

CHANGING MEDIA, CHANGING MINDS: THE LESBIAN AND GAY
MOVEMENT, TELEVISION, AND PUBLIC OPINION

By

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CHAPTER I

CHANGING MEDIA, CHANGING MINDS?

In the mid 1990s, a dramatic wave in the normally calm waters of public opinion began to form. The American public's attitudes towards lesbians and gays were changing and this change over the next fifteen years would be rapid. Immediately preceding this change, lesbians and gays began demanding the right to be portrayed in a positive light in the news, on television, and on film. This wave of change happened most heavily among the nation's youth who normally inherit their parent's political positions and it mirrored prior changes in opinion that have occurred in thinking on racial equality and the role of women in society. Why, when most research shows that changes in what the public thinks are weak and ephemeral (Page and Shapiro 1992, Stimson 2004), did these issues change rapidly and in a single direction toward greater toleration? Why do we see differences between the young and old on these issues and not others (MacManus 1996)?

The key difference between trends on public opinion involving policy and governmental issues, or political issues, and trends in public opinion on social issues which involve attitudes on racial equality, gender roles, and minorities can be gleaned from examining Figures 1-1 and 1-2. Figures 1-1 and 1-2 contain examples of both of these two distinct types of public opinion issues. Figure 1-1 plots the change in attitudes on government spending levels for three different policy areas. Although these preferences do change significantly over time, they do not appear to move towards a

point of broad consensus among the public. Contrast this with the issues displayed in Figure 1-2. Figure 1-2 shows attitudes on women working outside the home and attitudes on race-based integration of schools. Both issues show a sharp upward trajectory over time as a liberal public consensus slowly emerged. This trend toward liberal consensus is the key difference between political issues and social issues as discussed here.

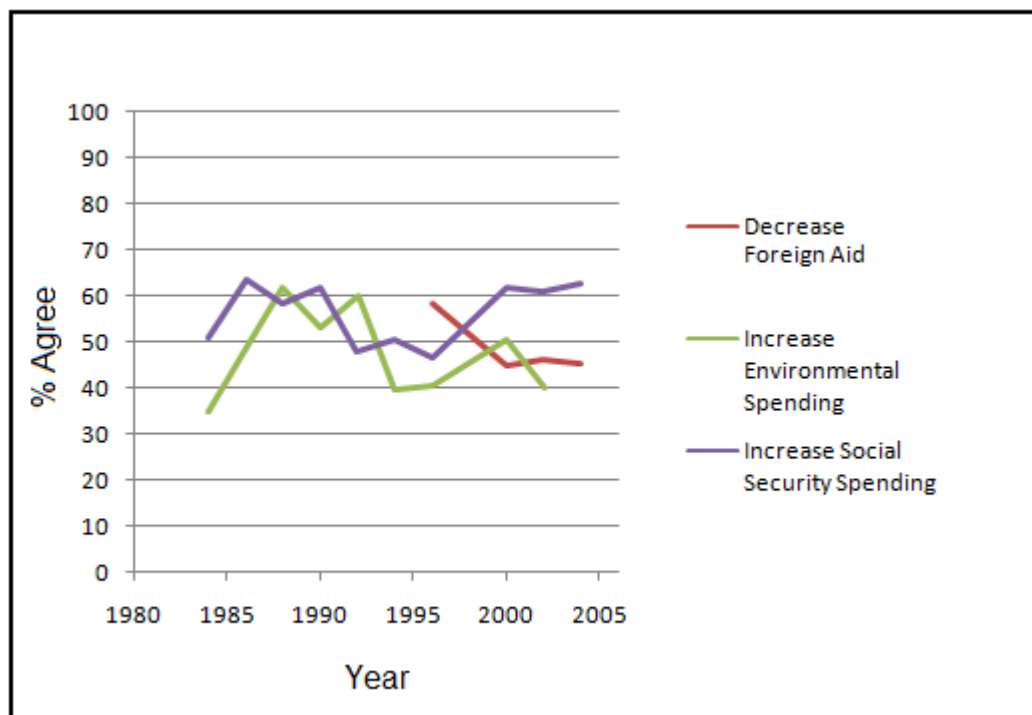


Figure 1-1: Stability and Political Issues

These changes in public opinion that took place towards women and African-Americans in the 1960s and 1970s are similar to the shifts that took place towards lesbians and gays and their rights later in the 1990s. Figure 1-3 shows one of the earliest repeated survey questions on lesbian and gay rights over time asked by the General

Social Survey (GSS). The survey asked respondents if they thought sexual relations between members of the same-sex were wrong. From 1973 through 1990 the number of respondents who answered the most liberal category, “not wrong at all” was small and stayed small. Started in 1990s, however, a liberalizing trend emerged. More and more people started answering that there was nothing wrong with same-sex relations on the GSS during the 1990s and 2000s. In the most recent round of GSS interviews nearly 40% of the respondents stated that there was nothing wrong at all. In fact, among those under age 30, this has become the majority response.

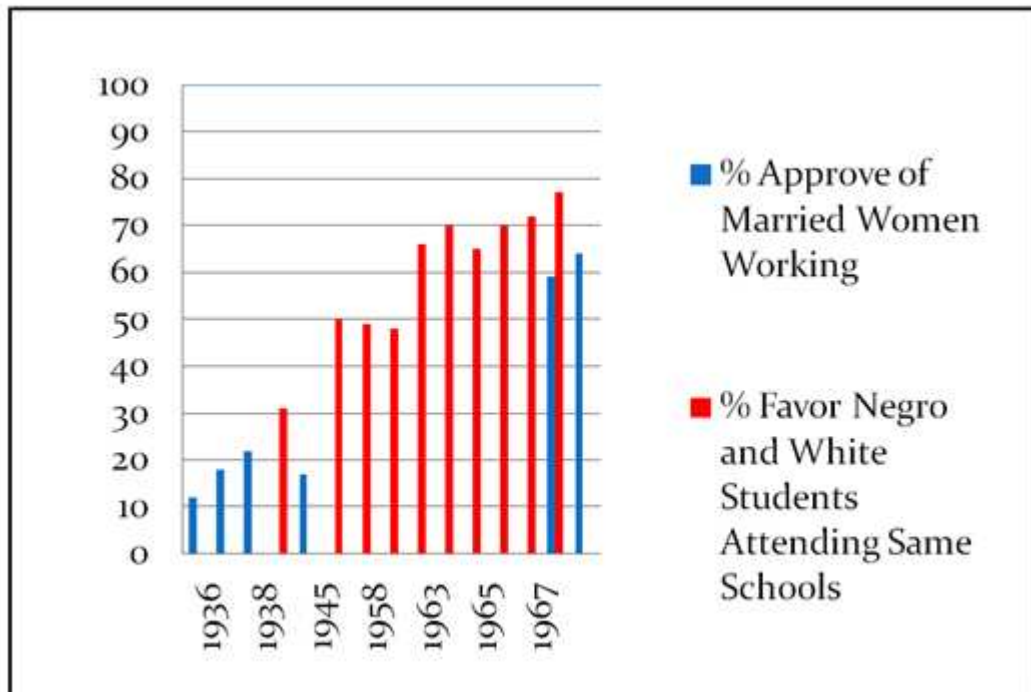


Figure 1-2: Social Issues and Public Opinion

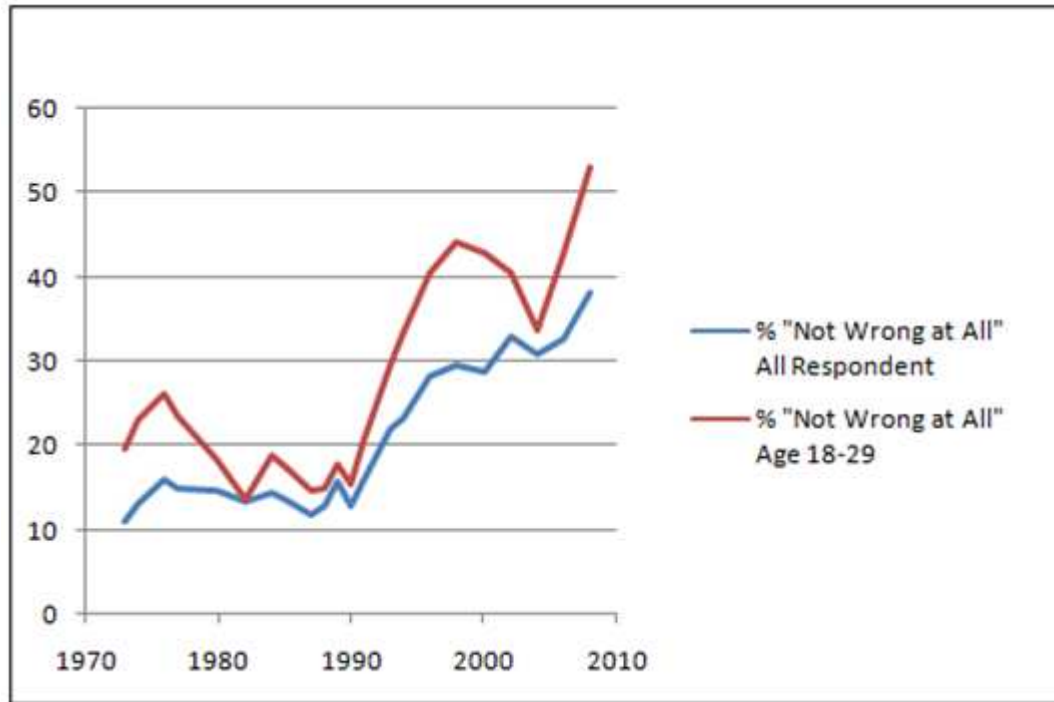


Figure 1-3: Public Opinion towards Same-Sex Relationship
Source: the General Social Survey.

This presents a puzzle? Why do these social attitudes behave differently from other political attitudes? Why is it that social change has pervaded society since the 1960s and prior, heralding greater social liberalism with each generation, while political and economic issues have shifted back and forth between liberal and conservative eras and administrations with no consensus emerging (Stimson 1999, 2004)? Why has there been a marked liberalization in attitudes towards women, blacks, lesbians, gays and other minorities since the 1960s? The answer to this question has two parts. The first has to do with where the public receives some of their information on social identities and minority groups as opposed to their information on politics and political issues. Instead of relying merely on hard news---newspapers and television news programming---for information on most political issues, the public can extract social information on people in different

identity categories—minorities and women---from other media sources. Television portrayals, films, literature, or any other mass transmitted source, fictional or reality-based, can serve as information on the lives and beliefs of minorities. Positive portrayals can humanize individuals and erase the psychological barriers constructed between groups just as negative portrayals or silence can strengthen the misperceptions and misunderstandings that lead to animosities between minorities and majorities.

Most television and film relies on portraying the lives of individuals in novel situations in order to garner viewers. This presents a contrast to educating the public on government programs, policies, or political events and issues which is the purported goal of the news media. This gives opinion change on social issues a major advantage over opinion change on harder political and policy-related issues. Citizens can get information from pure entertainment, like a situation comedy, a drama or even a cartoon, rather than take time out of their busy lives to study an issue or watch a less entertaining and more difficult news program. Changes in public opinion can occur when there is a systematic and permanent change in the way the media, entertainment and news, presents the lives and issues of minorities. When women are shown working outside the home in films, the public ought to become more receptive to women working. When gays and lesbians appear on television in positive roles, the public ought to become less likely to view them as abominations. When African-Americans are shown as real people dealing the best they can with economic problems, thinking of them as inherently inferior becomes more difficult.

To describe permanent attitude change as if it were merely a construction of media and generational change, however, would result in missing a large piece of the

driving forces behind the social change process. Political parties and their leaders play a crucial role in advancing the interests of minorities. This role is as crucial as that of the media. The pronouncements and utterances of their leaders shape partisan identities in the mass public (Zaller 1992). When minorities gain some nontrivial amount of resources through which to affect the political process, they can leverage it into coalitions with political leaders and particularly in places where they can affect electoral outcomes (McAdam 1999; Armstrong 2002; Clendinen and Nagourney 1999). Political elites can, in turn, move their adherents towards supporting the rights of the minority by openly embracing the minority through political communications. This effect of leaders on their followers' attitudes about minorities has been a key finding of political science (Carmines and Stimson 1989). The approval of political elites signals to the television media that the mass public may be more receptive to a greater number of portrayals of that minority in fiction. For example, support for the rights of African-Americans and women at the political elite level were followed by a surge in liberal portrayals of African-Americans and women in the 1970s like George Jefferson on *All in the Family* or Mary Richards on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. While it is possible that the opposing party's adherents may become less friendly towards the new group, eventually the intergenerational schism created by the media will force concessions in order for the more conservative party to appeal to young voters. This is the political process of social change. The interaction between political parties and the change in the media is crucial. Without each, change would not be possible.

Contrast Figure 1-3 with Figure 1-4. Figure 1-4 shows the number of television news stories on the big three network news channels, ABC, CBS, and NBC, which relate

to lesbian and gay issues for most of the later half of the 20th century. It also shows the rise in the number of lesbian and gay television characters on these same channels over the same time period. The number of television stories spikes in 1992 and 1993, with a sharp and sustained rise in television characters in 1995. These shifts take place at the

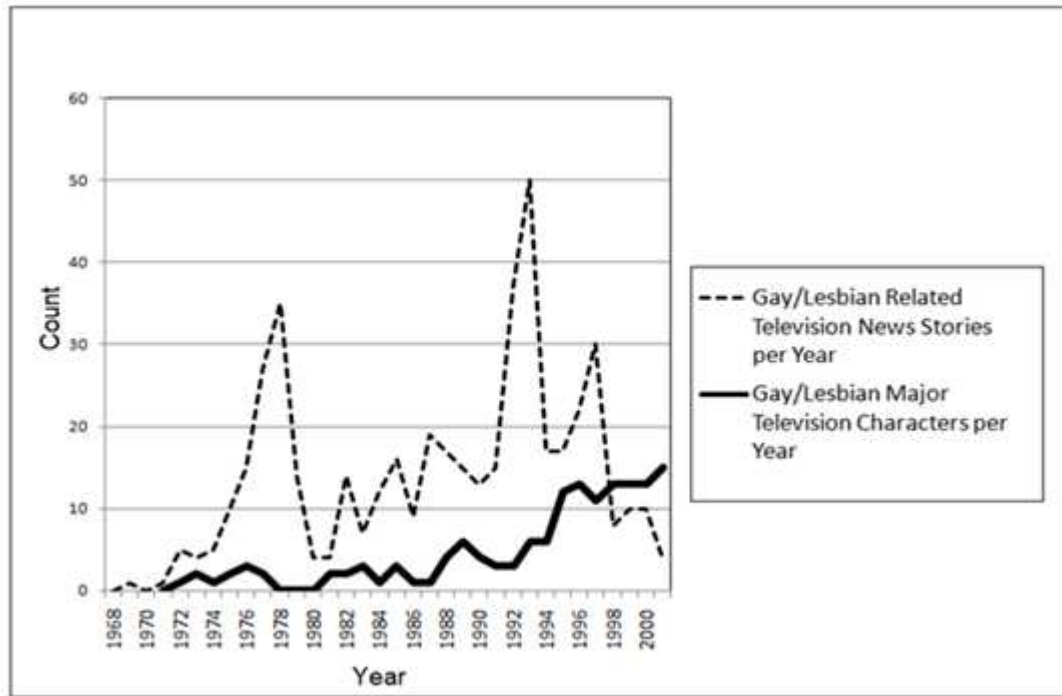


Figure 1-4: The Number of Lesbian and Gay-Related Television News Stories and Major Fictional Characters on NBC, ABC, and CBS: 1968-2000

start of the public’s wider attitude liberalization on lesbian and gay issues displayed GSS question in Figure 1-3. I will demonstrate that the more characters people watched and became comfortable with, the more tolerant their attitudes became. These shifts in television, along with the shifts in the Democratic Party’s support of lesbian and gay rights ultimately caused social change.

A Broad or a Narrow Liberalization?

Establishing that the GSS question above is representative of attitudes involving lesbian and gay rights in general and that all issues involving lesbian and gay equality are related would greatly aid this analysis. What do I mean when I say ‘public opinion towards lesbians and gays’? Public polling only sometimes asks questions over time on opinions as abstract as liking or disliking of a group and broad or narrow support for its rights. To create a more complete measure of support for lesbian and gay equality than any specific question, I would need to combine several different issues and questions that pertain to lesbian and gay rights as opposed to focusing a single specific issue that might go beyond lesbian and gay equality. For instance, a question involving employment protections for lesbians and gays might also reflect attitudes towards such laws for all groups, not just support for job protections for lesbians and gays. If a question, like the GSS above had a similar trend to a more abstract measure of support created from a broader range of issues, it specifically can be used as a window to more complete understanding of public opinion towards lesbians and gays generally in an analysis.

In order to do this, I created a measure of public affect towards lesbians and gays similar to Stimson’s “public mood” (1999). The ‘public mood’ related to changes in the aggregate policy liberalism and conservatism of the public generally (1999, 2004). Kellstedt (2003) has also found an underlying similarity in change on racial policy attitudes similar to the one demonstrated below on gay rights issues, although Kellstedt’s measure examines support for government intervention in erasing racial inequality rather than abstract support for that same equality.

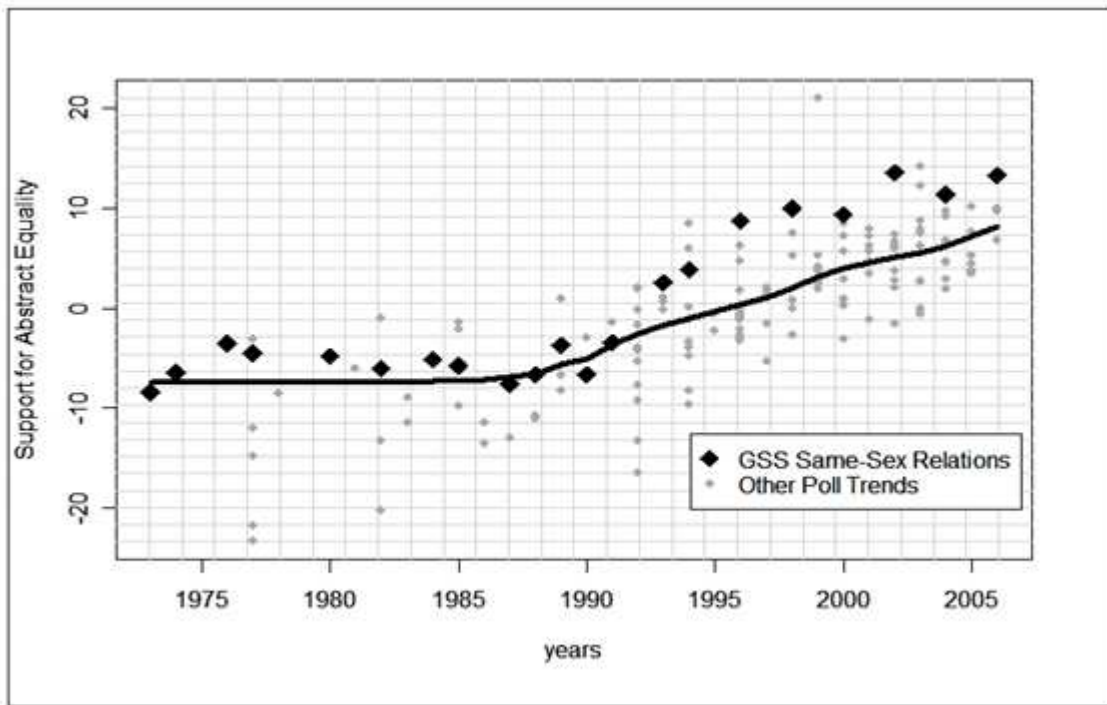


Figure 1-5: Abstract Support for Lesbian and Gay Equality over Time

Figure 1-5 displays this abstract support for lesbian and gay equality in United States over time. This was derived by taking 17 questions concerning gay rights issues which were repeated over time and polled by the same organization. These polls are listed in Table 1-1 and involve attitudes towards job protections for lesbians and gays, support for same-sex marriage and adoption, support for gay teachers, support for a gay cabinet secretary, and many other issues involving some sort of equal social treatment for lesbians and gays. These questions represent a diverse source of issues and polling organizations. The mean of each specific question across time was subtracted from the percentage of respondents taking a pro-gay rights position. This mean-centered measure for each individual question is plotted on the graph using a gray circle for each year.

Although each of these issues has greater or lesser support among the public at any given time due to a variety of factors (Mucciaroni 2008), with the mean removed from each question we obtain a measure of the trend over time. The support for abstract equality obtained from these trends, and graphed using a black line in the figure, represents a LOWESS curve, or locally-weighted regression, fitted to the individual data points. The LOWESS curve fit shows the aggregate trend in the 17 repeated survey questions over time and adjusted for outliers. The trend on the General Social Survey's question asking about public approval of same sex relations mentioned above is also overlaid in Figure 1-5 and closely matches the overall trend in lesbian and gay equality support.

The public's support for gay rights, as described by the abstract equality measure, remains static from the early 1970s to the mid 1980s. During the AIDS epidemic, negative shifts in questions concerned with affect towards lesbians and gays offset positive shifts in questions regarding employment protections and broader civil rights. However, in the early 1990s the public's support for lesbian and gay rights increased rapidly and that support continues to grow into the present. Similarly, the aggregate mix of responses on the GSS question involving same-sex relations is static for over the first decade and a half of the survey's run. Nearly 80 percent of the public choose the response that same sex relations were "always wrong" until 1991. After 1991, the number of people choosing the opposite response, "not wrong at all", started to increase significantly and it mirrors the change in abstract equality. The GSS question is thus a representative question of the broader attitude change that occurred.

Except for some initial liberalization in the early 1990s, around the time of the election of Bill Clinton, the abstract equality measure closely matches that of the

television characters measure in Figure 1-4. The rise in television characters is a very much a plausible cause of the rise in abstract equality.

Other Factors in the Liberalization of Attitudes toward Homosexuality

While media is key to my story of the public's shift in public opinion towards lesbian and gays, several other alternative hypotheses have also been proposed, which I account for throughout the dissertation. However, each of these other factors likely also has changes in media and the behavior of political elites at their core.

The widely know delisting of homosexuality from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) has been created with causing attitude change towards lesbians and gays. These medical elites' changing attitudes towards lesbians and gay are thought to have impacted the public (Zaller 1992). However, the shift in the APA predated the larger shift in public opinion by twenty years, as illustrated by the shift in abstract equality. It is highly unlikely that it would take that long for the public to get the message. The shift in the APA's attitudes is similar to the shift in medical thinking about intrinsic differences between the races that took place in the 1920s (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Gould 1996), but few would argue that a large scale liberalization on racial issues happened during that time period. Most would argue that events in the 1940s through the 1960s had more of a lasting impact on public opinion. The changes of medical elites did have an impact, but the impact was likely the political cover they provided for the decisions of other elites in the political sphere.

Another potential factor has great normative appeal and has been embraced by the lesbian and gay movement. That factor involves lesbians and gays themselves being

responsible for change in public opinion through interpersonal contact and social networks. Lesbians and gays are more comfortable today revealing their sexual orientation to family and friends and this increased contact may result in a liberalization of attitudes towards lesbians and gay. The number of people reportedly knowing gays and lesbians has increased. Also, research has shown that knowing someone gay has a positive effect on support for lesbian and gay rights (Altemeyer 2001; Lewis 2007).

The question that must be asked is why are gays and lesbians more likely to be out to more friends and family in the first place? It is likely that the increase in this phenomenon is also *a function of media coverage*. An increase in media portrayals likely increases the probability that gays and lesbians will feel comfortable ‘coming out’ and thus any interpersonal effect is an indirect effect of the media as well. Interpersonal contacts may also result from selection bias problems: gays and lesbians are more likely to come out to people whom they know are already supportive of lesbian and gay individuals and lesbian and gay rights (Lewis 2007). The number of ‘out’ gays and lesbians may also change over time, although it is equally difficult to assess whether this is due to an actual change in the number of people who think of themselves as gay and lesbian, or merely a change in the number who feel comfortable identifying on a survey (Villarroel et al. 2006). Fluctuations in the number of lesbian and gay (or homosexual) identified people in the U.S. are usually also within the margin of error of a standard survey (such as the GSS). This makes an assessment of the effect of a change in aggregate number of ‘out’ gays and lesbians on public opinion even more problematic. However, the media climate does affect how lesbian and gay identities are constructed. Historical evidence, which will be discussed in the next chapter, points to the late 1960s

and 1970s as the time when the lesbian and gay movement shifted their strategic focus to identity building activities including ‘coming out’, but public opinion change did not start shifting until the early 1990s. It seems unlikely that interpersonal contact alone would only start to be effective in the 1990s, since the gay and lesbian movement had experienced more growth prior to those years. It took something else to make lesbians and gays more comfortable revealing their identity to others, and that was media representation.

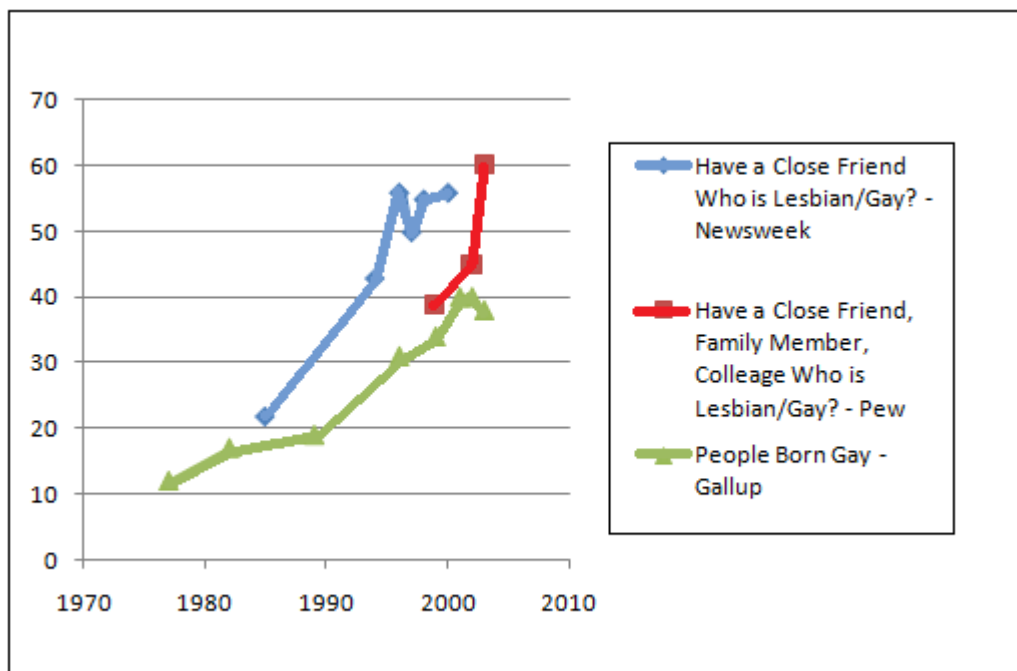


Figure 1-6. Interpersonal Contact with Lesbian and Gays and the Belief in a Biological Origin of Homosexuality

Another alternative theory to explain attitude liberalization has been proposed by Haider-Markel and Joslyn (2008). They examine the relationship between those who believe in a biological or an ‘essential’ cause of homosexuality and find a strong

relationship between those holding this attitude and individual level support for lesbian and gay rights. They also find a strong aggregate level correlation.

Haider-Markel and Joslyn's thesis has strong merit. A large number of medical articles and research on biological causations of homosexuality emerged in the early 1990s concurrent with the start of attitude liberalization, giving the thesis strong validity (Levay 1996). It is hard to imagine that this medical research is not exogenous to other forces, however. Figure 1-6 shows the rise in the percentage of people reporting contact with lesbians and gays and those believing in some sort of biological causation. Both of these hypotheses will be tested in the later chapters along with the hypothesis that social change was caused by the changing behavior of politicians and the rise of lesbians and gays in news and fictional media.

In sum, medical elites, contact with gays, and attitudes towards a biological cause of homosexuality all may contribute to the liberalization in attitudes towards lesbians and gays, but the primary factors are likely shifts in political elite and the media. Increases in 'coming out' are likely caused by media shifts. The timing of the APA decision doesn't match the time that attitude liberalization became. The biological cause argument has the most merit, but the fact that only 40% of the public hold this attitude, as illustrated in Figure 1-6, means that even it is unlikely to be the cause of the bulk of the liberalization.

Outline of the Dissertation

Although I argue public opinion is partially elite led, attention needs to be paid to the factors that cause, and sometimes force, these elites to lead. The owners of television networks would not allow characters on the air that would offend public sensibility and

thus harm their ratings and profits. Politicians, likewise, are reluctant to change their public positions on issues. A politician's shifting to support the civil rights of a very unpopular minority, especially one associated with immorality, would be anathema to winning reelection. A number of changes needed to take place in American politics before lesbian and gay rights could find support at elite levels. I demonstrate that for these changes to take place, a shift in the behavior of the lesbian and gay movement and the internal psychology of its members needed to take place. The change from a mentality of advocating for lesbian and gay integration into American culture to a mentality of creating a separate subcultural social identity occurred in the 1960s. Once the gay and lesbian movement started developing a shared collective identity, liberal and Democratic politicians in cities that contained a sizable number of lesbians and gays could fashion appeals for votes based on advocacy for that identity. Chapter 2 explains some of the history of the lesbian and gay movement and its paradigmatic shift in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The defining moment of this shift was the 1969 Stonewall Riots in Manhattan.

The change in the behavior of politicians seeking elected office and reelection is the focus of Chapter 3. In order to gain votes, activists, and funds, Democratic politicians in the urban districts of San Francisco and Manhattan started supporting lesbian and gay rights. Later as the lesbian and gay movement institutionalized in the 1980s, interest groups developed which tried to provide the same resources not based on urban geography, but based on party. In addition, Republicans, some of which had supported lesbian and gays partially in the 1980s, shifted rightward on gay rights in the 1990s to appeal to the social conservative activists emerging as one of their core constituencies.

The election of a pro-gay Democratic president in 1992 cemented the partisan cleavage thereafter.

Chapter 4 provides a background on previous research on public opinion change, and then draws on this previous research to form hypotheses regarding public opinion change on social issues. Partisanship and media exposure are major factors in liberalization. In addition, young people are particularly susceptible to changes in media due to the lack of a reference frame about socially appropriate behavior that older individuals have based on past media exposure. I test this theory in the later chapters.

Using a wide variety of survey data, Chapter 5 then determines why public opinion shifted. I find that the shift in elite attitudes triggered the start of public opinion change. Democrats in the public started liberalizing after Bill Clinton, who supported the lesbian and gay minority, was elected president. Furthermore, Clinton's convincing win signaled to Hollywood that putting a substantially larger number of lesbian and gay characters on television would no longer deeply offend the public since Clinton's support had not damaged his candidacy in 1992. This sustained and diversified the liberalization of attitudes beyond Democrats and also concentrated it in those whom had never encountered any information on lesbians and gays before: the nation's youth.

Of course, casual direction is a potential problem in Chapter 5. Did media cause or reflect public opinion change? In Chapter 6, I confirm using an experimental design that messages are causally prior to a change in attitudes. When individuals are exposed to a lesbian-identified individual via a mock interview, I find attitude change. This chapter demonstrates that more lesbian and gay television characters cause attitude liberalization.

Chapter 7 examines on potential consequence of opinion liberalization. As support for same-sex marriage increased, President George W. Bush used his position against same-sex marriage to appeal to voters. Although the media focused on states with ballot propositions banning same-sex marriage, I find evidence that same-sex marriage had a national effect on vote choice in the 2004 presidential election, which challenges previously published research (Donavan et al. 2005; Campbell and Monson 2005). Clinton's election in 1992 helped liberalize lesbian and gay attitudes in the 1990s. More liberal attitudes towards lesbians and gays may have helped reelect George W. Bush by making lesbian and gay rights a partisan issue that Democrat can no directly oppose or anger their base.

Chapter 8 contains my conclusion and final thoughts on media and elite led social change in the wake of Barack Obama's election as a purportedly pro-gay president and the nation's first president with an African heritage. Barack Obama could lead on lesbian and gay issues as Clinton had attempted to do in 1993 and inspire greater liberalization, but risk his greater agenda if a backlash emerges. Else, he could attempt to bury his support for lesbian and gay rights under other pressing issues like the economic crisis and healthcare in order to avoid the backlash Clinton faced.

Table 1.1: Summary of Questions Used to Construct Abstract Equality Measure

	Question Summary	Organization	# of Measures	Low	High	Years
1	Same-Sex Relations Approval	GSS	21	11	33	73-06
2	Feeling Thermometer for Lesbians and Gays	ANES	9	29	49	85-06
3	Legality of Same-Sex Relations	Gallup	17	32.5	59	77-07
4	Job Protections for Gays	Gallup	14	56	89	77-07
5	Being Gay Acceptable Lifestyle	Gallup	12	34	57	82-07
6	Same-Sex Relations Approval	Latimes	3	18	27	94-00
7	Legality of Homosexuality	CBS/NYT	2	39	51	81-94
8	Legality of Homosexuality	ABC/WashPost	4	41	46	92-03
9	Acceptability of Homosexuality	Yankel	2	41	58	78-94
10	Acceptability of Homosexuality	Pew	8	46	50	94-04
11	Job Protections for Gays	Pew	8	74	87	92-04
12	Approval of Gays in the Military	Gallup	8	51	80	77-05
13	Gay Elementary School Teacher Approval	Gallup	8	27	61	77-05
14	Gay Cabinet Secretary Approval	Gallup	6	55	75	92-05
15	Gay Marriage Approval	CNN	6	23	29	89-97
16	Gay Marriage Approval	Pew	9	30	35	90-03
17	Gay Adoption Approval	Pew	7	29	46	94-03

CHAPTER II

THE THEORETICAL, HISTORICAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ORIGINS OF THE LESBIAN AND GAY MOVEMENT

Political elites have an impact on the attitudes of their followers (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Zaller 1992). But they are also beholden to those followers for votes and reelection. They are thus averse to taking positions that would endanger their jobs as elected officials (Mayhew 1974). For instance lesbians and gays have traditionally been one of the least liked groups on the National Election Study's battery of feeling thermometers which ask individuals to rate groups and people on a scale from 0 to 100 with 100 being warm and 0 being cold. The mean rating of lesbians and gays was 28.5 even as late as 1988, which placed them well below Hispanics, Blacks, Christian fundamentalists, people on welfare, and even illegal aliens (Yang 1997). How is it possible that an unpopular minority, like lesbians and gays, could eventually gain the support of political elites whose electoral interests seem so opposed to being associated with a disliked social group?

The solution to this riddle is complicated, but crucial to understanding how an unpopular group can change the public's attitudes about them. In this chapter I trace the history of the lesbian and gay movement to determine how it first gained the support of elected officials and eventually became a valued constituency of the Democratic Party. The outcome required a shift in the ideology (or social movement frame) of the lesbian and gay movement from one of integration into the existing social order to one of

articulating a collective lesbian and gay identity. Except for a brief period in early 1950s Los Angeles, this did not happen until the late 1960s.

The Nature of Research in the Lesbian and Gay Movement

An old Indian legend can easily illustrate the ways in which academics from diverse disciplines have tried to establish the origins of the gay and lesbian movement. I shall now take great creative license in retelling it.

Three blind men walk into a room with an object they are trying to identify. Without sight to see the object, they reach out their hands and feel the texture and shape of it. One man says, "It's a wall". He then describes a wide, rubbery surface a few feet off the ground. The second states, "No, No, It has to be a spear". The second man then tells of a long cylindrical object he feels coming to a distinct and sharp point. The third man is dumbfounded at the first two. "It's clearly a hose," he replies. He relays to the other two that he has grasped a long flexible tube a few feet off the ground. The object, which none of the men could identify from their own limited perspectives, was an elephant. It announced its presence with a distinctive trumpeting sound emanating from its trunk. The three men had been focusing on the elephant's side, tusk, and trunk, respectively, all parts of the same whole.

The same phenomenon of limited individual perspectives repeats itself over and over every time a problem as complex as social change or a social movement becomes an object of analysis for the social sciences and humanities. Psychologists focus on the cognitive changes taking place in individuals in a social movement at any given time. The ways in which members of minorities and majorities think about their social status

and the attribution of that status is paramount. Rational choice theorists look at the complex costs and benefits that actors in a social movement deal with in determining their actions. Sociologists look at cultural changes spawned by movements and how or why formal organizations spin off from them. Historians chronicle events and the lives of individual leaders of movements. Political Scientists focus on the interaction between the various branches of government and social movements. Philosophers and political theorists read the documents produced by movements and study how they establish their legitimacy and the validity of arguments they make for their brand of social change.

