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Title of Paper: Are His Marriages Really Better than Hers? An International Comparison

Abstract:

Jessie Bernard's conclusions that "his marriage is better than hers" and that "marriage is bad for women" still appear in sociology of the family textbooks. This paper documents the popularity of her assertions and examines their validity using the NORC's General Social Survey and the World Values Survey. Data fail to confirm Bernard's findings. Textbook emphasis on marital harm to women's well-being seems misplaced.

His and Her Marriages: Are His Really Better?

Jessie Bernard ensured her place in the feminist study of sociology of the family with the 1972 publication of *The Future of Marriage*. She challenged the view she considered stereotypical that women gain more from the institution of marriage than do men, and suggested that the experience wives have is very different than that of their husbands: "There are two marriages, then, in every marital union, his and hers. And his. . . is better than hers" (p. 14). In fact, she asserted, "...being married is only half as good for wives as for husbands" (p. 25). She implied but did not actually state, as she is often paraphrased as doing (Howe and Canter, 1994) that marriage is good for men but bad for women.

Bernard produced no new data to support her conclusions, but instead selectively used secondary data. Her sources included survey data indicating, she admitted, that more married than unmarried women reported themselves as being happy (p. 49). This seemed contrary to her assertion that so many married women were afraid, anxious, and depressed (p. 49).

Bernard's explanation of "the paradox of the happy housewife" was that married women only thought they were happy because they had been socialized to believe that they were supposed to be happy if they were married. The society "...cut the motivational wings of young women or [bound] their emotional feet" so they would accept their marriage-family role. It followed that "to be happy in a relationship which imposes so many impediments on her, as traditional marriage does, a women must be slightly ill mentally" (p. 51).

Even ignoring the ironic hyperbole, this explanation is difficult to accept. One would have to believe that, while answering questions on a survey, married women would effectively say, "The question asks if I'm happy. I am married, and married women are supposed to be happy. Therefore I'll say that I am happy." Further, only married women apparently go through this circuitous logic, since Bernard takes at face value the reported happiness of single women, married men, and single men.¹

Bernard's conclusions about marriage quickly became popular among feminists both in and out of the academy. In only a few years the conclusions could be found in family relations textbooks and, especially, in sociology of the family texts that favored conflict-theory and feminists approaches. Awards for feminist scholarship were founded in Bernard's name at the American Sociological Association and the National Council on Family Relations.

Although Bernard's assertions have received mixed support at best, they continue to be cited three decades later. Glenn's (1997) review of college textbooks found several examples of this, which he saw as an anti-marriage bias. For instance, in the eighth edition of his popular textbook, Eshleman (1997:118) wrote:

The literature in general suggests that, when wives' and husbands' views of marriage are compared, "his" marriage is considerably better than "her" marriage. . . . Bernard described *housework* as menial labor, isolating, and

¹ In her earlier work, Bernard (1942, 1968, 1971) decried the lowly status given to housewives. It is ironic that she perpetuated that status by referring to them as "sick" and "mentally ill."

a dead-end job with no chance or promotion. According to Bernard, "In truth, being a housewife makes women sick."

Eshleman presents none of the contradictory evidence.

Zinn and Eitzen (1999:xiii) claim that a purpose of their text is to demythologize the family, and to do so they write from a "structuralist, feminist, and humanist perspective." Presenting none of the evidence contrary to Bernard, they asserted (p. 263): "There is a fundamental irony about marriage in that single men resist it while single women long for it, yet men benefit much more from marriage than do women."

Similarly, Collins and Coltrane (1995:372), without mentioning Bernard, asserted that:

Although marriage is associated with more happiness and better health among the general population, there is mounting evidence that men benefit much more from being married than do women. We know, for instance, that marriage has an adverse effect on women's mental health.

Again, no contradictory evidence was suggested. Aulette's feminist text (1994) also uncritically presented Bernard's conclusions, then suggested that Bernard had not gone far enough; other feminists, she point out, declared marriage to be a form of slavery for women.

In spite of the popularity of Bernard and her conclusions about "his" and "her" marriage, her assertions about comparative well-being have largely gone uncorroborated by large-scale quantitative research. Mookherjee (1997) found that marriage enhances perceptions of well being for both men and women, and that married women expressed more life satisfaction than did married men. Lowe and Smith (1987), using a multi-item index of mental well-being, reported findings that directly contradicted Bernard's thesis. Several other studies have also found positive effects of marriage on marital well-being for both men and women (Aldous and Ganey 1999; Aneshensel, Frerichs, and Clark, 1981; Glenn, 1975; Glenn and Weaver, 1988; Gove, 1979(a); Gove, Hughes, and Style, 1983; Gove, Style, and Hughes, 1990; Gove and Tudor, 1973; Wood, Rhodes, and Whelan, 1989).

A few studies focusing on psychological disturbances such as depression found higher rates among married women than married men. Gove (1972, 1978) is most frequently cited as support for this position. His work was based on secondary data from the 1950s and 1960s. It focused on relatively rare mental disorders; estimates of incidence ranged from 4.2 per 100,000 population to 35,100 per 100,000.

One way to frame the question is to examine the relative gains married men and women enjoy over their unmarried counterparts. Evidence here is mixed. A meta-analytic review by Haring-Hidore et al. (1985) found that men benefit more from the marital state than do women. Gove, Style, and Hughes (1990), as well as Lowe and Smith (1987) concurred. However, a meta-analysis of ninety-three studies (Wood, Rhodes, and Whelan, 1989) concluded that women experience greater favorable outcomes of marriage than men. An international study in nineteen countries (Mastekaasa, 1994) compared the relationship between marital status (currently married, never married, widowed, and divorced/separated) and four separate measures of well-being for men and women. On only one measure was the marriage gain significantly higher for men, and this only for the comparison between marrieds and never-married.

