

Journal Entry

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POSC 413

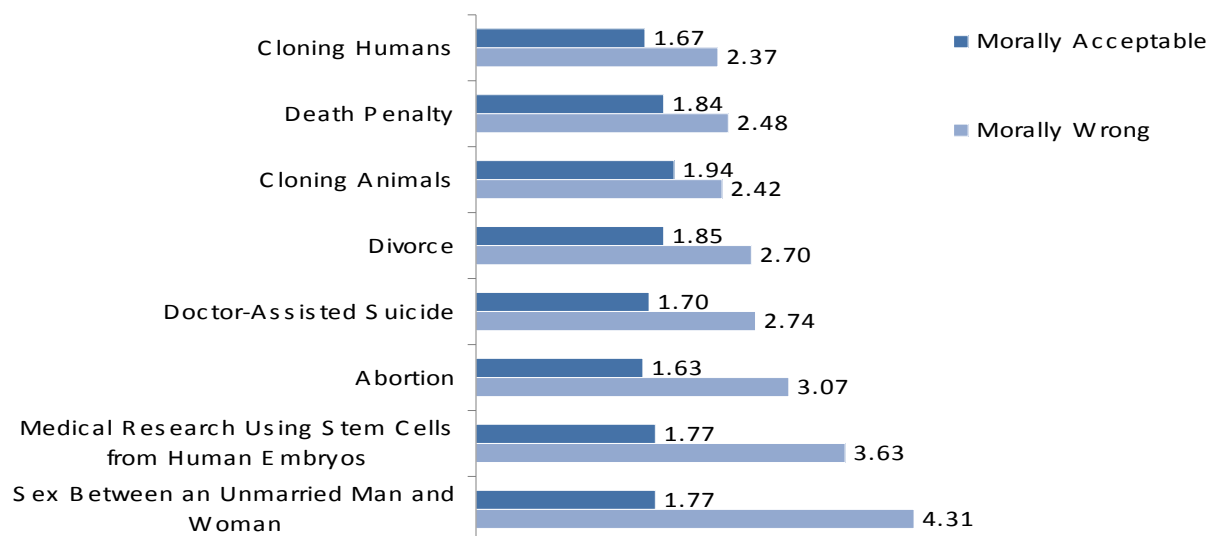
5/6/2008

Write up a 3-5 page public opinion brief for UDaily, the Review, or the News Journal. It can cover any topic from our survey, and it can be “co-authored” with up to 1 other person (it doesn’t matter if they are on your team or not). Feel free to include tables, charts, or other visualizations; however, this should be your “best work in public opinion.”

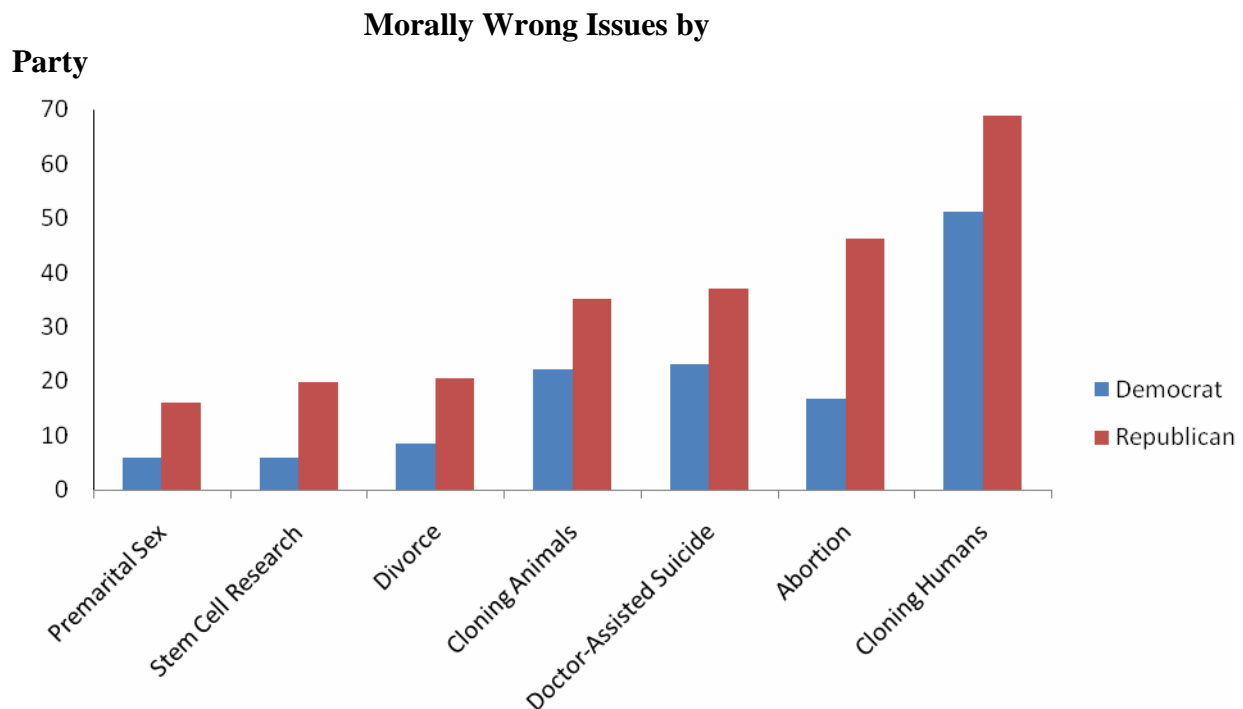
The Blue Hen Poll 2008 asked student respondents to decide if certain issues were “morally wrong” or “morally acceptable.” The poll also inquired about students’ attendance at religious services on a seven point scale from “Never” to “Almost daily.” There are significant differences in religious service attendance for students who feel that some issues are morally wrong. Furthermore, a number of other variables, such as party identification, have a relationship to whether students attend religious services more or less often. Finally, some of these other variables have (and some have not) had any influence on whether or not students find these issues morally acceptable.