Because the origin of the lesbian and gay movement has been told from so many different perspectives, this chapter will be necessarily incomplete. My goal here is to give an overview of the historical events that lead to the modern lesbian and gay movement, the theoretical understandings of a legitimate society that motivated activists, and some of the psychological theories that might lead to better scientific understanding of those who participated and continue to participate and which led to movement success. These aspects of the lesbian and gay movement are crucial to understanding why politicians would eventually court their votes actively despite public opinion. Several books and articles have already been written that go into these events and theories into greater detail (Armstrong 2002; D'Emilio 1998, 2000; Clendinen and Nagourney 1999; Engel 2001; Jagose 1996; Mucciaroni 2008; Rimmerman 2000, 2002, 2008; Bull and Gallagher 1996; Duberman 1993). I will try to go into enough detail to illuminate the historical background of the following empirical chapters, but not to go into so much detail so as to delay the analysis of the effects that the lesbian and gay movement had on the party system, culture, and ultimately public opinion outlined in the coming chapters.

The Conception of Homosexual Identity

Germany in 1871 is an unlikely place to start a dissertation on American attitudes toward lesbians and gays. But it was in this year the German Empire adopted paragraph 175, a law criminalizing consensual sex between men (Jagose 1996). Laws had existed prior to this banning homosexuality, but the adoption and debate concerning homosexuality shifted during this time period. The justification for such laws prior to this one had been religious in nature. What the debate concerning paragraph 175 emphasized, however, was not sin and the act of sodomy itself, but some sort of long-term characteristic of the individuals who engaged in sodomy.

The origins of this shift, its relation to the industrial revolution and urbanization, and its precise timing, have been much debated. The rise of the medical community and the enlightenment notions of sickness and treatment of disease are major causes of this shift (Foucault 1978). Over the centuries homosexual behavior had been considered at most a sinful act and probably something on par with an extramarital affair. Now with the rise of the medical community and concept of treatable disease, the justifications for laws against homosexuality had shifted to protecting the community from a sickness. Homosexuality was no longer just considered an act engaged in by an individual. The emphasis was now on those who engaged in that act. They were now suspected of being different from other people and, by the medical community, of having a chronic biological or mental defect. As the justification for laws shifted during the enlightenment from those justified by religious reasons or by the whims of a monarch, the public good became the paramount reason for legislation (Jagose 1996; Foucault 1978).

This marks the beginning of the notion of essentialism with regard to homosexuality. The essentialist theory states that homosexuality is not just acts of sodomy, but a long term characteristic of the individual who engages in those acts. What was a short term moral lapse had now morphed conceptually into a homosexual identity for the polity. An important aspect of essentialism is that the identity has been decoupled from the act of sodomy. An individual could be completely celibate, but still be considered a homosexual. This disjunction marks the birth of the modern notion of homosexuality: homosexuality as identity.

World War II, the Kinsey Report, and the Homophile Movement

Enclaves of homosexuals developed as the population of the country relocated to urban areas and immigration swelled most large cities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the US. D'Emilio (1998) cites these changes as the cause of modern homosexuality. Interpersonal contact between homosexuals increased over this time period. As certain bohemian areas became known for having many lesbians and gays, more lesbians and gays moved in due to the reputation. According to D'Emilio, "a small but stable group life was forming (p. 22)".

Somewhat counter-intuitively World War II effectively gave this process a shot in the arm. Traditional gender roles were ripped asunder as males left for overseas and women were mobilized into industry. The same-sex environment was freeing for many homosexuals both in the military and on the home front. Lasting friendships and relationships survived the hostilities (D'Emilio 1998). These were the social webs that

lead to the first rumblings of the lesbian and gay movement (Scagliotti, Schiller, and Rosenberg 1985).

Biological research would soon aid these social webs and deeply undermine the justification of laws criminalizing same-sex relations. In 1948, zoologist Alfred C. Kinsey, with Wardell B. Pomeroy and Clyde E. Martin, published the widely read *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* based on a set of 12,000 interviews performed by the authors. A volume on women followed soon after (Kinsey et al. 1953). The original study argued that the percentage of the public with a homosexual predisposition was close to 10%, a figure much greater than previously thought. Although the study had severe methodological flaws, and modern surveys have placed the percentage closer to 5% (Levay 1996), that number became greatly significant to the homosexual community in the United States. It signified to those who would form the movement that they had a potentially large group of compatriots similar in size to that of the Jewish community or the size of the Latino community in the United States during that time period.

The distinctive feature of the Kinsey study was the tone in which the article discussed same-sex behavior. Kinsey theorized sexual behavior as a continuum using a seven point scale between exclusively homosexual and exclusively heterosexual. This is different than the previously thought of as discrete identity categories of homosexual and heterosexual, although Freud (1995) had theorized that all individuals were bisexual by nature (Jagose 1996). But the larger issue in Kinsey's work is the normative break he makes from the older medical literature.

The opinion that homosexual activity in itself provides evidence of a psychopathic personality is materially challenged by these incidence and frequency data. Of the 40 or 50 per cent of the male population which has homosexual experience, certainly a high proportion would not be considered

psychopathic personalities on the basis of anything else in their histories. ... psychiatrists and clinicians in general might very well re-examine their justification for demanding that all persons conform to particular patterns of behavior. As a matter of fact, there is an increasing proportion of the most skilled psychiatrists who make no attempt to re-direct behavior, but who devote their attention to helping an individual accept himself, ... (p.660)

He concludes the chapter entitled 'Homosexual Outlet' with the following paragraph:

If all persons with any trace of homosexual history, or those who were predominantly homosexual, were eliminated from the population today, there is no reason for believing that the incidence of the homosexual in the next generation would be materially reduced. The homosexual has been a significant part of human activity ever since the dawn of history, primarily because it is an expression of capacities that are basic in the human animal (p.666).

Although Kinsey's work was scientifically flawed, it affected both the medical establishment, where some individuals began to reevaluate the notion of homosexuals as holding psychopathic tendencies, and a large number of homosexuals going into 1950s. Dr. Evelyn Hooker would later specifically study differences in the psychopathology between heterosexuals and homosexuals at the urging of a gay individual and confirm Kinsey's hypothesis (Marcus 2002; Zaller 1992).

Not long after the Kinsey Report was released, the first formal lesbian and gay organizations began forming on the West Coast. This set of organized and mostly local lesbian and gay organizations became known as the homophile movement. They began when a former member of the Communist Party named Harry Hay met with a group of his gay friends specifically about creating a political organization for homosexuals (D'Emilio 1998). Although Hay was no longer active in the Communist Party, he drew loosely both on the theoretical arguments of Marxism and the organizational skills he had learned from the party. Hay and the early members of his organization developed a class-based analysis of a society divided by sexual orientation. 'Liberation' would come only

from concerted action by the oppressed, in this case homosexuals in place of the proletariat. The organization also believed in educating homosexuals to think of themselves as an oppressed minority (D'Emilio 1998; Scaglioitti, Schiller, and Rosenberg 1985; Engel 2002). This conceptual innovation adopted from Marxist philosophy is similar to the consciousness raising that would later take place in the women's movement in the 1960s and 1970s. It would prove later to be crucial in the broader lesbian and gay movement that developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Their organization became known as the Mattachine Society. It developed as an underground, centralized society based around the Communist Party model. Members would join a cell, and when one cell got too large it would split (D'Emilio 1998). For an unpopular minority that could blend into society easily, this organizational model proved extremely effective. As it developed, it came to thrive throughout most of Southern California and branched into the Bay Area. As time went on, it eventually branched out to other major population centers like Chicago and New York City. Although the organization was predominantly male, women were included as well. Soon a separate organization formed in San Francisco for lesbians, the Daughters of Bilitis, and published a newsletter, *The Ladder* (Jagose 1996). The homophile movement largely became sex segregated at least at a local level due to problems incorporating gender differences as women left for other homophile organizations (D'Emilio 1998; Clendinen and Nagourney 1999).

More important than the new members' geographic locations were the different backgrounds and demographics of the new members. Although the early members had been leftists and hence outside the political mainstream, newer members were much more

diverse in their political views and professions (if not their race and gender). The new membership in Southern California created a schism in the organization. This was between the original members who favored more radical social change on one hand and those who believed more or less in the preexisting social order in the United States with the exception of the inferior place of homosexuals within that order. A series of changes started to take place within the organization. First it went above ground and radically changed its structure. Instead of separate cells, the organization now had a traditional president, executive committee, and meeting times like most traditional community organizations today (D'Emilio 1998).

The major divergence in outlook between the newcomers and older members revolved around what the preferred social identity that the organization should advocate for should be. Should the organization try to articulate the homosexual as a distinct social and political identity from mainstream society, one that believes in radical social change involving sexual liberalization, non-traditional gender-roles, a more equal society between all individuals, and a broad advocacy for social justice? Or should the Mattachine Society try to advocate that homosexuals were no different from other members of society except for their choice of sexual partners? The older and more liberal members tended to take the former position, while the newcomers and more conservative members (not necessarily in a political sense) tended believe in the later (Rimmerman 2002; D'Emilio 2000). In the end, perhaps because of the conservative nature of the 1950s and the political need to distance itself from its communist origins, the latter members won out. Considering the McCarthy hearings would soon take place and that homosexuals in general were suspected of aiding communists (Johnson 2004), a

change that helped distance the organization from its former communist founders may have helped the organization survive (nominally) into the 1960s.

As an above ground, traditionally-minded advocacy organization, however, the Mattachine society proved to be less successful with membership retention and recruitment than in the earlier below ground period. Without a clear message of liberation from gay oppression or an affirmative identity and life to advocate for, the Mattachine Society survived but stagnated throughout the 1950s and 1960s. It would take an interaction with a much broader network of social movements to rekindle the potential of a nationwide lesbian and gay rights movement.

The 1960s and the Creation of the Modern Lesbian and Gay Movement

Lesbians and gays could not claim a single national elected official that was openly supportive of their rights during the 1950s and 1960s. Something needed to change for the movement to lobby elites effectively. The activity that changed the movement was the development of a collective identity. This grew its ranks and pushed sexuality into a more central psychological role for those involved in it.

While the 1950s was a conservative decade that inhibited the lesbian and gay rights movement, the 1960s would provide a number of factors conducive to a widespread surge in its activity. Chief among these were the tactics developed by other identity-based movements like the Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Movement (Scagliotti, Schiller, and Rosenberg 1985). These tactics would help the movement grow into a network of organizations capable of lobbying the leaders and elites that held influence over public opinion. The normalization of identity-based advocacy politics in

the 1960s made the ideas which proved successful for the radicals in the early Mattachine Society less controversial. In addition, the 1960s had led to a marked liberalization in the sexual attitudes of America's youth. Although this did not always directly affect social mores toward homosexuality, it provided a crucial link between freedom, which all Americans support on an abstract level, and sexuality.

The Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Movement, and later the Black Power movement that emerged all contributed to the lesbian and gay rights movement specifically. A number of tactics that proved successful for these movements spread to the lesbian and gay rights movement as new and more radical local organizations formed. Most notable, civil disobedience tactics would be used by the new Gay Activists Alliance (GAA) which formed in lower Manhattan (Clendinen and Nagourney 1999). In Washington, DC members of one of the more liberal branches of Mattachine picketed the White House to lobby for an end to discrimination in the civil service against lesbians and gays (Engel 2002; Johnson 2004).

The key innovation that defined this newer wave of organizations was a devotion to articulating a collective identity different from the mainstream. Feminist, Black, Native-American, lesbian, gay, disabled, Latino, Baptist, Irish, or any other category that can have social or political meaning could form the basis of an identity movement. 'Consciousness raising' was a crucial part of the movement for gender-based equality and was an attempt to make women self-aware of the disadvantages they have in society solely due to their identity as woman. As the black power movement developed, 'Black is Beautiful' became a simple slogan of affirmation stating that being African-American was something of value and an identity that should be respected in society. Much of the

success of an identity-based lesbian and gay movement in the late 1960s can be attributed to these other new identity-based social movements. They rendered the identity-based politics that failed in the 1950s for Mattachine more intelligible and adoptable for would-be activists in the late 1960s.

Unlike the conservative message of no-difference between homosexuals and heterosexuals that the later Mattachine adopted, identity articulation involves embracing the differences and advocating that holding the specific identity is a good thing for individuals. This made it easier to create a subculture among activists that strengthened the interdependence of individuals with the activist group and raised its members' self-esteem. For instance, those who claimed 'Black is Beautiful' were in most cases asserting that being African-American and being proud of being African-American were good things for psychological health. They would also not advocate abandoning Black subculture for mainstream American culture in general. Gay activists even developed a similar slogan to 'Black is Beautiful' in the late 1960s, 'Gay is Good'. The words lesbian and gay themselves became popularized in the lesbian and gay subculture as an act of identity articulation.

Examples of cultural symbols relating to the gay and lesbian movement also date to this period, including the intra-movement usage of the terms lesbian and gay and the rainbow symbol. However, the largest evidence of a surge in the lesbian and gay movement involves a sharp increase in the number of lesbian and gay organizations that developed in this time period and during the 1970s. These organizations marked the expansion of the movement and the growth of a potential for a larger impact on politics.

Elizabeth Armstrong, a sociologist, catalogued the ideological social movement frames of several lesbian and gay organizations operating in San Francisco during this time period (2002). Her classification scheme involves categories for the more conservative homophile organizations, the more liberal gay liberation organizations that emphasized a shared struggle with other identity-based movements of the New Left (including the women's and black power movements), and organizations that specialized in developing a shared identity among lesbian and gays without a broader political goal. She found that nearly all lesbian and gay related organizations operating in the early and mid 1960s San Francisco were homophile organizations. However, in 1969 and 1970 organizations affiliated with gay liberation and identity-based politics emerged in San Francisco. By 1971 the numbers of these three different types of organizations were at parity. By 1973, the identity based organizations clearly outnumbered the other two types. As both the conservative homophile movement and the radical New Left declined in the late 1970s, the number of lesbian and gay organizations affiliated with these two movements evaporated, leaving only the identity-based organizations in their wake.

Meanwhile, the number of identity-based organizations not affiliated with the New Left in San Francisco exploded. Armstrong noted a few dozen organizations in the 1970s. By the 1980s, San Francisco had several hundred. Accounts of movement activity in the urban centers of Manhattan and Los Angeles point to similar patterns, with radical gay liberation organizations associated with the New Left (including the GAA mentioned above) developing in the late 1960s alongside the remaining homophile organizations, and both giving way to less political organizations that emphasized a shared social and political identity (Clendinen and Nagourney 1999; Armstrong 2002;

D'Emilio 2000; Marcus 2002). The Stonewall Riots in Manhattan, which took place on June 28th, 1969, were both an outpouring of the new collective consciousness of lesbians and gays and also a symbol that strengthened that identity and solidified the idea of a shared struggle (Duberman 1993; Clendinen and Nagourney 1999). The rioters were identified as lesbians and gays and were demanding an end to police harassment of lesbians and gays. This would have not been possible without a collective identity shared by a massive number of individuals.

Why Identity Politics?: Social Identity Theory and Movement Development

Something had truly changed in the urban centers. When the number of individuals and organizations associated with a group explodes in a short period of time, entrepreneurial politicians and leaders take notice. These organizations and the collective identity they created and expanded make them successful and brought more individuals into that identity. Appeals for political support and promises of issue advocacy by elected officials become possible. Why would organizations that emphasized a shared identity be so successful in establishing a large social movement that endured, while other types of organizations such as the conservative homophile movement and the New Left gay liberation movement collapsed? Understanding the psychological gains versus the costs of participation would help us to understand how identity-based movements and the individuals involved within those movements are capable of producing lasting and dramatic shifts in public opinion, while advocacy organizations involving political issues like the redistribution of wealth or government services cannot. A viable explanation comes from social identity theory.

Social identity theory and its successor, self-categorization theory, were developed by Tajfel and Turner (1986) in an effort to describe human behavior concerning the relationship between collective (or group) identities and personal individual identities. They sought to understand when individuals sometimes act as interchangeable members of a group (soldiers in an army, rioters in a crowd, or members of a political party) and when they act as individuals divorced from the groups that they are members in. Turner and Tajfel originally proposed social identity theory as a solution to understand the collective behavior of groups.

The key aspect of social identity theory involves thinking of a specific collective identity and an individual's personal identity as if they were at two ends of a continuum (Tajfel and Turner 1986). Depending on the salience of the social identity to the individual in a specific context, they will think and behave as if they were a stereotypical member of a group, or, if their collective identities were not salient, as an individual. Individuals also seek a positive social identity, one with prestige and esteem. A positive social identity is based on favorable comparisons between social groups. When an individual is a member of a group viewed as unfavorable by society, she or he will either seek to leave the group, compare their group with the other group on a different dimension, or engage in a social conflict in order to change the social value of their group. To the extent that a society is marked by a belief system that incorporates mobility between groups based on effort, hard work, or luck, group membership and identities should be less central to the society. If individuals believe that there is little to no social mobility between groups then identity categories, and stereotypes based on them, will pervade and dominant social life.

Turner (Turner et al. 1987; Turner 1991) proposed self-categorization theory as a refinement on social identity theory. While social identity theory, as it was originally proposed, was an effort to describe intergroup relations, self-categorization theory is an attempt to describe the psychology of individuals and their relationship to shared collective identities. It maintains the idea of a continuum between social and personal identities for individuals. Collective identities are shared social categories that an individual can classify himself or herself as. To the extent that a self-classification as a member of a shared collective identity is made salient, an individual will behave as if a stereotypical member of that group. Which self-category is salient is related to its fit to the situation a person is in. There are two aspects to fit, comparative and normative. Comparative fit is defined by the meta-contrast principle. When the differences between groups on a specific dimension are larger than the differences inside a group, there is a high meta-contrast, and group identity has a higher comparative fit. When the differences within groups are larger than the differences between groups there is a low meta-contrast and group identity is less likely. Normative fit involves the correspondence between the stereotypical aspects of the groups and the individuals' expectations of those stereotypes from past experiences. When fit is high and the collective identity of a group is made salient, we should see the behavior of the group converge as compared to situations when personal identity is salient.

Social identity theory appears to explain the successful nature of an identity-based gay and lesbian politics in the following way. Recall that individuals seek a positive self-identity. By emphasizing that gays and lesbians have a significant shared social and political identity, and a *positive* shared identity, the lesbian and gay movement was able

to raise the self-esteem of its individual members (“Gay is Good”). Once the identity was established and reinforced in small social groups, it spread in a rapid fashion both during the early period of the Mattachine Society in Southern California and later in the major urban centers in San Francisco, Manhattan, and West Los Angeles in the late 1960s (the Stonewall Riots) and early 1970s. The New Left gay liberation organizations and the more insular gay-identity organizations that developed immediately after them both thrived on an identity-based politics. However, gay liberation organizations required a more active membership devoted to a wider range of social justice issues than just articulating a lesbian or gay identity. As the new left collapsed, only the more narrow organizations that focused solely on a gay identity survived and thrived. The New Left organizations required much more activity than the other identity-based organization but had a similar payoff in self-esteem.

The identity based organizations proved so successful that lesbian and gay subcultures developed almost overnight in the major urban centers. Homosexuals interacting and going to bars in these places were nothing new. However what had been an underground of informal social and sexual networks spread and transformed into something more.

Conclusion

The late 1960s and the rise of lesbian and gay-based organizations in that time period likely increased the salience of that identity for homosexuals. This was especially the case in the urban centers that housed the majority of these organizations. This strengthened identity would lead to more organizations which would strengthen the

identities of more individuals in a cycle that reinforced itself until nearly all homosexuals who were not completely predisposed against thinking of themselves as lesbian or gay for religious or moral reasons had adopted a lesbian or gay identity in San Francisco, Manhattan, and west Los Angeles.

With a shared identity, an identity that could provide a basis for activism, politics, and political mobilization, politicians in these regions could now make appeals to those who held the new identity for money, support, volunteers, and, most important to politicians, votes. The focus of the next chapter involves the changing behavior of elites in urban centers in response to this new identity.

CHAPTER III

THE LESBIAN AND GAY MOVEMENT AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES

The shift in focus by lesbian and gay activists to an identity-based movement built on the examples of the Civil Rights movement, the women's movement, and other movements of the New Left has resulted in the creation of a lesbian and gay subculture now self-aware of its minority and subordinate status. This shared collective identity gave politicians in urban centers a new tool through which to appeal for votes in return for advocating for the group's interests. This chapter analyzes support for lesbian and gay issues among members of Congress and, in particular, the House of Representatives.

It should be kept in mind that although a number of representatives became supportive of lesbian and gay issues in the 1970s, the broader public's attitude towards lesbians and gays had not yet begun to liberalize. Politicians, even those in San Francisco and Manhattan, would be taking a risk by coming out in favor of lesbian and gay rights. In the atmosphere of the 1970s, such support, even if it resulted in winning a local election, may come back to haunt a politician if they desired to run for statewide office even in New York and California. In fact the first two politicians to seek the lesbian and gay vote actively would both run for statewide office later in their careers.

Because of the group's unpopularity, the lesbian and gay community itself was surprised when Diane Feinstein showed up at a candidate's night for the Society for Individuals Rights (or SIR), a gay organization, and affirmed her support for the equal rights of lesbians and gays in 1969. Feinstein was running for the board of supervisors of

San Francisco (Armstrong 2002; Bailey 1999). Similarly, Bella Abzug, a women's rights advocate in Manhattan, went as far as to campaign in gay bath houses during a run for New York's 19th congressional district in 1970 (Clendinen and Nagourney 1999). Both were ultimately successful.

Something had changed in Manhattan and San Francisco. A collective identity among gays and lesbians now allowed politicians to target appeals specifically towards this emerging identity group by promising support for lesbian and gay rights. Because of the shift to an identity-based politics in the lesbian and gay community, they would receive a sizable bloc of votes in return. This was simply not possible prior to the shifts that took place in the movement in the late 1960s. In this earlier era, seeking support of gays and lesbians would have been interpreted by the broader public (and even by some homosexuals) as akin to campaigning for the votes of felons or psychopaths. Although a scattered number of activists had adopted a lesbian or gay identity prior to the late 1960s, the number was likely small enough so as not to motivate a change in behavior by liberal activists running for political office.

The concentration of homosexuals in New York City and the Bay Area of California—in combination with the shift to an identity-based movement—drastically expanded the number of members of Congress susceptible to such appeals. Although western Los Angeles also had a large number of homosexuals and a spike in movement activity (Clendinen and Nagourney 1999), the geographical and demographic vastness of the city likely diluted the impact of potential lesbian and gay votes. This may explain the lack of a candidate like Feinstein or Abzug in Los Angeles, although a successful political action committee had developed in L.A. to support lesbian and gay friendly

candidates by 1977 (Clendinson and Nagourney 1999). San Francisco and Manhattan, in contrast to Los Angeles and Chicago, are bordered on three sides by bodies of water. Geographic concentration led to a greater per capita density of gays and lesbians in the electorate.

It was from New York and San Francisco that support for lesbian and gay rights would spread among other federal elected officials. In 1975, Abzug introduced the first gay-rights bill. The introduction itself was primarily symbolic. Most observers knew that gay rights were nowhere near popular enough to survive a House roll-call vote. The original bill, in fact, only had 23 co-sponsors. The most notable and interesting part of the co-sponsors was their complete lack of geographic diversity. Of the 23, 10 hailed from New York City and 6 from the San Francisco Bay Area. Of those from outside these cities, one was from Minneapolis, two from Massachusetts (including Rep. Gerry Studds, who would later be outed as the first openly gay member of the House), one was from west Los Angeles, one was from Denver, and one was from Philadelphia. District urbanicity seemed to dominate early support for the bill (Endean and Eaklor 2006). This also explains why the Abzug gay rights bill found little support in the rural-dominated United States Senate.

For the next decade the only legislation involving lesbian and gay rights in the House was the gay rights bill which was introduced in every Congress until 1993. The various bills were nearly identical to the original Abzug bill (Endean and Eaklor 2006).

To more systematically examine the propensity for legislators to co-sponsor this gay rights bill, I estimated a logistic regression of cosponsorship from the period 1974-1992 for every separate congress. As implied above, I hypothesize that urban legislators

are more likely to co-sponsor gay rights bills, though I also anticipate that other factors will be important like Black Caucus membership, party, and the Democratic percentage of the presidential vote. Figures 3-1 and 3-2 present the results of several logistic regression model used to determine what factors led to cosponsorship of the bill over time (for the full model, please consult the appendix). The dependent variable is coded 1 if the legislator cosponsored the bill, and coded 0 if the legislator did not. The independent variables at the district level used in the analysis were the percentage of the congressional district classified as urban, the percentage of individuals over age 65 in the district, the median district family income (in thousands), and the percentage vote for the Democratic nominee in the last presidential election. Variables specific to the member of Congress include membership in the black caucus, party, seniority, and civil rights support as measured by the LCCR (or Leadership Conference on Civil Rights) score for the member.¹ The black caucus variable is coded 1 if the legislator was in the CBC (Congressional Black Caucus) and 0 otherwise. The party variables codes Democrats as 1 and others as 0. The seniority variable is the total number of terms served by the member of Congress. The civil rights support variable ranges from 0 to 100, with larger values indicating greater support for civil rights legislation as defined by the LCCR.

A different regression was estimated for each Congress from the 94th Congress (1975-76) to the 102nd Congress (1991-1992). The regressions are displayed in Table 3-1 and Figures 3-1 and 3-2. The upper panel of Figure 3-1 plots the magnitude of coefficient of black caucus membership over time for each regression. The lower panel

¹ The majority of the Demographic Data came from E. Scott Adler's website: http://sobek.colorado.edu/~esadler/Congressional_District_Data.html. Presidential election data was coded from various editions of the Almanac of American Politics.

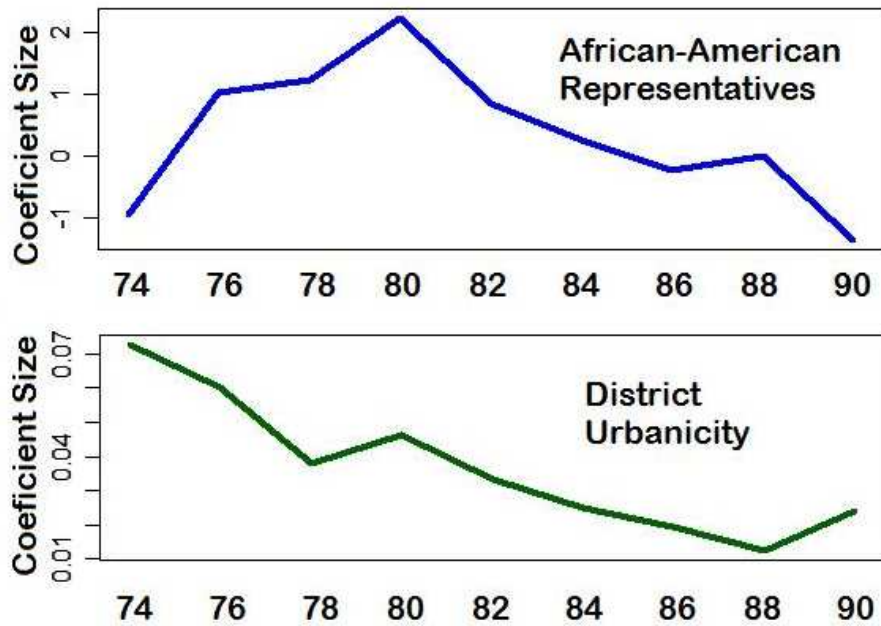


Figure 3-1: Changing Effects of Race and District Urbanicity in Predicting Cosponsorship of the Gay Rights Bill: 1974-1992

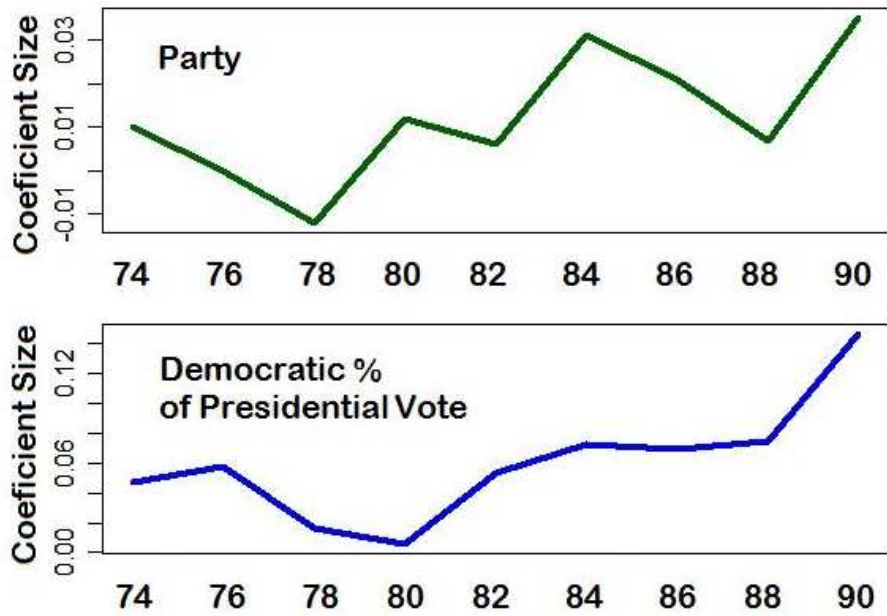


Figure 3-2: Changing Effects of Party and District Presidential Vote in Predicting Cosponsorship of the Gay Rights Bill: 1974-1992

Table 3-1: The Changing Basis of Support for the Gay Rights Bill in Congress

Congress	Intercept			Urbanicity			Black Rep.			Party		
	Param.	S.E		Param	S.E.		Param.	S.E		Param	S.E.	
94th	-11.82	3.083	***	0.074	0.027	**	-0.985	0.851		0.984	1.253	
95th	-16.98	3.592	***	0.06	0.027	*	1.017	0.81		0.012	1.083	
96th	-11.05	2.607	***	0.039	0.014	**	1.201	0.826		-1.238	0.808	
97th	-11.98	2.182	***	0.046	0.016	*	2.274	0.988	*	2.2	0.957	*
98th	-13.14	2.493	***	0.033	0.011	*	0.842	0.72		0.595	0.909	
99th	-12.29	1.803	***	0.025	0.011	*	0.241	0.804		3.114	0.795	***
100th	-13.64	2.046	***	0.02	0.01	*	-0.263	0.759		2.095	0.92	*
101st	-13.39	2.103	***	0.012	0.01		-0.021	0.734		0.694	0.696	
102nd	-17.31	2.11	***	0.025	0.01	*	-1.45	0.857	@	3.525	0.705	***
Congress	Dem Pres. Vote			District Education			District Income			LCCR Score		
	Param.	S.E		Param	S.E.		Param.	S.E		Param	S.E.	
94th	0.047	0.022	*	0.235	0.064	**	-0.537	0.193	**	0.038	0.02	@
95th	0.057	0.029	*	0.141	0.057	*	-0.001	0.191		0.058	0.021	**
96th	0.016	0.023		0.077	0.053		-0.141	0.172		0.086	0.18	***
97th	0.006	0.022		0.209	0.056	***	-0.159	0.162		0.044	0.011	***
98th	0.054	0.029	@	0.154	0.039	***	-0.075	0.071		0.058	0.014	***
99th	0.073	0.021	***	0.147	0.039	***	-0.008	0.066		0.009	0.004	*
100th	0.069	0.021	***	0.151	0.038	***	-0.062	0.064		0.053	0.016	***
101st	0.074	0.023	***	0.119	0.038	**	-0.038	0.067		0.064	0.015	***
102nd	0.151	0.025	***	0.188	0.041	***	0.073	0.067		0.002	0.005	
Congress	Seniority			Cox and Snell			% Correctly					
	Param.	S.E		R^2			Predicted			Years		
94th	-0.109	0.041	*	0.186			94.9%			75-76		
95th	-0.035	0.031		0.236			92.5%			77-78		
96th	-0.035	0.028		0.302			90.0%			79-80		
97th	-0.006	0.024		0.327			90.2%			81-82		
98th	-0.02	0.022		0.343			87.3%			83-84		
99th	-0.019	0.021		0.335			87.6%			85-86		
100th	-0.008	0.019		0.341			86.8%			97-88		
101st	0.005	0.019		0.363			87.6%			89-90		
102nd	-0.071	0.22	**	0.449			87.2%			91-92		

plots the effect of district urbanicity over time. Figure 3-2 is similar. The upper panel plots the effect of the party affiliation of the member overtime, while the lower panel looks at the change in the effect of district partisanship as measured by Democratic presidential vote.

As the bottom panel of Figure 3-1 shows, the effect of district urbanicity was most pronounced when the gay rights bill was first introduced during the 94th Congress. The magnitude of the coefficient declines almost monotonically until the 101st Congress. Membership in the Congressional Black Caucus, while not being significant when the bill was first introduced, has a sizable effect in favor of support in the late 1970s and peaks in the early 1980s (even when controlling for civil rights support and district urbanicity). This is likely due to the association between the lesbian and gay rights movement and the later period of the African-American civil rights and Black Power movements as allied movements of the New Left. Some of the earliest support for gay rights came from Black members of Congress, which testifies to the linkages between the two movements, at least among elites.

However the association between the New Left, district urbanicity, and congressional support for lesbian and gay rights wanes in the later part of the 1980s. Another set of factors surges in importance. In Figure 3-2 we see what replaces these factors. Partisanship, both at the district and member level, appears to profoundly effect support for the gay rights bill in the 1980s.

To understand this shift, we need to consider how the lesbian and gay movement changed from the early 1970s to the 1980s. The nexus of lobbying for support of the gay rights bill was no longer taking place within the world of the liberal, urban districts. The

gay liberation movement of the New Left had withered at a mass level and had been replaced by the more insular identity-articulation based organizations during the mid-to-late 1970s. Urban members susceptible to lobbying by identity-based organizations in urban enclaves were, for the most part, already co-sponsors of the gay rights bill by this time. However, a different type of organization rose up to replace the gay liberation and homophile organizations as they lost membership. These new organizations no longer needed a broad membership base to function, but instead required only a smaller base of donors to operate. These organizations were no longer social movement organizations, but were spun off by the movement. They were classic Washington based interest groups and they had changed the relationship between members of Congress and the lesbian and gay movement.

The first of these was the National Gay Task Force founded in 1974, and later renamed the National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce (NGLTF) (Clendinen and Nagourney 1999). This organization would become more of a think tank, and was eclipsed by the currently largest pro-lesbian and gay lobbying operation, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). The Human Rights Campaign Fund, the original name of the HRC, was founded in 1980 and by 1982 had given \$140,000 to candidates (Endean and Eaklor 2006). Of the 118 candidates given money in that cycle, the overwhelming majority were Democrats. This trend continued and by 2008, \$1,215,425 of the \$1,268,464 given out by HRC to candidates went to Democrats. This represented funds given to 187 Democrats and only 6 Republicans. Indeed, from 1990 to 2008 the level of organizational giving of the HRC to Democrats never dropped below 84% (Opensecrets.org 2009).

If the HRC gave to candidates based on party explicitly or if another factor that distinguished Democrats from Republicans led to this behavior, it would be difficult to tell. Several factors may have led to an illusion of partisan-based giving. In terms of ideology, most of the supporters who cosponsored the gay rights bill were solidly liberal in terms of their DW-NOMINATE scores. Giving donations to individuals who were moderately liberal in hopes of swinging members neutral on lesbian and gay rights would involve giving donations to Democrats. Furthermore, the election of President Reagan brought a number of socially conservative activists into the Republican Party base. While the relationship between social conservatives opposed to lesbian and gay rights and the Republicans strengthened, it may have resulted in a tactical decision by organizations like the NGLTF and HRC to focus on the Democratic Party due to its tradition of support for minority rights after the 1960s. The AIDS crisis and the Reagan Administration's slow response to the crisis intensified these perceptions. What had started as an urban issue in the 1970s was increasingly becoming a partisan issue by the 1980s.

Changes in the gay and lesbian movement outside of Washington likely intensified this divide. As the years went on, the lesbian and gay identity-based movement that had started and thrived in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York branched out to homosexuals across the country. Smaller pockets of lesbians and gays now voted their identity and voted in Democratic primaries across the country because of the same political forces that led the HRC to give most of their money to Democrats (Hertzog 1996). In the 1970s, local gay organizations in New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles had provided funds and volunteers to local candidates. By the 1980s and

early 1990s lesbian and gay volunteers could likely be found all over the country among activist Democrats, and the HRC and NGLTF provided campaign funds to Democratic candidates nationally. The gay subculture could also spread more effectively outside of the cities through specialized magazines and newsletters. Bars and community centers outside of the urban centers had also become less secretive and more political.

The collective behavior of elected Democrats shifted in response to the increase in interest group activity and the geographic spread of the lesbian and gay identity. In terms of the gay rights bill introduced in each Congress, Figure 3-2 shows this rise of partisanship among members of Congress in support for lesbian and gay rights. Although gay rights were still unpopular with the public, Democrats knew if they supported lesbian and gay rights they would be rewarded with concrete resources for their campaigns. Furthermore, the Democrats were likely reassured by the very low salience of the issue among most but not all of the public (Hillygus and Shields 2004).

