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Race, Ethnicity and Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Unions in the United States

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Race, Ethnicity, and Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Unions

In the United States

by

Claudia Pleșa

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Science
In
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ABSTRACT

Recent political and cultural trends have led to an evaluation of the meaning of marriage within American society, and especially marriage as it concerns couples of the same sex. However, little research has been done to find out how attitudes toward same-sex marriage might vary according to race and ethnicity. Drawing on data from the 2004 National Politics Study, the author investigates same-sex marriage attitudes and tests hypotheses concerning the attitudes of various American race-ethnic groups. This study employs multinomial logistic regression analysis to compare attitudes of African Americans, Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites. Results indicate that even when socio demographic factors such as education and gender are controlled for, ethnic groups still differ in their attitudes toward this topic. Analyses also indicate that the relationship between race/ethnicity and attitudes toward same-sex unions does not vary by gender and that foreign birth explains the relationship between Hispanic ethnicity and attitudes toward same-sex marriage.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The current debate over same-sex marriage shows a deep “cultural anxiety” in the U.S. over the nature and future of marriage (Hull, 2006, p. 4). In fact the many changes in attitudes and beliefs about marriage and family that took place in the United States in the last few decades have been extraordinary in both extent and pace. For example the divorce rate has seen sharp increases since the 1960’s, to where now half of all marriages end in divorce (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Rates of cohabitation and single parenthood households have also increased. Rather than one out of ten couples starting out cohabitating as was common in the 1960’s, now a majority of couples start their relationships this way (Smock, 2000). Today over one third of all births are to unmarried mothers, and one quarter of all U.S. households are headed by single parents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Although many of these changes have become sites for legal and cultural clashes, none has been as controversial and fiercely debated as same-sex marriage.

Alongside these trends in divorce rates and family types, new beliefs have emerged regarding sexuality, sexual choice, and marriage. As linkages between sex, reproduction, and marriage are dismantled due to changing attitudes, increased gender equality and technological advances, a variety of non traditional families are forming in the United States (Hull, 2006). Families are now more commonly headed by a single parent, cohabiting parents or even same-sex parents. Census data indicates that 11% of the 5.5 million couples who were living together but remained unmarried in

2000 were same-sex couples (Simmons & O'Connell, 2003). Research also indicates that of those couples, between 18% and 28% of gay men and 8% and 21% of lesbians have lived together 10 or more years (*The Advocate sex poll*, 2002; Falkner & Garber, 2002; Kurdek, 2003). Due perhaps to their increased visibility and acceptance and partially inspired by the sexual revolution, the civil rights and women's movement, some gay and lesbians now wish to change the definition of marriage to include same-sex relationships (Hull, 2006).

Although today same-sex marriage is a hotly contested political issue, it did not become so instantly. The controversy started in 1993 in Hawaii, when the Hawaii Supreme court ruled that denying marriage licenses to same-sex couples violated the state's equal rights amendment to the constitution (Rom, 2007). In response to the threat that Hawaii might actually start issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples, Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) (Cahill, 2004). DOMA established a national definition of marriage which required couples to consist solely of a man and a woman (Hull, 2006). Following this ruling and as early as 1998, many states rushed to pass constitutional amendments prohibiting same-sex marriage recognition (Rom, 2007). By 2004 thirty-eight states had enacted their own DOMA measures, with most of the bills being adopted between 1996 and 2000 (Rom, 2007, p. 27).

At the same time, there were some key decisions that supported the right to marriage for same-sex couples. In 2000, Vermont created civil unions for same-sex couples, and in 2003 the Massachusetts Supreme court ruled that denial of marriage licenses to same-sex couples was unconstitutional (Cahill, 2004). In 2005, California

legalized domestic partnerships, and Connecticut became the second state to fully allow same-sex marriage (Hull, 2006).

Ironically, while the U.S. Congress and most states rushed to ban same-sex marriage, other industrialized countries are increasingly recognizing same-sex relationships, (most notably, in the Netherlands, Scandinavia, Belgium, France, Canada, Germany) (Adam, 2003). While there are many differences between the U.S. context and other regions of the world, success in other countries has been attributed to legislators not using the term “marriage” when awarding same-sex couples the rights and obligations often associated with marriage (Adam, 2003). In part this is due to the fact that many gays and lesbians outside of the U.S. context have labeled marriage as an oppressive institution, and desire only the rights and privileges given to heterosexual married couples, but not necessarily the marriage label (Adam, 2003).

In the unique U.S. context, the debate between DOMA proponents and gay and lesbian advocates has taken the form “of a high stakes, all-or-nothing symbolic contention over *marriage*” (Adam, 2003, p. 273). In fact even those supporting DOMA , suggest that other options “might be open if we did not think the question was simply same-sex marriage, pro or con” (Warner, 1999, p. 146) While opinions polls show Americans to increasingly oppose overt discrimination against homosexuals, they also refuse to support same-sex marriage or to pass legislature meant to remedy present or future discrimination against homosexuals (Adam, 2003). The resulting issue is also highly partisan as legislators become split over same-sex marriage, with Democrats more likely to support it and Republicans generally opposed (Adam 2003). This unique focus on a “marriage only” discourse, as well as the

complexity of American attitudes toward homosexual rights and marriage make it very interesting and important to study these attitudes in the U.S. context.

In addition, it is particularly important to study this issue because within our society family, law and politics do not stand alone but are connected. Analysis of this issue can tell us how the meaning of marriage is shifting, and how this definition might vary among U.S. subpopulations. It might also help us to foresee the major political, legal, and cultural repercussions of legalizing same-sex unions within the U.S. As definitions change for who counts as a married couple (either to include or exclude gays), so do the ways in which voters, politicians and judges make their decisions regarding the legality of same-sex marriage.

Same-sex unions have a huge political importance for both voters and politicians. Exit polls conducted on Election Day 2004 show that 22% of Americans were motivated by moral values when they turned out to vote in the presidential election (Hull, 2006). Gay marriage is one of the most important issues lurking behind these exit polls, as many voters simply do not see the issue a civil rights issue, but a moral issue (Firestone et al., 2003). Same-sex marriage is also seen and treated by voters as well as politicians as an extension of a much larger set of policies and debates that stretch back decades (Hull, 2006). So politically, this issue is tied to current voting patterns on the part of voters, but also to campaigning efforts on the part of politicians.

Legally this issue is also very important. Those who support same-sex marriage claim that equal rights are at stake in this debate, and that marriage would bring the gay and lesbian population closer to equality in front of the law. Because of

how society, law and marriage are intertwined, supporters also claim that marriage would give gays equality not only legally, but increase acceptance in the eyes of employers, family members and heterosexuals in general (Hull 2006). Thus this issue is also very important culturally as most Americans do not see this as a political, legal or discrimination issue, but rather as a moral issue. Many Americans define marriage as created by God, and as between one man and one woman (Adam, 2003).

Gender is an important variable when studying attitudes toward same-sex marriage, as men are usually less supportive of gay and lesbian rights than women are (Herek, 2000; 2002), however research is not clear whether this pattern is similar for all ethnic and racial groups in the United States (McVeigh & Diaz, 2009; Finlay & Walther, 2003). A review of social science research revealed that few studies have focused specifically on the public opinions of Hispanics or African Americans in the United States. Most research addressed public opinion as it varied among the U.S. white population, and as it varies due to other demographic variables. Literature indicates that the most important predictors of attitudes toward homosexual marriage have been gender, age, socio-economic status, religiosity and religious denomination, race (Lewis, 2003; Burdette et al., 2005; Olsen et al., 2006).

While some studies have addressed the main effect of race/ethnicity on public opinions toward gay and lesbian rights, few have addressed the interaction between race, ethnicity and gender. The results of these studies are mixed, with some finding Hispanics and African Americans to have similar attitude to whites toward gay and lesbian rights, and some finding Hispanics and African Americans to be less supportive of gay and lesbian rights when compared to whites. However, these studies

simply control for gender and race, and do not distinguish the moderating effects of gender for each racial and ethnic category (Lewis, 2003; Herek & Capitano, 1995; Herek, 2000; 2002). In other words, past research treats both race and gender as demographic variables with the interaction between the two rarely being addressed. This study does not only test the effects of gender on attitudes toward same-sex marriage, but also uses interaction terms to compare the attitudes of white, African American and Hispanic men and women.

When researchers find that males are less supportive of same-sex marriage, this generally refers to non-Hispanic white men (Herek, 2000; 2002). And while parallels undoubtedly exist between these U.S. ethnic groups, there is a need for research that specifically compares the groups to one another. In addition, it is important to analyze how gender might moderate the association between race/ethnicity and public opinions regarding same-sex marriage. A goal of this research is to add the public opinions of Hispanics and African Americans, both men and women, into the academic discussion of why and how Americans feel they way they do about same-sex marriage.

Finally, there is one other reason why this issue is important to study. As marriage is clearly culturally defined, social research must remain current with the present population in the United States. As ethnic and minority racial groups become larger proportions of the United States population, marriage attitudes will shift to reflect that change. And although Hispanics have the highest birthrate in the United States, most studies do not look into the public opinion of Hispanics on the matter of same-sex marriage. This remains so in spite of the fact that same-sex marriage

initiatives drew larger racial and ethnic minority crowds than other political issues (Abrajano, 2010). Hispanics are also the largest group of immigrants in the U.S., as well as one of the largest U.S. ethnic groups. Contemporary models of migration clearly show that immigrants as well as their children do not simply change their values and standards to match American values (Rumbaut & Portes, 2006). Rather, they often change the cultural context into which they arrive (Massey et al., 1993). So to close this gap within the literature, and to make research better reflect the United States context, this study looks at the relationship between race, ethnicity, gender and political attitudes towards same-sex unions.

Thus, this study will address three primary research questions:

1. Do U.S. attitudes toward same-sex unions vary by ethnicity/race?
2. Is the relationship between ethnicity/race and attitudes toward same-sex unions moderated by gender?
3. Does foreign birth explain the association between Hispanic ethnicity and attitudes toward same-sex unions?

This research compares the public opinions of a nationally representative sample of U.S. Hispanics, African Americans and non-Hispanic whites using the National Politics Study of 2004. Each individual was interviewed as part of a larger study that had a primary goal of gathering data about individuals' political attitudes, beliefs, aspirations, and behaviors at the beginning of the 21st century.

Chapter two reviews sociological, political science and topic related literature that links my research questions to what has been found previously. In chapter two I address the trends in same-sex marriage public opinion from the 1970's to today. Since much of literature has found clear links between levels of acceptance and demographic variables, this discussion will also address how a respondent's age, region of residence, socio-economic status, political affiliation, marital status, religion and religiosity are associated with support for homosexual marriage rights. I will also discuss previous literature that specifically addresses the relationship between same-sex marriage and racial and ethnic background. This discussion will integrate an analysis of how gender might moderate the association between attitudes toward same-sex marriage and race/ethnicity, and how theories on race and gender might explain such moderating effects.

Chapter three is focused on the methodological process used in this research. I begin with a description of the data, sampling design and sample, and then discuss the measure used for each variable included in the analysis.

