

Gender, National Security, and the Election of 2004

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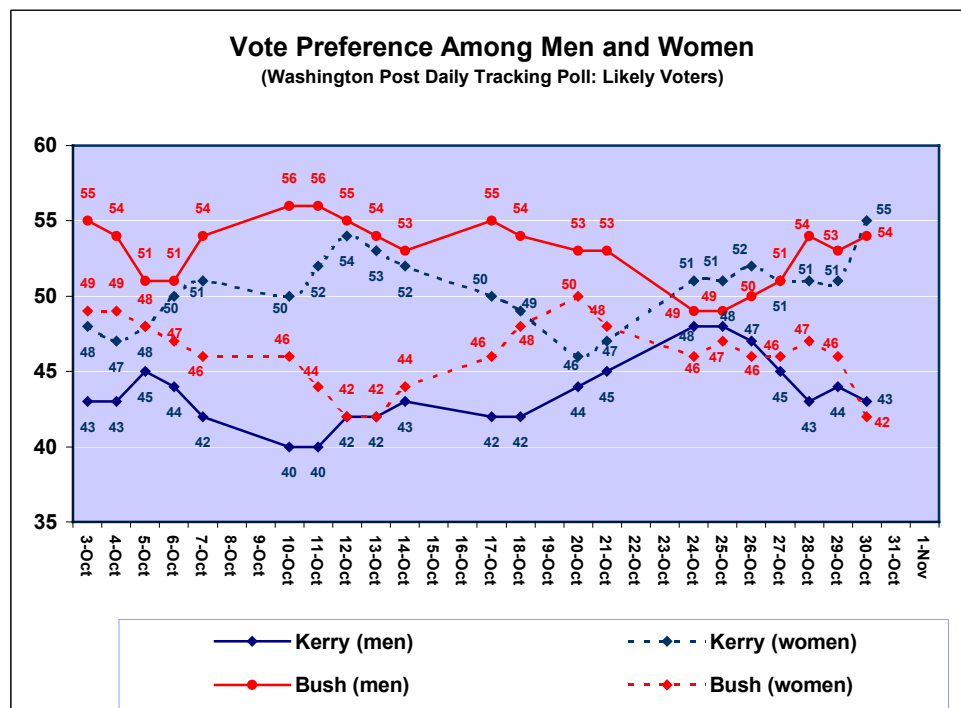
Update: October 31, 2004

In this brief report, I update my analysis of the impact of gender and national security issues on voter preferences in the 2004 election.¹ I do not review the original analysis in detail; it is available [here](#) together with earlier updates.

In this report, I simply present the gender breakdown of voter preference going into election day. More detailed analysis of the meaning of the data will follow in later updates.

Voter Preference

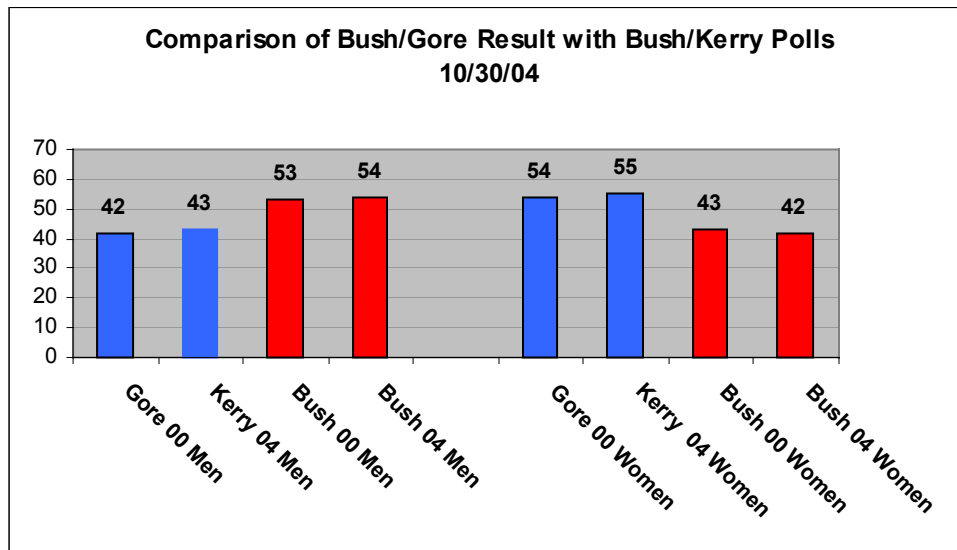
As shown below, Kerry now leads Bush among women by a large margin, 55-42. Three things are notable here. First, Kerry's 55 percent among women is the highest margin he has ever reached. Second, it matches the largest one-day upward blip that he has enjoyed, with little time left for a downward adjustment (although I suppose anything is possible, especially given sampling error). Third, 2 percent of all voters are undecided and 1 percent support Nader. Obviously, Kerry could increase his margin among women if they break disproportionately



toward him –which seems likely given conventional wisdom.

Comparison to Election 2000

The following graphic requires little elaboration. Like so much else, the data suggests a near identical finish to the last election. However, the one marginal difference is that Kerry is running slightly stronger than Gore did among both men and women with 2 percent still undecided. So, electoral college aside, Kerry looks in a strong position going into Tuesday.



¹ All of the following analysis is based on the *Washington Post* daily tracking poll of about 1050 likely voters. According to the *Post*, "This tracking poll is based on a rolling three-day sample. About 350 likely voters are polled each day. To update the numbers, a new day's sample of respondents is added to the total sample and the oldest day's sample of respondents is dropped out. The *Post* uses seven variables to define likely voters, including whether the respondent states they are registered to vote, their intention to vote, past voting history, interest in the presidential campaign, age, whether the respondent is voting for the first time in 2004 and whether the voter knows the location of his or her polling place. These variables produce a sample of likely voters that is largely composed of individuals who regularly vote in presidential elections

but does include newly registered as well as other first time voters. In a typical sample, about one in 10 likely voters are self-described first-time voters and one in six are between the ages of 18-29.

The Post adjusts, or "weights," each day's randomly selected samples of adults to match the voting-age population percentages by age, sex, race, and education, as reported by the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The Post also adjusts the percentages of self-identified Democrats and Republicans by partially weighting to bring the percentages of those groups to within three percentage points of their proportion of the electorate, as measured by national exit polls of voters in the last three presidential elections. “

[The daily rolling sample size is reported here.](#)