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AT THE FRONTLINES OF THE KULTURKAMPF:
SOCIAL POLICY POSITIONS OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT A LARGE UNIVERSITY IN THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

by

JULIO MONTANEZ

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Honors in the Major Program in Political Science in the College of Sciences and in The Burnett Honors College at the University of Central Florida Orlando, Florida

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Thesis Chair: Dr. Terri Susan Fine
ABSTRACT

Social policy concerns groups. Specifically, social policies have been implemented as a means to affect the well-being of sexual and gender minorities, including areas such as health, employment, violence, and many others. Undergraduate student opinions on such policies are an understudied area of survey research. Possible correlates of support for such policy areas include, but are not limited to, sexual prejudice, attributions, increased contact with the minority group, gender, Para-social contact, and many others. This research administered a 55-item survey to undergraduate students at the University of Central Florida. With a sample of 210 individuals, this study aimed to answer the following research question. Which explanatory variables are most correlated with support for social policies and rights regarding sexual and gender minorities? Dimension reduction techniques were utilized to create three sub-scales that measure the dependent variable: Alternative Relationship Recognitions, Socio-Political and Economic Goals, and Basic Freedoms. Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were reported, confirming the internal consistencies of the dimensions. Bivariate correlation analyses revealed a number of variables with consistent relationships to the dependent variable: sexual prejudice, attributions that view homosexuality as something with which an individual is born, support for abortion rights, partisan identification, ideology, religious affiliation, and religious attendance. Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression models further assessed the nature of the relationships; sexual prejudice was the most correlated with support for social policies and rights pertaining to sexual and gender minorities. Discussions of findings, limitations of this research, directions for future research, and empirical implications are provided accordingly.
DEDICATION

This thesis is firstly dedicated to my beautiful, kind-hearted, and loving mother, Rosie. We have been through so much together and I just want to thank her for being so generously supportive in the life gamble that is my educational pursuit, listening to my non-stop, obsessive rambling about this thesis, as well as for sacrificing so much for my younger brothers and me. She is always there for me when the going gets rough. Mom, you are the best.

To my two younger brothers, Christopher and Christian, who make me the proudest big brother ever. They are extremely intelligent, fun-loving, and very talented. To the both of you: “My heart never stops beating for you.”

(Phillip Phillips)

To my friends and other loved ones.

To all of the allies, who lend open ears and open hearts.

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to all of my beautiful friends who have ever lived at the mercy of a closet door: “Live on, and be yourself.”

(Ben Macklemore)

“This is what I have found: to let ourselves be seen, deeply seen, vulnerably seen; to love with our whole hearts, even though there’s no guarantee...And the last...is to believe that we're enough. Because when we work from a place, I believe, that says, 'I'm enough,'...we're kinder and gentler to the people around us, and we're kinder and gentler to ourselves.”

(Brené Brown, 2012)
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I wish to thank my two other committee members, Dr. Amy Donley and Dr. Andrea Vieux. Their kind natures, helpful comments, and guidance have been essential in this process as well. I appreciate their taking the time to meet with me once in a while (as well as answering my emails) to help me get ideas for this project. I also wish to thank them for so kindly taking the time to read this document.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Social Policy

Social policy, as indicated by the vernacular makeup of the term, centers primarily on the social aspects of human existence, but inevitably intersects with the political and economic realms as well (Midgley, Tracy, and Livermore, 2000). But, what does the term social policy specifically entail? From previous research, we can identify two main definitional constructs of the term (Béland, 2010; Blakemore, 1998; Dean, 2006). The first definition regards the term as a field of study, in which the engagement in the scientific method as a means to create new knowledge functions to help understand government action, as well as how such actions affect social groups. The second definition regards social policy as an actual action (or set(s) of actions) implemented by governmental institutions for certain purposes. For instance, Dean (2006) conceptualizes this definition as "the particular policy or policies that have been determined in the fields of social security, health, education, social care and protection or...in any number of spheres that may bear upon human well-being" (p.2).

What distinguishes social policies from other forms of policy, such as environmental policy and foreign policy? The main distinction is who or what certain types of policies are intended to affect. For example, environmental policy functions to improve (or make worse) the relationship between humans and their environment; foreign policy may function to improve a nation-state's position in world affairs. Even though social policy may intersect with other areas, according to Blakemore (1998) social policy diverges from the other types of policies, like the
aforementioned, by functioning "to improve human welfare," as well as "to meet human needs" (p.1). Here, we see a particular emphasis on human beings, specifically groups of human beings.

**Social policy and minority groups.** Social policies are created in a manner in which an institution acts as a policy producer, and a certain group problem or group functions as the receiver; thus, they may affect different groups in a spectrum of ways. However, a lack of social policies may affect differing groups in a spectrum of ways as well. Meenaghan, Kilty, and McNutt (2004) provide an effective explanation of this idea: "not all individuals of social groups experience the same degree of vulnerability to specific difficulties" (p.148). Thus, social policies can be used, depending on which group or institution creates, interprets, and enforces them, to correct or decrease vulnerability to such difficulties, or exacerbate the group's vulnerability to said difficulties.

**Stigma and minority groups as the “other.”** A contributor to vulnerabilities that groups may face is stigma. Stigma has its definitional grounds in Greek history (Goffman, 1963). The stigma represented a physical “blemish” on the skin of an individual (Nettles & Balter, 2011, p.13). Specifically, this permanent mark functioned to segregate those of lesser status from those of higher status on the social hierarchy: separating “criminals and slaves” from all others in the society (Johnston-Robeldo and Chrisler, 2013, p.10). Persons who held the stigma experienced social exclusion and devaluation. However, a permanent mark or blemish is not needed in contemporary time for individuals to carry the burden of stigma, for it may present itself in many ways. The types of stigma that may be readily identified are body (which are based on physical characteristics), character (other unseen factors associated with an individual’s identity, such as
personality), and tribal (which is associated more with one’s identification with a group) (Goffman, 1963).

Those who carry the burden of stigma also carry the label of the *other* (Campbell and Deacon, 2006; Flowers and Landridge, 2007; Grant, 2010). Nobody wishes to possess this title, nor its accompanying consequences. This term usually denotes a status of disassociation of a minority group from the dominant, majority group. Several characteristics may be used to understand this position in the social order, specifically in regards to minority groups. A minority group, according to the literature, exists as a collectivity of individuals who “‘are singled out from the others in the society…for differential and unequal treatment’” (Hacker, 1951, p.60). Such differential treatment may be based on “‘physical or cultural’” qualities that are subject to “‘collective discrimination’” (p.60). The *other* is generally not seen as deserving of social interaction (to varying degrees) with those of the majority, and are thus treated as abnormal and undeserving of social inclusion; such a social disadvantage can influence the policymaking process, resulting in codified discrimination against the *other*. Thus, in accordance with the aforementioned (as well as the purpose of reducing vulnerability), social policies work to form "a more inclusive society" (Béland, 2010, p.12).

**Examples of social policies for minorities.** How have social policies manifested themselves in the empirical world? We may clarify understanding of social policies by briefly viewing how they have been implemented for two particular minority groups: women and individuals of low socioeconomic status. Literature has shown the perpetration of violence against women by an intimate partner to be a significant social problem in terms of prevalence (Alhabib, Nur, and Jones, 2010; Devries, Kishor, Stökl, Bacchus, Garcia-Moreno, and Watts,
2010; Taft, Bryant-Davis, Woodward, Tillman, and Torres, 2009), related to negative physical and mental health outcomes (Beydoun, Beydoun, Kaufman, Lo, and Zonderman, 2012; Humphreys, Cooper, and Miaskowski, 2011; Lacey, McPherson, Samuel, Sears, and Head, 2013; Sareen, Pagura, and Grant, 2009; Wong, DiGangi, Young, Huang, and Smith, 2011).

Accordingly, the identification of violence against women as a social problem has ultimately led to action on the part of government entities as a means to correct women’s vulnerability. At the federal level, the Violence against Women Act of 1994 was enacted to allot increased protections to women, as well as to increase enforcement and formal sanctions against those who abuse them. This particular law has been reauthorized by the federal government many times, the most recent being the Violence against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013.

Policies may be implemented in collaborated efforts that involve public and private actors, in which there exists an “institutional cooperation between the public and private sectors designed to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery” (Farah and Rizvi, 2007, p.340). This is another consideration worth noting when viewing women as a vulnerable minority is the role that private organizations have in social policy implementation. Regarding domestic violence victims (specifically women), this type of implementation can be presented in the form of intervention programs. Some of the most notable forms of interventions regarding domestic violence victims are "battered women's shelter[s]" (Barnett, Miller-Perrin, and Perrin, 2011, p. 32). In this context, a government institution may provide funding, while a private organization implements the protection(s) (program(s)), or further administers such funding. An example of this form of social policy implementation can be seen in an organization in Florida. The Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV) is of financial
contribution of both federal and state-level governments and runs a state-wide domestic violence hotline and sets the standards for many shelters in Florida. Its efforts mainly target abused women and their children ("About FCADV"). In a document titled "Program Standards for Certified Domestic Violence Centers" (2011), the FCADV sets criteria for providing services: "inclusive of all center services, both residential and outreach programs" (p.3). Part of the document reads as follows:

It is noted that gender specific language is used to refer to recipients of services. Since the majority of survivors of battering are female and the majority of persons who seek residential and outreach services are women, the female gender is used to refer to those who seek services. However, this is not to suggest that centers cannot nor do not offer services to male survivors of abuse. (p.3)

Here, the FCADV attempts to gear its services toward a group (women) that is vulnerable to a specific social problem (domestic violence); thus, the organization (with the assistance of governmental actors) implements social policies (residential and outreach services as interventions) as a means to reduce vulnerability.

Individuals of lower socioeconomic status represent another minority group that a) have endured susceptibility to certain difficulties, and b) have been the targets of social policies to improve their livelihood and well-being. For example, low-income individuals may be more susceptible to homelessness (Early, 2005; Gamache, Rosenheck, and Tessler, 2003; Link, Susser, Stueve, Phelan, Moore, and Struening, 1994), health issues (Currie, 2009; Drewnowski, 2009; Phelan, Link, and Tehraneifar, 2010), and poor educational outcomes (Along, 2009; Bastedo and Jaquette, 2011; Feliciano and Ashtiani, 2012).
The identification of individuals of lower socioeconomic status as a group vulnerable to the aforementioned difficulties has been historically brought to the attention of governmental entities. Thus, policies such as the implementation of publicly subsidized housing, health programs such as Medicaid, and educational initiatives such as the Head Start program have been implemented in an attempt to decrease low-income individuals’ vulnerability to problems that accompany unequal access to needs because of income.

**Social Policy and Sexual and Gender Minorities**

The aforementioned minority groups are not the only ones who have had social policies enacted to allot protections from particular vulnerabilities or to exacerbate such vulnerabilities. A specific set of minority groups, sexual and gender minorities, have also been recognized by some as a group that has experienced social exclusion, as well as unequal treatment in the policy-making process; awareness from individuals recognizing this group as in need of protection have placed demands on governmental institutions to correct this social problem.

Within the literature, definitions regarding this community are broad and not clear-cut. In order to adhere correctly and respectfully to the identities of this community, recognizing that there exists a broad scope of ways in which such minority persons may identify, a consultation of the literature will show how these terms are used in empirical research. The term *sexual minorities* can be used quite broadly. In previous research, this term has been applied to different arrangements of the community. For instance, Rankin (2005) uses the term to represent those who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT). The same acronym has been used in other works as well (Weber, 2010; Ineson, Yap, and Whiting, 2013). Stotzer (2009) uses the term *sexual orientation minorities* to refer to those who identify as Lesbian, Gay, and

Some have opted not to use the term sexual minorities in such a broad sense to include the entire LGBTQ community, proclaiming that the term, when “intended as a synonym for ‘LGBTQ[,]’ does not truly address the gender-based concerns of transgender and gender-variant people” (Greenblatt, 2005, p.87). Thus, others have used the term sexual and gender minorities (Monroe, 2009), or sexual/gender minorities (Yu, 2010), when referring to the LGBTQ community. In an effort to offer the most inclusive definition possible, the present work harnesses the use of the term sexual and gender minorities when referring to any part of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning (LGBTQ) community.

The historically stigmatized status of non-heterosexual orientations has resulted in sexual and gender minorities carrying the other label. As Hillier and Harrison (2004) put it, heterosexual relations are considered normal. Such a "normalization" results in "the exclusion of others from the realm of the normal" (p.91), taking sexual and gender minorities out of this realm and treating them as outcasts. The other sentiment not only treats sexual and gender minorities as outcasts in the social realm, but also the political and economic as well. It should be noted that some vulnerabilities intersect with others; therefore, a social policy that is used to correct one vulnerability, may very well reduce vulnerability to other difficulties as well.

Along the lines of the aforementioned, we may understand social policy regarding sexual and gender minorities better by viewing a specific theoretical term: sexual citizenship.
Richardson (2000) refers to this concept as “a status entailing number of different rights claims, some of which are recognized as legitimate by the state and are sanctioned” (p.107). Sexual and gender minorities may be vulnerable in terms of sexual citizenship because they may not have attained the status that confers such rights that may be readily enjoyed by individuals of sexual majority status. Richardson displays this by showing that sexual activity may be exclusive in that for some, “sex is not a right normally granted” (p.109). In totality, this concept embodies whether or not a certain group is deemed worthy of valued sexual practice, expression, and relationship recognition, as well as the rights that bestowed upon the group in the attainment of such worthiness.

**Health.** Sexual and gender minorities may possess vulnerabilities in health and well-being. Taking into account state-level social policies and the overall health of gender and sexual minorities may function as a primal display of such a phenomenon. Hatzenblauer, Keyes, and Hasin (2009) focused on how state-level employment anti-discrimination policies and policies regarding hate-crimes connect to the prominence of mood, anxiety, and substance abuse disorders among sexual and gender minorities. States with fewer social policies protecting LGBs from employment discrimination and hate crimes showed increased prominence of having LGBs who report suffering from at least two disorders. Riggle, Rotosky, and Horne (2010) found a similar connection between social policies enforcing nondiscrimination and psychologically beneficial outcomes in a sample of 2,511 individuals. Here, the structural role of governments in the health and well-being is seen by viewing the conditions of those who live within their jurisdictions.
Hence, state governments (as well as the federal government) may take certain actions to correct this vulnerability to poor health outcomes. Within the United States, some states have done so. One way that this has been done regards public accommodations at the state-level. An example can be found within the Maine Revised Statutes; Section 4591 (2005) iterates the “opportunity for every individual to have equal access to places of public accommodation without discrimination because of race, color, sex, sexual orientation.” This policy must be explained further to view how it allows equal access to hospitals and other services by viewing some legal definitions from Maine's statutes.

Just how broad is Maine's protection? The Maine statutes offer a very broad definition of the term a place of public accommodations. Pertaining specifically to health services access, we find that places of public accommodation, within Section 4553(8(f)) (1995) includes “pharmacies, insurance offices, professional official healthcare provider[s], hospital[s], dispensary, clinic[s], bathhouse or other service establishment[s]” In addition, sexual orientation is broad to include the entirety of the sexual and gender minority community. For instance, Maine refers to sexual orientation with Section 4335 (9(c)) (2005) as “a person's actual or perceived heterosexuality, bisexuality, homosexuality, or gender identity.” Thus, the social policy is broad enough to curb vulnerability to health disparity by allowing more equal access to health services. Until 2005, such protections did not exist for the entire LGBTQ population.

Employment. Another area in which social policies may exacerbate or abolish vulnerability to difficulties may be in terms of employment discrimination. A study by Tilcsik (2011) featured the dissemination of resumes to potential employers in several states in the United States, with some of the applications embodying information that was purposed to
indicate a non-heterosexual orientation of the applicant. The author found that a) a gap existed in hiring in which straight persons were more likely to receive a call-back than gay men, and b) sending applications to certain states increased the gap in call-back rates. Consequentially, we see that sexual minority populations are susceptible to “behaviors and practices--both deliberate and [unconscious]--that disadvantage individuals of a particular sexual orientation over individuals of another sexual orientation in employment contexts” (p.587). Hence, a social policy may be enacted to relieve gay men and other sexual and gender minorities of such a disadvantage.

Accordingly, some states have afforded employment protections to sexual minority populations. Section 4-1 of Chapter 151B of the Massachusetts General Laws make it prohibitory “for an employer…because of the…gender identity [and/or] sexual orientation…of any individual to refuse to hire or employ or to bar or to discharge from employment such individual or to discriminate…in compensation or in terms, conditions or privileges of employment.” This portion is the result of an amendment that went into effect in 2012. Incorporating the aforementioned with our understanding of social policy, the vulnerable group are sexual and minorities. The vulnerability is being susceptible to employment discrimination. Thus, Massachusetts’s statute fulfills the role of a social policy to reduce the vulnerability.

Teacher’s employment. Lewis and Pitts (2011) studied U.S. Census data shows that some portions of the sexual and gender minority community “are overrepresented among elementary and secondary teachers” (p.175), specifically lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals. Along the lines of employment is the specific contention associated with allowing sexual and gender minorities to teach, specifically at the elementary level. In January of 1981, the APA
publicized its position on the employment rights of sexual minority teachers. Via this policy statement, the APA announced its opposition to “personnel actions against any teachers solely because of sexual orientation” (Abeles, 1981, p.5). The security of employment for sexual minority teachers is unclear and makes such individuals susceptible to harassment and potential employment termination. Sexual minority employees, in general, may be in danger of employment termination based on their sexual orientation in a plurality of states (“Statewide Employment Laws,” 2013), with sexual minority teachers falling under this vulnerability.

Maryland provides statutory protections for sexual minority teachers. For instance, Section 6-104b of the Maryland Statutes prohibits discrimination on the basis of “sexual orientation” for “any public school employee of [the] State.” This protection from discrimination as per Section 6-104a applies to hiring, employment termination, and other employment-related occurrences. The scope is broad in who receives this policy, applying to both state and county officials, as per Section 6-104b.

Military. Another social policy area that has manifested itself in empirical applications is whether or not sexual minority persons should be allowed to serve in the military. Congress enacted what is known as the Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT) policy, which was a part of the National Defense Authorization Act of 1994. Via this federal action, openly affirming sexual minority persons were subject to being banned from the United States military. The specifics of the ban are embodied in the following quote:

A member of the armed forces shall be separated from the armed forces under regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Defense if...the member has engaged in, attempted to engage in, or solicited another to engage in a homosexual act or acts...[or] the member
has stated that he or she is a homosexual or bisexual, or words to that effect...[or] that person has married or attempted to marry a person known to be of the same biological sex. (10 U.S.C.S. §654(b))

In 2010, a repeal of the policy was implemented. The Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act of 2010, signed on December 22, 2010, deleted section 654 of chapter 37 of title 10 of the U.S. Code (the section containing DADT), started the process to end DADT. First, the act implemented a review process to assess the effects of allowing openly affirming sexual minority persons to serve in the military. On July 22, 2011, the president issued a certification of the repeal, the end of an evaluation period that determined the soundness of the repeal in relation to military effectiveness. The certification held that the repeal of DADT "is consistent with the standards of military readiness, military effectiveness, unit cohesion, and recruiting and retention of the Armed Forces" (“Certification,” 2011). This allowed for a formulation of an official expiration date. DADT was officially ended on September 20, 2011 (Malik, 2011).

**Housing.** Access to housing without discrimination represents a social policy area. Are sexual and gender minorities given the same consideration as sexual majority persons when applying for housing? Discrimination in terms of housing has been shown to exist, as per Herek’s (2009a) research assessing multiple forms of discrimination, including violence, job discrimination, and housing discrimination. The results of Herek's work show that 2.8% of the study's sample reported being the victim of housing discrimination at least once, with gay men reporting the highest percentage of such discrimination, followed by lesbians, bisexual males, then bisexual women. A study authored by Swank, Fahs, and Frost (2013) reported a very small presence of housing discrimination reported by sexual and gender minorities, but a presence
 nonetheless. Leppel (2007) views the status of homeownership at the intersection of sexual orientation and marital status. Married opposite-sex couples were most likely to own a home, followed by same-sex unmarried couples (female same-sex couples were more likely to own a home than male same-sex couples), and unmarried opposite-sex couples (respectively).

However, assessing self-reporting of discrimination is only perceived and does not reflect actual discrimination at the institutional level. For instance, a study by Ahmed and Hammarstedt (2009) featured the use of two fictitious couples (one opposite sex, and the other same-sex), engaging in standard application procedures for the purposes of buying a house during the spring of 2007. The authors found that "the heterosexual couple was 27% more likely than the homosexual couple to receive a call-back" from the landlord (p.592). In addition, straight couples were more likely to receive "invitations to a showing" of the desired residence than same-sex couples (p.593).

In June 2013, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released a study titled "An Estimate of Housing Discrimination against Same-Sex Couples." Using e-mail correspondence, the researchers used the number of responses to determine discriminatory actions on the part of the landlord. The results from the first part of the analysis revealed a statistically significant 3.1% gap between heterosexual and gay couples in the initial response from the housing provider, which embodies unequal housing access at the very beginning of the application process. A similar finding was found between lesbian couples and heterosexual couples, with a statistically significant 2.3% gap (Friedman, Reynolds, Scovill, Brassier, Campbell, Ballou, and Davis, 2013).
An example of housing anti-discrimination laws can be found within Iowa statutory provisions, which protect both sexual orientation and gender identity. Within the Iowa Code, sexual orientation is representative of "actual or perceived heterosexuality, homosexuality, or bisexuality" (Iowa Code §216.2(14)). In addition, gender identity is representative of “a gender-related identity of a person, regardless of the person's assigned sex at birth” (Iowa Code §216(10)).

Now that we understand definitions of terms regarding the scope of sexual orientation and gender identity in a definitional context, we may now understand how these minority groups are included within the context of housing protections. The Iowa Code prohibits multiple forms of discrimination. This is done by adding a certain demographic category to an existing, codified list of those groups who are protected in terms of housing discrimination. For instance, specifically prohibited is the following:

To refuse to sell, rent, lease, assign, sublease, refuse to negotiate, or to otherwise make unavailable, or deny any real property or housing accommodation or part, portion, or interest therein, to any person because of the race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, disability, or familial status of such person.

(Iowa Code §216.8(1a))

The protection afforded by the state of Iowa is broad in nature, banning a wide variety of discriminatory practices for both sexual and gender minorities.

**Violence.** A striking vulnerability regarding gender and sexual minorities is the susceptibility to violence, specifically acts of violence motivated by sexual prejudice: hate crimes. An analysis of data from a national-level internet survey in the United States indicates
that one-in-five LGB persons were the victims of hate crimes in 2005 (Herek, 2009a), with gay males experiencing a disproportionate share of such violence. Other works have found similar findings. A meta-analysis of research spanning almost two decades found that a) violence against sexual minority populations plateaued or increased, and b) sexual minority populations tend to experience more diverse forms of victimization when compared to their straight counterparts (Katz-Wise and Hyde, 2012).

Like in other social policy areas, some governments have opted to provide protections to sexual and gender minorities as a means to curb susceptibility to violence. Generally, this is done by adding a susceptible demographic category to the state definition of a hate-crime, since a hate-crime has to have a victimized group. For instance, during a certain time period, the definition of a hate-crime may not encompass a certain group within its defined protected groups; however, legislation may be introduced as a means to add a certain group or identity to the protected list.

At the federal level, the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Hate Crimes Prevention Act, adopted by the U.S. Congress in 2009, attempts to address hate-crime violence against sexual and gender minority populations at the federal level. Though limited in its enforcement by its federal nature, the legislation allots increased protections to sexual and gender minority populations. Consulting the text of the Act, within the National Defense Authorization Act of 2010, may help us understand the scope of its protection. The law shows that a hate crime encompasses “bodily injury to any persons” on the basis of “actual or perceived religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability” (18 U.S.C.S. §249). Here we see a relatively broad definition of hate-crime, as well as the expansion of groups
protected by the act. Thus, this social policy may dissuade individuals from engaging in violent behaviors toward sexual and gender minorities, curbing vulnerability to such a difficulty.


