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Explanations for Support of Sexual Minorities

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Abstract

This paper explores the role of emotional warmth and dislike towards a variety of religious groups in the shaping of support of sexual minorities. Previous research indicates that hostility towards sexual minorities is linked to lower support for their rights. Theories of symbolic hostility, or favorability, suggest that emotional feelings towards religious groups may also influence support for the rights of sexual minorities. Regression models indicate that support or nonsupport of sexual minority rights are associated with attitudes towards religious groups even after controlling for attitudes towards sexual minorities as well as other social and demographic factors. While overall political ideology and attitudes towards sexual minorities have stronger relationships to support of sexual minorities' rights, there is no denying the consistency of the finding of the impact of attitudes towards religious groups, especially those who dislike Christian fundamentalists. Emotional warmth or coolness towards Muslims, however, were not strongly associated with attitudes towards the rights of sexual minorities. Given the controls of emotional warmth or coolness towards sexual minorities, and the differential effects tied to Muslim dislike, these results suggest that part of support of sexual minorities is tied to whether a respondent dislikes conservative Christians.

With the *Obergefell v. Hodges* ruling, same-sex marriage rights have been established into law. Recent efforts in North Carolina and Texas to pass laws forcing individuals to use bathrooms based on their biological sex are either being rolled back or are being stopped. These events indicate growing support for the rights of sexual minorities. Growth in support for the rights of sexual minorities has developed at a rapid rate over the last several years (Brewer and Wilcox 2005; Sherkat et al. 2011; Stern et al. 2017). But even with this recent growth, there is still a large minority of individuals who resist those rights. For example, according to McCarthy (2015), 40 percent of Americans still believe that same-sex marriage should be illegal. Furthermore, 39 percent of Americans favor laws that require transgendered individuals to use bathrooms that correspond to their birth sex (Jones et al. 2017).

Previous research has identified several variables predictive of support of sexual minorities. This research suggests that the most explanatory of those variables are beliefs in traditional gender roles (Claman 2008; Norton and Herek 2013; Whitley 2001), religious identity (Gaines and Garand 2010; Nagoshi et al. 2008; Olson, Cadge, and Harrison 2006), religiosity (Claman 2008; Norton and Herek 2013; Sherkat, De Vries, and Creek 2010), political ideology (Jones 2012; Lewis and Gossett 2008; Norton and Herek 2013; Sherkat et al. 2011), and contact with sexual minorities (Barth, Overby, and Huffmon 2009; Becker 2012; King, Winter, and Webster 2009). These factors indicate that individuals with more traditional political and religious attitudes are less likely to support sexual minorities. Consequently, those with more progressive political and religious attitudes are more supportive. Thus, positive or negative attitudes towards sexual minorities strongly impact whether individuals support legal measures that promote rights for such minorities.

It is also possible, however, that liking or disliking religious groups influences support of sexual minorities. This hypothesis is quite possible if we are in a culture war (Hunter 1992) where culturally conservative groups known for opposition to sexual minorities, such as religious conservatives, have a social identity at least partially based on that opposition. Individuals at the opposite end of the culture war may have animosity towards those who identify with the cultural conservatism tied to a variety of religious groups known for their resistance to sexual minorities. Some individuals may have animosity towards religious groups for reasons other than their attitudes towards same-sex marriage and be willing to support sexual minorities as an expression of that hostility. The purpose of this paper is to explore the role of emotional warmth or coolness towards sexual minorities and a variety of religious groups in the shaping of same-sex marriage support.

STUDIES OF SUPPORT FOR SEXUAL MINORITIES

Previous research indicates that support for sexual minorities is predicted by a respondent's political (Gaines and Garand 2010; Jones 2012; Sherkat et al. 2011), educational (Baunach 2012; Olson, Cadge, and Harrison 2006), and religious (Adamczyk and Pitt 2009; Gaines and Garand 2010; Olson, Cadge, and Harrison 2006; Whitley 2001) characteristics. There is also evidence of cohort effect whereby those in younger cohorts are more supportive (Becker 2012; Gaines and Garand 2010; Stern et al. 2017) and a racial effect whereby blacks are less supportive (Han 2007; Lewis and Gossett 2008) of sexual minority rights. Proximity to sexual minorities also matters (Flores 2015; Gaines and Garand 2010), which indicates potential contact effects.

Of these characteristics, recent research suggests that religious based factors may be the strongest determinants of attitudes towards the rights of sexual minorities. For example, Sherkat, De Vries, and Creek (2010) find that religious factors play a crucial role in explaining the racial differences of support for same-sex marriage. Higher African-American religiosity appears to be tied to lower support. Olson, Cadge, and Harrison (2006) find that religious variables perform better than other demographic variables in explaining attitudes towards same-sex unions. Sherkat et al. (2011) find that Christians who subscribe to biblical fundamentalism are more likely to reject same-sex marriage and that while support for same-sex marriage has grown, it has grown the least among conservative Christians. As it concerns issues transgendered individuals face, there is also significant religious resistance to bathroom access (Bryk 2015; Stone 2017).

Much of this hostility may be due to an ideology of Christian nationalism which links political and religious identities in a way that motivates Christians to have an image of the United States as a Christian nation (Whitehead and Perry 2015). Christian nationalists may see promotion of same-sex marriage as a threat to this image since they see such marriages as outside the will of God. Furthermore, support of transgender individuals may be seen as an attack on a traditional understanding of sex roles (Nagoshi and Brzuzy 2010; Norton and Herek 2013; Tebbe and Moradi 2012). If Christians have a tendency to reaffirm traditional sex roles, then they may see the challenge to those roles as an affront to their understanding of a Christian nation. Therefore Christians, particularly conservative Christians, may be seen as especially troublesome to the advancement of issues concerning sexuality minorities.

Hunter (1992) argues that much of our society is shaped by a larger culture war. In this war, there are opposing groups with differing visions about our society. Cultural conservatives tend to envision a society that maintains traditional gender and family relations and are hesitant to embrace some of the modernist cultural adaptations. Conservative religious groups tend to side with cultural conservatives.

