

# ***HOW DO THEY FEEL ABOUT GOVERNMENT & POLITICS?***



**Women's Voices**  
**Women Vote.**

**While unmarried citizens take great pride in being Americans, cynicism is a barrier to greater participation in American politics.**

# FAST FACTS

## HOW DO THEY FEEL ABOUT GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS?

	UNMARRIED	MARRIED
<b>FEEL “VERY PROUD” TO BE AN AMERICAN</b> (General Social Survey, 2004)	<b>70.4%</b>	<b>83.7%</b>
<b>AGREE THAT THERE ARE THINGS THAT “MAKE ME ASHAMED” ABOUT AMERICA</b> (General Social Survey, 2004)	<b>56.3%</b>	<b>54.8%</b>
<b>AGREE THAT THE GOVERNMENT “DOESN’T CARE MUCH WHAT PEOPLE LIKE ME THINK”</b> (General Social Survey, 2004)	<b>47.1%</b>	<b>39.7%</b>
<b>THINKS THE GOVERNMENT IS MOSTLY RUN BY “A FEW BIG INTERESTS”</b> (National Election Study, 2004)	<b>59.2%</b>	<b>53.4%</b>

# FAST FACTS

## HOW DO THEY FEEL ABOUT GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS?

	UNMARRIED WOMEN	MARRIED WOMEN
<b>FEEL “VERY PROUD” TO BE AN AMERICAN</b> (General Social Survey, 2004)	74.5%	83.3%
<b>AGREE THAT THERE ARE THINGS THAT “MAKE ME ASHAMED” ABOUT AMERICA</b> (General Social Survey, 2004)	56.2%	56.8%
<b>AGREE THAT THE GOVERNMENT “DOESN’T CARE MUCH WHAT PEOPLE LIKE ME THINK”</b> (General Social Survey, 2004)	45.2%	40.3%
<b>THINK THE GOVERNMENT IS MOSTLY RUN BY “A FEW BIG INTERESTS”</b> (National Election Study, 2004)	60.0%	48.8%

# SUMMARY

## **HOW DO THEY FEEL ABOUT GOVERNMENT & POLITICS?**

- ***Unmarried Americans have great doubts about the way their government is run. Many feel that their voice is not heard, and many feel the government is run by an elite few. Government corruption is a common theme underlying their attitudes toward government.***
- ***Unmarried Americans are proud to be Americans. They are slightly less likely to feel “very proud” to be American, but their patriotism is not in doubt.***
- ***They are extremely cynical about government. Unmarried Americans are quite likely to agree that government does not care about people like them – this is especially true of unmarried Americans who do not vote.***
- ***Unmarried Americans who do not vote are particularly likely to believe that people like them do not have a say in government decisions.***

# SUMMARY

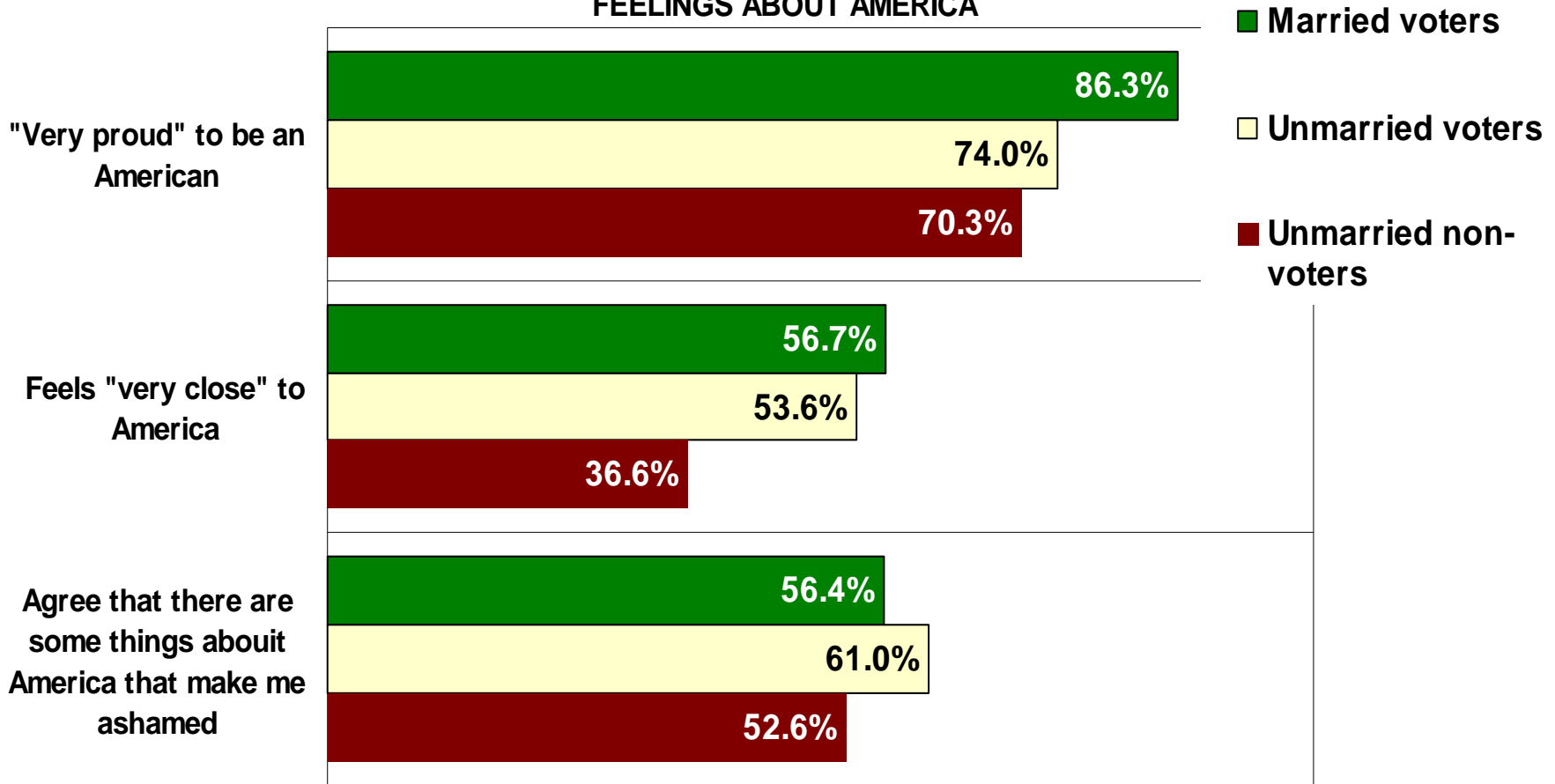
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## *HOW DO THEY FEEL ABOUT GOVERNMENT & POLITICS? Unmarried Women*