When comparing the average religious service attendance for students for find issues such as cloning humans, abortion, stem cell research, and premarital sex morally wrong, one finds that there are significant relationships ($p < .05$). For these issues as well as those of the death penalty, cloning animals, divorce, and doctor-assisted suicide one finds that students who find these issues morally wrong attend religious services more often. This relationship is strongest for stem cell research ($t = 9.25$, $p < .01$) and sex between an unmarried man and woman ($t = 13.55$, $p < .01$). One may postulate that these are more contentious issues, and religion may play a larger role in determining their moral acceptability.

Moral Acceptability and Religious Attendance



One other issue facing students that also determines their religious attendance is party identification. It may or may not be surprising that, even with the high number of democrats at the University of Delaware (about 67%), students who identify themselves as Republicans are more likely to attend religious services than Democrats ($t = 4.15, p < .01$). Republicans are also more likely to believe that morals in the country are getting worse ($\chi^2 = 12.77, p < .05$; Cramer's $V = .112, p < .05$). Students who believe these issues are wrong are more likely to attend religious services, and Republicans are also more likely to attend religious services. Therefore, it is reasonable to wonder whether Republicans are more or less likely to find these issues morally wrong. The data show that Republicans are more likely to find many of these issues morally wrong more often than Democrats. The notable exceptions to this are medical testing on animals, the death penalty, and extramarital affairs. Republicans are no more or less likely to find these issues morally wrong or acceptable than Democrats.



A possible reason for any correlation between party identification and finding extramarital affairs morally wrong is that a consensus of the population (89.8%) finds extramarital affairs wrong.

Another issue that currently divides the country morally is that of gay marriage. A consensus of the survey's population believes that marriages between gays and lesbians should be recognized as legal (84.4%). However, those who feel that gay marriages should not be recognized as legal can be characterized by their religious attendance and party identification. Students against gay marriage attend religious services much more often than do students who support gay marriage ($t = -6.52, p < .01$). Additionally, Republicans are more likely to be against gay marriage than Democrats ($\chi^2 = 86.42, p < .01$; Cramer's $V = .432, p < .01$).

Students who answered that they do not support gay marriages were then asked if they would support civil unions. Those students who do not support gay marriage but who would support civil unions are less likely to attend religious services ($t = -2.15, p < .05$). Interestingly, there is no relationship between party identification and student support for civil unions. Of all students asked the question, 47.1% would favor civil unions for gay couples.

We also asked students about various foreign policy issues. These included food and medical assistance to people in needy countries, aid that helps needy countries develop their economy, assistance with the prevention and treatment of AIDS in poor countries, and aid for women's education to reduce population growth. For most foreign policy issues there is no relationship to students' attendance of religious services. However, there are a few exceptions. Students who oppose aid for birth control in poor countries to help reduce population growth are more likely to attend religious services more often than those who support such aid ($t = -2.56, p < .05$). Additionally, students who support assistance to promote democracy abroad are more likely to attend religious services ($t = 2.07, p < .05$).

Democrats and Republicans also differ on foreign policy issues. There was no relationship between party identification and whether students favor or oppose aid to needy countries to help develop their economies or food and medical assistance to people in needy countries. Republicans on campus are less likely to support assistance with the prevention and treatment of AIDS ($\chi^2 = 16.16, p < .01$; Cramer's $V = .190, p < .01$), aid for birth control in poor countries ($\chi^2 = 12.02, p < .01$; Cramer's $V = .169, p < .01$), and aid for women's education in poor countries to reduce population growth ($\chi^2 = 10.91, p < .01$; Cramer's $V = .159, p < .01$). However, Democrats are less likely to support assistance to promote democracy abroad ($\chi^2 = 4.04, p < .05$; Cramer's $V = .112, p < .05$).

The data show that on morality and foreign policies there are definite differences between students who attend religious services and those who do not, as well as between Democrats and Republicans. One may feel that these are easy leaps to be made based on stereotypes; however, given the low religiosity and high number of democrats on campus, it is interesting to be able to prove that certain differences between these groups exist even on UD's campus.