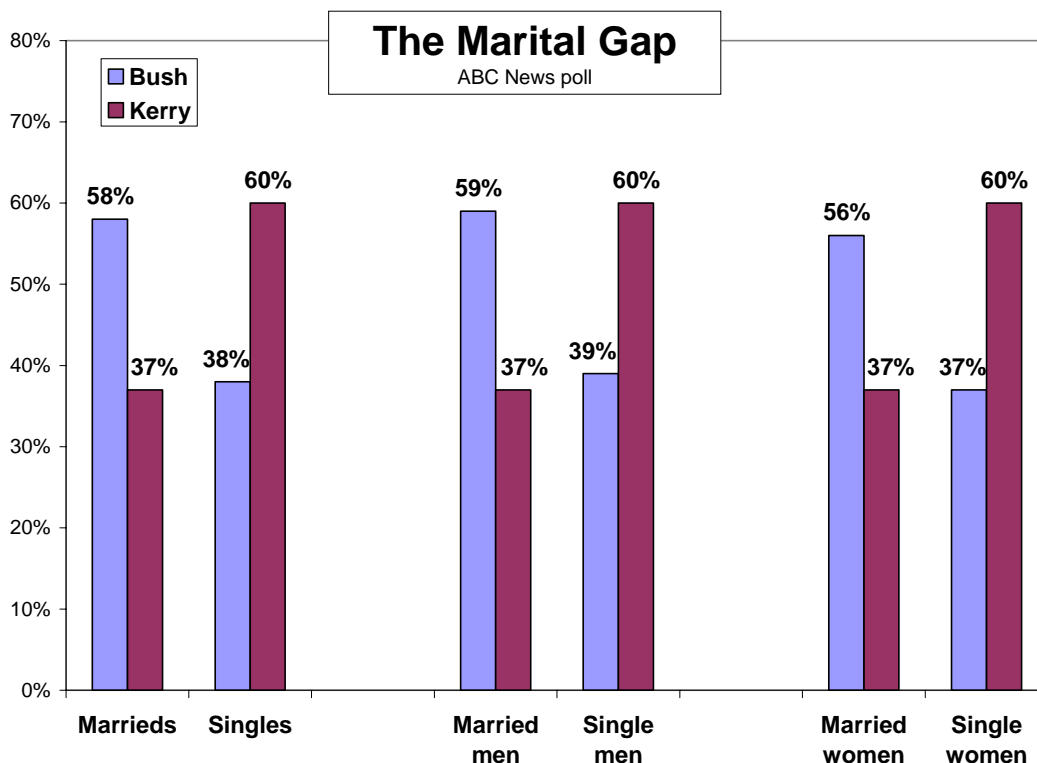


Gender Gap Might be Passé: Now it's the Marriage Gap

The gender gap just might be passé. This year's electorate currently is divided more along marital lines than gender lines, a contrast from the last presidential election.