Although the shift in congressional behavior was important, the most important shift was in the behavior of presidential candidates. In 1988, the lesbian and gay movement donated money to the campaign of Michael Dukakis, the Democratic nominee for president. In displaying how Democratic candidates who faced a national constituency reacted to lesbian and gay support prior to the 1990s, he returned the donation rather than accept the money and be linked to an extremely unpopular minority (Clendinen and Nagourney 1999).

By 1992, however, something had changed. In his quest to win the Democratic nomination and reach out to liberals who may be turned off by a Southern governor, Bill Clinton not only accepted campaign funds from lesbians and gay, but promised if elected

to champion lesbian and gay rights. He even went so far as to appoint a gay man to his campaign's National Executive Committee. Clinton went on to win the nomination with the support of lesbians and gays in the primaries. In his acceptance speech at the 1992 convention, Clinton mentioned his support for AIDS funding and his opposition to the cultural politics starting to develop within the Republican Party at the time. Support for lesbians and gays had now reached the highest level of the Democratic Party.

At the same time, the Republicans went in the opposite direction. The moderate George H.W. Bush had won his primary in 1992 after a tough contest from the right wing. Patrick Buchanan, his primary opponent, was allowed to speak at the Republican National Convention as part of an attempt at bringing the conservative and moderate wings of the party together after the divisive primary. In what is regarded as one of the opening salvos of the culture war, he said the following to the convention:

Yes, we disagreed with President Bush, but we stand with him for freedom to choice religious schools, and we stand with him against the amoral idea that gay and lesbian couples should have the same standing in law as married men and women. ... There is a religious war going on in our country for the soul of America. It is a cultural war, as critical to the kind of nation we will one day be as was the Cold War itself. And in that struggle for the soul of America, Clinton and Clinton are on the other side, and George Bush is on our side. And so, we have to come home, and stand beside him.

The 1992 election and the coming don't-ask-don't tell (DADT) controversy had permanently linked the lesbian and gay identity to the Democratic Party. Likewise social conservatives had a clear home with the Republican Party after 1992. From this point on, it would be very difficult to turn back from the process towards a secular Democratic Party and Religious Republican Party that had begun after the rejection of the spiritual southern Democrat Jimmy Carter in 1980 and prior.

Bill Clinton, Don't-Ask-Don't-Tell, and the Republican Revolution

The election of Bill Clinton later that year created the first real opportunity for lesbian and gay rights to become law at a federal level. Both chambers of Congress were controlled by the increasingly pro-gay Democratic Party. A president who had taken a pro-gay position in front of the electorate had triumphed at the polls. Because of this, beginning in the 103rd Congress (1993-95), the gay rights bill, which had always been a symbolic piece of omnibus legislation, was subdivided into many separate bills with a better chance of passing. The core of it, employment protections for lesbians and gays, became the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). Other separate parts included an end to the ban on gays in the military and legislation inserting protections based on sexual orientation into existing hate-crimes laws.

Earlier in the chapter, I analyzed a basic logistic regression model to predict the likelihood of cosponsoring the one gay rights bill introduced in every Congress from 1974-1992. While few gay and lesbian rights bills came up for a floor vote during the 1990s, many more bills emerged during the rest of the 1990s than in the pre-Clinton era. Because of this increasing diversity of legislative behavior and the legislative agenda involving lesbian and gay rights policy, support can no longer be measured dichotomously just by cosponsorship of the one gay rights bill in each Congress.

Thus, I introduce a new measure of legislative ideology based on the propensity of legislators to co-sponsor the multiplicity of gay rights bills in Congress. This new measure is derived using a Bayesian statistical procedure. Using this procedure I estimated relative legislative policy liberalism along a lesbian and gay dimension for three time periods for each member of the House. The three time periods were prior to

the 1992 election (the 100th Congress through the 102nd Congress or 1987-1992), after the 1992 election (the 103rd through the 105th Congress or 1993-2000), and the remaining years of Republican control of the House (the 106th through 109th Congress or 2000-2006). These time periods were selected to get a sense how members of congress voted on lesbian and gay rights issues before the election of Bill Clinton and his leadership on lesbian and gay rights, after the election of Clinton when attitude liberalization was taking place, and after Clinton had left office.

Estimating Lesbian and Gay Rights Support in Congress

The rise of ideal point estimation techniques, which can be used to measure policy support in Congress more accurately, has revolutionized the study of roll-call voting. Ideal point estimates are based on the spatial model of voting by members of Congress, and are often used by scholars as proxy measures for legislator ideology in a particular issue space. Because the number of roll-call votes in each two year Congress may run into the hundreds or thousands, the accuracy of the estimation of a single dimensional ideal point (or measure of policy liberalism or conservatism) for each member of Congress on every roll call in a given Congress is very high (Poole and Rosenthal 1997, 2007; Poole 2005). A problem can develop, however, when an attempt is made to estimate ideal points on issue dimensions in which the number of votes in each congress is limited or non-existent. Examples of these issue domains might be trade policy, women's rights, support or opposition to unions, or any other limited subset of the congressional agenda. This problem is compounded by possible shifts in the legislative agenda from year to year. These shifts, while having a small impact on ideal points

estimated from the entire roll-call matrix over a congress, may have a rather large impact on the estimation of ideal points using the handful of votes in a specific policy domain per year. While scholars have identified that problems with the conventional ideal-point models exist in small legislatures (e.g., Peress forthcoming), no one has provided an ideal-point model suitable to issue areas with an extreme paucity of roll-call votes.

I solve this small-votes problem by introducing a new ideal point estimation procedure that incorporates information on legislators' revealed preferences based on (1) roll calls, as other models have done; and (2) based on cosponsorship, which other ideal-point models have not considered. The decision to vote 'yea' or 'nay' on a floor vote *and* the decision to co-sponsor a bill reveals information about where the legislator lies on an issue dimension, yet previous ideal-point models have only relied upon roll-call data.

I use a second data source here, co-sponsorship information, in order to estimate ideal points on a narrow policy domain over time more accurately. This is because few votes occur on lesbian and gay rights issues each congress. The estimation of ideal points solely from a roll-call voting matrix is thus problematic. While I apply my ideal-point model to an analysis of gay and lesbian rights votes, it can be used to estimate ideal points for any issue dimension in which there are few roll calls. This method is likely to be of use to a number of scholars interested in specific issue dimensions in Congress.

Incorporating co-sponsorship information into an ideal point model solves several problems, or at least mitigates them. First and most importantly, it provides an additional behavioral manifestation of the underlying ideal point or level of policy support for usage in the statistical estimation. The act of cosponsoring a piece of legislation and actively being listed in support of the legislation can contain every bit as

much information as a roll-call vote. Second, any member can introduce legislation and gather cosponsors. This means that, unlike roll-call votes, the introduction of bills is not regulated by the majority party, congressional leadership, or similar agenda setters within the chamber. Because co-sponsorship is not as subject to agenda setting as roll-call voting, it theoretically should provide a more reliable and stable source of data for the estimation of dynamic, or time-varying, ideal points. Consider an admittedly extreme example. If the majority party only allows bills that every majority party member supports to the floor for a vote, all majority party members would have the same ideal point. The set of all introduced and co-sponsored legislation is less vulnerable to a shift in agenda setting as compared to the roll-call record. This is especially important for narrow issue areas with limited numbers of roll-call votes per congress.

Most measures of policy support for individual members of Congress are created by interest-groups. These scores, such as those created by American for Democratic Action (ADA), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), or the National Organization for Women (NOW), are created from a subset of roll-call votes in order to signal to constituents, activists, and donors which members of Congress are supportive of policies favored by that interest group.

Lacking a more objective measure, political scientists began using these scores compiled by interest groups as measures of congressional ideology on a liberal-conservative dimension, particularly those compiled by the ADA and Congressional Quarterly. However, several problems existed with these measures (Poole 2005). First, interest groups were the sole arbitrators of which specific subset of votes were used in the creation of the scores. Interest groups could easily select votes and add bias to their

scores by selecting votes in such a way as to reward and punish specific members regardless of their policy support (Fowler 1982). Second, the policy agenda could shift from year to year creating problems in the reliability of the scores. In some years, there may be few extremely liberal bills, while in other years a large number of extremely liberal bills may be used. Moderately liberal members who do not always support extremely liberal legislation would see their scores shift more conservative based on the number of extremely liberal bills used in the measure, even if there was no change in their underlying preferences for liberal legislation. This is an artifact of the additive method of compiling scores typically used by interest groups. Lastly, these scores contain no uncertainty estimates based on either their measurement or estimation.

For these reasons, political scientists moved beyond raw interest group scores and began developing their own methods for assessing the revealed ideology of members of Congress using the complete set of roll-call votes. The complete set of roll calls was not susceptible to the decisions of an interest group and spanned a much wider number of issues than any specific score. These new sets of scores were based on item response theory (IRT), which was developed to simultaneously assess student ability and question difficulty (Johnson and Albert 1999) on standardized tests. The two most seminal of these techniques are those developed by Poole and Rosenthal (DW-NOMINATE) and those developed by Jackman, Clinton, and Rivers using a Bayesian Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) IRT model (Poole and Rosenthal 1997; Poole 2005; Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers 2004; see also Bailey 2007; Bertelli and Grose 2009 and Martin and Quinn 2002). These models and the ideal points they produced solved many of the problems associated with interest-group ratings above, and today they have largely replaced the use

of interest groups scores as measures of voting ideology for members of Congress in the academic literature.

However, these techniques become more susceptible to error as the number of roll-call votes analyzed becomes smaller. Although contemporary roll-call voting behavior is marked by a strong unidimensionality (Poole 2005), smaller policy domains are often of great substantive importance and may not be captured completely by the 1st dimension DW-NOMINATE score or the 1st dimension from another roll-call derived measure estimated from the entire roll-call voting matrix for a specific Congress.

The Ideal Point Model

In order to estimate policy support scores from both cosponsorship information and roll-call votes, the model begins with the Bayesian Markov Chain Monte Carlo method outlined by Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers (2004). If a member is liberal and a bill is liberal, we should expect a relatively high probability that that member will cosponsor that bill and vice-versa for conservative members and bills. In order to estimate the model, I use the number of days from the introduction of a bill to when a specific member cosponsors a bill as my dependent variable, and modeled it as an event history:

$$\begin{aligned} \#Days &\sim \exp(\text{Propensity}) \\ \text{Propensity} &= \gamma_h * (\text{Bill Liberalism} * \text{Member Liberalism} + \\ &\quad \text{Bill Conservatism} * \text{Member Conservatism}) \end{aligned}$$

where \exp is the exponential distribution. γ_h is a parameter measuring the non-ideological factors specific to a bill leading a member to cosponsor. The exponential is used for count data where each time period has an equal probability of a cosponsorship, in

this case days. The majority of cosponsorships occur on the first day a bill is introduced, meaning this affects the ideal point estimates derived only slightly.

By defining Bill Liberalism $\equiv [1 - \text{Bill Conservatism}]$ and Member Liberalism $\equiv [2\mu_x - \text{Member Conservatism}]$, we can estimate this model easily using the Bayesian Markov-Chain Monte Carlo algorithm. μ_x is a number close to the mean of the ideal points chosen to keep all the terms positive for use in the exponential distribution which cannot take negative arguments mathematically.

More formally the model for cosponsorship data along with my specification for Bayesian priors is:

$$\begin{aligned} \#Days_{ih} &\sim \exp(P_{ih}) \\ P_{ih} &= \gamma_h * ((L_h * x_i) + (1 - L_h) * (200 - x_i)) \\ x_i &\sim \text{normal}(100, 1) \\ L_h &\sim \text{uniform}(0, 1) \\ \gamma_h &\sim \text{uniform}(0, 1) \\ i &\text{ signifies legislators, } h \text{ signifies bills to cosponsor} \end{aligned}$$

L_h and γ_h are all Parameter specific to the bill relating to their propensity to be cosponsored in a partisan and non-partisan manner respectively. P_{ih} is the propensity of the i^{th} legislature to cosponsor the h^{th} bill. They are both given a uniform prior distribution. The x_i are the bill points for the legislature and are given a normal prior distribution. This model was coded into the BUGS language used by the program WinBUGS for and this code was inserted into the preexisting model published by Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers for the estimation of an ideal point model based on roll-call data. The ideal points based on the two types of data were then estimated based on my exponential model for cosponsorship and Clinton, Jackman, and River's logit model for roll-call votes simultaneously. I estimated 20,000 MCMC iterations (with 1000 burn-in) in WINBugs for the three time periods listed above.

Data on cosponsorship were obtained from James Fowler's website, <http://jhfowler.ucsd.edu/cosponsorship.htm>. Data on roll-call voting were obtained from www.voteview.com. A list of roll-call votes involving lesbian and gay issues came from Haider-Markel (1999), the Human Rights Campaign scorecards for various years, and a search of THOMAS, the library of Congress's online legislative database, for keywords involving lesbian and gay issues. The same search of THOMAS for keywords was used to determine what bills should be selected for inclusion in the set of cosponsored legislation introduced in Congress that involved lesbian and gay issues. Any bill that came up for a roll-call vote that included cosponsors was also added to the list.

Finally, in order to bridge between Congresses, I assume that Rep. Nancy Pelosi, who represents San Francisco in the House and always supports lesbian and gay rights had a policy support score of 105. This was the time period prior to her becoming House Speaker. Likewise I assumed that two conservative members from Arizona, Rep. Jeff Flake and Rep. Bob Stump, who tend to nearly always vote against gay rights, had a score of 95. This allows for a weak comparison of the scores over time, as long as these members did not shift their positions sharply on gay rights issue and the difference between Stump and Flake, who represented the same conservative district, are small. Thus, the ideal point estimates will range from approximately 95 to 105, with larger values being more liberal. However, point estimates for each legislator can lie outside of the 95 to 105 range as Flake and Pelosi are simply used as baselines by which to estimate a comparable scale over time and across legislators. These values of 95 and 105 are akin to the poles of +1 and -1 used in other ideal-point models (e.g., Bertelli and Grose 2009; Poole and Rosenthal 1997).

These ideal point estimates (which I also call legislative support scores) display remarkable face validity. For instance, the most liberal member on gay rights in the first and last period was Rep. Pete Stark from the San Francisco Bay Area. Stark is a self-declared atheist. Rep. Barney Frank, an openly gay Democrat from Massachusetts, is among the most liberal members on gay rights in each time period. Furthermore, Rep. Jim Kolbe, a Republican from Arizona who declared he was gay in 104th Congress, showed a increased liberalization on gay rights after this event. In the earliest time period he was at the middle of the scale on lesbian and gay rights issues. This corresponds to being moderate on gay rights for a Republican, but still conservative when compared to Democrats. However, by the latter period he had become markedly more liberal on lesbian and gay rights and his behavior was indistinguishable from that of a liberal Democrat. In fact, it is not even statistically different from that of Rep. Stark in the later period.

The top half of Figure 3-3 shows the density of policy support for the two major parties for the first time period (1986-92), while the bottom half of the figure shows the density for the last time period (2001-2006). Blue signifies the Democratic legislators and red signifies the Republican legislators. Figure 3-4 plots the legislative support of each member of Congress on lesbian and gay rights on the vertical axis for the three periods in question. A blue line connects a specific Democratic member's support from one time period to the next. In a similar fashion, Republicans are plotted using red lines. In this way aggregate change in the parties' support for lesbian and gay rights could be analyzed by looking at this figure.

The two figures show a marked change in the behavior of Republicans and

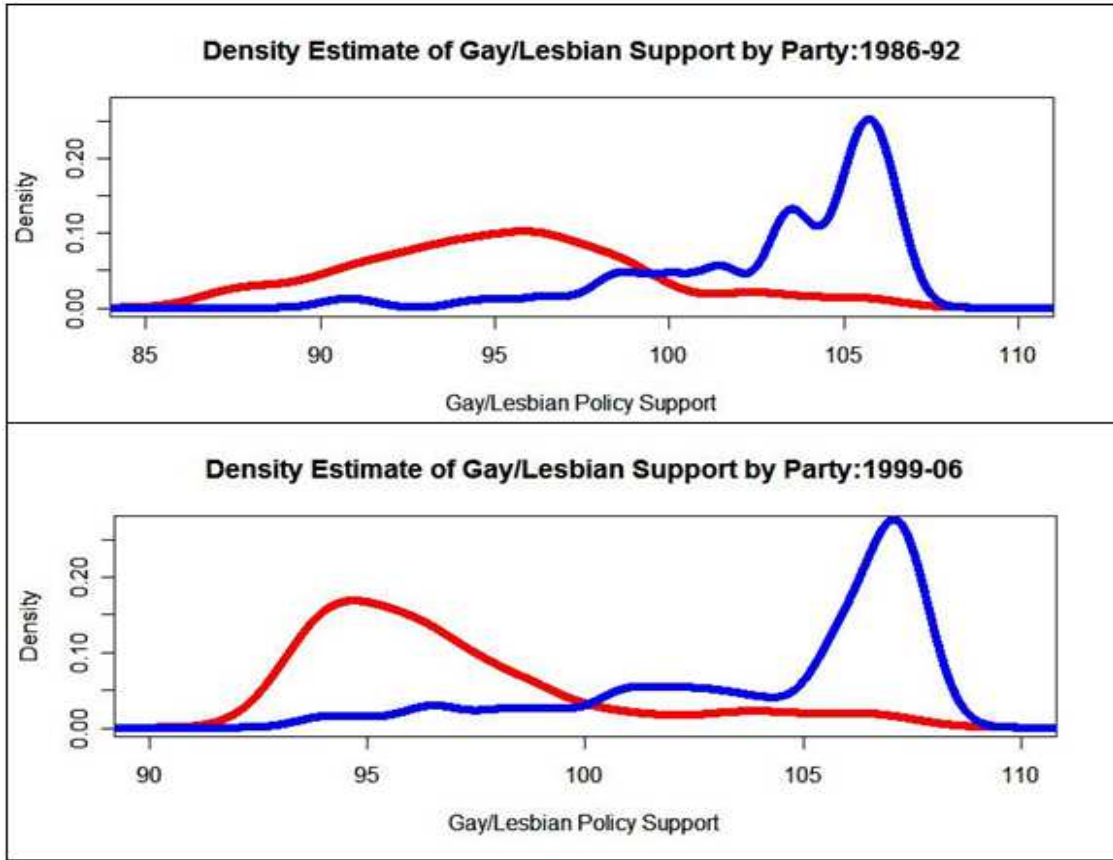


Figure 3-3: Density Estimates of Gay and Lesbian Policy Support for the Pre-Clinton House (1986-1992) and Contemporary House (1999-2006)

conservative Democrats from their behavior prior to the 1992 election. The Republicans, while very heterogeneous in their support prior to the 1992 election, had consolidated at an anti-gay position thereafter.

Two major reasons likely led to this consolidation. The first is the desire to appeal to the growing base of religious and social conservative activists who were flocking to the party after the 1992 campaign. Republican members running for Congress had incentives to move their individual support rightward on gay issues to appeal to these activists in a similar manner to the Democrats' leftward movement in the 1980s. The second factor took place at the start of the 104th Congress (1995).

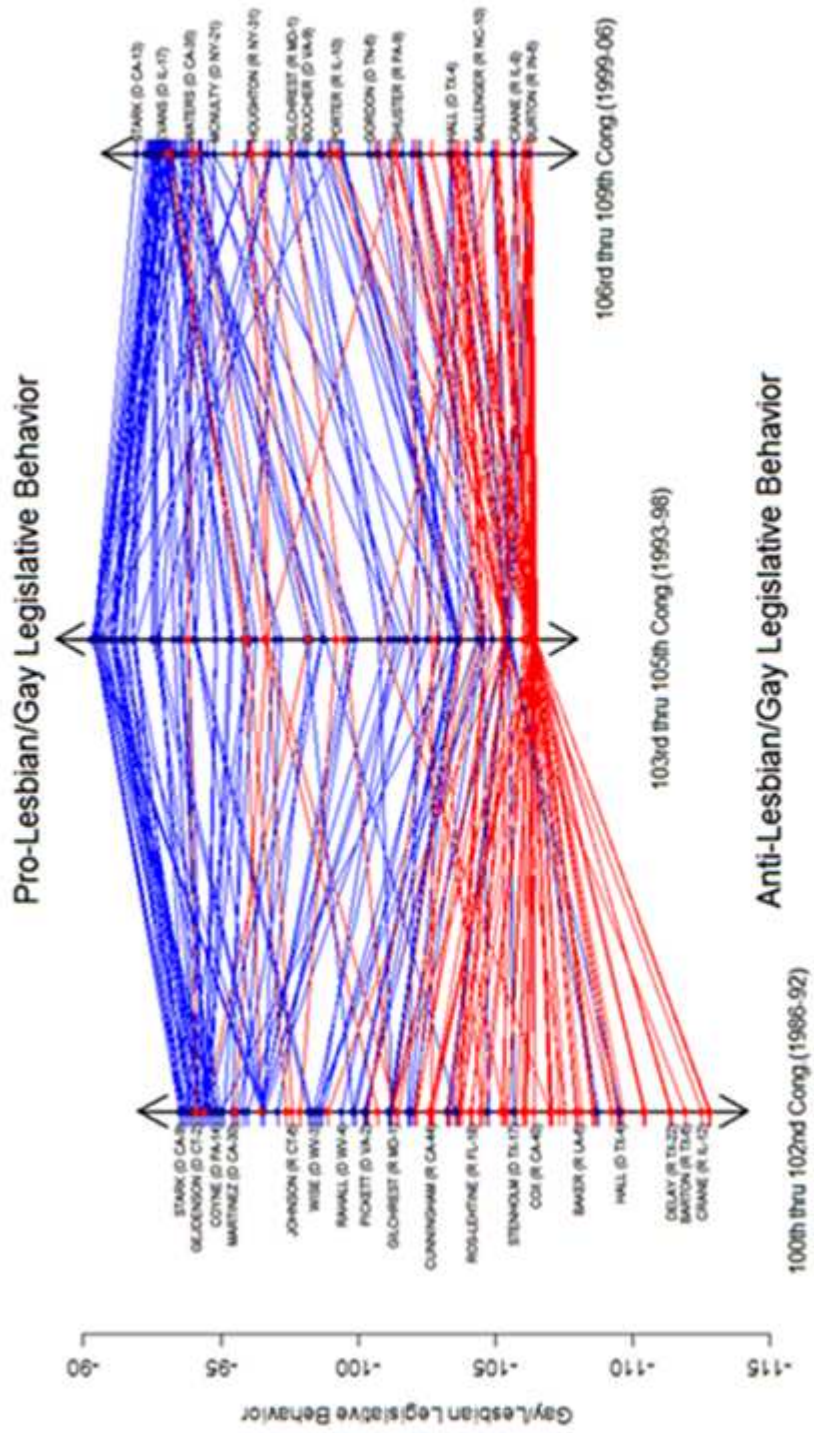


Figure 3-4: The Gay and Lesbian Policy Dimension in Congress Across Time

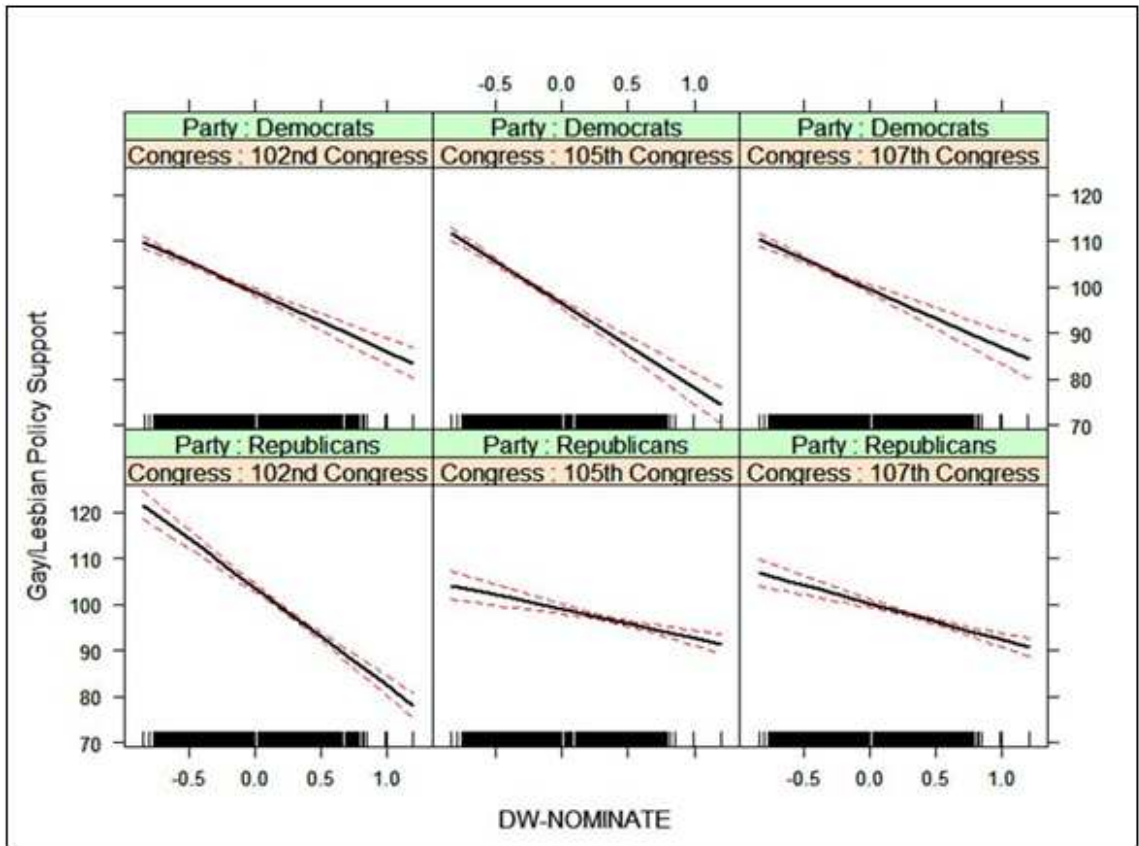


Figure 3-5: The Marginal Effect of Ideology (DW-NOMINATE) in Predicting Pro-Lesbian and Gay Policy Support in Congress by Party and Time Period

Republicans had won control of Congress in the 1994 election in a small part due to backlash over Clinton’s association with lesbians and gays due to DADT². As stated above, they also had a strong need to appeal to religious activists not as individual members but now as a party. Now that Republicans had control of the House, moderate bills that divided the GOP on gay rights issues could be kept off the floor. The result of keeping moderate bills on gay rights off the floor would be an image of the Republican Party as more conservative on lesbian and gay rights than it had been prior to Republican

² Other factors included healthcare, the budget bill, etc...

control. This party image could be used to appeal to new social conservative activists. The net result is a clearer party position on lesbian and gay issue for the Republicans.

Figure 3-5 shows this shift more quantitatively. It shows the association between ideology, as measured by DW-NOMINATE, and lesbian and gay policy support for each party in each of the three time periods. The association controls for district Democratic presidential vote, district urbanicity, district black percentage, district percentage of college graduates, district median income, and member seniority. The large positive slope in the bottom left box displays a significant relationship between ideology and support for lesbian and gay rights in the pre-1992 time period for Republicans. In the last two time periods, however, the slope significantly flattens out, signifying a decrease in the relationship. Party had replaced ideology as the dominate force on lesbian and gay rights support for Republicans, just as party had replaced urbanicity for the Democrats in the 1980s.

Conclusion

The 1980s and 1990s showed a rapid rise in party in predicting congressional support for lesbian and gay rights. The events that solidified this division in 1992 and 1993—namely the election of Bill Clinton, the 1992 Republican Convention, and DADT—would prove key in starting the process of public opinion change. In the next chapter I move from the elite level of politics to the mass level. Now that the lesbian and gay movement had support among elites in Congress, and ultimately the presidency in 1992, those elites' positions would persuade members of the public to change their

positions. They would also impact entertainment television via a signal that it was ok to put more lesbian and gay portrayals into America's living rooms through the air waves.

CHAPTER IV

THE CAUSE OF PUBLIC OPINION SHIFTS ON LESBIAN AND GAY ISSUES

A firm discussion of the nature of public opinion and what causes it to shift is crucial to the following chapters and especially that of Chapter 4. The rise of an identity based lesbian and gay movement created a constituency that was ultimately courted by elected Democrats. Likewise, the Republican Party shifted rightward in order to appeal to religious and social conservative activists. Several threads of research suggest that this polarization of political elites should affect public opinion. This chapter presents a summary of this research and then uses it to draw hypotheses regarding the shift in public opinion towards lesbians and gays in the 1990s.

The most useful theory of public opinion for my purposes is John Zaller's RAS model (1992). Zaller developed his RAS model of survey response and attitude change in order to explain mass behavior among respondents of public opinion surveys. He attempts to explain why members of opposing political parties in the mass public shift their opinions based on news coverage in systematic ways. His model is based on a conception of party identification developed at the start of the behavioral revolution in political science by Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes in their classic text, *The American Voter* (1960). Party identification is characterized as a static aspect of an individual, resistant to change, and mostly inherited from the family in early childhood socialization. It is a central component to understanding and predicting political behavior. Individuals without a party identification or with a weak identification were

shown to have lower political knowledge and sophistication, participate less in politics, and behave more in accordance with short-term political forces rather than a standing predisposition as opposed to those with strong party identification.

In 1992, Zaller published his now classic book *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*, in which he built on *The American Voter's* model of party identification (Zaller 1992). The theory is a psychological model of how a member of the public uses the information she has come in contact with in the past to answer a survey question or vote on an issue or candidate. While this is the primary behavior the model seeks to explain, it can easily be broadened to all acts of political decision making, such as deciding to sign a petition or voice an opinion in a focus group.

The fundamental assumptions of the model are as follows. RAS stands for Reception-Acceptance-Sample. The individual acts, politically, as if she has a storehouse of social and political knowledge in the memory that she views as accurate. The individual elements stored in this storehouse are called considerations. A “consideration” is any idea that pushes the individual in one direction towards a decision on a political issue. Considerations are primarily transmitted to the individual through political and scientific elites in political communications. A political speech on welfare, a scientific paper on poverty, and a news report on AIDS in Africa are all prime examples of Zallerian considerations.

The major theoretical mechanism of the model is how the considerations get into the storehouse in the first place. First, an individual must be “receptive” to the consideration. For instance, an individual might be apolitical and thus ignore all political considerations. The individual effectively blocks them from entering into the storehouse

by avoiding them in the first place. Even if they do receive the information, they do not have a firm knowledge base regarding politics to render it intelligible.

Second, if the individual is “receptive” to the information, she must then evaluate it. If a conservative politician provides the consideration, a liberal individual in the audience may block the consideration and not allow it to enter into their storehouse. Likewise, a conservative would not trust information from Michael Moore. The political identity of the individual (in this example the identity as “liberal” or “conservative”) is constituted by the previous considerations that have made it into the storehouse. Let’s say an individual has encountered no political information. She would have no considerations in her storehouse and thus politically be a *tabula rasa*. However, if she has accepted only “liberal” considerations, these could condense into a political identity, and block “conservative” considerations from being accepted into the storehouse. In this way, the individual uses the previous considerations within her storehouse to evaluate whether or not the newer consideration of information should be allowed to enter or be accepted. Very few individuals except among political elites, however, consider themselves completely liberal or conservative. Zaller calls the ideologies here “partisan screens”. Many individuals have no static political identity or ideology and “accept” all knowledge that they are presented with if they are “receptive” in the first phase.

In the final stage of the RAS model, the “Sample” stage, the individual is presented with a political decision or question they must decide. The way the individual determines a political position is to take a sample of the considerations in their storehouse that are relevant to the issue. The more recent a consideration has been active, the more likely it is to be drawn from the storehouse. For instance, when an individual views a

newscast on “the problem of racism” the night before she answer a survey with a question about racism, the knowledge from that newscast is more likely to be sampled. Once the individual has sampled these considerations, she decides her position “by averaging across the considerations” (Zaller 1992, p.58). If there are more considerations in the sample they move the individual in the “liberal” direction and she will voice a “liberal” political position and vice-versa.

The self-categorization theory of social identity explained in Chapter 2 and Zaller’s theory of survey response are very similar, but stress different aspects of the behavioral puzzle. For instance, identity plays a central role in both theories. In self-categorization theory, a social identity is a self-aspect that describes and predicts behavior when it is made salient, while in Zaller’s theory it is schema for determining the validity of incoming information. The origins of identity for individuals are somewhat obscure in both theories. For Zaller, the origin of a political (or social) identity is likely in childhood, when enough information of a liberal or conservative variety condensed, while for Tajfel and Turner, the creation of identity comes when one classifies oneself internally as fitting that identity based on the situation. Zaller’s theory does not stress the salience of a specific identity, but more salient pieces of information in the sample stage of his theory can lead to a greater probability of being sampled if those considerations were primed. Those primed considerations may relate to identity categories in the mass public. In the end, Zaller’s theory is very much a cognitive theory, while Tajfel’s and Turner’s is a social psychological theory.

The RAS model is more adept at explaining the role of political elites in shaping public opinion and political behavior. Political leaders of a shared identity category

produce valid information for their adherents in a straight forward manner. If they change their message, members associated with their party should change their beliefs. Indeed, when analyzing political change among Democrats and Republicans, Carmines and Stimson discovered that Democrats and Republicans in Congress shifted their attitudes on racial issues prior to the shift in mass attitudes. Carmines and Stimson coined the phrase 'issue evolution' in explaining a shift in elites' political attitudes directly causing a similar shift among their adherents in the mass public.

While Zaller focuses more on individual cognitive processes, others have looked at the dynamics of public opinion at the aggregate level. Research on public opinion has found that the nation's aggregate attitudes as revealed by surveys are very resistant to change. Page and Shapiro (1992) find little change in public opinion across nearly all issue domains in *The Rational Public* with the exception of racial issues and views on proper gender roles. When changes in political and social issues do occur, often in response to sudden and systematic changes in the mix of news stories being reported on, they decay rather quickly. Opinions tend to return to their previous levels. Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey (1987) examined the effects of news reporting on several issues both before and after political events reported through media and they found that experts, commentators, and other pronouncements of government officials tended to cause change. They determined that coverage has small effects on public opinion and that these media effects decay quickly.

Importantly, Page and Shapiro examined aggregate data. Determining individual level behavior from aggregate data is a major problem in the social sciences (King 1997). Fortunately, Iyengar and Kinder (1987) used several experimental designs

to determine convincingly that media coverage has effects on individuals' opinions and this is work that Zaller would later build on. By showing people news stories on specific topics, these researchers were able to manipulate which issues the viewers believed were most important to the country. They also were able to use similar experiments to change the issues used by voters when evaluating candidates in an election. Voters who saw stories on an issue, like race or inflation, were more likely to use that issue when choosing a candidate in an election to vote for. Similar experiments using mock news stories have found that manipulating the way the press talks about a story can affect the conclusion that individuals reach on the issue (Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley 1997; Brewer 2003a; Stenner 2005). For instance, when people read stories that emphasized civil rights that described a white supremacist rally, they were more likely to be supportive than when they read an article that stressed the law and order aspects of the story (Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley 1997). Similarly, experimental manipulation of priming has been applied to gay rights issues in a limited fashion (Brewer 2003a, 2008). These experiments have found positions on gay rights can be manipulated based on the frame of a story.

More permanent changes on political issues than the nearly ephemeral changes caused by priming and framing occur over the span of decades and are caused by changes in reporting habits in the news media. These changes tend to reverse themselves when new presidents enter office or when the nation's political 'mood' shifts. Stimson (1999) found that the public's 'mood' tends to get more liberal during conservative political periods and administrations and more conservative during liberal administrations and periods. This is likely due to the choices of individual newsmakers. They criticize

liberal excesses when liberals hold the reins of government and conservative overreaching during Republican eras. However these shifts on policy issues never reach a magnitude greater than a dozen percentage points or so (Stimson 1999) and importantly they swing back and forth. For instance in Figure 1-1, attitudes on environmental spending and social security spending became more liberal during the Reagan years and more conservative during the early Clinton years when the Democrats had unified government.

This research has at times labeled the changes on social issues as different and separate from those taking place on political issues because of the degree of change that has taken place (Stimson 2004). This is a mistake. The same processes that affect public opinion on political issues affect public opinion on social issues and cause social change. The real distance between the two is shifts in elites and the media which eventually move towards a consensus on social issues. On political issues, disputes do not move towards consensus.

Research on Public Opinion involving Lesbians and Gays

Why, when public opinion on most issues is stable, have issues involving gays and lesbians changed drastically and in a one-sided fashion? Theories of public opinion change and American institutions point to two major mechanisms that can lead to attitude change: contact with the media and a change in elite attitudes. Previous research into liberalization of attitudes towards gays and lesbians has focused on demographic changes within the public or changes in the effects of abstract psychological variables (Loftus 2001; Hicks and Lee 2006; Herek 2002; Olsen, Cadge, and Harrison 2006; Treas 2002;

Wolpert and Wilcox 2000). These studies are informative, but fail to determine why change happened. For instance, why did the effect of having a specific attitude change over time? Did a factor relating to the population change in the aggregate? Many of these studies simply state that variables had a static effect in a single cross-sectional survey, but fail to state how the variable, for instance an attitude or a demographic category's aggregate measure, changed in the mass public over time. Loftus (2001) looked specifically at the General Social Survey (GSS) over time and tried to determine why aggregate change happened by examining demographic changes as well as changes in attitudes toward pre-marital and extra-marital sex. She found that only about half of the change over time could be explained by these changes in these variables. Brewer (2003b, 2008) examined the National Election Study and found that some variables, such as partisanship, exhibit different effects in different years.