On the other hand, cultural progressives have a higher willingness to accept modernist alterations in gender and family structures. They tend to envision such changes as improvements since they represent an increase in individualistic freedoms. Homosexuality and transgenderism are tied to both the modern gender roles and novel family structures that cultural progressives are willing to embrace. Consequently, support for sexual minority rights is tied to rejection of traditional gender roles (Gaines and Garand 2010; Tebbe and Moradi 2012; Whitehead and Perry 2015).

Support or nonsupport for sexual minorities may play an important symbolic role in a larger culture war. Gaines and Garand (2010) find that attitudes towards same-sex marriage are connected to moral and religious considerations towards gays and lesbians as well as gender roles but not towards women and African-American rights. They assess basic attitudes towards gays and lesbians and find that basic hostility towards them is significantly correlated to rejection of same-sex marriage even after the application of relevant religious, political, and demographic controls. Individuals who oppose same-sex marriage, however, may not always do so out of animosity towards sexual minorities but oppose such marriages out of a desire to promote a traditional set of sexual values. Gaines and Garand only investigated the role of hostility towards sexuality minorities in shaping opposition towards same-sex marriage, leaving open the possibility that hostility towards other groups may buttress support for same-sex marriage. Support or nonsupport for same-sex marriage, and other issues relevant to the rights of sexual minorities, can be tied to how individuals construct their sexual and/or moral values, but it is also possible that they are both tied to hostility towards groups that promote alternate perspectives of those values.

Culture war considerations may also play a role in how individuals understand issues involving transgendered individuals. For example, Yarhouse (2015) argues that a culture war mentality often shapes how individuals comprehend issues of gender identity. In particular religious conservatives may envision themselves besieged by cultural changes they want to resist. In such a situation, religious conservatives may link transgender issues to larger modernist alterations to sexuality issues. If this linkage is a major motivating factor for how religious individuals interpret the rights of transgendered individuals, then it is not surprising that religiosity is inversely related to support of the rights of the transgendered. It is likely that cultural progressives understand the religious source of much of the hostility to sexual minorities and may react to that hostility with their own hostility towards religious groups. This pattern, however, is not the only source of religious hostility.

SOURCES OF RELIGIOUS HOSTILITY

Although freedom of religion is conceived as a common American value, several groups have experienced, and continue to experience, anti-religious bias. For example, there has been an increase in the hostility towards conservative Christians among those in the American left (Pieper 2011). Furthermore, education is also related to rejection of Christian fundamentalists (Bolce and De Maio 2008; Yancey and Williamson 2014). Given that progressive political ideology and education are also related to support of sexual minorities, it should not be a surprise to find that those who support issues framed as rights for sexual minorities are also likely to have animosity towards Christian fundamentalists. It is unlikely, however, that animosity to Christians is only driven by perceptions of their non-support of sexual minorities. Yancey and Williamson (2014) document other reasons for animosity towards conservative Christians such as fears of a governmental takeover, sexism, perceptions that such individuals are unintelligent, and a general hostility towards religion. It is worth investigating how much the ideology of those with animosity towards Christians is directly linked to support of marginalized sexuality groups. More specifically, if hostility towards conservative Christians predates their affection towards sexual minorities, can that hostility motivate some support for those sexual minorities?

If specific hostility towards conservative Christians can impact support for sexual minorities, then it is likely that Islam, which is also a socially conservative religion, is treated in a qualitatively different manner. Previous research has documented the importance of terrorism fears in the development of Islamophobia in the United States (Gottschalk and Greenberg 2008; Mamdani 2002; Shryock 2010). The September 11 attacks are an important turning point in the relations of Muslims to other Americans (Akram and Johnson 2002; Nacos and Torres-Reyna 2003). Although there are plenty of non-Middle Eastern Muslims, an ethnic element in Islamophobia ties hostile perspectives towards Middle Easterners to Muslims. Thus Muslims are often stereotyped as dangerous, patriarchal, violent, and barbaric (Aziz 2009; Bullock 2002; Gottschalk and Greenberg 2008; Sides and Gross 2013). Anti-Muslim hostility after the September 11 attacks has made Muslims wary of both political parties (Barreto and Bozonelos 2009); however, in recent years they have become more supportive of Democrats (Schoenfeld 2007). Even though Muslims have a reputation of endorsing regressive social practices, they vote for political candidates who support culturally progressive goals. This distinction likely creates alternative sources of support and opposition for Muslims relative to other religious groups. These distinctions may play an important role in understanding how attitudes towards Muslims relate to attitudes towards sexual minorities.

Anti-Semitism has also been a problem in the United States. Jews have often been the victims of religious stereotyping. For example, work on anti-Semitism

illustrates that fear of a takeover by Jews animates some of the hostility they face (Dinnerstein 1994; Jaher 1994). These fears created a desire among those with anti-Semitism to limit the potential influence of Jews. Anti-Semites paid special attention to efforts at limiting Jewish influence in the educational realm since education may provide Jews with higher ability to shape society (Dinnerstein 1994). Much of the animosity towards Jews comes from political conservatives (Diamond 1995; Smith 1999), and indeed Jews are often seen as part of the politically progressive coalition (Lefkowitz 1993; Levey 1996; Podhoretz 2010). Consequently, Jews may be more likely to be envisioned as individuals who support the rights of sexual minorities than other religious groups. One would not expect a desire to protect sexual minorities to be reflected in animosity towards Jews.

Hostility towards conservative religious groups may be shaped by the resistance of conservative religion towards sexual minorities (Hout and Fischer 2002, 2014). Thus Christian fundamentalists, and Christians in general, can experience hostility from the cultural progressive subcultures that buttress LGBT activism. Yancey and Williamson (2012) find in their work on cultural progressive activists that such activists exhibit culture war-based concerns that Christian fundamentalists are attempting to move our society back to an intolerant and repressive period. They conceptualize Christian fundamentalists as enemies who oppose science and modernity. In theory, Muslims also tend to oppose sexual minorities and should be subject to rejection by supporters of those sexuality groups. Yet it is not clear that Muslims are seen as openly opposing the aims of cultural progressives since Muslims tend to support progressive political groups (Ayers 2007; Jalalzai 2009). While there is little evidence that Muslims support specific cultural progressive causes, Muslims' voting patterns tend to support those who will promote such causes. This observation may be why cultural progressive activists are less hostile towards Muslims than towards conservative Christians (Yancey and Williamson 2012).