- *Compared to their male counterparts, unmarried female voters express high levels of pride in being an American and reflect a certain optimism about the future. They still have their doubts about government, but their slightly less negative outlook may explain their higher participation.*
- *These feelings of pride, however, are balanced by the cynicism that unmarried women share with unmarried men. In particular, non-voting women on their own are very disenchanted with politicians and seem to feel that politics may be too complicated for them to bother with.*

*Most voters feel very proud to be Americans, but most unmarried non-voters do not feel very "close" to America. This is not too surprising given other data that suggests they are somewhat less connected to their community. But it is not as if unmarried non-voters are unpatriotic; they are less likely than voters to agree that they are ashamed of America.*

**FEELINGS ABOUT AMERICA**



General Social Survey, 2004

Unmarried America, 2007

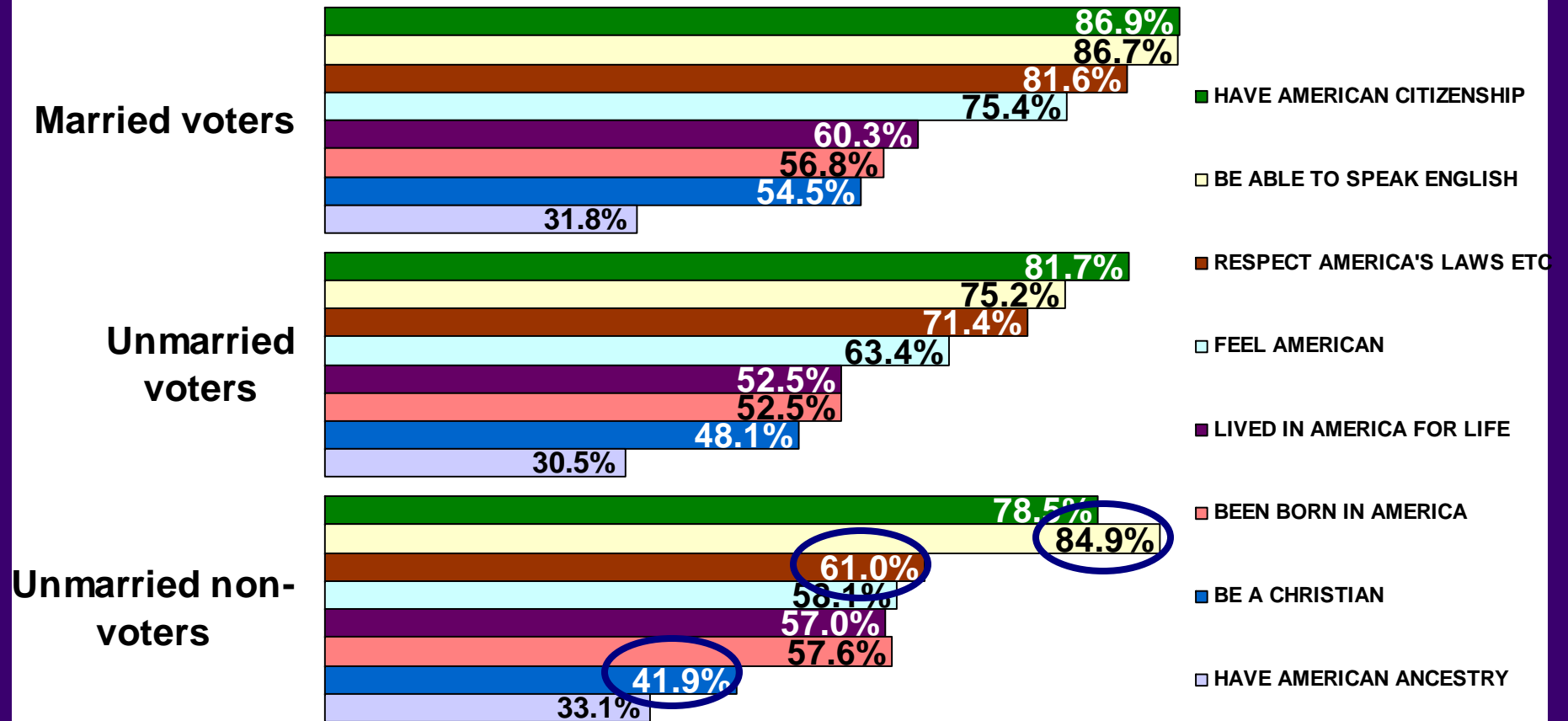


***Unmarried men, and younger unmarried non-voters, are less rooted in and “close” to America than their female and older counterparts.***

		"Very proud" to be an American	Feel "very close" to America	Some things about America make me ashamed
Unmarried voters	Men	70.9%	45.3%	60.4%
	Women	75.5%	58.0%	60.9%
	Under 35	59.7%	29.9%	73.1%
	35 & over	81.0%	65.2%	55.4%
Unmarried non-voters	Men	67.1%	34.5%	56.4%
	Women	73.6%	39.1%	49.4%
	Under 35	61.4%	20.0%	59.5%
	35 & over	82.5%	53.7%	45.1%

*Married voters tend to have a slightly stricter definition of what it means to be "American." Across groups the top tier is the same: be a citizen, speak English, and respect the law. However, compared to unmarried voters, unmarried non-voters are more likely to prioritize learning English, and place less importance upon respecting American laws and being a Christian.*