Three separate questions emerge from the discussion. First, are married persons better off than single persons? Second, is the marriage gain greater for men than for women, as Bernard contended? Finally, are Bernard's conclusions sufficiently replicated to justify their inclusion in so much of the marriage and family literature? This paper will test the first two questions, then speculate about the third.

Data From the United States

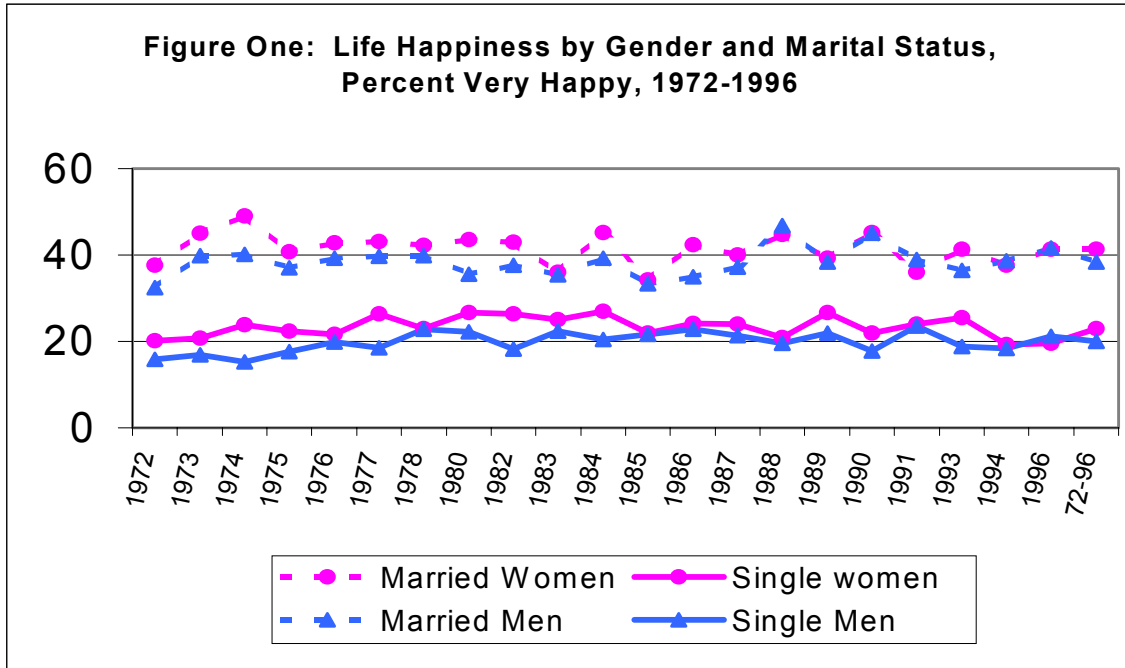
The United States General social survey (GSS) has been conducted almost every year since 1972 by the National Opinion research Center (NORC). Secondary analysis of this data, as provided by the MicroCase analysis system, was used to test the first two questions. The combined 1972-1996 data set provides nationally representative data with 34,577 respondents. The NORC survey was not conducted in 1979, 1981, 1992, or 1995. A more relevant set of well-being questions asked in 1996 includes an N of 2,904.

The combined data sets will be used to compare global happiness of married and single men and women, and marital happiness of men and women. Both negative and positive measures of well-being will be analyzed in detail using the 1996 NORC results.

The GSS measure of global happiness is a response to the question, "Taken all together, how would you say things are these days--would you say that you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?" Results in Figure One are given in percentages who reported that they were "very happy." For purposes of this figure, the marital statuses of "widowed," "never married," and "divorced/separated" were collapsed into the category "single." The results were quite consistent. For both men and women, for each individual year and for the combined data set, more married than single respondents of both genders reported being "very happy" (Chi Square Prob. < 0.000).

Table One reports data for each marital status, by sex, for the combined-year data set. More women in all categories reported being "very happy." For the married subset, 41.4% of women, compared to 38.4% of men reported the highest level of global happiness (prob. < 0.000). Among the never married, 25.2% of women compared to 20.8% of men did so (prob. < 0.000). Corresponding figures for the widowed group were 25.0% of women and 21.3% of men. Only among the divorced/separated group did the difference fail to be statistically significant, with 19.1% of women and 21.3% of men responding "very happy" (prob. = 0.331). Single men were consistently the least happy of the four groups.

The global happiness data lead to three conclusions. First, women are consistently most likely to report highest levels of happiness. This confirms other research findings (Lee, Seccombe, and Shehan, 1991; Mookherjee, 1997; Wood, Rhodes, and Whelan, 1989). Second, married men and women clearly report higher levels of happiness than their counterparts among all groups of singles. Again, this is virtually a universal finding. Finally, the "marriage gain" appears to be equal for men and women, since 18.4% more of the married respondents of each sex report being "very happy" than their single counterparts.