If a lack of advocacy of conservative cultural issues is part of the image individuals have of U.S. Muslims, and the idea of a culture war is useful for understanding attitudes towards sexual minorities and religious groups, then dislike of Muslims should not be heavily tied to support for the rights of sexual minorities. If dislike of Muslim is not tied to support of sexual minorities, then one may doubt that supporters of sexual minorities use a generalized value of equality to evaluate all religious groups. An alternate directionality of this relationship becomes possible as unique characteristics of a particular religious group may motivate emotional coolness towards them. This disaffection can shape an individual's attitudes towards political issues important to disrespected groups. Issues concerning the rights of sexual minorities can be a proxy for those who dislike a particular conservative religious group. Hostility towards conservative religious

groups may play an important symbolic role in promoting cultural progressive values.

EMOTIONAL WARMTH OR COOLNESS AS A SOURCE OF SUPPORT FOR SEXUAL MINORITIES

In modern society there is social pressure to present oneself as not prejudiced towards religious or sexuality groups. Despite this pressure, it is naïve to assert that antipathy towards such groups does not exist. Individuals with bias against religious or sexuality groups are likely to hide it when it is not socially acceptable. Nonetheless, this bias is still likely to reveal itself in ways so that those with such prejudice can lessen the possibility of experiencing stigma. In addition to the role negative emotions can play in the shaping of attitudes towards social groups, positive perceptions also inform such attitudes. While individuals may not want to show favoritism when it can lead to accusations of unfairness, it is likely that affirmative biases shape their perceptions of how a preferred group should be treated.

Theories of symbolic racism (Kinder and Sears 1981; McConahay and Hough 1976) offer a way to understand how individuals can express their disaffection for out-groups but avoid the stigma related to having out-group bias. Symbolic hostility can manifest itself on racial issues while also supplying a level of plausible deniability. For example, a person hostile towards Hispanics is unlikely to state support directly for an overt stereotype of Hispanics due to a desire to be seen as unbiased. Such a person can, however, safely express such hostility on issues of immigration reform since opposing such reform is not automatically seen as racist. In this way, immigration policy is a symbolic issue by which anti-Hispanic hostility can be expressed.

Such theories have focused on racial attitudes and are generally tied to attempts to avoid self-presentation of overt hostility towards minority racial groups. There is also incentive to avoid self-presentation of overt hostility towards religious and sexuality groups. Notions of symbolic hostility may be relevant in the exploration of negative attitudes towards religious and sexuality groups. While no one has previously theorized about symbolic sympathy, it is reasonable to contend a similar process may occur when individuals have positive attitudes towards social groups. It may be socially unacceptable to provide unearned benefits to social groups one favors. Thus, rather than overtly favoring selected in-groups, individuals may support issues that symbolically show favoritism towards that group. Such actions can allow individuals to express their emotional warmth while still maintaining a social identity of fairness.

In a culture war, it can be important for cultural conservatives and progressives to express hostility towards out-groups in ways that cannot be denounced as

bigotry. Issues involving the rights of sexual minorities can symbolically express an individual's comfort or discomfort for religious groups or sexual minorities. Individuals may oppose the rights of sexual minorities for reasons other than hostility towards sexual minorities, yet those with such hostility can exhibit it through opposition to the rights of sexual minorities and reduce the chances they will be accused of bigotry. Likewise, individuals with hostility towards certain religious groups may realize the antipathy those groups have towards the rights of sexual minorities. This realization may buttress their support for those rights since it can also express their hostility towards those religious groups. On the other hand, those with sympathy towards sexual minorities are likely to support the rights of sexual minorities, regardless of the reason for that sympathy, since support of same-sex marriage can be a symbolic way they express their support of sexual minorities. Furthermore, religious conservatives have become aware of the hostility they face from progressives and/or the highly educated (Perl and Bendyna 2002; Rosik and Smith 2009). Consequently, individuals with emotional warmth towards those religious groups may express that sympathy by sharing their rejection of the rights of sexual minorities.

Important social and demographic factors influence sympathy or dislike towards either sexual minorities or religious groups. For example, education has been found to be positively correlated to support for sexual minorities (Kosciw, Greytak, and Diaz 2009; Sherkat, De Vries, and Creek 2010) and negative attitudes towards Christians, although not towards Muslims fundamentalists (Yancey and Williamson 2014). It is possible that education is the driving factor behind attitudes towards certain religious groups such as Christian fundamentalists and towards sexual minorities. If an intrinsic link does exist, then support of sexual minorities would be tied to animosity towards Christians or Christian fundamentalists even after application of proper demographic controls.

VARIABLES

This study uses data from the 2016 American National Election Study (ANES). To assess attitudes towards sexual minorities, I utilize five different dependent variables. The first dependent variable (Same-Sex Marriage) comes from a question about whether same-sex marriage should be allowed. Respondents were given the option of selecting no recognition of same-sex couples, allowing civil unions, or allowing same-sex marriages. I converted results into a dummy variable with those allowing same-sex marriage coded as 1 and all other respondents (those supporting only civil unions or no recognition of same sex couple) coded as 0. The second dependent variable (Wedding Businesses) asked if business owners who provide wedding-related services should be allowed to refuse service to same-sex weddings. Respondents were allowed to rank their yes or no answer as feeling very

strongly, moderately, or not a little about that answer, which provided me with a 1 to 6 scale variable with higher numbers indicating more willingness to allow business owners to refuse same-sex weddings. The third dependent variable (Anti-Discrim Law) asked if there should be laws to protect gays and lesbians. Respondents were allowed to rank their yes or no answer as feeling strongly or not strongly about that answer, which provided me with a 1 to 4 scale variable with higher numbers indicating less support for those laws. The fourth dependent variable (Same-Sex Adopt) came from a question on whether gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to adopt children. Respondents provided a dichotomous yes or no answer (yes = 1, no = 0). The fifth dependent variable (Transgender Bathroom) comes from a question on transgender bathrooms. Respondents were asked if transgendered individuals should have to use the bathroom of their biological gender or if they can use the bathroom of their identified gender. Respondents were allowed to rank their yes or no answer as feeling strongly, moderately, or a little about that answer, which provided the me with a 1 to 6 scale variable with higher numbers indicating less support for the use of bathrooms according to one's gender identity.