The effect of contact with gays and lesbians has been explored and has a positive effect on attitudes towards gays and lesbians (Altemeyer 1988, 2001; Lewis 2007). However, lesbians and gays can choose not to reveal whether they are gay or lesbian to others. 'Coming out' is likely a function of the current political and social climate towards gays and lesbians and thus this cannot be a complete solution to explaining change in attitudes over time. Para-social contact, or contact with fictional or real lesbians and gays through the media, has been explored in experimental settings (Riggle, Ellis, and Crawford 1996; Mazur and Emmer-Sommer 2002; Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes 2006). The results of these studies are mixed (Ticker and Potocky-Tripodi 2006), and are recapped in Chapter 6, which reports the results of an original experiment.

The way issues involving gays and lesbians are framed in the media may have an effect of public attitudes. Framing is when different aspects of a story are emphasized in a way that influences the conclusions an audience reaches about that issue (Iyengar 1991; Nelson, Clausen, and Oxley 1997). There is some evidence that framing can change attitudes towards gay and lesbian issues in an experimental setting (Brewer 2003a). However, changes that have taken place in pro-gay behavior among political elites and changes in media have never been fully explored to determine if they are responsible for attitude liberalization. These framing studies have relied on (often flawed) experimental designs rather than assessing if the net change in lesbian and gay media portrayals that occurred in the 1990s actually corresponds to the change in public attitudes that took place.

Zaller himself talks about attitudes towards lesbians and gays in the last chapter of *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (1992). He suggests that the change in elite signals on homosexuality from the American Psychiatric Association (APA) in 1973 was responsible for attitude liberalization. The APA had removed homosexuality from their list of mental illnesses when updating their Diagnostic and Statistical Manual. However, broad based attitude liberalization on lesbian and gay rights issues did not start to occur until roughly the time that Zaller's book went to press in 1992. It is clear that something more than the changing behavior of experts is required to effect opinion change. Other elites besides psychiatrists had to change their attitudes before public opinion change would start.

I suspect that issues involving lesbians and gays, African-Americans, and women exhibit massive change because they involve groups explicitly and these groups have

formed identity-based movements that have allied themselves with political elites. These issues involve individuals with a self-categorization or social identity which has locked them into an inferior position in society with respect to social esteem and prestige (Tajfel and Turner 1986; Turner 1991; Turner et al. 1987). In a liberal society that claims that all people are created equal, the gradient created by the unequal esteem between these categories and dominant groups (males, whites, and heterosexuals) provide these groups with an advantage in *changing* public opinion. They also have enough members so that they can ally themselves with political elites in order to become part of an electoral coalition. Once allied with the elites in a political party, politicians shift their rhetoric towards the formerly disliked group. Other elites in entertainment and news also shift their behavior. These shifts snowball over time, until monumental change occurs in public opinion. Other unpopular groups, for instance atheists, have the potential for political alliances and public opinion change, but lack a collective identity based on categorization in that group strong enough to serve as a basis for political behavior and influence.

In the previous chapter, I showed that this is precisely what has happened among political elites. They polarized by party on lesbian and gay issues in the 1980s and early 1990s. This provided a clear signal to mass partisans about what their opinions ought to be. This polarization combined with changes in television portrayals should have resulted in predictable changes in different segments of the public over time.

Hypotheses Regarding Opinion Change towards Identity Groups

These theories offer three major mechanisms that affect the liberalization of attitudes toward homosexuality that occurred in the 1990s as well as a few minor mechanisms.

I. The Partisan Effect

I theorize that the political identity of respondents will greatly affect liberalization in opinions toward homosexuality. This relates directly to the effect that political leaders at the elite level have in shaping the opinions of the adherents of their parties in society. The parties had been drifting apart on lesbian and gay rights during the 1970s and 1980s as shown in Chapter 3. The election of Bill Clinton in 1992 and the focus on gays in the military in 1993 clarified the partisan dimension involving attitudes towards gays and lesbians for the mass public. Clinton's campaign in 1992 courted lesbian and gay voters while the Republican convention that year featured denunciations of lesbians and gays on the convention floor. In addition the first major issue Clinton addressed in office was a bungled attempt to lower the military's ban on gays serving openly in the military. Clinton's election and don't ask don't tell also triggered further polarization on gay rights issues among members of the U.S. House. A liberalization of partisans in response to elite signals is also consistent with an issue evolution theory of opinion change (Carmines and Stimson 1989). In an issue evolution, elites polarize on an issue causing their mass adherents to develop increasingly polarized views over time on that issue.

As the two political parties' elites have moved toward internal consensus throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the masses of each party should also have shifted

towards their elites, especially after 1992. For Republicans the effect may be canceled or mitigated by rising media portrayals or a low level of support going into the 1990s.

II. The Media Effect

The 1992 presidential election created a large burst of media attention on gay rights that continued into 1993 in the form of the debate surrounding Clinton's adoption of don't-ask- don't-tell. Recall Figure 1-4, which showed the number of news stories involving gays and lesbians on the major network evening newscasts over this time period.³ It showed a large spike in 1992 and 1993. This large spike in television news likely represents the communication of a polarization in elite attitudes to the public, which is itself crucial to communicating the elite polarization on lesbian and gay rights to the public. It represents the communication of the partisan dimension of gay rights issues by the conveying the events of don't ask don't tell and the 1992 election the year before. After Clinton's 1992 campaign, the 1992 Republican convention, and the 1993 prominence of gays in the military, being a Democrat became linked with being pro-gay, while Republicans and being Republican became linked with being against gay and lesbian rights. This is supported by the evidence of elite polarization on lesbian and gay rights presented in the last chapter.

Although being Republican had become linked with being anti-gay, something else occurred that prevented Republicans outside of elite circles from moving in an anti-gay direction. Two years later Hollywood had a similar boom in gay related

³ This measure over time was constructed by searching the Vanderbilt Television News Archive for newscasts on the ABC, CBS, or NBC evening news that contained "gay" or "lesbian" or "homosexual" or "same-sex" in addition to a mention of "rights", "movement", "discrimination", "adopt", "adoption", "teachers", "military", "armed", "activists", "groups", "army", "unions", "marriage", or "issues".

programming. Recall that Figure 1-4 also showed the number of major lesbian and gay characters on the three major television networks from 1971 to 2001.⁴ From 1994 to 1995 the number of characters doubled from 6 to 12 and stayed high through the end of the century.

This major increase in media exposure and fictional portrayals of lesbians and gays should have a direct effect on public opinion towards gays and lesbians. It is through the media that people learn about other individuals outside of their day to day activities. Turning on the television can expose an individual in an all white suburb to Bill Crosby, an anti-feminist male to Roseanne Arnold, or someone with no gay acquaintances to Ellen DeGeneres. If these shows are even mildly entertaining to an individual, people will watch and passively absorb messages about the way society functions for minorities. Changing the media is an important way to change society, especially for people in identity categories that are not primarily visual (i.e., easy to detect when meeting someone). Lesbians and gays need not disclose their orientation and open themselves up to prejudice. Fictional characters and media coverage both present new information to the public without anyone needing to face discrimination.

New sources of information present new considerations for the public to use when evaluating their positions on issues. The new attention paid to lesbians and gays can have effects on members of the mass public, but only if their political identities are not opposed to the new information (Zaller 1992). For instance, white supremacists may have such an overt reaction to Bill Cosby strictly because of his race that they may forgo any potential entertainment from his show in order to avoid media contact with an

⁴ This measure was based on a list taken from Stephan Tropiano's book *The Prime Time Closet: A History of Gays and Lesbians on TV* (2002).

African-American. Consequently we should expect Democrats to respond more favorably to gays and lesbians as media coverage increases, and Republicans to respond less favorably after the events that took place in 1992 and 1993. Independents could theoretically go either way. They consume less news, but filter information less compared to those with a party identity. They may or may not be responsive to the rise in television characters in the mid-1990s.

III. The Cohort Effect

The cohort effect on issues involving gay rights seems to be one of the most long standing findings surrounding public opinion on gay rights issues (Treas 2002, Hicks and Less 2006). It has been taken as given that younger people tend to be more liberal with respect to gay rights, while older people tend to be more conservative. However, this empirical finding has never been adequately explained.

Different generations have different experiences. These experiences determine what each respondent or individual determines to be an appropriate behavior given a certain stimulus. Older individuals have more experiences to draw from, meaning they are less susceptible to influence from experts when the direction of the message of the communications differs from those experiences. Similarly, young individuals are more susceptible to elite influence because they lack knowledge on what is an appropriate response for their identity category.

If the mix of considerations transmitted by the media changes quickly and in a systematic way, younger individuals will have a different mix of considerations or experiences as compared to those older individuals who lived both before and after the

shift. This is particularly true of ‘soft’ programming that younger individuals are more receptive to as opposed to ‘hard’ news. This variation in the mix of considerations or memories should give rise to the cohort effect. The cohort effect appears to be significant on social issues, while nonexistent or small on political issue (MacManus 1996). It is the interaction of the time a person lives in and their memories of news and television experienced throughout their lives.

IV. Religion and Demographic Effects

While I theorize that the three major factors above will affect individual opinions, other identities are likely to affect opinions toward lesbians and gays. For instance, those with strong religious identities, particularly evangelical Christians, are often found to be more opposed to gay rights (Wolport and Wilcox 2000; Olsen, Cadge, and Harrison 2006). Education also plays a major role in shaping public opinion towards gays and lesbians (Treas 2002). People with more years of education are often more supportive of gays rights in general. People on the West Coast and Northeast may have higher levels of support for lesbian and gays rights due to either increased contact with gays and lesbians or a greater number of pro-LGBT political leaders and elites (Loftus 2001). African-Americans have been shown to display lower support for gay rights, while women consistently have a higher level of support (Herek 2002). People that have contact with lesbians and gays and believe that individuals are born gay or cannot change their orientations also should be more supportive of gay rights (Lewis 2007; Haider-Markel and Joslyn 2008).

In the next two chapters these hypotheses will be tested against data. Historical survey data can establish the changing effects over time, while an experimental design can look directly for an explicit media effect and establish the direction of causation.

CHAPTER V

THE POLITICAL PROCESS, ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA, AND PUBLIC OPINION CHANGE

Opinions in the United States towards lesbians and gays have undergone a rapid shift over the last few decades (Loftus 2001; Yang 1997, 1999). Major shifts in opinion over time have been rare (Stimson 1999). However, on issues involving minorities and women, they have not been uncommon since the 1960s (Schuman et al. 1997). Mass opinion still appears to be in a state of flux on issues involving lesbian and gay rights, especially with the introduction of same-sex marriage as a national political topic during the 2004 presidential campaign. This change is illustrated graphically in Figure 5-1, which displays respondents to the GSS question discussed in Chapter 1, and Figure 1-5.

I explore two pieces of the process of political and social change in this chapter: the elite-led nature of the shift in mass opinion on gay rights issues and a sharp rise in lesbian and gay representation on television in order to test the hypotheses generated from public opinion theory.

Data and Methods

To test my hypotheses about public opinion change, I use both the GSS time series and the individual-level data of the GSS for a more robust analysis. In addition, I construct a second data set comprised of a set of surveys that ask respondents their opinions on biological attributions of homosexuality and interpersonal contact with gays

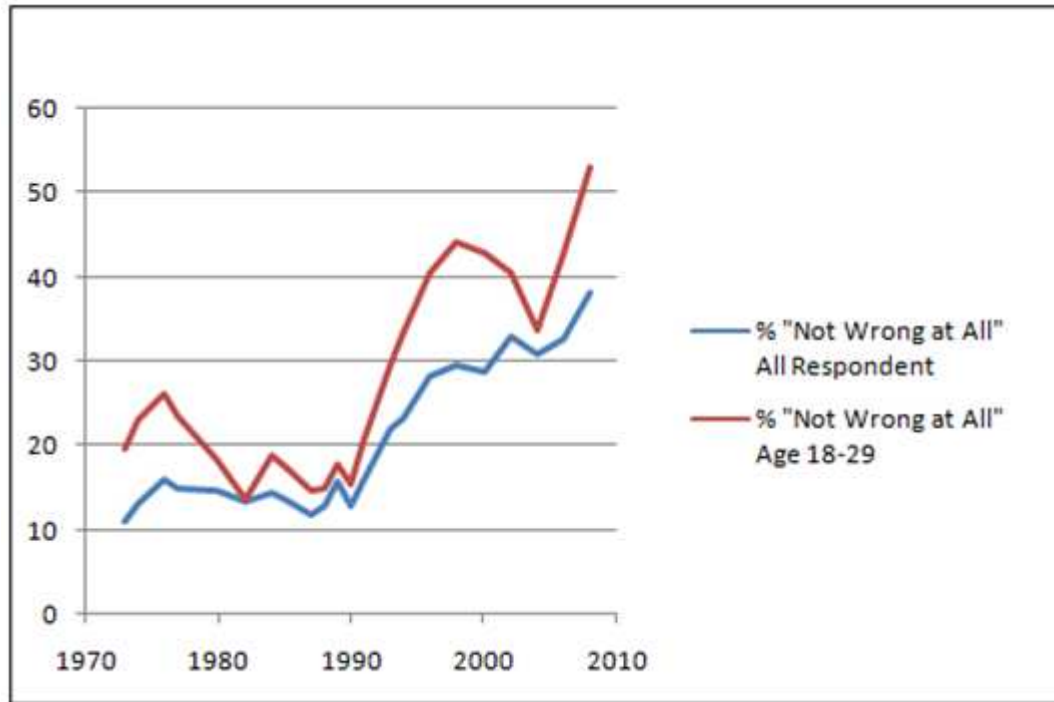


Figure 5-1: Public Opinion towards Same-Sex Relationship
Source: the General Social Survey.

or lesbians. This provides for a second test of the effects of contemporaneous media on attitudes relating to lesbians and gays.

The GSS contains four questions relating to lesbian and gay rights over time. The survey asks these four questions nearly every year or every other year from 1973 until 2006. Three of these, however, are related to civil liberties. Support for civil liberties in general has increased over this time independently of its relation to gay rights due to increasing levels of education (Loftus 2001). Due to the potential for civil liberties support to be less directly related to support for gay rights, I rely on the question involving support for same-sex relations graphed over time in Figure 5-1 as my key dependent variable. The actual question reads “What about sexual relations between two adults of the same sex--- do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong

only sometimes, or not wrong at all?” Very few people over time pick the two middle responses. This being the case, I focus my analysis on the proportion of respondents who pick the category “not wrong at all” since it is the category that increases most over time.

Figure 5-2 displays the breakdown of the proportion of respondents choosing “not wrong at all” over time separately by party identification. Democrats and those individuals leaning to the Democrats are in medium grey, Independents in light gray, and Republicans and those leaning to the Republican Party are in dark grey. Several events thought to affect public opinion are labeled on Figure 5-2, including the American Psychiatric Association’s de-classification of homosexuality as a mental disorder which occurred in 1973, the peak of the AIDS epidemic, the rise in television portrayals that occurred from 1994 to 1996, and the same-sex marriage debate that occurred in 2003 after the Supreme Judicial Court in Massachusetts legalized same-sex marriage. Also, the large vertical black line marks 1992. This is when major partisan effects should theoretically start to be seen due to the 1992 presidential campaign and the gays-in-the-military issue that took center stage in 1993. Independents appear most supportive of same-sex relations over most of the 1970s and early 1980s. Their support falls below that of Democrats during the AIDS epidemic. Independent support rebounds in 1992 after the presidential election, then further increases after 1995 when the number of gay and lesbian television characters increases.

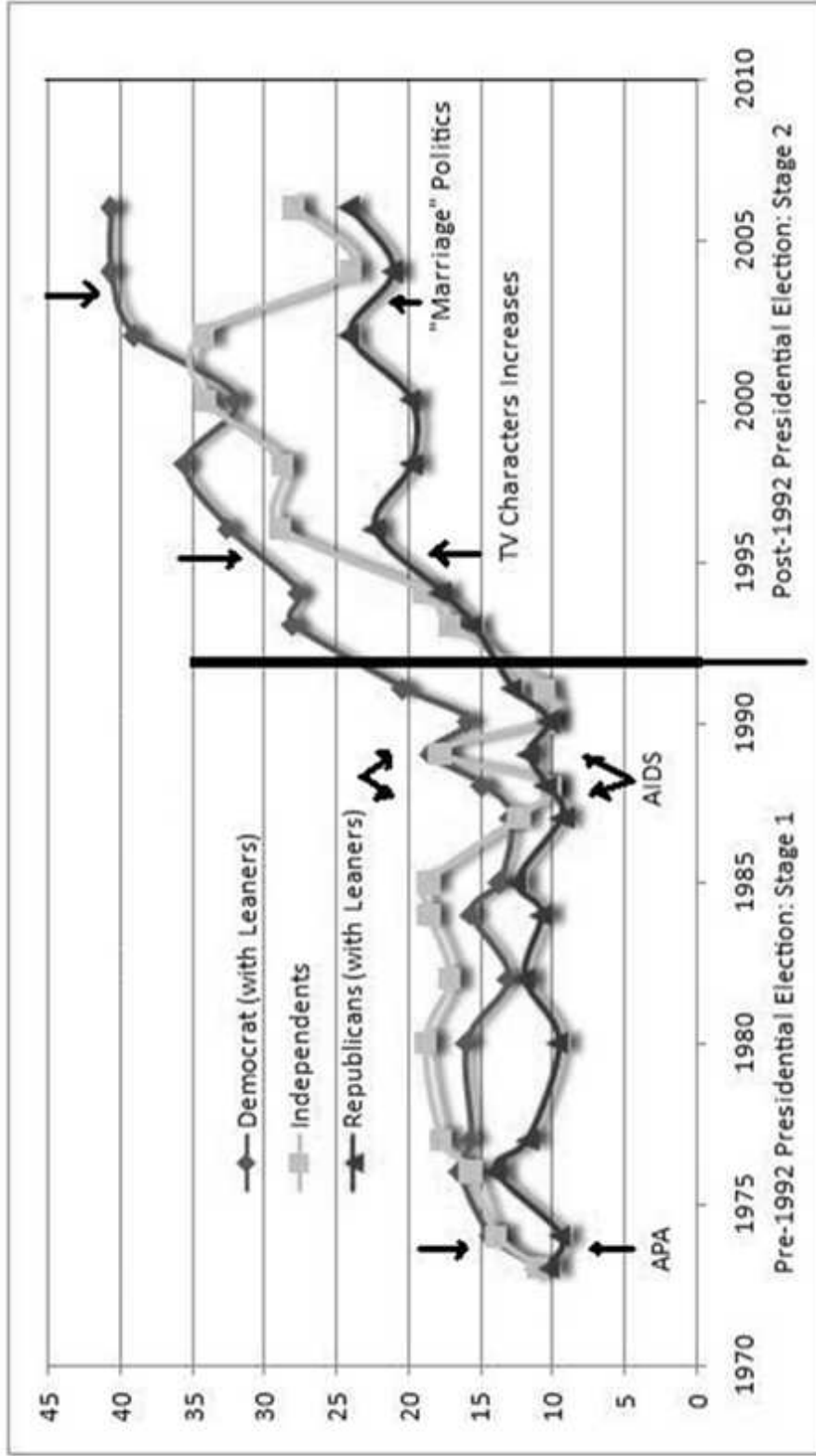


Figure 5-2: Partisan Change on Attitude Towards Same-Sex Relations
GSS - "Not Wrong at All"

While independents appear quite responsive to non-political events---AIDS, gay marriage politics, and television characters, Democrats appear to be very responsive to the 1992 campaign, at least in the aggregate. Democrats also tend to increase their support throughout the rest of the 1990s including in response to the rise in television characters after 1995. Republicans, however, have a lower level of support across the entire time-series. The difference between the parties' aggregate opinions expands after 1992 when the Democrats at the elite level to liberalized as predicted.

The Individual Level Analysis

Having looked at the data aggregated by party, I now turn to an individual-level analysis using a multi-level logistic regression clustered by the survey year. I use a multi-level model for two reasons: 1) Different survey years may have varying effects for some of the independent variables; 2) some of my independent variables take on constant values for every individual case in a given year. For instance, the number of lesbian and gay television characters in 1996 is 13. All respondents surveyed in 1996 therefore have the same value for the variable measuring lesbian and gay television characters. A multi-level model is appropriate when some of the dependent variables are clustered and constant in this way over time or space for segments of the data. The model allows variables to have different effects in different time periods if an exploratory analysis or theory specifies the effects should be changing over time. On preliminary analysis, none of the variables showed much evidence of varying drastically over time. That being the case and in pursuit of parsimony only the intercept of the model was allowed to vary by year for the results presented below.

My aggregate independent variables for the upper (time-series) level of the model are the number of major lesbian and gay television characters in each year and the number of lesbian and gay related television news stories for each year measured by searching the Vanderbilt Television News Archive. Party identity is measured on the traditional seven-point scale running from zero to six, with zero being a strong Democrat and six being a strong Republican. I also included a measure of self reported political ideology on a five point scale running from 1 to 5, and measures of approval and disapproval of pre-marital sex and extramarital sex constructed on a scale running from 1 to 4 in a similar fashion from questions on the GSS. A 4 indicates that the respondent strongly disagrees with premarital and extramarital sex while a 1 indicates there is nothing wrong at all with these activities. The region of the country the respondent lives in and the birth cohort by year were measured by several dummy variables which take the value of 1 if a respondent lives in that region or was born in that cohort and 0 otherwise. Variables measuring the oldest cohort, those born before 1926, as well as those living in New England, were excluded from the model for identification purposes. Independent variables measuring if a respondent was black, another race other than white or black, female, catholic, a liberal or moderate protestant, a fundamentalist protestant, Jewish, or if the respondent indicated a belief that the Bible was the word of God were added to the model, as were scale variables measuring self-reported church attendance, and the number of years of formal education.

The GSS also includes a variable asking the respondent to indicate how many hours of television they watch per day. Because respondents are likely to misreport television usage, I created a dummy variable equaling one for respondents that report

watching more than six hours of television per day and zero otherwise. I choose six chosen because A.C. Nielsen reports that the average television in the U.S. is on six hours per day, and respondents who report above average usage of television are probably less likely to be underreporting their usage for social acceptability reasons as compared to someone who reports less than the U.S. mean. I interacted this variable with the aggregate number of major lesbian and gay television characters on the three major channels in each year and the aggregate number of television news stories and included both interactions in the model, along with the un-interacted dummy variable. Again my dependent variable equals one is a respondent believes that same-sex relations are always wrong and zero otherwise.

My expectations are that identifying with the Democratic Party or as a liberal will be associated with greater probability of support for same-sex relations, especially after the increase in lesbian and gay television characters. I expect that television news will have an effect on partisans, but not on Independents because television news reflects the communication of the partisan dimension of lesbian and gay issues to the public. I expect that younger cohorts will be more supportive of same-sex relations due to the lack of previous information prior to elite liberalization conflicting with signals from medical, political, and media elites signaling support of same-sex relations over the time period, especially those born after 1970 and came of age after the early part of the AIDS crises. Finally, I expect that those who consume more media in times when more pro-gay signals are being broadcast to liberalize in regards to gay rights. Although my expectations of the effects stated above are characterized regarding a direct effect of each variable, I also expect that only interactions between these variables, and not direct effects, may be

significant. As an example, media effects may only be present in Democrats, or cohort effects may only be present in those who consume high levels of television. Therefore, any analysis should proceed with caution. This is because a specific political identity, or signals from elites with political identities that correspond to the identity of the respondent may predispose individuals to accept information from other sources later on.

Even with this impressive list of explanatory variables, missing regressors could still be an issue. Although the GSS has a robust battery of demographic variables and a large number of survey years, it lacks two key variables necessary to assess competing explanations for opinion liberalization. The GSS does not ask if respondents know a lesbian or gay male or if the respondent thinks that homosexuals cannot change their orientation or if people are born gay. Both of these variables have changed massively in aggregate over the 1990s. In August of 1985, a *Newsweek* poll found that only 22% of respondents reported having a friend or close acquaintance that are gay or lesbian. In 2000, *Newsweek* found that percentage had risen to 56%. Similarly, a Gallup poll taken in June of 1982 found that only 17% of respondents thought that people were born gay, while in May 2001 Gallup found that 41% reported that belief. Since these questions have a large positive shift in aggregate over the time period under consideration and previous research has found that both have a large effect on public opinion (Lewis 2007; Haider-Markel and Joslyn 2008) controlling for them in a study of public opinion at the individual level will go a long way in confirming the period effects of political elites and media exposure.

To assess the effects of knowing a lesbian or gay male and attitudes towards the immutability of homosexuality, I constructed a second data set by pooling 9 surveys

taken over two decades that ask respondents if they know a gay person, if they think people are born gay or cannot change their orientation, and if they support either job protections for gays or lesbians or allowing gays serving openly in the military. These nine surveys were taken in 5 years: 1983, 1985, 1993, 1998, and 2000. All the surveys also asked some basic demographic categories: education, sex, race, age, and if the respondent identifies as a Democrat, Republican or independent. One survey in 1998 reported age on an ordinal scale, and this variable was transformed so that each category was recoded so as to lie at the medium of the range of that category. For instance, if a respondent was coded as having an age between 25 and 34, the respondent was coded as having an age of 30.5. Respondents over the age of sixty-five were coded as having an age of 71. Appendix I reprints the question wording in these surveys and how each variables was coded.

For surveys not asking support for job protections for lesbians and gays, support for gays in the military was used as the dependent variable and a dummy variable was added in order to allow for a shift in the intercept since this question has lower support over time as compared to support for job protections. Since I showed in Chapter 1 that an underlying factor uniting gay rights attitudes exists, this is not problematic. All years that contained a gays-in-the-military question also contained a job protections question, meaning period effects can easily be separated from question wording effects.

The same multilevel analysis for the GSS data set was performed by clustering samples by survey and including the aggregate television characters and television news measures as variables. Reproducing the analysis below without questions that use gays-in-the-military as the dependent variable does not change the results substantively. The

results presented below allow only the intercept to vary by year. Figure 5-7 displays results allowing all coefficients to vary by year for this model. The results presented in it are briefly summarized below.

Results and Discussion

The 1st column of numbers in Table 5-1 displays the results for the combined multi-level model analyzing the GSS. Party behaves as expected; identification with the Democratic Party is associated with a greater probability of support for same-sex relations. More recent cohorts provide greater support. The number of gay television characters appears to have a large direct effect. Its interaction and marginal effect given high TV usage are significant at the .95 level for a one-tailed test. The effect is about one and a half times greater for high usage than low usage. High television usage has no statistically significant effect absent the number of lesbian and gay television characters on television. Television news and its interaction with TV usage appear to have no discernable effect. Other variables, including those tapping religious identity, race, gender, views regarding sex and the Bible, and region all behave as predicted by previous research (Loftus 2001). Women are more likely to support same-sex relations as are those with more liberal views regarding sex. Those who attend church more, are non-white, lack education, are born in rural areas, are fundamentalist Protestants, or believe that the Bible is the word of God are less likely to support same-sex relations. Jews are more likely to support same-sex relations. Being Catholic or a moderate or liberal Protestant seems to have no effect independent of other attitudinal variables or church attendance.

Table 5-1: Multi-Level Logistic Regression for All Respondents and Democrats (Dependent Variable = Same-Sex Relations "Always Wrong")						
	All Respondents			Democrats Only		
	Est.	S.E		Est.	S.E	
constant	4.32487	0.29768	***	4.79509	0.49982	***
Church Attendance	0.11551	0.01134	***	0.09664	0.01896	***
Party ID	0.05251	0.01485	***	N/A	N/A	
Ideology	0.24217	0.02148	***	0.25536	0.03535	***
Black	0.48789	0.08917	***	0.54871	0.12386	***
Catholic	0.00034	0.06737		0.02193	0.11545	
Jewish	-0.82365	0.2014	***	-1.06883	0.29657	***
Bible = Word of God	0.83381	0.07802	***	0.93496	0.12509	***
Other Race	0.3863	0.14536	**	0.07636	0.23205	
Birth Place	-0.26366	0.05454	***	-0.38362	0.09279	***
Education	-0.16432	0.01059	***	-0.15726	0.01727	***
Liberal/Moderate Protestant	-0.08409	0.15302		-0.32138	0.27979	
Fundamentalist Protestant	0.33023	0.15865	*	0.04685	0.28595	
Premarital Sex	-0.34387	0.02003	***	-0.35754	0.03291	***
Extramarital Sex	-0.44879	0.03064	***	-0.59466	0.0547	***
Cohort 1926-1935	-0.22031	0.10483	*	-0.19087	0.16275	
Cohort 1936-1945	-0.30902	0.09747	**	-0.3568	0.15322	*
Cohort 1946-1955	-0.43575	0.08912	***	-0.41214	0.14406	**
Cohort 1956-1960	-0.41347	0.10232	***	-0.25897	0.17097	
Cohort 1961-1965	-0.59234	0.11373	***	-0.49085	0.19976	*
Cohort 1966-1970	-0.56117	0.12773	***	-0.71212	0.21811	**
Cohort post-1971	-0.8939	0.14109	***	-0.98915	0.26856	***
Female	-0.55272	0.05438	***	-0.66297	0.09334	***
Hours of TV > 6	0.361	0.33538		0.69892	0.52061	
Gay TV Characters	-0.07198	0.00945	***	-0.079	0.01186	***

Table 5.1 (cont.)

Gay TV News Stories	-0.00778	<i>0.00399</i>	@	-0.00747	<i>0.0051</i>	
Middle Atlantic	0.23451	<i>0.1295</i>	@	0.59564	<i>0.24089</i>	*
East North Central	0.34185	<i>0.12719</i>	**	0.49822	<i>0.23784</i>	*
West North Central	0.50461	<i>0.14739</i>	***	0.65384	<i>0.27045</i>	*
South Atlantic	0.49046	<i>0.13129</i>	***	0.78939	<i>0.24439</i>	***
East South Central	1.04844	<i>0.17283</i>	***	1.42339	<i>0.31234</i>	***
West South Central	0.62739	<i>0.14796</i>	***	0.90649	<i>0.27122</i>	***
Mountain	0.2999	<i>0.15578</i>	@	0.50709	<i>0.28698</i>	@
Pacific	0.15477	<i>0.13246</i>		0.39791	<i>0.24582</i>	
(Hours of TV > 6)X Gay TV Characters	-0.04389	<i>0.02618</i>	@	-0.07727	<i>0.03964</i>	@
(Hours of TV > 6)X Gay TV News Stories	-0.01735	<i>0.01353</i>		-0.02506	<i>0.02188</i>	
σ (Year)	0.08942			0.00002		
AIC	9055.5			3322.5		
DIC	8981.5			3250.5		
N(Individuals)	9642			3793		

Since the cumulative GSS has a very large sample size (nearly ten thousand for the preceding analysis) and interactions between party identity and other variables are likely, I split the file by political party and re-estimated the model independently for different party groups.

The second column of results in Table 5-1 displays the result for Democrats, while Table 5-2 displays the results for Independents and Republicans. Region appears

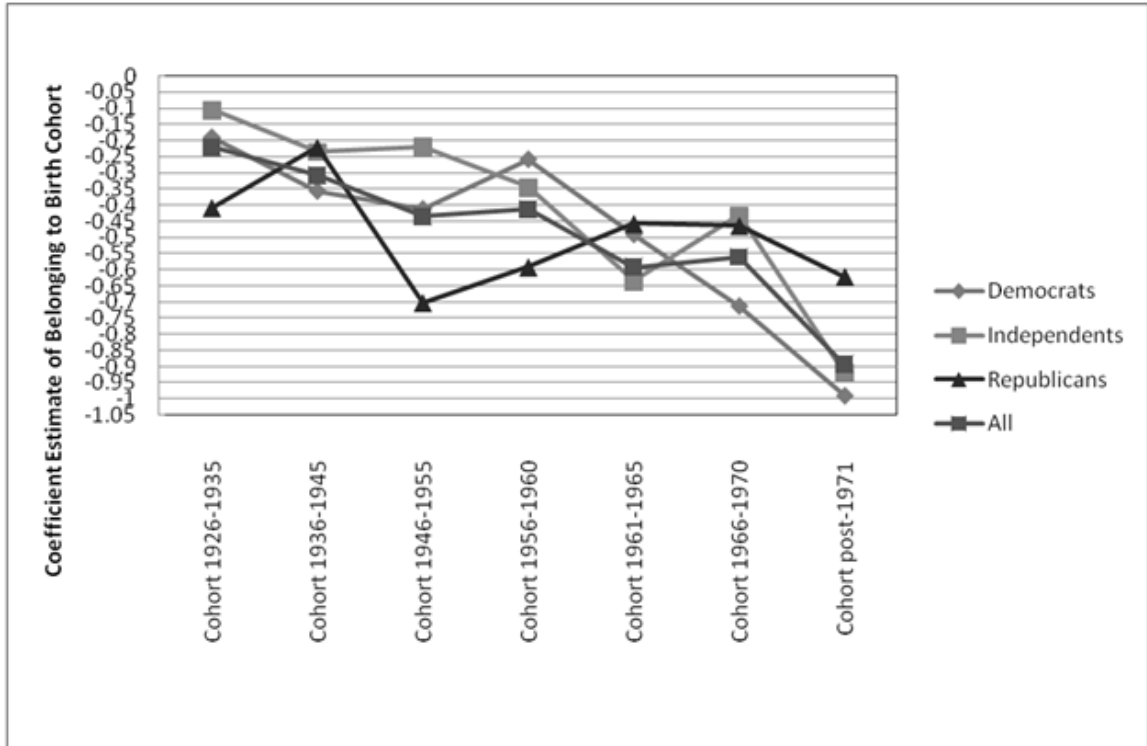


Figure 5-3: Cohort Effects on Attitudes towards Same-Sex Relations

to be a more important predictor for members of a political party, especially for those living in the South. Those in the South are less likely to support same-sex relations. Being born in a rural area seems to have the greatest effect for Democrats and no statistical effect for Republicans with Independents falling between the two. Differences in the estimates of the effects for race and being Jewish by party are likely due to a small number of respondents for those categories in the GSS within certain partisan groups.

Figure 5-3 plots the coefficient estimates for the cohort effects for all four models (all respondents plus the three partisan groupings). All 4 models display cohort effects, but a clear linear effect of age and birth year is more pronounced for the Democrats and Independents. With the exception of the 1946-1955 birth cohort for the Democrats and the 1961-1965 birth cohort for the independents, age seems to act in a linear fashion.

Table 5-2: Multi-Level Logistic Regression for Republicans and Independents (Dependent Variable = Same-Sex Relations "Always Wrong")						
	Independents Only			Republicans Only		
	Est.	S.E		Est.	S.E	
Constant	4.40361	0.46758	***	4.17015	0.63616	***
Church Attendance	0.13735	0.01892	***	0.10846	0.02247	***
Party ID	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	
Ideology	0.26456	0.03552	***	0.20082	0.04371	***
Black	0.4721	0.15261	**	-0.07597	0.30162	
Catholic	-0.15756	0.10935		0.20012	0.13389	
Jewish	-0.47854	0.35717		-0.73564	0.45627	
Bible = Word of God	0.72807	0.1275	***	0.95543	0.16228	***
Other Race	0.59761	0.22071	**	0.86462	0.39051	*
Birth Place	-0.2107	0.08881	*	-0.14178	0.10786	
Education	-0.19275	0.01773	***	-0.14168	0.022	***
Liberal/Moderate Protestant	-0.06813	0.2185		0.06155	0.35267	
Fundamentalist Protestant	0.32421	0.23147		0.52168	0.36157	
Premarital Sex	-0.33539	0.03361	***	-0.3441	0.03939	***
Extramarital Sex	-0.3441	0.04524	***	-0.40931	0.06461	***
Cohort 1926-1935	-0.10505	0.19355		-0.40805	0.1996	*
Cohort 1936-1945	-0.23452	0.17476		-0.22111	0.19391	
Cohort 1946-1955	-0.2193	0.1568		-0.70179	0.17711	***
Cohort 1956-1960	-0.34518	0.17524	*	-0.59141	0.19897	**
Cohort 1961-1965	-0.63507	0.19064	***	-0.45715	0.21856	*
Cohort 1966-1970	-0.43155	0.21514	*	-0.46372	0.24581	@
Cohort post-1971	-0.91934	0.22314	***	-0.62054	0.28369	*
Female	-0.49261	0.08754	***	-0.5423	0.10894	***
Hours of TV > 6	0.91991	0.61523		-0.75105	0.70552	
Gay TV Characters	-0.06281	0.01251	***	-0.06972	0.0161	***

Table 5.2 (cont.)