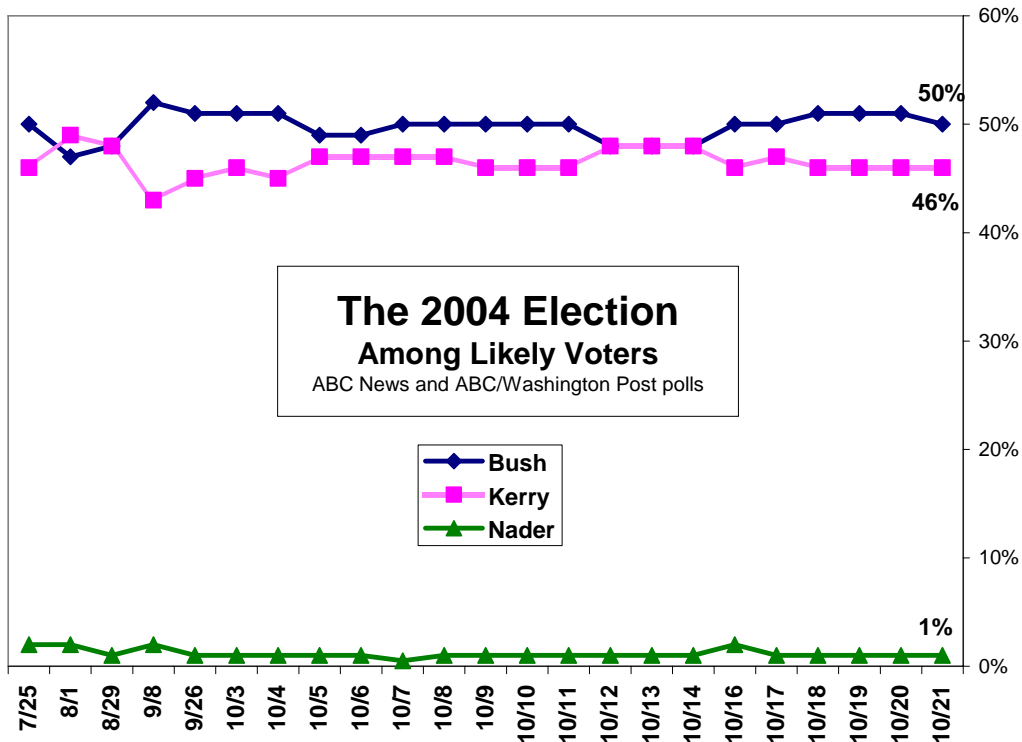
Men support George W. Bush over John Kerry by an eight-point margin in the latest ABC News tracking poll, while women are split between the candidates. In 2000 there was a bigger difference between the sexes: Bush +11 among men, Al Gore +11 among women.

Polls are not predictive and the final breakdown remains to be seen. But as of now, marital status tells more of a story. Married voters – men and women – are strong Bush groups: Married women support him by 19 points, 56-37 percent, and married men by 22 points, 59-37 percent. Kerry, though, is favored by six in 10 single men and women alike.



One difficulty for Kerry is that there are a lot more married voters than single ones. More than a third of likely voters, 37 percent, are single, compared with 63 percent married. That's very similar to the turnout in 2000, as measured in the national exit poll.

Overall, this ABC News tracking poll, based on interviews Tuesday through Thursday, finds Bush with 50 percent support among likely voters, Kerry with 46 percent and one percent for Ralph Nader. That's about where it's been since Saturday.



SEX and MARRIAGE – What's different from 2000 is Bush's bigger advantage among married women, and his bigger shortfall among single men. Bush in 2000 ran about evenly with Gore among married women and single men alike. Now Bush is winning married women, but losing single men.

	Now		2000 Exit poll	
	Bush-Kerry	Gap	Bush-Gore	Gap
Married men	59-37%	Bush +22	56-39%	Bush +17
Single men	39-60	Kerry +21	45-46	Gore +1
Married women	56-37	Bush +19	49-48	Bush +1
Single women	37-60	Kerry +23	33-63	Gore +30

Married women and single men – two more swingable groups – have indeed been the most changeable. Candidate support among married men (a core Bush group) and single women (a core Kerry group) has been largely consistent since tracking began Oct. 1. By contrast, Bush is doing a bit better now with married women, and Kerry with single men.