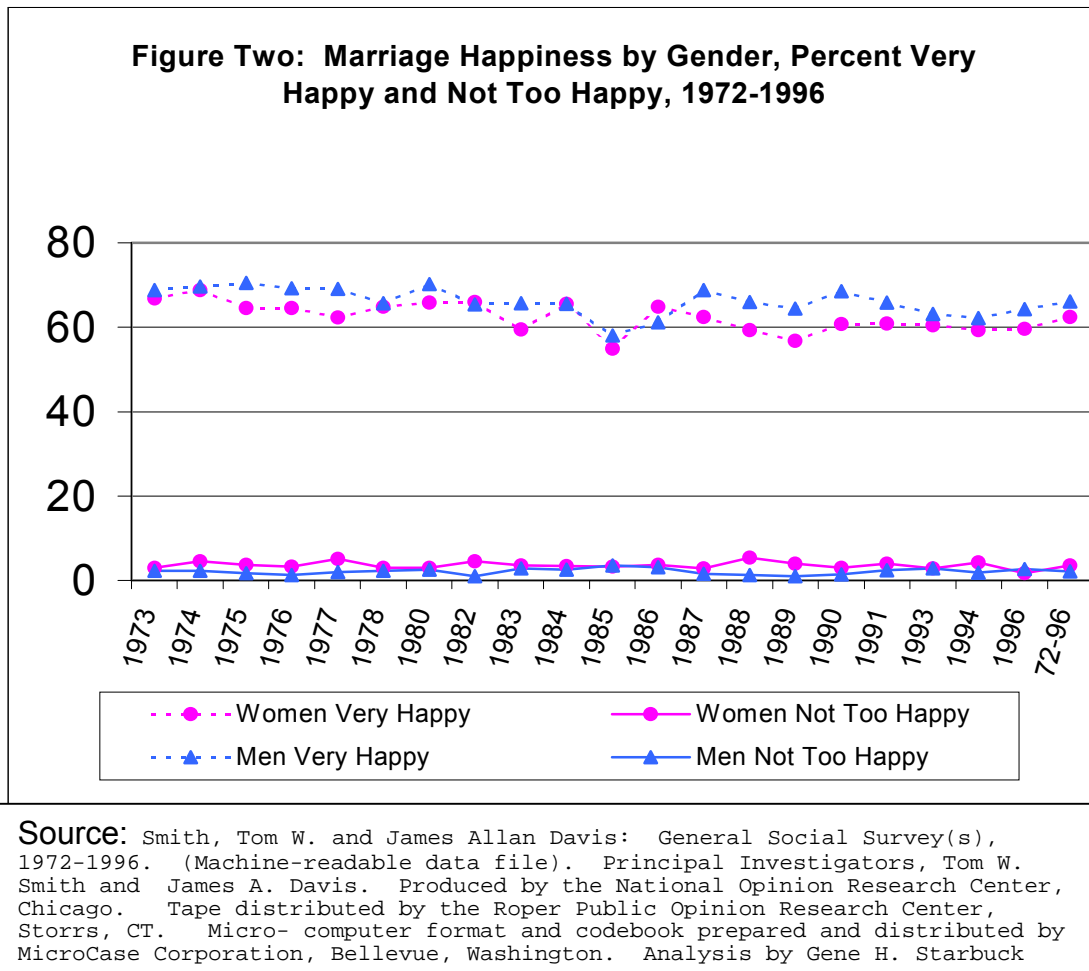
Source: Smith, Tom W. and James Allan Davis: General Social Survey(s), 1972,1996. (Machine-readable data file). Principal Investigators, Tom W. Smith and James A. Davis. Produced by the National Opinion Research Center, Chicago. Tape distributed by the Roper Public Opinion Research Center, Storrs, CT. Micro- computer format and codebook prepared and distributed by MicroCase Corporation, Bellevue, Washington. Analysis by Gene H. Starbuck.

Table One: Life Happiness by Gender and Marital Status, Percent "Very Happy," 1972-1996.

	Marital Status				
	Married	Single			
		All Single	Never Married	Divorced Separated	Widowed
Women	41.4	23.0	25.2	19.1	25.0
Men	38.4	20.0	20.8	18.0	21.3

Source: Smith, Tom W. and James Allan Davis: General Social Survey(s), 1972-1996. (Machine-readable data file). Principal Investigators, Tom W. Smith and James A. Davis. Produced by the National Opinion Research Center, Chicago. Tape distributed by the Roper Public Opinion Research Center, Storrs, CT. Micro- computer format and codebook prepared and distributed by MicroCase Corporation, Bellevue, Washington. Analysis by Gene H. Starbuck.

Questions about marital happiness, rather than life happiness yield a slightly different result. Figure Two presents the results of the NORC question "Taking things all together, how would you describe your marriage? Would you say that your marriage is



very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?"

Figure Two reports for each year and for the total of the 1972-96 NORC data set². Men are more likely to report that their marriage is "very happy." This difference was statistically significant at the .05 level in only five of the twenty years the question was asked, but was significant for the overall data set (N = 18,918). Women were more likely to say their marriage was "not too happy." This was a significant result in six different years and the combined-year data set.

Table Two provides the details of the marriage happiness question for the NORC 1972-1996 combined data. "Very happy" marriages were reported by 66.1% of the men and 62.4% of the women. Marriages were deemed "Pretty happy" by 31.8% of men compared to 34.0% of women, while only 2.1% of men and 3.6% of women reported that their marriages were "Not too happy." Differences between men and women are relatively small but significant because of the large sample size (Chi square prob < 0.000).

² The marriage happiness question was not asked in 1972, the first year of the survey, but was asked in each subsequent year.

This data could be read as partial confirmation of Bernard's thesis that "His marriage is better than hers." It is important to note, however, that the data was not collected as a "his and her marriage" question, as it is often taken to be. Respondents are not asked whether they are happy in or with their marriage; they are, rather, asked whether the marriage as an entity is happy. It is possible, for example, for a respondent who was him/herself happy in the marriage to say the marriage was not happy, if they thought their partner was unhappy. It is also possible that women have a different perception of the same marriage, rather than having a different "his" and "her" marriage. Women do tend to focus more on the relationship aspects of their lives, and their overall happiness is more closely tied to marital happiness than is the case for men (Aldous and Ganey, 1999; Wood, Rhodes, and Whelan, 1989).

Table Two: Marriage Happiness by Sex, in Percents, 1972-1996.