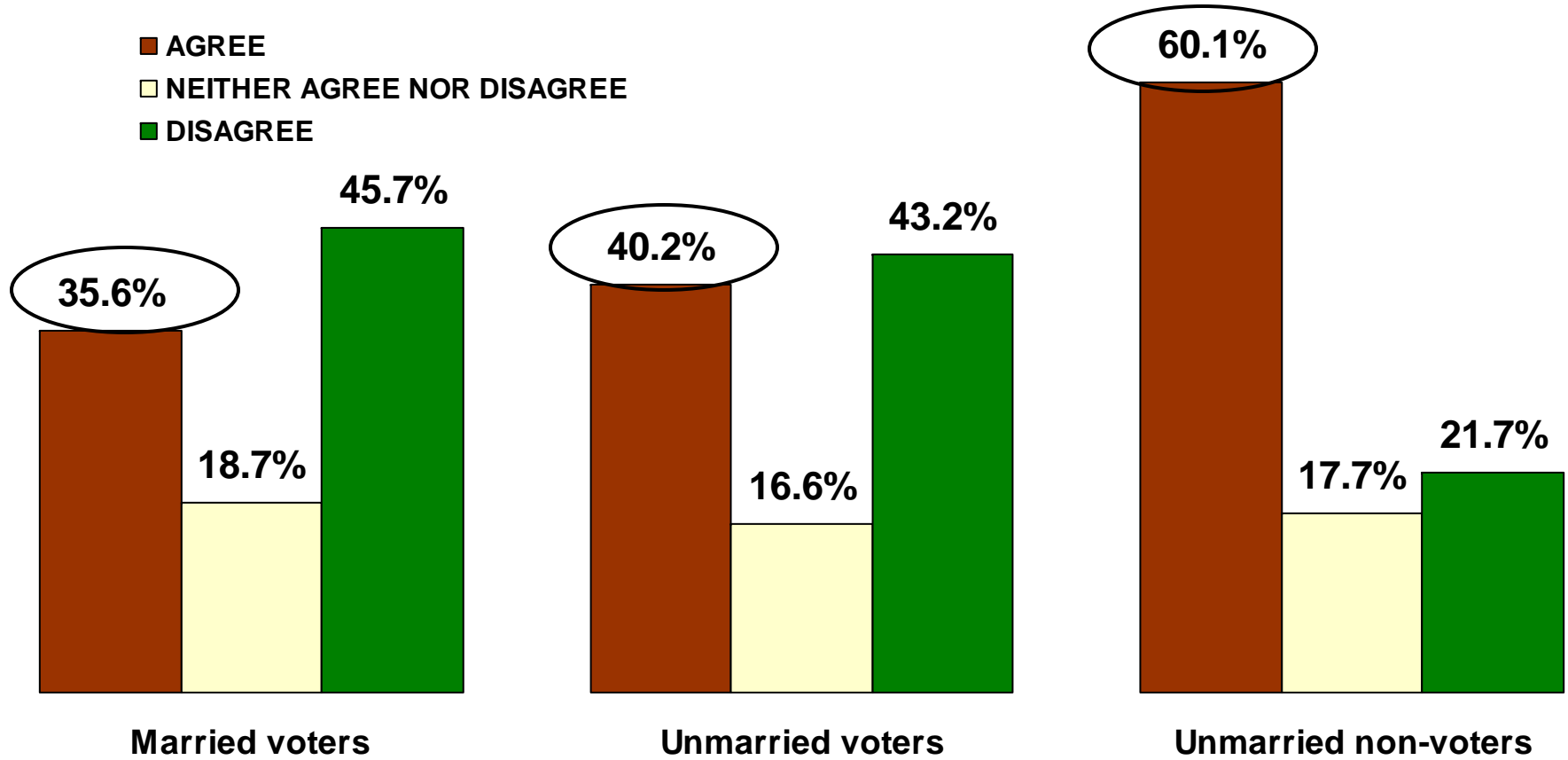
**IMPORTANCE FOR BEING TRULY AMERICAN (% saying "very important")**



*There is a considerable amount of public cynicism about government, and it is most intense among unmarried non-voters, with 60 percent of them believing that the government does not care what they think. This cynicism likely feeds their lower level of political involvement.*

"I don't think the government cares much what people like me think."

- AGREE
- NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE
- DISAGREE



General Social Survey, 2004

Unmarried America, 2007



# Unmarried men and women are similarly pessimistic about how much what they say matters to government.

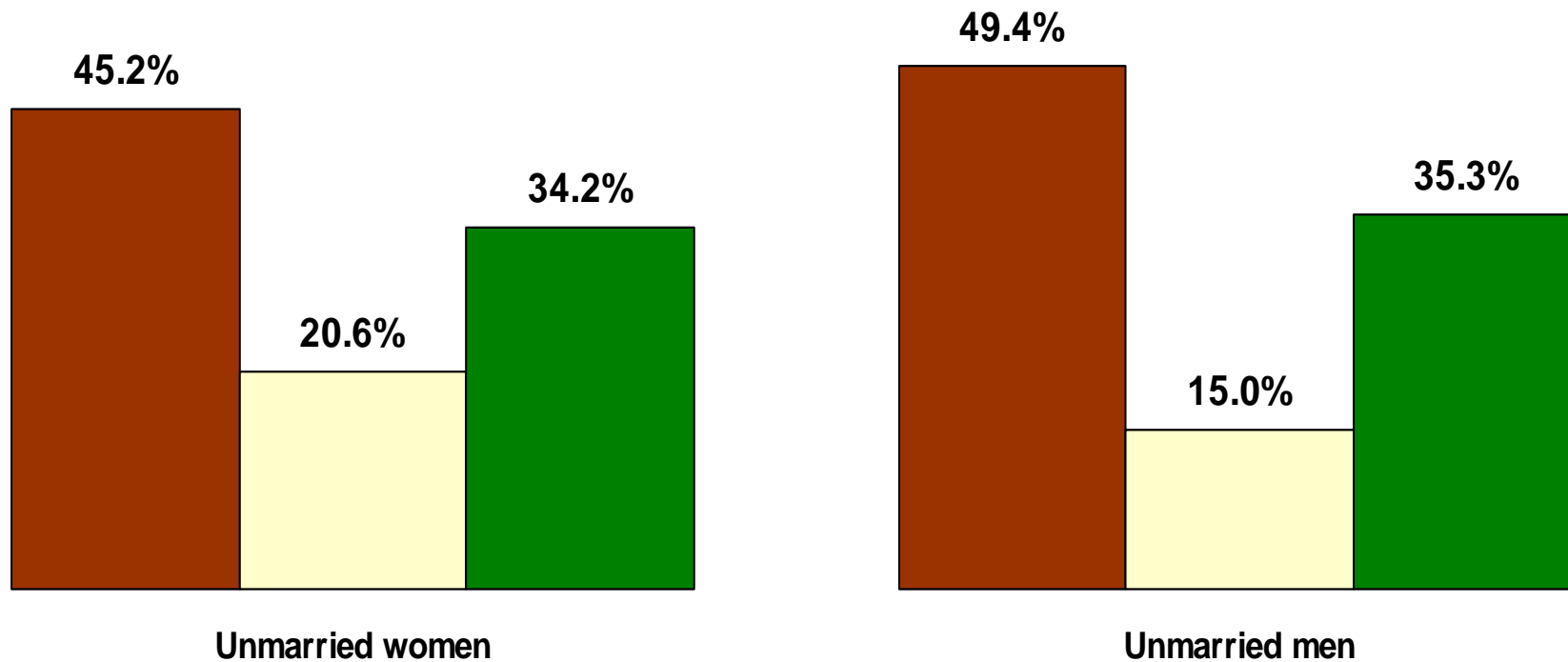
"I don't think the government cares much what people like me think."