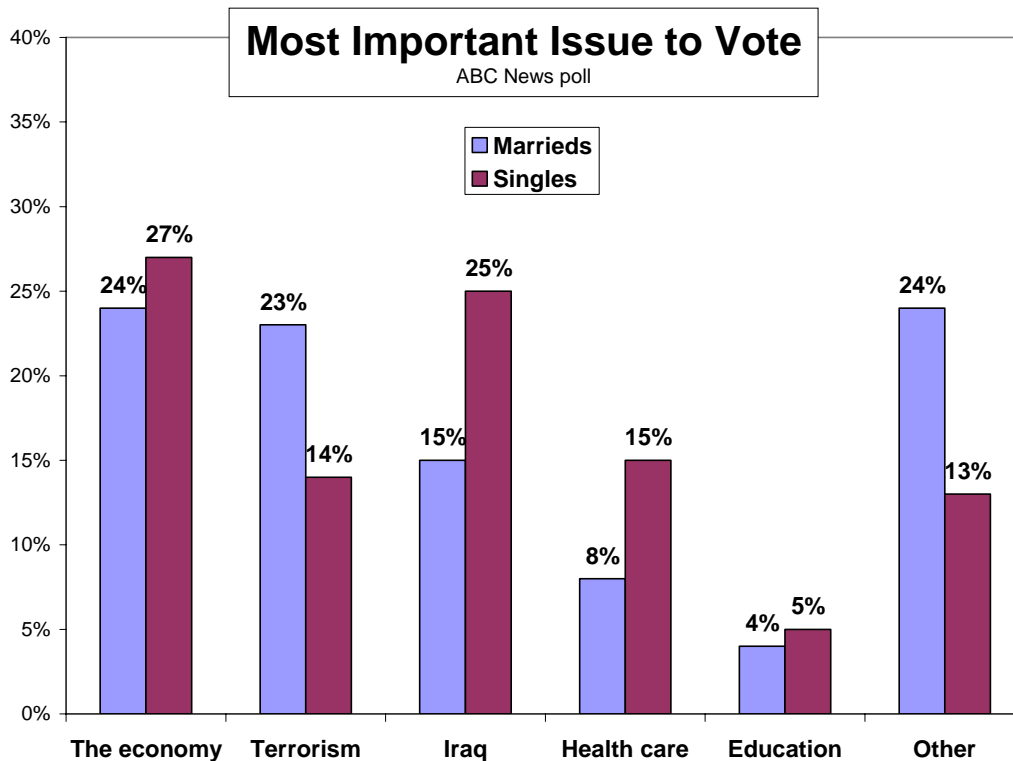
Age is a significant factor here. Single men and women are disproportionately young, and, as per yesterday's ABC News tracking poll analysis, Kerry does best with young voters – one of the groups whose turnout may prove critical.

It follows that among single voters, Kerry does best with young singles; he leads but less widely among older single women, and older single men divide about evenly. (Singles include people who have never been married, as well as those who are separated, divorced or widowed.) Bush's support is even among married men across age, and a bit better among younger married women than older ones.

	Unmarried Men		Unmarried Women	
	Under 40	40+	Under 40	40+
Support Bush	39%	48	29%	41
Support Kerry	58	46	69	55

	Married Men		Married Women	
	Under 40	40+	Under 40	40+
Support Bush	61%	58	60	52
Support Kerry	36	39	34	46

ISSUES and ATTRIBUTES – Issue priorities in this election reflect the difference in vote preference between married and single voters. Married voters are more likely to cite terrorism as the most important issue in their vote – Bush's best issue. Singles are more apt to cite Iraq and health care (the latter is Kerry's best issue).



Ratings of Bush and Kerry follow a similar pattern as vote choice. Married men and women are more likely to approve of the job Bush is doing as president and to have a favorable impression of him. Among singles, though, some gender differences appear – single men are closely split on their ratings of Bush, while single women by double digits disapprove of Bush's work in office and view him unfavorably.

Married likely voters are also more apt to call Bush the stronger leader and the more honest and trustworthy candidate. Again, single women are particularly negative on Bush. They're the least likely to call Bush the stronger leader, and the most likely to call Kerry more honest, clearer in his positions, and – by 25 points – to say he better understands their problems. Marrieds, in contrast, call Bush more empathetic.

	Married		Single	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Bush's job:				
Approve	60%	57	50%	39
Disapprove	38	42	49	58
Opinion of Bush:				
Favorable	60	57	49	37
Unfavorable	37	37	44	52
Opinion of Kerry:				
Favorable	43	44	51	51
Unfavorable	50	45	40	32
Stronger leader:				
Bush	63	59	56	47
Kerry	30	35	37	43
More honest:				
Bush	56	52	43	35
Kerry	34	38	39	48
Clearer stand:				
Bush	64	55	52	40
Kerry	28	35	36	49
Understands problems:				
Bush	53	50	38	32
Kerry	40	44	49	57

PROFILE – Married voters are more likely to be Republicans, while single voters are far more likely to be Democrats (especially single women) – helping to explain their vote differences. Singles are also more apt to be liberals, to be younger, to be minorities, and to be in lower-income households – all groups that are part of Kerry's base.