In 2013, Nevada passed a law that expanded the aforementioned protections to individuals of diverse gender identities. First, Section One of the law implements a formal definition of “gender identity or expression” as the “gender-related identity, appearance, expression or behavior of a person regardless of the person’s assigned sex at birth” (Senate Bill 139, 2003, p.2). Second, the law adds gender identity directly after sexual orientation, including
it within the protections afforded by Nevada Statute §193.1675(1). Third, the law adds a multitude of other hate-crimes to the list of punishable offenses, which includes grand larceny of a firearm (Nev. Rev. Stat. §205.226, 2011), graffiti (Nev. Rev. Stat. §206.330, 2011), and others.

**Age of consent.** Age of consent laws embody one of the many indicators of sexual citizenship. This generally regards the sexual minority community in terms of unequal ages of consent; for instance, a government may deem that a particular sexual relationship (such as one that is heterosexual) can be engaged in at a younger age than another sexual relationship (such as gay and lesbian). Within the United States, we can find an example of laws regarding the age of consent by looking at Nevada (Bennett-Smith, 2013). The law confers unequal status in that it makes illegal sexual relations within certain age groups for same-sex relations, even though sexual relations for opposite sex intimacy within such age groups is legal. Nevada's statute regarding this issue reads as follows: "As used in this section, the 'infamous crime against nature' means [any sexual acts] between natural persons of the same sex. Any sexual penetration, however slight, is sufficient to complete the infamous crime against nature" ("An ‘Infamous Hurdle,’” 2011; Nev. Rev. Stat. §201.195(2), 1979). This specifically regards the age of consent for the state, which, for heterosexual relationships, is 16 (Nev. Rev. Stat. §200.364(5)(a), 1979; Nev. Rev. Stat. §200.364(5) (b), 1979); however, as per the statute and context of the law, sexual intercourse for same-sex partners under the age of 18 is considered illegal (Nev. Rev. Stat. §201.195(2), 1979) as per the state’s definition of the term minor (Nev. Rev. Stat. §201.259, 1969).

**Legality of consensual sex and government regulation.** Along the lines of the age of consent regards whether or not consensual same-sex intimacy is even legal to begin with. Some
societies and governments have historically illegalized sexual relationships between individuals of the same sex. Specifically, this concerns whether or not a governmental unit may interfere with consensual sex between such individuals. Two judicial outputs of the United States Supreme Court will allow us to effectively grasp this concept: Bowers v. Hardwick (1986) and Lawrence v. Texas (2003). Bowers v. Hardwick (1986) featured two men who, by engaging in sexual relations with each other, violated a Georgia law that "criminalized sodomy" (478 U.S. 187-88). In this case, the Supreme Court voted 5 to 4 that sexual relations between two men is not representative of "a fundamental right" (478 U.S. 192). Thus, the Georgia statute criminalizing such relations was deemed constitutional by the Court and remained open for enforcement.

Another, more recent case that allows us to understand sexual citizenship is Lawrence v. Texas (2003). Within this case, police in a city in Texas entered a residence where two men were "engaging in a private, consensual sexual act" (539 U.S. 558). Both men were arrested because their sexual relation violated a Texas law restricting sexual conduct for individuals of the same sex. The Court's 6 to 3 ruling made null and void Texas's restrictions on the bases that they were in violation of the 14th Amendment's Due Process Clause. Consequentially, in making such a ruling, Bowers v. Hardwick (1986) was overruled as well.

Public engagement. Embedded within the privilege of sexual citizenship is the right to publically show physical affection toward other individuals. Of course, it should be noted that sexual and gender minorities have endured multiple barriers to this right. For instance, informal sanctions such as looks of discomfort, as well as negative remarks, may be made by sexual majority persons in response to witnessing sexual minority persons holding hands, or engaging in
other public displays of affection. Holding hands and other intimate practices may be out of the question because of such social stigma and negative reactions to public displays of affection by same-sex couples (Eichstedt, 1996; Steinbugler, 2005). For instance, Boulden’s (2001) work regarding gay males who live in Wyoming found that some “spoke about being unable to walk down certain streets” because of the social “prohibition of any form of showing affection towards one’s partner in public” (p.72).

Related to public display of affection is the ability to engage in public demonstration, which has functioned as another point of contention for the gay rights movement. By consulting judicial outputs, we may see a particular case that embodies this particular social policy area: *Hurley v. Irish-American Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Group of Boston (1995).* *Hurley v. Irish-American Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Group of Boston (1995)* featured a unanimous decision (9-0) within the Rehnquist Court declaring that a private organization could opt to exclude a gay rights group from engaging in a parade. Specifically, the city of Boston, Massachusetts assigned the authority to organize the city’s St. Patrick’s Day Parade to a private organization: the South Boston Allied War Veterans Council. In 1992 and 1993, the Council attempted to deny the Irish-American Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Group of Boston Inc. from participating in the parade. The Council in 1992 was required by the district court decision to allow the group to be involved in the parade. After both a district court and an appeals court ruled that the actions by the Council were both unconstitutional and not in accordance with Massachusetts public accommodations law, the Supreme Court agreed to receive the case. The Court ruled that “disapproval of a private speaker’s statement does not legitimize the use of the Commonwealth’s power to compel the speaker to alter the message by including one more acceptable to others” (515 U.S. 581),
meaning that the Council’s actions were constitutionally protected, reversing the district and appellate court opinions.

**Book bans.** The American Library Association’s (2013a) position on book bans and censorship expresses the “freedom to choose or the freedom to express one's opinions even if that opinion might be considered unorthodox or unpopular, and stresses the importance of ensuring the availability to those viewpoints to all who wish to read them." A challenged or banned book is one in which a group of individuals (or individuals) attempt to or succeed in the removal of a book (or other title of media) from a public library. Media within libraries may be challenged or banned for a number of reasons, such as inconsistency with dominant religious views, social norms, and other reasons. A study of challenged books between 2000 and 2010 revealed homosexuality as one of the reasons that some use for the purposes of banning or challenging books (Akers, 2012).

An example of a recently challenged book pertaining to homosexuality is *And Tango Makes Three*. The work is in the form of a children's picture book, and features two male penguins that live in similar ways to opposite-sex penguin couples. The book features a part in which an egg is given to the same-sex penguin couples for the purposes of hatching and caring for the chick (Richard and Parnell, 2005). The book was set in the Central Park Zoo in New York City. According to the ALA's (2013b) list of most banned books, this title ranks 4th out of 100. According to a recent study by Magnuson (2011), specific reasons for banning this particular picture book are the possible undesirable effects that reading the book's contents could have on children, as well as the belief that parents should have control over which books are readily accessible to their children.
In totality, the banned books debate continues as many books are challenged regarding whether or not they should be available within a library. However, a study of polling data spanning about 30 years revealed that a minority of individuals actually support removing such materials and that support for banning such books has decreased overtime, specifically in regards to media that contains content related to homosexuality (Burke, 2008). In addition, the banned books debate represents a part of a larger debate of the visibility of homosexuality in general.

**Relationship recognition.** A major contention in the public debate on gay rights is relationship recognition. One side of the debate only recognizes one legitimate form of relationship: people of opposite genders who are married. Another side of the debate allows for the recognition of other relationship forms. Specific to this contention is whether or not same-sex couples should have their relationships recognized as legitimate at state and federal levels of government.

There are many ways in which this debate has manifested itself in terms of policy: same-sex marriage, same-sex marriage bans, domestic partnerships, and civil unions. The federal nature of the U.S. government makes for a patchwork of variation in which policies are implemented. For example, some states have legislation that includes a more inclusive definition of the term *marriage*, in which same-sex marriage is declared legal. Some states have policies that codify a very restrictive, narrow definition of the term *marriage*, only including the traditional form. Some states offer alternative forms of legal recognition, which include domestic partnership registries and civil unions. Explanations and examples of those policies will follow.

**Same-sex marriage.** The expansion of the scope of the definition of the term *marriage* to include same-sex couples marks the present-day gay rights movement’s main policy goal. As
aforementioned, the implications of this policy widely vary from state to state. In general, this policy is implemented by not including gender or sex categories within the definition of marriage. For instance, Section 8 of Title 15 of the Vermont Statutes (2009) defines marriage as “the legally recognized union of two people.” Here, we see that there exist no gender or sex specifications that may function to exclude same-sex couples.

The dynamics of approval for same-sex marriage has seen a steady increase. In May 2011, support for same-sex marriage as worthy of receiving valid legal recognition attained 53% (Newport, 2011), a first in the Gallup Poll’s history of tracking opinions on the policy. In May 2012, same-sex marriage attained majority support once again at 50% (Newport, 2012). The most recent Gallup Poll conducted in mid-July 2013 indicates that this number has grown to 54% (Saad, 2013). However, this does not take into account the variation of opinions in different states.

As previously mentioned, some states have implemented restrictive, narrow definitions of the term marriage; these are generally known as same-sex marriage bans. An example of a state-level ban can be seen in Utah’s Constitution. Section 29 of Article 1 (2009) conceptualizes marriage as only between “a man and a woman.” Here, we see that the gender-specific nature of the language may prevent same-sex couples from obtaining marriage licenses within the state. In addition, Section 29 iterates that “no other domestic union, however denominated, may be recognized as a marriage or given the same or substantively equivalent legal effect.” This means that along with the lack of recognition for same-sex marriages, comparable recognitions like civil unions are also deemed null and void. Florida has a similar ban, which can be found with Section 27 of the state’s constitution. In 2008, this policy was enacted as a plebiscitary measure approved
by 62% of Florida’s electorate (Hamburg, 2008). Similar to Utah’s ban, Florida prohibits the recognition of other relationship forms that may confer the same rights as marriage.

Another state that has echoed within the literature as the focal point for same-sex marriage policy debate is California, which for many years has featured a disarray of overlapping policy implications regarding this topic. For most of the 2000s, a statutory ban on same-sex marriage was in place. On 2004, the major of San Francisco (which is both a county and a city) deputized the city-county clerk by conferring the authority to issue marriage licenses to couples regardless of their gender composition (“Mayor,” 2004; Murphy, 2004). Such licenses were then deemed void that same year (Younge, 2004), leading to a number of lawsuits against the state immediately afterward (Associated Press, 2004). In mid-2008, the California Supreme Court ruled that not recognizing marriages for same-sex couples was unconstitutional (In re Marriage Cases, 2008), invalidating statutory measures that restricted the definition of marriage to only allow opposite-sex couples; the state supreme court characterized legal marriage recognition for same-sex couples as “the equal protection remedy that is most consistent with” California’s legislative policy history (p.120). Subsequently, supporters of the traditional, long-standing definition of marriage constructed a ballot measure that would enshrine traditional marriage into California’s Constitution. In 2008, Proposition 8, a plebiscitary measure, passed with the support of the majority of California’s electorate, making opposite-sex couples the only eligible relationship forms worthy of legal marriage recognition.

Proposition 8 was then contested within federal court, appealed, and was eventually received by the U.S. Supreme Court as Hollingsworth v. Perry (2013). The major subject matter was not taken into account for this particular Supreme Court case. Instead, Justice Roberts held
in the Opinion of the Court that “[The Court has] never before upheld the standing of a private party to defend the constitutionality of a state statute when state officials have chosen not to. We decline to do so for the first time here” (p.17). Thus, this case was dismissed on procedural grounds, directing its contents back to the California Supreme Court for consideration at the state level once again. Shortly after the ruling, California commenced issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples on June 28, 2013 (Associated Press, 2013b).

Since 1994, the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) has been the pinnacle of federal marriage policy. This law has two major components: a) restricting the definition of the terms marriage and spouse to be only applicable to opposite-sex couples (104 P.L. 199, §3), and b) a provision dictating that a state does not have to recognize a marriage from another state (104 P.L. 199, §2). The constitutionality of DOMA was brought into question in a landmark 2013 court case: United States v. Windsor (2013). The Roberts Court took on the question of whether or not DOMA violates the Due Process Clause of the U.S. Constitution. The case featured two women, Edith Windsor and her spouse, Thea Spyer, whose marriage (lawfully declared in Canada) was recognized in the State of New York. After Spyer’s death in 2009, Windsor inherited her estate. However, when filing for an exemption from the federal estate tax, Windsor and Spyer’s relationship did not fall within the federal definition of the term (enacted by DOMA) spouse, excluding her from being eligible to claim the exemption. According to U.S. v. Windsor, Windsor was assessed an amount of “$363,053” (p.3). Windsor sued in District Court, which ruled in her favor, declaring that DOMA’s Section 3 was unconstitutional by violating the Due Process Clause. After being appealed, the Court of Appeals upheld the decision of the District Court. After consideration by the U.S. Supreme Court, it was ruled that Section 3, the part of
DOMA that set for a restrictive definition of marriage was “in violation of the Fifth Amendment” (p.26), holding that its contents “[impose] a disability on the class by refusing to acknowledge a status the State finds to be dignified and proper” (p.25). Thus, the federal government must acknowledge the existence of marriages that have been/are performed in states that grant marriages to same-sex couples.

**Domestic partnership.** Domestic partnerships are an alternative form of legal relationship recognition. These forms tend to be weaker in terms of protections and benefits; however, the strength of protection provided by domestic partnerships varies on a state by state basis. One example of a state that provides such benefits is Wisconsin. The unequal statuses of domestic partnerships in comparison to civil marriage are clearly expressed in Wisconsin statutory law. Section 770.001 iterates that "the legal status of domestic partnership...is not substantially similar to that of marriage." Making an alternative legal relationship status comparable to that of marriage would violate the state's ban on marriages that falls outside the requirement of one man and one woman (Wisc. Const. art. 8, §13, 2006). As far as definitions are concerned, Wisconsin defines a domestic partnership with the following criteria: two people (§770.05), 18 years of age or older (§770.05(1)), not covered under any other form of relationship recognition (§770.05(2)), possessing a common residence (§770.05(3)), not related by kin (§770.05(4)), and of the same sex (§770.05(5)).

**Civil unions.** Civil unions represent a form of legal relationship recognition specific to same-sex couples. Theses have generally been passed in states in which same-sex marriage policy is a) undefined or b) banned. They tend to confer more rights and protections than domestic partnerships, but have historically conferred fewer rights than marriage. However,
some states have civil union policies that confer comparable or identical rights (at the state level only). The most recent state to allow civil unions is Colorado. Senate Bill 13-011 was signed by Colorado's governor in March 2013 (Moreno, 2013). Known as the Colorado Civil Union Act (2013), the legislation conceptualizes this form of relationship recognition as "a relationship established by two eligible persons that entitles them to receive the benefits and protections and be subject to the responsibilities of spouses" (p.6). Specifically, this particular recognition confers a numeration of rights: inclusions in other familial definitions, rights "imposed upon spouses" (p.8), protection from relationship discrimination, workers' compensation, unemployment benefits, adoption, domestic violence legal standards, and others. The law’s provisions took full effect in early May 2013 (Associated Press, 2013a).

**Differences among marriage, civil unions, and domestic partnerships.** As previously mentioned, domestic partnerships, civil unions, and marriage confer different levels of benefits, rights, and senses of worthiness to those who engage in their contracts. The American Psychological Association’s 2011 policy statement iterates the unequal status and negative consequences of not recognizing same-sex marriages, as well as the unequal status and negative consequences that still exists when offering domestic partnerships and civil unions as an alternative. This includes barriers to "social, economic, health, and psychological benefits" (American Psychological Association, 2011, p.2), and negative effects such as minority stress and even dual minority stress for some. Herek’s (2006) discussion of a U.S. Government Accounting Office study shows that at the federal level, marriage is the key credential in “1,138 statutory provisions” that open a couple up to the reception of various rights and benefits (p.614). Herek also shows other key differences among marriage, civil unions, and domestic partnerships;
the latter two cannot be recognized at the federal level, nor can they be recognized in any other state; the latter two may not provide equal “social and psychological” benefits associated with marriage’s “special meaning” as the pinnacle of love and belonging (p.617); and, they may reinforce the unequal, unworthy status of social “stigma” (p.617). It does not seem that the same-sex marriage debate has reached its terminus; with a plurality of subnational units that do not provide such recognition, the debate will continue as pro-marriage equality and pro-traditional marriage supporters engage in heated debate.

Adoption. Adoption rights may be withheld by the state from sexual minority groups. One form of adoption in which same-sex couples may utilize is joint adoption, in which a couple may file a petition together as a means to adopt a child. As of June 2013, 21 states and the District of Columbia allow same-sex couples to file a joint petition to adopt a child (“Parenting Laws, 2013) Historically, adoption rights for same-sex couples, as well as non-heterosexual individuals, have not been allotted because of the stigma associated with sexual minority status; more specifically, the stigma involved viewing sexual minority persons as perverted and potentially harmful to the physical and mental well-being of children. This places a specific vulnerability on same-sex couples (individuals) in regards to familial benefits. For instance, without the recognition that accompanies having children, couples (individuals) may not have access to tax credits or educational grants based on the number of children within a household.

New York State functions as a prime example of a state that offers adoption rights to same-sex couples. Specifically, state legislation allows the joint petitioning of two people to adopt a child. A textual review New York’s state laws will allow for an effective understanding of the language used in constructing this information. For instance, Section 110 of the state laws
set forth which persons may petition to adopt a child: “an adult married couple together, or any
two unmarried adult intimate partners together may adopt another person.” Since same-sex
couples are allowed to marry in this state, in addition to the fact that a search of the New York
Consolidate Laws reveals no statutes that seem to prevent same-sex couples from adopting, they
fall under the Section 110, as well as Section 109(1), which declares that the terms adoptive
parent and/or adopter in such broad manner as to not exclude same-sex singles and couples from
adoption rights: “a person adopting.” Additionally, we see that even single people (not exclusive
to individuals of diverse sexual orientation) may petition, since the Section 110 broadly makes
“an adult unmarried person” eligible to engage in the adoption process as well.

**Immigration benefits.** Sexual and gender minorities in the U.S. who immigrated from
other nation states represent a segment of the queer community that may, in addition to social,
political, and economic difficulties due to discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, also
face legal barriers regarding their entry and residence in the U.S. According to a study reporting
descriptive statistics of U.S. Census data from 2010, there are “79,200 same-sex couples living in
the United States [that] include at least one partner who is currently not a U.S. citizen or was
naturalized as a citizen” (Konnoth and Gates, 2011, p.1). Historically, this subset of the queer
community has been vulnerable to difficulties that span from immigration policy within the U.S.;
one can expect such difficulties to increase at times in which the federal (or state) government
enacts more stringent immigration policies. One way this can be seen is via the difficulties that
immigrant, same-sex couples face; for instance, in situations in which an immigrant partner may
only be in the country for a limited amount of time (because of time constraints regarding tourist
visas), along with the fact that obtaining tourist permissions to enter the U.S. are difficult to
obtain, immigrant sexual and gender minorities may have difficult decisions to make, such as possible relationship termination, being in a relationship while living in different countries, having a partner illegally stay in the U.S., or move to a country in which sexual minority rights are adhered to for the purposes of immigration (Lewis, 2010/2011).

However, same-sex immigration rights have seen an improvement. As mentioned previously, the portion of DOMA that restricted same-sex married couples (married in states that permit same-sex marriage) was invalidated in late June 2013, which signaled the prospect of equalized immigration rights at the federal level (Gomez, 2013). For instance, shortly after *U.S. v. Windsor* (2013), the State Department commenced allowing same-sex couples to petition for visas (Associated Press, 2013c; “U.S. Changes,” 2013). Before, all visa applications that listed a same-sex partner were denied consideration.

Information released by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, as well as the U.S. Department of the State, will allow for an understanding of the specifics of the conditions for same-sex couples who wish to file an application for a visa. Specifically, “the same sex spouse of a visa applicant coming to the U.S. for any purpose...will be eligible for a derivative visa” (U.S. Department of State, 2013). If two people have a valid marriage license (either from a state that awards marriage licenses, or another country), they may access this resource no matter where they live in the United States since visas are granted at the federal level. However, this implication is not only limited to marriages; according to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (2013), this may also be applied to those who are engaged: “as long as all other immigration requirements are met, a same-sex engagement may allow [one’s] fiancé to enter the United States for marriage” (“Same-Sex Marriages”). Another added benefit is a
September 2013 decision by Department of Veterans Affairs that allows same-sex spouses to access to Veterans Administration (VA) benefits (Perez, 2013; Williams, 2013; Savage, 2013).

Origins of Social Policy

How are social policies implemented? Where do they come from? Social policies may be implemented in a variety of ways, as well as at various levels of government. In addition, they may be implemented via multiple branches of government: “legislative, executive, [and] judicial” (Meenaghan et al., 2004, p.80). They may also be implemented by private organizations. But, how do social policies get to that point in the policy making process? We may view U.S. government in terms of inputs and outputs, representative of Easton’s (1957) political systems model. The output is representative of policy outcomes, such as legislation, court decisions, and executive orders. The input may be in the form of demands and support (Easton, 1957). After policy is created, a feedback effect may influence the input once again.

One embodiment of the input part of the process is public opinion, which can be representative of both demands and support. Basically, whether or not the aggregate collectivity of individuals agrees (supports) or disagrees (opposes) with certain policies affects whether or not they become policy, or to what extent they become policy. Lax and Phillips (2009) put it best: “another key concern for democratic theory is how best to translate popular will into government action” (p.367). We may further understand the importance of opinions in the policy creation process by viewing how public opinion affects whether or not policies affecting sexual and gender minorities come in existence in accordance with such opinions. Lax and Phillips discussed a phenomenon known as policy responsiveness, or how well government institutions implement policy in accordance with how the public views the policy. Specifically, they were
interested in the policy responsiveness of all 50 states regarding gay rights policies. They studied a total of eight policy areas, including adoption, hate crimes law, health insurance for spouses, and others.

Overall, Lax and Phillips (2009) found that “for all policies, higher policy specific opinion is associated with a higher probability of policy adoption” (p.374). Therefore, we see that the input of public opinion is important because, for the most part, it seems to predict policy outcomes. As per the aforementioned, opinions function as very important areas of study regarding social policies pertaining to sexual and gender minority populations because of their integral role in the policy making process.

The Present Study

Overall, this research's purpose is to assess the dynamics of opinions regarding social policies and rights pertaining to sexual and gender minorities. The value of engaging in such research is embodied in the understanding that doing so will a) contribute vital data to a relatively small collection of literature regarding undergraduate opinions on social policies focusing gay on rights, b) assist in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the various factors that may contribute to the support for or opposition to those social policies, and c) assist the overall field of public opinion research in predicting how public support or opposition is trending.
CHAPTER 2: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Social policy opinion focusing on gay rights has been the focal point of much scholarly attention in recent years (Brewer, 2003; Brewer, 2008). Within this, there exists a variety of policies that are generally addressed. For instance, some works engage in studies of whether or not people agree with having gays, lesbians, and bisexuals serve openly in the military, specifically allowing of such service, as well as barring service (Belkin, 2008; Brewer, 2003; Ender, Rohall, Brennan, Mathews, and Smith III, 2012; Nadler, Will, Lowry, and Smith 2012). Another policy that generally receives scholarly attention, as well as media attention in contemporary times, is whether or not individuals believe same-sex marriage should be legally recognized at multiple levels of government (Avery, Chase, Johansson, Litvak, Montero, and Wydra, 2007; Brewer, 2008). Opinions on employment anti-discrimination policies have also been noted within the research (Brewer, 2008). Other areas of policy research include civil unions, housing discrimination, and legalized same-sex relations.

