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The Polls: Gender and Attitudes Toward Violence

TOM W. SMITH, EDITOR

Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood;
Stop up the access and passage to remorse.
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers. . .

—Lady Macbeth, *Macbeth*, I: v, 41–49

CONSIDERABLE attention in the media and social science community has been focused on the gender gap in President Reagan's popularity. In large part this gap may come from underlying differences between men and women toward violence and the use of force. Women and men differ both in their use of violence and in their approval of violence across a wide range of social conditions including foreign affairs, social control and law enforcement, and interpersonal relations, and the difference is reasonably stable across time. Looking at 285 data points we found that men were more supportive of the violent or forceful option in over 87 percent of the readings.¹ The results were ambiguous in 7 percent of the cases, with men more in favor of both the most *and* least forceful response and women leaning toward a middle alternative. Finally, in only just over 5 percent of the cases did women favor the forceful response more than men.

The tendency of men to back violent options is moderately strong, averaging over 9 percentage points and ranging up to over 30 percentage points. The difference is largest on topics that are closely linked to major differences in socialization, including gun ownership, hunting, gun control attitudes, and attitudes toward boxing. Differences averaging about 10 percentage points are found on most questions dealing with law enforcement and criminal punishments—such as questions on the approval of the death penalty, television violence, and on a wide range of questions asking about the use of the military in international relations and support for America's involvement in wars. Differences tend to be somewhat smaller when dealing indirectly with

¹ The article reports an illustrative selection of 214 data points.

military matters, such as asking about changes in defense spending. Finally, the smallest differences appear on items dealing with interpersonal violence, such as approval of hitting in certain specified situations and the spanking of children.

The partial exceptions where women favor the middle alternative over either the more or less forceful option are heavily concentrated in attitudes toward defense spending. This ambiguous pattern may occur in part because the issue of violence is not directly stated but only implied by these questions. In addition, women may have lower interest in or information about these issues than men and therefore opt for the neutral middle response. Also, three partial exceptions occur about Vietnam being a mistake. Indirect evidence suggests that this is probably because many people who called Vietnam a mistake were actually in favor of greater military involvement rather than for withdrawal.

Actual reversals are more scattered and in virtually every case of doubtful statistical significance. Four reversals occur on a question dealing with approval for a man punching an adult male stranger who "was beating up a woman." This suggestion that women overcome their disfavor of violence if the force is being explicitly used to protect their sex finds further support in the question on capital punishment that asks about applying the death penalty for murderers, traitors, hijackers, and rapists. While men are more in favor of applying the death penalty for all four crimes, the difference on rapists is less than half the magnitude of that for murderers, traitors, or hijackers.

Differences also tend to be larger when dealing with gray areas where there is no well-established social convention on the appropriateness of force or violence. For example, on both the interpersonal and police approval of hitting questions gender differences tend to be greater for items for which there is lack of consensus—that is, those items closer to 50/50 splits on approval. Similarly, on the item that asks about sending troops to eight countries, the gender differences are largest where opinion is most evenly divided.

The difference between men and women usually results from men choosing the proforce option (e.g., for capital punishment, for military intervention, against gun control, against procedures to restrict war) while women select the antiforce option *or* reply that they have no opinion.

Besides consistently differing in approval of force, men and women also differ in their propensity to give a substantive response to the questions. In 86 percent of the cases men have fewer don't knows than women, in 3–4 percent there are no differences, and in only 10 percent do women give fewer don't knows than men. Overall, the nonresponse is 3 percentage points lower for men than for women. Most of the exceptions come in interpersonal relations, which deals with intimate personal concerns rather than more remote and abstract political issues such as foreign affairs and law enforcement. The higher nonresponse levels, as well as a slight inclination to select middle options, suggests that women tend to be less interested in and opinionated about many of these issues.