UNMARRIEDS ONLY

■ AGREE

■ NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

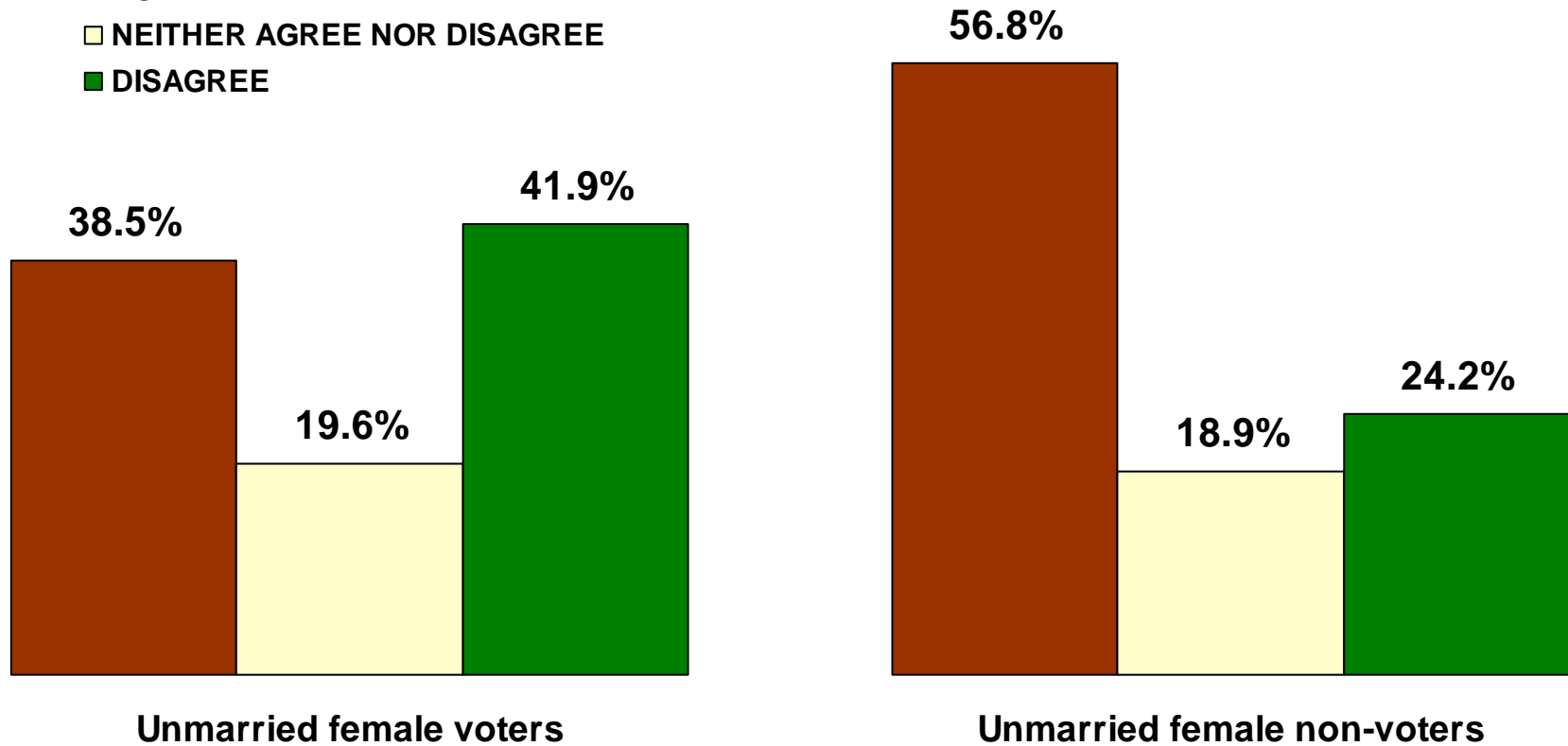
■ DISAGREE



*Feelings of alienation from the government are less intense among unmarried women than among their male counterparts, but the overall pattern is the same. Non-voting unmarried women are much more likely to feel the government does not care about them.*

"I don't think the government cares much what people like me think."  
UNMARRIED WOMEN ONLY