Chapter four presents the findings of the research, through both univariate and multivariate analysis of the National Politics Study 2004. Chapter five discusses the important theoretical and policy implications of this research and concludes with a discussion of the limitations of this study, as well as with suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review and Theory

Introduction

Despite widespread polling and research on correlates of attitudes toward same-sex marriage, there has been modest empirical research on the impact of race and ethnicity on attitudes toward gays and lesbians (Jenkins et al., 2009; Schulte & Battle, 2004). Only a handful of studies have actually tested the mediating effect of race on public opinion toward gay and lesbian rights, and even fewer have tested the interaction effects of gender and race/ethnicity toward the legalization of same-sex marriage. As such, there is a large gap in the literature concerning the specific effects of gender on the attitudes of African American and Hispanic respondents. Moreover, no study to date compares the levels of support among Hispanics, African Americans and whites for same-sex marriage to their levels of support for civil unions. This is a serious gap in literature, as U.S. attitudes toward homosexuality demonstrate clear differences between support for civil unions and same-sex marriage (Bowman & O'Keefe, 2004). Generally in the United States civil unions are viewed more favorably than same-sex marriage (Bowman & O'Keefe, 2004; Adam, 2003).

In fact racial and ethnic differences are a source of debate within the field, as the small numbers of studies that have approached this relationship have produced mixed results. However, while research has so far only shown conflicting results, there is still a common perception within the field that African Americans in particular are more homophobic than whites, and less likely than whites to approve of same-sex

marriage (Jenkins et al., 2009; Abrajano, 2010; Shulte & Battle, 2004; Lewis, 2003; Herek & Capitanio, 1995). This perception is not limited to academic research but is also present in media reports on state wide initiatives such as California's Proposition 8. After California's Proposition 8 passed in 2008, which banned same-sex marriage, media reports concluded that it was the overwhelming opposition of Black and Latino voters that accounted for the ban (Swift & Webby, 2008; Wetzstein, 2008). To determine whether this academic and media perception of the attitudes of the African American and Latino communities toward same-sex marriage is accurate, it is important to discuss the research that has studied race and ethnic variations in public opinion toward same-sex marriage.

Previous Empirical Research

Race and Attitudes toward Homosexuality

Some studies have found that African Americans have more negative attitudes toward homosexuals than whites (Loftus, 2001; Bonilla & Porter, 1990; Schulte, 2002; Lewis, 2003). Loftus (2001) reports that whites have more favorable attitudes toward homosexuals in general, and Lewis (2003) and Bonilla and Porter (1990) found that whites were significantly less likely than Blacks to view homosexuality as always wrong. Schulte and Battle (2004) found that when compared to Blacks, whites express less negativity toward both lesbians and gay men. Concerning the civil rights of homosexuals, DeJowski (1992) found that whites were more supportive than Blacks. While these studies produced results supporting the notion that African

Americans have more negative views of homosexuals and are less supportive of gay rights, other results have been mixed.

In fact other studies have found no racial differences in attitudes toward homosexuals (Herek & Glunt, 1993; Herek & Capitanio, 1995; Jenkins et al. 2009; Firestone et al., 2003). Herek & Glunt (1993) found no difference at all between the attitudes toward gays of African American and whites, and Herek & Capitanio (1995) found whites and Blacks to have similar levels of homophobia. Jenkins et al. (2009) found no statistically significant differences between the opinions of Black and white students regarding homosexuality in general, extending rights to homosexuals, and socializing with homosexuals. Also while Shulte (2002) found African Americans to have more negative attitudes in one sample, a second sample showed levels of homophobia to be similar between whites and African Americans. And specifically regarding same-sex marriage, in a survey of San Antonio, Blacks were not found to have significantly differing opinions than whites or Hispanics (Firestone et al., 2003)

To add greater confusion to the debate, there have been a few studies that show African Americans to be more tolerant of homosexuals than whites (Finlay & Walther, 2003; Lewis, 2003). A survey of Texas college students conducted by Finlay & Walther (2003) showed that Black and Latino students were less homophobic than whites. Lewis also found that while Blacks had less favorable views of gays than whites, Blacks were more likely to support gay rights laws (Lewis, 2003). While these two studies have their limitations as far as sample size, they show that “there is no consensus about the issue of homophobic attitudes among African Americans” (Finlay & Walther, 2003, p. 373).

Social scientists have proposed several sources for the attitudes of African Americans toward homosexuality. The major explanation found within the literature argues that because African Americans are more religious than whites, and high levels of religiosity often indicate increased intolerance toward homosexuals, decreased support for same-sex marriage should be expected among African Americans (Lewis 2003; Lewis-Williams, 2006; Jenkins et al., 2009). Research has also noted that the Black church occupies a unique social, economic and historical place within the African American community, and this differs significantly from the way whites view the churches they attend (Lewis, 2003; Taylor & Chatters, 1996). But it is not only that Black churches occupy a uniquely important role in the lives of African Americans: researchers have also suggested that it is the types of teachings taught that also make a difference for African American attitudes toward homosexuals. Griffin (2000) found that while most religious groups view homosexuality as wrong, African American denominations seem to oppose it to a higher degree than white religious groups.

U.S. black churches are diverse as far as denomination, and this makes it difficult to control for religion within this study. African American churches could be of Baptist, Protestant or Methodist denominations, and could vary widely in their views of homosexuality (Ward, 2005). As such, this study does not control for the specific denomination of the respondents, but rather for the dedication level of respondents toward their faith. This is in line with research that found that “religious affiliation is less important as a predictor of political attitudes and affiliations than the extent to which individuals are committed to and engrossed in religious life” (Olson et

al. 2006, p. 346; Green, 2004; Layman, 2001). The key measure of religiosity is respondent answers to the question “How religious would you say you are?” This is meant to take into account the special importance of the church in the African American community outside of a specific denomination.

Hispanic Ethnicity and Attitudes toward Homosexuality

While there are some studies that examine homophobic attitudes among African Americans, much less is known about the attitudes of Hispanic Americans. Only a handful of studies have compared the attitudes of U.S. Hispanics toward homosexuals (Bonilla & Porter, 1990; Lewis & Gossett, 2008; Bauermeister et al. 2007; Abrajano et al., 2008). The results of each study reveal that attitudes of Hispanics lie somewhere between the views of whites and Blacks in the United States.

Generally these studies have shown that while Hispanics show more favorable attitudes toward homosexuals than Blacks, Hispanic support for homosexuals is much lower than white support (Abrajano, 2005; Lewis & Gossett, 2008). Moreover, in a study looking at changes in same-sex marriage attitudes in California, results indicated that support for same-sex marriage is lower among Hispanics when compared to whites, but that over time support has been increasing in the Hispanic community (Lewis & Gossett 2008; Firestone et al. 2003). Some hypothesize that a large part of the increase in support for same-sex marriage in California has been due to “the growth of support from Latinos” in the state (Abrajano 2005, p. 6). In a national study of county level attitudes, opposition to same-sex marriage was found to be lower in counties with high percentages of Latino residents (McVeight & Diaz 2009). As such,

these studies have found that support for same-sex marriage among Hispanics is low because American support for the institution in general is low, but Hispanics should be somewhere in the middle in terms of support for same-sex marriage (Firestone et al., 2003).

While these studies show some clear patterns in same-sex marriage attitudes among Hispanics, other research suggests that attitudes among Hispanics are more complicated than previously thought. Firestone et al. found differences between Hispanic and white attitudes, but those differences were not statistically significant (Firestone et al., 2003). Other studies have found a similar trend, in which white and Hispanic attitudes did not differ significantly (Bonilla & Porter, 1990; Herek & Gonzalez-Rivera, 2006). Additionally, while much research has been devoted toward gender differences between white males and females, a study of sexual prejudice among Puerto Rican college students found no differences between men and women (Bauermeister et al., 2007). As such, the question of how supportive or unsupportive of same-sex marriage Hispanics truly are has not been adequately answered within the literature, and this study intends to address this gap.

Research has proposed several causes for the attitudes of Hispanics toward homosexuality. Researchers usually attempt to either describe why Hispanic attitudes might be more favorable than other minorities, or why they are more negative than the attitudes of non-Hispanic whites. Abrajano suggests that because Hispanics are more religious than whites, and because they tend to affiliate with socially conservative denominations like Catholicism, it is only logical that they support same-sex marriage less than whites (2010, p. 6). She also suggests that Latinos are increasingly

beginning to identify with Evangelical Christianity, which as a denomination is linked to the least amount of support for homosexuals (p. 6).

Firestone et al. found no differences between non-Hispanic whites and Hispanics, and suggested that Hispanics are as supportive of homosexuals as whites because of their own experience as an oppressed group (2003). Due to their own experiences of discrimination, they are therefore hypothesized to be more supportive of marriage rights for homosexuals (Firestone et al., 2003). While this study uses a relatively large sample (1100 respondents of non-Hispanic white, Hispanic, and African American descent), the data collected only represents the San Antonio, Texas area. Furthermore, while the overall sample size is relatively large, the statistical power for each racial and ethnic group diminishes as the groups are compared. My study has enough African American, white and Hispanic respondents to be able to compare the groups and not lose statistical power.

Also due to low statistical power, Firestone et al. (2003) were not able to add gender interaction terms to distinguish whether support varied by gender among the Hispanic and African American communities. As such, my study uses a large random sample to distinguish whether significant differences exist between the attitudes of Hispanic men and women regarding same-sex unions, when compared to whites.

Gender and Attitudes towards Homosexuality

The relationship between gender and attitudes toward homosexuality has been one of the most widely addressed topics within empirically produced social research literature. Gender has consistently been found to be associated with attitudes toward

homosexuality, with men being less likely to be tolerant of homosexuals, and less supportive of gay rights than women (McVeigh & Diaz, 2009, Herek, 2000; 2002; Finlay & Walther, 2003; Jenkins, 2007). Differences in attitudes between men and women follow a similar pattern when it comes to voting for or against same-sex marriage. Public opinion polls and voting patterns indicate that women are more likely to vote in support of same-sex marriage when compared to men (Lewis & Gossett, 2008).

While it is widely accepted within social research that men disapprove of homosexuality more than women, a few studies have found no statistical differences between the attitudes of men and women (Kirkpatrick 1993; Cotton-Hudson & Waite, 2000; Glenn & Weaver, 1979; Herek, 1984). Moreover, no studies have found women to be less supportive of gays or to be more homophobic when compared to men (Finlay & Walther, 2003). Additionally, men and women's attitudes also depend on whether the question was about a couple composed of gay men or lesbian women. Men have been found to be less hostile toward lesbians than gay men (Herek & Captanio, 1999; Herek, 2000). Men have also been found to associate the word 'homosexual' with male couples, while women were more likely to assume that the word applied to same-sex couples of both genders (Black & Stevenson, 1984). But overall, the research clearly finds men to have more negative attitudes toward gays and lesbians, and to be less supportive of gay marriage rights when compared to women. It is still unknown whether men interpret the words "gay marriage" to mean male couples, female couples or both, and how this might affect their chances of supporting this institution.

African Americans, Gender and Same-sex Marriage

While gender has been found to be a strong and consistent predictor of attitudes toward gays and lesbians, the research is less clear to whether gender differences follow similar patterns for non-white populations. Few studies address this topic specifically, and those that do have had mixed results. Jenkins et al.(2007) and Lewis (2003) find that black men and women do not differ from one another in their attitudes toward homosexuals. While these results are an important starting point for understanding the attitudes of African Americans, their results are difficult to interpret on a national scale. Jenkins et al. (2007) use a small non-random sample of students from a public Midwestern University (611 respondents), and as such it is difficult to say how their results apply nationally.