Gay TV News Stories	-0.00626	<i>0.00561</i>		-0.01137	<i>0.00667</i>	@
Middle Atlantic	-0.06008	<i>0.18582</i>		0.27857	<i>0.29616</i>	
East North Central	0.21683	<i>0.1788</i>		0.41886	<i>0.29344</i>	
West North Central	0.38872	<i>0.21472</i>	@	0.6453	<i>0.32694</i>	*
South Atlantic	0.07011	<i>0.18982</i>		0.78871	<i>0.29919</i>	**
East South Central	0.58264	<i>0.25935</i>	*	1.36022	<i>0.3815</i>	***
West South Central	0.24731	<i>0.2143</i>		0.92395	<i>0.33461</i>	**
Mountain	0.03334	<i>0.22669</i>		0.54558	<i>0.34264</i>	
Pacific	-0.1497	<i>0.19393</i>		0.36429	<i>0.30022</i>	
(Hours of TV > 6)X Gay TV Characters	-0.03348	<i>0.04248</i>		-0.02952	<i>0.06746</i>	
(Hours of TV > 6)X Gay TV News Stories	-0.04769	<i>0.02558</i>	@	0.0243	<i>0.02505</i>	
σ (Year)	0.07614			0.12394		
AIC	3411.5			2377.8		
DIC	3339.5			2305.8		
N	3283			2566		

Earlier cohorts all appear to be less supportive of gay rights than more recent cohorts. For the Republicans, however, age seems to have more of a binary effect. Those born after 1946 are more liberal than those born before that year irrespective of actual age.

The most interesting variation in effects involves the media-related variables. The number of television characters has a strong direct effect unrelated to television usage for all three categories, but the differential effect of the number of lesbian and gay

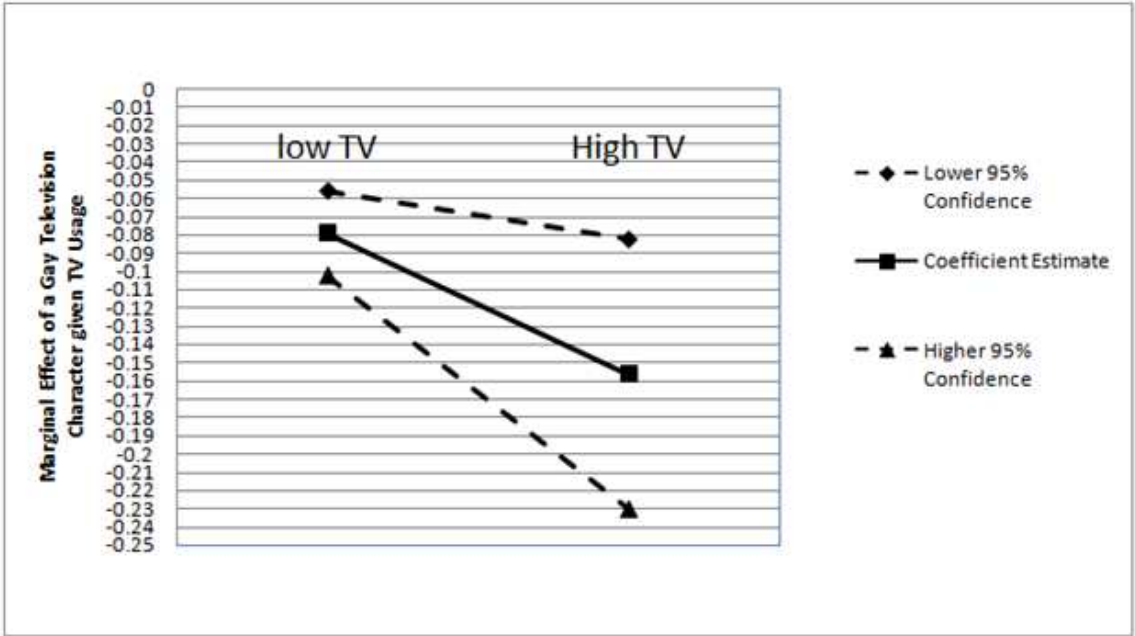


Figure 5-4: The Marginal Effect of an Additional Lesbian or Gay Television Character on Same-Sex Relation Attitudes Given TV Consumption

television character is only significant for Democrats. The results for the interaction are displayed in Figure 5-4 for the model with Democrats only. The differential effect between low TV usage and high TV usage is significant at the 95% confidence level for a 2-tailed test. The magnitude of lesbian and gay characters is nearly double that for high TV versus low TV. Since the main effect is an aggregate time series variable, its effect may be spurious---other specific factors that changed over time unrelated with television character, yet correlated with television characters and un-modeled here, may be responsible for the effect. However, since the marginal effect is greater for those who consume more television and we have controlled for the effect of TV news, we can be reasonably confident that more television characters are having a liberalizing effect for Democrats since the interaction is itself an individual level variable. Moreover, there is no direct effect of high TV usage. Independents also show some mixed evidence of a

significant effect for TV news stories when this television usage is high. (The marginal effect is non-zero statistically, but not statistically different from the estimated effect of -.006 for TV news stories for those with low TV usage.)

The results presented above suggest that Democrats were more likely to adopt favorable attitudes towards same-sex relations when the number of gay and lesbian television characters increased. The most likely scenario is that the polarization of the Democrats and Republicans over the 1980s and 1990s, the 1992 presidential campaign, including Bill Clinton's generally pro-gay positions, the Republican Party's denunciations of lesbians and gays at their convention in 1992, and the gays-in-the-military debate that took place after, made Democrats receptive to opinion change when the increase in the number of lesbian and gay television characters in the mid and late 1990s occurred. Without the support of Democratic Party elites for same-sex relations in the early 1990s, elites with a shared political identity as a large segment of the public, the rise in lesbian and gay characters would have likely had a diminished effect (or not have happened at all).

The results for the second data set confirm the period effects of the television news and lesbian and gay television characters controlling for attitudes involving whether homosexuals can change their orientations or are born gay and interpersonal contact with gays and lesbians. The 1st column in Table 5-3 contains the estimated model for all respondents. The 2nd column in Table 5-3 contains the estimates for all Democratic respondents and Table 5-4 contains the estimated models for independents and Republicans. Because attitudes involving the biological innateness of homosexuality and contact with lesbians and gays likely vary by age, higher order terms for birth year were

Table 5-3: Multi-Level Logistic Regression for All Respondent and Democrats Only Controlling for Knowing Lesbians and Gay and Attribution of Homosexuality over Time (Dependent Variable = Support Job Protections for Gays or Support for Gays in the Military)						
	All Respondents			Democrats Only		
	Param. Est.	S.E		Param. Est.	S.E	
Constant	-5.664	2.379	***	-13.206	4.110	***
Knowing a Gay or Lesbian	0.549	0.049	***	0.668	0.085	***
Born Gay or Cannot Change Orientation	1.009	0.053	***	1.028	.092	***
Birth Year (starting at 1850)	0.153	0.080	@	0.405	0.139	**
Birth Year^2	-0.0018	0.0009	*	-0.004	0.001	***
Birth Year^3	0.000007	0.000004	*	0.00015	0.00005	**
Education	0.425	0.070	***	0.811	0.120	***
Lesbian or Gay Television Characters	0.066	0.007	***	0.068	0.011	***
Lesbian or Gay related Television News	0.013	0.002	***	0.012	0.003	***
Female	0.253	0.045	***	0.173	0.078	*
Black	0.015	0.071		0.172	0.092	@
Dependent Variable = Gays in the Military Question	-1.374	0.065	***	-1.067	0.012	***
Independent	0.285	.055	***			
Democrat	0.627	.059	***			
σ (Year)	0.035			0.058		
AIC	11927.7			4070.6		
DIC	11897.7			4044.6		
Log Likelihood	-5949			-2022		
N(respondents)	10807			3920		

included. The square and cube of birth year were significant for the model including all respondents and the model including Democrats only as well. The cube of birth year allows the slope of the relationship between policy attitudes on lesbian and gay rights and birth year to take on a zero value for a specific year. This means the cohort effect can be

Table 5-4: Multi-Level Logistic Regression for Republicans and Independents Only Controlling for Knowing Lesbians and Gay and Attribution of Homosexuality over Time (Dependent Variable = Support Job Protections for Gays or Support for Gays in the Military)						
	Republicans Only			Independents Only		
	Param. Est.	<i>S.E</i>		Param. Est.	<i>S.E</i>	
Constant	2.347	4.317		-2.194	4.190	
Knowing a Gay or Lesbian	0.450	0.090	***	0.519	0.080	***
Born Gay or Cannot Change Orientation	0.902	0.097	***	1.088	.088	***
Birth Year (starting at 1850)	-0.088	0.144		0.057	0.138	
Birth Year^2	0.0007	0.0015		-0.0008	0.0014	
Birth Year^3	-0.000001	0.00006		0.000004	0.000005	
Education	0.059	0.133		0.328	0.117	**
Lesbian or Gay Television Characters	0.065	0.013	***	0.066	0.012	***
Lesbian or Gay related Television News	0.011	0.004	**	0.016	0.004	***
Female	0.373	0.083	***	0.199	0.075	**
Black	0.076	0.227		-0.280	0.135	*
Dependent Variable = Gays in the Military Question	-1.675	0.119	***	-1.419	0.106	***
σ (Year)	0.067			0.058		
AIC	3453.4			4374.5		
DIC	3427.4			4348.5		
Log Likelihood	-1714			-2174		
N(respondents)	2907			3980		

non-existent in the model for a given age group, say those born in the 1940s through 1960s, but still have an effect for those older than that group and younger than that group. These higher order terms were not significant for the sample of Republicans and independents and are only included for comparison with the models in Table 5-3.

Removing the higher order terms restores the statistical significance of the linear term for Republicans and independents.

Knowing a lesbian or gay person and beliefs about being born gay or changing orientation both have an expected large impact on attitudes towards gays-in-the-military and job protections for gays. The impact of knowing a gay person is roughly half that of biological attribution in terms of coefficient size. Despite the large impact of these two variables, the contemporaneous impact of aggregate television news and television characters survives. Figure 5-5 provides a graphical interpretation of the model, using its systematic components. It plots the predicted probability of support for gay job protections for all respondents that answered that question for the five time periods for which surveys exist. Between 1985 and 1993 there is a sharp rise in the predicted probability for all respondents due to the impact of additional news media coverage of gays. After the media coverage dropped off in 1994, it was replaced by the rise in lesbian and gay television characters in 1995. These period effects raise the estimated probability of all respondents starting in 1993 and continuing through 2000 as illustrated in Figure 5-5. The effects of age also appear to be less linear than previous studies due to the introduction of the additional control variables. The eldest respondents appear to be less pro-gay in 1983 and 1985, but for the bulk of respondents in these time periods, age has no impact. In the 1990s, however, respondents born after 1960 appear to be increasingly more pro-gay with birth year. Nearly all of these individuals would have memories only after the demedicalization of homosexuality by the American Psychiatric Association in the early 1970s.

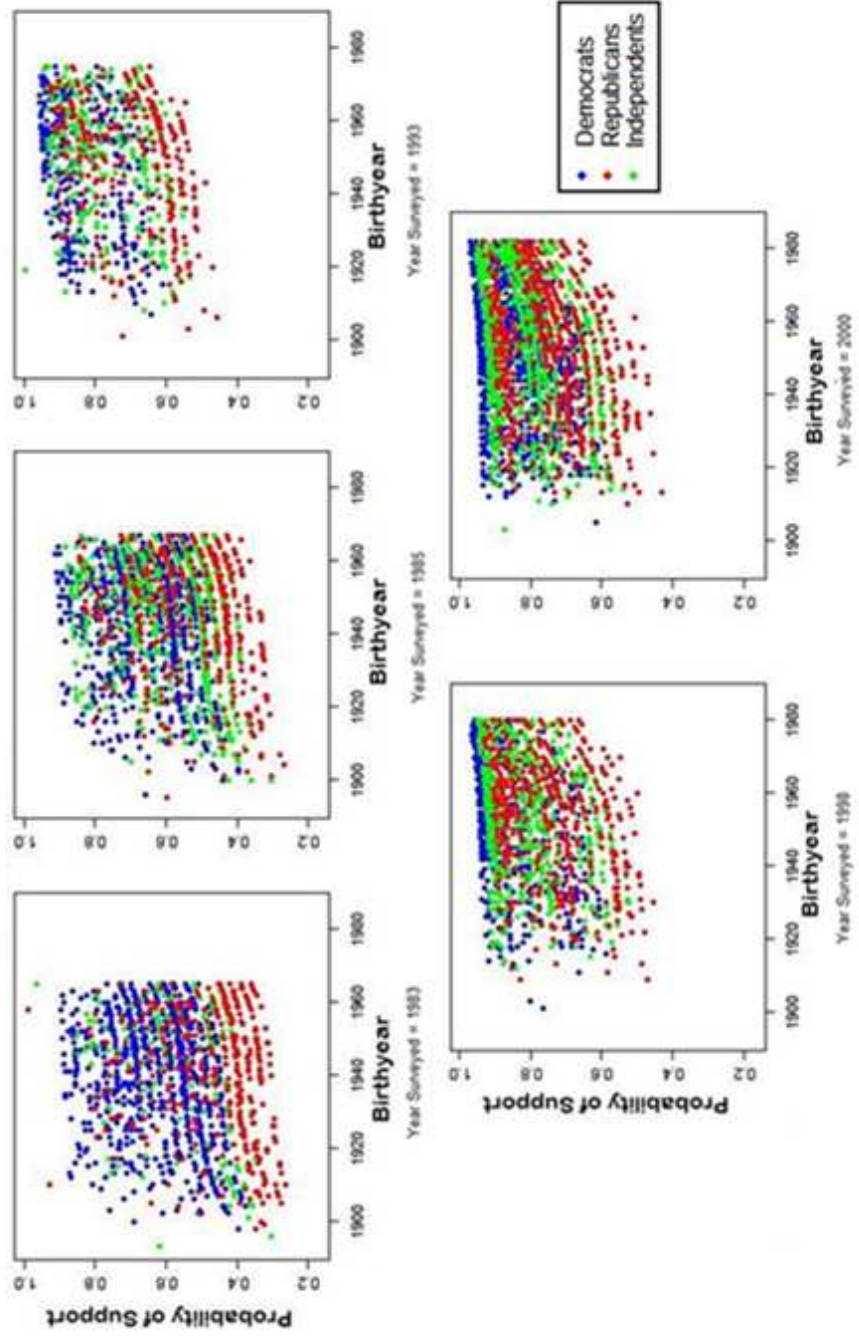


Figure 5-5: Estimated Probability of Support for Lesbian and Gay Job Protections by Period, Birthyear, and Party

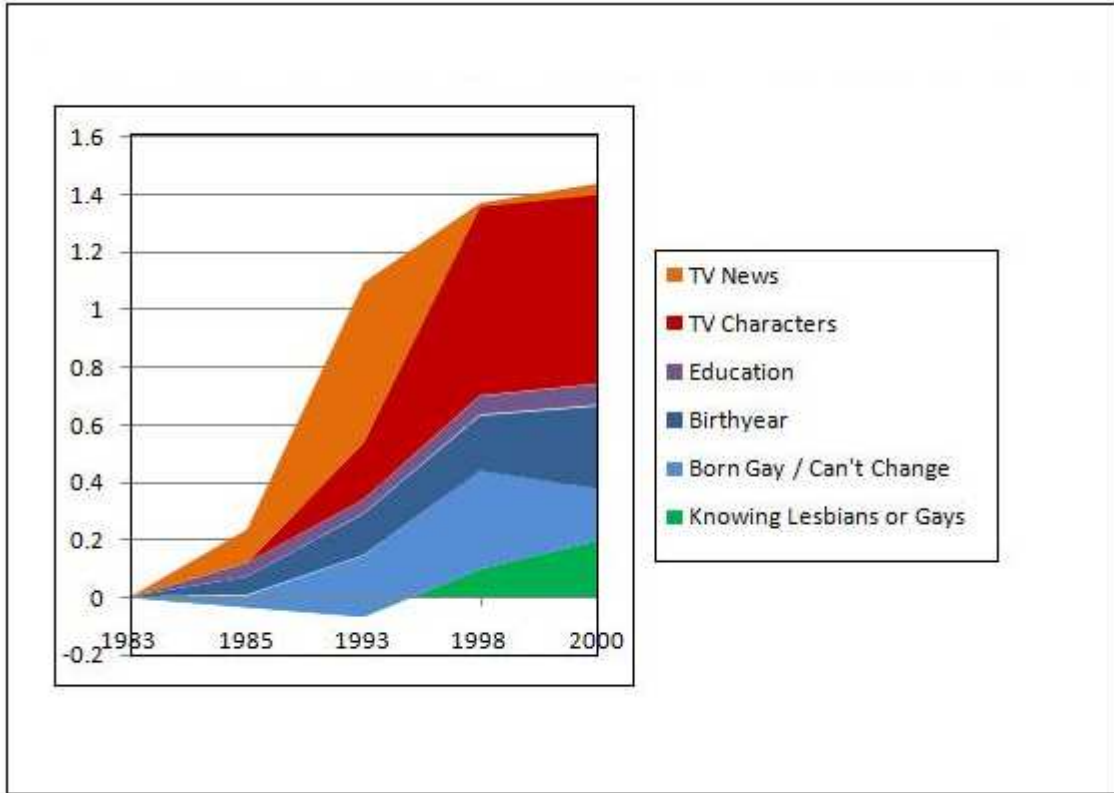


Figure 5-6: The Estimated Proportion of Public Opinion Change Due to Changes in Television, Demographics, Contact with Lesbians and Gays, and the Biological Attribution of Homosexuality

Figure 5-6 displays the impact of the media in a slightly different way. It plots the change in each variable in aggregate using 1983 as a baseline multiplied times the estimated coefficient in the 1st model of Table 5-3. As these variables change in aggregate, they all impact the aggregated propensity of support for gay job protections and gays-in-the-military summated over individuals over time. By weighting the aggregate change of each independent variable by the coefficient estimate, we obtain a rough measure of the relative change due to each over time. The period effects of the media dominate demographic shifts, changes in interpersonal contact, and changes in

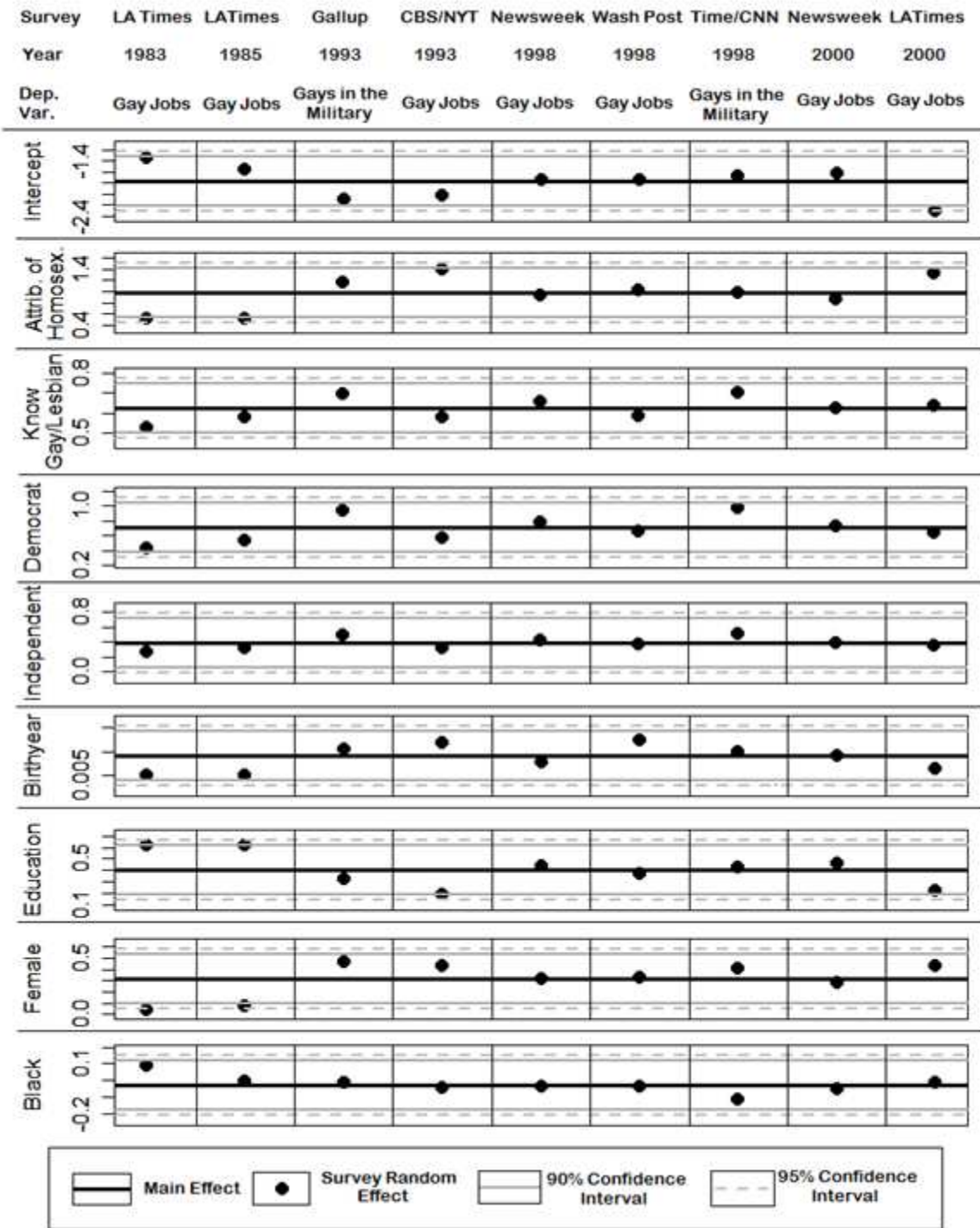


Figure 5-7. Random Effects for Second Multilevel Model of Policy Attitudes towards Lesbians and Gay

biological attribution. Roughly one half of the change through 2000 is due to period media effects, one fourth due to demographic shifts in education and age, one-eighth due to the rise in interpersonal contact, and one-eighth due to changes in biological attribution attitudes.

Other variables behave as expected in the model. Being African-American appears to make Democrats slightly more supportive of gay rights, but slightly less supportive for independents. Education appears to have less of an impact for Republicans.

Figure 5-7 shows the random effects for an additional multilevel model that allows the effect of each individual-level variable to take a different value based on the magnitude of the effect in that specific survey. The effect of a biological attribution appears to become a more powerful predictor of gay rights in the 1990s. This is when research implying a biological cause of homosexuality was reported on. The effect of education becomes less predictive of gay rights support at this time also. Highly educated individuals likely learned the biological attribution causing a decline in the impact of education. Interestingly, gender appears to be more predictive of gay rights in the 1990s than the 1980s signaling a potential interaction between gender and period effects that can be explored in future research. Except for the surveys taken during the 1980s, few other systematic and significant deviations from the effects of the aggregated surveys appear. Party appears to be a much less powerful in the 1980s, but not statistically so. It is likely the party effect is non-zero because of Democrats' greater support for job protections across time unrelated to sexual orientation.

These results should be taken cautiously, however. Future research should try to more accurately measure television usage of individuals. Reporting error in this measure may be the reason why the interactive effects are not present for Independents or Republicans. Still, that the effect is present for Democrats implies the measure is at least valid in some circumstances and that media effects are present in public opinion toward same-sex relations in the GSS. These results are confirmed by the second data set. Searching for interactive effects between age and media variables, or by disaggregating the GSS or other surveys should yield fruit in the future.

Still potential problems lurk in this analysis. In order to determine a media effect, I used aggregate level data and exploited the fact that characters and news stories vary over time. Individuals in time periods with high numbers of lesbian and gay characters and news stories are compared with those in periods with a small number. This creates a problem. Anything trending in a similar way could be responsible for the effect. Although I created a second dataset specifically to control for known factors that trend in this fashion, contact with lesbians and gays and the biological attribution of homosexuality, something else unknown or a complex interaction between factors may actually be responsible for the effect. Data from the 1980s and 1990s that ask specifically if respondents have encountered a lesbian and gay on television do not exist, and if they did respondents who answer no may have actually encountered characters but forgotten, leaving subliminal effects.

Also of equal importance is verifying the order of causation between media representation and public opinion. Although I have argued that media causes attitude change, liberalizing attitudes towards gays might be responsible for more lesbian and gay

television characters. In order to solve this problem, in the next chapter I will verify the results not by using observational data, but by using an experimental design complete with an individual dose of media contact with a lesbian and gay individual.

Conclusion

Based on the models presented of public opinion change presented in this chapter, it appears that two major changes responsible for shifts in public opinion towards gays and lesbians are the support of Democratic Party elites, chief among them President Bill Clinton in 1992, which clarified the party's position to mass partisans, and a shift in the entertainment industry that resulted in a major increase in the number of lesbian and gay portrayals on television and other media in the mid-1990s. These two events both affected public opinion in a positive fashion starting in the mid-1990s and continuing to today in America's liberalization of attitudes toward homosexuality. These events did not occur in isolation, but occurred due to the hard work and diligence of gays and lesbians in gaining acceptance and the groundwork that was laid decades prior by activists courting and persuading political and entertainment elites to come out in favor of gays and lesbians and their rights.

Television need not only be a negative in regards to civic life. Often in the academic literature it is portrayed as evil. It saps social capital and reduces civic participation and interest in politics among the citizenry (Putnam 2000). But sometimes contact with individuals through television can erase the space between citizens and show people new worlds and lives, displace negative stereotypes, and bring people together across social categories.

CHAPTER VI

THE EFFECT OF MEDIA CONTACT WITH LESBIANS AND GAY: AN EXPERIMENTAL CONFIRMATION

Although the last chapter used survey data to show that the increase in television portrayals of gays and lesbians is a major cause of the attitude liberalization towards lesbians and gays that took place in the 1990s, alternative explanations remain. The greatest concern is that of causation. Because the rise in television characters occurred at the same time as attitude liberalization, this rise could be caused by changing public sentiments and not the reverse as I have argued. In addition, I showed that the aggregate liberalization in public opinion started among most of the public when the number of lesbian and gay characters on television increased in 1995 and in 1996, and among Democrats when Clinton took a pro-gay position even before that. However, I did not show that individuals who saw lesbians and gays in the media liberalized after viewing them *directly*.

In this chapter, I use an experimental design to confirm that individuals liberalize their attitudes when they view a representation of a lesbian or gay individual and not the other way around. Furthermore, I show that the context in which the lesbian or gay individual appears can also matter. When lesbians and gays appear on TV with well liked politicians, it causes attitudes to liberalize. When they appear in a context with politicians who are not respected and not well liked, little attitude change occurs. This is similar to what happened in 1992, when lesbians and gays became associated with Bill

Clinton and Democrats who liked Clinton because of his party became more supportive of lesbians and gays.

Observational vs. Experimental Designs

Most research into public opinion uses observational data such the NES, GSS, and media-based surveys, such as those discussed in Chapters 1 and 5. The social sciences, due to an inability to conduct large-scale controlled experiments, have been forced to test their hypotheses using mostly observational data. For example, one cannot create a parallel United States where the rise in lesbian and gay characters in 1995 and 1996 or the pro-gay campaign of Bill Clinton in 1992 did not take place to act as a control condition even though this would scientifically determine if these factors actually caused the attitude shifts that took place after. This dependence on observational data, rather than experimental data, has led some individuals to denigrate the social sciences as non-scientific.

However, a heavy reliance on experimental data may not be as beneficial as some would suggest. The social sciences are not the natural sciences. Effects in the natural sciences can usually be tracked to handful of potential causes, such as when an electric field or gravitation causes a particle to move. A social science effect, like democratization or voting behavior, could have dozens or even hundreds of causes and these causes may be different for each individual. The causes themselves may interact and be contingent on other causes, creating a much more complicated scenario.

This difficulty is compounded by the problem of determining what is meant by some concepts that people take for granted as meaning the same thing to everyone, but in

reality are different for each person. What is freedom? What is tolerance? What is justice? These concepts are not as easy to define as physical phenomenon because they are constructed by people to describe their social situations and goals and not constructed by nature. Determining how these concepts can be measured directly and controlled for often rests on the philosophical predispositions of the social scientists involved.

The distinction between observational and experimental studies rests on the trade-off between external and internal validity. Observational studies are often highly externally valid, in that the situations studied in observational studies are very likely to reoccur in a similar fashion in the real world outside of the research study. For instance, in the last chapter, individuals surveyed were highly representative of the national public and had a diverse set of life experiences and demographics. In a highly controlled experiment, such as one in which a treatment group and a control group watch two identical television shows (with identical dialogue, plot, settings, and costumes) but one character is identified as lesbian or gay for a treatment group and as heterosexual for a control group, the external validity is much lower for several reasons. First, members of the public are likely to have a long term relationship with television characters outside of a controlled experiment. This is because individuals typically do not watch a single episode of a show but watch multiple episodes involving the characters over a number of years and develop a close psychological attachment with the characters. A long term study to capture such dynamics in an experimental setting would be expensive (and not very productive in terms of the usage of lab time). Portrayals of minorities on television also often use stereotypes. For instance, gay men are often portrayed as having a heightened fashion sense or as behaving effeminately on television. Prior to the 1990s,

lesbian and gay men were often also portrayed as psychologically unbalanced (Tropiano 2002). In an experimentally controlled study, stereotypes would have to be controlled by different experimental conditions in addition to the mere presence of a minority character to preserve internal validity at the cost of external validity. That way the effect of contact with a lesbian or gay or contact with the stereotype can be determined. Lastly, but crucially, experimental studies often rely on samples of individuals unrepresentative of the public. If the individuals sampled behave differently than those of the mass public, the external validity of the study is also called into question.

Although experiments have problems, they make up for their draw back in several ways. They contain excellent internal validity, meaning that they generally are able to prove or disprove the hypothesis made (even if that hypothesis has little bearing on the outside world due to low external validity). Randomization allows the stimulus or treatment in the experiment to be nearly uncorrelated with any confounding factors. An experiment with a randomized treatment of media exposure would probabilistically be uncorrelated with any variable left off of a survey and unable to be controlled using pre-existing survey data. Most importantly, causation can be directly assessed in an experiment.

To confirm the findings of previous chapter, that individuals brought into media contact with lesbians and gays liberalize their attitudes, I constructed an experiment that attempts to balance external and internal validity. Because several experiments have been conducted prior that have attempted to assess the impact of contact with gays and lesbians on public attitudes, I review their methods briefly before describing my treatment conditions and results.

Experimental Studies and Public Attitudes towards Lesbians and Gays

Because the number of individuals reporting contact with lesbians and gays and the number of portrayals of lesbians and gays in the media increased around the same time that public attitudes towards lesbians and gays liberalized, several studies have already been conducted using experimental or quasi-experimental designs in an attempt to assess causation. Several of these studies, however, contain severe methodological flaws that call their findings into question.

A review article by Tucker and Potocky-Tripoli (2006) analyzed seventeen such studies. The treatment condition in eleven of these was a workshop that addressed lesbian and gay issues and five contained contact with lesbian or gay identified individuals like a professor or a guest speaker. One used a description of a biological cause of homosexuality as a treatment. One involved a “non-stereotypical description of a lesbian couple”. One involved a problem solving activity involving lesbian and gay issues. All these studies involved convenience samples of students. Only four studies truly randomized between treatments and control conditions. Three of these also gave pretest measures of attitudes towards lesbians and gays, which may be problematic because they increase the likelihood of a consistent response between a pre- and post- test due to an individuals’ desire to give consistent responses and appear rational in front of the researcher (Zaller 1992). Also, the pre-test may tip off the subjects that the study is about attitudes involving homosexuality. Hence, if they see a lesbian or gay, they may determine that the researcher wants to see a liberalization of attitudes toward gays and the subjects may respond in kind on the posttest. Most of the studies had attrition problems

and did not report on the characteristics of the subjects that dropped out. The one study that used randomization without a pretest had no true control condition, varying only the level of stereotypical content involved. In fact, 6 of the 17 lacked any proper control groups. Not surprisingly, these studies all report a wide variety of positive and negative results, which is likely the result of problems with the research design.

An adequate experiment requires randomization, a true control condition, and a lack of attrition, among other factors. A few of the designs used media contact with lesbians and gays, particularly films. One of the studies mentioned above showed *The Times of Harvey Milk* as their treatment condition (Riggle, Ellis and Crawford 1996). This is an award winning biography on one of the first openly gay elected officials. One study, not described in the article above, used a showing of the film *Object of My Affection*, a gay-themed movie about nontraditional relationships, as a treatment condition. It also showed the film *Father of the Bride II* as a control condition (Mazur and Emmers-Sommer 2002). It is very difficult to think of the movie *Father of the Bride II* as an adequate control condition. The film may be reinforcing typical attitudes about gender roles which than impact attitudes toward homosexuality rather than actually having a neutral effect. This may be an alternative explanation for the study's positive findings, undermining the author's conclusion. The issue of an adequate control condition has to be taken seriously.

The Control and Treatment Conditions

My study improves on these issues in the following ways. Although I use a convenience sample of students, most of the other errors in previous studies are

corrected. I use an adequate control condition which is nearly identical to the treatment conditions, but one heterosexual-identified individual is replaced with a lesbian identified individual. The students are all randomized into various conditions. Unlike the experiments outlined above where the treatment assignment was based on membership in a class or discussion group, the treatment and post-test treatment in attitudes were assigned on entry to the lab based on a randomly generated number.

To test the media contact hypothesis, I created three separate treatment conditions and a control condition. To create a treatment with as much external validity as possible, each treatment was modeled after an interview that took place on the *Ellen DeGeneres Show*. Ellen DeGeneres is widely known as a lesbian in American popular culture. This dates back to the mid 1990s. Ellen starred in a sitcom (*These Friends of Mine*, nicknamed *Ellen*, and separate from the later *Ellen DeGeneres* talk show). She played a heterosexual character of the same name. As the show went on, it was revealed that Ellen DeGeneres, *the actress*, was in reality a lesbian. Shortly after this, *Ellen, the character*, was rewritten as a lesbian and “came out” as such on the sitcom. This caused a media firestorm and generated a vast amount of attention. Interestingly the show’s ratings declined after Ellen’s “coming out”, resulting in the shows cancellation. DeGeneres, the actress, subsequently became more public and outspoken about her sexuality and was later given a talk show, the current *Ellen DeGeneres Show*, where she interviews celebrities and occasionally politicians.

Ellen is ideal as a treatment condition for testing the media contact hypotheses. Her status as a lesbian is well known by the public, especially the college students in my sample. The subjects do not need to be told that she is a lesbian directly, which would tip

them off as the purpose of the study and undermine internal validity. All of the various interviews described in the treatment conditions below actually took place, increasing external validity. However, the written dialogue in all the conditions was changed so that it was nearly identical in all four conditions. Furthermore, Ellen, the actress, and Ellen, the sitcom character, are very similar and easy for the public to associate. Since Ellen, the character, was a lesbian television character in the 1990s, it increases external validity. Subjects may also have a long term relationship with Ellen as a celebrity figure, and these long term entertainment relationships may have been crucial to the attitude liberalization process.

I use three treatment conditions and all three along with the control are in Appendix II. The subjects are placed on a computer, and asked to take a survey. After answering several demographic and questions unrelated to lesbian and gay rights, the students are asked to read a paragraph stating that television can have a significant impact on politics and that on the next screen will appear a picture and written transcript of an interview that took place during the 2008 presidential election. The next screen displays either the treatment or control conditions. Each of these is a picture of an interview. The main treatment interview is a picture of Ellen interviewing Tom Brokaw, a non-partisan journalist, on her television show. The transcript below the picture involves a discussion of the nation's most important problem. Brokaw says it has to do with the economy. The second and third treatment interviews involve the same short dialogue, but the pictures and names are changed from Brokaw to either Ellen interviewing Democrat Barack Obama or Ellen interviewing Republican John McCain. By comparing them with the Brokaw condition, we can test for a stronger effect of attitude liberalization when Ellen is

interviewing the two partisan figures, and thus associated with, and tacitly endorsed by, a Democratic or Republican leader. The students only see one of the three interviews or the control condition. The transcript accompanying each treatment is identical and is always a discussion of the most important problem, except the name of the interviewee is changed to match the picture. After this screen, they are asked what the most important problem is in national politics. A roughly equal number of students saw the three conditions and the control. By testing for differences between the four groups of students, we can ascertain the effect of priming affect that Ellen in combination with the interview has on lesbian and gay rights attitudes in questions in the posttest.

As mentioned above, the control condition is particularly important for balancing internal validity and external validity. Here I use the same transcript as in my treatment conditions, but change the interviewer from Ellen DeGeneres to the heterosexual David Letterman. Letterman also interviews only Brokaw, and a picture from this interview was used as the control condition. This is not perfect for interval validity. The backdrops for the two shows are different, and thus there is slightly more difference between the control and treatment conditions than there would be in a perfect design. Also the genders of the two hosts are different in addition to their sexual orientations. But this control condition provides the best balance of internal and external validity. Editing the backdrops in the pictures would put them in a context that the subjects might find suspicious and undermine the results.