A variety of independent variables are used to control for factors previous research indicated influences same-sex marriage support. Age is measured with a 13-point scale. Female, Black, Hispanic, Other Race¹, Heterosexual, Northcentral, Northeast, and West² are dummy variables. Education is measured with a 5-point scale, and income is measured with a 28-point scale. I convert the political viewpoint variable into a 7-point scale measuring political conservatism with higher values indicating higher levels of political conservatism. To capture measured acceptance of traditional gender roles with "Better if Wife at Home," I created a 7-point scale with higher numbers indicating a stronger assertion that it is better for a wife to stay at home while her husband works. I assess religious preference with a series of dummy variables that represented the Judeo-Christian faiths (Protestant believing the Bible is the word of God³, Protestant not believing

¹ White is the reference group.

² South is the reference group.

³ The question provided three possible answers: 1) that the Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally word-for-word, 2) that the Bible is the word of God but not everything in it should be taken literally, word-for-word, and 3) that the Bible is a book written by men and is not the word of God. Protestants who provided the first answer were coded as believing the Bible is the word of God. Those who answered with the other two answers were coded as not believing the Bible to be the word of God.

the Bible is the word of God⁴, Catholic, and Jew⁵). Religious attendance (Religious Attendance) is captured with a 6-point scale where higher numbers indicated more attendance.

I investigated the possibility of constructing an index with the dependent variables. The Cronbach's alpha of these five variables, however, is 0.683. This score indicates some relationship between the variables but not enough to justify an index. Face validity, however, indicates that such variables deal with sexual minorities' rights. Thus my analytical strategy will be a series of OLS and logistic regression models for each dependent variable. Each dependent variable represents attitudes to sexual minorities' rights, but they likely reflect different aspects of one's attitudes toward sexual minorities. Furthermore, other important issues can be conflated with a given dependent variable. For example, a political libertarian may oppose having the government force a business to serve a same-sex wedding but also does not want the state to prevent that couple from getting married. Both positions can be consistent with a libertarian idea of less government interference. So while consistent associations of the dependent variables to a given independent variable are likely to indicate an overarching relationship of that independent variable to support, or non-support, of sexual minorities, it is also possible that specific associations are confounded by extramural forces not adequately captured by the independent variables.

To capture possible emotional warmth/coolness towards sexual minorities and religious groups, I use thermometer scores. These questions asked the respondents to rank groups on a scale of 0 to 100 according to how much affection they have towards those groups. As it concerned the meaning of those ratings, respondents were instructed, "Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the group. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorable toward the group and that you don't care too much for that group. You would rate the person at the 50-degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward the group." Face validity of this question is

⁴ It was important to distinguish between conservative and moderate/liberal Protestants. Denominational differences have become less important over the last half of the 20th century (Wuthnow 1988), so theological differences are more useful. Previous research has used attitudes towards biblical inerrancy as the sole measure to operationalize potential theological fundamentalism (Sherkat 2011; Sherkat and Darnell 1999), evangelicalism (Hunter 1983), and orthodoxy (Freeman and Houston 2011; Roy 2016) within the Christian faith. Therefore, it is a viable measure for dividing Protestants into conservative and moderate/liberal camps.

⁵ Those who are not either Christian or Jewish are the reference group. Unfortunately, this categorization creates a reference group with very disparate beliefs. These groups, however, which vary from highly religious Muslims to atheists, tend to be too small to have much of an impact on the results. The one exception would be those who classify themselves as "none of the above." Research has indicated, however, that this group as well is quite religiously diverse (Baker and Smith 2009; Lim, MacGregor, and Putnam 2010), and there was not much to gain by adding them as a dummy variable.

that it provides a continuous measure of emotional warmth/coolness towards a given group. This emotional warmth or coolness is conceptualized as either having sympathy for the group or having dislike for the group since sympathy and dislike are generally acknowledged as emotional responses.

One might use the stated score for each respondent to assess sympathy or dislike towards a given group. This approach is problematic, however, for at least two reasons. First, if these variables are not normed, then they will measure the propensity of respondents to rank others high or low, as well as to rank the particular group. Second, continuous variables do not differentiate between those who rank groups high or low relative to other groups. In other words, the basic score on a thermometer does not tell a researcher whether sympathy or dislike towards a group shapes support for sexual minorities. To deal with these issues, I used a variation of Yancey's (2010) technique in his assessment of attitudes towards religious groups. He operationalized emotional dislike with a dichotomous variable assessing if a respondent ranks a religious group a standard deviation below an average of the rankings of other religious groups. The ANES contains 27 thermometer variables connected to different social groups. I construct dichotomous variables whereby if a respondent ranked the group identified as gay a standard deviation above the mean of their ranking of other groups, then the respondent is labeled Pro-Gay, and if a respondent ranked the group identified as gay a standard deviation below the mean, then the respondent is labeled Anti-Gay.⁶ A similar methodology creates Pro-Transgendered, Anti-Transgendered, Pro-Fundamentalist, Anti-Fundamentalist, Pro-Christian, Anti-Christian, Pro-Muslim, Anti-Muslim, Pro-Jew, and Anti-Jew. A breakdown of the percentage of respondents in each group can be seen on Table 1.⁷

Table 1: Percentage of Respondents in Pro-/Anti- Variables (N = 3,199)

	Pro	Anti
Gay	18.5%	12.8%
Transgendered	10.8%	18.0%
Christian Fundamentalist	10.3%	29.9%
Christian	45.2%	3.8%
Muslim	5.8%	16.4%
Jew	25.2%	2.5%

⁶ Respondents who did not answer all 27 of the thermometer questions were dropped from all models.

