



Elected Officials of Color Lead the Way on Dissatisfaction with Iraq War

The recently completed GMCL survey¹ of the nation’s elected officials of color holding state and local offices found that elected officials of color echo and even surpass the public’s growing dissatisfaction with the Iraq war. Seven in ten strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement “The US made the right decision in using military force against Iraq”; and almost one in three strongly disagreed. When asked the extent to which they agreed with the statement “The US should bring its troops home from Iraq as soon as possible,” more than eight in ten strongly agreed or agreed. Public opinion polls conducted during the same period showed that about 55% of those 18 and older in the United States thought the war was a “mistake.”²

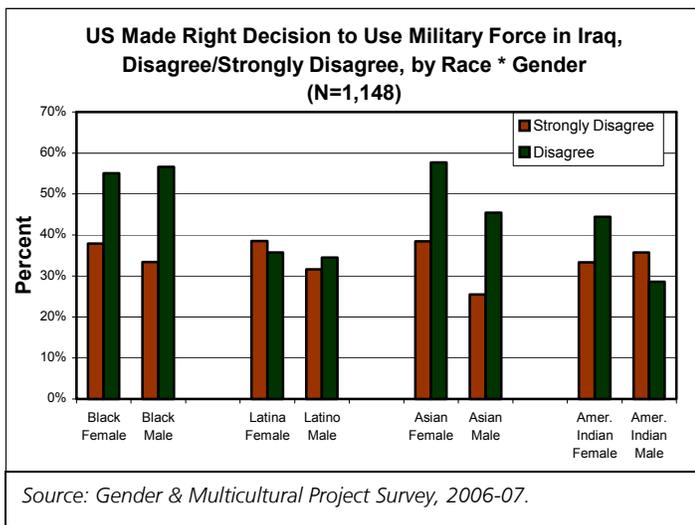
Race/Ethnicity	The US made the right decision in using military force against Iraq. (%)				The US should bring its troops home from Iraq as soon as possible. (%)			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Black	35	55	7	1	1	6	56	37
Latino/a	34	35	24	7	3	16	49	31
Asian	35	40	19	3	5	20	54	22
Amer. Indian	35	35	13	17	0	14	46	41

Source: Gender & Multicultural Project Survey, 2006-07. Note: Decision: N=1,148 (597 Black, 447,81 Asian, and 23 American Indian) ; Troops: N=1,185 (622 Black, 459 Latino, 75 Asian, and 23 American Indian).³

Race and Gender Make a Difference

Race and gender make a difference in explaining the difference between the public and elected official opinions on the war. About a third of Black, Latino/a and American Indian (and almost as many Asian) elected officials strongly disagreed with the statement “The US made the right decision in using military force against Iraq.” Black/African American elected officials voiced the strongest disapproval: more than nine out of ten said they strongly disagreed or disagreed. About eight out of ten Asian American and seven out of ten Latino/a and American Indian elected officials also disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Even more officials agreed that the US should bring the troops home as soon as possible: 93% of Black/African American, 86% of American Indian, 81% of Latino/a and 76% of Asian American elected officials agreed or strongly agreed that the US should bring the troops home as soon as possible.

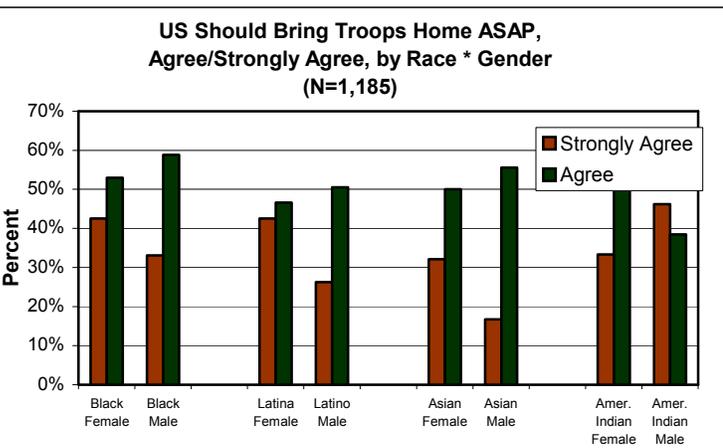


Race and gender do matter, as has been shown in a number of public opinion polls. AP-Ipsos polls conducted over the same period, for example, have shown that whites have been between 9 to 25 percentage points more likely than nonwhites to say it was the right decision and the spread has been 5 to 16 points when comparing men versus women.⁴

What happens, however, when the analysis looks at the interaction of race and gender together? The chart to the left shows that a higher percentage of Black, Latina and Asian female elected officials all “strongly disagreed” with the decision to use force in Iraq than their male counterparts although, it is only in the case of Asian women that the difference is more than ten percentage points. Combining “strongly disagree” and “disagree,” we find that that the interaction effect is even larger: 96% of Asian women compared to 71% of Asian men disagreed/strongly disagreed with the decision; furthermore, whereas the racial difference between Latinos and blacks is large, the gender gap between

Latina women (74% strongly disagreed/ disagreed) and Latino men (66%) is also large and that between American Indian female and male elected officials is even larger: 77% for the former and 64% for the latter. In contrast, Black elected officials are more similar (93% for women and 90% for men).