Before moving toward understanding the consensus of the literature regarding support for gay rights policies, grasping an effective knowledge of the term public opinion is needed. Defining the term opinion is encompassed in a very large body of literature that has been engaged by a number of researchers (Oskamp, 1977; Lane and Sears, 1964; Splichal, 1999; Lippmann, 1949; Erikson, Luttbeg, and Tedin, 1980; Zaller, 1992). First, the term opinion can be understood, separately from the term public, as an individual matter: “a reflection of the subjectivity of human beings” (Splichal, 1999, p.49), which can manifest itself as an answer to a question (Lane and Sears, 1963). More simply, opinions can be summed up as “political preferences” (Zaller, 1992, p.1). The preference can be externalized as support or opposition.
(alternatively, agreement or disagreement) to a particular policy or set of policies. A more formal and applicable conceptualization within the political science discipline is given by Erikson, Luttbeg, and Tedin (1980), in which they describe public opinion as “the combined personal opinions of adults toward issues of relevance to government” (p.3). The aforementioned theoretical grounding allows this work to engage in further discussion of the dynamics of public opinion concerning gay rights.

**Contact Hypothesis**

The Contact Hypothesis postulates explanations of policy positions regarding gay rights. The Contact Hypothesis is based on Allport's (1954) classical work regarding in-groups and out-groups (majority and minority groups). In general, Allport postulated that as contact with a certain group increases, the tendency to engage in prejudiced behavior toward the group decreases.

However, simply increasing contact between groups does not decrease prejudice entirely. There are nuances, as Allport shows. There are certain conditions that must be met in order to successfully facilitate a decrease in prejudicial tendencies towards certain groups. One of these conditions is equal status between individuals of the two groups. For instance, power differentials between two individuals that exacerbate or create dominant and subordinate statuses between individuals cannot exist.

Another condition that is needed to facilitate decreased prejudice is the existence of common goals. Allport shows this by examining segregation in the United States military, noting that sometimes it was necessary to include some African Americans within platoons that were
predominantly white. It is noted that both racial groups had "a common project" (p.277), fighting in a war, which contributed to minimizing prejudice toward African Americans.

*Intergroup cooperation* functions as another vital condition, in which majority and minority individuals must engage in activities peacefully and without a proliferation of conflict. This also means that high degrees of competition between the groups should not exist, or, if they exist, should be minimized. The fourth major condition underpinning the contact hypothesis is the role played by *institutional supports*. This encompasses the idea that authority figures and policies can help facilitate better relations. Together, all of the aforementioned interact within a particular postulation by Allport: "prejudice...may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals" (p.281).

**Contact hypothesis and minority groups.** How does the Contact Hypothesis work in contemporary research? It has been used to explain attitudes towards minority groups and has been shown to generally work in fostering better relations between majority and minority groups. Lee, Farrell, and Link (2004) explored attitudes toward homeless people in a survey of 1,388 individuals. As contact with homeless people increased, so did positive attitudes toward the out-group. In addition to perceptions of homeless people, the Contact Hypothesis also applies to racial/ethnic groups. Ellison, Shin, and Leal (2011) viewed this topic in regards to Latinos(as) residing in the United States using a sample of 1,100 individuals who completed the General Social Survey in 2000. After taking into account negative stereotyping, the perceived contributions of Latinos(as) to the wellbeing of society, social distance regarding relationships, and perceptions of immigration, various forms of contact with Hispanics (friendship, kinship,
acquaintanceship, and others), the authors found that increased contact reduces negative attitudes toward Latinos(as); however, having a friend who is Latino(a) has the most prominent effect.

From the aforementioned, it seems clear that Allport’s postulation has held firm in regards to prejudicial attitudes toward minority groups. As contact with certain groups increases, prejudicial dispositions toward the groups minimize. This has been true at aggregate levels for a multitude of other minority groups, such as individuals with disabilities (McManus, Feyes, and Saucier, 2010; Pruett, Lee, Chan, Huan Wang, and Lang, 2008) and immigrant populations (Excandell and Ceobanu, 2009; Leong & Ward, 2011; Vezzali and Giovannini, 2011). However, an important question in regards to the present research is the effect of contact on perceptions of LGBTQ and gay rights; does this postulation work for decreasing prejudice toward those of sexual and gender minority status?

**Contact and attitudes toward sexual and gender minorities.** Allport's Contact Hypothesis has been applied to data regarding attitudinal dispositions toward the LGBTQ community. For instance, Herek and Glunt (1993) analyzed a sample of 937 respondents, part of a 1988 national telephone survey of 1,078 individuals. The authors’ dependent variable was attitudinal dispositions towards gay men, measured with the Attitudes toward Gay Men (ATG) scale; the main independent variable is contact, measured with whether or not individuals had friends or family members who were gay or lesbian. The results of the authors’ work indicated that a) contact with sexual minorities was a very strong indicator of attitudes toward such minorities and b) that increased contact, as well as "the political strategy of coming out to heterosexual friends and relatives does indeed help to increase societal acceptance for gay
people" (p.244). However, this study only viewed attitudes toward gay men; what are the implications for prejudice for other sexual minority groups?

Other works have looked at how contact interacts with attitudes toward both gay men and lesbians. A recent study regarding the link between contact and attitudes, specifically sexual prejudice, is a meta-analysis by Smith, Axelton, and Saucier (2009). Within the meta-analysis, the authors examined 41 different studies as a means to find patterns within the literature regarding contact and sexual prejudice within the United States. Overall, Smith et al. found that as contact with lesbians and gays ("homosexuals") increased, negative attitudes and sexual prejudice decreased. Even more impactful was the finding that the stated relationships were not significantly impacted when controlling for a) differences between correlational and experimental studies, b) differences between attitudes toward lesbians, gay men, and homosexuals as distinct categories, c) differences in the quality of the studies, d) years of the studies' publications, and e) the locations of the conducted studies.

From the aforementioned works, as well as others (Collier, Box, and Sadfort, 2012; Herek and Capitanio, 1996; Hodson, Harry, and Mitchell, 2009; Liang and Alimo, 2005; Swank and Raiz, 2010a), we may understand that contact with sexual minorities affects attitudinal dispositions toward the group. Generally, as contact with a sexual minority group increases, individuals report a decrease in prejudicial (negative) attitudes. Whereas this may be true for attitudes, does increased contact work for perceptions of other areas regarding sexual minorities, such as policy positions?

**Contact and social policy opinions.** Contact is also useful when understanding social policy positions regarding sexual minorities. Similar to the Contact Hypothesis and attitudinal
dispositions, increases in contact with sexual minorities is accompanied by an increase in support for social policies that positively affect such minorities. Becker (2012) displayed the importance of contact and support for policy areas. Becker analyzed the Pew Research Center’s January 2010 Millennial Survey data, finding that increased contact accompanied increased support for same-sex marriage, as reflective of beta coefficients of 0.20 and 0.13: a positive prediction.

We have seen how contact influences support for same-sex marriage; but, how does it affect support in other policy areas, such as allowing military service, civil unions, and others? Lewis (2011) analyzed data from 27 different surveys spanning from 1983 to 2005, finding that increased contact with lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals was accompanied by an increase in support for gay rights policies: "nondiscrimination in principle and in law, to support LGBs teaching in schools and serving openly in the military, to oppose sodomy laws, to favor civil unions and same-sex marriage, and to support adoption and inheritance rights for same-sex couples" (p.231). However, also noted by Lewis is that contact had differing levels of effect per policy area, such as civil unions and same-sex marriage. Also noted was that having a friend/acquaintance who is LGB accompanied greater support for policies than those who have a family member who is LGB.

It seems very clear, that the relationship between gay rights policy support and interpersonal contact is well noted within the literature (Abrajano, 2010; Wood and Bartowski, 2004); however, relatively few have looked at this association regarding college students (Raiz, 2006; Morrison, Speakman, and Ryan, 2009; Brown and Henriquez, 2011). But, from those who have engaged in such work, the connection has been generally supported. Brown and Henriquez (2011) used independent-samples t-tests and found a mean of 114.27 (on the Support for Gay
and Lesbian Civil Rights (SGLCR) scale) for those who have a gay or lesbian friend, while the aggregate of students sampled who did not have a gay or lesbian friend revealed a mean of 92.78.

Limitations of Allport’s hypothesis must be addressed when viewing policy positions. The contact hypothesis has not performed as predicted in a universal manner. Swank and Raiz (2010b) harnessed an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression in their research, yielding that “contact with gay or lesbian friends was not statistically significant” (p.158). Thus, it is possible that contact may not have as strong of an effect on policy positions. Additionally, it is very possible that the other side of the intergroup relations debate, “Intergroup Conflict Theory” (Gaines and Garand, 2010, p.556), could also be explanatory, in which negative experiences between two groups result in increased prejudice and more negative attitudes. Raiz (2006) reported a nuance in which a decrease in support for gay rights was associated with individuals who had a roommate who was gay. From this, it is also understood that some forms of contact may not be equal status in nature; according to Allport (1954), such occurrences may be the result of prejudicial attitudes that are “deeply rooted in the character structure of the individual” (p.281).

Para-social Contact: The Media

Para-social interaction, theoretically grounded in a work by Horton and Wohl (1956) regarding human perceptions of television characters, showed that perception of television characters influence how the audience views real-life situations. Specifically, the authors showed that the audience (individuals watching television) can become “insinuated into the program’s action and internal social relationships.” In lay terms, the media has an important influence on
people’s perceptions of others; this influence can turn into practice, manifesting itself in how individuals interact socially.

Some researchers have applied para-social interaction to the perception of social groups, specifically minorities. A previous portion of this paper acknowledges the existence of Allport’s (1954) Contact Hypothesis, in which increased social interaction with stigmatized groups has the capacity to change prejudicial tendency towards such groups. A segment of researchers have combined the ideas of para-social interaction postulation with Allport’s Contact Hypothesis, creating a theoretical postulation known as the Para-social Contact Hypothesis. This hypothesis is based on the interaction between a specific independent variable, the exposure to stigmatized groups (minorities, others, and out-groups), with an independent variable of prejudice towards the group. The overall postulation is that increased exposure to an out-group via the media is accompanied by a decrease in prejudicial tendency towards the group: “para-social interaction potentially could provide such contact” (Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes, 2006, p.21). However, there is a nuance; in order for this effect to occur, there must be a favorable depiction of the out-group in the medium being viewed. Media perceptions have also been used to examine attitudes towards racial/ethnic minority groups (Ramasubramanian, 2013)

Accordingly, the Para-social Contact Hypothesis has been applied to how individuals view sexual and gender minorities. Schiappa et al. (2006) studied the link between a popular show featuring gay characters, Will and Grace, and scores on Herek’s Attitudes towards Lesbians and Gay Men (ATLG) scale. Analyses by Schiappa et al. showed that as the frequency of watching the television show increased, sexual prejudice towards gay men decreased, reflective of a correlation coefficient of -.36, as well as decreased prejudice towards lesbians,
reflective of a coefficient of -.25. Similar results (to an extent) were reported in an analysis by Calzo and Ward (2009) regarding media exposure and the Attitudes for Acceptance towards Homosexuality (AATH) scale.

Scant research has viewed the connection between media exposure and policy positions. Becker and Scheufele (2011) included independent variables that measure exposure in terms of television, internet, and newspaper. However, when entered into a multivariate analysis, the authors found media exposure to be insignificant in explaining same-sex marriage support. Multivariate analyses from a study by Lee and Hicks (2011) found increased support for this policy among those who mostly watch television, those who watch political television shows, and those who explore blogs on the internet. Using variables that assess exposure to media content featuring sexual and gender minorities may help in further understanding the dynamics of the Para-Social Contact Hypothesis.

**Attribution Theory**

*Heider.* Attribution Theory has been used within the literature to explain gay rights policy support. Attribution Theory has its grounds in Heider's (1958) classic work within psychology focusing on interpersonal relations, specifically, how the individual perceives other individuals: "how one person thinks and feels about another person, how [that person] perceives [the other person], what [that person] expects [the other person] to do or think, how [that person] reacts to the actions of the other" (p.1). However, Heider was not only interested in perceptions of others, but also people's perceptions of occurrences within their lives as well as perceptions of actions they perform. In essence, actions taken by a person are the function of either "effective personal force[s]," in which individuals perform actions because of internal reasons specific to
the individual, and "effective environmental force[s]," in which actors and conditions external to the individual affect how or if the individual performs an action (p.82).

Rotter. Similar ideas regarding attribution have been postulated within social psychology. Rotter (1954), whose works falls within the overarching conceptual ideas of Social Learning Theory, has also given an understanding of how people attribute their actions. Rotter (1990) historically studied a phenomenon known as the locus of control. In lay terms, this concept is defined as “allocation of responsibility for an outcome” (Weiner, 1974, p.106); an outcome, also known as reinforcement (Rotter, 1990), is best represented as an action made by an individual. Although both researchers represented two different (but interconnected) disciplines, Rotter’s conceptualization was similar to Heider’s conceptualization in that the author was interested in how individuals perceive occurrences in their lives. To clarify further, the following queries will synopsize the debate. What (or who) is responsible for a person’s actions? To explain this, a more in-depth understanding of locus of control must be made.

Similar to Heider’s constructs, locus of control can be divided into two constructs for which people attribute their actions: internal and external (Rotter, 1990). Internal locus of control represents an attribution in which individuals link their decisions and actions (outcomes) as a function of factors within, exemplifying the control that they have over their own actions. External locus of control represents an attribution in which people attribute their actions as functions of factors from the realm outside of their control. The constructs exist on a spectrum, with very strong internal locus of control at one extreme, and every strong external locus of control at the other extreme.
Weiner. Weiner (1974) extended attribution to perceptions of achievement by students, building on Rotter’s Locus of Control Theory. However, there is a nuance in how Weiner presented such attributions. Weiner expanded upon the ideas upon which Heider and Rotter conceptualized. Weiner (1979) replaced the term *locus of control* with *locus of causality*; he makes a distinction that control should embody its own dimension (this will be discussed in greater detail in a later paragraph). Thus, in renaming the concept as the locus of causality, Weiner implied that individuals perceive both external causes of failure or success retrospectively since responsibility for a success or failure is generally allocated after an outcome. In addition to the locus of causality, another important dimension exists: stability. In lay terms, stability represents the extent to which a condition or habit can be changed over time. Is the condition changeable? If an individual engages in an action, will the same outcome occur every time?

Weiner also conceptualized a dimension of Attribution Theory titled *controllability*, which is defined as “whether or not a person is believed to control their own behavior and the subsequent attitudinal and perceptual implications” (Haider-Markel, 2008, p.292). Can the cause of a condition, identity, action, or anything related to the individual, be controlled? To clarify, does a person control whether or not that person can pass or fail a test?

In totality, Attribution Theory centers on the following question: Why do certain events happen? Alternatively, this question can be asked in other ways. Who or what is responsible for the occurrence of an event? What causes a certain event to happen?

Attribution theory and minority groups. Attribution has been applied to attitudes of socially stigmatized characteristics. Weiner, Perry, and Magnusson (1988) analyzed how people
viewed traditionally stigmatized characteristics based on the perceived cause of the
classification. Overall, if a stigmatized characteristic was deemed uncontrollable (cancer) on the
part of the individual (who has the characteristic), it elicit “pity, liking, and no anger” from other
individuals (p.745), whereas a characteristic deemed controllable (having acquired immune
deficiency syndrome (AIDS)) on the part of the individual elicited more negative responses.
Attribution theory can be further explained by asking what causes the status of other minority groups,
such as individuals of low socioeconomic status. Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, and Tagler (2001)
assessed the connection between attitudes towards individuals of low socioeconomic status and
whether or not individuals attribute lower SES to individual causes (internal), societal causes
(external), or fatalistic (external) causes. Findings from an intercorrelation analysis showed a
strong relationship between the belief that low SES is a function of internal (individual) causes
and negative stereotypical tendencies.

**Attribution theory and attitudes towards sexual and gender minorities.** We can
classify perceived causes of homosexuality into three categories: biological, learned, or
preference. How do these reflect the theoretical framework of Attribution Theory? We can best
answer this question by looking at each cause in the context of Weiner’s typology. Biological
attribution signifies that individuals believe that homosexuality is a function of an individual’s
genetic makeup; many who believe this attribution will advocate the idea that gays and lesbians
are born that way, or that homosexuality is genetic. Preference explains homosexuality in terms
of whether or not someone makes the conscious decision to change sexual orientation from
heterosexual to non-heterosexual (or vice-versa). There also exists an attribution in which non-
heterosexual orientation is learned; for instance, some may believe that children may become gay, lesbian, or bisexual because if they are raised by same-sex parents.

In accordance with previous research, perceived causes of homosexuality have been explained via the dimension of controllability (King, 2001; Sakalli, 2002; Haider-Markel and Joslyn, 2008; Murray, Aberson, Blankenship, and Highfield, 2013). Controllability addresses whether or not the cause of something may be controlled by the individual, or stated otherwise, “the extent of one’s control or mastery over various causal factors” (Wong and Weiner, 1981, p.655). A biological attribution of cause is deemed uncontrollable because given the fixed status of genetics (see the stability dimension), the ability to control same-sex attraction is not within one’s control. An attribution of preference embodies full controllability because of the role played by individual choice. An attribution of learning is deemed more controllable than a biological cause, but not as controllable as a direct choice.

Just as Weiner et al. (1988) uncovered the connection between attribution and stigma; others have narrowed their focus on how attributions explain attitudinal prejudice toward sexual minority groups. A study by Landén and Innala (2002) found "that those who believe in a biological explanation of homosexuality...hold more tolerant attitudes than those who believe in psychological theories" (p.185). In lay terms, those individuals who believe that being a sexual minority is a) a choice or b) learned hold more prejudicial views than those who advocate a biological attribution.

**Attribution theory and social policy opinions.** Just as attribution has been linked to a decrease in negative attitudes, it has also been linked to support for policy positions regarding the LGBTQ community. Looking at controllability, the literature shows that if a characteristic elicits
prejudice and is controllable, more negative dispositions are held toward the individual. Attributing homosexuality to genetic or innate origins elicits more positive responses because the individual has no control over genetics, whereas attributing homosexuality to learned behavior or personal preference elicits more negative responses because the person has some extent of control over the characteristic in terms of choice or learning. This generally transmits into policy areas as well. Biological attributions elicit more support for policies that positively regard sexual and gender minorities, whereas preferential and learning attributions elicit more opposition.

Such connections have been found using national samples. An analysis of 2003 Pew Research Center survey data viewed the role of attributions (Haider-Markel and Joslyn, 2008). The specific question of focus was whether or not respondents believed that homosexuality was based on innateness, preference, or upbringing, as well as whether or not this affected opinions. The plurality of the sample attributed homosexuality to choice. Using logistic regression to analyze the data, it was found that attributions based on innateness were found to embody the strongest prediction for civil rights for gays in a positive direction. The authors also found differences in the impact of attribution per policy area. For instance, interpreting predicted probabilities from the study show that biological attributions implied an increase in probability to support legalized same-sex relations by almost 37%, while the same type of attribution only increased the odds of supporting same-sex marriage by 32%.

A more recent study by Lewis (2009) that studied national survey data from 1977 to 2005 focused on understanding whether or not perceived origins of being LGB and support for policy areas affecting LGB were explained as a function of Attribution Theory. The results of Lewis’s work reported that as the belief that LGB is innate increased, so did support for policies
positively affecting LGB; specifically, it was found that this was the case “on every question” (p.677). However, also found was differences in the relationship across certain policy areas when taking into account those who believe in innateness: “increases the odds of opposing sodomy laws and of supporting the principle of equal employment opportunity more than hiring for any particular occupation, including elementary school teacher” (p.682). A study set in Oklahoma yielded that biological attribution “substantially increased support for gay rights initiatives” (Wood and Bartowski, 2004, p.71).

In addition to the aforementioned studies, some researchers have administered surveys to smaller samples at the collegiate level. Swank and Raiz (2010b) analyzed a sample of 575 undergraduate respondents in social work programs from many universities in the United States. Results from their OLS regression indicated a negative prediction of attribution (specifically, homosexuality as a choice) to support for a relationship recognition scale that included both same-sex marriage and criminalizing same-sex relations. Similar findings were reported in Raiz’s (2006) study of 348 students. Thus, it seems clear that Attribution Theory has its place within the literature in determining policy positions at multiple levels.

Attitudes

Within research regarding views of LGBTQ persons and policies that affect such persons, the literature is divided into two types of perceptions one of which is public opinion which is the present work's primary concern. The other concern is attitudes. What is an attitude?

Conceptualizing a single definition to embody what an attitude represents is challenging because of the extensive body of literature defining the term, as well as the variation of definitions in different contexts and applications. For a classical definition, we must revisit Allport, who
conceptualized the term attitude as a “mental and neutral state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and the situations with which it is related” (Morin, Crocker, Beaulieu-Bergeron, and Caron, 2013, p.268-269). This definition evolved overtime. Later, Eagly and Chaiken (2007) developed a definition that became widely used among the academic community: “a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor” (p.598).

According to previous research, there is a possible interaction between attitudes and opinions. Before engaging in further discussion of this connection, we must engage in a brief discussion of general attitudes towards sexual minority groups. The most influential researcher regarding attitudes of sexual minorities within the last few decades is Dr. George Herek. Specifically, researching attitudes toward sexual minority populations, according to Herek (2009b), has allowed for researchers to understand “the negative evaluations of sexual minorities” (p.74). Herek referred to such negative attitudinal dispositions toward these minority groups specifically as sexual prejudice; for the purposes of this research, the terms sexual prejudice and negative attitudes will be used synonymously.

Historically, attitudes toward sexual minorities have been negative. However, as time has progressed, such attitudes have transformed into “more favorable” ones (Herek, 2000, p.20). Loftus’s (2001) analysis of data between 1973 and 1998 showed that, overall, attitudes have become more positive. Anderson and Fetner (2008) viewed attitudinal effects within the United States and Canada, with a focus on differences among the years 1981, 1990, and 2000. Over the 20-year period, attitudes became increasingly positive. Other academic works have indicated
such trends in attitudinal positions of sexual and gender minority groups (Keleher and Smith, 2012; Sullivan, 2003; Yang, 1997).

Another way to understand attitudes is by briefly understanding demographic trends. For instance, within demographic categories, some characteristics have held more prejudicial views toward sexual minority populations: men (Herek, 1988), African Americans (slightly and to an extent) (Negy and Russel, 2005), less educated individuals (Ohlander, Batalova, and Treas, 2005), Republicans (Holland, Matthews, and Schott, 2013), Conservatives (Jayakumar, 2009), and others. Knowing this information will allow us to decipher predictors of support for social policies regarding sexual minority groups.

**Attitudes and social policy opinions.** Is there a relation between attitudes and support for social policies affecting LGBTQ (either negative or positive)? Attitudinal positions toward sexual minorities can give a good indication of policy positions. To clarify, it is thought that if individuals possess less prejudicial views toward the minority group, those individual’s tolerance and understanding may move such persons to support the extension of protections to such groups. Previous literature affirms this connection widely.

However, we may benefit from viewing in-depth how researchers have analyzed this particular connection. Brown and Henriquez (2011) studied the opinions of 537 individuals from both a university and the general public included the analysis of the Support for Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights (SGLCR) scale, a series of items that measure policy support. The authors found that “attitudes towards lesbians and gays…were significantly correlated with SGLCR scores” (p.470). Poteat and Mareish (2012) examined opinions of 478 undergraduates, focusing on support for a same-sex marriage ban, support for equal adoption rights, and support regarding six
other policies. The authors showed that opposition to social policies by certain ideological backgrounds are explained by negative attitudes. Wolff, Himes, Kwom, and Bollinger (2012) found that the beliefs that homosexual behavior is disgusting or wrong are significant predictors of support for same-sex marriage in the negative direction, citing beta coefficients of -.604 and -.116 (respectively). Other authors have revealed similar findings regarding this connection (Ellis, Kitzinger, and Wilkinson, 2003; Moskowitz, Rieger, and Roloff, 2010).

Other sample types have shown this to be true as well. In Burke’s (2008) analysis of data from a national sample, it was found that those who “believed homosexuality” is morally incorrect also (generally) supported the removal of media that includes subject matter on homosexuality from libraries (p.255). Gaines and Garand (2010) examined American National Election Studies data, revealing a significantly positive relationship between favorable attitudes towards lesbians and gay men (measured on a feeling thermometer) and increased support for “same-sex marriage” (p.560). Similar connections have been revealed by authors who harness other samples (Hetzel, 2011).

