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Marriage Gap Bigger Than Gender Gap, With Married People More Supportive Than Singles Are To Bush and Republicans, Annenberg Data Show

The marriage gap is bigger than the gender gap on a wide range of political issues, from opinions of George W. Bush and John Kerry to party allegiance or a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage, the University of Pennsylvania's National Annenberg Election Survey shows.

While the gender gap, or the political differences between men and women, has intrigued politicians and women's organizations since the early 1980s, the greater differences between married and single people, though first noted at about the same time, have received less attention.

But this survey shows that the differences between married men and married women are either slight or statistically insignificant. In contrast, people who do not live with a spouse are considerably more liberal and critical of Bush than are married Americans.

For example, polling of 1,641 adults conducted from June 16 through June 30 showed that 54 percent of respondents either married or living as married approved of how President Bush was handling his job, while 41 percent disapproved. Among those never married, widowed, divorced or separated, 42 percent approved and 56 percent disapproved. The differences between men and women were much smaller. Men divided evenly, with 48 percent approving and 48 percent disapproving; unusually, awomen were slightly positive, with 51 percent approving and 46 percent disapproving.

Fifty-five percent of married women approved, as did 53 percent of married men. Just 43 percent of single women and 41 percent of single men did so.

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Similarly, 32 percent of married people called themselves Republicans and 31 percent said they were Democrats, while among single people, 19 percent were Republicans and 38 percent Democrats. The gender differences were smaller; 26 percent of men were Republicans and 30 percent were Democrats while 28 percent of women were Republicans and 37 percent were Democrats.

Adam Clymer, political director of the survey, said “Single respondents may be more negative toward Bush and the Republicans, when compared to married respondents, because they had lower incomes and were much younger, at a time when young people are least supportive of Bush.” Men and women, he said, show much smaller differences in household income and age.

“About half of the single respondents have family incomes under \$35,000 per year, compared to about a fourth of married respondents,” he said. “And 52 percent of everybody in that under \$35,000 income group disapproves of Bush’s handling of his job as president, while 43 percent approves. Among those with higher incomes, 54 percent approve and 45 percent disapprove.”

Thirty-eight percent the single respondents were 18 to 29, compared to just 11 percent of the married respondents. In that age group, where voting rates are lower than they are among older Americans, 50 percent disapproved of Bush’s handling of the presidency, while 46 percent approved.

The margin of sampling error for the entire sample was plus or minus two percentage points. For men, women and married people it was plus or minus three points, and for single people it was plus or minus four points.

The marriage gap differences were bigger than the gender gap on questions ranging from approval of Bush’s handling of the economy, the war on terrorism, the war in Iraq. They were also bigger on the issues of a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage and a ban on all abortions.

There were also significant differences on personal economic status and whether people knew someone who had lost a job in the last six months. Fifty percent of married people, but just 34 percent of single people, said their own economic condition was excellent or good. And 39 percent of married respondents, but 59 percent of singles, said they or someone they knew had lost his or her job because of economic conditions.

Only one question in the Annenberg survey stood out as showing the gender gap bigger than the marriage gap. Asked whether the government should do more about controlling the kinds of guns people can buy, 59 percent of married people and 61 percent of single people said it should. But only 51 percent of men, compared to 69 percent of women, favored more gun restrictions.

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At the same time, there were a number of questions on which there was no meaningful difference between the sizes of the gender gaps and marriage gaps. For example, when asked if the country was going in the right direction or off on the wrong track, 52 percent of married people said wrong track while 39 percent said right direction. Single people were even gloomier, with 63 percent saying wrong track and 30 percent saying right direction.

But that gap was about the same as the difference between men and women on the question. Fifty percent of men said “wrong track,” and 43 percent said “right direction.” Among women, 61 percent said wrong track and 28 percent said right direction.

Other questions where the two gaps were of about equal sizes were whether the war in Iraq had been worth it and whether it had increased the risk of terrorism against the United States, the condition of the national economy, the desirability of private school vouchers and greater federal aid to public schools.

That National Annenberg Election Survey, the largest academic election poll, is a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania (www.AnnenbergPublicPolicyCenter.org). It has been tracking the presidential campaign since October 7, and interviewing will continue until after Election Day. Dr. Kathleen Hall Jamieson is the director of the survey. Ken Winneg is the managing director of the survey. Adam Clymer is the political director of the survey.

Another major election project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center is FactCheck.org, a project that tries to hold politicians accountable by exposing false or misleading campaign statements. It is available online at www.FactCheck.Org.

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Questions

- A. Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president?

	Approve	Disapprove
Total	50%	47%
All Single	42%	56%
All Married	54%	41%
All Men	48%	48%
All Women	51%	46%
Single Men	41%	58%
Married Men	53%	41%
Single Women	43%	54%
Married Women	55%	41%

- B. Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the nation's economy?