Where do these differences between men and women on violence come from? They probably emerge from an intricate interplay of biology and sociology. While far from definitive, existing research indicates a greater inherent predisposition to the use of force among men than women (Seward and Seward, 1980; Davidson and Gordon, 1979; and Maccoby and Jacklin,

1974). Moreover, while the exact mechanisms are ill understood, it appears that socialization also encourages at least some uses of force among men more than among women. Training in the use of guns is heavily concentrated among males. Boxing is traditionally referred to as the "manly art of self-defense."

Overall, the evidence fails to show any impact of feminist ideology on the gender difference on violence. Differences have not appreciably changed since the women's movement was organized in the late sixties, and the gap is the same among profeminist men and women as it is among antifeminists of both sexes, nor do those differences vary by either age or education. In at least one area, socialization seems to completely explain the difference in attitudes. On the 1980 and 1982 General Social Surveys greater male opposition to gun control disappears when personal gun ownership is controlled for. Similarly some of the promilitary inclinations of men can be explained by their veteran status (Schreiber, 1979).

Yet in other cases socialization diminishes or even eliminates biological predispositions. Studies indicate that parents and teachers tend to discourage aggressive behaviors by both girls and boys and since boys tend to exhibit more of these behaviors, the socialization tends to standardize and pacify behavior in general. Similarly, socialization in general and education in particular may tend to reduce the impact of sex as a determinant of attitudes. By establishing moral and intellectual standards for judging the appropriateness of various policies and behaviors as well as by introducing other cultural determinants of action and attitudes, education and socialization clearly can modify biologically based propensities. Gender differences on violence seem to decrease where a social norm exists and tend to increase in situations where society has not promulgated clear and established standards.

The data used in this article were gleaned mostly from published sources including Cantril, 1947; Mueller, 1973; Converse, 1980; Cantril and Strunk, 1951; Gallup, 1972, and Erskine, 1970. Special cross-tabulations were supplied by the Louis Harris Data Archive, University of North Carolina and the National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago. All studies are based on samples of 1,200 or greater except as noted. For the availability of these data please contact the appropriate survey organization or archive.

GALLUP—Gallup Poll

HARRIS—Louis Harris and Associates

NORC—National Opinion Research Center

NORC-GSS—NORC, General Social Survey

ROPER—Roper Organization

SRC—Survey Research Center, University of Michigan

International Relations and War

ROPER: Would you be willing to fight, or to have a member of your family fight, in case a foreign power tried to seize land in Central or South America? Would you be willing to fight, or to have a member of your family fight, in case the Philippines were attacked?

	<i>Central or S. America</i>		<i>Philippines</i>	
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
<i>1/1936</i>				
Yes	22.4%	11.8%	29.6%	17.4%
No	69.5	78.7	62.0	72.3
Don't know	8.1	9.5	8.4	10.3

ROPER: The government is spending more than ever before on building warships and airplanes. Which is your attitude on this? (1) We should have a strong army and navy so that no one will dare attack us. (2) It is a bad policy because preparing for war is likely to lead to it. (3) It is a waste of money that should be spent for better things. (4) We should have an adequate defense, but at less cost.

<i>10/1937</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Strong army, navy	81.1%	73.6%
Leads to war	8.0	11.8
Spend elsewhere	10.1	13.6
Less cost	0.3	0.1
Don't know	0.5	0.9

ROPER: Should the democratic powers, including the United States, now stand firm together at any cost to prevent Hitler or Mussolini from taking any more territory at the expense of other nations?

<i>1/1939</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Yes	59.8%	52.8%
No	30.2	31.8
Don't know	10.0	15.4

GALLUP: In case Germany and Italy go to war against England and France, how far should we go in helping England and France? Should we send our army and navy abroad to fight Germany and Italy?

<i>5/1939</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Yes	17%	15%
No	83	85

GALLUP: In the present war, how far should we go in helping England, France, and Poland—should we send our army and navy abroad to fight against Germany?