All conditions were followed by a question asking about the nation's most important problem. By adding the question, which involved the dialogue of the interviews and not gay rights, I hoped to decrease the likelihood of the subjects

discovering that the research hypotheses involved attitudes towards homosexuality as small as possible.

The measure of lesbian and gay rights support used here involves a five question battery asking about attitudes toward gay civil unions, gay marriage, gay adoption, employment protections for gays, and support for gays in the military. Each of these questions was then followed by a question asking individuals if they felt strongly or weakly about their position on that issue or only weakly supported it. These ten questions were used as a post test and combined in a scale of lesbian and gay rights support that ranges from 0 to 5, with five being the most supportive of gay rights. For instance a score of five means the subject was strongly supportive of gay rights in all five policy areas. A score of 0 means they were strongly against gay rights in each of the policy areas. An individual that was strongly in favor of gay rights in 4 of the 5, but weakly in favor in one policy area would have a score of 4 and 2/3. If they were weakly against in only one policy area, but strong supportive in the four 4, they would score 4 and 1/3 and so on. The actual question wordings are also in Appendix III. Also asked during the experiment was the ideological self-placement of the respondents as well their party identification and whom they voted for in the 2008 presidential election.

The Subjects and their Characteristics

Although using a convenience sample of students is non-ideal for studying gay rights because of a variety of issues, it remains the most attractive option due to the low costs involved. This study uses a sample of 289 political science students at an elite university. The study took place in the spring semester of 2009. The students were

offered class extra credit for participating in the computer based study outside of class. There are several problems with the study sample that make a confirmation of my hypotheses less likely.

The key problem is that students are much younger and better educated than most of the public. Both these factors correlate highly with support for lesbian and gay rights. Even independent of demographics, students may be more liberal in general and on lesbian and gay rights in particular. Figures 6-1 and 6-2 contain histograms of the party identification and ideology of the study respondents. The students are much more liberal and Democratic than the public at large. Whereas most members of the public

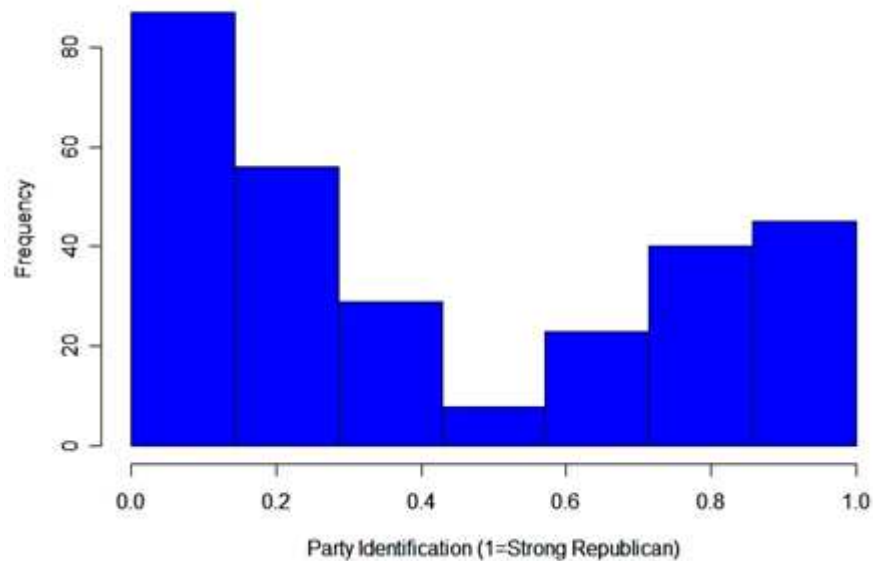


Figure 6-1: Party Identification, Spring 2009 Study

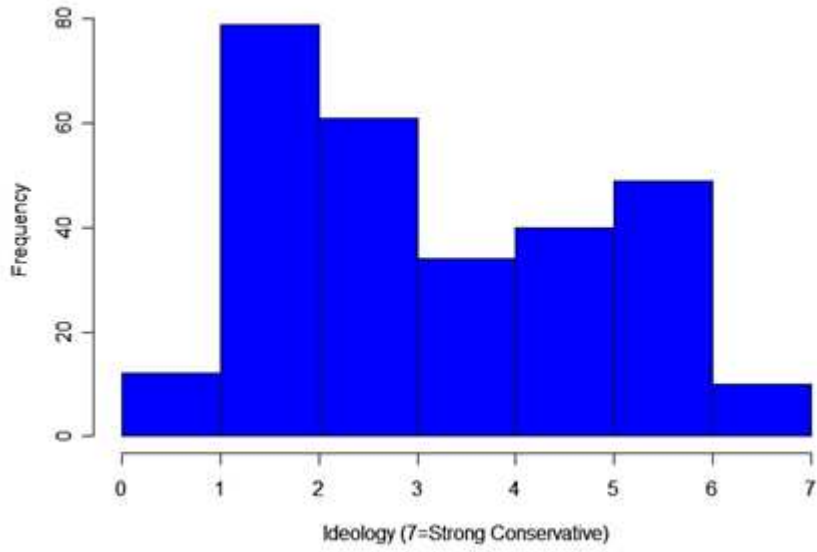


Figure 6-2: Ideology, Spring 2009 Study

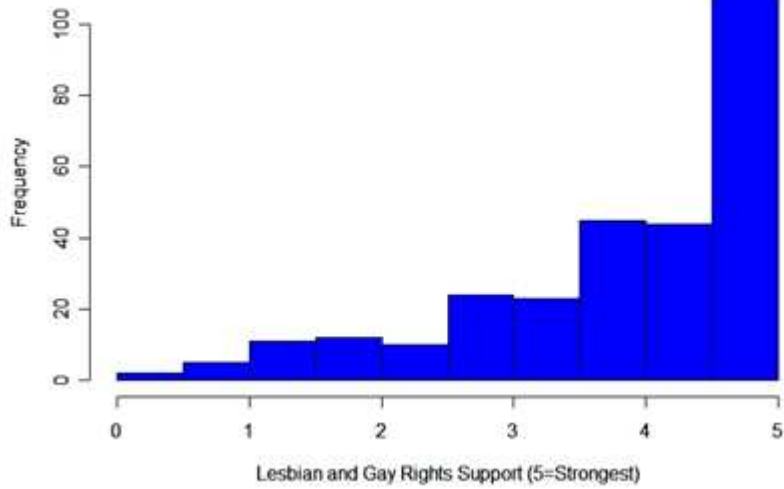


Figure 6-3: Lesbian and Gay Rights Support Scale Histogram, Spring 2009 Study

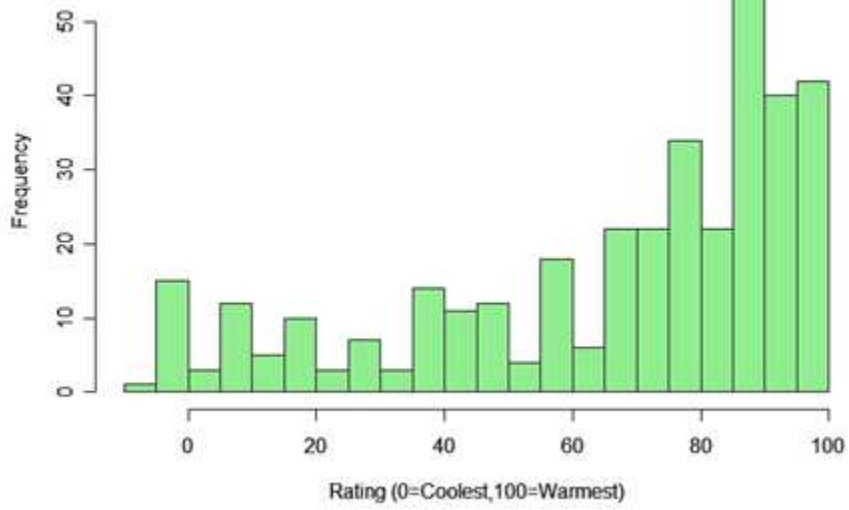


Figure 6-4: Histogram of Obama Feeling Thermometer, Fall 2008 Study

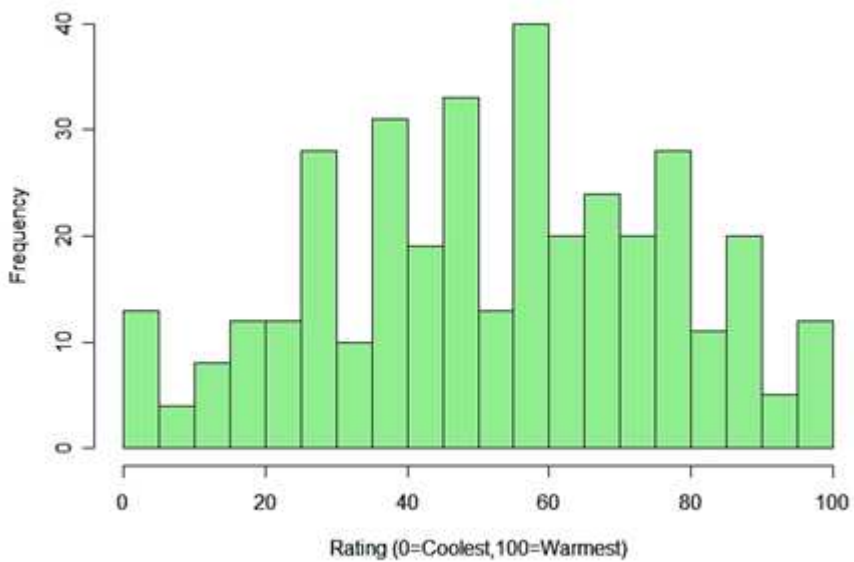


Figure 6-5: Histogram of Feeling Thermometer for John McCain, Fall 2008 Study

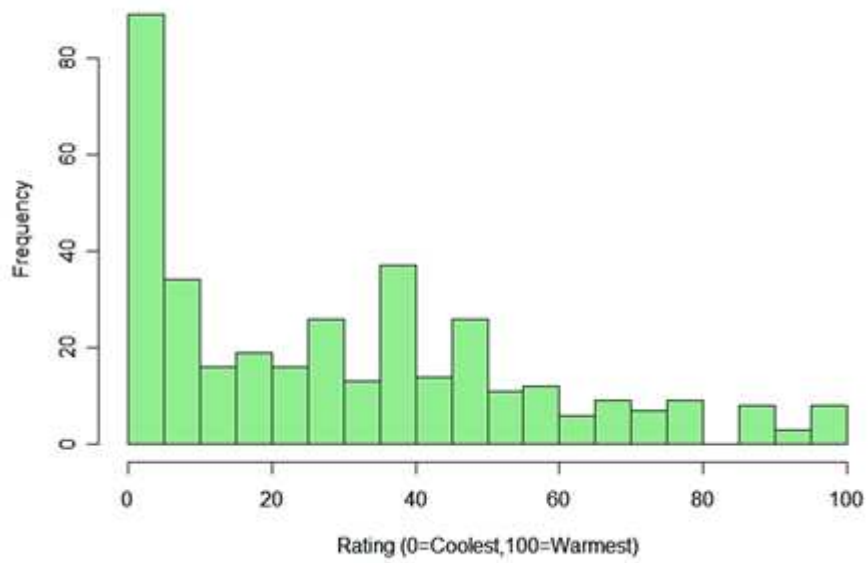


Figure 6-6: Histogram for George W. Bush Feeling Thermometer, Fall 2008 Study

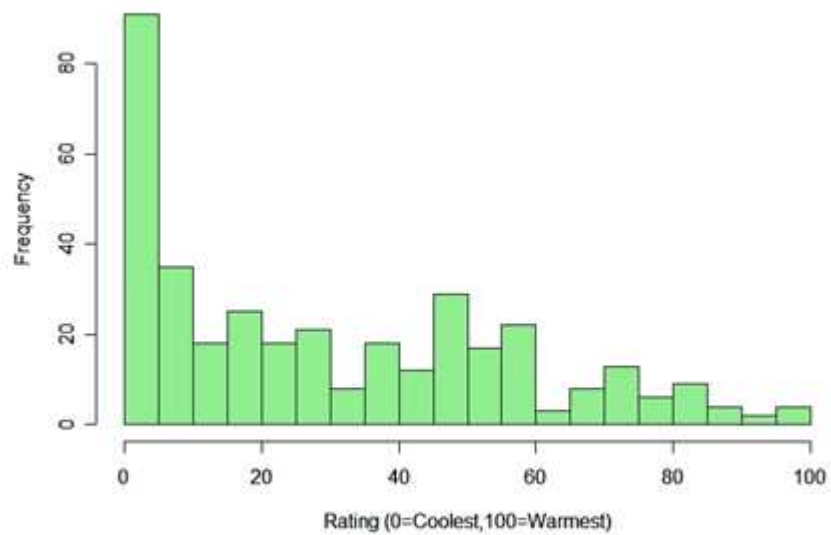


Figure 6-7: Histogram of Feeling Thermometer for Sarah Palin, Fall 2008 Study

lean moderate or conservative, most of the students are moderate or liberal. Likewise the number of strong partisans and especially strong Democratic identifiers is high. This suggests the sample has a higher political sophistication than the mass public and likely has a constrained ideology resulting in fewer unstable attitudes that are subject to manipulation in an experiment (Zaller 1992).

Turning to the result of the posttest, the sample does appear to be highly supportive of lesbian and gay rights independent of the experimental manipulation. Figure 6-3 presents a histogram of the five point scale used to measure lesbian and gay rights support in the spring 2009 gay rights study. The mode is clearly at 5, the maximum, suggesting the plurality of subjects is strongly supportive of the pro-gay position on all five of the issues listed above.⁵ However, this problem should, as well as the demographic problems of the sample, bias against positive results for the treatment by diluting the number of individuals that have attitudes capable of manipulation by the experiment. Hence findings even suggestive of my hypotheses will be impressive.

The sample may actually be even more liberal and Democratic than the breakdown in ideology and party suggest. For instance, the students who claim to be conservative may only be economically conservative due to their social situations. Cultural conservatives are usually against gay rights whereas economic conservatives are

⁵ This suggests that there might be a problem with truncation in our scale. Different levels of individuals who are pro-gay may be grouped together at the highest category because there is no question on the scale to distinguish them. For instance people who are strongly supportive of gay rights may be at the same place on the scale (5) as those who are very strongly supportive. This should also bias against positive results on the experiment. A question that may be more difficult for a social liberal to support, like

more heterogeneous in their support. This coupled with the demographics of the group and the broad appeal of the Democratic ticket led by Barack Obama in the year prior among the young makes even the conservatives in the sample warm to Barack Obama, less supportive of Republicans in general, and particularly less supportive of socially conservative Republicans. The net result of this would be a sample that respects and values the opinions of Barack Obama and does not value the opinions of John McCain. This would mean that the Obama condition would have a greater effect on gay rights attitudes than a non-student sample. Likewise, the McCain condition may have a weaker effect, especially among conservatives and Republicans.

Examining the feeling thermometers results of the subjects affect toward the candidates allow a test of this. Although the feeling thermometers towards Obama and McCain were not included in the spring study, a similar study with nearly identical demographics and sample size ran in the previous semester before the presidential election under identical conditions at the same university. Figure 6-4 shows a histogram of the feeling thermometer for Barack Obama for this fall study. The modal category is clearly 100, and nearly all respondents give him a positive rating. Figure 6-5 contains the feeling thermometer for Sen. McCain. Feelings for him are much more mixed but slightly positive. Most respondents cluster towards the middle of the scale. However, McCain is far from being considered a loyal, conservative Republican due to his reputation as a “Maverick”. This may lead liberal leaning students to feel warmer towards him. The affect for a more typical socially conservative Republican can be

affirmative action for lesbians and gay or support for cross-dressing in public should be added to the battery in the future.

gleaned by examining Figures 6-6 and 6-7. These are the feeling thermometers for George W. Bush and Gov. Sarah Palin of Alaska. Although President Bush's rating may be low due to the several crises that took place during his second term, Sarah Palin's ratings among conservative Republicans were very high during this period. However, virtually no students give either of these typical, social-conservative Republicans warm feelings. For Palin, 100 is one of the least popular responses on the thermometer. If the conservatives in the student sample were more typical of conservatives in the mass public we would expect a greater polarization on attitudes toward Palin and Obama.

In a representative sample of the public, I would expect conservative Republicans to behave differently from liberal Democrats. The student sample, with its positive affect towards Obama and negative affect towards socially conservative Republicans based on age and education, and the issues of the 2008 presidential election calls this expectation into question. Indeed, I find that the student sample at-large behaves more like a sample of liberals in aggregate.

Although there are problems with the student sample, the sample problems should only make positive results less likely, not more likely. Any positive results I find in this educated, pro-gay, and young sample should be more pronounced using a sample of the general public.

Results and Discussion

My expectations are that media contact with Ellen DeGeneres, a lesbian, will lead to more liberal attitudes on the lesbian and gay rights scale. Additionally, I expect that, due to the sample's positive affect towards Obama, a similar liberalization will occur for

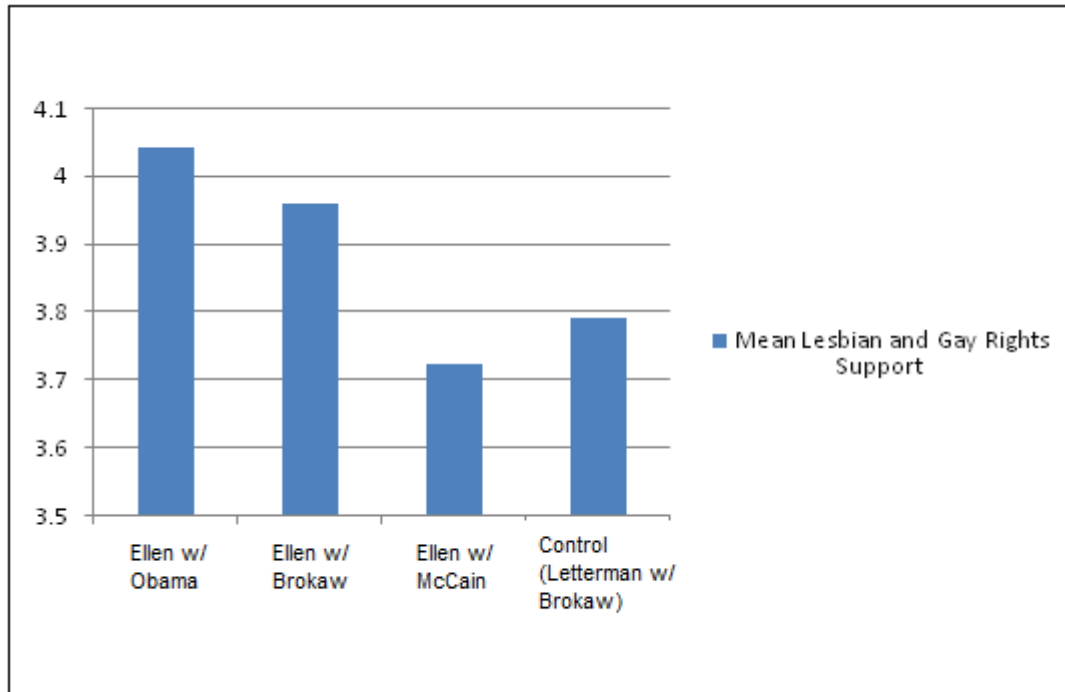


Figure 6-8: Mean Lesbian and Gay Rights Support Across by Experimental and Control Groups.

that condition. The McCain condition could have either result. Because he occurs in a treatment with Ellen, the sample may be come more liberal compared to the control. However, his limited popularity among students as compared to Obama may render the condition ineffective.

The results of the experimental manipulation are depicted graphically in Figure 6-8. This figure shows the mean of the lesbian and gay rights measure for each of the four treatment and control groups. The control group (Letterman-Brokaw) and McCain condition (Ellen-McCain) resulted in samples that have the lowest support for lesbian and gay rights. As expected, the Obama (Ellen-Obama) and Ellen (Ellen-Brokaw) conditions resulted in more liberal attitudes toward lesbian and gay rights. The difference between

the Obama and McCain conditions is roughly one response category on the ten question battery answered in a more liberal direction. This is equivalent to moving from being weakly supportive of gay marriage to strongly supportive of gay marriage or from being weakly against gay adoption to weakly in favor of gay adoption. The other major differences, such as those between the control and Ellen conditions and the Ellen and McCain conditions are slightly smaller yet still similar in size.

The results of an ANOVA to test for statistical significance between the groups are disappointing however. The ANOVA cannot rule out that the differences are due to chance ($F = 1.18, p = .317$). The extra credit motive might be responsible for the low statistical significance. I reestimated the ANOVA, but dropped the students whose self-reported GPA was in the bottom 15% of the sample. These subjects are most likely to taking survey solely for the extra credit involved. Since they know the results are anonymous, they might be distracted or unfocused on the task of completing the survey. The differences for the restricted sample, thankfully, attained statistical significance on the ANOVA ($F=2.31, p=.076$).

I then estimated a multivariate model using the responses for party, ideology, knowing lesbians or gays, attitudes on a biological causation of homosexuality, and gender as controls. Party was coded on a seven point scale running from 0 (strong Democrat) to 1 (strong Republican). Ideology was also coded using a seven point scale ranging from 0 (Very Liberal) to 1 (Very Conservative). Gender was coded as a 1 for male and 0 for female. Dummy variables were also created for those who stated they knew lesbians or gays, did not know lesbians or gays, those who thought that individuals were lesbian or gay due to experiences, and those who thought that lesbians and gays

choose to be lesbian or gay. These variables equaled 1 if a subject was in the category and 0 otherwise. The excluded categories were those who suspected they knew a lesbian or gay, but did not know for sure not sure, and those who believe people are born gay or lesbian. The main independent variable was coded as a set of dummy variables were 1 represented each condition and 0 otherwise. The excluded category was the control condition.

I find that differences using the sample restricted by self-reported GPA are statistically significant and large for the Obama condition, as illustrated in by the dummy OLS regression in Table 6-1. This represents the same rise in support as someone that suspects someone they know is lesbian or gay as compared to someone that actually knows an out lesbian or gay. Unfortunately the condition of Ellen with Brokaw, although in the right direction, does not reach statistical significance. The results would have likely been much stronger if a non-student sample with lower and more malleable gay rights support had been available. The fact that detectable results were found for the Obama condition, and that the subject in the Ellen condition are of nearly the same level of lesbian and gay rights support with such a non-ideal sample, affirms the power the media effect.

The fact that this is a sample predisposed to favor Obama heavily in terms of affect, and the experimental group with the most liberal attitudes was those subjects exposed to the Obama-Ellen interview suggests the power of elite led change. Obama is clearly capable of inspiring attitude change if the effort is made in a fashion similar to the attitude change caused by Clinton in the early 1990s. It is surprising that this condition was slightly more powerful than the effect of media contact with Ellen only, and this

Table 6-1: Regression Analysis of Experimental Data (Dependent Variable = Gay Rights Support) Excluded: Control Condition	Coefficient Estimate (Standard Error)	P-value
Intercept	5.72 (.29)	.000
Ellen w/Obama Condition	0.2595 (.1471)	.079
Ellen w/McCain Condition	0.0042 (.1459)	.977
Ellen w/Brokaw Condition	0.0897 (.1501)	.550
Party (Republican)	-0.7159 (.2695)	.008
Ideology (Conservative)	-0.1946 (.0610)	.002
Causation of Homosexuality: Experiences	-0.4133 (.1259)	.001
Causation of Homosexuality: Personal Choice	-0.8904 (.1727)	.000
Gender (Male)	-0.3160 (.1072)	.004
Do Not Know a Lesbian or Gay	-0.1054 (.2712)	.698
Know a Lesbian or Gay	0.2587 (.1737)	.137
R²	.5227	

note: two-tail tests

might have not been the case with a representative sample where the ceiling effect of lesbian and gay rights support would have been less of an issue. Although not surprising, the McCain condition performed the worst, even controlling for other factors. McCain, as stated above, was liked much less than Obama by the students in the fall study. It is likely that by spring he was even less well liked. Liberals would not have liked him because of his conservative oriented campaign in 2008. Young conservatives would have not liked him because he lost the election in combination with his tradition of bucking the Republican Party on key issues. When Ellen interviews a negative figure in the young subjects' eyes, like McCain, the effect of media contact with her became non-existent and maybe slightly negative on attitudes towards gays. Media contact and portrayals of minorities matter in terms of public opinion.

Conclusion

This chapter used an experimental design to confirm the results of the previous chapter which used aggregate and observational survey data. Individuals liberalized their gay rights policy attitudes when exposed to lesbians or gays through media contact, in this case an interview hosted by Ellen DeGeneres. The most liberal responses on gay rights came from those who saw Ellen interview a positively viewed individual leader, Barack Obama.

However, attitudes of the public do not always flow from attitudes toward political leaders as was the case with Clinton in 1992 and 1993 and Obama in this experiment. Sometimes those attitudes on minorities help determine who political leaders are in the first place. In the next chapter I examine the case of the 2004

presidential election. The incumbent president, George W. Bush, made his stance against same-sex marriage a major part of his campaign. Did this strategy work? Did the media coverage surrounding same-sex marriage cause it to work, or did ballot initiatives trying to ban same-sex marriage have an effect on the election in place of the media? The next chapter deals with these issues before returning to concluding remarks on Obama, his presidency, the future of lesbian and gays rights attitudes in the last chapter.

CHAPTER VII

TAKING THE BAIT: BELIEFS ABOUT LESBIAN AND GAY FAMILIES AND THE 2004 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

In the preceding chapters, I showed that positive attitudes towards leaders transferred to lesbians and gays when the group became associated with those leaders. Democrats in Congress became more liberal on gay rights. Republicans moved against lesbian and gay rights to appeal to social conservatives. When lesbians and gays became associated with the Democrats and, later, Bill Clinton, Democrats in the public became more tolerant of lesbian and gay rights. I showed this using aggregate level data for Bill Clinton in Chapter 4 and in an experimental context for a group of students using Barack Obama in Chapter 5. Although attitudes towards lesbians and gays are generally less stable and less salient than attitudes towards well known political leaders (Hillygus and Shields 2005), sometimes attitudes towards minorities can influence a preference among leaders. Indeed, this was the case in the 2004 presidential election. Up to this point, I have focused on changing attitudes towards lesbians and gays. In this chapter, I demonstrate the impact these attitudes had on American politics at the highest levels.

As people opinions on lesbian and gay rights moderated throughout the 1990s, it became possible for this to become a partisan issue in a national campaign. In fact, I show that it was an important issue in determining vote choice in the 2004 presidential election. Social conservative and Republican operatives placed several ballot measures that would ban same-sex marriage up for a vote simultaneously with the presidential election in 2004. It was thought that these ballot measures would help President Bush

win reelection. While lesbian and gay rights now enjoy strong support within the Democratic Party, same-sex marriage had no where near majority support in swing states in 2004. Republican candidates, including Bush, could campaign on being against same-sex marriage strongly. This would increase the appeal to their social conservative supporters and not alienate swing voters. Democrats, however, were in a bind. They could not advocate for same-sex marriage rights because swing voters did not support them. However, their base and core supporters were in favor of same-sex marriage. Coming out strongly against same-sex marriage would hurt the enthusiasm of Democratic activists and potentially cut off liberal donors.

Immediately following the reelection of president George W. Bush in 2004, a scholarly conventional wisdom developed suggesting that same-sex marriage and specifically anti-same-sex marriage ballot measures had no effect or a very small effect on presidential vote choice in 2004 (Abramowitz 2004, Hillygus and Shields 2005, Friedman 2004, Sherrill 2004). Such findings quelled the worst fears of those on the political left. As normatively appealing as it may be for some to conclude that efforts to tap anti-gay sentiment were unsuccessful, the continued behavior of social conservatives suggests that they believe the strategy had merit. In 2006, eight more states, including two pivotal to Senate control (Virginia and Tennessee), placed anti-same-sex marriage initiatives on their statewide ballots either at the urging of social conservatives or by petition. As the number of same-sex marriage ban referenda and initiatives on the ballot in 2006 slowly increased, the energy of social conservatives in putting them on the ballot appeared to be enhanced by the sense that they would somehow increase the chances of victory for their preferred electoral candidates.

I present evidence here that suggests that these measures mattered. The same-sex marriage issue specifically---and attitudes toward lesbian and gay families in general---affected presidential vote choice in the 2004 presidential election. The mechanism through which these attitudes have affected the vote, however, has been misunderstood. Ballot initiatives to ban same-sex marriage became a national, not local or state specific, story. Previous research concluding a null effect of the bans had compared differences in the Republican share of the presidential vote in states with and without marriage bans (Abramowitz 2004). This research found no difference. However the majority of media coverage that individuals encountered was likely on the national news networks. Hence, theories of media priming would suggest that the effect of same-sex marriage ought to be large in both states with those bans on the ballot and in those states without. Looking at variation between states will miss this effect.

First, I use county level-data to show evidence of a potentially decisive impact of the same-sex marriage issue on the race for president in Ohio. I next demonstrate that voters in states with same-sex marriage bans on the ballot in 2004 behaved similarly to voters in states without same-sex marriage bans on the ballot suggesting that something other than the ballot measure caused the effects in Ohio. In both cases attitudes about same-sex marriage mattered profoundly. Finally I use the 2000-2002-2004 panel of the American National Election Study to assess whether people use their beliefs about the legitimacy of lesbian and gay families to determine their presidential vote or if the results from cross-sectional surveys presented can be fully explained by an elite led change in beliefs about the rights of lesbians and gays through the clarification of party and

candidate positions on same-sex marriage and media focus on the politics of recognition of lesbian and gay families.

The sheer number of marriage bans on state ballots in 2004 likely caused the issue to spill over into the national media and thus affect the vote nationally. The combination of the attention of the national news on same-sex marriages in 2003, on the political implications of these unions on the 2004 presidential election, and finally, on the implications of same-sex marriage ballot measures in swing states shifted the nexus of attention on the politics surrounding gay and lesbian unions from the affected states and localities and squarely located it in the national arena. Essentially, the issue transmuted from one with local effects into one with a large national impact.

Media-led Priming and Its Effect on Vote Choice

Previous research into the same-sex marriage issue has led to conflicting results. First, Abramowitz (2004) looked for effects of the same-sex marriage issue using the states as his unit of analysis. He found no differential effects in states with same-sex ballot measures as compared to those without them. Another study using aggregate-level data found different results from Abramowitz. Smith, DeSantis, and Kissel (2006), using counties as the unit of analysis, found an effect of county same-sex marriage ban support on vote choice, but they examine only states with same-sex marriage ballot measures.

Others have used individual-level survey data and have also found results at odds with Abramowitz. Using a post-election internet panel, Hillygus and Shields (2005) found that the effects of individual attitudes towards same-sex marriages exerted an influence on the vote (see also Lewis 2005), with the effect in ballot measure states

slightly larger than non-ballot measure states. However, the effect was so small that it was not statistically significant when examining only respondents in marriage ban states. Donovan et al. (2005) also found effects within the states of Ohio, Michigan, and Arkansas, which all had same-sex marriage bans on the ballot. But when they examined national individual-level data, using a mid-October poll, they found that the intensity of same-sex marriage attitudes affected vote intention in same-sex marriage ban states, but not at a national level. Finally, Campbell and Monson (2005) found that religious affiliation has a larger impact on the vote in states voting on same-sex marriage bans than non-same-sex marriage ban states, but their study is geared towards searching for the effects of religious beliefs on the vote and does not control for the effect of attitudes towards recognition of same-sex couples contingent upon living within a ban state.

None of these studies assesses whether same-sex marriage attitudes exert *change* in presidential voting which is a particularly compelling question given the increase in George W. Bush's vote share from 2000 to 2004. Moreover, these studies do not assess if party or affect towards the candidates are causing members of the public to bring their attitudes on same-sex marriage in line with partisan elites. Because attitudes towards lesbians and gays are likely to be more weakly held than party identification and candidate assessments, endogeneity is a potential problem.

Theoretically, there is a good reason to believe that the effect of same-sex marriage attitudes should have been felt nationally and not locally in same-sex marriage ban states. Priming likely had a national effect on the vote. Priming is when media coverage of a specific issue influences voters by making that issue the lens (or more accurately one of the lenses) through which they interpret the election (Druckman 2004;

Miller and Krosnick 2000). By covering a political issue, the media raises its salience to the public (Iyengar and Kinder 1985). This causes the public to both view that specific issue as important to the election and to evaluate candidates' stances on that issue when deciding whom to vote for. Regarding same-sex marriage, more media attention on the issue should make it a more important consideration to voters.

Priming can have a major effect on American elections across a wide variety of issues. Using experimental methods, Iyengar and Kinder (1987) found that showing news stories to individuals influenced candidate choice in a general election. Using exit polls, Druckman (2004) has demonstrated priming effects in U.S. Senate campaigns. Miller and Krosnick (2000) have found that the importance given to a specific issue as influenced by the media can affect vote choice. Even the way the media talks about an issue or event can affect the public's perceptions and evaluation of an issue through framing, or the emphasis of different components and aspects of an issue or story (Nelson, Clausen, and Oxley 1997, Gitlin 2003, Brewer 2003). Because a relatively small percentage of Americans say same-sex marriage is the most important problem facing the nation (Hillygus and Shields 2005), one might argue that gay rights attitudes are generally of such low salience that they cannot be of importance to the public in voting decisions. While this may be the case, a counter argument can be constructed that attitudes toward race, gender, and sexuality are "easier" for the public to access cognitively and thus more powerful (Carmines and Stimson 1980).

Same-sex marriage certainly received ample attention from the news media in 2004. It first became a major part of the national political dialogue when the supreme judicial court in Massachusetts ruled that barring gays and lesbians from the right to

marry violated the state constitution in the summer of 2003 and reignited in the summer of 2004 when the ruling took effect. Following this, President Bush took a position against same sex marriage in his reelection campaign. This position would appeal to religious conservatives. Congress voted on a Constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage in September of 2004, which was defeated largely by Democrats. Finally several states placed their own same-sex marriage bans on the ballot. All of these events made it into the news.

Whether priming exerts effects locally or nationally depends on the pattern of media coverage. If the local media in same-sex marriage ban states cover the issue more intensely than other states, attitudes about lesbian and gay families should be activated to a greater extent in those areas. If not, however, the effects might be the same. Even if ban states and non-ban states do differ, the effect of attitudes can still be important for both.

Examining local newspaper coverage of the same-sex marriage debate suggests that residents of states with ballot measures ought to react to the issue in roughly the same way as those in non-same-sex marriage ban states. Lexis-Nexis keeps a searchable digital archive of many local newspapers. Using this archive, I searched for the number of stories mentioning either “same-sex marriage”, “gay marriage”, or “homosexual marriage” and one of the two presidential candidate’s last names from Labor Day through Election Day in 2004. I added the number of hits for these search categories together as a measure of election-related media around same-sex marriage. Included are three papers in the swing state of Ohio, which had a same-sex marriage ballot measure and which I single out for an in depth analysis below. Also included were four other papers in states

with same-sex marriage bans, twelve major papers in states without same-sex marriage ballot measures, and the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, and *USA Today*.