Other studies that look at differences in black-white attitudes often only control for gender, but do not create interaction terms to distinguish how African American men and women might differ from one another (Lewis & Gossett, 2008; Shulte & Battle, 2004; Jenkins et al., 2007; Finlay & Walther, 2003). As such, it is hard to interpret whether the gender differences found are applicable to each subpopulation tested. This study uses both appropriate sampling techniques, as well as methodology to distinguish whether attitudes toward same-sex marriage among Hispanics, African Americans and non-Hispanic whites vary by gender.

Hispanics, Gender and Same-sex Marriage

Studies attempting that examine differences between Hispanics and other ethnic groups do not test whether gender differences might exist between Hispanic women and men (Lewis, 2005; Lewis & Gossett, 2008; Firestone et al., 2003). Only one study addresses this question specifically and finds no significant differences between the attitudes of Puerto Rican men and women toward homosexuals (Bauermeister et al., 2007). This study uses a non-random sample of 360 undergraduate students to analyze the attitudes of Puerto Ricans toward same-sex marriage. Given the cultural differences between Puerto Rican youths and other Hispanic respondents, as well as the relatively small sample size, it is hard to gauge the significance of these findings. As such there is a large gap in the literature regarding how gender differences in tolerance toward homosexuals interact with ethnic differences.

So while generally the literature indicates that males have more negative attitudes toward homosexuals and are less supportive of same-sex marriage, there is less agreement for the theoretical reasons why, and for how these theoretical models apply to ethnic and racial minorities in the United States.

Theoretical Framework

African Americans and Homophobia

Social scientists have proposed that differences between men and women in regards to their attitudes toward homosexuality are largely due to how gender is learned within the United States context (Kimmel & Mahler, 2003; Ward, 2005).

American masculinity is defined as “a degree of mastery one’s environment, the display of avid interest in sports, competitiveness, independence, being tough/strong, suppressing feelings and aggressive/dominant control of relationships” (Staples, 1982, p. 2; Jakupcak, 2003; Seal & Ehrhardt, 2003, p. 315). Attitudes toward homosexuality among men are theorized to be more negative than women’s attitudes as a direct result of the hegemonic construction of masculinity in the United States, one which conflates sexuality and gender, and thus naturally predisposes men to be less tolerant of those who step outside gender or sexuality norms (Staples, 1982, p. 2; Jakupcak, 2003; Seal & Ehrhardt, 2003). In fact research has clearly found links between adherence to traditional gender roles and negative attitudes toward homosexuals (McVeight & Diaz, 2009; Basow & Johnson, 2000). Also because of the inherent advantages awarded to men who embody traditional masculine characteristics, Bernstein (2004) theorizes that men find homosexuality to be a threat to the male privilege.

While masculinity is learned by all men in the United States, researchers have proposed that the type of masculinity performed by Black men has led to less tolerance for gay and lesbians even when they are compared to white men (Ward, 2005; Hill Collins 2000). While masculinity in general is theorized to produce homophobia, black men have been theorized to have higher levels of homophobia because of a hyper masculine “hegemonic masculinity present in the black community” (Ward, 2005, p. 496). Hypermasculinity is defined as “a value system extolling male physical strength, aggression, violence, competition, and dominance that despises the dearth of those characteristics as weak or feminine” (Ward, 2005, p. 496; Benson, 2001).

Patricia Hill Collins uses her theory of intersectionality to explain why this type of masculinity is likely to have developed among African American men. Patricia Hill Collins writes that American society largely keeps material resources out of the grasp of black men, and in this way limits their ability to be in control of their environment and show traditional masculine traits (2000). Hill Collins goes on to say that since black men cannot prove their masculinity through power and control of tangible resources in society, they turn to a form of hypermasculinity centered on traditional gender roles and heterosexism (2000). Because black men are economically oppressed, they turn to homophobia and control over women as tangible ways of proving their masculinity (Hill Collins, 2000). Collins also suggests that this prevailing notion of black masculinity naturally results in more homophobia among black men when compared to white men, because homosexuality poses a greater threat to black men's ideas of masculinity, which are primarily (because they lack other resources they can control) based on distancing one's self from anything deemed feminine or homosexual (Hill Collins, 2000).

Patricia Hill Collins also applies her theory of intersectionality to African American women and their views of homosexuals. She theorizes that African American men and women do differ from each other in support for homosexuals, but that this difference comes from the fact that African American women are less supportive of gay rights when compared to African American men (Hill Collins, 2000). Although African American men themselves show less support for homosexuals than white men (because of hypermasculinity), African American women show even less support than that due to their own experiences of oppression in

our society (Hill Collins 2000). Through a framework of intersecting oppressions, she argues that “heterosexual privilege is the only privilege that Black women have. None of us have racial or sexual privilege; almost none of us have class privilege, maintaining our straight privilege is our last resort” (Hill Collins 2000, p. 125). This theory suggests that Black women might be less supportive of same-sex marriage than black men, because they have more of an incentive to protect the advantages that come from being heterosexual. Patricia Hill Collins also goes on to say that besides being less supportive of homosexuals in general, black women are also particularly afraid to being labeled lesbians, and have more incentive for homophobia toward lesbians, as this label is the actual label that would make them lose out on the only privileges they have as straight women (Hill Collins 2000).

Few studies have actually addressed the independent effect of gender when studying African Americans and their attitudes toward same-sex marriage, even though this theory implies that gender might play a unique role in this relationship for African Americans (Jenkins et al., 2007; Lewis 2003). Both Jenkins et al.(2007) and Lewis (2003) failed to find support for Patricia Hill Collins’ assertion that black women show less support than black men for homosexual civil rights. For Jenkins et al.(2007), this lack of difference in the effect of gender for African Americans is probably due to the use of a small non- representative sample for analysis (611 African American and white respondents total). Although Lewis uses a larger sample of respondents to test attitudes between African American men and women, he uses an index to create a general “attitude” toward homosexuals on the part of these two groups, and it becomes hard to apply these results to the study of same-sex marriage

(Lewis 2003). As such while this index suggests that there are no differences between the effect of gender for African American men and women in regards to their general attitudes toward homosexuality, it is hard to distinguish whether this is also the case for same-sex marriage.

This study uses both appropriate sampling techniques, as well as methodology to distinguish what the effect of gender is on African American attitudes toward same-sex marriage.

Importance of Foreign Birth

Theory indicates good reasons for differences between foreign-born Hispanics and U.S. born Hispanics. Nancy Foner writes that fundamental differences exist between Hispanics born abroad and those born in the United States because of the nature of the migration process (1997). These differences are due to the “cultural understandings, meanings and symbols that immigrants bring with them from their home societies”, and impact the way this population interacts with the world around them (Foner 1997, p. 963). Foner also states that “immigrants often draw on pre-migration family experiences, norms and cultural frameworks” in their attempts to make sense of their new environment (1997, p. 963). While U.S. born Hispanics might understand some the norms and expectations of the country their parents or grandparents might have immigrated from, they do not use these cultural beliefs as guidelines for their attitudes as much as foreign-born Hispanics (Fernandez-Esquer et al. 2004; Carballo-Diequez, 1995).

Several studies of the U.S Hispanic population have found distinctions between the attitudes of foreign-born Hispanics and U.S. born Hispanics. While no study has specifically tested the relationship between foreign birth and one's attitude toward same-sex marriage, research indicates that foreign birth seems to mediate the effects of HIV prevention programs (Carballo-Diequez, 1995). Carballo-Diequez (1995) found Hispanics born in the U.S. to be more likely to follow proper HIV/AIDS prevention techniques, and to show less sexual prejudice toward homosexuals when compared to foreign-born Hispanics. Also relevant to this study, two other studies found that foreign-born Hispanic males had different social norms regarding masculinity than U.S. Hispanic males (Jiminez et al., 2009; Saez et al. 2009). Furthermore, Saez et al. (2009) find that foreign-born Hispanics endorsed more traditional notions of masculinity when compared to Hispanics born in the United States.

These studies demonstrate the importance of foreign birth in the attitudes of Hispanics in the United States. The effect of foreign birth applies to a variety of other social attitudes, as Rumbaut (1994) finds that it is a key variable that mediates the relationships between migration and self esteem as well as ethnic identity and family dynamics in the Hispanic community (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). As such, when studying Hispanics, or any other immigrant group, it is important to take into account foreign birth. While a way to distinguish how long the immigrant has been here is the best measurement of pre-migration cultural norms (as pre-migration cultural norms diminish over time, and their importance depends on the immigrants age of arrival), foreign birth is still important to take into account when looking at the attitudes of this

population. This study will control for foreign birth and thus identify whether foreign birth is a key factor in Hispanic attitudes toward same-sex marriage.

U.S Trends in public opinions, 1970-2005

Introduction

While this brief review of the literature explores racial, ethnic and gender identities in relation to public opinion toward the legalization of same-sex unions, it is also important to discuss trends in public opinion over the last 30-40 years. These trends are part of a larger body of research focused on the liberalization of American attitudes toward homosexuality in general. I will also review research addressing demographic predictors of one's attitude toward awarding marriage rights to same-sex couples. While my research is not primarily focused on demographic factors other than race and gender, this information is important when considering public opinion toward same-sex marriage, as research suggests that one's background strongly affects one's likelihood of support or opposition toward same-sex marriage. Trend data are also important to discuss because they help to gauge whether respondents in this particular sample are similar or different in their attitudes to other nationally representative samples.

Public Opinions toward Homosexual Civil Rights, 1970-2005

An extensive amount of research has examined the attitudes of Americans toward homosexuals. A large part of this research has been concerned with how the

American public feels about awarding gays and lesbians the right to form same-sex marriages and civil unions and how these attitudes have changed over time.

Beginning in the 1970's studies assessing Americans' attitudes about restricting the civil rights and liberties of gay people have showed that Americans over time became increasingly supportive of civil rights for homosexuals (Glenn & Weaver, 1979; Yang, 1997; Loftus, 2001; Bowman & O'Keefe, 2004). In 1988 only 12% of Americans supported same-sex marriage, while in 1992 this number had increased to 27% of Americans (Bowman & O'Keefe, 2004; Yang, 1997). By 1994 polls indicated the number of Americans who support ranging between 27-31% (Yang 1997; Bowman and O'Keefe, 2004). By 2004 polls indicated that support had increased to range between 30-42% (Yang, 1997; Bowman & O'Keefe, 2004). While support for same-sex marriage in the United States has increased over time, Bowman and O'Keefe's review of opinion polls on same-sex marriage attitudes between 1998 and 2004 showed that a majority of Americans still oppose same-sex marriage rather than support it (Yang, 1997; Bowman & O'Keefe, 2004).

Recognizing that public opinions regarding homosexual relationships in the United States are not simply pro or anti same-sex marriage, researchers have begun to shift the debate to include civil unions. As early as 2004, polls indicated that when included into the pro and anti marriage debate, 35% of Americans support civil unions, 25% supported legalizing same-sex marriage, and 37% oppose both marriage and civil unions for same-sex couples (Bowman & O'Keefe, 2004). Although attitudes toward both same-sex marriage and civil unions are becoming more liberal,

they are part of a puzzling aspect of the discourse about same-sex unions in the United States.