<i>8/1939</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Yes	19%	12%

ROPER: If it is quite clear that the Allies are beating Germany, do you think they should stop if Germany asks for peace or do you think they should continue until Germany is so badly beaten that she will never again rise as a nation?

<i>1/1940</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Keep going	59.3%	54.9%
Stop	32.9	31.8
Don't know	7.8	13.3

ROPER: Do you think the time has come for us to take strong measures against Japan?

<i>11/1940</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Yes	56.4%	42.4%
No	27.1	21.4
Don't know	16.5	36.2

GALLUP: Do you approve or disapprove of using the new atomic bomb on Japanese cities? (Asked of 96% who heard or read about the atomic bomb)

<i>8/1945</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Approve	86%	83%
Disapprove	9	11
No opinion	5	6

NORC: Do you think the United States was right or wrong in sending American troops to stop the Communist invasion of South Korea? (Figures for whites only.)

	9/1950		12/1950		2/1951		3/1951		4/1951		5/1951	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Right	86%	80%	61%	52%	64%	51%	66%	55%	67%	62%	68%	53%
Wrong	10	15	34	37	28	36	27	34	25	26	25	34
No opinion	4	5	5	12	8	13	7	11	8	11	7	13

	8/1951		12/1951		1/1952		3/1952		6/1952	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Right	66%	56%	57%	54%	62%	51%	55%	46%	59%	50%
Wrong	28	31	35	36	32	37	38	41	34	42
No opinion	6	14	8	11	6	12	7	13	7	7

Adapted from Mueller, 1973: 142.

GALLUP: Do you think the United States made a mistake in going into the war in Korea? (Figures for whites only.)

	2/1951		3/1951		4/1951		6/1951	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
No mistake	46%	37%	51%	37%	57%	37%	46%	34%
Made mistake	45	52	40	48	33	41	40	45
No opinion	8	10	9	15	11	21	13	19

	8/1951		3/1952		10/1952		1/1953	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
No mistake	55%	42%	43%	32%	44%	31%	54%	46%
Made mistake	37	45	47	52	40	46	35	37
No opinion	8	13	9	15	15	22	10	17

Adapted from Mueller, 1973: 142.

GALLUP: A U.S. senator has suggested that the United States should pledge (promise) that we will never use the atomic bomb in warfare until some other nation has used it on us first. What is your opinion of this suggestion?

	7/1949	Men	Women
Never use first		21%	25%
Disagree		75	69
Outlaw atomic bomb completely (vol.)		4	6

ROPER: There has been a good deal of discussion about what we should do about Russia. In which of these directions do you believe the next administration should go in dealing with Russia? (Hand respondent card.) (a) Adopt an even tougher policy of dealing with the Russians than we have up to now—even if it means taking some risks . . . (b) Keep on with about the same degree of toughness we have been pursuing in the last 2–3 years . . . (c) Try a somewhat friendlier approach in the hope that the Russians will in time learn to play fair when they know more about us and what we believe in.

	10/1960	Men	Women
Tougher		60%	46%
The same		22	29
Friendlier		18	25

GALLUP: Suppose you had to make the decision between fighting an all-out nuclear war or living under Communist rule—how would you decide?

	10/1961	Men	Women
Better dead		87%	75%
Better red		4	7
Undecided		9	18

GALLUP: In view of the developments since we entered the fighting in Vietnam, do you think the U.S. made a mistake sending troops to fight in Vietnam? (Figures for whites only.)

	8/1965		3/1966		5/1966		9/1966		11/1966		5/1967	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
No mistake	63%	61%	65%	54%	54%	47%	56%	43%	58%	48%	60%	46%
Made mistake	26	22	26	26	36	37	33	37	29	31	31	36
No opinion	11	18	9	20	10	16	11	20	13	21	9	17
	7/1967		10/1967		12/1967		2/1968		4/1968		10/1968	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
No mistake	52%	45%	49%	39%	48%	44%	43%	42%	41%	40%	42%	34%
Made mistake	40	42	45	48	43	45	51	48	51	49	51	55
No opinion	8	13	7	12	7	10	7	9	8	12	7	11
	2/1969		9/1969		1/1970		4/1970					
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women				
No mistake	42%	39%	35%	29%	35%	28%	41%	30%				
Made mistake	51	51	55	56	54	56	49	51				
No opinion	7	10	10	15	11	16	10	18				

Adapted from Mueller, 1973: 143.