	Approve	Disapprove
Total	43%	51%
All Single	35%	60%
All Married	49%	46%
All Men	46%	50%
All Women	41%	52%
Single Men	38%	59%
Married Men	51%	44%
Single Women	32%	61%
Married Women	46%	47%

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C. Would you favor or oppose an amendment to the U.S. Constitution saying that no state can allow two men or two women to marry each other?

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Total	37%	6%	9%	39%
All Single	29%	7%	12%	42%
All Married	42%	6%	7%	36%
All Men	42%	7%	7%	36%
All Women	33%	6%	10%	41%
Single Men	28%	9%	14%	42%
Married Men	49%	7%	4%	32%
Single Women	30%	6%	11%	43%
Married Women	34%	6%	9%	40%

D. Do you favor or oppose banning all abortions?

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Total	25%	6%	17%	46%
All Single	19%	4%	20%	52%
All Married	29%	8%	15%	43%
All Men	26%	6%	20%	42%
All Women	25%	6%	14%	50%
Single Men	19%	4%	22%	48%
Married Men	30%	8%	20%	38%
Single Women	19%	4%	19%	55%
Married Women	28%	8%	11%	48%

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E. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as:

	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Total	27%	34%	27%
All Single	19%	38%	29%
All Married	32%	31%	26%
All Men	26%	30%	31%
All Women	28%	37%	24%
Single Men	20%	31%	34%
Married Men	30%	29%	29%
Single Women	19%	44%	25%
Married Women	34%	33%	23%

F. Generally speaking, would you describe your political views as:

	Conservative	Moderate	Liberal
Total	37%	36%	24%
All Single	31%	35%	30%
All Married	40%	37%	20%
All Men	38%	37%	22%
All Women	36%	36%	26%
Single Men	31%	37%	27%
Married Men	42%	37%	18%
Single Women	32%	34%	32%
Married Women	38%	37%	22%

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G. Do you feel things in this country are generally going in the right direction, or do you think things are seriously off on the wrong track?

	Right direction	Wrong track
Total	35%	56%
All Single	30%	63%
All Married	39%	52%
All Men	43%	50%
All Women	28%	61%
Single Men	42%	52%
Married Men	44%	49%
Single Women	19%	72%
Married Women	34%	55%

H. All in all, do you think the situation in Iraq is worth going to war over, or not?

	Yes, worth it	No, not worth it
Total	41%	52%
All Single	35%	59%
All Married	46%	47%
All Men	46%	48%
All Women	37%	55%
Single Men	40%	55%
Married Men	50%	43%
Single Women	29%	63%
Married Women	43%	50%

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I. Do you favor or oppose the government giving tax credits or vouchers to help parents send their children to private schools?

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Total	32%	18%	16%	30%
All Single	30%	18%	20%	28%
All Married	33%	18%	13%	31%
All Men	37%	17%	15%	27%
All Women	27%	18%	16%	33%
Single Men	37%	15%	20%	24%
Married Men	37%	18%	13%	29%
Single Women	23%	20%	20%	32%
Married Women	29%	17%	14%	34%

J. Do you think the federal government should do more, the same, less, or nothing at all about restricting the kinds of guns that people can buy?

	More about it	Same as now	Less about it	Do nothing at all
Total	60%	21%	10%	8%
All Single	61%	20%	9%	6%
All Married	59%	21%	10%	8%
All Men	51%	24%	14%	9%
All Women	69%	17%	6%	6%
Single Men	53%	26%	10%	8%
Married Men	50%	22%	16%	10%
Single Women	70%	15%	8%	6%
Married Women	68%	19%	5%	7%

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Survey Methodology

The National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES) is a survey conducted each presidential election by the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania.

The 2004 National Annenberg Election Survey is based on telephone interviews which began October 7, 2003 and will continue past Election Day.

The sample of telephone exchanges called was randomly selected by a computer from a complete list of thousands of active residential exchanges across the country. Within each exchange, random digits were added to form a complete telephone number, thus permitting access to both listed and unlisted numbers. Within each household, one adult was designated by a random procedure to be the respondent for the survey. The interviewing is conducted by Schulman, Ronca, Bucuvalas, Inc.

The results have been weighted to take account of household size and number of telephone lines into the residence and to adjust for variation in the sample relating to geographic region, sex, race, age and education.

This report deals with interviewing conducted from June 16 through June 30, when 1,641 adults were interviewed.

In theory, in 19 cases out of 20 the results for these interviews will differ by no more than two percentage points, up or down, from what would have been obtained by interviewing all American adults. For smaller subgroups, the margin of sampling error would be higher. For men, women and married people it was plus or minus three points, and for single people it was plus or minus four points. Moreover, some questions were not asked of all respondents, which would lead to higher potential sampling errors.

In addition to sampling error, the practical difficulties of conducting any survey of public opinion may introduce other sources of error into the poll. Variations in the wording and order of questions, for example, may lead to somewhat different results.

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