⁷ Only respondents who qualified for inclusion in the final model were used in this table.

RESULTS

Dependent variables concerning the wedding businesses, anti-discrimination laws, and support for transgender bathrooms were tested in OLS models. For each dependent variable, I first constructed a model with just the relevant social and demographic independent variables. The next model added either the Gay or Transgender thermometer depending on which one is the relevant group in the question. The final model adds in the relevant religious thermometer variables. This approach allows me to see how much explanatory power is added when including the different thermometer variables.

The final Wedding Business model (Table 2) indicates that men, whites, political conservatives, those who attend religious services more often, those who have positive feelings towards Christians, those who have negative feelings towards gays, those who lack positive feelings towards gays, and those who lack negative feelings towards Christian fundamentalists are more likely to support wedding businesses that do not want to serve same-sex weddings. There was a larger jump in coefficient of determination with the addition of the gay thermometer variables than the religious thermometer variables (0.027 v. 0.016), revealing that the power of attitudes towards sexual minorities is more powerful than attitudes towards religious groups to predict support for businesses to refuse to serve same-sex weddings. Only the standard beta of political conservatism (0.322) is higher than the standard betas of Pro-Gay (-0.13) and Anti-Gay (0.111), indicating that only one's overall political philosophy can matter more than attitudes towards sexual minorities as it concerns the right of businesses to refuse to serve same-sex weddings. Attitudes towards religions do matter, however, even after application of relevant controls, as seen in the results of Anti-Fundamentalist and Pro-Christian.

Table 2: Betas and Standard Errors on Wedding Businesses

	Wedding Businesses	Wedding Businesses	Wedding Businesses
Age	-0.004 (0.003)	-0.024 (0.003)	-0.033 (0.003)
Female	-0.060** (0.094)	-0.047* (0.093)	-0.049* (0.092)
Black	-0.051* (0.190)	-0.057* (0.186)	-0.063* (0.186)
Other Race	-.044 (0.132)	-0.053* (0.130)	-0.046* (0.129)
Heterosexual	0.010 (0.132)	0.010 (0.130)	0.006 (0.129)
Northcentral	-0.028 (.117)	-0.026 (0.115)	-0.028 (0.114)

Northeast	-0.023 (0.154)	-0.011 (0.152)	-0.007 (0.151)
West	-0.002 (0.129)	0.006 (0.126)	0.017 (0.126)
Education	-0.049 (0.047)	-.038 (0.047)	-0.027 (0.047)
Income	-0.004 (0.007)	0.010 (0.007)	0.016 (0.006)
Political Conservatism	0.406*** (0.035)	0.370*** (0.035)	0.322*** (0.037)
Better if Wife at Home	0.057* (0.036)	0.046 (0.035)	0.041 (0.035)
Protestant – Bible God’s Word	0.069* (0.147)	0.060* (0.145)	0.051 (0.144)
Protestant _ Bible Not God’s Word	-0.028 (0.137)	-0.013 (0.135)	-0.009 (0.135)
Catholic	-0.077** (0.133)	-0.068* (0.131)	-0.063 (0.131)
Jewish	-0.020 (0.339)	-0.024 (0.333)	-0.020 (0.335)
Religious Attendance	0.136*** (0.041)	0.111*** (0.040)	0.090*** (0.041)
Pro- Transgender Anti- Transgender			
Pro-Gay		-0.130*** (0.146)	-0.120*** (0.152)
Anti-Gay		0.111*** (0.134)	0.101*** (0.136)
Pro- Fundamentalist Anti- Fundamentalist			-0.003 (0.138) -0.078*** (0.124)
Pro-Muslim			-0.019 (0.208)
Anti-Muslim			0.022 (0.125)
Pro-Christian			0.085*** (0.106)
Anti-Christian			0.024 (0.381)

Pro-Jew			0.043 (0.107)
Anti-Jew			-0.004 (0.343)
R ²	0.315	0.342	0.358
N	1,364	1,364	1,364

* = p < 0.05; ** = p < 0.01; *** = p < 0.001; Standard Beta are entries, Standard Error in parenthesis.

The final Anti-Discrimination Law model (Table 3) indicates that those not white or black, political conservatives, those who attend religious services more often, those believing it is better that a wife stays home, those who have negative feelings towards gays, those who lack positive feelings towards gays, those who have positive feelings towards Christian fundamentalists, and those who lack negative feelings towards Christian fundamentalists are less likely to support anti-discrimination laws based on sexual orientation. Once again there was a substantially greater increase in coefficient of determination when adding the gay thermometer variables than the religious thermometer variables (0.051 v. 0.014). As it concerns size effects, it is notable that Anti-Gay (0.196) rivals the power of Political Conservatism (0.201) but that Pro-Fundamentalist (0.094) is higher than Pro-Gay (-0.069). The power of animosity towards sexual minorities may be the driving force behind the powerful jump in coefficient of determination.