SRC: Do you think we did the right thing in getting into the fighting in Vietnam or should we have stayed out?

	Fall 1964 ^a		Fall 1966		Fall 1968		Fall 1970		Fall 1972	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Yes	54.4%	42.2%	55.7%	40.9%	37.7%	25.0%	35.3%	28.0%	32.0%	26.3%
It depends	1.4	0.9	0.6	0.9	1.5	1.0	1.3	0.7	6.6	4.9
No	27.5	32.0	30.0	32.1	48.7	54.3	50.5	48.8	56.0	57.8
Don't know	16.8	24.9	13.8	26.1	12.1	19.7	12.8	22.6	5.4	11.0

^a In 1964 and 1966 asked only of those answering "yes" to "Have you been paying any attention to what is going on in Vietnam?" *N* for 1966 = 1,188.

GALLUP: People are called "hawks" if they want to step up our military effort in Vietnam. They are called "doves" if they want to reduce our military effort in Vietnam. How would you describe yourself, as a "hawk" or a "dove"?

	4/68		10/69	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Hawk	50%	32%	39%	23%
Dove	33	49	48	63
No opinion	17	19	13	14

GALLUP: Some people feel that war is an outmoded way of settling differences between nations. Others feel that wars are necessary to settle differences. With which point of view do you agree?

4/1975	Men	Women
Outmoded	37%	52%
Necessary	55	38
No opinion	8	10

GALLUP: In the event a nation is attacked by Communist-backed forces, there are several things the United States can do about it. As I read the name of each country, tell me what action you would want to see us take if that nation is actually attacked—send American troops, or send military supplies but not send American troops, or refuse to get involved.

4/1975	Men	Women
West Germany		
Troops	37%	18%
Supplies only	30	33
No involvement	26	39
No opinion	7	10

Japan		
Troops	24	9
Supplies only	35	35
No involvement	34	45
No opinion	7	11
India		
Troops	7	6
Supplies only	33	35
No involvement	51	44
No opinion	9	15
Thailand		
Troops	13	6
Supplies only	31	34
No involvement	47	45
No opinion	9	15
Nationalist China		
Troops	10	6
Supplies	28	27
No involvement	54	54
No opinion	8	13
Canada		
Troops	66	48
Supplies only	15	23
No involvement	10	18
No opinion	9	11
Saudi Arabia		
Troops	9	5
Supplies only	26	27
No involvement	55	54
No opinion	10	14
Turkey		
Troops	13	6
Supplies only	29	29
No involvement	48	50
No opinion	10	15

GALLUP: If such a referendum [by the UN] were held in the United States, how would you vote—for or against nuclear disarmament?

<i>5/1981</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
For	63%	55%
Against	30	29
No opinion	7	16

NORC-GSS: We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount?

The Military, Armaments, and Defense

	<i>3/1973</i>		<i>3/1974</i>		<i>3/1975</i>		<i>3/1976</i>		<i>3/1977</i>	
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Too little	13.0%	10.8%	20.1%	16.3%	22.1%	14.1%	31.4%	20.9%	28.9%	22.8%
About right	43.9	51.5	42.7	54.2	44.1	53.2	38.0	51.1	44.3	54.1
Too much	43.1	37.7	37.3	29.5	33.8	32.7	30.6	27.9	26.8	23.1

	3/1978		3/1980		3/1982		3/1983	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Too little	33.1%	26.3%	64.6%	56.6%	33.3%	28.9%	29.8%	22.1%
About right	43.1	50.3	23.2	31.1	35.6	39.2	34.1	44.8
Too much	23.8	23.5	12.2	12.3	31.1	31.9	36.1	33.1

Social Control and Law Enforcement

GALLUP/NORC-GSS:^a Are you in favor of the death penalty for persons convicted of murder?