Bush's base, however, is larger. If, as usual, many more married voters show up at the polls on Election Day than single ones, Kerry will need to close the gap with Bush among married women.

	Marrieds	Singles
Democrats	32%	47%
Republicans	39	24
Independents	24	25
Liberals	14	23
Moderates	45	42
Conservatives	37	29
Age 18-29	8	26
Age 30+	92	74
<\$50K	29	62
>\$50K	69	29

METHODOLOGY – This poll was conducted October 19-21 among a random national sample of 1,803 adults, including 1,592 registered voters and 1,110 likely voters. The results have a three-point error margin for the likely voter sample. ABC News and The Washington Post are sharing data collection for this tracking poll, then independently applying their own models to arrive at likely voter estimates. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Dalia Sussman.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollvault.html>.

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Full results follow (*= less than 0.5 percent).

3. (and 3a) If the 2004 presidential election were being held today, would you vote for (George W. Bush and Dick Cheney, the Republicans), (John Kerry and John Edwards, the Democrats), or Ralph Nader and Peter Camejo, the independents? Which candidate are you leaning toward?

Net Leaned Vote, Likely Voters:

	Bush	Kerry	Nader	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Would not vote	No op.
10/21/04	50	46	1	*	1	*	2
10/20/04	51	46	1	*	*	*	2
10/19/04	51	46	1	*	*	*	2
10/18/04	51	46	1	*	*	0	2
10/17/04	50	47	1	*	*	*	2
10/16/04	50	46	2	*	*	*	2
10/14/04	48	48	1	*	1	*	1
10/13/04	48	48	1	*	1	0	2
10/12/04	48	48	1	*	1	0	2
10/11/04	50	46	1	*	1	0	2
10/10/04	50	46	1	*	1	0	2
10/9/04	50	46	1	*	1	0	2
10/8/04	50	47	1	*	1	0	2
10/7/04	50	47	*	*	1	0	1
10/6/04	49	47	1	1	1	0	1
10/5/04	49	47	1	1	1	0	1

10/4/04	51	45	1	*	1	0	1
10/3/04	51	46	1	*	1	*	1
9/26/04	51	45	1	*	1	0	2
9/8/04	52	43	2	*	1	0	2
8/29/04	48	48	1	*	1	0	2
8/1/04	47	49	2	*	1	0	1
7/25/04	50	46	2	*	1	*	1

Net Leaned Vote, Registered Voters:

	Bush	Kerry	Nader	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Would not vote	No op.
10/21/04	50	44	1	*	1	*	3
10/20/04	51	44	1	*	1	*	3
10/19/04	51	44	1	*	1	*	2
10/18/04	51	44	1	*	1	*	3
10/17/04	49	46	1	*	1	*	3
10/16/04	49	45	2	*	1	*	3
10/14/04	47	48	2	*	1	*	2
10/13/04	47	47	2	*	2	*	2
10/12/04	47	47	2	*	2	*	2
10/11/04	48	46	2	*	1	*	2
10/10/04	48	46	1	*	1	*	3
10/9/04	48	47	1	*	2	*	3
10/8/04	48	46	1	*	2	*	3
10/7/04	48	47	1	*	2	*	2
10/6/04	49	46	1	1	2	*	2
10/5/04	50	45	2	*	1	*	2
10/4/04	52	43	2	*	1	*	2
10/3/04	50	45	2	*	1	*	2
9/26/04	51	44	2	1	1	*	2
9/8/04	50	44	2	*	2	*	2
8/29/04	48	47	2	*	1	*	2
8/1/04	44	50	2	*	1	1	2
7/25/04	48	46	3	*	1	*	1
7/11/04	46	46	4	1	2	1	1
6/20/04	44	48	6	*	1	*	1
5/23/04	46	46	4	*	1	1	1
4/18/04	48	43	6	*	2	1	*
3/7/04	44	48	3	*	1	2	2

END