The case of same-sex marriage in the United States is complex because while approval of both same-sex marriage and civil unions has increased over time, it has done so at a slower pace than approval toward homosexuals in general. That is to say, research has found that while most attitudes toward homosexuals in general are quickly becoming more liberal, approval toward same-sex marriage has increased only slightly, even as in some ways these two attitudes are seen as extensions of each other (Bowman & O'Keefe , 2004; Loftus, 2001; Yang, 1997). Yang's review of public opinion polls conducted between 1970's and the 1990's reveals that while in the 1970's and 1980's a constant majority of the American public believed homosexual relations to be wrong, that number decreased significantly by the 1990's (Yang, 1997). This similar trend regarding many aspects of public opinion toward homosexuals and homosexuality continued through 2004, but significant increases in support was not seen regarding marriage rights for homosexuals (Bowman & O'Keefe, 2004). As such it seems that marriage rights are seen differently in the eyes of the public than the general morality of homosexuality or homosexuals.

Currently trends in attitudes toward homosexuals show that same-sex marriage adds complexity to the homosexuality debate in the United States, and that attitudes toward same-sex marriage are in some ways correlated to attitudes to other gay and lesbian rights, and in some ways unique. While trends thus indicate that support for same-sex unions is increasing over time, progress is not nearly as quick as with other rights issues, and a majority of Americans are still in fact opposed to same-sex

marriage (Bowman & O'Keefe, 2004; Loftus, 2001). It is therefore expected that the results of this study will reflect similar trends in support for same-sex marriage, with a majority of Americans opposing the institution outright, some opposing marriage while approving of civil unions, and only about 25-30% completely supporting the institution.

Other Demographic Factors

While polls are an important way of measuring how Americans feels about same-sex unions in general and how opinions have changed over time, research also indicates that support and opposition to legalization significantly varies among U.S. subpopulations. Literature indicates that several demographic factors impact one's chances of being supportive of civil rights for same-sex couples. The most significant correlates of American's attitudes towards homosexuality in past research have been education, class, age, region, political ideology, marital status, religion and religiosity.

Many studies have reported strong relationships between increased education and higher levels of tolerance toward homosexuals (Herek & Capitanio, 1995; Lewis, 2003; Burdette et al., 2005; Olsen et al., 2006). Research indicates a similar relationship between class status and tolerance of homosexuality, indicating that those with higher incomes tend to be more supportive of homosexual civil rights (Herek, 2002; Andresen & Fetner, 2008; Gay & Lynxwiler, 2010). The similarity of these two relationships is not surprising, as social scientists have found education and income to be highly correlated with one another.

Another important predictor of tolerance toward homosexuals is age.

Literature concludes that those who are older are more likely to view homosexuality as always wrong and homosexuals as less deserving of rights when compared to heterosexuals (Loftus, 2001; Herek, 2002; Lewis & Gossett, 2003). Region of residence has also been found to be a predictor of negative attitudes. Those living in the South or Midwest are significantly less likely to be tolerant of homosexuality when compared to those living in the Northwest and on the Pacific coast (Loftus, 2001; Herek, 2002; Schulte & Battle, 2004; Burdette et al., 2005; Gay & Lynxwiler, 2010).

Due to the political nature of the debate on this issue, political ideology is a strong predictor of his or her attitude toward homosexuality. Those with a liberal political ideology have been linked to more positive views of gay and lesbian individuals and issues when compared to individuals label themselves republicans or conservatives (Lewis & Gossett, 2003; Burdette et al., 2005; Jenkins et al., 2009; Gay & Lynxwiler, 2010). Research also indicated that marital status is important predictor of one's attitude toward homosexuality. Possibly due to the perceived social norms surrounding family configuration and heterosexuality, those who are married have been found to be less likely than single or divorced individuals to support same-sex marriage (Schulte & Battle, 2004; Olson et al., 2006). It is theorized that married individuals perceive same-sex marriage as greater threat to themselves and to their identity than individuals who are single and divorced (Schulte & Battle, 2004).

The relationships between religion and religiosity and attitudes toward homosexuality have been thoroughly explored in literature. Past literature indicates that those who identify as Catholic are less accepting of homosexuals than those who

identify as Jewish or have no religious affiliation, while Protestants are the least accepting of all of the religious groups (Finlay & Walther, 2003; Lewis, 2003; Burdette et al., 2005; Gay & Lynxwiler, 2010). While these comparisons are important to discuss, social researchers have found a wide variety of opinions among Protestant sects regarding same-sex marriage (Finlay & Walther, 2003). As such, when researchers differentiate among sects of Protestants, important differences appear, showing the need for a way to classify these religious groups so that comparison is meaningful. In order to avoid using categories too broad to compare, researchers have often used religiosity as a way to account for religious beliefs (Finlay & Walther, 2003). High religiosity, as measured by church attendance, was found to be a predictor of higher levels of intolerance and homophobia (Herek, 2002; Lewis, 2003; Burdette et al., 2005; Olson et al., 2006).

While trends indicate changes in opinions, demographics help to indicate where the changes actually happened. Researchers such as Loftus (2001) even theorize that the major changes and trends in opinions toward homosexuality resulted from country wide demographic changes. The strong and significant relationships between demographics and public opinions toward homosexuals make it essential to discuss the effects of population level demographics and to introduce these variables into the analysis. It is important to control for other predictors of one's attitude toward homosexuality, as this allows me to tease out the effects of gender and race/ethnicity. These findings as well as research on the association between race/ethnicity and attitudes toward same-sex marriage and civil unions and the potential moderating effect of gender inform the following research hypotheses:

-Hypothesis 1: African Americans will be less supportive of same-sex marriage and civil unions than non-Hispanic whites.

-Hypothesis 2: Hispanic Americans will be less supportive of same-sex marriage and civil unions than non-Hispanic whites.

-Hypothesis 3: African Americans' attitudes toward same-sex unions will be moderated by gender.

-Hypothesis 4: Hispanics' attitudes toward same-sex unions will be moderated by gender.

-Hypothesis 5: Foreign birth is a confounder in the association between Hispanic ethnicity and attitudes toward same-sex unions.

Conclusion

My research addresses gaps in the literature by investigating the opinions of African American and Hispanic men and women toward same-sex marriage. Analyses will focus on differences in attitudes toward same-sex marriage and civil unions by race, ethnicity and gender, as well as how attitudes toward same-sex marriage among race-ethnic subpopulations are shaped by gender. Also, to better understand Hispanic attitudes toward same-sex marriage, this research will also address the role of foreign birth in the attitudes of U.S. Hispanics. My research also tests demographic predictors for support or opposition to same-sex marriage. As the population ages, as new viewpoints are entered into the debate, and as the issue becomes increasingly politicized, opposition or support within any demographic

category might increase, decrease or stay the same. This is important to analyze and discuss because past trends have shown drastic changes in the past thirty years in public opinion toward homosexuals.

Chapter three addresses the methodology used to conduct this study. The data and sampling design are discussed, as well the sample of respondents used for this analysis. This section also addresses the dependent, independent and control variables used for analysis, as well as how each is measure.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Chapters one and two offered a brief glimpse into pertinent literature and theoretical frameworks for my study of the public opinions of white, African American and Hispanics toward same-sex unions in the United States. I chose a quantitative approach as a vehicle for exploring the three main research questions of my study:

1. Do U.S. attitudes toward same-sex unions vary by ethnicity/race?
2. Is the relationship between ethnicity/race and attitudes toward same-sex unions moderated by gender?
3. Does foreign birth explain the association between Hispanic ethnicity and attitudes toward same-sex unions?

Chapter three is divided into four sections, with the first two sections describing the data set and sampling design. The third section addresses the specific sample used for this analysis, and the fourth describes the measures for each variable used for analysis, as well as any changes made prior to analysis. The measures section is divided into three subsections: Dependent Variable: Public Opinion toward Same-Sex Unions; Independent Variables: Racial/Ethnic Background, Gender; and Control Variables: Age, SES, Political Views, Religiosity, Marital Status, Region and Foreign

Birth. Lastly, I will address the specifics of the statistical method chosen to explore the three main research questions of the study.

Data Collection

This study utilizes the 2004 National Politics Study (NPS) to test the relationship between racial background, gender and attitudes toward same-sex union. The primary goal of the NPS is to gather data about U.S. political attitudes, beliefs, aspirations, and behaviors at the beginning of the 21st century. The NPS is one of the first multiracial and multiethnic national studies of political and racial attitudes. This study was begun shortly before the 2004 presidential election and concluded a few months later in February 2005. The researchers used national randomized phone dialing to collect data from the 3339 respondents. The overall response rate is 31 percent. This is similar to the median response rate (30 percent) found by Groves (2006) in his study of more than 200 response rates in 35 published articles. In an attempt to minimize responder bias the race and gender of the interviewers were also randomized across the phone calls. The study limited its respondents to those over 18, was conducted in Spanish when necessary, and interviews took place in both rural and urban centers across the United States.

In this study the racial/ethnic categories of Asian, African America, Caribbean, Hispanic and non-Hispanic white respondents are mutually exclusive. Although non-Hispanic white, African American, Hispanic, Asian American and Caribbean respondents were also interviewed, this study limits the discussion to Hispanic, African American and non-Hispanic respondents. While the attitudes of Asian

American and Caribbean individuals are important to study, these respondent groups are too small to produce statistically significant results and are excluded from this study.

Sample

In this study, ethnic minorities were intentionally over sampled. To account for the over sampling, the data set employs post-stratification weights to adjust the racial composition of the sample to the known composition of the population. In this sample, African American and Hispanic respondents are weighted down to reflect the actual distribution of these two racial/ethnic groups in the U.S. population. Other race groups, such as whites, were underrepresented in the sample and so had to be weighted up to match the distribution of whites in the U.S. population. The population weight variable in the NPS is *wgtpopnrps*.

Using this data set, I intend to determine whether African Americans, Hispanics and whites differ in their attitudes toward same-sex marriage, whether gender moderates the association between race/ethnicity and attitudes toward same-sex unions, and the role of foreign birth in the association between Hispanic ethnicity and attitudes toward same-sex unions. This data set is well suited to answer these questions because it includes elements of most of the factors indicated by various theories, and it also has a large sample size that will allow for robust statistical analysis. In addition, the answers to these questions may be helpful in shaping future state policies concerning same-sex relationships.

Measures

Dependent Variable: Public Opinion toward Same-Sex Unions

The dependent variable in this analysis was public opinion toward same-sex unions. This study measures support for same-sex unions through the following question: “Which of the following statements comes closest to your view concerning same-sex couples?” Respondents could choose from the following categories: 1. Be allowed to marry; 2. Be allowed to legally form civil unions-but not marry; and 3. Not be allowed to marry or form civil unions. This is a nominal variable and is not normally distributed. 210 respondents did not answer this question. This constitutes only 6.3% of the total sample of respondents, and these respondents were eliminated from the analysis.

This attitude will be analyzed by performing multinomial logistic regression, through which the first and second response categories will be compared to the third, making the third the reference category. By using multinomial logistic regression analysis the researcher will find the likelihood of respondents reporting 1) opposition to same-sex marriage or 2) opposition to gay marriage but not civil unions, both relative to reporting 3) opposition to both marriage and civil unions for same-sex couples. The results will represent the change in the likelihood of responding yes to the dependent variable category versus the comparison category.