In Favor

11/1937 ^b		11/1953		3/1960		2/1965		6/1967		1/1969	
Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
69%	57%	77%	66%	64%	55%	58%	43%	66%	54.5	64%	48%
10/1971		2/1972		3/1972		3/1973		3/1974 ^c		3/1975 ^c	
Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
61%	47%	59%	51%	65%	50%	70%	57%	70%	63%	71%	59%
3/1976 ^c		3/1977 ^c		3/1978 ^c		3/1980 ^c		3/1982 ^c		3/1983 ^c	
Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
75%	63.5%	77.5%	67%	76%	66%	78.5%	66%	80%	73%	84%	71.5%

^a Points prior to 3/1972 are Gallup, later points are NORC-GSS.

^b Are you in favor of the death penalty for murder?

^c Do you favor or oppose the death penalty for persons convicted of murder?

GALLUP: Are you in favor of the death penalty for persons convicted of murder/of treason/of rape/of hijacking an airplane?

	3/1978		1-2/1981	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Murder				
Yes	70%	55%	71%	62%
No	22	32	22	28
No opinion	8	13	7	10
Treason				
Yes	45	28	46	33
No	45	55	44	52
No opinion	10	17	10	15
Rape				
Yes	34	31	40	34
No	54	57	50	55
No opinion	12	12	10	11
Hijacking an airplane				
Yes	44	30	26	19
No	45	58	65	71
No opinion	11	12	9	10

NORC-GSS: Are there any situations you can imagine in which you would approve of a policeman striking an adult male citizen?

	3/1973 ^a		3/1975 ^a		3/1976		3/1978		3/1980		3/1983	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Yes	77.0%	71.9%	78.9%	73.4%	82.4%	76.4%	84.0%	75.5%	81.6%	70.1%	85.1%	75.8%

Would you approve of a policeman striking a citizen who:

a) Had said vulgar and obscene things to the policeman?

Yes	22.6%	22.8%	23.4%	17.1%	21.7%	19.2%	20.5%	16.7%	14.2%	13.6%	17.7%	13.1%
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b) Was being questioned as a suspect in a murder case?

Yes 8.0% 8.9% 9.8% 5.9% 8.4% 7.3% 7.2% 9.1% 8.3% 8.7% 9.3% 9.2%

c) Was attempting to escape from custody?

Yes 89.3% 87.0% 89.7% 88.0% 84.0% 78.5% 82.0% 74.2% 83.6% 75.5% 84.6% 73.1%

d) Was attacking the policeman with his fists?

Yes 96.7% 97.2% 98.7% 98.3% 95.3% 94.4% 95.0% 92.7% 96.5% 94.6% 95.2% 91.1%

^a In 1973 and 1975 subparts a-d were asked only of those approving of hitting on the introductory question. In 1976-1983 the introductory question did not act as a filter.

NORC-GSS: Do you happen to have in your home (IF HOUSE: or garage) any guns or revolvers? IF YES: Do any of these guns personally belong to you?

	3/1980		3/1982	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
% Personally owning firearm	51.8%	11.3%	48.9%	14.6%

GALLUP/NORC-GSS: Would you favor or oppose a law which would require a person to obtain a police permit before he or she could buy a gun?

	<i>Oppose</i>											
	7/1959		12/63		1/1965		8/1966		8/1967		10/1971	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
	30.2%	14.6%	25.6%	11.3%	35.3%	14.5%	40.1%	21.5%	34.6%	16.1%	34.1%	16.8%
	3/1972		3/1973		3/1974		3/1975		3/1976			
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women		
	37.4%	17.6%	32.0%	19.3%	33.4%	15.3%	32.7%	17.6%	35.7%	20.7%		
	3/1977		3/1980		3/1982		3/1982		3/1982			
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women		
	35.6%	19.8%	36.4%	23.6%	31.6%	23.3%						

GALLUP: Do you think there should or should not be a law which would forbid the possession of pistols and revolvers except by the police and other authorized persons?

