1965. Given the limit of timeframe and the current limit of racial diversity in the Senate, it was not chosen as a variable for this study. The central

independent variable of this study was sex, and including another large-scale, literature-rich variable such as race would have required an extended timeline. However, there are many other independent variables to be explored in addition to race such as military service, place of education, financial status, place of birth, economic background, public image, and previous field of work. One intriguing recent survey found that there is a significant increase in public offices filled by businessmen and women ("Vital Statistics on Congress" 2017). There is much more work to be done in decoding the complex algorithm that the American voter follows. Another aspect of this study that requires further attention is the ratio of male to female candidates actively pursuing a position in office. It is possible that the data could be skewed by a deficit of female candidates and an abundance of male candidates. On the other hand, analysis on the American voter could be conducted as a continuation of this study. Voting patterns were not analyzed at all throughout the study, and public polls and opinion polls were referenced only sparingly. Essentially, the product of a more exhaustive study would provide a much clearer illustration of both the Senate itself and the changing image of the American voter. This research, however, could potentially provide a solid starting point for more research to continue.

I theorized that higher education level would correlate with an increase in senatorial longevity, and more children and being female would correlate with a decrease in senatorial longevity. However, the only variable for which we reject the null hypothesis is sex, and in fact, children were correlated with senatorial longevity in the opposite direction as predicted. The choice of the American voter is still impacted by sex, but there are many other confounding variables to be explored that potentially play

a role as well. There is much to analyze when looking at the demographics of the U.S. Senate retrospectively. While I hypothesized that the choices of the American people would reflect the current social equality movements and push for higher education, it appears that sexism still has a place in society. The sexism that American politics faces today likely comes in a variety of forms: from voter bias or gender discrimination to "the result of barriers to entering politics" for women (Anastasopoulos 2015). Perhaps American women are simply not running. The modern American voter has yet to break through the 'glass ceiling' of the political world: women are not equally represented. The de facto strive for gender equality has yet to be made, and this is the only variable that was decisively analyzed in this study. Public polls may show support for feminism, but it appears that third wave feminism has yet to take its empowerment movement into the political arena (Weiyi and Clement 2016). This could be feminism's next stride: equal representation of the sexes and the elimination of the "motherhood penalty" in both the public and private sectors.

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