Overall, there was about a ten-point gender gap on both questions with about nine in ten women more likely than men to say the decision was wrong



and to say the troops should come home as soon as possible; about eight in ten men held those positions. Opinion on bringing the troops home as soon as possible also showed gender differences within the races. The gender gap for Latinos was 12 percentage points with 89% of Latina elected officials saying they either agreed or strongly agreed; similarly, the gender gap was 10 points for Asians with 82% of Asian female compared to 72% for Asian male elected officials agreeing or strongly agreeing on this statement. While Black and American Indian women were also more likely to agree/strongly agree, the gender gap was much smaller: 4% for American Indians and 4% for Black/African Americans.

Partisanship

Recent polls have shown that party identification is a strong predictor of attitudes on the war in Iraq. An LA Times/Bloomberg Poll, for example, found majority support for a timed withdrawal of troops only among Democrats (82%) and Independents (60%), with three times as many Republicans opposing the idea (73%) as supporting it (24%).⁵ The GMCL Survey respondents were more likely to be Democrats (81%); 11% were Independents and just 8% Republicans.⁵ Party and race affected the officials' opinion on whether the US made the right decision to use military force in Iraq with eight in ten Latino/a Republicans and seven in ten Asian American Republicans showing support compared to only half of the Black/African American Republicans. The vast majority of elected officials who said they were Democrats disagreed/strongly disagreed, although Latino/a elected officials from the Democratic party were eight to ten percentage points *less likely* than Black or Asian Democrats to disagree/strongly disagree with that position: Latinos/as 72%, Blacks 81%, Asian Americans 85% and American Indians 80%.

Veteran Status

Almost 20% of the elected officials surveyed (and 31% of the men) indicated that they were veterans. There was no significant difference between veterans and non-veterans in their positions on the Iraq War.

Notes

¹ The 1,354 respondents in the survey included 722 Black, 509 Latino, 96 Asian, and 27 American Indian elected officials. Under the category "Asian" we include Pacific Islanders as well as those from East, Southeast and South Asia. The category "American Indian" includes Alaskan Natives.

² See USA Today/Gallup Poll data from June – Dec. 2006;

³ Does not include those who answered "Don't Know/Not Sure/Does Not Apply," or who refused to answer;

⁴ Alan Fram and Trevor Tompson, "Poll: Race, gender nor party line separates pessimists," May 21, 2007. Downloaded from www2.ljworld.com/news/2007/may/21/poll_race_gender_nor_party_line_separates_pessimis/ on 29 June 2007;

⁵ This poll was conducted later (June 2007) than the GMCL Survey (June 2006–Feb. 2007): "Public Sees Stalemate in Iraq, Support Path For Undocumented Workers. Downloaded from <http://www.latimes.com/media/acrobat/2007-06/30470878.pdf> on 29 June 2007; ⁵ Fifteen officials said "None"; ten "Other"; four "Nonpartisan"; four "Vote based on a person"; and three "Independent/ Democrat."

Gender	US made the right decision: Disagreed/ Strongly Disagreed	Bring troops home asap: Agreed/Strongly agreed
Men	78	84
Women	87	93

Source: Gender & Multicultural Project Survey, 2006-07.
Decision: N=1,148, p<.005; Troops: N=1,185, p<.0001.

About the Gender & Multicultural Leadership (GMCL) Project

The GMCL Survey is to date the nation's most comprehensive multiracial, multi-office national survey of Black, Latino, Asian, and American Indian elected officials holding positions at the state and local levels. A total of 1,354 elected officials of color were included in this report of the telephone survey conducted between June 5, 2006 and March 21, 2007, by the Institute for Public Policy (IPP) at the University of New Mexico. Seventy-two percent of those public officials who were successfully contacted agreed to participate in the survey. The margin of error for the entire sample is ±3%.

Besides the survey, other components of the GMCL Project include a **national database** of elected officials of color, by race and gender (as of spring 2006); an annotated **bibliography** and **analytical framework** on the intersection of gender, race/ethnicity, and class; and a project **website** for public education.

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