	1975		1/1979		12/1980 ^a		6/1981 ^a	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Yes	35%	46%	25%	36%	31%	44%	34%	48%
No	62	49	71	59	62	40	62	46
No opinion	3	5	4	5	7	16	4	6

^a "Handguns" instead of "pistols and revolvers."

Interpersonal Force

NORC: Are there any situations you can imagine in which you would approve of a public school teacher hitting a student? Would you approve if the student had been repeatedly disobedient and uncooperative? Would you approve if the student had destroyed school property? Would you approve if the student had hit the teacher?

	<i>Student</i>									
	<i>Disobedient</i>				<i>Destroyed</i>					
	<i>Hit Teacher</i>									
3/1971	Any Situation		Men		Women		Men		Women	
Yes	60.4%	47.2%	49.8%	48.0%	47.0%	43.3%	71.8%	60.0%		
No	39.1	52.0	49.5	51.2	52.1	55.9	27.5	38.6		
No answer	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7	1.4		

GALLUP: Do you think teachers in grade schools should have the right to spank children at school?

	8-9/1946	Fathers	Mothers
Yes		43%	34%
No		54	63
No opinion		3	3

Do you approve or disapprove of spanking children?

	Fathers	Mothers
Approve	73%	76%
Disapprove	24	22
No opinion	3	2

NORC: Are there any situations you can imagine in which you would approve of a teenage boy punching another teenage boy? Would you approve if the teenage boy had been ridiculed and picked on by the other boy? Would you approve if the teenage boy had been challenged by the other boy to a fist fight? Would you approve if the teenage boy had been hit by the other boy?

3/1971	Any Situation		Ridiculed		Challenged		Hit	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Yes	73.2%	64.2%	64.2%	60.7%	49.5%	39.3%	82.9%	76.7%
No	26.1	34.4	35.1	37.8	49.2	58.7	16.2	21.9
No answer	0.7	1.4	0.7	1.5	1.2	1.9	0.9	1.4

NORC-GSS: Are there any situations that you can imagine in which you would approve of a man punching an adult male stranger?

Approve											
3/1973 ^a		3/1975 ^a		3/1976		3/1978		3/1980		3/1983	
Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
65.3%	68.1%	70.2%	72.6%	70.9%	67.8%	69.0%	64.0%	66.3%	63.9%	74.5%	68.1%

Would you approve if the stranger . . .

a) Was in a protest march showing opposition to the other man's views?

3/1973		3/1975		3/1976		3/1978		3/1980		3/1983	
Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
7.0%	4.8%	4.0%	2.2%	3.8%	2.6%	2.8%	3.6%	4.6%	4.1%	3.3%	3.7%

b) Was drunk and bumped into the man and his wife on the street?

10.8%	9.6%	10.2%	5.0%	9.8%	8.4%	10.5%	7.9%	10.7%	9.3%	11.3%	8.4%
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c) Would you approve of a man punching a stranger who had hit the man's child after the child accidentally damaged the stranger's car?

56.6%	48.3%	58.6%	47.9%	55.4%	45.6%	57.5%	50.9%	52.4%	52.2%	63.7%	54.7%
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d) Was beating up a woman and the man saw it?

85.2%	88.6%	83.9%	85.1%	80.4%	83.5%	79.7%	85.7%	84.5%	84.4%	87.3%	84.9%
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e) Had broken into the man's house?

87.3%	85.8%	92.1%	90.0%	85.7%	82.6%	85.7%	83.3%	86.3%	81.2%	88.3%	81.5%
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^a In 1973 and 1975 subparts a-e were asked only of those approving of hitting on the introductory question. In 1976-1983 the introductory question did not act as a filter.