Civil Rights for African Americans and Social Policy Opinions

Another postulation within the literature is the analogy between gay rights and civil rights for African Americans in the U.S. More specifically, some suggest that gender and sexual minorities, like African Americans, have experienced prejudice, have experienced institutional barriers, and have constructed movements that function to enhance their positions on the social, economic, and political hierarchies. Likewise, some see the relationships between policy implications. Public officials have created and reshaped policy based on this postulation. An example can be seen from a court case dealing with the issue of same-sex marriage.
Perry v. Schwarzenegger (2010), a district court decision, featured the connection between civil rights for African Americans and gay rights in a challenge to California’s constitutional ban on same-sex marriage, Proposition 8. Specifically, a connection was made between the right of interracial couples to marry and the right of same-sex couples to do the same. Loving v. Virginia (1967), in lay terms, made interracial marriage legal in the state of Virginia, deeming null and void the state’s anti-miscegenation provision within its statutory law (“Loving Decision,” 2007). The opinion in Perry v. Schwarzenegger (2010) harnessed the use of the Loving decision to show how social definitions of the term marriage have changed, such as how they changed with race: “race restrictions on marital partners were once common in most states but are now seen as archaic, shameful, or even bizarre” (704 F. Supp. 2d 992). The opinion drew a similar relationship in denying marriage to same-sex couples:

The evidence did not show any historical purpose for excluding same-sex couples from marriage, as states have never required spouses to have an ability or willingness to procreate in order to marry. Rather, the exclusion exists as an artifact of a time when the genders were seen as having distinct roles in society and in marriage. That time has passed. (Perry v. Schwarzenegger, 2010, 704 F. Supp. 2d 993)

However, such an argument drawing a parallel has not been used universally. For instance, in U.S. v. Windsor (2013), allusions to Loving were scant and only used to express the right of the states to define “‘domestic relations’” such as marriage (p.16). Debates among public officials regarding constitutionality are only one portion of the entire debate; the general public may express views as well.
Policy positions regarding sexual and gender minorities and African Americans have shown similar trends. Brewer (2008) noted that opinions toward anti-discrimination in employment reached consensus before interracial marriage; Brewer also noted that once consensus for employment nondiscrimination policies for gays and lesbians is reached, the next step would be the legalization of marriage for same-sex couples. Here, we see similarities between rights for both the gay community, as well as the African American community in terms of opinion positions. Another study also showed the connection between support for African American civil rights and gay rights policy. Analyzing National Election Studies (NES) survey data from 2000, Hicks and Lee (2006) found that respondents who reported opposition to governmental aid to the African American community were less supportive of permitting adoption rights, less supportive of employment anti-discrimination laws, and more opposed to allowing sexual minorities to serve in the military (embodied in a scale).

However, it must be noted that the postulation of the link between African American civil rights and gay rights is not universally supported by empirical research. Gaines and Garand (2010) included this concept in their work concerning support for same-sex marriage. Their findings regarding this connection ran counter to expectation. An increase in support for African American civil rights was accompanied by a decrease (statistically insignificant) in support for same-sex marriage. This means that civil rights and gay rights may not be as analogous when taking into account opinion positions as some scholars suggest. Thus, this lack of clarity in the literature about this connection lends another justification for research.
Women’s Rights and Social Policy Opinions

Noted within the research is the connection between opinions toward policies regarding women’s rights and those regarding sexual and gender minorities. However, it may first be appropriate to see if there has been a connection within the policymaking process. For instance, in *Bowers v. Hardwick* (1986), the Court showed disagreements with previous holdings and the “respondent that the Court’s prior cases have construed the Constitution to confer a right of privacy that extends to homosexual sodomy” (478 U.S. 190), citing previous cases dealing with the right to privacy in obtaining contraception or an abortion. However, in *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003), this idea was pondered once again as the Court questioned whether or not sexual activity between two individuals of the same sex was protected by the Due Process Clause’s protections regarding “liberty and privacy” (539 U.S. 564). The opinion of the Court cited previous court rulings regarding the right to privacy, such as (but not limited to) *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965), a court case overruling contraceptive usage bans (“Griswold,” 2006), *Roe v. Wade* (1973), a court case that used the right to privacy argument to allow the right of a woman to terminate a pregnancy (“OYEZ”), and others. In discussing such cases regarding liberty and privacy, the opinion showed that “the statutes [of Texas criminalizing same-sex intimate relations] do seek to control a personal relationship that...is within the liberty of persons to choose without being punished as criminals (539 U.S. 567). Even though some aspects of actual policy have addressed this connection, a separate question would be whether or not public opinion falls in line with this rationale.

How does the general public view the connection between gay rights and women’s rights? Do they even see a connection between the two? Gaines and Garand (2010) analyzed the
connection between women’s rights, gender role beliefs, and support for same-sex marriage. The authors found that same-sex marriage opposition was related to support for traditional gender role beliefs. Gaines and Garand showed that as support for women’s rights increased, thus did support for same-sex marriage (but not significantly). Another study found a similar connection between advocating traditional gender roles and support for three gay rights policies, citing a statistically significant regression coefficient of “.17” (Hicks and Lee, 2006, p.69).

Within the context of women’s rights, a very contentious issue is whether or not a woman should have the right to terminate a pregnancy within legally defined time and ethical boundaries: abortion. The issue has elicited deep polarization over the years and remains a sensitive issue of debate. Do those who support abortion also support the LGBTQ community? The literature on this postulation yields mixed implications. For several decades, the “battle lines on abortion” coincided with those of policies regarding gay rights (Brewer, 2008, p.34). However, this trend has altered over the years. Brewer (2008) showed that, regarding abortion, public opinion of the issue “ha[s] reached a long-running stalemate” (p.35), whereas gay rights policy support has found a steady increase.

However, comparing trends concerning support for each policy area is only one dimension to consider; as per this research, we may view how support for abortion rights interacts with support for gay rights policies. As an example, an ordinary least squares regression featuring National Election Studies (NES) data within Hicks and Lee (2006) featured this topic within their research, finding that decreased support for abortion was accompanied by a decrease in support for three social policies regarding sexual minorities, reporting a regression coefficient
of “.18” (p.69). Investigating the dynamics of this particular policy in regards to gay rights may allow for a better understanding of how individuals view minority rights as a whole.

**Gender**

When taking gender into account, women tend to display more support for multiple social policies focusing on gay rights than men. For instance, in Herek’s (2002) work, national surveys reported multiple gender gaps not just focusing on the extent to which men and women support certain policies, but the extent to which men and women support social policies for gay men versus social policies for lesbians; Herek reported that about 81% of women supported the passage of a law ensuring that lesbians have equal job opportunities, and about 81% of women supported the same policy for gay men. In contrast, it was reported by Herek that about 65% of male respondents supported the passage of a law ensuring that lesbians have equal job opportunities, while about 64% of men supported such a law ensuring the same rights for gay men. Herek reported similar trends for allowing same-sex couples to adopt children. However, a significantly smaller gap existed for supporting the legal recognition of marriage for gay couples, as well as lesbian couples, with women still showing more support.

Differences in support for certain policies have been indicated for gender widely within the literature. Moskowitz, Rieger, and Roloff (2010) researched policy preference toward same-sex marriage. The authors' focus was to view support differences between males and females. Support for same-sex marriage for gay males was asked in a separate question from same-sex marriage for lesbian women. Compared to women, men displayed increasingly negative views for both gay marriage and lesbian marriage. Brown and Henriquez (2011) also included an analysis at the university level. Specifically, the authors analyzed data from a sample of 537
individuals by reporting means from independent-samples t-tests on a scale of 32 to 140, with increasing scores indicating increased support for gay rights policies. They reported a mean of 110.45 for women and 95.22 for men, indicating that women showed more support for gay rights.

**Gender theories: patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity**

**Patriarchy.** In order to understand gender differences in support for gay rights, we must first understand a construct known as patriarchy. This phenomenon is an enduring constraint on human social behavior that embodies the domination of men over women. Walby (1989) conceptualized this particular concept specifically as “a system of social structures, and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women” (p.214). Thus, inequalities may manifest themselves within many institutions; for instance, men and women may possess unequal status in the economic realm of existence facing difficulties such as a gender-gap in pay and/or a glass ceiling in employment advancement and social mobility overall. Women may be unequal when taking into account politics, in which women may be underrepresented within legislatures and other political offices. Religious doctrines may advocate the relegation of women to the household. The subordinate status of women at the structural level is a pinnacle of this theoretical background.

**Hegemonic masculinity.** In line with the concept of patriarchy is the subordination of femininity. Specifically, this embodies the idea that masculine qualities are more valued than feminine qualities, as shown within Kane’s (2006) study of parental evaluations of deviations in traditional gendered activities and roles for their children. In addition to the subordination of femininity, there is also a subordination of other forms of masculinity. Specifically, this
conceptualized the existence of a dominant form of masculinity: hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is an important factor in upholding patriarchy. Connel and Messerschmidt (2005) showed that hegemonic masculinity is indicative of the most revered conceptualization of “being a man” (p.832). Some characteristics of this idea are stoicism, violent behaviors, and very strict adherence to heterosexuality. Social sanctions are applied to men who do not adhere to the aforementioned, and are deemed feminine, constituting subordinated forms of masculinity. However, it should be noted that both men and women who deviate from gender norms may meet social sanction.

As previously mentioned, adherence to heterosexuality is a significant part of hegemonic masculinity. This means that homosexuality is a construct that transgresses gender norms in terms of normative sexual relations (male and female): “the cultural devaluation of femininity and homosexuality” (Schilt and Westbrook, 2009, p.443). McGuffy and Rich (1999) discussed the gender transgression zone (GTZ), which may help us understand this more, especially in regards to sexual orientation, gender identity, and sexual and gender minority rights. The GTZ functioned as setting in which children deviate from gendered norms and engage in activities that are typically performed by another gender. For instance, a boy may decide to play hop-scotch or jump rope while singing; this would be a transgression of gender norms. As mentioned previously, sanctions are placed on individuals in accordance with transgressing these boundaries. However, another gendered dynamic exists within this occurrence. As the authors explained, “[males] seldom accept deviant [males] and [females]” (McGuffey and Rich, 1999, p.618); females tended to be more accepting of deviations in gender performance, according to McGuffey and Rich.
Sexuality tends to be socially monitored and sanctioned in a heightened manner, in accordance with its function as a tenet of hegemonic masculinity; homosexuality (or perceived homosexuality) may constitute a transgression of gender performance. The observations reported by McGuffy and Rich included a male child that frequently engaged in behavior that is typically deemed effeminate; thus, the child was generally considered gay and was stigmatized and sanctioned harshly by the other males; the child “threatened…masculinity because [he] had been labeled homosexual” (p.619). Thus, the harshest sanctions against perceived deviations in gender performance (and translated into deviations of sexual boundaries, even though none were breeched) were from males. This may help us understand, first of all, negative attitudes of men toward sexual and gender minority populations. In regards to the present work, such implications tend to translate into opinion positions as well.

**Partisanship, Political Ideology, and Religion**

The areas of partisanship, political ideology and religion intersect into what some consider the “culture war” (Lindaman and Haider-Markel, 2002, p.92; McConkey, 2001, p.151), a larger debate about social policies within the United States, such as abortion rights, gun control, civil rights for blacks, civil rights for women, and more importantly for this study, gay rights. What are the trends for political ideology, religion, and political party when researching social policy on gay rights? First, it has been shown that Republicans present less support for social policies on gay rights; at the same time self-identified conservatives hold less support for such rights (Brewer, 2008). Religious affiliation and religious attendance also offer divisions (Brewer, 2008).
Partisanship. As aforementioned, there is a debate regarding gay rights along partisan lines. In general, Democrats support policies that affect sexual minorities in a positive manner, whereas Republicans show less support for such policy areas (Dancey and Goran, 2010). At the forefront of the debate is the legal recognition of same-sex relationships. For example, Baunach (2011) studied General Social Survey (GSS) data between 1988 and 2006, using support for same-sex marriage as a dependent variable, and explanatory variables such as age cohort, gender, racial/ethnic background, region, and important to this section, partisan identification. For the 1988 data, Baunach recorded a mean of 0.776 for Republicans (means closer to 1 indicate less support for same-sex marriage) and a mean of 0.691 for Democrats. For the 2006 data, Baunach found similar trends; a mean of 0.682 was recorded for Republicans, as opposed to a mean of 0.462 for Democrats. Baunach's (2012) work also shows similar patterns when expanding the time period from 1988 to 2010.

Other research has also shown the trend in partisanship on gay rights. Brewer (2003) analyzed American National Election Studies (ANES) data from 1992 and 1996, attempting to understand support and opposition to two policy areas regarding gays and lesbians: employment protections law and allowing military service. Brewer's presentation of regression coefficients within the study showed that as Democratic Party identification increased, thus did the support for a job anti-discrimination law, but even more for allowing gays in the military.

One way we can view partisanship’s impact is within a work by O’Reilly and Webster (1998), which focuses on a referendum in Oregon that featured a) a repeal of a state-level anti-discrimination statute, b) a government policy advocating disapproval of same-sex behavior, and c) a measure preventing public moneys from being implemented to support gay rights. The
authors found that the vote for a Republican candidate positively and significantly predicted the vote for all of the referenda and was the best predictor for two of them. Thus, we see that partisan voting tends to have an impact on how people vote on social policies regarding gay rights. A more recent study by Burnett and Salka (2009) found that the vote for a Republican presidential candidate (for 2004) and socio-economic status best predicted the vote for 2006 same-sex marriage bans in seven states. Similar findings were found in regards to 2008 bans on same-sex marriage in Florida and California during a separate study (Salka and Burnett, 2012). Thus, the link between partisan identification and support for social policy opinions focusing on gay rights across much literature shows that the more Republican an individual is, the less support they will show.

**Explanation for partisanship.** Why does partisan identification have this effect on support for gay rights? A possible explanation is the idea that elites have an important role in influencing such policy positions, as indicated by Zaller’s (1992) groundbreaking work. Citizens may use party platform positions or discourses from party leaders as a means to form or intensify their own views on policy; consequentially, in staking out a position and publicly advocating its stance on an issue, the party structure pressures “citizens to bring their partisan identification and views on [the] issues closer together” (Carsey and Layman, 2006, p.467). Thus, if a particular party stakes out a certain position on gay rights, citizens who may identify with that party may very well take the party’s position on an issue.

**Ideology.** The role of ideology in the gay rights debate tends to follow along similar lines as partisan identification, with more conservative individuals expressing lesser support for social policies focusing on gay rights; on the other hand, more liberal individuals tend to exhibit more
support than conservative individuals. This has been found to be the case with relatively large sample sizes. Keleher and Smith (2012), in using GSS data to estimate tolerance of sexual minority relations, found that liberals were overall more tolerant, as indicated by trend percentages and coefficients from ordered probit. Becker and Sheufele (2011) analyzed support for gay marriage in a national random sample of 871 individuals. The authors measured ideology on a seven-point scale (with higher values indicating more conservative views); an ordinary least squares regression revealed ideology to be a significant, negative predictor of support for same-sex marriage. However, Brewer (2003) only noted a small impact of ideology on support for gay rights spanning eight years.

A study at the state level has also shown this connection; Lewis and Gossett (2008) studied state-level data from California. Findings from logit models revealed that "liberals are 27 percentage points more likely" to exhibit support for same-sex marriage (p.18), as opposed to their conservative counterparts. But, is the connection true for other types of samples, such as ones generally collected at the university level?

University-level samples have also shown the connection between ideology and gay rights support. As an example, Poteat and Mereish (2012) studied a sample of 491 students. A correlation analysis revealed a positive relationship between an increase in conservatism and an increase in opposition to eight social policy areas (combined to make a scale), reflective of a coefficient of .56. A recent work authored by Woodford, Atteberry, Derr, and Howell (2013) analyzed a sample of 1,714 college students as a means to understand support for a gay civil rights scale composed of items that gauge opinions on same-sex marriage, protections of employment rights, and civil unions. Results from multiple regression analysis showed political
ideology to be one of the best predictors, with a coefficient of .19, meaning that liberals were overall more supportive.

**Religion.** Religion has also been included within the culture war. Overall, those who identify with religious groups or attend religious services more frequently tend to indicate less support for pro-gay rights policies, as opposed to those who do not identify with a religious disposition (Ellis, Kitzinger, and Wilkinson 2003). The simple logic regarding this occurrence is the notion that major religious texts and teachings hold that deviation from normative sexual behavior, as well as variation in gender performance, are socially unacceptable: “prominent religions condemn homosexuality” (Whitley, 2009, p.23). However, it should first be noted that not all individuals, religious institutions, and/or leaders who adhere to religious doctrines view diverse sexual orientation and gender identity in this way.

Before moving to understand policy positions, a grasp of the connection between religion and attitudes is necessary, specifically sexual prejudice. Whitley’s (2009) meta-analysis aimed to understand this connection. Whitley analyzed effect sizes of 61 scholarly works regarding the aforementioned relationship. The results show that “most forms of religiosity” are connected to negative attitudes towards sexual minorities (p.29), specifically lesbians and gay men.

Olson, Cadge, and Harrison (2006) also studied the link between religion and support/opposition to social policies concerning sexual minorities. The authors used dependent variables concerning policy areas: support for same-sex marriage, civil unions, and a federal constitutional ban on same-sex marriage. Their main independent variables encompassed a) religious affiliation and b) religious attendance. Religious affiliation had "a powerful effect" influencing attitudes toward same-sex marriage and civil unions (p.355), but not for supporting
constitutional bans on same-sex marriage. Non-protestant religious identifications display a greater tendency of support for same-sex marriage and civil unions. A study of opinions regarding a ban on open military service for lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals featured a dummy variable of religious identification that categorized as Christian and Non-Christian (Ender et al., 2012). Logistic regression found that identification with Christianity was indicative of support for barring open military service, reflective of a statistically significant coefficient of .517. Additionally, a study by Sherkat, Powell-Williams, Maddox, and DeVries (2011) indicates a significantly positive relationship between having no religious affiliation and supporting same-sex marriage.

Alongside religious identification, religiosity and attendance at religious services allows for an effective understanding of support for gay rights. It is postulated within the literature that increases in religious attendance and religiosity are accompanied by a decrease in support for social policies positively affecting sexual minorities. Brown and Henriquez (2011) measured religiosity on a 7-point scale asking how religious individuals identify within their study of the SGLCR. The researchers found a Pearson’s correlation coefficient of -.38, with a p-value less than .01, depicting a moderately negative relationship between religiosity and SGLCR scores, which embodied multiple policies regarding sexual minority rights. A study regarding opinions on employment protection, open military service, and gay adoption found that increased religious service attendance, as well as increased religious practice (such as prayer) featured less support for such policies (Hicks and Lee, 2006).

Other studies have shown this relationship, specifically for college students. For instance, in a work by Swank and Raiz (2010b), a relationship rights scale was created to understand
predictors of support. Results from an OLS regression showed religious attendance to be negatively associated with support, as shown by a regression coefficient of -.24, which was significant given a p-value of less than .001. Schwartz (2010), when attempting to uncover the best predictor variables for supporting adoption rights for sexual minorities, found that attendance at religious services was the “second most powerful” independent variable in terms of prediction (p.754).

Race

Another demographic to consider regarding support for social policies on gay rights is race. Studies regarding race/ethnicity in viewing these social policies have yielded mixed results. For instance, in a study regarding attitudes toward homosexuality and support for social policies on gay rights between the early 1970s and 2000, Lewis (2003) found that there exists a similarity in opposition between whites and blacks on certain policies: “sodomy laws, gay civil liberties, and employment discrimination” (p.76). However, other works did not yield similar results. Abrajano (2010) focused on whether or not race/ethnicity acted as a significant factor in the passage of Proposition 8, a plebiscitary ban on same-sex marriage in California. Abrajano found that Latinos and blacks largely contributed to a majority needed to pass Proposition 8; however, the author did not link this happening to higher turnout as much as the entire racial/ethnic composition of the California electorate. Specifically, the author showed that “blacks exhibited a higher probability of supporting the ban” compared to California voters who identified as white (p. 929). We may look more into this connection to see if there are differences between whites and non-whites regarding policy positions.
Using “white” as a reference category, one study found negative relationships between being African American, Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander, and some other race/ethnicity and support for a civil rights scale regarding LGBT (Woodford, Atteberry, Derr, and Howell, 2012), with coefficients of -.12, -.06, and -.06, respectively. Woodford, Chardony, Scherrer, Silverschanz, and Kulick’s (2012) results in a study of same-sex marriage support found more neutral opinions toward the policy in African Americans and Hispanics/Latinos(as). Raiz (2006) reported overall more positive opinions for seven social policy areas for individuals who identified as white/Caucasian.

The literature suggests that the dynamics of opinions toward gay rights based on race are a function of several factors. However, an analysis by Sherkat, deVries, and Creek (2010) found a particular pattern. The racial/ethnic gap in support for same-sex marriage rights was explained primarily by affiliation with certain religious groups, as well as attendance at religious services. The authors further postulate that as time progresses, whites become more supportive of gay rights, with African Americans remaining consistent in opposition.

**Region**

We may attempt to track policy positions by viewing location internally within a nation-state. For instance, some research has suggested that there may be policy implications based on regions within the United States. In other words, certain groups of states that are geographically related by a closer proximity to each other may exhibit similar tendencies regarding overall support for gay rights policies. Likewise, some regions differ from others, showing patterns in support. We may understand this by viewing Sullivan’s (2003) work regarding attitudinal positions toward same-sex relationships. Studying data from 1973 to 1998, Sullivan found that
individuals within certain regions display the views that such relationships are wrong, as opposed to others. Interpreting Sullivan’s findings, such regional findings were as follows, from the most opposed to such relations, to the most supportive: Midsouth and South, East South Central, New England and Mid-Atlantic, Pacific, West South Central, and Mountain.

Another study has included region within the scope of understanding gay rights issue support. Lewis and Taylor (2001) studied General Social Survey (GSS) data from 1973 to 1998. Part of their research focused on predictors of how individuals perceive non-heterosexual elementary school teachers, school board members, and college professors; overall, those from the New England region were most supportive; areas in the more southern part of the country tend to offer more opposition. All other regions, such as the Mid-West and the Pacific Coast, fall somewhere in between the Southern states and Northern states regarding such positions. Burke’s (2008) study of opinions regarding book bans showed support for removing gay-themed media from libraries in the following regions (descending order): the South, the Midwest, the Mid-Atlantic, the West, and New England. From this, it seems that the geographical implications of support follow the general positioning of red states and blue states in terms of election context.

Age

Age has also shown to be a significant factor when viewing public policy opinions. The age gap regarding public opinion on social policies about gay rights reflects less support as age increases. For instance, Brewer (2008) showed that between 2003 and 2006, employment nondiscrimination, the legal recognitions of marriage for same-sex couples, and the right for same-sex couples to adopt children yielded less support among older respondents, as opposed to younger respondents. In addition, it is important to study this demographic because younger
individuals will eventually “outpace their older counterparts at the voting booths” (Becker, 2012, p.2). Raiz (2006) expressed similar results, showing that the present generation of students embodies a cohort that “will determine the composition of elected bodies…in the United States for generations to come” (p.72). Thus, their opinions on this subject are important when looking toward the future of public policy studies because they are the voters of the future. However, this necessitates more research because younger citizens generally have encompassed the lowest voting rates (Schneider, 2009); it will be important for research to view a possible connection between voting and younger voters, especially when regarding such social policies.

Do individuals vote on this basis? This depends specifically on where voting occurs, as well as what policy is the object of the vote. A study by Brown, Knopp, and Morrill (2005) assessed correlations between many demographic variables and votes cast in favor of maintaining a statute adding sexual orientation to Washington state’s anti-discrimination policy. Specifically, the scope of the study was centered in Tacoma, Washington. The correlation analysis showed that individuals within the ages of 20 and 24 showed a stronger correlation with maintaining the statute (reflective of a correlation coefficient of .35) than those between 25 and 34 (reflective of a correlation coefficient of .21).