- AGREE
- NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE
- DISAGREE



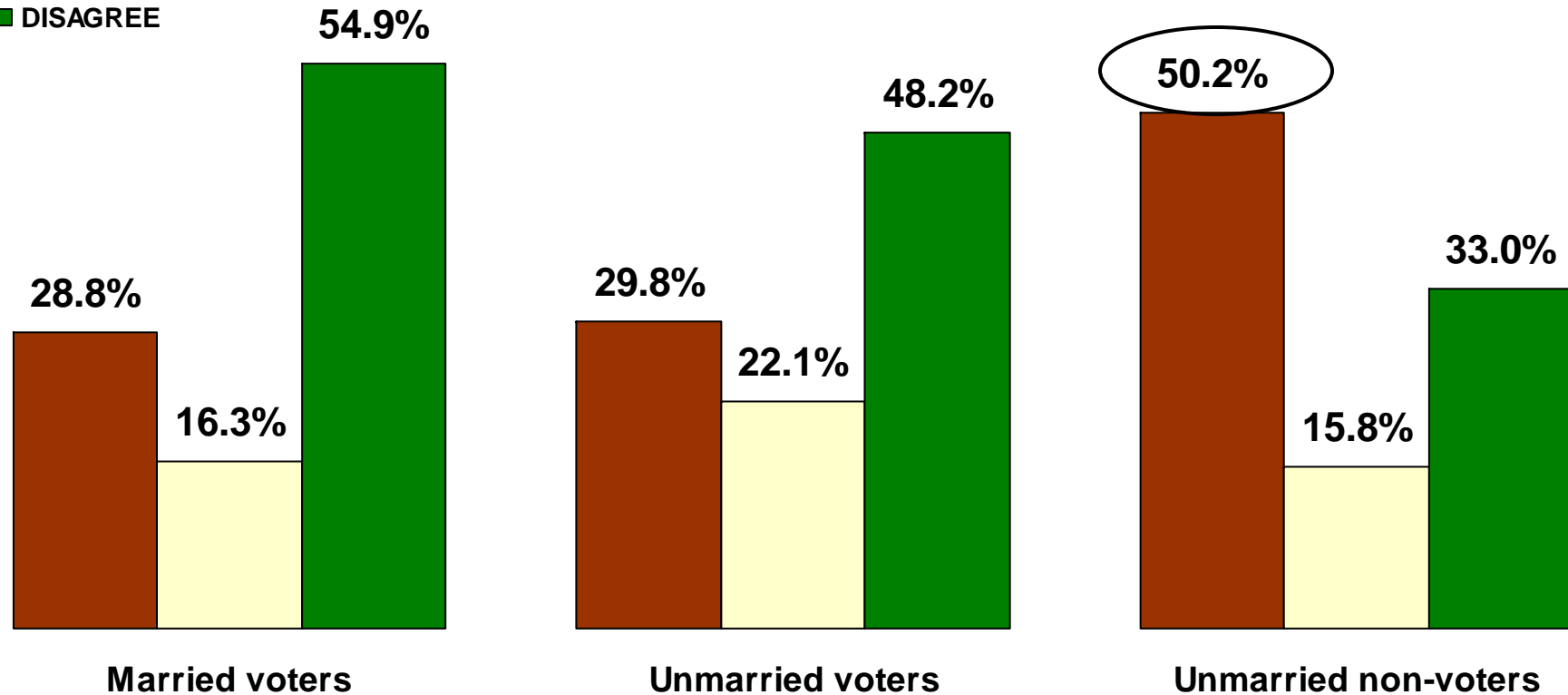
*Voters are more optimistic about being able to at least have a say in what government does. However, half of unmarried non-voters feel that they **DO NOT** have a say.*

"People like me don't have any say about what the government does."