Table 3: Betas and Standard Errors on Anti-Discrimination Law

	Anti-Discrim Law	Anti-Discrim Law	Anti-Discrim Law
Age	-0.019 (0.002)	-0.038 (0.002)	-0.033 (0.002)
Female	-0.016 (0.056)	-0.005 (0.055)	-0.001 (0.055)
Black	0.009 (0.113)	0.003 (0.110)	0.002 (0.110)
Other Race	-0.047 (0.079)	-0.064* (0.076)	-0.060* (0.076)
Heterosexual	-0.037 (0.080)	-0.032 (0.077)	-0.027 (0.077)
Northcentral	0.031 (0.070)	0.031 (0.068)	0.034 (0.067)
Northeast	0.031 (0.092)	0.044 (0.089)	0.043 (0.089)
West	-0.057* (0.077)	-0.044 (0.074)	-0.045 (0.074)

Education	-0.027 (0.028)	-0.008 (0.027)	0.004 (0.028)
Income	-0.080** (0.004)	-0.057* (0.004)	-0.049 (0.004)
Political Conservatism	0.280*** (0.021)	0.237*** (0.020)	0.201*** (0.022)
Better if Wife at Home	0.082*** (0.021)	0.068** (0.021)	0.064* (0.021)
Protestant – Bible God’s Word	0.053 (0.088)	0.034 (0.086)	0.026 (0.086)
Protestant _ Bible Not God’s Word	-0.084** (0.082)	-0.064* (0.079)	-0.051 (0.079)
Catholic	-0.067* (0.080)	-0.055 (0.077)	-0.041 (0.077)
Jewish	-0.012 (0.203)	-0.017 (0.197)	-0.010 (0.199)
Religious Attendance	0.097*** (0.024)	0.066* (0.024)	0.058* (0.024)
Pro- Transgender Anti- Transgender Pro-Gay		- 0.085*** (0.087)	-0.069** (0.090)
Anti-Gay		0.220*** (0.079)	0.196*** (0.081)
Pro- Fundamentalist Anti- Fundamentalist Pro-Muslim			0.094*** (0.082) -0.054* (0.073) -0.004 (0.123)
Anti-Muslim			0.049 (0.074)
Pro-Christian			0.006 (0.063)
Anti-Christian			0.013 (0.226)
Pro-Jew			-0.027 (0.063)
Anti-Jew			0.008 (0.203)

R ²	0.185	0.236	0.250
N	1,371	1,371	1,371

* = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$; *** = $p < 0.001$; Standard Beta are entries, Standard Error in parenthesis.

The final Transgender Bathroom model (Table 4) indicates that males, political conservatives, those who are not moderate/liberal Protestants, those who have positive feelings towards Christians, those who have negative feelings towards the transgendered, those who lack positive feelings towards the transgendered, and those who lack negative feelings towards Christian fundamentalists are less supportive of individuals using restrooms according to their gender identity. The difference in coefficient of determination when adding the transgendered thermometers as opposed to the religion thermometers (0.033 v. 0.031) was negligible. Indeed, the strength of the standard beta of Anti-Fundamentalist (-0.157) is greater than the standardized betas of Pro-Transgender (-0.097) and Anti-Transgender (0.111) and is only surpassed by the standard beta of Political Conservatism (0.331). The effect of animosity towards fundamentalist Christians may have a greater effect on support for transgendered bathrooms than any other factor outside of general political liberalism.

Table 4: Betas and Standard Errors on Transgender Bathroom Support

	Transgender Bathroom	Transgender Bathroom	Transgender Bathroom
Age	-0.013 (0.003)	0.005 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.003)
Female	-0.064** (0.094)	-0.057* (0.091)	-0.055* (0.090)
Black	0.056* (0.187)	0.046 (0.183)	0.038 (0.180)
Other Race	0.047 (0.130)	0.042 (0.127)	0.047 (0.125)
Heterosexual	0.017 (0.133)	0.014 (0.129)	0.016 (0.127)
Northcentral	0.025 (0.116)	0.030 (0.113)	0.025 (0.111)
Northeast	-0.035 (0.153)	-0.013 (0.150)	-0.011 (0.147)
West	-0.013 (0.127)	-0.004 (0.124)	0.009 (0.122)
Education	-0.069** (0.047)	-0.056* (0.046)	-0.033 (0.045)
Income	-0.064* (0.047)	-0.059* (0.046)	-0.045 (0.045)

	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Political	0.445***	0.395***	0.331***
Conservatism	(0.034)	(0.035)	(0.036)
Better if Wife at	0.053*	0.044	0.034
Home	(0.035)	(0.034)	(0.034)
Protestant –	0.060*	0.048	0.039
Bible God’s	(0.145)	(0.142)	(0.139)
Word			
Protestant _	-0.092***	-0.083**	-0.069*
Bible Not	(0.136)	(0.133)	(0.131)
God’s Word			
Catholic	-0.046	-0.050	-0.042
	(0.132)	(0.129)	(0.127)
Jewish	-0.034	-0.037	-0.024
	(0.343)	(0.335)	(0.333)
Religious	0.073**	0.055*	0.036
Attendance	(0.040)	(0.039)	(0.040)
Pro-		-0.122***	-0.097***
Transgender		(0.179)	(0.179)
Anti-		-0.139***	0.111***
Transgender		(0.113)	(0.113)
Pro-Gay			
Anti-Gay			
Pro-			0.002
Fundamentalist			(0.133)
Anti-			-0.157***
Fundamentalist			(0.121)
Pro-Muslim			-0.029
			(0.205)
Anti-Muslim			0.053*
			(0.121)
Pro-Christian			0.075***
			(0.103)
Anti-Christian			0.028
			(0.369)
Pro-Jew			-0.000
			(0.103)
Anti-Jew			0.014
			(0.331)
R ²	0.329	0.362	0.393
N	1,345	1,345	1,345

* = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$; *** = $p < 0.001$; Standard Beta are entries, Standard Error in parenthesis.

The variables Same-Sex Marriage and Same-Sex Adoption are both dummy variables, and logistic regression models are appropriate for exploring the effects of the independent variables upon them. Those models can be seen in Table 5. I used the same strategy of the first model being all non-thermometer variables, the second model adding in the gay thermometer variable, and the third model adding in the religion thermometer variables. The final Same-Sex Marriage model indicates that older, male, the lower educated, political conservatives, those who believe it is better that a wife stays home, Protestants who believe the Bible is the word of God, those who are not Protestants who do not believe the Bible is the word of God, non-Catholics, those who attend religious services more often, those who have positive feelings towards Christians and Jews, those who have negative feelings towards gays, those who lack positive feelings towards gays, and those who lack negative feelings towards Christian fundamentalists and Jews are less supportive of same-sex marriage. Looking at the Nagelkerke R^2 , which is a pseudo-measurement of determination, it is clear that adding the gay thermometers adds about twice as much explanatory power as adding the religion thermometers (0.051 v. 0.026). Given the strength of the standard betas of Pro-Gay (-1.553) and Anti-Gay (1.218), this model indicates that affection or disaffection towards sexual minorities is the most powerful explanation for support or nonsupport of same-sex marriage.