	Female	Male	Total
Very Happy	62.4	66.1	64.1
Pretty Happy	34.0	31.8	33.0
Not Too Happy	3.6	2.1	2.9

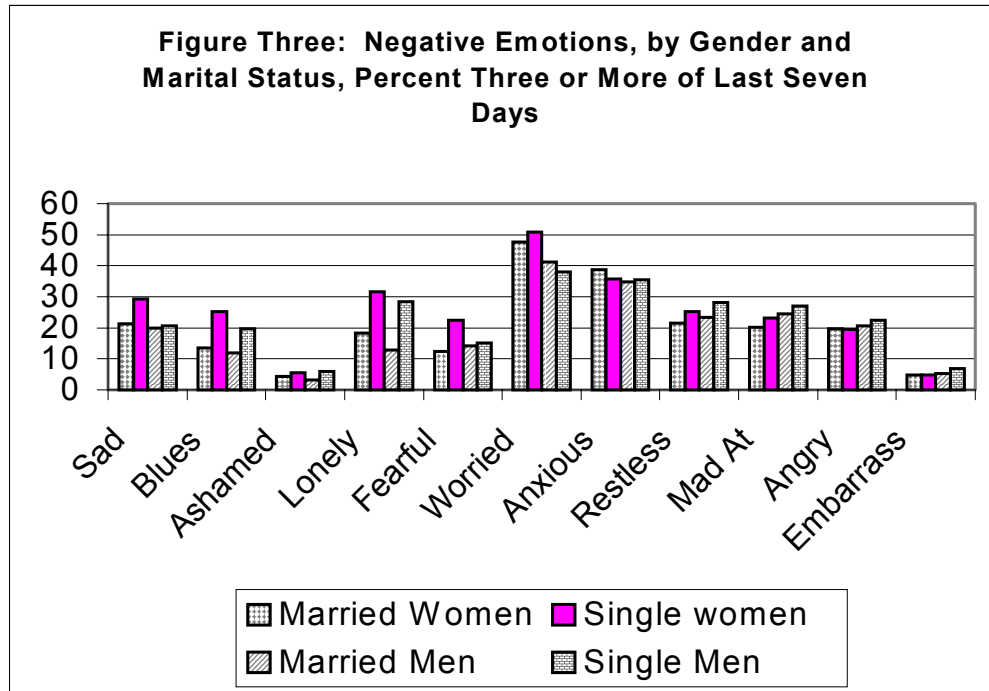
Source: Smith, Tom W. and James Allan Davis: General Social Survey(s), year(s). (Machine-readable data file). Principal Investigators, Tom W. Smith and James A. Davis. Produced by the National Opinion Research Center, Chicago. Tape distributed by the Roper Public Opinion Research Center, Storrs, CT. Micro-computer format and codebook prepared and distributed by MicroCase Corporation, Bellevue, Washington. Analysis by Gene H. Starbuck.

A series of question asked in the 1996 NORC study can be used more directly to measure well-being. The frequency of various emotional states, both negative and positive, can be compared for married and single men and women. The data came in response to this preface: "Now I'm going to read a list of different feelings that people sometimes have. After each one, I would like you to tell me on how many days you have felt this way during the past 7 days." Responses were coded in three categories: 0 days; 1-2 days; and 3 or more days.

Eleven specific questions were used to measure negative emotions (see appendix). Each of these eleven states correlate with each of the others at the .01 level; they score a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.822. Six specific questions were used for the positive emotion measurement. These measures each correlate with each other at the .01 level, with a Chronbach's Alpha of 0.666.

Figure Three summarizes the distribution of the negative emotions (see appendix for data). Of the four marital status/sex combinations, single women are most likely to report being sad (29.4%), being unable to shake the blues (25.3%), feeling lonely (31.6%), and feeling worried (50.8%). Single men are more likely to report high frequencies of being ashamed (5.9%), being restless (28.2%), being mad at someone or something (27.0%), being angry with someone (22.55), and being embarrassed (6.8%). Married women scored highest only in the category of feeling anxious (38.65). Married men had the highest scores in no categories. The clear differences are between single and married, not between men and women.

The largest difference between married and single responses came from the "feel



lonely" and "can't shake the blues" categories. Singles of both sexes reported being

Source: Smith, Tom W. and James Allan Davis: General Social Survey(s), year(s). (Machine-readable data file). Principal Investigators, Tom W. Smith and James A. Davis. Produced by the National Opinion Research Center, Chicago. Tape distributed by the Roper Public Opinion Research Center, Storrs, CT. Micro-computer format and codebook prepared and distributed by MicroCase Corporation, Bellevue, Washington. Analysis by Gene H. Starbuck.

lonely and blue significantly more frequently than married respondents.

The data provide a test of Bernard's contention that married women were inordinately afraid, anxious, and depressed. The question "felt sad" is one indicator of depression. Married women more frequently felt sad (21.1%) than did married men (19.9%), but the difference was not significant. Single women (29.4) were, significantly, the highest in this category. The marriage gain was considerably higher for women (8.2) than for men (0.6).

The "can't shake the blues" question is also an indicator of depression. The higher score for married women (13.5%) than for married men (12.0%) was not significant. Unmarried women (25.3%) were again significantly higher, and again the marriage gain for women (11.6) was greater than the marriage gain for men (7.6).

Results on the "fearful" question stand in stark contrast to Bernard's assertion about inordinate fear among married women. Married women (12.3%) were fearful less frequently than either married men (14.1%) or single men (15.1%), although neither difference was statistically significant. Significant differences did appear, however, between single women (22.5%) and each of the other three groups. The marriage gain for women (10.2) was significantly higher than that for men (1.0).