Figure 7-1 shows the total number of stories on same-sex marriage associated with the 2004 presidential election for local and national papers. States with same-sex marriage bans are on the right, and all other papers are on the left. The *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, both generally regarded as national papers of record, come in first and second in terms of candidate-related same-sex marriage coverage with 120 and

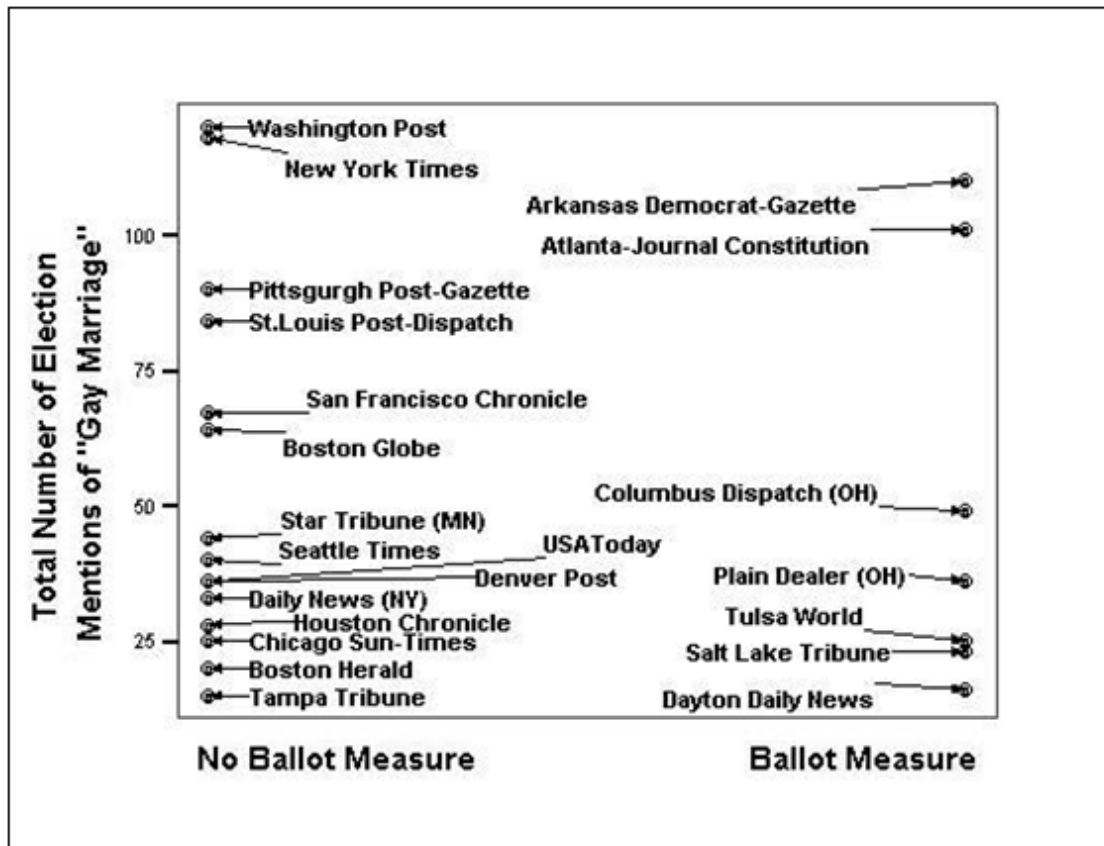


Figure 7-1: Number of New Stories involving Gay Marriage by States with and without Ballot Measures on The Issue

18 total hits. The next highest on the measure are the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* and the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* with 110 and 101 hits, respectively. While both these states had same-sex ballot initiatives, Georgia was considered a non-competitive state in terms of the presidential election, and Arkansas had only a low chance of swinging to the Democrats. The next two highest papers, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, were not in states with ballot initiatives. Moreover, an independent samples t-test, ignoring the national papers, reveals the difference in coverage between papers in states with same-sex marriage bans on the ballot and without same-sex marriage bans on the ballot is not statistically significant ($t=.410$, $p=.687$).

Of the Ohio-based papers, the *Columbus Dispatch* fell close to the mean, while *The Plain Dealer* (Cleveland) and the *Dayton Daily News* fell closer to the bottom in politicized same-sex marriage coverage. These results provide evidence that coverage of the same-sex marriage issue was regularly distributed between states with and without same-sex marriage ban measures in 2004. Theoretically, this means that any effects of beliefs involving same-sex couples on the 2004 presidential vote should be felt nationally and not locally.

Priming will be particularly powerful when political elites clarify party positions on issues of national importance. This can result in two-way communication flows that make candidate choice more clear to the public (Zaller 1992). Candidates, along with parties are equally crucial to effects of media coverage. They are important in creating a partisan dimension concerning the issue. If presidential candidates and their associated parties clarify their positions on an issue discussed by the media through political

rhetoric, it increases the possibility that the public will use that issue in guiding vote choice. This was certainly the case for same-sex marriage in 2004.

In addition to the volume of coverage accorded the issue by the national media and coverage generated by the marriages in Massachusetts and other states, same-sex marriage took on an increased electoral salience when Republican leaders in Congress held a vote on a Constitutional Amendment banning same-sex unions, a proposal firmly endorsed by President George W. Bush. Democratic nominee John Kerry tended to remain silent on the issue, but it was a Democratic mayor in San Francisco who authorized same-sex marriage licenses and strong Democratic opposition in Congress that likely killed the proposed Constitutional amendment. Because the state of Massachusetts legalized same-sex marriages and this state has been regarded as a Democratic bastion (as well as being the home state of the Democratic nominee in 2004), the partisan dimension of the issue should have become more clear in the public mind. This is on top of the polarization that took place in the 1980s and more strongly in the 1990s discussed in Chapter 3. These recent political communications by political actors, in addition to the political polarization on lesbian and gay rights that started in the 1980s, laid the groundwork for an impact of same-sex marriage on the national vote.

To recap, the key to understanding the media priming that took place concerning same-sex marriage is to also understand that priming nationalized the effects of the issue. Studies searching for state-specific effects are, as a result, unlikely to find substantive differences between states. That is not to suggest that the issue did not have an effect in Ohio and other states with ballot initiatives (as some previous studies have found). Since

media in non-ballot measure states gave the issue as much attention as those in ballot measure states, it suggests the effects ought to be fairly uniform across the nation.

Ground Zero: Ohio in 2004

The logical place to begin any analysis of the 2004 presidential election is Ohio. It featured a high profile, anti-same-sex marriage ballot initiative, and its close outcome provided President Bush with his margin of victory in 2004. Mr. Bush's victory in Ohio was not a forgone conclusion during the campaign. The state narrowly went for him in 2000 despite his opponent's redeployment of resources from Ohio to Florida in the

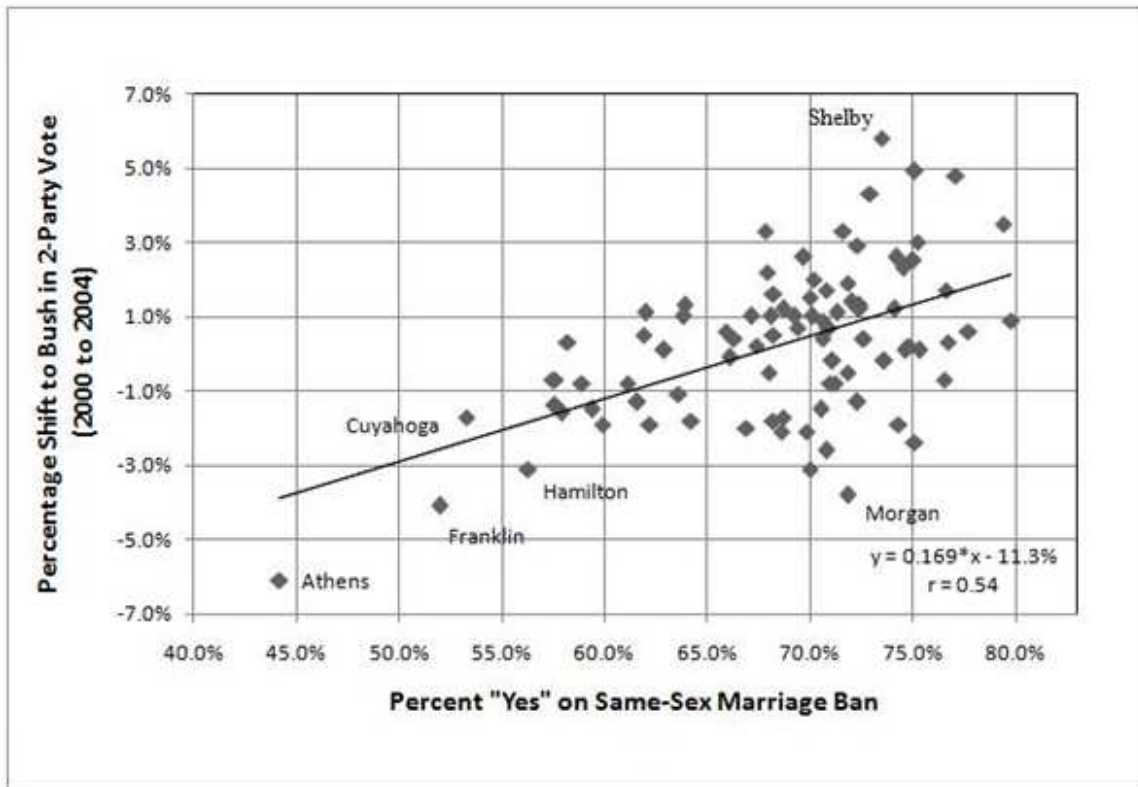


Figure 7-2: The 2004 Presidential Vote and the Same-Sex Marriage Ban in Ohio (Counties)

October before the election. Moreover, the state's economy was in marked decline by 2004, and John Kerry attempted to make this the major issue of the campaign. A county-level analysis provides an appropriate starting place for an analysis of the effect of same-sex marriage attitudes on presidential vote choice.

First, I examined whether there existed a correlation between "yes" votes on the same-sex marriage ban in Ohio and changing support for Bush between 2000 and 2004. Specifically, I gathered countywide voting data for the presidential elections in 2000 and 2004 and the same-sex marriage ballot initiative in 2004. I obtained the countywide results for the 2004 presidential election and same-sex marriage vote from the website of the office of the Ohio Secretary of State along with the results from the 2000 presidential election.⁶

Figure 7-2 displays the aggregate percentage of "yes" on the same-sex marriage ban plotted against the shift in the two-party vote to President Bush from 2000 to 2004 for all 88 Ohio counties. A strong correlation ($r = .54$) between the change in the presidential vote and disapproval of same-sex marriage appears graphically. Simply put, the more a county voted for the same-sex marriage ban, the more Bush's share of the vote increased.⁷

To assess the robustness of the relationship between the change in vote and the support for same-sex marriage ban, I estimate a multivariate model. Obviously other

⁶ <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/>

⁷ Athens County appears as an outlier in the upper left corner of the chart because it contains Ohio University, a liberal college town, where a successful voter registration drive among students boosted the percentage voting for the Democrats and likely also led to the same-sex marriage ban being defeated county-wide. The next cluster of counties above and to the right of Athens County, where the same-sex marriage ban did poorly relative to the rest of the state, include Franklin, Hamilton, and Cuyahoga Counties. These counties contain the cities of Columbus, Cleveland, and Cincinnati where Kerry tended to do well relative to Gore in 2000.

factors could change voting behavior too. The economy was a major issue, given the marked increase in unemployment between 2000 and 2004. I obtained the change in unemployment rate for each county from October 2001 through October 2004 from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and included it in the model. Same-sex marriage vote may be a proxy for other social variables such as age, urban living, or education as they all correlate with support for the rights of lesbians and gays and may have had an effect on presidential vote choice independently (Loftus 2001, Lewis and Rogers 1999, Wilcox and Wolpert 2000). I obtained the percentage of residents age 15 to 32 in 2000, the percentage of residents over age 61 in 2000, the percentage living in areas classified as rural in 2000, and the percentage of residents with advanced degrees and only high school educations in 2000 from the U.S. census bureau and included them in the analysis. I then regressed the county-level results for the two-party presidential vote percentage on the proportion voting “yes” in the same-sex marriage ban, the two party-vote percentage in 2000, and these control variables.

The results of the regression model are displayed in Table 7-1. The first column contains the estimates from ordinary least squares regression model, and the second model contains a weighted least squares model weighted by county population.⁸ I also include in the table the first difference for statistically significant variables.

The results conform to expectations; the impact of same-sex marriage on the presidential vote is substantial and significant in both models. For every percentage point better the same-sex marriage ban did, Bush gained .236% of the vote from 2000 to 2004 according to the un-weighted regression. For every percentage point higher in

⁸ The weighted least squares method is generally necessary when using aggregated data such as the county level data employed here (Voss 1996).

Table 7-1: Change in Bush Vote in Ohio (County-Level)	Democratic Percentage of Two-Party Vote 2004		Democratic Percentage of Two-Party Vote 2004 (weighted)†	
	Parameter Est. (Std. Err.)	First Difference	Parameter Est. (Std. Err.)	First Difference
Constant	0.019 (0.258)	---	0.026 (0.065)	---
Democratic Vote % in 2000	0.968*** (0.032)	0.405	0.945*** (0.027)	0.395
Nader Percentage	0.279 (0.436)	---	0.223 (0.336)	---
Same-Sex Marriage Ban Percentage "Yes"	-0.236*** (0.067)	0.084	-0.269*** (0.057)	0.095
Change in Unemployment (Oct.2004 – Oct.2001)	0.515*** (0.114)	0.041	0.297* (0.123)	0.023
% Population with Advanced Degree in 2000 Census	0.214* (0.094)	0.075	0.252*** (0.074)	0.088
% Population with High School Degree or Less In 2000 Census	0.160* (0.072)	0.078	0.219*** (0.064)	0.106
% Population Age 15 to 32 in 2000 Census	-0.009 (0.074)	---	-0.010 (0.063)	---
% Population Over Age 61 in 2000 Census	0.004 (0.116)	---	-0.029 (0.098)	---
% Population Classified as Rural in 2000 Census	0.019 (0.012)	---	0.003 (0.012)	---
Adj. R ²	.977		.991	

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

† Data Weighted by County Population in 2000 Census

unemployment relative to 2001, Mr. Bush lost .52% of the vote. The greater variation in the same-sex marriage vote relative to change in unemployment suggests a larger impact on the vote than unemployment despite the larger coefficient estimate for the latter. The first difference for the same-sex marriage ban is .084, as compared to .041 for unemployment. In addition, counties with a high percentage of advanced degrees and

with populations that are more highly educated voted more for Kerry than Gore. The model as a whole performs quite well with an R^2 of .98.

While these results suggest a large impact of the same-sex marriage ban on presidential vote-share, aggregate-level data should be treated with caution due to the chance of an ecological fallacy (King 1997). We cannot be certain that the assertion that individuals who held anti-same-sex marriage positions are actually the people who became more likely to vote for Bush is correct. The relationship between these variables may be spurious. In addition, other factors that cannot be measured at the aggregate level may be causing both the change in Bush votes and the high support of the same-sex marriage ban. That said, these results clearly suggest that more analysis is needed and that the effect of the same-sex marriage bans cannot be dismissed out of hand.

An Individual Analysis of Ohio

Demonstrating a link at the level of the individual voter in Ohio would be reassuring. The 2004 exit polls produced by Edison/Mitofsky Research and employed by the television networks can be used to determine the effect of attitudes about same-sex marriage and voting for same-sex marriage bans. The exit polls also allow me to introduce additional control variables that cannot be reproduced easily at the aggregate level.⁹

The dependent variable here is a vote for George W. Bush, coded as a one for Bush and a zero otherwise. My key independent variable is a vote in favor of the same-

⁹ While the over-sample of Democrats and other liberals in the exit polls has been well documented in the media, this over-sample should have no significant impact on the regression analysis when party identification and other related variables are included as independent variables.

sex marriage ban, also known as State Issue 1, which was also asked on the survey. Race and ethnic origin, sex, income, age, church attendance, and religion were all included as demographic variables on the survey and are used as control variables in the analysis below, along with 3-point measures of party identification and ideology. They were all recoded on scales ranging from zero to one. I also included as controls two variables tapping other opinions about current political issues. Respondents were asked if they were safer from terrorism under Mr. Bush's policies and what the most important problem was in the country. I included dummy variables for those who indicated that they felt safer and that picked the economy as the most important issue. Since my dependent variable is dichotomous, I employ logistic regression.

Table 7-2 contains the estimated effects on presidential vote choice for the same-sex marriage ban and other variables. While the same-sex marriage issue may not have been the most important of the election, my results suggest that it still had a substantial impact on vote choice. The positive and significant coefficient suggests that at least some voters may not have supported Bush if the issue had not been on the national agenda. The relationship easily holds with the control variables included in the model. When same-sex marriage is included in the vote-choice model, the effects of religiosity and religious denomination on vote choice in Ohio in 2004 lose traditional levels of statistical significance despite the attention the popular press gave religiosity in its immediate analysis of the 2004 race. Other variables have effects conforming to expectations.

Local vs. National Effects

But was it really the presence of the same-sex marriage measures that affected vote choice in Ohio or was media priming responsible for its impact? Using only data based on Ohio cannot answer that question. All the voters in the state were subjected to both media priming over both same-sex marriage as a national issue due to the national coverage of the same-sex marriage bans, and the direct effects specific to the actual marriage ban that appeared on the ballot in the state simultaneously. Did the impact of the issue have a larger effect in Ohio and other states where same-sex marriage recognition was on the ballot compared to a priming effect nationally?

To answer this question, I turn to the national exit poll also produced by Edison/Mitofsky. The poll had over 10,000 respondents. Unfortunately, the same-sex marriage question appeared on only one-fourth of the survey forms. Worse, economic, war, terrorism, and other related variables did not appear on this particular survey form, so their measures cannot be included in a national analysis based on the exit poll surveys. However the religion battery, more central to this inquiry, was on the same form, as was a question asking people's recollection of their vote for president in 2000 which allows me to control for voting history and, hence, understand *change* in voting behavior between 2000 and 2004. Using the national exit poll, I reproduced the same logistic regression as with Ohio, but included new variables from the religion battery that may have been responsible for the relationship between vote choice and same-sex marriage, and dropped the questions involving national issues that were not included on the form. Attitudes involving abortion and self-identifying as a born again or evangelical Christian

Table 7-2: 2004 Ohio Exit Poll		The Effect of Gay Marriage on Bush Vote in 2004 (Ohio)	
Variable	Parameter Est.	Std. Error	
Constant	-4.527***	0.397	
Party ID (3-pt)	3.742***	0.280	
Ideology (3-pt)	1.345	0.350	
Black	-1.194**	0.411	
Female	0.147	0.200	
Income	0.113	0.351	
Protestant	0.305	0.249	
Catholic	0.392	0.249	
Religiosity	0.573	0.362	
Over 65 years old	-0.222	0.392	
Under 30 years old	0.031	0.240	
Hispanic Origin	-1.129	0.626	
Safer From Terror	2.122***	0.203	
Economy MIP	-1.890***	0.246	
“Yes” on Same-Sex Marriage Ban	0.988***	0.211	
Percent Correctly Predicted	90.9 %		
Cox and Snell. R ²	.597	N=1512	

Logistic Regression

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, two-tailed tests

were added to the model along with race, sex, Hispanic origin, church attendance, age, party identification and ideology.

As opposed to the self reported same-sex marriage ban vote in the Ohio data, the national exit poll asked respondents if they were in favor of same-sex marriage, civil unions, or no legal recognition for gay couples. I coded the same-sex marriage variable as 0 for support of same-sex marriage, .5 for support for civil unions, and 1 for no legal recognition. I then created two dummy variables: a variable equaling 1 if the respondent voted in a state with a same-sex marriage ban, and 0 if they did not; and another variable

Table 7-3: 2004 National Exit Poll	A Republican Vote for President in 2004 2004 National Exit Poll Model 1		A Republican Preference for President in 2004 2004 National Exit Poll Model 2	
	Variable	Parameter Est.	Std. Error	Parameter Est.
Constant	-4.422***	0.273	-4.406***	0.270
Party ID (3-pt)	3.068***	0.190	3.063***	0.191
Ideology (3-pt)	1.510***	0.237	1.498***	0.236
Bush Vote in 2000	2.192***	0.154	2.205***	0.153
Hispanic Origin	-0.572*	0.255	-0.604*	0.255
Black	-1.541***	0.294	-1.551***	0.294
Female	0.392**	0.143	0.381**	0.143
Under 30 years old	0.433*	0.186	0.421*	0.186
Over 65 years old	-0.424	0.235	-0.440	0.235
Income	-0.182	0.242	-0.217	0.241
Abortion	1.300***	0.262	1.315***	0.262
Religiosity	-0.468	0.270	-0.422	0.256
Born Again	0.432*	0.190	0.377*	0.178
Same-Sex Marriage Attitude (3-pt)	1.248***	0.220	1.347***	0.213
Same-Sex Marriage Ban on Ballot [†]	-0.006	0.630		
Same-Sex Marriage* Same-Sex Marriage Ban [†]	0.454	0.794		
Born Again*Same-Sex Marriage Ban [†]	-0.219	0.457		
Religiosity*Same-Sex Marriage Ban [†]	0.027	0.663		
Ohio Dummy Variable			0.334	0.666
Same-Sex Marriage *Ohio [†]			-0.419	0.988
Born Again*Ohio [†]			0.495	0.767
Religiosity*Ohio [†]			-0.422	1.142
% correctly predicted	89.5%		89.4%	
Cox and Snell. R ²	.567	N=2651	.567	N=2651

Logistic Regression

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, two-tailed tests

[†] When these models are re-estimated leaving out all but one of the interaction variables, the interaction variable is still statistically insignificant. This shows that insignificance for those variables is not due to multicollinearity among them.

equaling 1 if the respondent to the national exit poll voted in Ohio and 0 otherwise. The first variable will determine the actual effect of having a same-sex marriage ban on the ballot. The second was created to test the proposition that the Ohio same-sex marriage ban had more of an effect on vote choice due to the intensity of the Ohio presidential campaign as compared to the other bans. I then interacted these variables with a number of other variables that, theoretically, could have increased the likelihood of a vote for Bush with a same-sex marriage ban on the ballot: church attendance, status as a born-again Christian, and attitude toward same-sex marriage. I included all of these interactions in two models, one examining the differences between same-sex marriage ban states and non-same-sex marriage ban states in 2004, and one looking at differences between Ohio and the rest of the nation. I then estimated the effect of same-sex marriage attitudes, the effect of residing in a state with a same-sex marriage ban on the ballot, and the interaction of the two on vote choice for George W. Bush for two models: one testing the effects for residing in Ohio and its interactions, and one for all states with a marriage ban.

Table 7-3 contains logistic regression estimates for two models designed to answer the above questions. First the effect of attitudes toward same-sex marriage, as measured by the 3-point same-sex marriage variable, is statistically significant and substantial. The change in probability predicted by the model is graphed in Figure 7-3 for Model 1 of Table 7-3. The calculations in Figure 7-3 assumed a white male who makes between \$30,000 and \$49,999 in a year, attends church once a week, believes abortion should be mostly legal, and is between 30 and 65 years of age. The results depicted in Figure 7-3 show that same-sex marriage attitudes had a major impact on vote

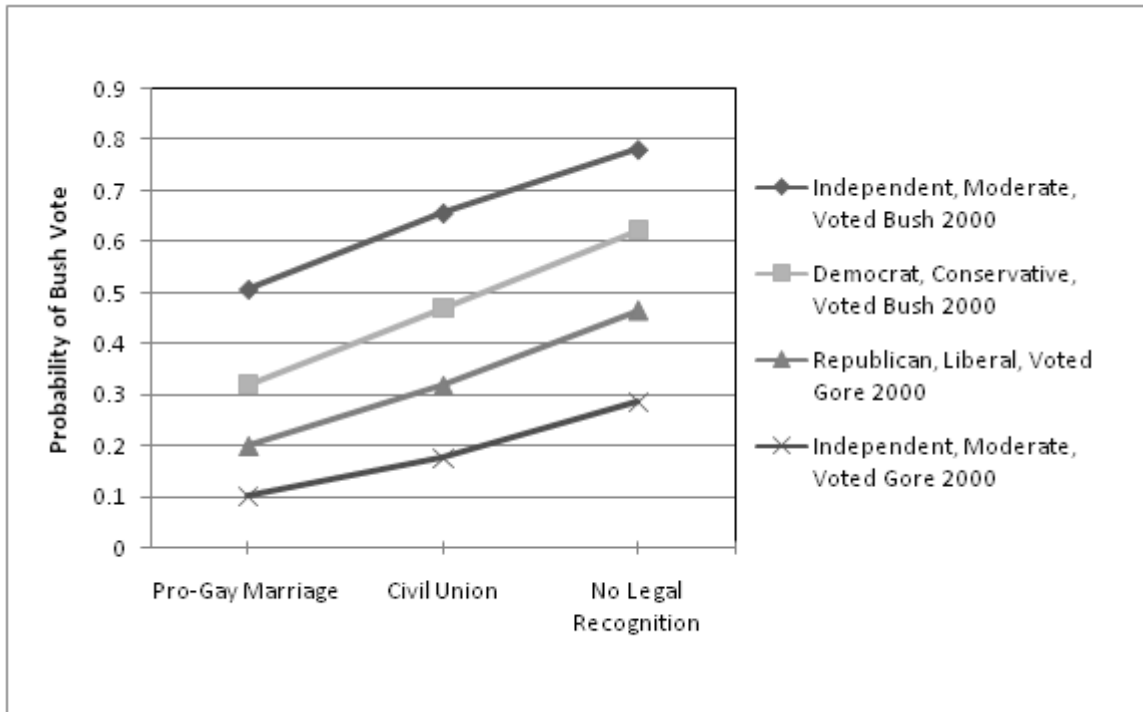


Figure 7-3: Shift in Probability of Bush Vote Based on Gay Marriage Position

choice at the national level and not just in the pivotal state of Ohio. If the voter was a moderate and independent, the probability that the individual would vote for Bush increases by nearly 30% from near 50% to 80% if he favors no legal recognition for gay and lesbian couples versus favoring same-sex marriage. Had this same respondent voted for Al Gore in 2000, he would have seen nearly a 20% increase in his probability of voting for Mr. Bush in 2004 moving from an attitude of pro- to anti-same-sex marriage. If he was a conservative Democrat and had voted for Mr. Bush in 2000, the chances of him supporting Mr. Bush again would have gone from one in three, to three out of five depending on his position on same-sex marriage. In relative terms, the magnitude of the effect of same-sex marriage attitudes is nearly the same as the magnitude of the effect of ideology. The impact of same-sex marriage dwarfs that of identifying as “born again”,

and when both variables and attitudes toward abortion are included in the equation, church attendance (religiosity) is insignificant and in the wrong direction. Furthermore, the model performs well and correctly accounts for nearly 90% of individual voting decisions.

Equally important, there is no evidence that the effect of same-sex marriage was disproportionately concentrated in either Ohio or the 11 states where a same-sex marriage ban was on the ballot in 2004.¹⁰ Interaction terms between these geographic and religious variables and same-sex marriage are also insignificant. The interaction term between anti-same-sex marriage attitudes and having the issue on the ballot is in the expected direction, but it lacks statistical significance. Furthermore the interaction term in the model involving the same-sex marriage issue and residence in Ohio has the improper sign as well as being statistically insignificant. Taken together these results suggest that same-sex marriage has had a national effect. The national effect likely was caused by media priming on the issue, and could not have been caused by same-sex marriage ban amendments that were only present in some localities. These results are consistent with the content analysis of local and national newspaper coverage above. In short, attitudes involving lesbian and gay rights impacted the presidential vote nationally.

Determining Causation: The 2000-2002-2004 ANES Panel

It is possible that using a traditional regression model to estimate the effect of same-sex marriage on vote choice might prove misleading. The relationship between same-sex marriage and vote choice or same-sex marriage and attitudes toward the

¹⁰ The results in table 3 hold if the models are estimated with only one each of the interactions suggesting insignificance is not due to multicollinearity among the interaction variables.

president might be endogenous. When the party position is clarified through political communications it may lead individuals with weakly held attitudes on same-sex marriage, but strong partisan or ideological identities or positive affect toward the president, to adopt the party position on same-sex marriage given the clarified stance on the issue specified by the leaders of the party (Zaller 1992). In essence, Republican-leaning individuals or individuals predisposed to trust the president on other grounds will become more likely to adopt positions against same-sex marriage leading to the illusion of support for a priming hypothesis. This causal mechanism is an elite-led public opinion change and in simple models of voting based on cross sectional survey data, priming and elite-led public opinion change will yield identical and significant results. This is despite the notion that the attitude causing the other to change in the two theoretical models are completely different. Support for Mr. Bush in 2004 can lead to a position against same-sex marriage just as being against same-sex marriage can lead to support for Mr. Bush.

One way to account for this is through finding measures of same-sex marriage attitudes or beliefs about lesbian and gay family legitimacy and that could have effects on presidential vote that are independent and exogenous from both the media coverage on same-sex marriage and the associated same-sex marriage bans that took place in 2003 and 2004. To do so, I employ the 2000-2002-2004 American National Election Study (ANES) panel which contained a question on the first wave in 2000 asking respondents whether they approved of lesbian and gay couples adopting children.¹¹

¹¹ Unfortunately, attitudes about gay marriage were not asked in the 2000 cross section. Fortunately, support for or against lesbian and gay adoption, an attitude which is highly similar to attitudes on same-sex marriage, was asked in the 2000 round of interviews. The bivariate correlation between the two attitudes is .590 (N=972) using the 2004 NES. This is a very strong relationship. Incidentally, the ANES panel also asked attitudes about job protections for homosexuals and attitudes on gays in the military. In this analysis I assume that attitudes on lesbian and gay adoption are much closer to attitudes on gay

Using the 2000-2002-2004 ANES, I first constructed a voting model to test for a potential effect of gay adoption on vote choice in 2000. Theoretically, there should be no effect. The media coverage surrounding same-sex marriages did not take place until 2003 and 2004 and neither same-sex marriage nor had lesbian and gay adoption had been significantly debated in the national press.¹² I constructed the model using variables that traditionally affect voting behavior. Specifically included are party identification (7-pt), income (measured as a scale based on the NES coding categories), age, education, and education squared along with dummy variables for female respondents, African-Americans, and Latino respondents. In addition, I constructed a scale of domestic policy issues by using the mean of the government spending scale, attitudes on school vouchers, and guaranteed jobs by the government, and government health insurance. I also constructed a foreign policy scale from attitudes on isolationism and defense spending.¹³ I measured attitudes about Mr. Bush as a candidate that may have had effects on vote choice using the mean of the responses to questions about specific personality traits

marriage in 2004 than to job protections for lesbians gays and lesbians and gays in the military. Number one, gay job protections and gays in the military were old issues and likely already incorporated into the political system. Same-sex marriage and same-sex adoption and other issues involving beliefs about gay families had never been subject to a major national debate before 2003. Second, many more Americans agree with job protections for gays and lesbians and gays in the military than same-sex adoption and same-sex marriage in 2004. While less than half the public agrees with same-sex adoption and same-sex marriage, over three-fourths regularly agree that gays and lesbians should serve openly in the military and should not be discriminated against in employment according to the 2004 NES cross sectional study. Lastly, same-sex marriage and same-sex adoption are likely more related attitudes than same-sex marriage and the other two. Same-sex marriage and same-sex adoption both tap feelings about the family and particularly gender roles in the family, while lesbian and gay jobs and lesbians and gays in the military are related more with individualism and egalitarianism. The bivariate correlations in the 2004 NES were only .394 (N=973) and .358 (N=973) between gay marriage and gays in the military respectively.

¹² Not counting the debate in Vermont surrounding civil unions or those based on similar court decisions in Hawaii or Alaska. Since gay marriages never actually resulted from these decisions, I assume that the effects of these debates never had as large of an effect on voting psychology, or the press, as those sparked by the Massachusetts SJC decision in 2003.

¹³ Recall Mr. Bush took an isolationist position in the presidential debates in 2000.

measured in a more favorable way. I used retrospective views on how well the economy was performing over 1999 as a measure of economic voting. Finally, I controlled for several items tapping religion and associated attitudes: church attendance, belonging to a Protestant denomination, being Catholic, identifying as born-again, abortion attitudes, and moral traditionalism. Moral traditionalism gauges attitudes about change in society and lifestyles and whether these changes are bad or good and is common in models involving religion and lesbian and gay issues (Wilcox and Wolpert 2000).¹⁴ Finally lesbian and gay adoption attitudes are measured by a variable taking the value of one if the respondent indicated they are against gay adoption and zero otherwise. All variables (except age) were recoded on scales to have a maximum of one and minimum of zero. I estimate the effects on presidential vote choice in 2000 using logistic regression.

The results, displayed in Model 1 of Table 7-4, confirm the hypothesis that lesbian and gay adoption attitudes and, by implication, same-sex marriage, mattered little in 2000. Candidate traits, party, age, and domestic issues appear to driving the vote, along with moral traditionalism and identifying as born-again.

Next, I re-estimated the same model, using their 2000 values to estimate their effects on the vote in 2004. Using the 2000 values solves the endogeneity problem between lesbian and gay adoption and vote choice as attitudes in 2000 are exogenous to changes that took place that were caused by media and political rhetoric that took place in 2003 and 2004.

The results of the 2004 vote choice model (Model 2 in Table 7-4) show a large and significant effect of gay adoption attitudes in 2000 on vote choice in 2004,

¹⁴ Ideology is not included in the model below because of problems in the reliability of the measure across interview formats (Luskin 1987; Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida 1989).

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Table 6-4: Gay Adoption and the 2000-2002-2004 ANES Panel Study (Logistic Regressions)	Parameter Estimate (<i>std. error</i>)	Parameter Estimate (<i>std. error</i>)	Parameter Estimate (<i>std. error</i>)	Parameter Estimate (<i>std. error</i>)	Parameter Estimate (<i>std. error</i>)
Dependent Variable→ Independent Variables (Below)	<i>2-Party Vote 2000(Bush)</i>	<i>2-Party Vote 2004(Bush)</i>	<i>2-Party Vote 2004(Bush)</i>	<i>2-Party Vote 2004(Bush)</i>	<i>2-Party Vote 2004(Bush)</i>
Gay Adoption (2000)	0.276 (0.315)	0.998** (0.348)	1.664* (0.653)	1.885** (0.749)	1.060@ (0.598)
Party (2000, 2004 in model 5)	6.186*** (0.521)	4.725*** (0.571)	1.397 (1.136)	1.362 (1.148)	3.963*** (1.963)
Abortion (2000, 2004 in model 5)	0.438 (0.440)	0.747 (0.477)	-0.537 (0.982)	-0.678 (1.027)	-0.603 (0.958)
Income (2000, 2004 in model 5)	0.445 (1.077)	0.451 (1.135)	-0.020 (2.035)	-0.009 (2.044)	1.488 (0.922)
Born Again (2000)	0.583@ (0.341)	0.602 (0.379)	0.207 (0.741)	0.231 (0.752)	0.939 (0.697)
Moral Traditionalism (2000)	0.381@ (0.202)	0.317 (0.222)	0.512 (0.386)	0.485 (0.386)	0.460 (0.391)
Education (2000)	-3.164 (2.670)	-2.545 (3.083)	-3.367 (5.171)	-2.914 (5.151)	-9.000* (4.247)
Education^2 (2000)	1.448 (2.191)	0.872 (2.448)	2.497 (4.225)	2.132 (4.218)	6.220@ (3.487)
Religiosity (2000, 2004 in model 5)	-0.042 (0.470)	0.499 (0.477)	0.064 (0.918)	0.215 (0.944)	1.039 (0.768)
G. W. Bush Traits Mean (2000, 2004 in model 5)	7.491*** (1.044)	4.870*** (1.139)	-0.308 (1.980)	-0.504 (2.010)	5.457*** (1.578)
Domestic Issues, (2000, 2004 in model 5)	-2.072*** (0.643)	-0.746 (0.752)	-0.529 (1.336)	-0.542 (1.349)	1.247 (1.653)
Foreign Policy Issues (2000)	0.445 (0.506)	0.251 (0.547)			
Black	-1.324 (1.057)	-2.964** (1.134)	-2.357@ (1.281)	-2.537@ (1.313)	-3.533* (1.615)
Hispanic	-0.014 (0.864)	-0.013 (0.757)	0.668 (1.441)	0.615 (1.454)	0.019 (1.803)
Protestant (2000)	0.394 (0.647)	0.135 (0.604)	-1.157 (1.139)	-1.085 (1.154)	-1.579 (1.037)

Table 7.4 (cont.)

Catholic (2000)	0.665 (0.601)	0.084 (0.794)	-2.057 (1.265)	-2.118 [@] (1.261)	-2.572* (1.106)
Female	0.062 (0.294)	0.282 (0.326)	0.153 (0.597)	0.117 (0.603)	-0.072 (0.560)
Age	-0.027** (0.010)	-0.042*** (0.011)	-0.090** (0.022)	-0.063** (0.022)	-0.019 (0.019)
Same-Sex Marriage Ban States (2004)				0.245 (1.026)	
Same-sex Ban States*Gay Adoption (2004, 2000)				-0.911 (1.413)	
Strength of Opposition for Bush's War on Terror (2004)			-3.592*** (0.839)	-3.675*** (0.863)	-1.695* (0.837)
Bush 2-Party Vote 2000			2.640*** (0.779)	2.674*** (0.806)	1.636** (0.575)
Economy over Past Year (2000, 2004 in models 3,5)	-0.352 (0.487)	-0.720 (0.547)	-0.732 (1.234)	-0.575 (1.257)	-1.255 (1.273)
Iraq Not Worth It (2004)			-1.879*** (0.589)	-1.857** (0.593)	-1.330* (0.633)
Constant	-3.679* (1.528)	-1.266 (1.700)	5.953* (2.834)	5.730* (2.869)	-0.972 (2.780)
Cox and Snell R ²	.600	.541	.666	.666	.677
Percent Correctly Predicted	90.3%	87.6%	94.7%	94.9%	95.9%
Number of Cases	801	490	415	415	491

[@]p<.01, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 – two tailed tests

despite that these attitudes were measured over four years before the act of voting. The effect is roughly equivalent to moving up a position on the party ID scale in 2000 or rating Mr. Bush more favorably on about 4 or 5 specific candidate characteristics.¹⁵

¹⁵ These results in model 2 hold if views on biblical interpretation and authoritarianism are added. Also the coefficient on lesbian and gay adoption remains significant if the sample is restricted to only voters

Using only the 2000 variables may be problematic, however. New issues also entered the political debate over Mr. Bush's first term and attitudes involving these issues may be correlated with attitudes involving gay and lesbian adoption and same-sex marriage. The foreign policy scale in 2000 is likely a very poor measure on attitudes involving terrorism and the war in Iraq. To better account for these new issues, in Model 3, I add in attitudes measuring disapproval for the president's war on terror, the respondent's evaluation of the value of the Iraq war, and the direction of the respondents' two-party vote in the 2000 election. I also updated the retrospective evaluation of the economy based on change in the national economy from the last year to the 2004 assessments from the 2000 assessments. Adding in these new measures, as illustrated in the third column of Table 7-4, actually increases the magnitude of the gay adoption attitude effect's estimate. Other new issues involving foreign policy are clearly not driving the effect of lesbian and gay rights attitudes, although terrorism and the Iraq war are themselves also having major effects on presidential voting behavior. The effect of gay adoption attitudes are roughly the same magnitude of those of attitudes on the value of the war in Iraq, and twice the effect size of economic evaluations.