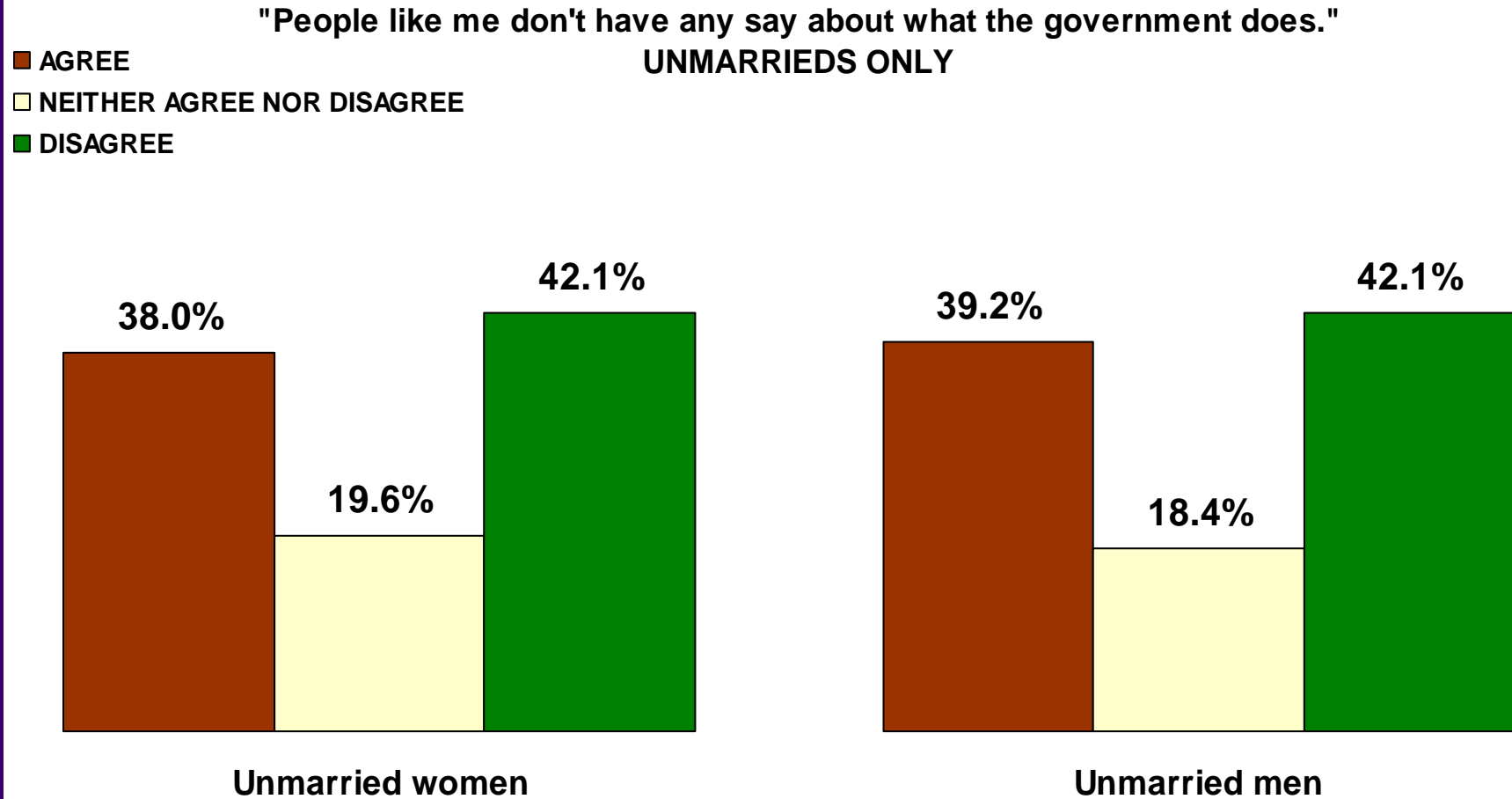
■ AGREE

■ NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

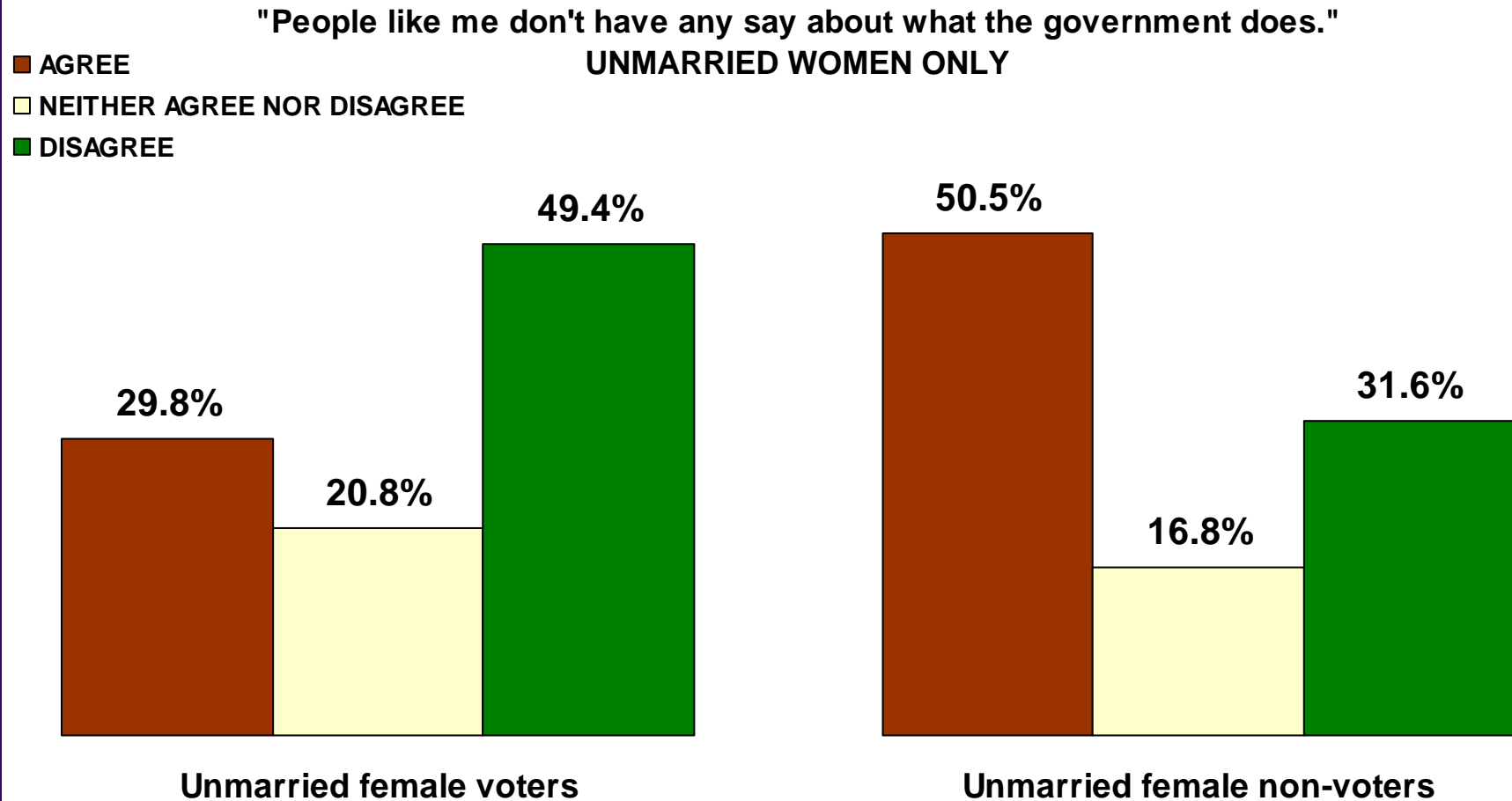
■ DISAGREE



# Both unmarried women and unmarried men are split on whether or not people like them have any say about what the government does.