Independent Variables: Racial/Ethnic Background, Gender

The data set already contained a five racial/ethnic categories variable, in which whites were coded 1, African Americans 2, Hispanics 3, Asian American 4, and

Caribbean respondents 5. I recoded each racial/ethnic category into a dichotomous variable, with whites as a reference category. This decision was based on previous literature, as whites have been shown to have the most positive attitudes toward same-sex unions, and as such their distinctive attitudes were ideal for being used as a comparison category.

The gender variable in the data set coded males as 1, and females as 2. I recoded this into a dummy variable, with males coded as 1 and females coded as 0. Because the literature indicates that attitudes vary by gender (males holding more negative attitudes), it is important to find how this attitudinal variation might be different among the African American, Hispanic and non-Hispanic white populations. As such, interaction terms were created by multiplying the gender and racial/ethnic dummy variables together.

Control Variables

In an attempt to replicate past research on attitudes toward same-sex unions and how they vary by racial/ethnic background and gender, this study controls for other predictors of this attitude. The literature indicates a need to control for age, socio-economic status, political views, marital status, religiosity and region. Given the recent high rate of immigration to the U.S., especially of Hispanic immigrants, I also controlled for foreign birth of respondents to address my third research question.

Age

The literature indicates that respondents who are older are less likely to support same-sex unions. In this data set the original age variable was continuous. However it was more useful to recode this variable into age groups for easier comparison. Respondents were coded into 6 age categories: 18 through 25 year olds were coded as 1, 26 through 35 as 2, 36 through 50 as 3, 51 through 65 as 4, and those over 65 years old as 5. There were no missing cases for this variable.

SES

Past studies indicate that those with higher socio-economic status are more tolerant of same-sex unions relative to those lower on the SES scale. In this study, family income and educational level serve as proxies for SES. While somewhat limited in scope (individual income and net worth of assets are not available), these variables are the closest available measures of SES. Eight respondents were considered outliers, (family income was above \$800,000) and were eliminated from the analysis in order to bring the mean family income closer to the national average.

Education is measured with a five category variable, with each increase indicating more education. Respondents were asked to indicate “the highest grade or level of school” they had completed. These responses were later coded into five categories, with respondents with less than a high school education being coded 1, those with a high school diploma 2, some college 3, college graduate 4, and graduate school 5. Respondents with a graduate school education were used as reference within this analysis, as the literature indicates that increases in education mean increases in tolerance toward homosexuality. This would make those who had completed graduate

school the most tolerant, and thus a good reference category to use for comparisons.

Fifteen respondents did not answer this question, and were coded as missing cases.

The missing cases constituted less than 1% of the sample and so were eliminated from analysis.

In its original form, the family income variable was continuous. To be able to compare how attitudes might vary due to income differences, it was necessary to recode this variable into several separate income categories. As such family income was recoded into categories of \$20,000 increments. Thus families making \$20,000 were coded 1, \$20,001 through \$40,000 were coded 2 and so forth. This pattern remained consistent until coding category 5 (\$80,000-\$100,000). Coding category 6 indicated families making \$100,001-\$125,000, and coding category 7 indicated respondents who make over \$125,000.

Political Views

Because of the highly politicized nature of attitudes toward same-sex unions, the political views of respondents are often indicators of their attitudes. Liberal and middle of the road are more likely to be tolerant when compared to conservative respondents. This study asked “We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals or conservative. When it comes to politics, do you think of yourself as a liberal or conservative?” Response categories were as follows: 0-haven’t thought about it, 1-liberal, 2-conservative, 3-middle of the road, 8/9 don’t know/refused. To control for this variable in the models, those who were missing or indicated a 0 response were

eliminated from the analysis, and those who indicated a 1, 2 or 3 response were dummy coded with conservatives serving as the reference category.

Subsequent recoding was also necessary to eliminate the high number of missing cases for this variable. Perhaps due to the high number of respondents (360 respondents total) who answered 0-haven't thought about it, or who did not answer the question at all, researchers asked these missing case respondents to think again about their political affiliation. Missing case respondents for the 'liberal vs. conservative' question were subsequently asked "If you had to choose, would you consider yourself a liberal or a conservative?" While a considerable number of respondents still refused to classify their political affiliation as either liberal or conservative, this question managed to eliminate some of the missing cases for this question. Through recoding of these second responses, I was able to add 154 respondents to the analysis. There still were 216 missing cases for this variable, and they were eliminated from the analysis. This constituted only 6% of the respondent population. Because this number of respondents is small, their elimination from analysis is unlikely to have significantly altered the results.

Religiosity

The literature indicates that religion and religiosity are related to attitudes toward same-sex unions. In this study, this variable will be controlled for through religiosity, which is measured with the following question. "How religious would you say you are 1-very religious, 2-fairly religious, 3-not too religious, 4-not religious at all, 8/9 refused. This question was asked of respondents who had indicated having a

religion, which was measured through the following question: “What is your current religion or religious preference?” Responses were coded 1-60. As a result, researchers fail to ask the religiosity follow up question of those who indicated having “No religion.” This artificially inflated the missing respondents to 429 for religiosity. Thus to create the dummy variables needed for analysis, some reworking of the data was necessary.

Religiosity was recoded into a three category response variable. Respondents who indicated that they were either 1-very religious or 2-fairly religious were coded as 1. Those indicating they had a religion and were either 3-not too religious or 4-not religious at all were coded as 2. Those who indicated in the Religion variable that they had “No religion,” and thus were coded as missing in the subsequent religiosity question, were coded as 3. This new three response religiosity measure was then recoded into dummy variables, with those indicating the highest levels of religiosity being the reference category. There were 41 missing cases for this variable. The missing cases are only .1% of the total population and so were removed from the analysis.

Marital Status

Because of the politics surrounding same-sex unions, and the associated discourse over traditional marriage, it is important to control for the respondents marital status. The NPS measured marital status through the following question: “Are you currently married, living with a partner, separated, divorced, widowed or have never been married?” (coded as 1-6). Theoretically those who are currently married

are said to perceive same-sex unions as more threatening as they have more at stake in traditional marriage. As such marital status was recoded as a dummy variable, with married respondents being coded as 1, and those in the other categories being coded as 0. Twenty-two respondents did not answer this question and were eliminated from the analysis. The missing cases for this variable constituted only .1% of the total sample, so it is unlikely that their removal substantially affected the final analysis.

Region

Research on political attitudes in general suggests that real cultural differences exist among the four major regions of the country. Respondents in this study were asked to indicate the region they live in with 1 indicating residence in the Northwest, 2 indicating Midwest, 3 indicating residence in the South, and 4 indicates residence in the West. The attitudes in the South have been found to be particularly conservative when compared to the rest of the country. As such, to create a region variable suitable for analysis, the variable was recoded into a dummy variable. As residence in the South is linked to less tolerance toward homosexuals, as well as distinctly conservative political views when compared to any other United States region, in this analysis this became the reference category that all others were compared to. There were no missing cases for this variable.

Foreign Birth

When studying ethnicity it is important to take into account how foreign birth affects attitudes toward U.S. policies. It is especially important for social science

research with a focus on Hispanics to take this into account because a 54% of Hispanic respondents are foreign-born. The measure for this within this study is the question “Were you born in the United States or in another country?” Respondents born here indicated a response of 1, and respondents born abroad answered 2. To create a dummy variable, foreign-born individuals were coded as 1, and those born in the United States were coded 0. This variable had 4 missing cases. They were eliminated from the analysis, and because they constituted less than 1% of the sample, it is unlikely that this affected analysis in any way.

Statistical Methods

As previously mentioned, due to the dependent variable being nominal, multinomial logit regression was used to test the effects of racial/ethnic background and gender on public opinion toward same-sex marriage. With logistic regression, interpretations of the results are different than other types of regression. The significance, B and $\text{Exp}(B)$ are the most important values to pay attention to. When using multinomial logistic regression, the chances of a respondent choosing one category are compared to them choosing the reference category. The $\text{Exp}(B)$ for a given value indicates the difference in odds between the value and the comparison value, which is excluded from the regression. Values of $\text{Exp}(B)$ closer to 1 suggest little or no difference between the odds of either possible value. Values of $\text{Exp}(B)$ faraway from 1, either lower or higher, imply variation in the dependent variable for the given category. In this study the odds of respondents having either of the two more positive attitudes (Be allowed to marry coded as 1, Be allowed to legally form

civil unions-but not marry coded as 2) are being independently compared to the odds of them having the negative attitude (Not be allowed to marry or form civil coded as 3), which is the reference category.

Missing Values

I employed list-wise deletion for missing cases, and this resulted in the elimination of 389 respondents from the analysis. I used list-wise deletion so that I could compare the same group of respondents across all three models, and had a total sample size of 2950 respondents. While missing cases do not comprise a high percentage of the sample (7%), analysis of the missing cases revealed that they were not missing at random. This could have introduced bias into the analysis, as previous researchers have found that it is conservative respondents that are more likely to skip questions regarding same-sex marriage rather than liberal respondents (Abraham et al. 2006).

Further analysis of the missing cases also confirmed that the cases were not missing at random (see Appendix B). Cross-tabulations confirmed that the two variables with the most missing cases, same-sex marriage attitudes and political ideology, contained a high percentage of the same missing respondents (same 116 respondents declined to answer both questions). This was another indicator of possible bias to the sample, as research on political attitudes and missing responses has found that conservatives are less likely than liberals to label themselves as such in a survey question (Abramowitz & Saunders 2006). Abramowitz and Saunders (2006) also found that missing cases for political affiliation were found to score higher on

other conservative measures, such as attitudes toward abortion or political party affiliation (republican vs. democrat).

Although the number of missing cases is low overall and constitutes a small percentage of the sample, this analysis indicates that the missing cases were not missing at random and came primarily from the dependent variable, so eliminating these cases is the best solution. Further analysis also indicated that the missing cases did not show any other non-random skip pattern. Deleting cases with missing values make this sample slightly more liberal in its support for same- sex marriage than a more random sample.

Models

This study used three separate models to test the mediating effects of race/ethnicity, gender and foreign birth on public opinions toward both same-sex marriage and civil unions for same-sex couples. While controlling for other predictors of this attitude, Model 1 tests the relationships between race, ethnicity and gender and support for same-sex unions. Model 1 finds if attitudes in the United States do in fact vary by race, ethnicity and gender.

Model 1 indicated that differences in attitudes toward same-sex unions could be seen along gender, racial and ethnic lines. Through the introduction of interaction terms, Model 2 is used to determine whether or not the association between race/ethnicity and attitudes toward same-sex unions vary by gender. This decision is literature based, as previous studies often find differences in the attitudes of men and

women, yet fail to account for the independent effects of gender within each racial and ethnic subgroups in the United States.

Model 3 also attempts to redress a gap in literature. While most studies looking at U.S. Hispanic populations do not account for the fact that some of those Hispanics were born abroad, I use Model 3 to introduce a control for this difference. Foreign birth is necessary to take into account when studying Hispanics because research indicates a big difference between Hispanics born in the United States, and those who immigrated here. Model 3 is thus used to see what happens to the Hispanic coefficient once immigration status is taken into account.