Table 5: Betas and Odds Ratios on Same-Sex Marriage and Same-Sex Adoption Support

	Same-Sex Marriage	Same-Sex Marriage	Same-Sex Marriage	Same-Sex Adoption	Same-Sex Adoption	Same-Sex Adoption
Age	0.015*** (1.015)	0.011** (1.011)	0.009* (1.009)	0.009 (1.009)	0.007 (1.007)	0.006 (1.006)
Female	-0.393** (0.675)	-0.314* (0.730)	-0.317* (.728)	-0.342** (0.711)	-0.275* (0.759)	-0.276* (0.759)
Black	0.450* (1.568)	0.413 (1.539)	0.402 (1.495)	0.790** (2.203)	0.803** (2.233)	0.895*** (2.447)
Other Race	0.290 (1.336)	0.232 (1.262)	0.332 (1.394)	0.715*** (2.045)	0.645*** (1.907)	0.811*** (2.251)
Heterosexual	0.082 (1.086)	0.102 (1.107)	0.124 (1.132)	0.200 (1.221)	0.291 (1.337)	0.325 (1.384)
Northcentral	-0.058 (0.944)	-0.046 (0.955)	-0.031 (0.970)	0.003 (1.003)	0.014 (1.014)	0.052 (1.053)
Northeast	0.010 (1.010)	0.140 (1.151)	0.163 (1.177)	-0.676* (0.509)	-0.551* (0.576)	-0.563* (0.570)
West	-0.267 (0.766)	-0.256 (0.774)	-0.226 (0.798)	-0.171 (0.843)	-0.077 (0.926)	-0.019 (0.981)
Education	-0.186** (0.830)	-0.152* (0.859)	-0.124* (0.883)	0.001 (1.001)	0.060 (1.062)	0.096 (1.101)
Income	-0.019* (0.981)	-0.013 (0.987)	-0.012 (0.988)	-0.034*** (0.967)	-0.025** (0.975)	-0.024* (0.976)

Political	0.644***	0.591***	0.507***	0.484***	0.425***	0.329***
Conservatism	(1.905)	(1.805)	(1.660)	(1.622)	(1.530)	(1.389)
Better if Wife at Home	0.152**	0.131**	0.129**	0.276***	0.272***	0.269***
	(1.164)	(1.140)	(1.137)	(1.318)	(1.313)	(1.309)
Protestant – Bible God’s Word	0.800***	0.799**	0.698**	0.590**	0.542**	0.487*
	(2.226)	(2.224)	(2.010)	(1.803)	(1.720)	(1.627)
Protestant _ Bible Not God’s Word	-0.611**	-0.488**	-0.470*	-0.520**	-0.390*	-0.339
	(0.543)	(0.614)	(0.625)	(0.595)	(0.677)	(0.712)
Catholic	-0.560**	-0.482**	-0.373*	-0.328*	-0.264	-0.126
	(0.571)	(0.617)	(0.688)	(0.720)	(0.768)	(0.882)
Jewish	-0.709	-0.862	-0.891	0.275	0.119	0.369
	(0.492)	(0.422)	(0.410)	(1.316)	(1.126)	(1.447)
Religious Attendance	0.397***	0.359***	0.317***	0.382***	0.330***	0.278***
	(1.487)	(1.432)	(1.372)	(1.465)	(1.391)	(1.320)
Pro-Gay	-	-	-	-	-	-0.961**
		1.630***	1.553***		1.157***	(0.383)
		(0.196)	(0.212)		(0.315)	
Anti-Gay		1.259***	1.218***		1.722***	1.639***
		(3.521)	(3.382)		(5.598)	(5.148)
Pro-Fundamentalist			0.782***			0.592**
			(2.185)			(1.808)
Anti-Fundamentalist			-0.552**			-0.599**
			(0.576)			(0.549)
Pro-Muslim			-0.260			-0.673
			(0.771)			(0.510)
Anti-Muslim			0.103			0.258
			(1.108)			(1.294)
Pro-Christian			0.270*			0.526***
			(1.309)			(1.692)
Anti-Christian			0.442			0.042
			(1.556)			(1.043)
Pro-Jew			0.344*			0.066
			(1.411)			(1.068)
Anti-Jew			-1.224*			-1.035*
			(0.294)			(0.355)
Nagelkerke R ²	0.429	0.480	0.506	0.363	0.436	0.466
-2 Log Likelihood	1370.228	1290.476	1248.421	1307.548	1207.218	1165.042
N	1,376	1,376	1,376	1,362	1,362	1,362

* = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$; *** = $p < 0.001$; Standard Beta are entries, Odds Ratios in parenthesis.

The final model of Same Sex Adoption indicates that individuals who are male, nonwhite, not living in the Northeast, have lower SES, political conservatives, those who believe it is better that a wife stays home, Protestants who believe that the Bible is the word of God, those who attend religious services more often, those who have positive feelings towards Christians, those who have negative feelings towards gays, those who lack positive feelings towards gays, and those who lack negative feelings towards Christian fundamentalists and Jews are less supportive of same-sex adoption. Once again adding the gay thermometers added much more explanatory power than adding the religion thermometers (0.073 v. 0.03). The standardized betas of Pro-Gay (-0.961) and Anti-Gay (1.639) are higher than those

of any other independent variable. Affection or disaffection towards sexual minorities is the strongest factor determining support for same-sex adoption.