**Education**

Specific importance for this research is embodied in educational attainment because of the varying levels of support that come with differing educational levels. Brewer’s (2008) interpretation of polling data from the 2004 American National Election Studies survey found that education levels were “positively and strongly related” to support for certain social policies regarding gay rights (p.31), such as allowing gays to serve in the military, allowing same-sex
couples to adopt, employment anti-discrimination policies, and allowing same-sex couples to marry.

Research does consistently show the impact of education on social policy support; however, there are limitations. Education may be an important contributing factor, but it may not have the same level of importance all of the time. Kozloski (2010) studied General Social Survey (GSS) data from 1973 to 2006, focusing on how education impacts support for both moral acceptance of sexual relations between people of the same sex and tolerance for social policy areas. The author found that as the years of education increased, so did support for the following social policies: allowing gay men to teach in post-secondary educational institutions, allowing public speeches by sexual minorities, and opposition to library book-bans. However, Kozloski noted that as time has progressed, the gap in support between the most educated and the least educated is becoming smaller.

Undergraduate education. However, one must question whether such happenings exist between immediately subsequent education levels. For instance, an understanding of findings from Lambert, Ventura, Hall, and Cluse-Tolar’s (2006) work showed that when asked whether or not they would sign a petition to stop violent hate crimes against gays, 73% of students supported such action to some degree; however, nuances were reported during this study; 63% of individuals in the lower educational levels (freshmen and sophomores) showed some extent of support for such action, while 86% of upper level students (juniors and seniors) supported such action. A similar type of trend existed for whether or not gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to marry; 36% of lower level students reported some kind of support, whereas 52% of upper level students reported support for the policy. This phenomenon can be more explored as a
means to look at how socialization (the lifelong learning process that shapes individuals’ views) via the undergraduate university system intersects with age and other factors in determining support for social policies focusing on gay rights.

Another study that allows for a look at differences in support and opposition regarding class standing is Ender et al.’s (2012) investigation of opinions for banning lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals from serving in the armed forces. Specifically, the authors reported cross-tabulations revealing percentage differences among various class standings (freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior) for military academy cadets; for instance about 56% of Freshman and about 65% of sophomores agreed with barring openly gay military members, while 52% of Juniors and 49% of Seniors supported such action. Woodford et al. (2013) intriguingly compared graduate students and undergraduate students to assess how the full college experience affected opinion; being a graduate student positively predicted support for same-sex marriage, civil unions, and employment protections. This trend embodies the effect of having gone through the process that is the undergraduate experience. Swank and Raiz (2010a) found a negative relationship between class standing and negative attitudes, meaning that attitudes became friendlier as class standing increases.

The aforementioned raises the question of what distinguishes undergraduates from other parts of the general population. In order to understand this, one must first view what the undergraduate experience entails. The entrance of young people into the undergraduate university system marks a very important time in their lives because it functions as a period of transition for young people: a transition between the experience of adolescence and the expectations that accompany adulthood. For instance, students learn new skills that enhance their
ability to perform economically, as well as organizational and personal skills: “entering college requires youths to face multiple transitions, including changes in their living arrangements, academic environments, and friendship networks, while adapting to greater independence and responsibility in their personal and academic lives” (Pittman and Richmond, 2008, p.344).

Critical thinking skills are improved via undergraduate education. A meta-analytic study of data between 1991 and 2000 showed that increased involvement in campus organizations, employment, and other aspects of college life increased student propensity to think critically and problem solve (Gellin, 2003).

Of course, another part of the undergraduate experience is harnessing what is learned within the classroom setting and applying it to the real world setting in the workplace. Social science students may use what they learn in their courses as a prerequisite training for employment in social services, political campaigns, government agencies, and academia. Engineering students may use their information learned about derivatives and other topics regarding technology to be able to earn opportunities in various fields such as aerospace and architecture. In essence, undergraduate education equips one with the cognitive tools to attain and perform well in gainful employment, as noted by the fact that college education is associated with an increase in employment opportunities, as well as an increase in income (Smart, 1988).

The building of social support networks and relationships is another lesson reaped from the undergraduate experience. For instance, students may be exposed to, as well as engage in, interpersonal situations in which friendships are established (Hays, 1984; Hays, 1985), which leads to the satisfaction of a need to belong, resulting in desirable outcomes such as self-perceived happiness (Demir and Özdemir, 2010). Intimate and romantic relationships are also
included in the development of social networks, which further satisfies social needs and contributes to positive adult development in mental health (Braithwaite, Delevi, and Fincham, 2010).

Other, more superficial relationships may be another necessity involved in college life. For instance, students may find it necessary to form study groups with their peers for courses, using social interaction within the academic setting to enhance positive educational outcomes, as shown in a study by Springer, Stanne, and Donovan (1999) regarding STEM programs. Learning to work well with others and collaborate in a constructive manner, as shown within an analysis by Jensen, Mattheis, and Johnson (2012) concerning a semester-long group video within a hard-science discipline, becomes a cornerstone of this phenomenon. Meeting new people who may serve as connections to employment and scholarly opportunities such as campus jobs and research experience becomes an integral part of networking with other undergraduates, faculty, and staff. From the aforementioned, we find that undergraduate students have the potential to interact with large numbers of people (encompassing a plethora of varying statuses) within their four-year journey to degree achievement.

**Diversity in undergraduate education.** Within the transition of the university system, there is a particularly important experience that accompanies exposure to other students and faculty: diversity. There are certain dimensions of diversity in which students may come into contact as they explore the collegiate environment. These dimensions are embodied in certain demographic categories that researchers use to explore differences (as well as similarities) among groups, such as age, sex, and race/ethnicity (Harrison, Price, and Bell, 1998). Other dimensions may include educational levels, dialect, and socioeconomic status. This idea of
diversity is significant because undergraduates can expect to meet a variety of people with differing viewpoints and demographic backgrounds: “experiences with interactional diversity have positive effects for virtually all students in all types of postsecondary institutions with a wide range of desirable outcomes” and “prepare students from different backgrounds to live and work in a diverse society” (Shouping and Kuh, 2003, p.331). Students learn to work with and understand those around them. For instance, such interaction can help break-down popular stereotypes and promote understanding of certain demographics, as Allport (1954) has shown. This phenomenon has been true for race, as seen in Chang’s (2001) work regarding diversity courses and smaller levels of prejudice toward certain races. Similar phenomena were also reported in research regarding survey data from 250 students at a university in Ohio (Hogan and Mallot, 2005), as well as in other works (Chang, 2002; Denson and Chang, 2009). But, is this idea between students and diversity only limited to race? No, sexual orientation, which the scope of this research includes, has functioned as another “dimensio[n] of diversity” (Liang and Alimo, 2005, p.237) that undergraduate students may encounter.

Even though research regarding public opinion on gay rights policies exists, more is needed in order to fill a persistent gap in the literature specifically regarding undergraduate students’ opinions on such social policies. More research regarding undergraduate student opinions on such policies are needed even more now than ever because of increased awareness of LGBTQ in recent years: a connection to sexual orientation’s function as a dimension of diversity. We may view this reality by looking at three patterns: campus climate, coming out, organizations on campus, and diversity courses that include LGBTQ content.
Campus climate. Campus climate refers to how hostile or friendly a university is toward certain groups. This manifests itself in a dichotomous continuum; colder climates represent a more hostile environment for a certain group in the university context. Warmer campus climates are indicative of a more welcoming and friendly environment that is less hostile to certain groups. Climates may be measured in a multitude of ways by comprehensively assessing sexual prejudice, gender prejudice, how the institution includes sexual and gender minorities, how well professors include sexual and gender minority content into course curricula, violence against sexual and gender minorities, and extracurricular activities and organizations (Yost and Gilmore, 2011).

Traditionally, campus climates for sexual and gender minorities have been cold, representing a harsh environment that excludes. Waldo (1998), in a study assessing campus climate toward LGB at a large university in the Midwest, reported that sexual minority undergraduates (LGB) perceived the campus climate to be more hostile, as opposed to sexual majority undergraduates, who perceived the campus climate embodied more acceptance and respect. In D’Augelli’s (1992) scholarly work regarding a college-level sample of 121 sexual minority students, there was reporting of verbal insults, threats of violence, and even stalking on campus, representative of a harsh campus climate.

However, more recent research has shown that campus climates for sexual and gender minorities have been steadily warming up, entailing more welcoming and friendly environments. Yost and Gilmore (2011) explored campus climate in a sample of 274 employees and 562 college students at a relatively small university in the Northeast. The results of the study find that the campus climate was relatively warmer, “supportive” (p.1351), and “more welcoming”
(p.1351), toward sexual and gender minorities on campus. Yost and Gilmore reported that the university implemented changes as a means to create a more welcoming environment for sexual and gender minority undergraduate students. Tetreault, Fette, Meidlinger, and Hope (2013) focused solely on how sexual and gender minorities (LGBT) perceive campus climate. Their work found that, overall, sexual and gender minority students perceived the campus to be supportive, as indicated by a mean of 2.57 out of four. Most sexual and gender minorities within the study reported never having been treated unfairly by instructors, students, and staff. Similar findings regarding a more positive climate were reported by Henry, Fowler, and West (2011), inclusive of climate regarding sexual and gender minorities, as well as other minority groups.

**Coming out.** Coming out is an important step for sexual minorities, specifically in their development. Thus, coming out may also increase awareness of sexual minorities. For instance, in contemporary times, the university setting functions as “the place” in which LGBTQ students make their sexual orientation public by means of “‘com[ing] out’” (Yost and Gilmore, 2011, p.1331). This makes other undergraduate students more likely to have conscious contact with the LGBTQ population, as opposed to if LGBTQ persons stayed in the closet. Waldo (1998) found that even though campus climate was more hostile, the more time a sexual minority student spends at the university was accompanied by an increased propensity to come out and be open about their sexual orientation. But, in order to understand this further, we must understand the established definitional construct of coming out.

According to Coleman (1982), there are a series of stages that sexual minorities engage in both at the subconscious and conscious levels when coming out:
• Pre-coming out embodies the initial, developmental awareness of those feelings and attractions of an individual's sexual orientation and identity; another part of pre-coming out is the role played by social norms; within the socially stigmatized status of sexual minority orientations, individuals generally attempt to "reject, dismiss, or repress" their identity" (p.471); however, they often contemplate disclosure of their sexual orientation.

• Coming out represents a stage in the process that includes several sub-processes. Chronological parts of this stage, according to Coleman, are as follows: a) coming to terms with one's own sexuality, b) disclosure to whom they instill trust, c) the internalization of positive and negative responses based on such disclosure, and finally d) the "[discovery] that the worth of their being or relationships has nothing to do with their sexual identity" (p.475).

• Exploration embodies the period of time in which sexual minority person's reach out to and get to know others who are like themselves. In addition, this stage includes the exploration into one's own sexuality.

• First relationships, according to Coleman, functions as the fourth stage. Sexual minorities generally engage in their first intimate partner relationships, as well as the accompanied struggles and experiences.

• The fifth stage is conceptualized as integration, which embodies more resilient forms of intimate and personal connections with others, specifically romantic relationships.

As we have seen within the literature, coming out can be a precursor to increased contact, which generally involves increased tolerance/acceptance. Due to social stigma that treats sexual and gender minorities as the other, such individuals are more apt to come out to those who they
believe are more understanding, accepting, and/or celebratory of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

Coming out reinforces the role that contact with sexual minorities has on perceptions of the community, as well as their rights. As previously shown in this research, contact with sexual minorities generally has positive implications on attitudes toward such minorities (Hodson, Harry, and Mitchell, 2009; Liang and Alimo, 2005), as well as policy positions (Barth and Perry, 2009a; Becker, 2012; Lewis, 2011). Knowing that individuals are accepting and pro-gay has the possibility to create an environment in which sexual minorities may experience more comfort with making their sexual orientation known to their friends, family members, acquaintances, and other forms of relationship (Raiz, 2006). When sexual minority persons make their sexual orientation known to the public, an increase in the likelihood of conscious contact between sexual majority and minority groups occurs, which then again may lead to more positive attitudes and increased support for rights.

Organizations on campus. Another aspect of increased awareness is the enhanced prevalence of “the formation of…LGBTQ organizations on college campuses” (Yost and Gilmore, 2011, p.1331). In addition, the role of other institutional supports (Allport, 1954) may be important as well because such organizations provide a safe place for sexual and gender minority students to interact and discuss issues relevant to the community. This also constitutes seemingly non-LGBTQ groups that may still be welcoming to such groups, such as theatre. Thus, such organizations may foster a safer environment overall.

We may turn to Yost and Gilmore (2011) for empirical support. In analyzing campus climates, the authors used the extent to which students are involved in extra-curricular activity
(on campus) as an independent variable. Results from a bivariate correlation analysis revealed that a decrease in student co-curricular involvement among LGBTQ (in student organizations and clubs) is accompanied by an increase in the belief that services at the university are denied to LGBTQ, as per a Pearson’s r of -.23. A qualitative analysis by McKinney (2005) looked at transgender students’ perceptions of their campus experience; the author posits that resources that affirm the rights and identities of transgender students on campus function to help this community “feel welcomed on campus” (p.73). An analysis of survey data revealed themes among the students in regards to institutional and organizational supports on campus. Specifically, one of the themes for the students was the perceived “lack of programming” that addresses the needs of transgender students (p.68).

Another way to assess the role of organizations and institutional supports for sexual and gender minorities is to assess their connection to risky behavior such as substance abuse. Eisenberg and Wechsler (2003) studied this connection with an overall LGB student resource variable, comprised of the number of student organizations, the frequency of meetings, LGB-friendly campus housing and others. This variable, as per the study’s analysis, was associated with a decrease in smoking behaviors among individuals who identify as lesbian. Thus, the role that institutional supports, such as gay-straight alliances and diversity programming, have in the well-being of sexual and gender minorities on campus is important for the reason that they “would be welcoming to, and respectful of, all students” and offer “safe space[s] for facilitating LGBTQ and ally interactions outside the classroom” (Manning, Pring, and Glider, 2012, p.497)

**Diversity courses.** Diversity courses affect attitudes and policy preferences regarding sexual and gender minorities. Exposure to a curriculum featuring topics relating to minority
groups allows majority group students to understand difficulties that such minority groups may face. For instance, students may learn the impact that violence has on the sexual and gender minority community. They may also learn about the dynamics of intimate relationships within the community as well. From the aforementioned, majority group students may gain knowledge that can debunk myths and stereotypes, allowing for more positive evaluations of this specific out-group. Thus, more positive evaluations may also be accompanied by support for policies that affirm the rights of the group.

First, we must look at diversity course content in relation to attitudes. Finken (2002) found this to be true by measuring sexual prejudice differences between a human sexuality course and a course that does not regard information on sexual minorities. Women within the human sexuality course featured a mean score on a homophobia scale (increasing values indicate more prejudice) of 47.06 at the beginning of the course, with a mean of 38.18 at the end; in the course without sexuality course content, women indicated a means score of 48.19 at the beginning, and 49.16 at the end. But, attitudes only explain one part of the utility of diversity courses.

Woodford et al. (2013) studied prediction for a civil rights scale for LGBT persons. Within their study, 36% took a course that featured content regarding LGBT. In one of the authors’ models, the engagement in a course that features subject matter regarding LGBT positively (but weakly) predicted increased support for the civil rights variables (civil unions, employment protections, and marriage). Woodford, Silvershanz, Swank, Scherrer, and Raiz (2012) found a positive relationship as well; however, the effect size was very small and statistically insignificant.
Looking at studies that offer the focus of a particular policy area may allow for a better explanation. One study featured the administration of a survey to 143 undergraduates as a means to understand how attendance in a course with diversity content affects positions toward same-sex marriage (Case and Stewart, 2010b); completion of the course showed increased support for same-sex marriage by the end of the course, as indicated by pre- and post-survey data. Case and Stewart (2010a) found similar results when harnessing the use of a comparison course without topics regarding sexuality.

**Florida**

For this research, an understanding of how Florida has implemented social policies may assist in providing context for examining public opinion for certain areas within this state. To accomplish this task, we may turn to the Human Rights Campaign website (http://www.hrc.org/), which provides maps that detail the status of states in implementing gay rights policies. In regards to sexual and gender minorities, Florida has no laws extending hospital visitation rights ("Hospital Visitation Laws," 2013), no laws prohibiting discrimination in terms of housing ("Statewide Housing Laws," 2013), no laws prohibiting employment discrimination ("Statewide Employment Laws," 2013), a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage ("Statewide Marriage Prohibitions," 2013). In addition to the aforementioned, Florida does offer hate-crime protections for sexual orientation ("State Hate Crimes Laws," 2013). Concerning adoption, Florida trial courts are bound by a 2010 court case that deemed unconstitutional the prohibition of adoption for non-heterosexual persons ("Parenting Laws," 2013).
Orlando

The City of Orlando is located in the central portion of Florida. Knowing a recent policy implementation by this city is important for providing political context for this research. In December of 2011, the Orlando City Council took a vote on whether or not to allow the creation of a domestic partnership registry that would provide a legal recognition of same-sex relationships at the city-level (Schlueb, 2011). A unanimous vote by the council approved the creation of the registry. Whereas the registry does not confer nearly the same amount of rights that marriage does, some afforded benefits include a stake in health care decisions of a domestic partner, visitation rights at healthcare facilities, visitation at correctional facilities, notifications to domestic partners in the case of emergencies, and others (“What are Domestic Partners?,” 2012).

University of Central Florida

The University of Central Florida (UCF) is positioned in Orange County, FL, located near the City of Orlando. Knowing sexual and gender minority-specific information about this academic institution will provide further background for the scope of this study. First, we may evaluate the institutional supports offered to sexual and gender minorities. For instance, the university possesses a campus organization known as LGBTQ Services (“LGBTQ Services,” 2013), as well as an allies program administered through the university’s counseling center, known as the UCF Safe Zone (“UCF Safe Zone,” 2013).

The political context in which the University of Central Florida is located is also worth noting as a means to hint how public opinion trends. Regarding elections for the Florida House of Representatives, UCF is located in District 49 (“District 49,” 2012), a relatively small district
in terms of geography compared to others in Florida. In November 2012, an election for the
district’s seat for the state’s lower house in the legislature occurred (Project Vote Smart, 2012).
The outcome of the election was the advancing of one of Florida’s first openly-gay state
legislators to the Florida House of Representatives, according to some sources (“Gay

**Research Question**

In accordance with the aforementioned review of the literature, this study seeks to answer
the following research question. Which explanatory variables are most correlated with support
for social policies and rights regarding sexual and gender minorities? Specifically, this research
hopes to understand this question in the context of the opinions of undergraduate students at
UCF. The next section will introduce the methodology for this research.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This section highlights the methodology of this research. First, an understanding of methodologies used in previous literature is used to help identify where this research fits in to public opinion research overall; this is done by viewing literature about analytical methods, survey format, and scale development. Next, this research includes a discussion of data collection and survey construction and coding. Then, a factor analysis is performed to create sub-scales for prospective analysis. Finally, an analytical plan is developed to describe how this research will answer the research question, including a plan to engage in both bivariate and multivariate analyses. Equations for the multivariate analyses are included.

Methodology within the Literature

Analytical methods. In order to show where, more specifically, the present study fits into the field social policy opinion research focusing on gay rights, there must exist an understanding of the methods that exist within the literature. Methods within this topic engage multiple approaches. Some have engaged in secondary analyses of previously collected data from other organizations and/or researchers: “answering new questions with old data” (Glass, 1976, p.3). For instance, Gaines and Garand (2010) harnessed data previously collected from the American National Election Studies Survey in 2004, while also using United States Census data. Another example of secondary analysis within research regarding gay rights policy is Lewis’s (2009) work, in which the researcher harnessed the use of previously collected data from two dozen national surveys as a means to assess the connection between Attribution Theory and gay rights support. Schwartz (2010) engaged in secondary analysis as well.
Other researchers use previous works as a means to develop new scales and survey instruments for future studies to harness. Ellis, Kitzinger, and Wilkinson (2003) used a multitude of “scales, tests, questionnaires, and interview schedules” from previous literature as a means to construct a 25-question survey instrument known as the Support for Lesbian and Gay Human Rights (SLGHR) scale (p.125), which features a multitude of attitudinal and policy-related questions regarding sexual minorities. Another example of this type of methodology was employed by Brown and Henriquez (2011), in which the authors consulted an advocacy group and as well as “previously established scales” within the literature to construct the Support for Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights (SGLCR) scale (p.465), a 20-item survey questionnaire used to gauge multiple gay rights policy areas.

Another aspect of social policy opinion research is primary analysis. This concerns the administration of survey scales (such as the scales previously mentioned) to new samples of individuals. After survey administration, the data are analyzed to arrive at the answer to a research question: “the original analysis of data in [the] research study” (Glass, 1976, p.3). Within the literature, this method has been used to understand policy positions of undergraduate students. For instance, Morrison, Speakman, and Ryan (2009) administered the previously developed SLGHR to a sample of 353 individuals at a university in Ireland. Brown and Henriquez (2011) also administered their SGLCR scale to samples of undergraduate students when constructing their scale, analyzing the data accordingly. Works such as the aforementioned studies at universities serve the purpose of understanding if, and to what extent, undergraduate student populations support such social policies.
Survey format. Within the methodology of administering surveys to samples of certain populations, different survey formats may be used. For instance, some researchers use data from face-to-face interviews. This method was featured in a study by Wood and Bartowski (2004) that viewed the connection between Attribution Theory and gay rights, in which data from a random sample were analyzed. The administration of hard-copy surveys are another format that is used within the research. This is done in a couple of ways: administration via mail and in-person administration. For instance, in their analysis of attitudes towards LGBs among undergraduates, Hinrichs and Rosenberg (2002) analyzed data from a survey that was administered via mail. In-person survey administration at the undergraduate level generally occurs when a researcher physically administers the surveys to potential respondents within a face-to-face classroom setting, collecting the surveys after their completion. A study gauging undergraduate opinions on gay rights within a sample of 364 students used in-person survey administration (Lambert et al., 2006), as well as in a study by Swank and Raiz (2010).

Online surveys are another survey format used to understand social policy opinions. They represent a relatively new phenomenon in academic research and have increasingly become popular with the proliferation of internet usage. The main reason one would use online surveys is the impact on socially desirable responding, in which students may not report their true perceptions of a topic because of the fear that their views will not coincide with the dominant views of other respondents. For the respondent, online surveys tend to contribute a greater sense of anonymity, as opposed to the presence of an interviewer or other individuals (Duffey, Smith, Terhanian, and Bremer, 2005). Gravlee, Bernard, Maxwell, and Jacobsohn (2013) conducted a survey with a sample of 319 respondents as a means to compare the effects of three methods of
survey administration: face-to-face interviews, online surveys, and hard-copy questionnaires. The authors iterated that "web-based [administration] may be less susceptible to social desirability effects" (p.128), as opposed to other modes of survey administration.

Of course, one must examine the context in which a survey is administered, specifically its subject matter. Some subjects may lead to more social desirable answers than others depending on the sensitivity of the subject. Some researchers have looked at social desirability in the political realm by looking at voter participation (Persson and Solevid, 2013), in which individuals may report that they voted in a previous election cycle, even though they really did not. Topics relating to sexuality may also be prone to social desirability because of their sensitive nature, according to Tourangeau and Yan (2007). Maybe the interaction of the two aforementioned topics (politics and sexuality) may embody social desirability pressures in terms of gay rights policy. Woodford, Luke, Grogan-Kaylor, Fredriksen-Goldsen, and Gutierrez (2012) used a web-based survey as a means to gauge opinions toward same-sex marriage among graduate faculty within the United States and Canada; the authors showed that with their method of survey research, they attempted to decrease socially desirable answers by "ensuring respondent anonymity" (p.309). Online surveys were administered in Study 2 of an analysis by Brown and Henriquez (2011), as well as in a study by Woodford, Atteberry, Derr, and Howell (2013).