Only with the "feel anxious" dimension were the results in the direction Bernard would predict, but not significantly so. Married women more frequently felt anxious

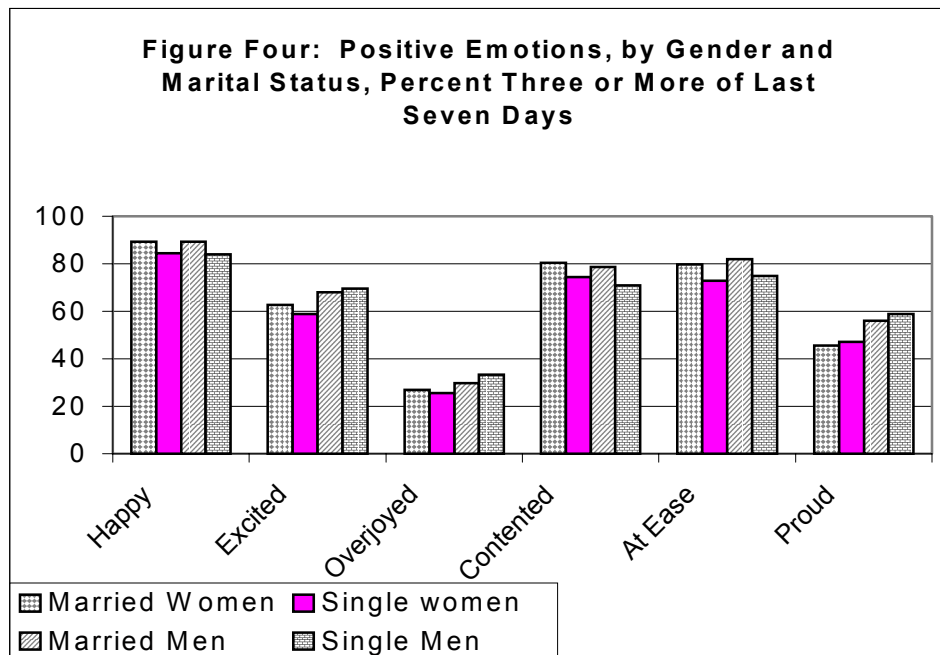
(38.6%) than did married men (34.8%), single women (35.5%), or single men (35.6%). In this case there was a small marriage loss for women (-1.8) and slight marriage gain for men (0.8). This difference is not statistically significant.

Scores for each of the negative emotions can be combined into a rough index of negative well-being. Table Three compares those scores by sex and marital status. The least well-off category is, significantly, single women. Both married men and women have significantly lower negative scores than their single counterparts with the difference being slightly larger for men.

Table Three: Negative Well-Being Index, by Sex and Gender.

	Married	Single	Marriage Gain
Women	222.3	273.4	51.1
Men	211.5	247.6	56.1

Source: Smith, Tom W. and James Allan Davis: General Social Survey(s), 1996. (Machine-readable data file). Principal Investigators, Tom W. Smith and James A. Davis. Produced by the National Opinion Research Center, Chicago. Tape distributed by the Roper Public Opinion Research Center, Storrs, CT. Micro-computer format and codebook prepared and distributed by MicroCase Corporation, Bellevue, Washington. Analysis by Gene H. Starbuck.



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Figure Four illustrates the findings regarding the positive emotional well-being scores. Married women reported higher frequencies of being both happy (89.4%) and contented (80.5%) They were least frequently proud (45.6%). Single men report most often being excited (69.5%), overjoyed (33.3%), and proud (58.8%) but least frequently happy (84.1%). Married men were most frequently at ease (82.0%), and were lowest in

no categories. Single women were highest in no categories, and were least frequently overjoyed (25.5%). Very few of these differences were significant, however. The four marital status/ gender groups were very similar to each other in their frequency of the various positive well-being indicators.

Table Four provides results of the positive well-being index, arrived at by adding the percentages of persons in each category who had the experience three or more days of the last seven. The marriage gain for women (21.4) is considerably greater than the marriage gain for men (12.4). Married men and women each scored higher than their same-sex singles. Single women, who were worst off on the negative well-being index, also fared worst on the positive well-being index.

Table Four: Positive Well-Being Index, by Sex and Marital Status.

	Married	Single	Marriage Gain
Women	384.7	363.3	21.4
Men	403.8	391.4	12.4

Source: Smith, Tom W. and James Allan Davis: General Social Survey(s), 1996. (Machine-readable data file). Principal Investigators, Tom W. Smith and James A. Davis. Produced by the National Opinion Research Center, Chicago. Tape distributed by the Roper Public Opinion Research Center, Storrs, CT. Micro-computer format and codebook prepared and distributed by MicroCase Corporation, Bellevue, Washington. Analysis by Gene H. Starbuck.

Summary of United States Data

Overwhelming evidence exists to refute the contention that marriage is, overall, detrimental to the well-being of women while being beneficial to men. Contrary to Bernard's implications, but consistent with other results (Aldous and Ganey 1999; Aneshensel, Frerichs, and Clark, 1981; Glenn, 1975; Glenn and Weaver, 1988; Gove, 1979(a); Gove, Hughes, and Style, 1983; Gove, Style, and Hughes, 1990; Gove and Tudor, 1973; Wood, Rhodes, and Whelan, 1989), the GSS data used in this analysis find significant marriage gains for women as well as men. The present data did not address the issue of whether this is the result of a marriage selection factor or, instead, is a function of the marital condition itself.

There is no reason to conclude that the overall marriage gain is greater for men than for women; if anything, the data show the opposite. The global happiness gain is identical by sex, while women gained considerably more in overall positive well-being. Men gained slightly more in alleviation of overall negative well being. All told, the data fail to confirm Bernard's contentions in this regard.