HARRIS: Do you feel that people are always, sometimes, or never justified in (READ LIST) using physical violence?

<i>5/1969</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Always justified	1.1%	0.4%
Sometimes justified	32.4	26.3
Never justified	63.8	70.2
Not sure	2.8	3.1

HARRIS: Do you feel it is justified or not justified to take the life of another person . . .

<i>5/1969</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
A. In self-defense		
Justified	82.2%	68.2%
Not justified	12.5	19.0
Not sure	5.3	12.8
B. When fighting in a war		
Justified	82.2	75.0
Not justified	11.4	13.2
Not sure	6.4	11.7
C. When treason against the U.S. is committed		
Justified	57.8	43.7
Not justified	27.3	36.4
Not sure	15.0	19.9
D. When one person has murdered another in cold blood		
Justified	50.7	37.8
Not justified	39.1	46.6
Not sure	10.2	15.6

HARRIS: Do you feel that it is always wrong for one human being to take the life of another under any circumstances, or do you think there are times when it is justified?

<i>12/1969</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Always wrong	11.4%	19.8%
Justified sometimes	85.3	74.3
Not sure	3.3	5.9

Let me ask you about some specific cases, and ask you for each if you think taking human life is justified or not:

<i>12/1969</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
A. Executing a person who murders another in cold blood		
Justified	61.4%	48.5%
Not justified	29.6	37.9
Not sure	9.0	13.6
B. If a person kills another in self-defense		
Justified	86.0	82.1
Not justified	11.4	14.1
Not sure	2.5	3.8
C. If a policeman shoots a criminal in the course of duty		
Justified	79.5	73.1
Not justified	12.5	15.2
Not sure	8.0	11.7
D. If a soldier shoots an enemy in war		
Justified	91.6	86.1
Not justified	6.1	8.9
Not sure	2.3	5.1

E. Shooting civilians who are believed to be helping the enemy in war

Justified	44.1	35.1
Not justified	40.6	42.9
Not sure	15.3	22.1

Television and Other

HARRIS: How do you feel about the amount of violence portrayed in television programs today, not including news programs—do you think that there is too much, a reasonable amount, or very little violence?

	10/1968		12/1976	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Too much	55.3%	63.0%	65.1%	76.3%
Reasonable amount	35.0	29.3	28.4	19.7
Very little	5.5	3.0	4.6	2.2
Not sure	4.3	4.7	1.9	1.8

Apart from the amount of violence, do you generally approve or disapprove of the kind of violence that is portrayed on TV?

	10/1968		12/1976	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Approve	30.6%	17.4%	29.0%	17.3%
Disapprove	57.1	70.5	66.4	75.3
Not sure	12.3	12.1	4.6	7.4

GALLUP: There has been a good deal of discussion lately about television programs that show violence, that is, gunplay, fistfights, and the like. Do you think there is a relationship between violence on television and the rising crime rate in the United States, or not?

	1/1977 ^a		3/1982	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Yes	66%	73%	59%	72%
No	30	22	37	24
Not sure	4	5	4	4

^a “Shows” instead of “programs” in 1977.

GALLUP: It has been proposed that all television programs which show violence be taken off television entirely. Would favor or oppose this?

	1/1977		3/1982	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Favor	32%	39%	28%	39%
Oppose	63	52	66	56
No opinion	5	9	6	5

GALLUP: A brain surgeon says that every blow a boxer gets on the head does some injury to his brain. Because of this he says boxing should be banned by law. Do you agree or disagree with his point of view that boxing should be banned?

	6/1955	Men	Women
Agree		27%	51%
Disagree		62	29
Undecided		11	20

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With this issue, Tom W. Smith assumes the Editorship of The Polls section. Suggestions and ideas for future sections are welcome and should be addressed to him at NORC, University of Chicago, 6030 S. Ellis Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637.