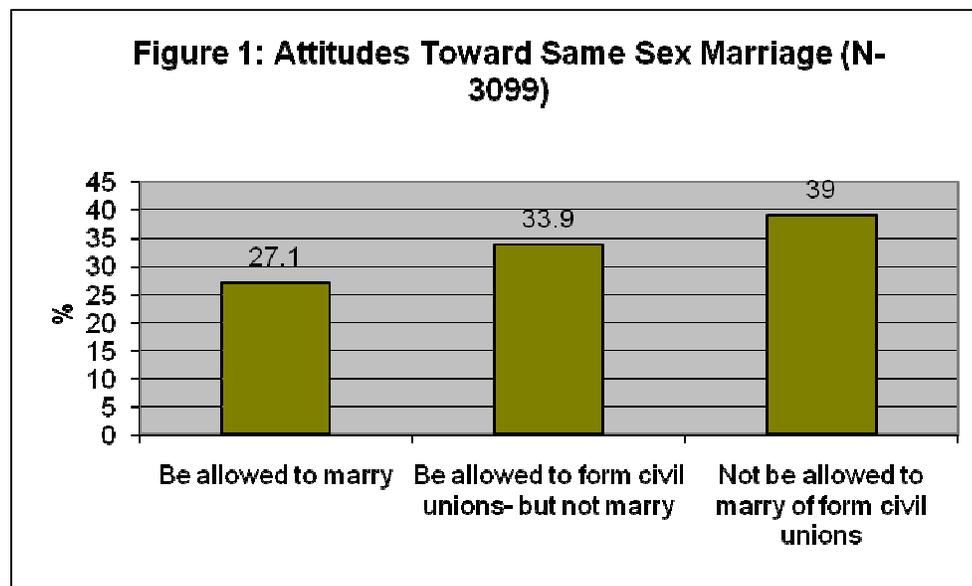
CHAPTER 4

Findings

[See tables beginning on page 59]

In order to measure the attitudes of Americans regarding same-sex marriage, as well as to test other factors, bivariate as well as multivariate analysis was performed. The analysis performed is meant to answer the following three main research questions: Do U.S. attitudes toward same-sex unions vary by ethnicity/race? Is the relationship between ethnicity/race and attitudes toward same-sex unions moderated by gender? What is the role of foreign birth in the association between Hispanic ethnicity and attitudes toward same-sex unions?

Before discussing the results of the regression analysis, it is important to talk about the descriptive analysis of the sample of individuals surveyed.



Descriptive Statistics

As shown in Figure 1, a majority of National Politics Study (2004) respondents are either against marriage or civil unions for same-sex couples. 39% of respondents indicated that they were against civil unions and same-sex marriage. 33.9% of respondents indicated support only for civil unions, but not marriage for same-sex couples. Only 27.1% of the sample fully supported same-sex marriage. These match the findings of Bowman & O'Keefe (2004), who use 2004 national poll data to find roughly similar levels of support for same-sex marriage and civil unions. Frequencies in Figure 1 are weighted and exclude respondents whose annual income exceeded \$800,000.

Table 2 indicates several important demographic characteristics of the National Politics study sample. The racial distribution of the sample is also important to discuss. The purpose of the study was to assess the political attitudes of various ethnic groups in the United States. Thus initially ethnic minorities were intentionally over sampled to obtain enough respondents from these groups, and subsequently weights were applied to have the entire sample population reflect the actual distribution of these groups within the U.S. population. As such, the weighted percentages reflect the racial distribution of the sample after the Black and Hispanic populations were weighted down, and the white population was weighted up. Thus for this analysis, the sample population is made up of 71.8% whites, 9.7% African Americans, 13% Hispanics, with 6.5% of the total population being left out. Table 2 also indicates that

most respondents in this sample have at least a high school education. In fact only 8.4% of the population has not graduated from high school. Within this sample 28% of had some college education, and over 40% of the sample having a college or graduate degree. This indicates that this sample might be more educated than the broader population.

Bivariate Analysis

Table 2 suggests that there is a significant relationship between gender and support or opposition to same-sex marriage. Far fewer men supported the legalization of same-sex marriage, when compared to women. Only 29.5% of men supported the full legalization of same-sex marriage, compared to 36.8% of women. While support for the legalization of civil unions was higher among men (38.1 vs. 31.9%), more men than women indicated that they did not support either marriage rights or civil unions for same-sex couples. This relationship is significant at .the 001 level, but multivariate analysis will indicate how gender effects might further vary by race or ethnic background.

Initial analysis also revealed a significant association of race or ethnicity with support for the legalization of same-sex marriage and civil unions. Table 2 suggests that African Americans, non-Hispanic whites and Hispanics vary in their support for same-sex unions. While 36.8% of non-Hispanic whites believe that same-sex marriage should be legal, only 20.5% of African Americans and 23.8% of Hispanics feel the same. The data also show that more non-Hispanic white respondents are willing to support civil unions when compared to both Hispanics and African

Americans. 37.4% of whites report they support civil unions for same-sex couples, while only 26.8% of African Americans and 27.3% of Hispanics feel the same. The data also suggest that many more African American and Hispanic respondents are strongly against same-sex marriage but also civil unions. Only 25.7% of non-Hispanic white respondents report being against both same-sex marriage and civil unions, while over half of African Americans (52.6%) and nearly half of all Hispanics (48.9%) report similar attitudes. The relationship between opinion toward same-sex unions and race or ethnicity is significant to the .001 level.

For ethnic minorities, foreign birth seemed to make a difference. Those born abroad seemed to vary in their attitudes from those who were born in the United States. Fewer U.S. born respondents (29.5%) outright opposed same-sex marriage and civil unions (vs. 43.8% of respondents born abroad), and relatively more seemed to support marriage rights and civil unions for same-sex couples when compared to respondents born abroad (35.4% U.S. born vs. 21.8% of respondents born abroad). This significant relationship between place of birth and willingness to support marriage rights for same-sex couples suggests that those born outside of the U.S. view same-sex marriage, or perhaps marriage as an institution, differently than U.S. born respondents.

Multivariate Analysis: Multinomial Logistic Regression

General Findings: U.S. Attitudes toward Same-sex unions

Table 3 represents the results of the three Models used for analysis. The top portion of the table represents the odds of respondents choosing “Be allowed to

marry” over “Not be allowed to marry or form civil unions.” The bottom section of the table represents the odds of respondents choosing “Be allowed to form civil unions-but not marry” over “Not be allowed to marry or form civil unions.” Model 1 tests the odds of respondents choosing “Be allowed to marry” or “Be allowed to form civil unions-but not marry” over “Not be allowed to marry or form civil unions.”

This model compares African Americans and Hispanics to white respondents, and compares men to women. Model 2 introduces interaction effects between race/ethnicity and gender to test whether the effects of gender are similar for respondents of all racial or ethnic backgrounds. Model 3 controls for foreign birth for all respondents (both black and Hispanic). The coefficient represents the effect of being foreign-born vs. being U.S. born for all respondents. This was done to account for the fact that 54.8% of the Hispanic respondents in this sample were foreign-born.

Analysis revealed several significant relationships between attitudes toward same-sex marriage and other important variables. These three models tested variables indicated by literature as important predictors of attitudes toward same-sex marriage and homosexual behavior. These variables included income, age, religiosity, region, education, marital status and political views. As suggested by previous research, respondents who are younger, liberal, less religious, more educated, and who have higher incomes are more likely to support marriage rights for same-sex couples than older, married, less educated and conservative respondents. Despite controlling for these significant variables, the effect of race and ethnicity, gender and foreign birth remained. This suggests that the effects of race, ethnicity, gender and foreign birth are quite strong and important to the analysis of same-sex marriage attitudes in the United

States. Below I will discuss the findings as they related to my three primary research questions.

Hispanics and Same-Sex Unions

Analysis shows that Hispanic respondents hold significantly different attitudes toward same-sex marriage than white respondents. While other factors are held constant, the odds in Model 1 indicate that Hispanic respondents are 58% less likely to choose “Be allowed to marry” over “Not be allowed to marry or form civil unions” when compared to whites. The relationship between Hispanic ethnicity and support for civil unions is also an interesting area of analysis. Odds in the bottom section of the table indicate that Hispanics are 54% less likely than non-Hispanic whites to approve of civil unions. The significance of this relationship is high (.001 level). The significance of the relationship between ethnicity and support for civil unions remained even after foreign birth was controlled for in Model 3. Model 1 indicates that Hispanics are less likely than whites to support both civil union and marriage rights for same-sex couples.

Model 3 introduced foreign birth as a control, and the significance of the Hispanic coefficient disappeared. As foreign birth is added in Model 3, there is a large drop in the Hispanic coefficient as it goes from $-.732$ to $-.324$, and becomes insignificant. Model 3 is the first time that Hispanic ethnicity becomes an insignificant predictor of ones attitude toward same-sex marriages. Model 3 indicates that foreign birth plays a confounding role in the attitudes of Hispanics toward the legalization of same-sex marriage. In short, both foreign-born and U.S. born

Hispanics are more opposed to same-sex unions compared to non-Hispanic whites. But native-born Hispanics are not significantly more opposed to same-sex marriage than non-Hispanic whites, while foreign-born Hispanics are.

African Americans and Same-sex Unions

As predicted by previous literature, African American respondents are less likely than non-Hispanic white respondents to approve of same-sex marriage. In Model 1, the unstandardized coefficient representing African Americans in the top section of Table 2 is negative. This indicates that African Americans are less likely to support same-sex marriage when compared to non-Hispanic white respondents. In Model 1, the odds ratio of .33 indicates that African American respondents are 67% less likely than non-Hispanic whites to be in favor of same-sex marriage rather than no marriage or civil unions for same-sex couples. This relationship is statistically significant and indicates a strong link between race and level of support for the legalization of same-sex marriage.

Bottom section of Table 2 reveals that African American respondents are also less likely to support the legalization of civil unions for same-sex couples. Model 1 indicates that African American respondents are 59% less likely than non-Hispanic whites to choose “Be allowed to form civil unions-but not marry” over “Not be allowed to marry or form civil unions.” This relationship is significant to the .001 level. This model indicates that there is a significant difference between the attitudes of white respondents and African American respondents regarding both civil unions for gay couples and same-sex marriage.

Gender and Attitudes in the African American and Hispanic Communities

Model 2 adds the race/ethnicity and gender interaction terms, which were not statistically significant. This non-significance indicates that the effect of gender on the attitudes toward same-sex unions do not vary by race/ethnicity. The effect of gender on attitudes among whites does not seem to be significantly different from the effect of gender on attitudes among African Americans or Hispanics.

Conclusion

Overall, ethnicity and racial background seems to make a difference in regard to support for same-sex unions (both same-sex marriage and civil unions). Both Hispanics and African Americans are less likely to support same-sex unions when compared to non-Hispanic white respondents. Subsequent models that introduced interaction terms between race/ethnicity and gender also indicate that there was no significant difference between the effects of gender on same-sex unions and race and ethnicity. The insignificance of the interaction terms suggests that gender effects are not significantly different when comparing Hispanics, African Americans and whites.

For Hispanics, when birth outside of the United States is taken into account, their level of support for same-sex marriage is not significantly different than that for non-Hispanic whites. However, Hispanics are still significantly less likely to support civil unions for same-sex couples even when foreign birth is taken into account.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion and Conclusion

Hypothesis 1 was supported by the results of this analysis. Model 1 indicates that African American respondents were less supportive of same-sex unions (both civil unions and same-sex marriage) when compared to non-Hispanic white respondents. This finding is consistent with the findings of several previous researchers (Loftus, 2001; Bonilla & Porter, 1990; Schulte, 2002; Lewis, 2003). However, this finding differs from that of Jenkins et al. (2009) and Firestone et al.(2003), both of whom found African Americans and whites to have similar attitudes toward gays. This is not surprising, given that there is a general lack of consensus within the field regarding the attitudes of African Americans toward gay and lesbian civil rights. A possible explanation for the difference between the current findings and past findings is that this study used current nationally representative data, while both Jenkins et al. (2009) and Firestone et al.(2003) used small non-representative samples to perform their analyses. As such, it is hard to generalize their results to the larger national population.