A review of the analysis of these five dependent variables reveals important implications about the support of sexual minorities' rights. First, clearly one's overall political ideology and positive/negative feelings towards sexual minorities are the most powerful predictors of support for the rights of sexual minorities. Given the polarized nature of politics in the United States and the natural inclination to favor those towards whom we feel affection, such results are to be expected. Second, the religious thermometers were found to be significant in all five of the models. They may be only inferior to political ideology and affection/disaffection towards sexual minorities as having consistent power to predict support for sexual minorities. Third, among the religious thermometer variables, only Anti-Fundamentalist was found to be significant in all five models. While at times the standard betas of Pro-Fundamentalist were stronger than Anti-Fundamentalist, it was not consistently a significant predictor of nonsupport of sexual minorities. Even after applications of controls, disaffection towards Christian fundamentalists is a very reliable predictor of the religion thermometers. Finally, although not significant in all five models, gender and religious service attendance were still significant predictors in four of the models. It is reasonable to argue that men and regular church attendees are less supportive of sexual minorities.

DISCUSSION

Attitudes towards religious groups was found to be associated with support or nonsupport of sexual minority rights even after controlling for a variety of other social and demographic factors. While overall political ideology and attitudes towards sexual minorities have stronger relationships to support of sexual minorities' rights, there is no denying the consistency of the finding of the impact of attitudes towards religious groups. Future work should consider how attitudes towards religious groups may influence the ability of activists to promote the interest of sexual minorities. The results of this research, however, suggest that the notions of a culture war may help to explain this relationship. Among the religious measures, dislike towards Christian fundamentalists is the most consistent predictor of support for sexual minorities. If Christian fundamentalists can be accurately seen as an important opponent of cultural progressives (Yancey and Williamson 2012), who tend to champion the rights of sexual minorities, then it is plausible that animosity towards them would be the most relevant measure of religious thermometer attitudes. For example, although Muslims are a culturally conservative subculture, they are not known for political opposition to cultural progressive measures. The political and social controls in the research indicate that it is not merely that political progressives who happen to support sexual minorities

are also less likely to have animosity towards a political ally. What is likely is that animosity towards Muslims cannot be expressed through support of sexual minorities, and there is little or no symbolic motivation for those resenting Muslims also to support sexual minorities.

Many respondents dislike these religious groups precisely because of their hostility to sexual minorities. There are two reasons, however, to suspect that it is also the case that the power of anti-religious animosity has fueled some support for sexual minorities. First, even with the sympathy towards sexual minorities controlled, sympathy or dislike towards religious groups still matters. If support of sexual minorities led to both animosity towards religious groups and support of the rights of sexual minorities, then controlling for affinity or animosity towards sexual minorities should eliminate the significant relationship of sexual minority support and attitudes towards religious groups. Second, if the direction of the relationship is caused only by respondents rejecting religious groups due to their opposition of sexual minorities, then the non-significant results concerning Anti-Muslims in four of the five models, as well as the positive relationship of animosity of Muslims with less support for transgendered bathrooms, does not fit. While there is not a strong tendency to think of Muslims as major political opponents to sexual minorities, Islamic theology is not known to favor them either. Anti-Muslim bias is not likely to develop because of a stereotype of Muslims supporting sexual minorities. Previous perceptions of religious groups' attitudes towards sexual minorities offer only partial explanation of the relationships of emotional warmth or coolness towards certain religious groups and support of the rights of sexual minorities.

These two factors suggest that animosity towards religious groups is not only linked to their non-support for sexual minorities but that animosity towards religious groups may engender more support for sexual minorities. To argue that the direction of this association is only religious group rejection of sexual minorities leading to rejection of that religious group by those supportive of sexual minorities, then one must find additional theories beyond the original theory that sympathy to sexual minorities motivates anger towards religious groups. In the absence of such theories, it is reasonable to consider if the direction of the association also works in the opposite direction. In other words, hostility towards religious groups may also lead to support of sexual minorities. The notion of using symbolic issues to signal antipathy towards out-groups is well established in race and ethnicity literature (Bobo 1983; Kinder and Sears 1981; McConahay and Hough 1976; Sniderman and Tetlock 1986). In a similar way, those with antipathy towards certain types of religious groups may express it with support of the rights of sexual minorities. Ironically, this practice may also lead to the possibility of symbolic sympathy as well as symbolic hostility whereby individuals use support of certain groups to signal their distance from other groups.

This analysis helps explain the stronger result of attitudes towards Christian fundamentalists relative to the other religious groups. Work on animosity towards Christian fundamentalists indicates that they are perceived as the major religious enemy to highly educated progressives (Yancey and Williamson 2014). Such educated progressives do not tend to have nearly as much animosity towards Muslims or Jews as they do towards conservative Christians and may be more open to the idea of sexual minorities' rights. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that they would be more open to using issues surrounding sexual minorities to signal anti-conservative Christian hostility than hostility towards other religious groups.

It is expected that political advocacy furthers the causes of the proponents of a particular political cause. This research, however, offers a unique interpretation of the information we have on the relationship of attitudes towards religious groups and sexual minorities, and further research can spur efforts to explore the possibility of a reversed directionality. These current results introduce the possibility that advocacy against sexual minorities by religious groups may generate support for sexual minorities in some quarters of our society. There may be unique aspects in sexuality rights debates that produce this level of backlash. It remains to be seen if the support generated by religious groups' advocacy is greater than the nonsupport generated by that activism. These results suggest the need for qualitative work that explores the symbolic meaning of the rights of sexual minorities for those with anti-Christian animosity.

Finally, there is a unique challenge concerning the measurement of attitudes towards Christian fundamentalists. The ANES did not provide a way to understand how individuals define fundamentalists. It is possible that respondents perceive fundamentalists as a mere fringe group, such as Westboro Baptist Church members, or a larger group that makes up a significant percentage of the United States, such as the 36 percent of Americans who claim to be "born-again" (Chaves 2011). There have been limited efforts to determine how Americans define fundamentalism (Altemeyer and Hunsberger 1992; Emerson and Hartman 2006), and to comprehend fully the culture war implications of this research, it is important to understand how respondents define Christian fundamentalists. If respondents supporting same-sex marriage in part due to animosity towards fundamentalists only envision them as a small fringe group, then they are less likely to feel threatened than those who see fundamentalists as a larger group. The latter may be more likely to encourage support for same-sex marriage as a way possibly to combat the potential threat of Christian fundamentalism.

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