**Scale development.** When a survey has multiple dependent variables (issue areas) of interest, some scholars opt to create sub-scales to more comprehensively and concisely analyze the data. This is done by finding commonalities among variables (such as topic themes or support trends); then, such variables are combined together in accordance with such
commonalities. For instance, Craig, Martinez, and Kane (2005) used ten dependent variables measuring gay rights support in their study focusing on ambivalence. Using factor analysis with varimax rotation, the authors reported factor loadings for all of the dependent variables, along with Eigen values and explanations of the variance for each factor (dimension) created. The authors created two scales from the analysis, one composed of variables that deal with adult employment roles, and another composed of variables that deal with family issues; a confirmatory reporting of Cronbach’s $\alpha$ coefficients for both scales was also included to gauge their reliabilities. Ellis, Kitzinger, and Wilkinson (2003) also created factors within their work. Their work featured 25 dependent variables of interest from the SLGHR. They were able to generate three factors from their data; one focusing on “social and political rights,” another focusing on “freedom of expression,” and another focusing on “privacy of identity” (p.126).

**Data Collection**

Since this study attempts to understand social policy opinion, a survey was designed as a means to reach is goal. This section details the steps taken in this process, showing relevant steps in the process such as institutional review board (IRB) approval, participant recruitment, survey administration, response rates, and the demographic composition of the survey.

**Institutional review board approval.** A protocol and consent process for the present study was submitted to the university’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) on March 1, 2013, after approval from the principal investigator and department chair of the university’s political science department; the protocol was reviewed for exempt determination by the IRB. This study was given final approval by the IRB on March 12, 2013, “as human participant research that is exempt from regulation” (see “Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Protocol”).
Participant recruitment and survey administration. As per this study’s IRB protocol, professors were contacted via email for permission to administer surveys within their courses. If they agreed to participate, professors were given two options for survey administration: online surveys and hard-copy surveys. If professors agreed to have the online survey administered within their course(s), a link was provided in the initial contact email for the professors to copy and paste into their preferred method of electronic contact with students. If professors agreed to have the paper survey administered within their courses, a mutually agreeable time was set up for survey administration to occur. For courses in which hard-copy surveys were administered, the co-investigator read aloud the nature of the study to potential participants; surveys were then distributed to the students; the co-investigator then collected the surveys. Participation in the survey was voluntary and anonymous, which means that the researcher did not have access to the names of the participants, nor were the participants asked to disclose such identifying information. The target population of this research was UCF undergraduates who attained the age of 18 and older.

Sample and response rates. An online survey was created using a popular web-based software known as Qualtrics. A link to the online survey was activated on April 3, 2013. The online survey was administered to a total of ten courses in which professors agreed to advertise the link either via an online course component, or via email. The link to the online survey was deactivated at 11:59 p.m. on April 31, 2013, the last day of the Spring 2013 semester. Hard-copy surveys were administered to three social science courses as well.

The online version of the survey was made available to a total of 950 students; 84 online surveys were completed and are usable for analysis. The response rate for online surveys was
9%. The hard-copy survey was administered to a total of 128 students; 126 surveys were completed and are usable for analysis. The response rate for hard-copy surveys was 98%. Taking into account both online and paper surveys, the survey was made available to sample of 1,078 students across a total of 13 courses; 210 surveys were successfully completed and are usable for the purposes of analysis, resulting in an overall response rate of approximately 19%. More information detailing the course numbers, course titles, the specific numbers of students within each course, as well as other survey administration information can be found in this research’s “Appendix C: Response Rates Information.”

**Demographic composition of the study sample.** This section notes the demographic composition of the sample used in this research; all descriptive statistics are calculated based on the number of respondents who completed such items in the survey. Ages for the sample ranged between 18 and 56 years, with a mean age of 21.63. The sample was predominantly white or Caucasian (61.3%) in terms of racial/ethnic background; 8.8% identified as Black or African American; 16.7% were Hispanic/Latino(a); 5.4% were Asian; 6.4% identified as Two or More Races; Extremely small percentages identified as either American Indian and Alaska Native or Some Other Race.
Table 1 Demographics Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%*</th>
<th>Mean (Range)**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21.63 (18-56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White or Caucasian</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino(a)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Other Race</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-binary Transmasculine</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual Orientation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pansexual</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyneromantic/Demisexual</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identification as Queer and/or Questioning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class Standing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Bac</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partisan Identification</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.66 (1-7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Democrat</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak Democrat</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lean Democrat</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lean Republican</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak Republican</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Republican</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political Ideology</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.70 (1-7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Liberal</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Liberal</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Conservative</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Conservative</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Percentages are valid percentages.

** If applicable.
Because LGBTQ persons are the focal point of this research, it is important to address gender and sexual orientation. The sample was predominantly female (65.7%), with males making up 32.4%. Even though they make up a very small portion of this sample, the presence of non-binary genders are worthy of noting within the context of this research. One student identified as transgender, while another identified as “Non-binary transmasculine,” harnessing the other response option. Whereas most of the sample identified as heterosexual (89%), sexual minorities made up about ten percent; 3.3% identified as gay; 1.9% identified as lesbian; 4.8% identified as bisexual; one individual identified as “gyneromantic/demisexual,” while another identified as “pansexual.” In regards to other parts of the LGBTQ community, 1.5% identified as queer, while 2.1% identified as questioning.

Regarding class standing, the plurality of the sample identified as senior (29.7%); 20.6% identified as junior; 23.4% identified as sophomore; and, 25.4% identified as freshman; a very small portion of the survey identified as post-baccalaureate. Politically, the central tendency of ideology for the sample was more liberal, with a mean of 4.70 (on a 1 to 7 scale); regarding partisan identification, the sample was more democratic, with a mean of 4.66 (on a 1 to 7 scale).

**Study Variables**

The survey harnessed for this study is composed of a total of 55 items. The questions are created based on information from previous literature within the field of opinion research, and include information on policy areas pertaining to sexual and gender minorities, theoretical content, and demography. The dependent variable is measured with the Support for Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights (SGLCR) scale (Brown and Henriquez, 2011), which will be put to a factor analysis later in this chapter; other variables not included within SGLCR, but included in this
analysis, are two variables that gauge support for civil unions and domestic partnerships.

Selected independent variables (based on previous research) used for this analysis are as follows: the Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men (ATLG) scale (Herek, 1995), attributions that attempt to explain the existence of homosexuality, contact, Para-social contact, course curricula, women’s rights, African American civil rights, age, gender, partisan identification, ideology, religious affiliation, religious attendance, region of origin, race, class standing, and survey format. More detailed information regarding the coding of study variables, construction of the survey, and sources consulted for specific questions can be found in this research’s “Appendix D: Detailed Survey Information and Coding.”

**Preliminary Scale Development for Dependent Variables**

Since many dependent variables were included within the survey, this research uses sub-scale development as a means to reduce the number of variables used in the analysis; this offers the most comprehensive and concise means of analyzing the data, giving the overall answer to the research question. First, commonalities were assessed regarding the number of options available within each question. Twenty of the dependent variables contain five options; however, two of the dependent variables are dichotomous in nature: civil union support/opposition and domestic partnership support/opposition. The two dichotomous were combined to create an original scale titled *Alternative Relationship Recognitions*. Separating these two items from the other 20 variables ensures consistency regarding response option structure.

For the remaining five-option variables, further dimension reduction was engaged by performing an exploratory factor analysis, which functions as an objective way to hint at other potential relationships among the variables. For direction on how to interpret findings, this
research used information reported by Craig, Martinez, Kane, and Gainous (2005) as a guide; Factors created in a study by Ellis, Kitzinger and Wilkinson (2003) are also consulted to gauge the conceptual nature of the analysis. All 20 five-option variables were entered into the analysis. Factor loadings from the rotated component matrix, Eigen values, and explanations of the variance are included within Table 2.

Table 2 Factor Analysis for SGLCR Sub-Scale Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hate-Crime Anti-discrimination</td>
<td>.599*</td>
<td>.252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same-sex Marriage</td>
<td>.677*</td>
<td>.484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal Immigration Rights</td>
<td>.676*</td>
<td>.369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Display of Affection</td>
<td>.461</td>
<td>.692*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Anti-Discrimination</td>
<td>.449*</td>
<td>-.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the Gay Rights Movement</td>
<td>.837*</td>
<td>.323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Service</td>
<td>.609*</td>
<td>.412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Anti-Discrimination</td>
<td>.606*</td>
<td>.551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Interference in Sex Lives</td>
<td>.249</td>
<td>.682*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defending Civil Rights of Gays and Lesbians</td>
<td>.748*</td>
<td>.351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption**</td>
<td>.630*</td>
<td>.587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legality of Homosexuality**</td>
<td>.342</td>
<td>.729*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Demonstration**</td>
<td>.526*</td>
<td>.467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Censorship of Gay Media Content**</td>
<td>.170</td>
<td>.831*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay and Lesbian Teachers**</td>
<td>.527</td>
<td>.591*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Bans**</td>
<td>.436</td>
<td>.764*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morality of the Gay Rights Movement**</td>
<td>.610*</td>
<td>.514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Lifestyles**</td>
<td>.584*</td>
<td>.282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of Consent**</td>
<td>.131</td>
<td>.694*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidizing Gay and Lesbian Organizations**</td>
<td>.727*</td>
<td>.304</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Initial Eigen Value                      12.019  1.261
Explaination of the variance: extraction sums of squared loadings (%)  54.63%  5.73%
Explaination of the variance: rotation sums of squared loadings (%)  31.89%  28.576%

This table reports the rotated component matrix (varimax) factor loadings of the factor analysis.

* Variable has stronger correlation with this particular factor than the other factor.

** Variable is reverse-coded to indicate greater support for sexual and gender minorities.
The analysis generated two separate factors. Explanations of the variance for extraction sums of squares loadings indicate that Factor 1 explains 54.63% of the variance, while Factor 2 explains 5.73%. Explanations of the variance for rotation sums of squared loadings indicate that Factor 1 explains about 32% of the variance, while Factor 2 explains about 29% of the variance. After looking through the correlations between each variable and the factors, patterns resulting from the analysis were discovered by viewing which variables were more correlated with a particular factor, as opposed to the other factor. Factors created from previous research were also consulted to make sense of the analysis and such patterns.

Factor 1 encompassed the following variables: hate crime protections, same-sex marriage, equal immigration rights housing anti-discrimination, the importance of the gay rights movement, open military service, employment ant-discrimination, defending civil rights, adoption, public demonstration, the morality of the gay rights movement, and giving rights to other alternative lifestyles, and subsidizing organizations that promote gay rights. Overall, the variables most correlated with Factor 1 reflects rights that have not been widely attained by the gay rights movement within the United States. Thus, the sub-scale extracted from this particular factor is titled *Socio-Political and Economic Goals*.

Factor 2 included the following variables: public display of affection, no government interference in private sex lives, the legality of homosexuality, governmental censorship of printed media, allowing gays and lesbians to teach, book bans, and age of consent. Overall, it seemed that the variables most correlated with Factor 2 seemed reflects rights that have been obtained on a larger scale and basic freedoms from government. Thus, this particular sub-scale extracted from the analysis is titled *Basic Freedoms*.  

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To further test the internal consistency of each scale, a reliability analysis is performed by reporting Cronbach’s α coefficient of each scale. Testing of the reliability are based on alphas that are greater than .70, which has been identified within the literature as an acceptable level of internal consistency for scales (Bernardi, 1994; Cortina, 1993), showing whether or not they can be used within the analysis. The first scale, *Alternative Relationship Recognitions*, revealed a Cronbach’s α of .911, meaning it is highly internally consistent. The second scale, *Socio-Political and Economic Goals*, was also found to be highly internally consistent (Cronbach’s α=.924). The analysis also showed the *Basic Freedoms* sub-scale as internally consistent, with a Cronbach’s α of .886.

**Analytical Plan**

**Descriptive statistics.** Taking into account the literature on social policies and rights pertaining to sexual and gender minorities, this research seeks to answer the following research question: Which explanatory variables are most correlated with support for social policies and rights pertaining to sexual and gender minorities? According to Schwartz (2010), “it is not clear which [variables]” offer the most powerful relationship to such social policies (p.752). First, the analysis starts with general means, frequencies, and percentages for all study variables used in the analysis.

**Bivariate analyses.** To answer the research question of this study, a series of correlation analyses were used to assess the initial relationships between the scales and independent variables. As per a study by Brown, Knopp, and Morrill (2005) examining the connections between various demographic factors gay rights, this step in the analysis will serve as a means “to get a flavor of what to expect and uncover any surprises” (p.277). Three separate correlation
analyses will be performed: one for each sub-scale. All independent variable of interest will be input into each analysis. Pearson’s correlation coefficients will be reported accordingly, along with a discussion of the most correlated variables within the analysis.

**Confirmatory multivariate analyses.** The next step in the analysis will be to run a series of multivariate analyses. This step in the process functions to “assess further the relative strength” of the independent variables on the dependent variables while controlling for other factors (Brown, Knopp, and Morrill, 2005, p.280), attempting to further uncover the explanatory variables that are most correlated to support for social policies and rights pertaining to sexual and gender minorities. Three ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models will be performed: one for each measure of the dependent variable. All independent variables will be placed into each analysis at once. The proposed equations for the analysis are as follows:

- **Alternative Relationship Recognitions** = B + ATLG Scale + Attribution + LGBTQ Friend + LGBTQ Family + Para-social Contact + Diversity Course Content + LGBTQ Course Content + Abortion + African American Civil Rights + Gender + Party I.D. + Ideology + Religion + Religious Attendance + Race + Region + Age + Class Standing + Survey Format

- **Socio-Political and Economic Goals** = B + ATLG Scale + Attribution + LGBTQ Friend + LGBTQ Family + Para-social Contact + Diversity Course Content + LGBTQ Course Content + Abortion + African American Civil Rights + Gender + Party I.D. + Ideology + Religion + Religious Attendance + Race + Region + Age + Class Standing + Survey Format
- *Basic Freedoms* = B + ATLQ Scale + Attribution + LGBTQ Friend + LGBTQ Family + Para-social Contact + Diversity Course Content + LGBTQ Course Content + Abortion + African American Civil Rights + Gender + Party I.D. + Ideology + Religion + Religious Attendance + Race + Region + Age + Class Standing + Survey Format

The following statistics will be reported within each model: unstandardized beta coefficients, standard errors, standardized beta coefficients, t-ratio, significance values (P-value), constants, and R-squares. A thorough discussion of findings will be included accordingly.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter explains, in-depth, the analytical findings of this research. First, descriptive statistics are shown for the dependent variable(s) of interest: Alternative Relationship Recognitions, Socio-Political and Economic Goals, and Basic Freedoms. This part of the analysis including ranges, means, numbers of cases, and standard deviations. Second, descriptive statistics of the independent variables are included: valid percentages, ranges, means, and numbers of cases. A series of bivariate correlation analyses are reported as a means to show the initial relationships between the independent and dependent variables while not controlling for other factors. Next, multivariate ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models are reported as a means to further understand the nature of such relationships while controlling for other factors. A series of exploratory correlation analyses are completed to explore relationships among the independent variables to understand why some variables were (or were not) related to the dependent variable. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was the statistical analysis program of choice for this research.

Dependent Variables

Table 3 shows scale ranges, mean scores, and the number of respondents for the three scales within this research. Also reported are the standard deviations (SD) of each variable’s mean. Overall, respondents were very supportive of gay rights. The mean for the Alternative Relationship Recognitions variable is 3.82 (SD = .555) out of 4. The mean for the Socio-Political and Economic Goals variable was also quite high, with a mean of 56.06 (SD = 10.06) out of 65. The Basic Freedoms scale mean was 31.34 (SD = 4.61).
Table 3 Dependent Variable Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Scale Range</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>3.82</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-Political and Economic Goals</td>
<td>13-65</td>
<td>56.06</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Freedoms</td>
<td>7-35</td>
<td>31.34</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Independent Variables of Interest**

Table 4 focuses on the ranges, means, and valid percentages of the study variables of interest. The sample overall held favorable attitudes towards sexual and gender minorities. This is indicated by the ATLG scale (Cronbach’s α = .914), with a mean score of 11.54 (SD = 5.50) out of 30 (higher values on the ATLG scale indicate greater sexual prejudice (more negative attitudes)). About 67% of the respondents in the sample reported that homosexuality is a function of an individual’s biology, whereas 33% attribute homosexuality to upbringing or individual preference. A very high percentage of the respondents reported having an acquaintance or friend who is LGBTQ. Less than half have a family member who is LGBTQ. Almost all respondents reported knowing about LGBTQ persons in the media.

Other variables that indicate contextual factors include diversity course content and LGBTQ course content. Most of the sample reported enrollment in a course that discussed diversity as part of the course curriculum. A smaller percentage of respondents (but still quite high) reported enrollment in a course that discussed LGBTQ topics as part of the course curriculum.
Table 4 Descriptive Statistics for Independent Variables

<table>
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<th>Variable</th>
<th>%*</th>
<th>Mean*</th>
<th>Range*</th>
<th>N</th>
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<td>120</td>
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<td>Preference/Learned</td>
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<td>Non-male</td>
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<td>4.66</td>
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<td>Ideology****</td>
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<td>South</td>
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<td>Non-South</td>
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<td>white or Caucasian</td>
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<td>Other race category</td>
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<td>Class Standing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>209</td>
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<tr>
<td>junior/senior/post-bac</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Freshman/sophomore</td>
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<td></td>
<td>84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hard-copy</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*If applicable.

**Increasing values indicate increased support for abortion rights.

***Increasing values indicate increased identification with the Democratic Party or more liberal ideology.
Part of this research focuses on how opinions of other minority group rights interact with that of gay rights. One of these issues is whether or not women should have access to an abortion. Respondents were asked whether or not they think abortion should be legal or illegal (on a 4-point scale). Overall, the sample was pro-choice, with a mean of 2.92. However, respondents were not so ready to extend rights to the African American community. Most of the respondents indicated that new civil rights laws designed to protect African Americans from discrimination are not needed.

As mentioned in a previous chapter, the sample was predominately female, white or Caucasian, Democratic, and liberal. Additionally, respondents indicated lower levels of religious attendance. Most were religious. Most were born in a Southern State. The sample was almost evenly split between lower and upper class standing. Finally, there were more hard-copy survey respondents than online survey respondents.

**Bivariate Analyses**

Table 5 features a correlation analysis of the Alternative Relationship Recognitions variable. A number of significant associations were found for the Alternative Relationship Recognitions scale at the .01 level. The ATLG scale was strongly, negatively, and significantly correlated with this variable, indicative of a Pearson’s r of -.657 (p < .01). This means that as sexual prejudice increased, support for Alternative Relationship Recognitions for sexual and gender minorities decreased. There was a relationship between support for women’s rights and gay rights (r = .452, p < .01). Ideology was moderately correlated as well, indicating that as the identification to a liberal ideology increased, thus did support for Alternative Relationship Recognitions (r = .425, p < .01). Increased identification with the Democratic Party indicated
more support for the dependent variable ($r = .350$, $p < .01$). Religious attendance was a negative correlate ($r = -.346$, $p < .01$). Those who perceived homosexuality as a function of biology were more likely to show more support, with a Pearson’s $r$ of $.312$ ($p < .01$). Religious affiliation reflected a negative association ($r = -.216$, $p < .01$).

Table 5 Correlation Analysis of Alternative Relationship Recognition Sub-Scale and Study Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Pearson’s r</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATLG</td>
<td>-.657</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribution (1 = Born With)</td>
<td>.312</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend Contact (1 = Yes)</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Contact (1 = Yes)</td>
<td>-.015</td>
<td>.846</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Para-social Contact (1 = Yes)</td>
<td>.114</td>
<td>.136</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity Course (1 = Yes)</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>.588</td>
<td>170</td>
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<td>LGBTQ Course (1 = Yes)</td>
<td>-.019</td>
<td>.804</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortion</td>
<td>.453</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>173</td>
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<td>African American Civil Rights</td>
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<td>.295</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>.364</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (1 = Male)</td>
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<td>.876</td>
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</tr>
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<td>.350</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>.425</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion (1=religious)</td>
<td>-.216</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Attendance</td>
<td>-.346</td>
<td>.000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>.099</td>
<td>.227</td>
<td>151</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race (1=white)</td>
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<td>.249</td>
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<td>Class Standing (1= Upper-Class Standing)</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>.320</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Format</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>.417</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many of the variables did not significantly correlate to support for *Alternative Relationship Recognitions*. However, while statistically insignificant, understanding the strength and direction of the correlations may assist in understanding the potential effects of the independent variables. Para-social contact was the variable that was closest to statistical significance (without actually attaining it), with a weakly positive coefficient ($r = .114$, $p > .05$). Contact with LGBTQ friends and acquaintances followed with a weak, positive relationship that was insignificant ($r = .107$, $p > .05$). Other insignificantly positive relationships include diversity course content, support for African American civil rights, gender, region, race, class standing,
and survey format. Insignificant negative relationships were found for contact with LGBTQ family members, LGBTQ course content, and age.

The next series of correlation analyses included the *Socio-Political and Economic Goals* scale, which is the larger sub-scale generated from the factor analysis in a previous chapter. Once again, sexual prejudice was strongly correlated with the dependent variable. The relationship was very strong, with a Pearson’s r of -.836 at the .01 level. Ideology was also a relatively strong correlate of the sub-scale in the positive direction (r = .640, p < .01). Support for abortion rights for women featured a relatively strong, positive correlation (r = .535, p < .01). An increase in identification with the Democratic Party was accompanied by increased support for the dependent variable (r = .478, p < .01). The variables dealing with the religiosity of the sample revealed moderately relationships in the negative direction: religious attendance (r = -.434, p < .01) and religious affiliation (r = -.322, p < .01).

Some weaker, significant relationships were also found. Support for African American Civil Rights was positively correlated with more support for the *Socio-Political and Economic Goals* (r = .234, p < .01). Increased contact with LGBTQ friends and acquaintances revealed a positive association as well (r = .212, p < .01). Some insignificant associations are also worth noting. Para-social contact approached significance with a Pearson’s r of .148 (p > .05). Diversity course curricula offered a weakly positive relationship as well (r = .136, p > .05), also approaching significance. Other insignificant relationships in this correlation analysis are contact with LGBTQ family members, LGBTQ course content, age, gender, region, race, class standing, and survey format. The aforementioned information can be found within Table 6.
The Basic Freedoms sub-scale was the final dependent variable to be used for the correlation analysis, which is found within Table 7. Once again, sexual prejudice featured the strongest correlation \( r = -0.772, p < .001 \). Liberal ideology indicated a moderate correlation \( r = 0.448, p < .01 \). Support for abortion rights was positively correlated with a Pearson’s r of 0.444 \( p < .01 \). Religious attendance featured a significantly negative association \( r = -0.416, p < .01 \). Partisan held a weak-to-moderate correlation \( r = 0.356, p < .01 \). Religious affiliation was a significantly negative correlate \( r = -0.292, p < .01 \). Significantly positive relationships were found for biological attribution \( r = 0.299, p < .01 \) and contact with LGBTQ friends and acquaintances \( r = 0.222, p < .01 \).

A couple of variables within the correlation analysis were significant at the .05 level. First, enrollment in a course featuring topics related to diversity was associated with greater support for the Basic Freedoms sub-scale \( r = 0.150, p < .05 \). Class standing was also positively

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### Table 6 Correlation Analysis of Socio-Political and Economic Goals Sub-Scale and Study Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Pearson’s r</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATLG</td>
<td>-0.836</td>
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<td>157</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attribution</td>
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<td>.000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend Contact (1 = Yes)</td>
<td>0.212</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Contact (1 = Yes)</td>
<td>0.075</td>
<td>.355</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Para-social Contact (1 = Yes)</td>
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<td>.059</td>
<td>163</td>
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<td>Diversity Course (1 = Yes)</td>
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correlated, indicative of a Pearson’s r of .169 (p < .05). The Basic Freedoms sub-scale was the only dependent variable in which class standing indicated a significant correlation. LGBTQ family contact, Para-social contact, LGBTQ course content, support for African American Civil Rights, age, gender, region, race, and survey format were all insignificant in the analysis.