Overall, however, it also could be that overwhelming lack of support for same-sex marriage among African Americans could be due to the importance of the Black church to the African American community. Social scientists have long noted that African Americans tend to be more religious than other respondents, and this could be part of the reason why African Americans as a group and regardless of gender are less likely to support same-sex marriage (Ward, 2005). Studies looking at this institution have not only noted the Black church's influence on the African American

community, but also noticed the fact that most black churches are not particularly supportive of same-sex marriage or homosexuality in general (Reed, 2003; Ward, 2005). While this study controlled for religiosity, it could be that African Americans see and relate to religion differently than whites, and thus it may be more important in shaping their attitudes toward gays than it is for whites (Jenkins et al. 2009). This could help explain why support for same-sex unions is so much lower among African Americans. Future research could use multiple measures of religiosity to control for the unique importance of the Black church to its parishioners, as this could help explain why support for same-sex sex marriage is not strong in the African American community.

Hypothesis 2 was also supported by the results of this analysis. As predicted Hispanic American respondents were less likely to support same-sex marriage and civil unions when compared to white respondents. This finding is similar to the findings of several other researchers, who also found Hispanics to show low levels of support for same-sex unions (Lewis & Gossett 2008; Bauermeister et al. 2007; Abrajano et al. 2008). This is different from the findings of Firestone et al.(2003), who found Hispanic attitudes toward same-sex marriage to be no different than the attitudes of other respondents. The difference between my results and those found by Firestone et al. (2003) could be due to the fact that they use a non-representative sample of respondents from the San Antonio, TX area. As such, while their results are important to discuss, they are hard to generalize to the national population.

Hypotheses 3 and 4, regarding the interaction of race, ethnicity and gender were not supported by the findings. The effect of gender was similar for whites,

Hispanics and African Americans. This is similar to past research which found men and women to have significant different attitudes toward homosexuals and homosexual rights (McVeigh & Diaz 2009, Herek, 2000; 2002; Finlay & Walther, 2003). While these studies found differences between the attitudes of male and female respondents, they did not introduce interaction terms to test whether gender might have a similar effect for all racial and ethnic groups in their samples. Thus the results of my study are also particularly significant because they were obtained using a large random sample of respondents and introduced interaction terms between race/ethnicity and gender. The use of interaction terms makes the results easier to apply to the diverse population of the United States, because it does not assume that the effects of gender are similar for all U.S. racial and ethnic groups. My study tests this hypothesis rather than simply controlling for gender.

The results of this analysis are contrary to those of other researchers, who found no difference between the attitudes of African American men and women (Jenkins et al., 2007; Bauermeister et al., 2007). In their research, the attitudes of African American men and women did not vary from one another in regards to their views toward homosexuality and being male did not translate into less support for homosexual civil rights (Jenkins et al., 2007; Bauermeister et al., 2007). These findings could be due to the relatively small sample sizes used by these two researcher teams. Jenkins et al.(2007) use only 611 respondents to compare the attitudes of African American and white respondents, and Baumeister et al.(2007) use a sample of 360 respondents to compare the attitudes of Hispanic and white respondents. The small sample sizes might have lacked the statistical power necessary to find significant

differences between the African American and Hispanic respondents tested.

Furthermore, Baumeister et al.(2007) use a sample of students, and this makes it difficult to apply their results to the general U.S. population.

My results suggest that for whites, African Americans and Hispanics, one's view of same-sex marriage is highly correlated with gender. These finds thus partially support theories that suggest that masculinity and femininity are highly linked to a person's view of homosexuality because of the way we learn gender roles in society (Bernstein, 2004; Kimmel & Mahler, 2003). It seems that for African American, Hispanics and white respondents the effect of being male or female is similar. The insignificance of the interaction terms indicates that the effect of gender on same-sex marriage attitudes is consistent for all racial and ethnic groups. According to theories regarding hegemonic masculinity, males are generally less supportive of same-sex marriage than females, and this could be due to the fact that over time they have learned that to be a man means to be heterosexual, and to reject anything and anyone that steps outside of traditional gender norms (Jakupcak, 2003; Seal & Ehrhardt, 2003).

The fact that the effect of gender on same-sex marriage attitudes did not significantly differ for African American men and women could have some theoretical implications. Patricia Hill-Collins argues that black women have more of a reason to show less support for homosexuals than black men because of the way gender and race oppressions interact with one another in society (Hill-Collins, 2000). Because heterosexuality is one of the few privileges allowed black women in U.S. society, they know this and act out their remaining privilege through homophobia (Hill-Collins,

2000). Although my findings did not suggest the effect of gender to be different for African Americans than for whites, this does not necessarily negate Patricia Hill Collins theory of the intersections of oppression and power.

Though African American women experience a different kind of oppression when compared to African American men, and might even have different outlooks on homosexuality than African American men, the lack of the gender effect could be due to other reasons. The work of Olson et al. (2006) found that results for questions regarding same-sex marriage often depend on how the question was asked. Patricia Hill Collins suggests that black women's attitudes are more negative than black men's attitudes, but particularly in black women's evaluation of lesbians (2000). Since this question asked about the legalization of marriage for gay couples in general (both female and male couples), and not lesbian couples, this could be a good reason as to why this analysis did not find a difference in the effect of gender for whites and blacks.

To build even further on the work of Olson et A.(2006), since this question measures support for a particular civil right for gay couples (marriage), and black men are found to be more traditional in their views of heterosexual marriage when compared to black women, could be another reason for the lack a difference in the effect of gender on African American same-sex marriage attitudes (Ward, 2005). Furthermore, the effects of the intersectionality of oppression on attitudes toward same-sex marriage might be too small or too complicated to measure when it comes to attitudes toward same-sex marriage specifically. In short, while my results do not support Patricia Hill Collins assertion that black women show less support for

homosexuals when compared to black men, this could be due what the question asked support for (marriage rights specifically), and it did not differentiate between gay and lesbian couples.

The final hypothesis was supported by the results of this analysis. For Hispanics, foreign birth significantly affects support for same-sex marriage as the difference between the levels of support among Hispanic and white respondents disappeared when foreign birth (indicating immigrant status, and a different outlook on life) was taken into account. This is similar to the findings of Rumbaut & Portes (2001), who link foreign birth to changes in the ways Hispanics perceive themselves and the world around them. This also supports Foner's theories of migration, which suggest that the norms and values which immigrant bring with them do not simply disappear, but impact their overall outlook on life, their attitudes and behaviors (Foner 1997). This means that future research on Hispanic Americans should control for the fact the some of them might be immigrants, and might be significantly different from Hispanics born in the United States. The results of my study showed that foreign birth is a confounder in the relationship between Hispanic ethnicity and same-sex marriage attitudes.

This is also similar to the findings of Ellison et al. (2011), who in a study of religious involvement and attitudes toward same-sex marriage, found that Hispanics differ from one another in terms of support for same-sex marriage because of differences in their immigration status. This recent study (2011) confirms the findings of my study, and found that those born abroad or who had migrated to the United States were less likely to support the legalization of same-sex marriage. While this

study also uses a rough measurement to control for differences among Hispanic respondents, at least it makes an attempt to take into account the diversity of the Hispanic population. Many other researchers who examine the public opinions of Hispanics toward same-sex marriage do not do this, or mention this as a weakness to their work (Lewis, 2005; Lewis & Gossett, 2008; Firestone et al., 2003).

Further research is necessary to redress the limitations of the present study. The first weakness has to do with the sample used. This sample has too many middle aged high earning respondents. This average was even lowered by eliminating 8 outliers, and yet the average remained well above the relative income distribution in the United States. In fact both of these variables are mentioned as weaknesses of the National Politics study. The researchers recognized that the weighted mean and median income and age values are somewhat higher than the actual distribution in the United States. This persists despite the weighting efforts of researchers. Although these two variables are too high for the income and age distribution of the United States, within this study they were only used as controls. As such it is unlikely that the uneven distribution of the age and income variable significantly affected the results of this study.

The second weakness of this study is that the data used contained only one item measuring the attitudes of respondents toward same-sex marriage. Work done by Olson et al. (2006) suggests that responses to questions regarding particularly controversial issues such as gay marriage, sometimes depend on the wording of the question itself. As such, it is hard say whether the wording of the question had some sort of effect on the results. Therefore I cannot be sure that similar results would be

found if using a differently worded question, or if an index of several questions specific to same-sex marriage was used.

Another weakness in this study is the skip pattern created by the missing response cases. While only two of the variables used in the analysis had more than 7% missing (political ideology and attitudes toward same-sex marriage), they are important to mention because they are both important variables to this analysis. While this is not a significant percentage missing out of the final sample, these missing cases are important to mention because they were not missing at random, and might resulted in making the sample slightly liberal in its attitudes toward same-sex marriage. Past research indicates that respondents who skip both of these questions tend to be conservative rather than liberal, and do not wish to disclose their attitudes specifically because of this (Abraham et al. 2006; Abranowitz & Saunders, 2006).

Lastly, this study uses a rough control for foreign birth, and could not distinguish how long they had actually been in the U.S., or compare multiple countries of origin for the Hispanic respondents. Bauermeister et al.(2007) is the only study to have been conducted on the potential cultural variations in attitudes toward homosexuals among ethnic subgroups of Hispanics in the United States, and it points out the necessity of breaking down what it means to be a Hispanic in the United States. Furthermore, this variable could not distinguish how long each respondent had been in the U.S., as the importance of values brought to the U.S by immigrant seems to diminish over time (Foner 1997).

Future research should not only use a better measure of foreign birth, but should also use interaction terms to compare the attitudes of many different types of

Hispanics (by ethnic group as well as length of residency). Using large data sets so that the statistical power of the analysis remains strong even when comparing subgroups, future research should attempt to compare Hispanic ethnicities to one another in their attitudes toward same-sex marriage. Future studies should also compare Hispanic immigrants to Hispanics who were born here, as the results indicate a significant that foreign birth played a role in the attitudes of Hispanics toward same-sex marriage. To get a more complete picture, future studies should also compare the attitudes of Hispanic immigrants who have been here for varying lengths of time. It seems logical to think that those who have been here longer would differ in their attitudes from those who have just arrived.

There is great importance in distinguishing between types of Hispanics and among multiple Hispanic ethnicities when conducting social research. As Hispanics have replaced African Americans as the largest ethnic group in the United States and make up 14% of the U.S. population, it is important to accurately study their attitudes regarding same-sex marriage (Ellison et al., 2011). As attempts at legalizing along with the reactions against these efforts intensify, these findings have significant political and legal implications for both Hispanics and homosexuals. Hispanics support same-sex marriage less than whites, but all difference disappears when we account for the fact that some Hispanics are immigrants. This is important to keep in mind when discussing the legal battle over the future of same-sex marriage, and the attitudes of Hispanics. This is also important to remember when studying the social attitudes of Hispanics in general, as there might be less consensus than is implied by the ethnic label of Hispanic.