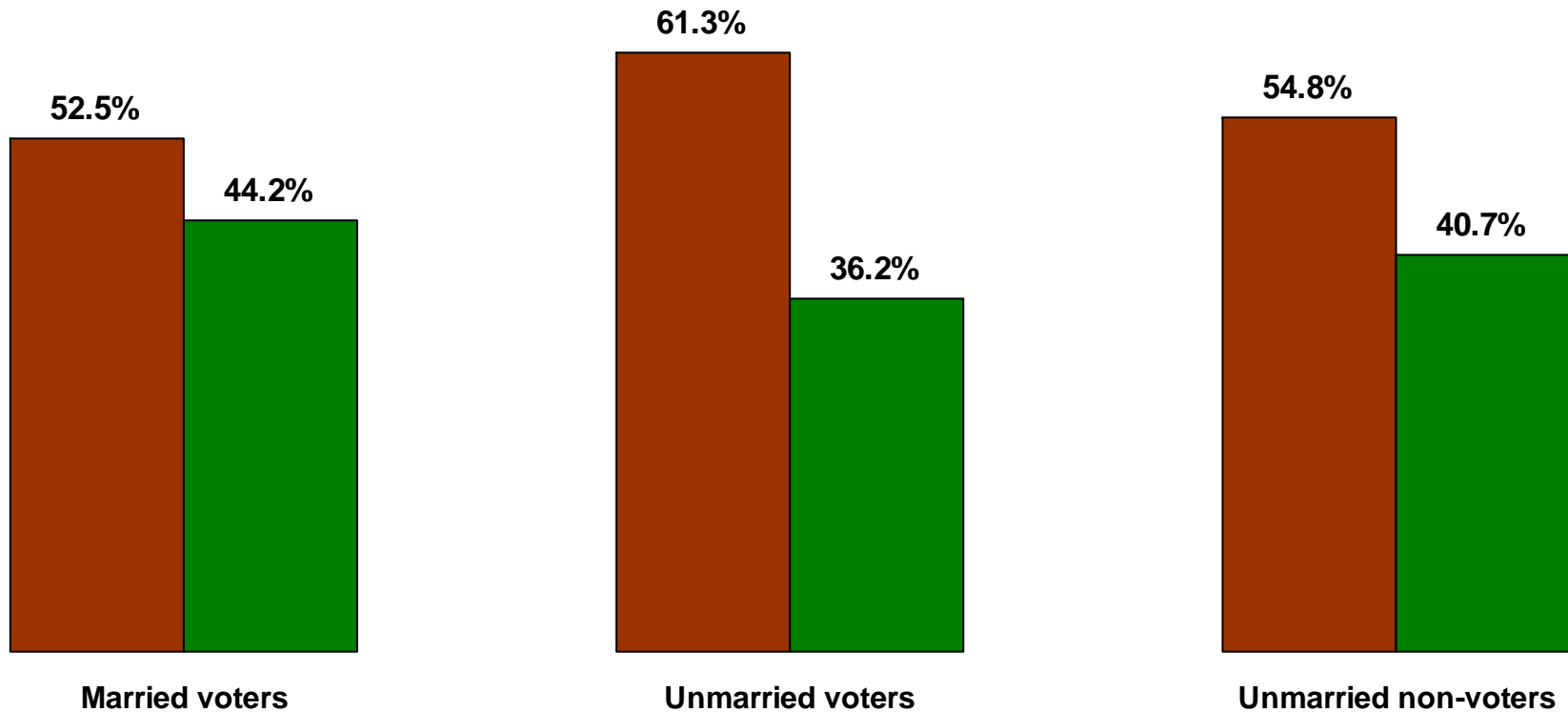
*The feelings unmarried women have about their ability to be heard by the government mirror what unmarried men believe. The main difference, once again, is between voters – who feel they are being listened to – and non-voters – who feel they are not.*



# *There is general agreement on the idea that government is mostly run by the rich and powerful, especially among unmarried voters.*

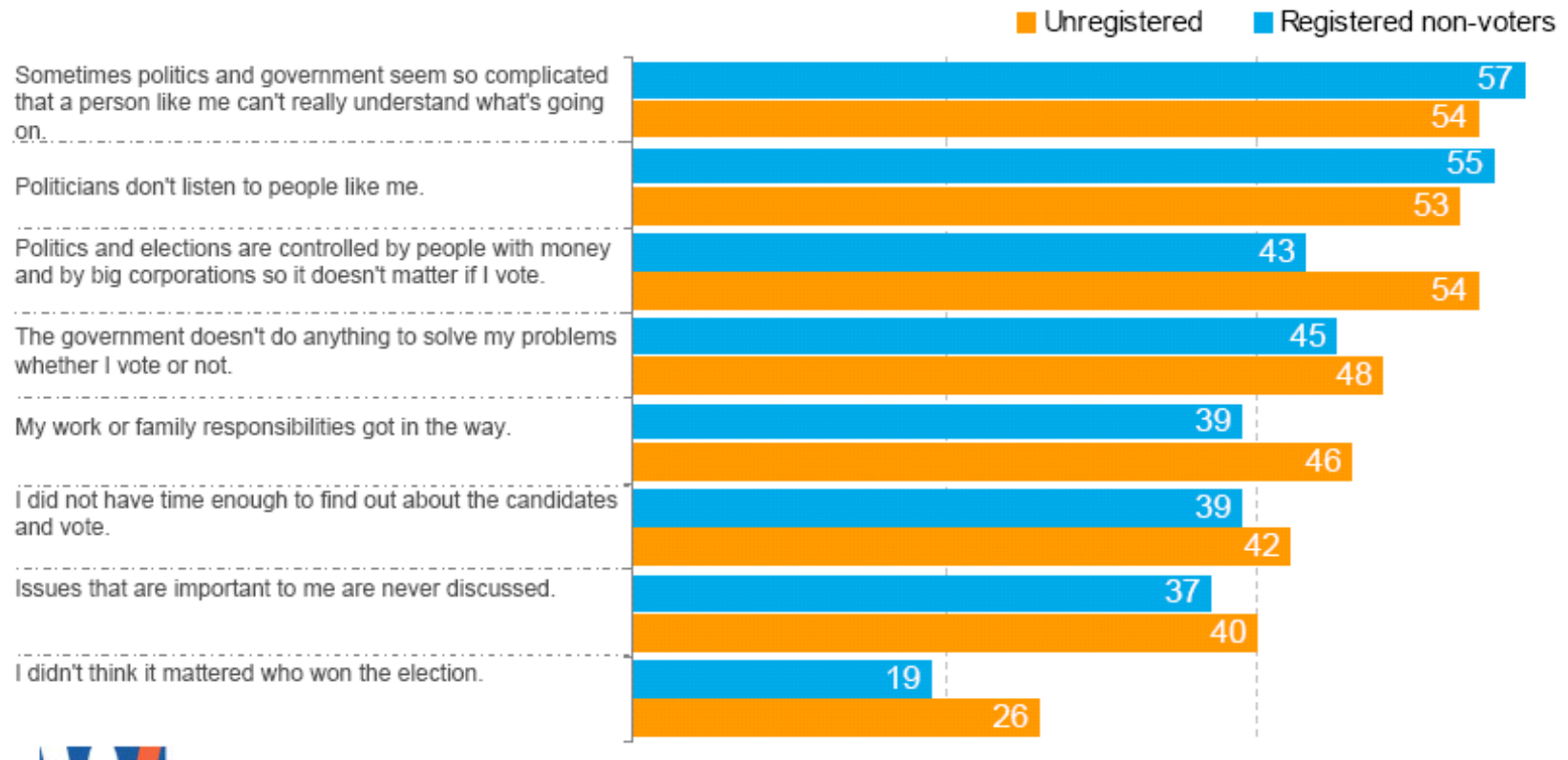
"Which statement do you agree with the most?"