Next I change the model to test for effects of the same-sex marriage bans in 2004. This is in order to create a model that matched the exit poll results presented above as closely as possible. Recall that this should manifest itself as an interactive effect between voting in a same-sex marriage ban state and same-sex marriage attitudes, here proxied by gay and lesbian adoption attitudes. Model 4 includes the dummy variable for same-sex marriage ban states in 2004 and the associated interaction. Neither is significant in a

who voted for Mr. Gore in 2000 are modeled indicating that beliefs about the legitimacy of lesbian and gay families can effect votes.

statistical sense and the coefficient on the interaction is in the wrong direction paralleling the results from the exit polls above. This suggests again that same-sex marriage bans themselves had no effect on vote choice while same-sex marriage attitudes did.

Lastly, I updated the model using (endogenous) attitudes measured in 2004. I do this to get a sense of the dynamics between lesbian and gay adoption and the other variables. Lesbian and gay adoption is kept at its 2000 values, along with age, religious denomination, sex, and race. Presumably these demographic categories are stable over time. Updated values for moral traditionalism, education, and born again were not available in 2004 so I continue to use the 2000 values, as I do with gay adoption. The results of the new vote-choice model are in Model 5 of Table 7-4. The effects of Bush's character traits and party identification, whose 2000 measures had been drowned out by the 2004 attitudes involving terror and Iraq reappear and are large and statistically significant. The effect of lesbian and gay adoption declines as compared to models 2 and 3, as would be predicted if candidate traits, party identification, or other updated variables in 2004 are related to lesbian and gay adoption or same-sex marriage endogenously. This demonstrated endogeneity also explains why others have sometimes failed to find a significant or large effect of same-sex marriage or lesbian and gay rights attitudes on vote choice in 2004 (Mockabee 2007). This effect is clear when examining multiple data sources as has been demonstrated throughout this paper. Same-sex marriage and lesbian and gay rights attitudes are exerting effects, particularly through Bush candidate traits, indirectly through endogeneous relationships between the variables. This can be demonstrated by looking at the correlation between Bush traits in 2000 and 2004 and lesbian and gay adoption attitudes measured in 2000. The correlation between 2000 Bush

traits and adoption attitudes is .216 (N=1215), while the correlation in 2004 is .340 (N=771). Finally, the results in model 1 of Table 7-4 also hold when restricted to voters who continued throughout the entire panel and reported voting in both elections.

Discussion and Conclusion

Political scientists are beginning to realize that ballot initiatives can, by helping to set the criteria by which voters match their issue positions to parties and candidates, shift results of close elections (Nicholson 2005). This chapter confirms that same-sex marriage, in 2004, had the potential to have a decisive effect by defining the agenda for the election. The national media, through coverage of the same-sex marriage issue, shaped the context of choice that voters used to decide upon a candidate. The context created a linkage between attitudes and beliefs about lesbian and gay families and their legitimacy, government recognition and policies toward these families, and ultimately candidate choice in the 2004 presidential election.

Pundits and scholars who have claimed that the ballot initiatives themselves had an effect on vote choice have missed the more likely causal mechanism behind this issue: namely, the discussion of same-sex marriage by national media elites. This is not to say that had the same-sex marriage bans not been on the ballot that there would have still been as large of an effect of same-sex marriage attitudes on vote choice. Their presence created an environment amenable to a media narrative weaving together the 2004 presidential election and same-sex marriage. This narrative gave the numerous ballot measures banning same-sex marriage an impact outside of their respective states. They, along with the media, interacted to create what was essentially a national referendum on

the issue. Lastly, the effect of lesbian and gay adoption attitudes measured in 2000 on vote choice in 2004 rather than on vote choice in 2000 provides strong confirmation that attitudes towards lesbian and gay families are determining vote choice rather than vote choice and elite led opinion determining attitudes towards the legitimacy of gay and lesbian families.

In terms of the larger story of this dissertation, it should be stated that public opinion about lesbians and gays are not just a cause of the political system but also help structure the political system in an endogenous fashion. The polarization on lesbian and gay rights issues in the 1990s and the election of Bill Clinton changed attitudes towards lesbian and gay rights. Attitudes towards lesbian and gay rights then potentially helped change the results of the 2004 presidential campaign. This makes for a difficult balancing act for politicians. Supporting an unpopular minority group can make public attitudes toward that group more positive over time, but that support may risk an immediate backlash. However, if support for minority rights rises high enough, politicians can collect the material benefits of support, volunteers and campaign donations, with virtually no risk of backlash. Democratic politicians in California are taking strong positions in favor of same-sex marriage in order to win support in Democratic primaries and the backing of activists. This is in spite of the fact that the state banned same-sex marriage in 2008. Same-sex marriage appears to be headed for the ballot in Maine and California (as a repeal of the 2008 initiative). Both measures have a good chance of being decided in a pro-gay direction, which has left Republican who are against same-sex marriage much less vocal than in 2008.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION: BUSH, OBAMA, AND THE FUTURE OF LESBIAN AND GAY PUBLIC ATTITUDES

Although the American Psychiatric Association's removal of homosexuality from the list of mental disorders marked a shift in elite thinking credited with starting the process of mass attitude change towards lesbians and gays (Zaller 1992), the real process is more complicated. Gays and lesbians developed a collective identity suitable for political mobilization and activism in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Entrepreneurial candidates for office noticed this development in urban centers and targeted electoral appeals to these constituents almost immediately after the collective identity developed. As the lesbian and gay movement institutionalized, interest groups formed which targeted donations and activists towards the Democratic Party. This caused mainstream democratic politicians to liberalize on lesbian and gay rights, starting an issue evolution similar to the one that took place on race in the 1960s (Carmines and Stimson 1989).

Attitudes towards lesbian and gays have changed radically since the early 1990s due to two major factors contingent on these events. The support of Democrats and Bill Clinton for lesbian and gay rights was the first of these. It and don't-ask-don't-tell provided a visible symbol of the polarization that had taken place at the elite level involving lesbian and gay issues and was received much more new coverage than previous lesbian and gay issues. Democrats in the mass public began to liberalize their

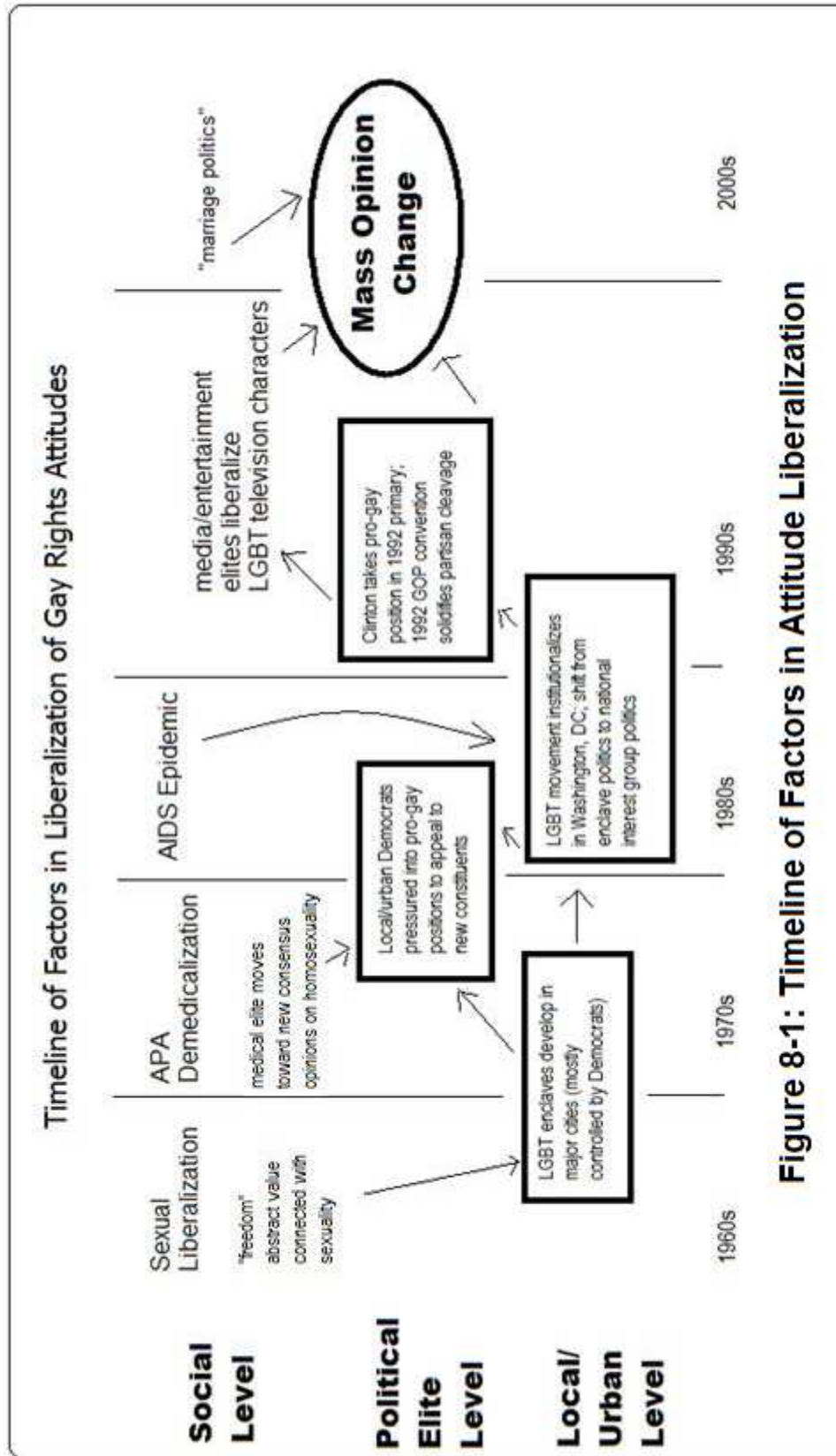


Figure 8-1: Timeline of Factors in Attitude Liberalization

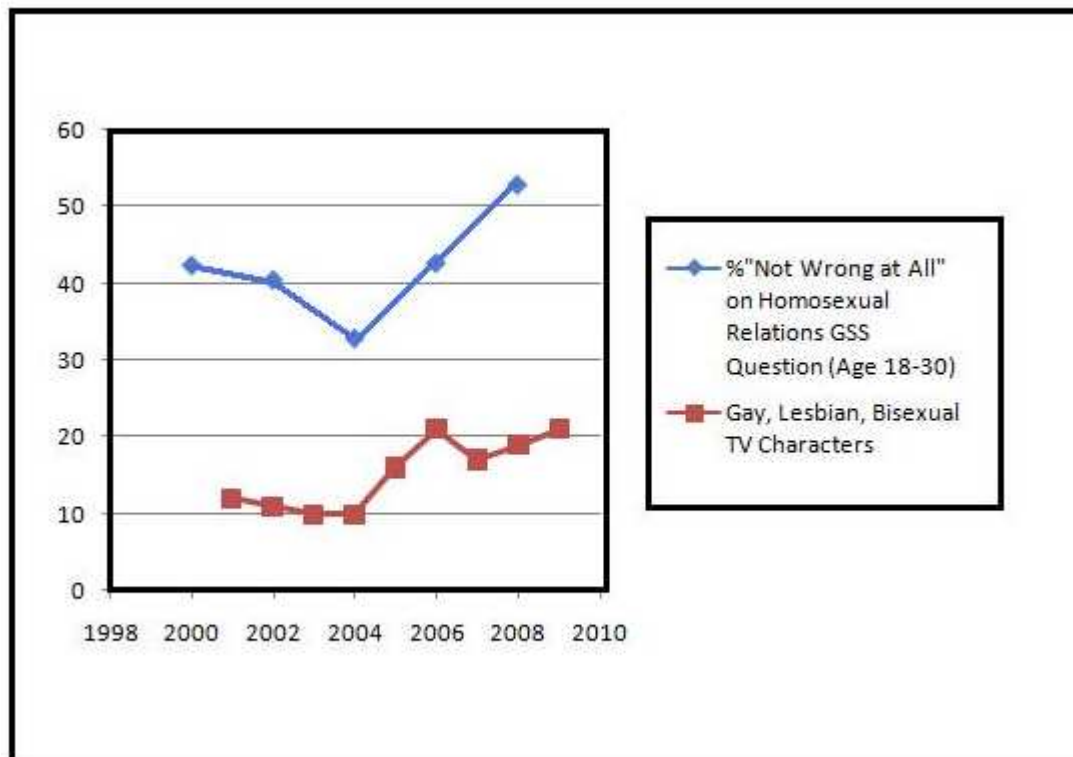


Figure 8-2: Television, the 2004 Election, and Declining Acceptance towards Same-Sex Relations among Youth

attitudes. Clinton's election then triggered an increase in lesbian and gay television characters which broadened attitude liberalization beyond his party's.

Remember, the support of Democratic elites itself was contingent on the development of a lesbian and gay movement in major U. S. cities that could provide resources to Democrats. Elite-led change must often come from the bottom up. The lesbian and gay movement thrived because it articulated and spread a lesbian and gay identity throughout the country. This had many cultural effects beyond the political sphere. This process and its historical narrative are outlined in Figure 8-1.

While it seems that further advances for lesbian and gay rights are certain in the future and that attitude liberalization will continue at its current pace, there are reasons to be more guarded. In addition to the possibility of the election of politicians unfriendly towards the rights of lesbians and gays described in Chapter 7, the clock can easily be rolled back on public support of gay rights directly. This came close very close to happening in 2004, and is illustrated in Figure 8-2. Although not directly comparable to Figure 1-4, Figure 8-2 displays a count of shows with lesbian, gay, or bisexual characters on the big three television networks from 2001 onward¹⁶. The rise of cable television and the internet has rendered this measure less valid after the 1990s, but it still acts as a rough measure of the cultural representation of lesbians, gays, and bisexuals in the American mainstream.

Despite the explosion in the number of shows on TV with the creation of new networks, the number of characters on the big three networks shows a small decline from its high in 2001 and 2002. The same-sex marriage debate in 2003 and 2004 was concurrent with this decline. Also, unlike the 1990s, the 2004 presidential election showcased an incumbent president strongly against lesbian and gay rights illustrated by same-sex marriage. Even the Democratic nominee, Sen. John Kerry, equivocated in his support.

If the effect of the decline in characters and the lack of presidential support for gay rights can be seen in public opinion, it would be most readily detectable among the nation's youth who have not experienced older time periods and have less static opinions.

¹⁶ This count was derived from a different method than the count of figure 4 of chapter 1. This count was created by referencing www.glaad.org and conducting a number of web searches for television characters. Reality show characters, which increased dramatically over this period, were not included,

Indeed, as shown in Figure 8-2, the nation's youngest citizens became less supportive of gay rights over the course of Bush's first term and reelection campaign. With lesbian and gay cultural representation on the decline and presidential leadership against lesbian and gay rights, a retreat from acceptance of homosexuality started.

But the retreat from tolerance was not to be. Bush's popularity declined rapidly after his reelection to the point where he no longer capable of influencing many members of the mass public in an anti-gay direction. Likewise the number of lesbian, bisexual, and gay characters started increasing again with a new generation of television shows in 2005. In 2008, Republican John McCain did not make opposition to same-sex marriage a major issue in the campaign. After his loose, his daughter, Megan McCain, stated that the Republican Party needed to liberalize on lesbian and gay rights in order to appeal to young voters. By 2006 the retreat from tolerance had itself reversed and by 2008 the nation's youth had become so supportive of lesbian and gay relationships that the 2004 backlash became lost in the decades long tread of liberalization.

Obama: A Difficult Position

2008 also brought the election of a second pro-lesbian and gay rights Democratic president, Barack Hussein Obama. Like Clinton, he campaigned on ending Don't-Ask-Don't-Tell (DADT), adding hate-crimes protections for lesbians and gays to existing federal statutes, and passing the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA).

However, in spite of high Democratic margins of control in both the House and the Senate, none of these agenda items has become law as of six months into his presidency.

causing a slightly smaller number than Figure 1-4. Also the number of episodes each character appeared in was unable to be verified, meaning some minor characters may have accidentally been listed.

Only hate-crimes protections seem likely to be enacted in the immediate future. The Obama administration seems particularly against an immediate repeal of DADT, despite a need for U.S. troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The reason for President Obama's lack of vocal support for lesbian and gay rights issues is almost certainly due to his seeming command of presidential history and strong desire to avoid problems experienced by previous presidents. For instance, instead of imposing health care reform on Congress, he has taken a hands-off and cooperative approach to the legislature, in an attempt not to follow in the footsteps of President Carter. Carter had dictated to the Congress and ended up alienating needed support for his entire administration.

Obama appears to be avoiding lesbian and gay rights in order to avoid triggering a potential backlash like the one experienced by Bill Clinton in 1994. Recall that Democrats lost both houses of Congress in 1994. Bills supportive of lesbian and gay rights were kept from making it to the floor regularly as described in Chapter 3. Even if a number of lesbian and gay rights bills became law prior to the 2010 midterm elections, strong public support would not guarantee that these bills wouldn't be repealed if the Republicans took control after the midterm. The Republican 104th Congress had no trouble repealing a popular assault weapons ban passed in the Democratic 103rd Congress in order to increase its appeal to members of its base. Obama appears to be moving slowly on gay rights issue, and perhaps extremely slowly, in accordance with his perception of the best interests of the Democratic Congress, lesbian and gay activists, and himself by avoiding an electoral backlash partly due to gay rights issues in 2010.

However, the long term interests of all of these groups would dictate a quicker and more vocal response. Gay and lesbian rights are relatively unpopular in the African-American community although they are widely supported by Black civil rights leaders and members of the Congressional Black Caucus. More vocal support for lesbian and gay rights would likely liberalize the mass African-American community in the long run. This would eliminate the possibility of a future schism within the Democratic Party. Several gay and lesbian activists noted that a lack of African-American support for same-sex marriage was a contributing factor to the passage of a ban on same-sex marriage in the state of California (although the lack of a coherent campaign that appealed to African-Americans by lesbian and gay activists likely contributed to this outcome).

Additionally, Obama's added appeal to young voters would hasten the liberalization process if he made a more vocal appeal. As mentioned above, by increasing tolerance in the public over time, the chance of backlash decreases in the long run. For instance, no major politician would today advocate *de jure* school segregation based on race, even in the South, although making an appeal to desegregate would have resulted in an electoral backlash in the 1950s and 1960s in the region. A similar pattern has slowly been unfolding for gay and lesbian rights since the 1990s.

Obama appears to have resolved the balance between short term risks and long term rewards by acting in a risk averse manner. He does not want to jeopardize his initiatives on economic recovery and health care, which are of higher salience to the public than gay rights. Because the liberalization of attitudes on homosexuality now seems unrelenting, the lack of presidential leadership is likely not interpreted as having a

significant effect on the process. This would be a mistake. As happened during the Bush years, the process could easily reverse itself. Gains could slip away into nothingness.

The Annihilation and Creation of Tolerance

Has the trend toward a more tolerant society over the last century been a natural and unavoidable outcome of the enlightenment and industrialization? Or is it contingent on other factors that can be turned back and reversed? This research suggests the latter. Changes in television and political leaders complement each other in causing social change. But when eliminated, tolerance can disappear. Increasing mass tolerance would not have occurred without the rise of mass media and entertainment in the 20th century. Likewise the structure and policies of the media and entertainment industries shape all the contours of our society in unexpected ways.

State regulation of television and entertainment can create and destroy tolerance within cultures in support of a public good or to strengthen a ruling social group or class. Government regulation of television in favor of increasing tolerance appears unlikely, however, for the very reason that this requires elite support that unpopular groups do not have.

The free market itself may not be well suited to increase tolerance. Unpopular minorities often make unpopular and controversial characters, and without the effect of political elites in starting social change, it may not be economical for executives in change of content to change television prior to shifts in the political arena. Niche media, cable, and the internet, however, may increase diversity in the long run, but if only

individuals who are already tolerant watch this media, the vast majority of the public will remain unchanged.

The way the gay and lesbian movement affected change seems to be one viable model. Groups in urban centers and in Washington, DC lobbied elites, while organizations like the Gay & Lesbian Alliance against Defamation (GLAAD) lobbied media elites and monitored media content. Without the economic resources that many lesbian and gay individuals had in the 1970s and 1980s, the pressure created by these groups may not have been possible. The African-American civil rights movement focused on news media and used a larger number of volunteers to pressure leaders in the 1960s in contrast to the model used by the lesbian and gay rights movement.

What is certain is that both television and the media matter in affecting change. When sexuality liberalized in the 1960s, attitudes toward gays were left behind. When more lesbian and gays forged a collective identity, public opinion barely budged. When psychiatric and media elites declared that lesbians and gays were not mentally ill, the public seemed to turn a deaf ear. But when a president supported lesbian and gay people, the public started listening. Finally, when lesbians and gays characters started streaming into homes in the mid 1990s, the message broke through. Tolerance grew and government policies shifted. Changing media had changed minds.

APPENDIX I

QUESTION CODING FOR SECOND POOLED CROSS-SECTIONAL DATA SET

Survey	Year	Variable	Question Wording	Coding
LA Times	1983	Job Protections for Gays	Do you favor or oppose laws to protect homosexuals against job discrimination?	1 = Favor, 0 = Oppose, Other Responses
LA Times	1983	Know a Lesbian or Gay	Do you know any friends or co-workers who are openly homosexual? (IF NOT) Do you know any friends or co-workers who you suspect are homosexuals?	1 = Yes, open homosexuals, 0 = Other responses [including suspected]
LA Times	1983	Born Gay or Cannot Change	In your opinion, what causes homosexuality? Is it something that people are born with ... or is it something that develops because of the way people are brought up ... or is it just the way that some people prefer to live?	1= Something that people are born with, 0 = Other responses
LA Times	1985	Job Protections for Gays	Do you favor or oppose laws to protect homosexuals against job discrimination?	1 = Favor, 0 = Oppose, Other Responses
LA Times	1985	Know a Lesbian or Gay	Do you have any friends, or relatives, or co-workers who have told you, personally, that they are gay or lesbian? (If no) Do you have any friends, or relatives, or co-workers who you seriously suspect are gay or lesbian --- but they haven't told you?	1 = Yes, [explicitly] told you, 0 = Other responses
LA Times	1985	Born Gay or Cannot Change	In your opinion, what causes homosexuality? Is it something that people are born with ... or is it something that develops because of the way people	1= Something that people are born with, 0 = Other responses

			are brought up ... or is it just the way that some people prefer to live?	
Gallup	1993	Gays in the Military	Do you favor Keeping the ban on homosexuals serving in the military?	1 = Favor ending the ban, 0 = Other responses
Gallup	1993	Know a Lesbian or Gay	Do you have a co-worker, friends or relative who is openly homosexual?	1 = Yes, 0= No, Other responses
Gallup	1993	Born Gay or Cannot Change	In your opinion, what causes homosexuality? Is homosexuality...	1 = Something that people are born with, 0 = Other responses
CBS & NY Times	1993	Job Protections for Gays	As you know, there has been considerable discussion in the news lately regarding the rights of homosexual men and women. In general, do you think homosexuals should or should not have equal rights in terms of job opportunities?	1 = Should, 0= Should not, Other responses
CBS & NY Times	1993	Know a Lesbian or Gay	Do you have a close friend or family member who is gay or lesbian?	1 = Yes, 0= No, Other responses
CBS & NY Times	1993	Born Gay or Cannot Change	Do you think being homosexual is something that people choose to be, or do you think it is something they cannot change?	1 = Cannot change, 0 = Choose to be, Other responses
Newsweek	1998	Job Protections for Gays	Thinking again about what might be done to protect gay rights, do you think there should or should NOT be ... Equal rights for gays and lesbians in terms of job opportunities?	1 = Yes, 0= No, Other responses
Newsweek	1998	Know a Lesbian or Gay	Please tell me whether or not each of the following applies to you. First, do you ... a) work with someone you know is gay or lesbian, b) have someone in your family who is gay or lesbian, c) have a friend or acquaintance who is gay or lesbian?	1 = Yes (any category), 0 = No on all, or Other response

Newsweek	1998	Born Gay or Cannot Change	1) In your opinion, is homosexuality something a person is born with, or is homosexuality due to other factors such as upbringing or environment? 2) Some people believe gays' and lesbians' sexual preference is something that cannot be changed. Others believe their sexual preference can be changed through willpower, therapy, or religious conviction. Which comes closer to your view?	1 = Born with AND/OR Homosexuality cannot be changed, 0 = Other factors AND Homosexuality can be changed, or Other Response
CNN/Time	1998	Gays in the Military	Do you favor or oppose permitting openly gays or lesbians to serve in the military?	1 = Favor, 0 = Oppose, Other Responses
CNN/Time	1998	Know a Lesbian or Gay	Do you happen to have a family member or close friend who is gay or lesbian?	1 = Yes, 0= No, Other responses
CNN/Time	1998	Born Gay or Cannot Change	1) Do you think that homosexuality is something a person is born with, or is due to other factors such as how they are raised or to their environment? 2) Do you think that someone who is homosexual can change their sexual orientation if they choose to do so or don't you think so?	1 = Born with AND/OR Homosexuality cannot be changed, 0 = Other factors AND Homosexuality can be changed, or Other Response
Washington Post	1998	Job Protections for Gays	In general, do you think homosexuals should or should not have equal rights in terms of job opportunities?	1 = Should, 0 = Should not, Other responses
Washington Post	1998	Know a Lesbian or Gay	Do you yourself have a friend, family member, or acquaintance who is gay or lesbian, or not?	1 = Yes, 0= No, Other responses

Washington Post	1998	Born Gay or Cannot Change	1) In your opinion, what is the main cause of homosexuality? Are people born homosexual, do people become homosexual because of their experiences while growing up, or do people choose to be homosexual on their own?	1 = People are born homosexual, 0 = Other responses
Newsweek	2000	Job Protections for Gays	Thinking again about what might be done to protect the rights of gays and lesbians, ... Do you think there should or should NOT be ... Equal rights for gays and lesbians in terms of job opportunities?	1 = Yes, 0= No, Other responses
Newsweek	2000	Know a Lesbian or Gay	Please tell me whether or not each of the following applies to you. First, do you ... a) work with someone you know is gay or lesbian, b) have someone in your family who is gay or lesbian, c) have a friend or acquaintance who is gay or lesbian?	1 = Yes (any category), 0 = No on all, or Other response
Newsweek	2000	Born Gay or Cannot Change	1) In your opinion, is homosexuality something a person is born with, or is homosexuality due to other factors such as upbringing or environment?	1 = Born with , 0 = Other factors, or Other Response
Washington Post	2000	Job Protections for Gays	Do you favor or oppose laws to protect gays against job discrimination?	1 = Favor, 0 = Oppose, Other Responses
Washington Post	2000	Know a Lesbian or Gay	Thinking of all the people you know, either well or even casually --- do you know anyone who is openly gay? (IF NOT) Do you know anyone who you think is gay?	1 = Yes openly gay, 0= No, Other responses (including Yes, thought gay)

Washington Post	2000	Born Gay or Cannot Change	1) In your opinion, what causes someone to be gay? Is it something that people are born with, or is it something that develops because of the way people are brought up, or is it just the way that some people choose to live?	1 = Something people are born with, 0 = Other responses
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APPENDIX II

TREATMENT AND CONTROL CONDITIONS FOR EXPERIMENT

“Obama” Treatment:

Television has become the medium through which most citizens learn about politics. We would like to show you a picture and a short transcript of an interview that took place on television a few months ago about the 2008 presidential election. The interviewer here is Ellen DeGeneres, who is married to Portia De Rossi, and known for her role on a sit-com in the mid-1990s. She interviews Barack Obama, one of the candidates for Presidency in 2008.

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Figure AII-1: Image in “Obama” Condition

Obama Talks Politics on Ellen

Ellen: I’d like to welcome our very special guest today, Barack Obama. He’s come a very long way to talk to us about the 2008 presidential election. <Applause>

Obama: I’m glad to be here, Ellen. Thank you so much for having me. After all this is one of the most important elections we’ve had in decades. A lot is riding on it.

Ellen: What do you think has been the most important issue has been in this election so far?

Obama: Well, I think a lot of people in Middle America today are suffering because of the way things are going in this country. One of the most important things we can do is provide relief to people. We have to fix the mess that has developed over the years in Washington.

<next page>

What do you think is the most important problem facing the country today?

1. The Economy
2. Healthcare
3. Terrorism
4. Iraq and Afghanistan
5. Social Issues Such as Abortion and Gay Rights
6. Energy
7. Something Else
8. Haven't Thought Much about It

“McCain” Treatment:

Television has become the medium through which most citizens learn about politics. We would like to show you a picture and a short transcript of an interview that took place on television a few months ago about the 2008 presidential election. The interviewer here is Ellen DeGeneres, who is married to Portia De Rossi, and known for her role on a sit-com in the mid-1990s. She interviews John McCain, one of the candidates for presidency in 2008.

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Figure AII-2: Image Used in “McCain” Condition

McCain Talks Politics on Ellen

Ellen: I’d like to welcome our very special guest today, John McCain. He’s come a very long way to talk to us about the 2008 presidential election. <Applause>

McCain: I’m glad to be here, Ellen. Thank you so much for having me. After all this is one of the most important elections we’ve had in decades. A lot is riding on it.

Ellen: What do you think has been the most important issue has been in this election so far?

McCain: Well, I think a lot of people in Middle America today are suffering because of the way things are going in this country. One of the most important things we can do is provide relief to people. We have to fix the mess that has developed over the years in Washington.

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What do you think is the most important problem facing the country today?

1. The Economy
2. Healthcare
3. Terrorism
4. Iraq and Afghanistan
5. Social Issues Such as Abortion and Gay Rights
6. Energy
7. Something Else
8. Haven’t Thought Much about It

“Ellen” Treatment:

Television has become the medium through which most citizens learn about politics. We would like to show you a picture and a short transcript of an interview that took place on television a few months ago about the 2008 presidential election. The interviewer here is Ellen DeGeneres, who is married to Portia De Rossi, and known for her role on a sit-com in the mid-1990s. She interviews Tom Brokaw, an anchor for a major television news channel.

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Figure AII-3: Image Used in “Ellen” Condition

Brokaw Talks Politics on Ellen

Ellen: I’d like to welcome our very special guest today, Tom Brokaw. He’s come a very long way to talk to us about the 2008 presidential election. <Applause>

Brokaw: I’m glad to be here, Ellen. Thank you so much for having me. After all this is one of the most important elections we’ve had in decades. A lot is riding on it.

Ellen: What do you think has been the most important issue has been in this election so far?

Brokaw: Well, I think a lot of people in Middle America today are suffering because of the way things are going in this country. One of the most important things we can do is provide relief to people. We have to fix the mess that has developed over the years in Washington.

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What do you think is the most important problem facing the country today?

1. The Economy
2. Healthcare
3. Terrorism
4. Iraq and Afghanistan
5. Social Issues Such as Abortion and Gay Rights
6. Energy
7. Something Else
8. Haven't Thought Much about It

Control Condition:

Television has become the medium through which most citizens learn about politics. We'd like to show you a picture and a short transcript of an interview that took on television a few months ago about the 2008 presidential election. The interviewer here is David Letterman, who is married to Regina Lasko, and known for his role on a late-night comedy show. He interviews Tom Brokaw, an anchor for a major television news channel.

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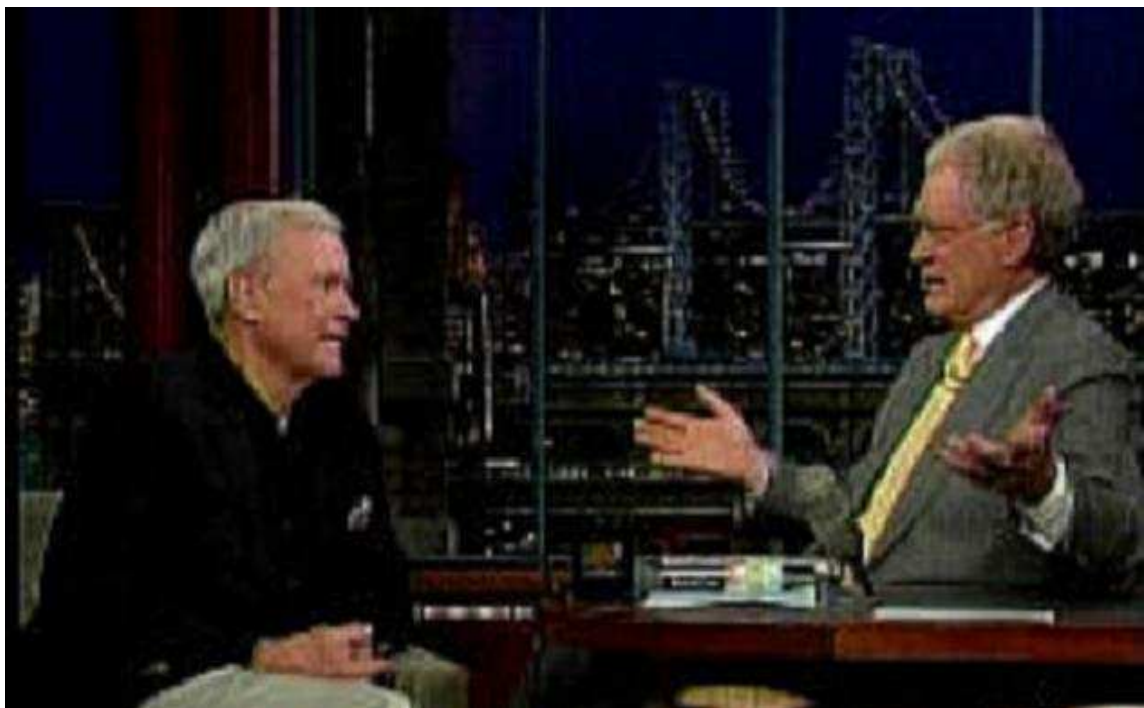


Figure AII-4: Image Used in Control Condition

Brokaw Talks Politics on Letterman

Letterman: I'd like to welcome our very special guest today, Tom Brokaw. He's come a very long way to talk to us about the 2008 presidential election. <Applause>

Brokaw: I'm glad to be here, Dave. Thank you so much for having me. After all this is one of the most important elections we've had in decades. A lot is riding on it.

Letterman: What do you think has been the most important issue has been in this election so far?

Brokaw: Well, I think a lot of people in Middle America today are suffering because of the way things are going in this country. One of the most important things we can do is provide relief to people. We have to fix the mess that has developed over the years in Washington.

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What do you think is the most important problem facing the country today?

1. The Economy
2. Healthcare
3. Terrorism
4. Iraq and Afghanistan
5. Social Issues Such as Abortion and Gay Rights
6. Energy
7. Something Else
8. Haven't Thought Much about It

APPENDIX III

QUESTION WORDING FOR EXPERIMENTAL LESBIAN AND GAY RIGHTS SCALE

- A. Should same-sex couples be allowed to marry, or do you think they should not be allowed to marry?
1. Should be allowed
 2. Should not be allowed
- B. How strongly do you feel about your position on same-sex marriage?
1. Strongly
 2. Not Strongly
- C. Do you think gay or lesbian couples, in other words, homosexual couples, should be legally permitted to adopt children?
1. Should be allowed
 2. Should not be allowed
- D. How strongly do you feel about your position on same-sex couples adopting?
1. Strongly
 2. Not Strongly
- E. Should same-sex couples be allowed to form civil unions, or do you think they should not be allowed to form civil unions?
1. Should be allowed
 2. Should not be allowed
- F. How strongly do you feel about your position on same-sex civil unions?
1. Strongly
 2. Not Strongly
- G. Do you favor or oppose laws to protect homosexuals against job discrimination?
1. Favor
 2. Oppose

- H. Do you favor or oppose such laws strongly or not strongly?
1. Strongly
 2. Not Strongly
- I. Do you think homosexuals should be allowed to serve in the United States Armed Forces or don't you think so?
1. Homosexuals should be allowed to serve
 2. Homosexuals should not be allowed to serve
- J. Do you feel strongly or not strongly that homosexuals should be allowed or should not be allowed to serve?
1. Strongly
 2. Not Strongly

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