Table 7 Correlation Analysis of Basic Freedoms Sub-Scale and Study Variables

<table>
<thead>
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<td>.149</td>
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<td>.049</td>
<td>172</td>
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Multivariate Analyses

To further understand which explanatory variables are most correlated to support for gay rights, a series of ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions are performed. For this part of the analysis, three equations are completed for each measure of the dependent variable. This will show which variables are most correlated while controlling for other factors. All independent variables of interest are included within the models at once.

Model 1, found within Table 8, features an OLS regression for the Alternative Relationship Recognitions sub-scale, which was significant \[F (19, 48) = 4.17, p = 0.000\],
explaining approximately 62% of the variance. The only variable to attain statistical significance in the model was sexual prejudice. (β = -.440, p < .05). Attribution, while not significant, approached the .05 level more than most of the other variables, and was positively correlated (β = .180, p = .088). Surprisingly, age performed in a similar manner within the model; in relation to most variables within the model, it was closer to significance with a negative effect on the dependent variable (β = -.199, p = .081). This model explained approximately 62% of the variance.

Table 8 Model 1: Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression Model for Alternative Relationship Recognitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Std. Error</td>
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<td>-.440</td>
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<td>-.400</td>
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<td>Abortion</td>
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<td>.104</td>
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<td>.520</td>
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<td>.026</td>
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<td>.488</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>.183</td>
<td>.045</td>
<td>.364</td>
</tr>
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<td>Religious Attendance</td>
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<td>.041</td>
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<td>Region</td>
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<td>.143</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>.228</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>.139</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.278</td>
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<td>Class Standing (1 = Upper-Class Standing)</td>
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<td>.155</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>.700</td>
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<td>Survey Format</td>
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<td>.150</td>
<td>.105</td>
<td>.930</td>
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<td>Constant</td>
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<td>.896</td>
<td>4.085</td>
<td>.000</td>
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R-Square = .623  
Adjusted R-Square = .473  
N = 68

A regression analysis was also computed for the Socio-Political and Economic Goals sub-scale, which was also significant as whole [F (19, 47) = 12.70, p = 0.000]. Sexual prejudice
once again attained the top level of prediction (in the negative direction) and significance (β = -.558, p < .01). Political ideology was the next predictor, with a positive coefficient (β = .369, p < .05). Biological attribution towards homosexuality featured a beta coefficient of .170; though a weakly positive coefficient, it was significant at the .05 level. No other variable attained significance in the models. The model, found in Table 9, explained 83% of the variance.

Table 9 Model 2: Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression Model for Socio-Political and Economic Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
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<td>Attribution</td>
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<td>.170</td>
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<td>.200</td>
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<td>.054</td>
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<td>Abortion</td>
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<td>.320</td>
<td>.750</td>
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<td>.006</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>.933</td>
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<td>.483</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race</td>
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<td>-.020</td>
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<td>.771</td>
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R-Square = .837
Adjusted R-Square = .771
N = 67

The Basic Freedoms scale was also entered into a model as well (found within Table 10), along with all independent variables. Sexual prejudice was once again the strongest predictor (β = -.341, p < .05). Attribution positively predicted the Basic Freedoms scale (β=.249, p<.05). Age also indicated some prediction (β = -.229, p < .026). No other variables attained significance for
this model while controlling for other variables. This particular model explained approximately
68% of the variance [F (19, 50) = 5.60, p = 0.000].

Table 10 Model 3: Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression Model for Basic Freedoms

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<th>Variable</th>
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<td>-.926</td>
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<td>5.017</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

R-Square = .684
Adjusted R-Square = .564
N = 70

**Missing cases.** As can be seen within Model 1, Model 2, and Model 3, there were a
number of missing cases (both system-missing, no opinion/no answer, and unsure/refuse to
answer options). A full discussion of this occurrence will be explained in this research’s
limitations sections. Model 1 was calculated for 68 individuals; Model 2 was calculated for 67
individuals; Model 3 was calculated for 70 individuals. Thus, this research recompleted each
model; however, instead of excluding cases list-wise, Model 4 (*Alternative Relationship
Recognitions*), Model 5 (*Socio-Political and Economic Goals*), and Model 6 (*Basic Freedoms*)
were completed with a mean imputation technique, which “[replaces] missing data with the arithmetic mean of the variable” (Chiesi and Primi, 2010, p.14); specifically, this is done for the “available data” (Baraldi and Enders, 2010, p.11). The purpose of this step is to see if treating the missing cases in a different way other than list-wise deletion, as well as including all 210 respondents, would affect the meaningfulness of the results. The following equations were completed:

- **Alternative Relationship Recognitions** (Missing Cases Replaced with a Mean) = B + ATLG Scale + Attribution + LGBTQ Friend + LGBTQ Family + Para-social Contact + Diversity Course Content + LGBTQ Course Content + Abortion + African American Civil Rights + Gender + Party I.D. + Ideology + Religion + Religious Attendance + Race + Region + Age + Class Standing + Survey Format

- **Socio-Political and Economic Goals** (Missing Cases Replaced with a Mean) = B + ATLG Scale + Attribution + LGBTQ Friend + LGBTQ Family + Para-social Contact + Diversity Course Content + LGBTQ Course Content + Abortion + African American Civil Rights + Gender + Party I.D. + Ideology + Religion + Religious Attendance + Race + Region + Age + Class Standing + Survey Format

- **Basic Freedoms** (Missing Cases Replaced with a Mean) = B + ATLG Scale + Attribution + LGBTQ Friend + LGBTQ Family + Para-social Contact + Diversity Course Content + LGBTQ Course Content + Abortion + African American Civil Rights + Gender + Party I.D. + Ideology + Religion + Religious Attendance + Race + Region + Age + Class Standing + Survey Format
Overall, there were no meaningful changes that occurred after running the models with the mean imputation. Model 4 regressed the *Alternative Relationship Recognitions* sub-scale with missing cases replaced with a mean, which explained 41% of the variance \[F (19, 190) = 6.95, p = 0.000\]. The only two explanatory variables to attain significance were sexual prejudice and attributions. Sexual prejudice explained support for *Alternative Relationship Recognitions* in the negative direction, reflecting a beta coefficient of \(-0.480\) (\(p < 0.01\)). Attributions which suggest that homosexuality is genetic explained the dependent variable in the positive direction (\(\beta = 0.150\), \(p < 0.01\)). Survey format was the closest to significance without actually attaining it (\(\beta = 0.106\), \(p > 0.05\)).

Model 5 regressed the *Socio-Political and Economic Goals* sub-scale with mean imputation, which explained approximately 66% of the variance \[F (19, 190) = 19.38, p = 0.000\]. Sexual prejudice was once again embodied the highest explanatory power, specifically in the negative direction (\(\beta = -0.607\), \(p < 0.01\)). Ideology also attained significance while controlling for other factors, with an effect size of \(0.224\) (\(p < 0.01\)).

Model 6 regressed the *Basic Freedoms* sub-scale with mean imputation, which explained approximately 57% of the variance \(F (19, 190) = 13.34, p = 0.000\). When controlling for other factors, sexual prejudice was the most explanatory in the negative direction (\(\beta = -0.604\), \(p < 0.01\)). Class standing offered a very weak explanation at the .05 level (\(\beta = -0.142\)). Age offered a relatively weak prediction at the .05 level as well (\(\beta = -0.128\)). Support for African American civil rights correlated negatively, approaching significance (\(\beta = -0.103\), \(p > 0.05\)).
Further Exploration of the Data

In consulting previous research to formulate their exploratory analyses regarding gay rights opinions, Morrison, Speakman, Ryan (2009) provide the following suggestion: “data should be explored to their fullest capacity” (p.394). Doing so within the context of the current analysis will allow for a more in-depth understanding of the results. Furthermore, it could assist in possibly explaining why some independent variables had a stronger relationship to the dependent variable(s) than others. For instance, from the aforementioned analyses, notable variables with particularly stronger and/or consistent relations seem to be sexual prejudice, genetic attributions of homosexuality, support for abortion rights, partisan identification, ideology, religious affiliation, and religious attendance, with sexual prejudice as the most correlated out of all of the variables. Why is this so? What are the intricacies behind these occurrences?

Attitudes, specifically negative ones, have been shown by this research to be the variable most related to support for gay rights. If attitudes are most related to support for gay rights, maybe it is of value to know the intricacies of this variable. What makes this particular variable perform in such a way that it is so correlated to gay rights? To explore this, a correlation analysis is completed, as shown within Table 13 and Table 14. Those who attribute homosexuality to biology hold less anti-gay attitudes ($r = -.258, p <.01$). Decreased sexual prejudice was associated with those who have LGBTQ friends ($r = -.283, p <.05$), those who believe abortion should be legal ($r = -.550, p < .01$), those who believe new civil rights laws for African Americans are needed ($r = -.229, p < .01$), individuals who identify more with the Democratic Party ($r = -.381, p < .01$), more liberal ideology ($r = .546, p < .01$). Increased sexual prejudice
was associated with those who are more religious in terms of religious affiliation ($r = .355, p < .01$), and increased religious attendance ($r = .496, p < .01$). This is a peculiar part of the analysis because even though sexual prejudice held to strongest relationship to gay rights, many of the variables that are related to sexual prejudice (separately) are not related to gay rights. Is it that certain independent variables are prerequisites to less sexual prejudice, which then translates into support for gay rights? Future research would have to perform models that treat attitudes as a variable that mediates the relationship between support for gay rights and other independent variables.

Genetic attributions of homosexuality were positively correlated to support for abortion ($r = .216, p < .01$) and liberal ideology ($r = .218, p < .01$). There was also a relationship between support for abortion rights and increased support for African American civil rights ($r = .259, p < .01$), partisan identification ($r = .424, p < .01$), ideology ($r = .525, p < .01$). Partisan identification was linked to ideology ($r = .740, p < .01$), religious affiliation ($r = .205, p < .01$), and attendance at religious services ($r = .277, p < .01$). Ideology was also associated with religious affiliation ($r = .320, p < .01$) and religious attendance ($r = .418, p < .01$). A relationship between religious affiliation was found with the following variables: religious attendance ($r = .549, p < .01$) and survey format ($r = .144, p < .05$). Religious attendance was related to class standing.

Having a friend who is LGBTQ was related to Para-social contact ($r = .221, p < .01$), enrollment in diversity courses ($r = .163, p < .05$), enrollment in LGBTQ courses ($r = .190, p < .05$), and identification as female ($-.156, p < .05$). There was a relationship between enrollment in diversity courses and enrollment in LGBTQ courses ($r = .320, p < .01$), being non-male ($r = -.226, p < .01$), increased affiliation with the Democratic Party ($r = .220, p < .01$). Support for
African American civil rights as associated with being male \((r = .173, p < .05)\), partisan identification \((r = .342, p < .01)\), ideology \((r = .323, p < .01)\), and race \((r = .190, p < .05)\). Other correlations among demographics are as follows.

**Summary of Analysis**

Overall, the results write-up of this research answered the research question. When assessments of the initial relationships were engaged, sexual prejudice, genetic attributions of homosexuality, support for abortion rights, partisan identification, ideology, religious affiliation, and religious attendance were all consistently correlated with all three measures of the dependent variable.

Multivariate analyses were completed to show, more specifically, the size and direction of the independent variables’ effects while controlling for other variables. In the presence of all explanatory variables of interest, sexual prejudice embodied the strongest, most consistent relationship to social policies and rights pertaining to sexual and gender minorities. This occurrence was consistent across all models, even for models in which mean imputation techniques were included within the analyses.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes the contents of this research. First, this chapter offers a brief discussion of this research’s experimental design. Next, a discussion of overall answers to the research question is included. Evaluations of the results in comparison to previous literature allows for a greater understanding of where this research’s findings fit into the larger picture regarding social policy opinions. Then, this chapter includes limitations of this research, as well as possible directions for prospective research to engage as a means to show other ways in which research on gay rights opinions can be explored. Finally, in adherence to previous literature, this section includes a discussion of policy implications and advocacy strategies.

Discussion

This research sought to understand undergraduate student opinions towards social policies affecting sexual and gender minorities. To understand this, a survey was developed that gauged policy opinions, attitudes, and many other variables of interest. The research question of interest was as follows. Which explanatory variables are most correlated with support for social policies and rights pertaining to sexual and gender minorities? The experimental design of this research first featured the development of three sub-scales that measure the dependent variable: *Alternative Relationship Recognitions, Socio-Political and Economic Goals*, and *Basic Freedoms*. Bivariate and multivariate analyses were engaged as a means to answer the research question.

**Overall findings.** To answer the research question, this research first sought to understand the initial relationships regarding support for social policies and rights pertaining to sexual and gender minorities. Some variables correlated to some degree with all measures of the
dependent variable: sexual prejudice, attributions that view homosexuality as something with
which an individual is born, support for abortion rights, partisan identification, ideology,
religious affiliation, religious attendance. Overall, the aforementioned seem to be the most
correlated to the dependent variable(s) when put to a bivariate correlation analyses.

Second, this research sought to assess, more specifically, the strength and direction of the
relationships (while controlling for other factors) by employing a series of multivariate analyses,
which function as a more confirmatory, precise answer to the research question. Across all of the
OLS models, sexual prejudice was the explanatory variable that featured the strongest
relationship with support for social policies and rights pertaining to sexual and gender minorities.
Following sexual prejudice, attributions viewing homosexuality as something with which an
individual is born was the next most consistent explanatory variable in the final models.

It seems that as per the aforementioned, there is another possible answer to the research
question. The alternative answer, though less direct in an explanatory sense, is that it (the
answer) depends on which dimension (scale), as well as the type of analysis. Some dependent
variables had their own unique correlates. For instance, in the bivariate analyses, the Socio-
Political and Economic Goals sub-scale was the only dimension with a relationship with support
for African American civil rights. Likewise, Basic Freedoms sub-scale had its own unique
relationships with enrollment in a diversity course and increased class standing. The answer may
be extended to the OLS models as well. The Socio-Political and Economic Goals models, Model
2 (with list-wise deletion of missing data) and Model 5 (with mean imputation), were the only
ones in which ideology was a significant explanatory variable. The Basic Freedoms models
(Model 3 and Model 6) were the only ones in which age possessed significant explanatory
power. Model 6 (*Basic Freedoms* regressed with mean imputation) was the only model in which class standing was significantly explanatory. As previously mentioned, the answer may depend upon which set of policies (in this case, the three dimensions measuring the dependent variable) one focuses, as well as which type of analyses (bivariate or multivariate) is used to answer the research question.

**Evaluations of present findings and previous research.** What can be said about the results of this research in regards to previous research? This can be done by summarizing the findings as per each independent variable.

- Sexual prejudice was the most correlated variable. The strongly negative relationship between sexual prejudice and support for gay rights, as shown within these results, is consistent with previous literature.

- The results are also generally consistent with previous literature noting the relationship between Attribution Theory and gay rights support. Generally, as the belief that homosexuality is a genetic (in-born) characteristic increases, so does general support for gay rights, which is consistent with previous research on the subject. This was true in all of the correlation analyses, as well as within some of the multivariate models: *Socio-Political and Economic Goals, Basic Freedoms, and Alternative Relationship Recognitions* (with mean imputation).

- The Contact Hypothesis received limited support as per the results of this research. In the correlation analyses, contact with LGBTQ friends and acquaintances featured a weak, positive correlation with support for *Socio-Political and Economic Goals* and *Basic Freedoms*. However, the significance of the relationship disappeared when controlling for
other factors. Contact with LGBTQ family members showed no significant relationships across any of the correlation analyses, as well as in the final models.

- The Para-social Contact Hypothesis was not supported by the results of the analysis within this research, as none of the coefficients for the bivariate analyses and the multivariate analyses achieved statistical significance.

- Within previous research, gender has been shown as significantly related to gay rights support, with men expressing less support. Gender was not significantly related to the dependent variable(s), meaning the gendered explanations of support for social policies regarding sexual and gender minorities, patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity, are not supported by the findings of this research.

- Support for abortion rights was positively and moderately related to support for all three measures of the dependent variable when the correlation analyses were completed, indicating some meaningful relationship; however, the significance of the relationship disappeared in the final models.

- The relationship between support for African American civil rights and gay rights, *overall*, received limited support; this variable only achieved significance (in the positive direction) in the correlation analysis of the *Socio-Political and Economic Goals* dimension, a relationship that did not continue into the final models. Previous research indicates that the relationship is unclear. This research affirms that postulation.

- Partisan identification was associated with all three measures of the dependent variables in the bivariate analyses; the relationship did not maintain significance in the final
models, meaning that Zaller’s (1992) postulation regarding elite influences on public opinion may have some meaning, but is limited in terms of explanatory power.

- Ideology, in addition to its significantly moderate relationships in the correlation analyses, indicated a weak, but significantly positive relationship with the *Socio-Political and Economic* dimension in one of the OLS models (regressed with mean imputation).

- Religious attendance and religious affiliation both negatively (and significantly) correlated to all three dimensions in the bivariate analyses, but not within the final multivariate models. The directions of the coefficients feature a consistency with previous research.

- As per *all* of the analyses, there were no significant relationships regarding survey format, meaning that social desirability did not play a significant role in the responses.

- Race did not attain significance in any bivariate analyses; nor was it significant while controlling for other factors.

- The impact of certain types of course work is unclear. Enrollment in a course that featured diversity as a part of the course curriculum featured a weak (but significant) relationship to the *Basic Freedoms* scale, as per the correlation analysis, with no significant relationships while controlling for other factors in the OLS models. Enrollment in a course that featured LGBTQ issues as part of the course curriculum indicated no significant relationships.

- Origins in a southern state revealed no significant relationships in regards to the dependent variable(s).
• Class standing featured a significantly positive (weak) relationship with the Basic Freedoms dimension as per the correlation analyses. This particular independent variable attained a significant relationship with the mean-imputed version model for the Basic Freedoms dimension as well. Maybe class standing only has an influence on certain social policy areas

• Age was not significantly related to any of the measures of the dependent variable in the bivariate analyses. However, there was a relationship with the Basic Freedoms dimension in the negative direction while controlling for other factors (with the list-wise deletion of missing cases). A similar relationship was found for the Basic Freedoms model regressed with mean imputation. Is age’s relationship to certain types of social policies based on other factors? Future research would have to explore this possibility. Additionally, the directions of the coefficients (negative) are consistent with previous research.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Sample size. A number of limitations were featured within this work. The first major limitation regards sample size. During the semester in which data collection took place, the UCF undergraduate population was 49,024 undergraduate students (“Enrollment,” 2013). With a maximum sample size of 210 individuals, this research is unable to generalize these findings to the entire undergraduate population of UCF. Though findings of this research should be interpreted carefully in accordance with the small sample size, the results still have meaning as per the significant nature of some of the findings.

Missing cases. Another limitation within this research was the number of missing cases, which contributed to a considerable reduction in the number of valid cases in the final models.
The literature review section of this work put forth that undergraduates would be more supportive of gay rights because of contextual factors that introduce and expose them to an environment of diversity. After variables were combined to form the Socio-Political and Economic Goals sub-scale, the number of individuals for which descriptive statistics of this sub-scale were calculated featured 168 valid cases out of a possible 210. This occurrence is not only specific to the context of gay rights, but other minority rights as well. For instance, between system-missing data and Don’t Know/No Answer responses, the variable measuring support for African American civil rights resulted in a total of 50 missing cases. Thus, it is peculiar that undergraduates who are thought to be in an environment that promotes diversity would choose to not take a stance on certain issues.

One probable explanation for missing cases within this analytical context is the nature of young people within the university context. Maybe the students within the sample, simply stated, have not made up their minds on the issue. Additionally, they could be engaged in a rationalization regarding what was learned in their upbringing via family socialization and experiences in the university socialization. This may be possible because, within the university context, students are exposed to “new ideas, new experiences, and the opportunity to examine their beliefs and the basis of their beliefs” (Raiz, 2006, p.71). Alternatively, it is entirely possible that students are just indifferent on certain survey questions. Raiz noted a number of neutral responses within a work focusing on gay rights support among college students, iterating that students may have not “genuinely contemplated the issue” (p. 71). Whereas neutral and don’t know responses are distinct categories (and have different meanings), maybe indifference
(towards the subject matter of the survey) can be a possible explanation for *don't know* responses within the present research.

However, *Don’t Know/No Answer* responses and system-missing cases are not a negative occurrence within survey research, and can harnessed for the purposes of analysis. Objectively, they can be seen as just another response option. Luskin and Bullock (2011) showed that “almost everyone who knows the answer can be expected to give it, which is to say that the vast majority of those saying ‘don't know’ really don't know” (p.549). Thus, if respondents truly do not know an answer, and were hypothetically not given the option to express such a response, would the survey be truly measuring the views of respondents? Would the lack of such options result in forcing respondents to take stances that they really do not wish to take?

What can future research do to address missing cases? As suggested by previous research, “[don’t know response options] should not be discouraged” (Luskin and Bullock, 2011, p.554). One particular analytical strategy could be to translate this study’s research question to form experimental designs that attempt to understand which explanatory variables are most correlated with don’t know-type answers (and/or system-missing cases) in the context of social policy opinions focusing on gay rights. In doing so, we may understand why individuals, specifically undergraduate students, may not wish to stake out a position.

Another valuable inquiry would be to understand how this phenomenon translates into voting patterns that focus on gay rights issues. Plebiscitary measures at the state level regarding same-sex marriage occurred in 2012: Washington State, Minnesota, Maryland and Maine (Shapiro, 2012). The outcomes of plebiscitary measures at the state level can be based on a threshold (such as Florida’s 60% rule for amendments) or a plurality of the number of votes cast...
in support of a policy; opposition and refusals to answer (leaving that part of the ballot unanswered) would be grouped together because the only answer that counts in an election context is an affirmative one. How would those who did not take a stance on a particular gay rights issue within this research vote in an election on such an issue? Future research could benefit from research designs that address such concerns.

**Insignificance within the Analyses.** One occurrence within the analyses that is worthy of discussion is the statistical insignificance of many of the independent variables. Correlation analyses for the *Alternative Relationship Recognitions* scale had only seven significant correlations; *Socio-Political and Economic Goals* featured nine significant correlations; *Basic Freedoms* featured ten significant relationships. The number of independent variables with statistically significant relationships to the dependent variables diminished within the final models. For instance, Model 1 only had one significant predictor; Model 2 had three significant predictors; Model 3 had only three predictors as well. This occurrence continued into the mean-imputed models (number of significant independent variables in parentheses): Model 4 (two significant variables), Model 5 (two significant variables), and Model 6 (three significant variables). Why did this happen?

There are a number of probable explanations for the aforementioned occurrence. One explanation could be the number of independent variables that were included (19 independent variables total) within the models. Controlling for multiple factors impacts the nature of the effects of individual independent variables on the dependent variable. Maybe controlling for so many factors within the models diminished the effect of many independent variables on the dependent variable to the point in which statistical significance could not be attained.
A specific occurrence of insignificance within the final models regards the following variables: partisan identification, political ideology, religious attendance, and religious affiliation. For instance, all four of the aforementioned variables attained significance within the initial correlation analyses when this research viewed the initial relationships. However, when placed into the final models, the variables were generally insignificant, with the exception of the ideology variable, which attained significance in the Model 2 and Model 5. One possible explanation could be *multicollinearity*; this is a phenomenon that embodies a “high correlation among predictor variables” (Gordon, 2010, p.386). Correlation analyses among the aforementioned variables ranged from relatively weak to relatively strong. Partisan identification featured relationships to the following at the .01 level: ideology (r = .740), religious affiliation (r = -.205), and religious attendance (r = -.277). At the .01 level, ideology held relationships with religious attendance (r = -.320) and religious attendance (r = -.418). Religious affiliation and attendance were also related (r = .549, p < .01). Also worthy of note are the relationships featuring support for abortion rights, which was related to partisan identification (r = .424, p < .01), as well as political ideology (r = .525, p < .01). Even though there is a wide range of relationship strength regarding these variables (all significant at the .01 level), maybe the intercorrelations were just enough as to allow for multicollinearity when all factors were controlled for, making for insignificant results for these particular variables.