Despite the limitations of this study, its findings indicate a need for further research on this topic. The results of this study show that there are many complexities to the attitudes of Americans toward same-sex marriage. Americans do not only vary in level of support on their gender, race and ethnicity, but also vary according to whether the respondent was born in the U.S. or abroad. The results suggest that support depends on whether the question is regarding same-sex marriage or civil unions for same-sex couples. The findings also suggest that there is less opposition to civil unions in the United States than there is to same-sex marriage.

By using large scale data this study has also contributed to closing the gap in literature regarding the attitudes of Hispanics toward same-sex unions. I also use clear comparisons between white, African American and Hispanic men and women to help gauge the effect of gender on same-sex unions in the United States. Additionally by controlling for foreign birth among its respondents, this study has shed some light on the internal diversity in attitudes among Hispanic respondents. It is my hope that this study will increase interest in the topic, and that future research will take into account the complexities revealed in the attitudes of United States residents toward homosexuality.

Table 1: Proportions of Analytical Variables by DV
N(3099)

Value	Proportion	Be allowed to marry	Be allowed to marry but form civil unions	Not be allowed to marry or form civil unions	Significance
Male	.49	29.5%	38.1%	32.4%	***
Female	.51	36.8%	31.9%	31.1%	
Race/Ethnicity					
Non-Hispanic white	.71	36.8%	37.4%	25.7%	***
Black	.09	20.5%	26.8%	52.6%	
Hispanic	.13	23.8%	27.3%	48.9%	
Income					
0-20,000	.17	29.9%	36.9%	19.5%	***
20,001-40,000	.21	35.3%	29.6%	35%	
40,001-60,000	.23	26.7%	39.8%	33.4%	
60,001-80,000	.12	27%	41.6%	31.2%	
80,001-100,000	.09	43.4%	36.9%	19.5%	
100,001-125,000	.03	29.1 %	55.3%	15.5%	
125,001+	.12	45.7%	34.8%	19.4%	
Age					
18-25	.13	47.2%	25.6%	27.1%	***
26-35	.26	38.9%	31.5%	29.5%	
36-50	.33	28.9%	35%	36%	
51-65	.17	28.6%	42.5%	28.8%	
66+	.11	21.5%	43.9%	34.5%	
Religiosity					
Religious	.67	21.8%	37.1%	41.4%	***
Not too religious	.19	50.5%	33.3%	16.1%	
No Religion	.13	65.8%	27.3%	6%	
Region					
Northwest	.26	41.8%	38.2%	19.6%	***
Midwest	.13	32.2%	33.4%	34.2%	
West	.21	38.7%	33.4%	27.8%	
South	.39	25.9%	35.1%	38.9%	
Education					
Less than HS	.08	21.4%	21.4%	57.1%	***
HS Diploma	.21	21.4%	30%	48.5%	
Some College	.29	31.5%	37.8%	30.5%	
College Graduate	.22	38.9%	38.4%	22.5%	
Graduate School	.19	46.9%	37.6%	15.3%	
Political Ideology					
Liberal	.43	52.1%	29.3%	18.5%	***
Conservative	.47	16.2%	38.2%	45.4%	
Moderate	.09	31.7%	50%	18.2%	
Marital Status					
Married	.52	28.8%	35.2%	35.8%	***
Separated/Not Married	.47	38%	34.6%	27.2%	

Birthplace					
In U.S.	.84	35.4%	35%	29.5%	***
Outside U.S.	.16	21.8%	34.4%	43.8%	

*=Significant at the .05 level **=Significant at the .001 level

Note: The significance of the bivariate relationships between the DV and other variables was determined using Chi-Square tests.

Table 2: Logit Regression of Attitudes toward Same-sex Unions
N(2950)

Which of these statements comes closest to your views concerning same-sex couples?^a	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Be allowed to marry			
Gender (Female is reference)	-.59*** (.55)	-.63*** (.53)	-.56*** (.57)
Race/Ethnicity (White is ref)			
Black	-1.11*** (0.33)	-1.23*** (.29)	-1.28*** (.28)
Hispanic	-.86*** (.42)	-.73*** (.48)	-0.32 (.72)
Black X Male		0.26 (1.30)	0.2 (1.25)
Hispanic X Male		-0.27 (.76)	-0.36 (.69)
Foreign Birth			-1.06*** (.34)
INTERCEPT	4.27	4.31	4.33
Be allowed to form civil unions-but not marry			
Race/Ethnicity (White is reference)			
Black	-.89*** (.41)	-1.12*** (.33)	-1.19*** (.32)
Hispanic	-.62*** (.54)	-.72*** (.49)	-.59*** (.55)
Gender (Female is reference)	-0.04 (.96)	-0.13 (.87)	-0.12 (.88)
Black x Male		0.44 (1.55)	0.44 (1.55)
Hispanic x Male		0.17 (1.19)	0.17 (1.19)
Foreign Birth			-0.26 (.77)
INTERCEPT	3.50	3.55	3.55
-2LL	4.847E3	4.840E3	4.829E3

a. The reference category is: Not be allowed to marry or form civil unions.

Unstandardized coefficients with odds ratios in parentheses.* p< .05, **p<.01, ***p<.001.

Note: Controls are family income, age, religiosity, region, education, marital status and political views (omitted from Table 3, for full results see Table 3).

Table 3: . Logit Regression of Attitudes toward Same-sex Unions, with controls
N(2950)

Which of these statements comes closest to your views concerning same-sex couples?	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Race/Ethnicity (White is ref)			
Black	-1.11*** (0.33)	-1.23*** (0.29)	-1.28*** (0.28)
Hispanic	-0.86*** (0.42)	-0.73*** (0.48)	-0.32 (0.72)
Gender (Female is reference)	-0.59*** (0.55)	-0.63*** (0.53)	-0.56*** (0.57)
Black X Male		0.26 (1.30)	0.23 (1.25)
Hispanic X Male		-0.27 (0.76)	-0.36 (0.69)
Foreign Birth			-1.06*** (0.34)
Family Income (\$125,001 and higher is reference)			
\$20,000 and less	-0.81*** (0.45)	-0.81*** (0.45)	-0.74*** (0.47)
\$20,001-40,000	-0.86*** (0.42)	-0.85*** (0.43)	-0.83*** (0.43)
\$40,001-60,000	-0.83*** (0.43)	-0.81*** (0.44)	-0.81*** (0.44)
\$60,001-80,000	-0.98*** (0.37)	-0.96*** (0.38)	-1.01*** (0.36)
\$80,001-100,000	-0.03 (0.96)	-0.03 (0.97)	-0.07 (0.93)
\$100,001-125,000	0.13 (1.14)	0.17 (1.18)	0.25 (1.28)
Age (reference is oldest)			
25 and younger	1.52*** (4.55)	1.52*** (4.59)	1.53*** (4.60)
26-35	0.65* (1.92)	0.66** (1.94)	0.72*** (2.06)
36-50	0.16 (1.17)	0.16 (1.18)	0.22 (1.24)
51-65	0.09 (1.11)	0.10 (1.11)	0.15 (1.16)
Religiosity (Respondents with no religion are reference)			
Religious	-2.76*** (0.06)	-2.76*** (0.06)	-2.82*** (0.05)
Not religious	-0.91***	-0.90***	-0.96***

	(0.40)	(0.41)	(0.38)
Education (graduate degree is reference)			
Less than High school	-2.21*** (0.11)	-2.23*** (0.11)	-2.12*** (0.12)
High school Diploma	-1.81*** (0.16)	-1.83*** (0.16)	-1.84*** (0.16)
Some College	-1.04*** (0.35)	-1.05*** (0.35)	-1.10*** (0.33)
College graduate	-0.37* (0.67)	-0.40* (0.67)	-0.40* (0.67)
Marital Status (married is reference)	-0.58*** (0.55)	-0.59*** (0.55)	-0.54*** (0.58)
Political Views (Middle of the road are reference)			
Liberal	0.47* (1.61)	0.47 (1.60)	0.52** (1.68)
Conservative	-1.46*** (0.23)	-1.47*** (0.22)	-1.49*** (0.22)
INTERCEPT	4.27	4.31	4.33
Be allowed to form civil unions-but not marry			
Race/Ethnicity (White is ref)			
Black	-0.89*** (0.41)	-1.12*** (0.33)	-1.19*** (0.32)
Hispanic	-0.62*** (0.54)	-0.72*** (0.49)	-0.59*** (0.55)
Gender (Female is reference)	-0.04 (0.96)	-0.13 (0.87)	-0.12 (0.88)
Black X Male		0.44 (1.55)	0.44 (1.55)
Hispanic X Male		0.17 (1.19)	0.17 (1.19)
Foreign Birth			-0.26 (0.77)
Family Income (\$125,001 and higher is reference)			
\$20,000 and less	-0.92*** (0.39)	-0.91*** (0.39)	-0.90*** (0.40)
\$20,001-40,000	-0.70*** (0.49)	-0.69*** (0.49)	-0.69*** (0.49)
\$40,001-60,000	-0.28 (0.74)	-0.28 (0.75)	-0.29 (0.74)
\$60,001-80,000	-0.27 (0.73)	-0.26 (0.76)	-0.27 (0.75)
\$80,001-100,000	0.03 (1.03)	0.04 (1.04)	0.02 (1.02)
\$100,001-125,000	0.73 (2.08)	0.76 (2.13)	0.74 (2.11)

Age (reference is oldest)			
25 and younger	-0.06 (0.94)	-0.06 (0.94)	-0.06 (0.93)
26-35	-0.24 (0.78)	-0.23 (0.78)	-0.23 (0.78)
36-50	-0.39 (0.67)	-0.38 (0.68)	-0.36 (0.69)
51-65	-0.07 (0.92)	-0.07 (0.93)	-0.05 (0.95)
Religiosity (Respondents with no religion are reference)			
Religious	-1.36*** (0.25)	-1.36*** (0.26)	-1.37*** (0.25)
Not religious	-0.58* (0.55)	-0.57* (0.56)	-0.58* (0.55)
Northwest(South is reference)			
Midwest	0.06 (1.07)	0.07 (1.07)	0.06 (1.06)
West	0.42** (1.53)	0.43*** (1.53)	0.43*** (1.54)
Education (graduate degree is reference)			
Less than High school	-1.31*** (0.27)	-1.33*** (0.27)	-1.26*** (0.28)
High school Diploma	-1.15*** (0.32)	-1.17*** (0.31)	-1.17*** (0.31)
Some College	-0.42** (0.66)	-0.43* (0.65)	-0.43* (0.65)
College graduate	-0.19 (0.83)	-0.19 (0.82)	-0.18 (0.83)
Marital Status (married is reference)			
	-0.62*** (0.53)	-0.64*** (0.52)	-0.62*** (0.53)
Political Views (Middle of the road are reference)			
Liberal	-0.27 (0.76)	-0.28 (0.75)	-0.25 (0.77)
Conservative	-0.94*** (0.38)	-0.95*** (0.38)	-0.94*** (0.38)
INTERCEPT	3.50	3.56	3.55
-2LL	4.847E3	4.840E3	4.829E3

The reference category is: Not be allowed to marry or form civil unions.

Unstandardized coefficients with odds ratios in parentheses.* p< .05, **p<.01, ***p<.001.

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