Finally, there is no convincing evidence that, among married persons, "his marriage" is better than "her marriage" in any way that can be attributed to the institution of marriage. Married women did score higher on the negative well-being index than did married men, but single women were considerably the worst off. It is quite possible that either more women in general have negative well-being, or this kind of instrument is more likely to pick up indicators of negative well-being that occur in women.

International Data

The World Values Survey (WVS), completed between 1990 and 1993, was produced by the Institute for Social Research. The surveys, received from nearly 60,000 respondents, were conducted in 43 countries that represent 70 percent of the world's population.

Global happiness was measured by the question, "Taking all things together, would you say you are very happy, quite happy, not very happy, or not at all happy?" Respondents thus had four levels of happiness from which to choose, rather than the three levels offered by the GSS. Marital status was also measured differently from the GSS survey; the category "living as married" was offered as a choice on the WVS, and the category "single" was offered in addition to divorced, separated, and widowed. For the present analysis, this marital status variable was combined with a question asking whether the respondent had ever been married. This resulted in a marital status variable with the categories married, living as married (cohabiting), divorced, separated, widowed, and never wed.

Table 5: Global Happiness by Marital Status and Sex, All Countries, in Percents

Happy?	<u>Married</u>		<u>Cohabit</u>		<u>Divorced</u>		<u>Separated</u>		<u>Widowed</u>		<u>Neverwed</u>	
	<u>men</u>	<u>wom</u>	<u>men</u>	<u>wom</u>	<u>men</u>	<u>wom</u>	<u>men</u>	<u>wom</u>	<u>men</u>	<u>wom</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>wom</u>
Very	21.8	25.1	23.3	28.7	15.9	11.8	9.2	13.8	16.1	13.5	19.4	23.1
Quite	58.0	54.7	56.7	53.5	49.0	49.2	48.0	46.4	50.3	50.3	58.1	56.6
Not Very	18.0	18.0	16.8	15.2	28.4	33.0	37.5	31.7	26.8	29.4	19.4	18.4
Not at All	2.2	2.2	3.2	2.6	6.7	6.0	5.3	8.0	6.8	6.7	3.0	1.9

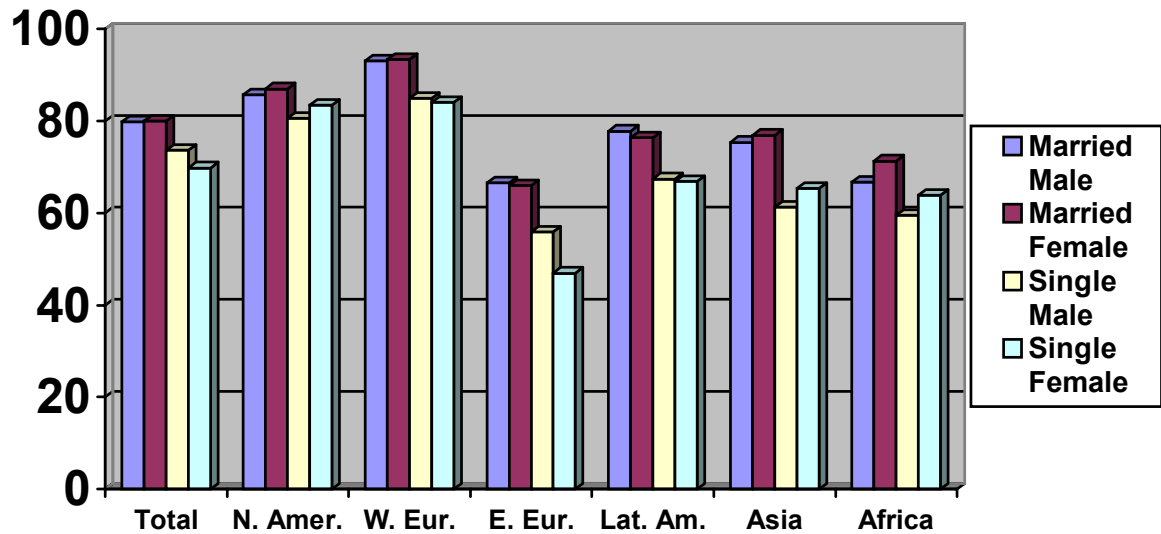
Source: World Values Study Group. WORLD VALUES SURVEY, 1990-1993 [Computer file]. ICPSR version. Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research [producer], 1994. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 1994. Title: WORLD VALUES SURVEY, 1990-1993, (Enhanced Instructional Version) MicroCase Corporation, 14110 NE 21st Street, Bellevue, WA 98007. Analysis by Gene H. Starbuck.

In overall levels of happiness, men and women do not significantly differ. Table 5 provides the cross tabulation of the global happiness and marital status variables, broken down by sex. For both men and women, cohabiting respondents reported the highest levels of happiness, followed by married ones (prob.= 0.000). However, cohabitants made up only 5.0 percent of all respondents, and were concentrated in the Scandinavian countries where very high overall rates of happiness are found. When considered separately, married respondents were slightly happier even in the Scandinavian country. When controlling for region in this way, the difference between

married and cohabiting respondents becomes non-significant for the total sample. Among the married, cohabiting, and never wed, women reported significantly higher levels of happiness than did the men (prob.= 0.000).

Because the cohabiting category was so small and had results quite similar to the married group, the remainder of this analysis collapses the “married” and “cohabiting” respondents into a category labeled “married.” Also, the “very happy” and “quite happy” categories are collapsed into one simply labeled “happy,” while the “not very happy” and “not at all happy” (only 2.9 percent of all respondents) are both included in the category “unhappy.”