■ Government is run by a few big interests ■ Government is run for the benefit of all



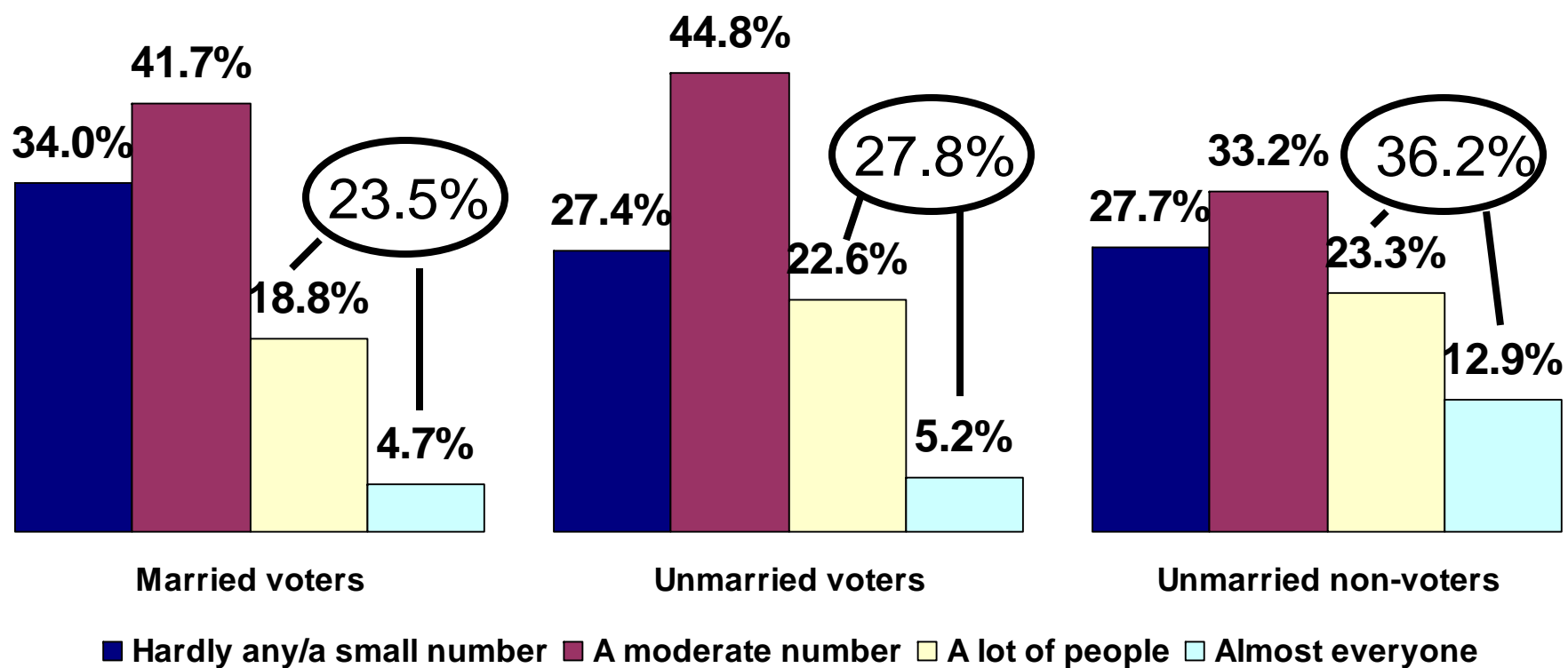
## Among unmarried female non-voters, there are high levels of cynicism about politicians and feelings that politics is too complicated to bother with.

Here are some statements that people have made about why they did not vote in recent elections. For each one, please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree.



*For unmarried Americans, corruption in government is a constant background narrative. They see public corruption as not unusual, feeding their belief that government is run by a few special interests. The feeling is particularly intense among unmarried non-voters.*

**"How widespread do you think corruption is in public service in America?"**



General Social Survey, 2004

Unmarried America, 2007



*Unmarried America has the least confidence in either Congress, the media, or television. Unmarried non-voters also hold a special contempt for major companies.*

**CONFIDENCE IN AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS (% “a great deal” of confidence)**

	MARRIED VOTERS	UNMARRIED VOTERS	UNMARRIED NON-VOTERS
<b>Most Confidence</b>	Military – 57.4%	Military – 52.8%	Military – 60.3%
	Scientific Comm. – 43.6%	Scientific Comm. – 39.0%	Scientific Comm. – 45.2%
	Medicine – 38.0%	Medicine – 36.5%	U.S. Supreme Court – 40.5%
		Education – 31.4%	Medicine – 36.2%
		U.S. Supreme Court – 31.3%	
<b>Least Confidence</b>			Major Companies – 15.5%
	Congress – 11.0%	Television – 11.3%	Television – 15.5%
	Television – 6.8%	Congress – 10.7%	Congress – 15.5%
	Press – 5.2%	Press – 10.7%	Press – 14.7%
			Executive Branch – 13.7%

The complete list of institutions is BANKS & FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, CONGRESS, EDUCATION, EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT, MAJOR COMPANIES, MEDICINE, MILITARY, ORGANIZED RELIGION, PRESS, SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY, TELEVISION, & U.S. SUPREME COURT



General Social Survey, 2004  
 Unmarried America, 2007