Figure 5: Percent "Very" or "Quite" Happy, by World Region, Sex and Marital Status



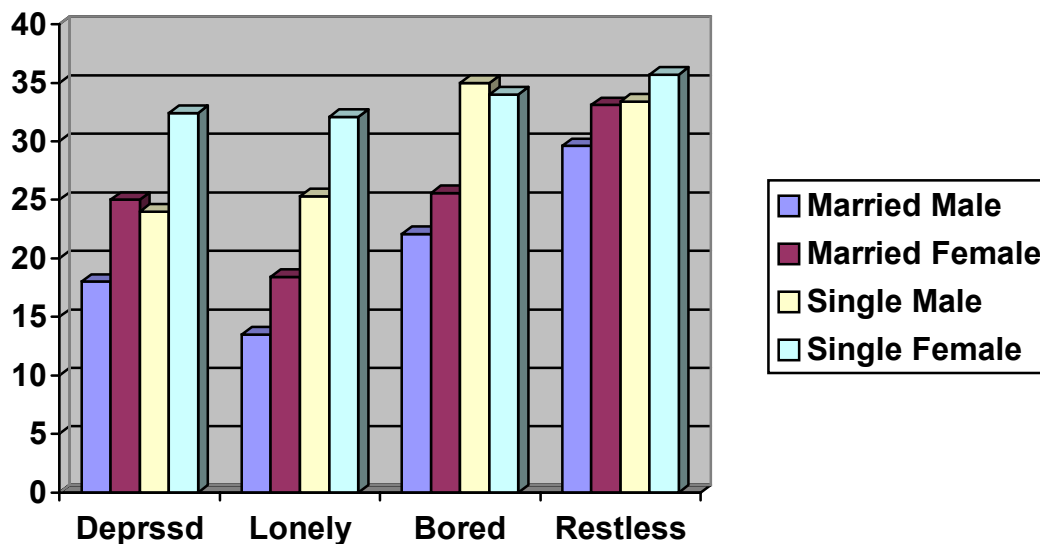
Source:World Values Study Group. WORLD VALUES SURVEY, 1990-1993 [Computer file]. ICPSR version. Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research [producer], 1994. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 1994Title: WORLD VALUES SURVEY, 1990-1993, (Enhanced Instructional Version) MicroCase Corporation, 14110 NE 21st Street, Bellevue, WA 98007. Analysis by Gene H. Starbuck.

Figure 5 summarizes the data using the collapsed variables. For the sample as a whole, there was no significant difference in happiness levels between married men and

women. Single men, however, were significantly happier than single women (prob.=0.000). For the total sample and for each region, married respondents reported higher levels of happiness than did their single counterparts (prob.=0.000). For the sample as a whole, single women were the least happy. For the combined sample and for each region, women experienced a greater “marriage gain” than did men (all prob.=0.000).

In addition to the global happiness questions, the World Values Survey included more specific data on positive and negative well being of respondents. The questions begin with, “During the past few weeks have you ever felt. . .” and then end with a one-word or description feeling. The answers used here were coded as “Yes” or “No.” Negative feeling states included indicators of depression, loneliness, boredom, and restlessness.

Figure 6: Percent with Negative Feelings, by Marital Status and Sex, World Sample



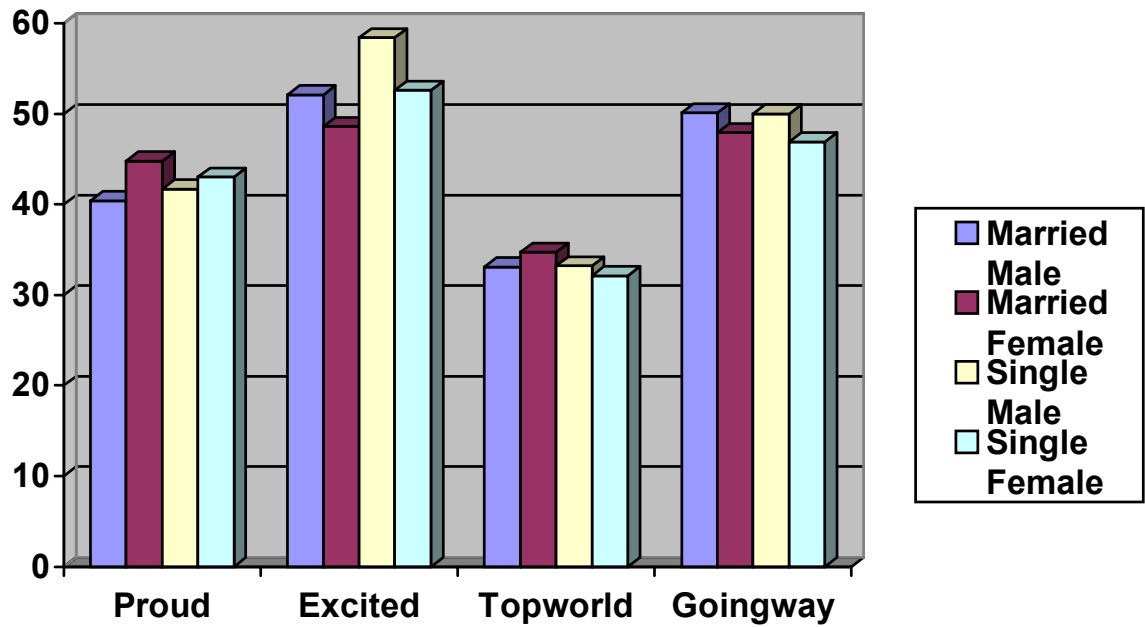
Source: World Values Study Group. WORLD VALUES SURVEY, 1990-1993 [Computer file]. ICPSR version. Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research [producer], 1994. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 1994

As Figure 6 indicates, married males are best off on all four indicators of negative well being. Single women are worst off on all but the “bored” indicator; this is most pronounced with respect to depression and loneliness. In every case, married respondents are better off than their single counterparts.

As Figure Seven indicates, results on the indicators of positive well being are more mixed. Single respondents were more likely than their married counterparts to have feel “proud because someone had complemented [them] on something they had done.” Males were more likely than females to report feeling that “Things were going their

way.” Single males were most likely to have felt “Excited about something” and that “Things were going their way.”

Figure 7: Percent with Positive Feelings, by Marital Status and Sex, World Sample



Source: World Values Study Group. WORLD VALUES SURVEY, 1990-1993 [Computer file]. ICPSR version. Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research [producer], 1994. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 1994

A combination of the negative and positive indicators of well being provide a way to compare the total “marriage gain” experienced by men and women. Total percents experiencing a particular feeling were summed within each category of sex and marital status to calculate total positive and negative scores. Table 6 summarizes the results. Although women generally have higher negative scores than do men, married individuals of both sexes are considerably better off. Males drop 34.5 negative points, compared to the 32.1 point drop for women.

Table 6: Marriage Gain, Negative and Positive Feelings, by Sex, World Survey

	Negative Feelings			Positive Feelings			Total Marriage Gain
	Single	Married	Marriage Gain	Single	Married	Marriage Gain	
<i>Male</i>	117.7	83.2	34.5	183.8	175.7	-8.1	26.4
<i>Female</i>	134.2	102.1	32.1	170.3	173.9	3.6	35.7

Source: World Values Study Group. WORLD VALUES SURVEY, 1990-1993 [Computer file]. ICPSR version. Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research [producer], 1994. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 1994

Males have higher overall positive well being scores than do females, but single males have higher scores than do married males, while married women are better off than their single counterparts. When the differences on negative and positive well being indicators are combined, males have a “marriage gain” of 9.3 points less than do females. The gain for men comes entirely from reducing negative well being, while women benefit both from reducing negative well being and from increasing positive well being.

Summary of International Data

Data from the World Values Survey confirms that of the General Social Survey. When controlling for region, there is no difference between married men and women in reported happiness. There is, however, a significant difference between married and single respondents. Women have higher negative well being than do men, but married respondents of both sexes have significantly lower negative well being scores than do single respondents. Positive well being scores are higher for married than for single women, while married men have somewhat lower positive well being than do their single counterparts. While different indicators of well being could yield different results, the ones in the World Values Survey find, over all, greater “marriage gains” for women than for men.

Conclusion

The overwhelming evidence is that men and women both benefit from marriage. Bernard aside, there is no convincing evidence that, overall, "his marriage" is better than "her marriage" in terms of their respective well-being.

Feminist and conflict approaches are dominant paradigms today in sociology. Bernard's assertions have been institutionalized therein. In this author's view, there is nothing wrong with presenting her work in textbooks and elsewhere, as long as more recent, contrary results are also discussed. If the volume of textbook space corresponded to the volume of confirmed research, several pages would be devoted to the findings that both men and women gain from marriage, and there would be only a passing mention of the conflicting evidence about ways men and women might benefit unequally. Emphasizing the latter over the former seems to misplace the emphasis.

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Appendix

Negative Emotions Data

	Sad	Blues	Ashamed	Lonely	Fearful	Worried	Anxious	Restless	Mad At	Angry	Embarrassed	Totals
Married Women	21.2	13.5	4.3	18.3	12.3	47.7	38.6	21.6	20.2	19.7	4.9	222.3
Single women	29.4	25.3	5.6	31.6	22.5	50.8	35.8	25.2	23.1	19.4	4.7	273.4
Married Men	19.9	12	3.1	12.8	14.1	41.3	34.8	23.3	24.5	20.5	5.2	211.5
Single Men	20.5	19.6	5.9	28.3	15.1	38.1	35.6	28.2	27	22.5	6.8	247.6

Positive Emotions Data

	Happy	Excited	Overjoyed	Contented	At Ease	Proud	Total
Married Women	89.4	62.6	26.9	80.5	79.7	45.6	384.7
Single women	84.5	58.9	25.5	74.5	72.8	47.1	363.3
Married Men	89.3	68	29.8	78.7	82	56	403.8
Single Men	84.1	69.5	33.3	70.8	74.9	58.8	391.4

Questions and code words used for the negative emotions were: On how many of the last seven days have you . . .

- Felt sad? (SAD);
- Felt that you couldn't shake the blues? (SHAKEBLU);
- Felt ashamed of something you'd done? (ASHAMED);
- Felt lonely? (LONELY);
- Felt fearful about something that might happen to you? (FEARFUL);
- Worried a lot about little things? (WORRIED);
- Felt anxious and tense? (ANXIOUS);
- Felt so restless that you couldn't sit long in a chair? (RESTLESS);
- Felt mad at something or someone? (MADAT);
- Felt angry at someone? (ANGRY);
- Felt embarrassed about something? (EMBARRSS).

Questions and code words used for the positive emotions: On how many of the last seven days have you . . .

- Felt happy? (HAPFEEL);
- Felt excited about or interested in something? (EXCITED);
- Felt overjoyed about something? (OVRJOYED);
- Felt contented? (CONTENTD);
- Felt at ease? (ATEASE);
- Felt proud of something you'd done? (PROUD).

Countries by region, World Values Survey:

North America: United States, Canada.

Western Europe: France, Britain, West Germany, Italy Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, Spain, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, Finland, Switzerland, Austria.

Eastern Europe: Hungary, Poland, Belarus, Czech-Slov; East Germany, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Russia.

Latin America: Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Chile.

Asia: Japan, South Korea, India, China.

Africa: South Africa, Nigeria.