**Focusing on other parts of the LGBTQ community.** The present research’s social policy survey content was framed to elicit opinions on policies that affect gay men and lesbians. However, these are not the only individuals who policies and attitudes may affect. Only four of this research’s survey questions actually acknowledged the existence of persons who identify as
transgender: LGBTQ course content, LGBTQ friends/acquaintances, LGBTQ in the media, and LGBTQ family members. Transgender persons are a part of the alphabet soup that features diverse gender identities; this group has received less scholarly attention in comparison to research that deals with sexual orientation, as well as fewer policies protecting them from discriminatory practice.

Transgender persons may experience multiple forms of discrimination and vulnerabilities that are studied separately from the rest of the sexual and gender community; for instance, even though the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell ceased the de jure discrimination based on sexual orientation in the military, individuals who identify as transgender may still be discriminated against and prevented from serving (Kerrigan, 2012); at the undergraduate level, transgender-identifying individuals may have heightened levels of distress when compared to those who identify with the predominant, dichotomous gender categories (Effrig, Bieschke, and Locke, 2011); in regards to mental health, individuals who identify as transgender may have a particular vulnerability concerning anxiety and depression (Budge, Adelson, and Howard, 2013). Violence specifically toward this group is another concern (Lombardi, Wilchins, Priesing Esq., and Malouf, 2002).

Individuals who identify as transgender have only been explored by a minute number of academic works regarding survey research. Norton and Herek (2012) viewed attitudes toward transgender individuals in a sample of 2,281, finding a connection between sexual prejudice and attitudes towards the transgender community. Tee and Hegarty (2006) attempted to view social policy opinions toward the rights of transgender individuals, such as the granting of new birth certificates, hospital treatment that is suited to dealing with diverse gender identities, and others.
For future research, explorations of attitudes and policy positions that regard the transgender community are necessary because of a) the vulnerabilities they may face in terms of policy and other empirical phenomena, and b) the lack of research on perceptions specific to this community. Thus, some possible research questions for future survey designs concerning attitudes and opinions related to this community are as follows. What are university student attitudes towards individuals who identify as transgender? Which explanatory variables are most correlated to social policies and rights specific to transgender persons? Among undergraduate students, are there significant differences between how individuals view social policies that affect transgender persons and how individuals view social policies that affect lesbians, gay, and bisexual individuals?

Another understudied part of the sexual and gender community are people who identify as bisexual. Bisexual men and women may be the receivers of negative perceptions on the part of both sexual/gender majority and minority communities. Eliason (2000) showed that out of LGBs, bisexual men received the most negative attitudes among university undergraduates. Cox, Bimbi, and Parsons (2013) connected their findings with previous literature, showing that “bisexuals are viewed as out-group members by heterosexuals and by gay men and lesbians” (p.223). For this reason, it would be of value to view how individuals (specifically undergraduate students) would respond to the extension of legal protections specifically to individuals who identify as bisexual. Future research could adapt the SGLCR scale (Brown and Henriquez, 2011), substituting the terms gays and lesbians with bisexual men and women or bisexual persons. Some possible research questions are as follows. Do the opinions of social policies and rights specifically pertaining to the bisexual community differ significantly from opinions of social policies and
rights framed to pertain to lesbians and gay men? Which explanatory variables are most correlated to social policies and rights specifically framed to pertain to bisexual individuals?

Intersectionality. Another direction that future research may take would be to include the concept of intersectionality as a theoretical framework. Within a work titled *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*, Collins (2000) offered a definition for the term *intersectionality*, which is conceptualized as “forms of intersecting oppressions, for example, intersections of race and gender, or of sexuality and nation” (p.18); the specific and actual organization of such oppressive intersections is what Collins referred to as the *matrix of domination*. This research’s social policy survey featured this topic (unintentionally) on a limited basis; for instance, one of the variables that contributed to the formulation of the *Socio-Political and Economic Goals* dimension featured immigration rights for same-sex couples, showing the intersection of sexual orientation and citizenship status.

Future research could incorporate intersectional thought into the formulation of survey research designs by including instruments that acknowledge the existence of multiple, intersecting identities. For instance, future research could focus on the intersections of sexual orientation, gender, and race. Possible research question are as follows. What are undergraduate students’ attitudes toward lesbian women of color? Are those perceptions different from undergraduate students’ attitudes toward gay males who identify with a white/Caucasian racial/ethnic background? Which explanatory variables are most correlated with prejudicial attitudes towards LGBTQ persons of color? In a similar direction, future social policy survey designs could focus on the intersection of age, socio-economic status, and sexual and gender minority status by asking respondents if they would support a social policy that provides housing
assistance to homeless LGBTQ youth. Such steps could function to broaden and further enrich our understanding of attitudes toward sexual and gender minorities, as well as opinions toward the issue areas that affect them.

**Focusing on single policy areas.** This research used data reduction techniques to create scales based on commonalities among variables, which serves the purpose of providing a concise and comprehensive answer to the research question in terms of the overall results. However, dimension reduction techniques, like the one used in this research, have their limitations as well. Schwartz (2010) showed that “public support for specific gay rights issues is not uniform; in fact, it can vary widely” (p.748). Furthermore, Barth and Perry (2009b) explained the following: “each policy issue likely has a distinctive dynamic, that is, service in the military is not gay adoption is not same-sex marriage, and citizens consequently maintain separate attitudinal constructs for each” (p.323). It is possible that no two policies are the same in regards to the support they receive from individuals; each may possess its own unique level of agreement (or disagreement) from the public, as well as its own unique set of predictors (correlates) that function to explain its support or opposition.

In accordance with the aforementioned, it is possible that data reduction (though embodying utility for the purposes of this research) may prevent us from knowing the unique, more in-depth intricacies of policy support. For instance, in this research, support for same-sex marriage is one of the many variables that make up the *Socio-Political and Economic Goals* dimension. However, it is very much possible that the independent variables most correlated to the *Socio-Political and Economic Goals* dimension are different from the independent variables most correlated with support for same-sex marriage as an individual policy area. Thus, when
inquiring about which explanatory variables are most correlated with support for social policies pertaining to sexual and gender minorities, a counter-question could be as follows: Which policy? Future works could use dimension reduction to first form scales, using analytical techniques such as the OLS regression to understand which variables are most correlated overall; a second, additional, and exploratory step could be to then examine each policy area within the scale individually by collapsing response options into dichotomous support/oppose variables, completing equations for binary logistic regression models. This would offer an extensively more detailed picture of the research question.

**Empirical Implications**

Sexual and gender minorities are vulnerable in terms of a wide range of policy areas. Opinions are important in the empirical manifestation of such policies (Lax and Phillips, 2009). In a scholarly work regarding opinions for LGBT civil rights, Woodford, Atteberry, Derr, and Howell (2013) concluded their study by including a discussion of “implications for LGBT advocacy efforts” (p.203). Accordingly, this research will follow suit. The results of this research indicate that sexual prejudice (negative attitudes) had the strongest, most consistent relationship to opinions pertaining to social policies and rights that concern the sexual and gender minority community. Sexual prejudice (negative attitudes) was negatively associated with support for *Alternative Relationship Recognitions* (β = -.440, p < .05), *Socio-Political and Economic Goals* (β = -.558, p < .01), and *Basic Freedoms* (β = -.341, p < .05). Even given the limitations of this research, the findings suggests the possibility that the attainment of positive attitudes amongst individuals (specifically undergraduate students) may be a prerequisite for the achievement of...
social policies and rights that reduce the vulnerability of sexual and gender minorities to certain
difficulties.

What can be done at the undergraduate level to foster positive attitudes towards sexual
and gender minorities? For assistance with this discussion of empirical implications, this
research includes a brief review of strategies used by research dealing with intergroup relations,
such as interventions and programs. Hussey and Bisconti (2010) featured the use of intervention
methods within their work assessing changes in stigma towards lesbians and gay men among
individuals involved in sororities; they included a panel discussion regarding many sexual
minority topics, as well as a video-discussion combination featuring content on violence towards
the minority community (in addition to other related topics). A study by Miller, Markman,
Wagner, and Hunt (2013) included an intervention method known as “counterfactual priming”
(p.191), in which individuals involved in the study “imagine[d] contact” with a gay male (p.191).
Policy implications at the collegiate level may take other avenues as well, including Allies
programs and Safe Zone programs that can be harnessed for continued use to foster more
welcoming environments for sexual and gender minorities on campus (Draughn, Elkins, and
Roy, 2002).

Concluding Statement

This research constitutes a small contribution of important data to the field of public
opinion research. Its specific importance is embodied in its focus on social policy positions
regarding sexual and gender minorities in the context of undergraduate education, bringing
further clarity to an understudied area. However, more research is needed to further explore the
intricacies of this niche. Prospective research on this topic has the potential to enrich our
understanding of the dynamics of policy positions regarding gay rights, especially as the public
debate on such issues continues.
APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER
Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: UCF Institutional Review Board #1
FWA0000351, IRB00001138

To: Terri S. Fine and Co-PI: Julio R. Montanez

Date: March 12, 2013

Dear Researcher:

On 3/12/2013, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: Exempt Determination
Project Title: A Study of Undergraduate Student Opinions Regarding Social Policy
Investigator: Terri S Fine
IRB Number: SBE-13-09222
Funding Agency: Grant Title:
Research ID: N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in IRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Sophia Dziewielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 03/12/2013 10:07:39 AM EST

IRB Coordinator
APPENDIX B: SURVEY INSTRUMENT
EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH

Title of Project: A Study of Undergraduate Student Opinions Regarding Social Policy

Principal Investigator: Terri Susan Fine, PhD

Other Investigators: Julio Montanez, Undergraduate Student

Faculty Supervisor: Terri Susan Fine, PhD

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Whether you take part is up to you.

- The purpose of this study is to understand undergraduate student opinions regarding numerous social policies focusing on gay rights.

- Participants will answer a series of questions on a survey. Participation is voluntary. Participants may cease participation in this research study at any time.

- The expected time expected to complete the survey is about ten to fifteen minutes.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, talk to Julio Montanez, Undergraduate Student, Political Science Department, College of Science, jrochmontanez@knights.ucf.edu, or Dr. Terri Susan Fine, Faculty Supervisor, Department of Political Science at terri.fine@ucf.edu or (407) 823-2081.

IRB contact about your rights in the study or to report a complaint: Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (UCF IRB). This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901.
Social Policy Survey

Please indicate your level of approval with the following questions.

1. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Congress is handling the economy?
   a. Strongly Approve
   b. Approve
   c. Neither Approve or Disapprove
   d. Disapprove
   e. Strongly Disapprove
   f. No Answer/No Opinion

2. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Congress is handling foreign affairs?
   a. Strongly Approve
   b. Approve
   c. Neither Approve or Disapprove
   d. Disapprove
   e. Strongly Disapprove
   f. No Answer/No Opinion

3. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Congress is handling the environment?
   a. Strongly Approve
   b. Approve
   c. Neither Approve or Disapprove
   d. Disapprove
   e. Strongly Disapprove
   f. No Answer/No Opinion

Please indicate your level of agreement to each of the following statements.

4. Gays and lesbians should be protected by hate-crime legislation.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree

5. Gays and lesbians should not be allowed to adopt children.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
   f. No Answer/No Opinion

6. Gays and lesbians should be allowed to marry.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
   f. No Answer/No Opinion

7. Homosexuality should be illegal in this country.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
   f. No Answer/No Opinion

8. Immigrant partners of gays and lesbians should receive the same immigration rights as partners of heterosexuals.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
   f. No Answer/No Opinion

9. Gays and lesbians should be able to display affection with their partners in public.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
10. Gays and lesbians should not be allowed to flaunt their homosexuality in public by having things like parades, marches, or rallies.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
   f. No Answer/No Opinion

11. The government should be allowed to censor magazines, newspapers, or other printed material that deals with homosexuality.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
   f. No Answer/No Opinion

12. Gays and lesbians should not be allowed to teach school-aged children.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
   f. No Answer/No Opinion

13. Public libraries should not carry books that deal with homosexuality.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
   f. No Answer/No Opinion

14. Public tax dollars should not go to organizations that promote tolerance for gays and lesbians.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
   f. No Answer/No Opinion

15. A landlord should not be allowed to refuse to rent a house or an apartment to somebody who is gay or lesbian.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
   f. No Answer/No Opinion

16. The gay rights movement is just as important as other civil rights movements of the past, such as those led by African Americans and women.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
   f. No Answer/No Opinion

17. If the military discovers a member is gay or lesbian, it should not be allowed to discharge that person from service.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
   f. No Answer/No Opinion

18. A potential employee's homosexuality should never be an issue in hiring decisions.
   a. Strongly Agree
19. The "gay rights movement" signifies a decline in morality in this country.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
   f. No Answer/No Opinion

20. If we give gays and lesbians the same rights as heterosexuals, then we will have to give them to other "alternative lifestyles" like incest, bestiality, and polygamy.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
   f. No Answer/No Opinion

21. The government has no right interfering with the private consensual sex-lives of gays and lesbians
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
   f. No Answer/No Opinion

22. The age of consent for homosexual sex should be higher than the age of consent for heterosexual sex.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
   f. No Answer/No Opinion

23. Defending the civil rights of gays and lesbians also helps to defend the civil rights of everyone else.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Neutral
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
   f. No Answer/No Opinion

Other Policy-Related Questions

Please indicate your responses to the following questions.

24. In your opinion, what causes homosexuality? Is it something that people are born with...or is it something that develops because of the way people are brought up...or is it just the way some people prefer to live?
   a. Born with
   b. Upbringing
   c. Preference
   d. No Answer/No Opinion

25. In general, do you think gays and lesbians should or should not be allowed to form a domestic partnership that would give the same-sex couple the same rights and benefits as opposite sex marriage?
   a. Should
   b. Should not
   c. No Answer/No Opinion

26. Would you support or oppose a state law that would allow civil unions for same-sex couples?
   a. Support
   b. Oppose
   c. No Answer/No Opinion

27. Do you think abortion should be legal in all cases, legal in most cases,
illegal in most cases or illegal in all cases?
  a. Legal in all cases
  b. Legal in most cases
  c. Illegal in most cases
  d. Illegal in all cases
  e. No Answer/No Opinion

28. Do you think new civil rights laws are needed to reduce discrimination against African Americans, or not?
  a. Are needed
  b. Not needed
  c. No Answer/No Opinion

**Attitudes**

Please indicate your level of agreement to each of the following statements.

29. Sex between two men is just plain wrong.
  a. Strongly Agree
  b. Agree
  c. Neutral
  d. Disagree
  e. Strongly Disagree
  f. No Answer/No Opinion

30. I think male homosexuals are disgusting.
  a. Strongly Agree
  b. Agree
  c. Neutral
  d. Disagree
  e. Strongly Disagree
  f. No Answer/No Opinion

31. Male homosexuality is a natural expression of sexuality in men.
  a. Strongly Agree
  b. Agree
  c. Neutral
  d. Disagree
  e. Strongly Disagree
  f. No Answer/No Opinion

32. Sex between two women is just plain wrong.
  a. Strongly Agree
  b. Agree
  c. Neutral
  d. Disagree
  e. Strongly Disagree
  f. No Answer/No Opinion

33. I think lesbians are disgusting.
  a. Strongly Agree
  b. Agree
  c. Neutral
  d. Disagree
  e. Strongly Disagree
  f. No Answer/No Opinion

34. Female homosexuality is a natural expression of sexuality in women.
  a. Strongly Agree
  b. Agree
  c. Neutral
  d. Disagree
  e. Strongly Disagree
  f. No Answer/No Opinion

**Demographics and Other**

Please answer the following items to the best of your ability.

35. What is your age?
  a. Please Record Your Answer Below
  b. Refuse to Answer

36. What is your gender?
  a. Male
  b. Female
  c. Transgender
  d. Other (Please specify):
  e. Refuse to Answer/Unsure

37. Do you have an acquaintance/friend who is Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual,
Transgender, or Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ)?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Don't Know/No Answer

38. Do you have a family member who is LGBTQ?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Don't Know/No Answer

39. Are you aware of any LGBTQ persons in the media (such as movies, television shows, and books)?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Don't Know/No Answer

40. What is your sexual orientation?
   a. Heterosexual
   b. Gay
   c. Lesbian
   d. Bisexual
   e. Other (Please specify):
      f. Refuse to Answer/Unsure

41. Do you identify as Queer and/or Questioning?
   a. Queer
   b. Questioning
   c. Both
   d. Neither
   e. Refuse to Answer/Unsure

42. Have you ever been enrolled in a university course in which diversity issues were discussed as part of the course curriculum?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Don't Know/No Answer

43. Have you ever been enrolled in a university course in which LGBTQ issues were discussed as part of the course curriculum?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Don't Know/No Answer

44. What is your current class standing?
   a. Freshman (0-29 credits)
   b. Sophomore (30-59 credits)
   c. Junior (60-89 credits)
   d. Senior (90 credits or more)
   e. Post-Baccalaureate
   f. Refuse to Answer/Unsure

45. What is your primary religious affiliation?
   a. Mainline Protestant
   b. Evangelical Protestant
   c. Catholic
   d. Jewish
   e. Mormon
   f. Muslim
   g. Other (Please specify):
      h. None
      i. Refuse to Answer/Unsure

46. Which category best represents your attendance at religious services?
   a. Never
   b. Less than Once a Year
   c. About Once or Twice a Year
   d. Several Times a Year
   e. About Once a Month
   f. 2-3 Times a Month
   g. Nearly Every Week
   h. Every Week
   i. Several Times a Week
   j. Daily
   k. Other (Please Specify):
      l. Don't Know/No Answer

47. Which category best represents your economic circumstances?
   a. Upper class
   b. Upper-middle class
48. Politically, which of the following do you consider yourself?
   a. Very conservative
   b. Conservative
   c. Somewhat conservative
   d. Moderate
   e. Somewhat liberal
   f. Liberal
   g. Very Liberal
   h. Refuse to Answer/Unsure

49. What political party do you generally identify with?
   a. Strong Republican
   b. Weak Republican
   c. Lean Republican
   d. Independent
   e. Lean Democrat
   f. Weak Democrat
   g. Strong Democrat
   h. Refuse to Answer/Unsure

50. How would you identify your racial/ethnic background?
   a. White or Caucasian
   b. Black or African American
   c. American Indian and Alaska Native
   d. Asian
   e. Native Hawaiian
   f. Hispanic/Latino(a)
   g. Two or More Races
   h. Some Other Race
   i. Refuse to Answer/Unsure

51. In which country were you born?
   a. Please Record Your Answer Below
   b. Refuse to Answer/Unsure

52. If you were born in the United States, in which state were you born?
   a. Please Record Your Answer Below
   b. Refuse to Answer/Unsure

53. Are you registered to vote?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Refuse to Answer/Unsure

54. Did you vote in the 2012 election cycle?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Refuse to Answer/Unsure

55. Who did you vote for president in the 2012 election cycle?
   a. Mitt Romney
   b. Barack Obama
   c. Other (Please Specify):
   d. Refuse to Answer/Unsure
APPENDIX C: INFORMATION FOR RESPONSE RATES
Below are the courses in which the link to the online survey was administered. Included is the course number for each course, the course title, and the number of students within the course in parentheses.

- POT 4632: Religion and Politics (50 students)
- SYG 2000: Introduction to Sociology (291 students)
- SYG 2010: Social Problems (53 students)
- POS 3703: Scopes and Methods of Political Science (31 students)
- POS 4030: Politics of Sports (15 students)
- GEO 3471: World Political Geography (232 students)
- POS 4284: Judicial Process and Politics (123 students)
- POS 3182: Florida Politics (72 students)
- POS 2041H: Honors American National Government (11 students)
- POS 3233: Public Opinion (72 students).

Among the 10 courses in which online surveys were administered, the survey was made available to 950 students. One-hundred thirteen surveys were attempted on the online survey. However, Qualtrics indicated that 29 surveys were incomplete, meaning that potential respondents a) did not complete the consent process outlined at the beginning of the survey or b) withdrew participation at some point during the survey, resulting in 84 usable online surveys.

Hard-copy surveys were administered to three social science courses at the university. All three of the courses were located on the UCF Main Campus. The first course in which the survey was administered was an upper-level political science course titled POS 4623: Religion and Politics, located at the university’s main campus. The course was composed of 18 total students;
however, only 17 were in attendance for survey administration, which occurred on April 8, 2013. After an informed consent process, 17 surveys were completed.

The next course in which hard-copy surveys were administered was an upper-level course titled SYA 4450: Data Analysis in the university’s sociology department. Thirty-one students were in attendance on the day of survey administration, which occurred on Thursday, April 11, 2013. After an informed consent process, students completed the survey. One student in the Data Analysis course opted to not complete the survey. Thus, 126 completed a hard-copy survey are used in this study; a total of 30 surveys were returned as completed.

The final course in which hard-copy surveys were administered was a lower-level political science course titled POS 2041: American National Government. A total of 80 students were in attendance on the day of survey administration, which occurred on Friday, April 12, 2013. Eighty surveys were returned as successfully completed.

After viewing the data in-depth, it was found that one respondent was 17 years old, too young to qualify for participation in this research; this student’s responses are not included in this research’s analysis. This resulted in a total of 126 completed hard-copy surveys that are usable for this analysis.
APPENDIX D: DETAILED SURVEY INFORMATION AND CODING
A wide variety of questions were asked regarding policy areas. This research uses the Support for Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights (SGLCR) scale, developed by Brown and Henriquez (2011); the scale is used to gauge opinions on 20 social policy areas that pertain to sexual and gender minority populations: hate-crime anti-discrimination, same-sex marriage, equal immigration rights, public display of affection, housing anti-discrimination, the importance of the Gay Rights Movement, military service, employment anti-discrimination, government interference in sex lives, defending the civil rights of gays and lesbians, adoption, the legality of homosexuality, public demonstration, government censorship of gay media content, gay and lesbian teachers, book bans, the morality of the gay rights movement, alternative lifestyles, age of consent, and the subsidizing of gay and lesbian organizations. Responses to each item within the scale are as follows: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, and no answer/no opinion. For ten of the items, coding is scaled from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree); however, some items are framed to gauge opposition; these questions are reverse-coded to show support for gay rights: from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). No answer/no opinion options are coded as missing.

However, Brown and Henriquez (2011) did not include questions regarding domestic partnerships and civil unions in their original scale; therefore, other sources were consulted for such questions. For domestic partnerships, a question from an Associated Press Poll from May 2000 was used: "In general, do you think gays and lesbians should or should not be allowed to form a domestic partnership that would give the same-sex couple the same rights as opposite sex marriage?" (“Laws and Civil Rights,” p. 2). Options were dichotomous in nature, reflecting should, should not, and no answer/no opinion options. For civil unions, a question from a 2009
Quinnipac University Poll was used: “Would you support or oppose a law in your state that would allow civil unions for same-sex couples?” (“Laws and Civil Rights,” p.2). Options for the item were dichotomous, featuring support (coded 1), oppose (coded 0), and no answer/no opinion (coded as missing) categories.

To assess the connection between attitudes and opinions, the widely used Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men (ATLG) scale was considered. However, the long form generally harnesses twenty items and has been explained as best used when attitudes are the dependent variable. Since the primal topic of this research is social policy opinion, a short form of the scale was used. This research uses the 6-item Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men Short Form (ATLG-S6), found in a work by Herek and Capitanio (1995) that assesses the connection between race/ethnicity and attitudes towards gays and lesbians, as well as Herek’s (2002) work on attitudinal differences based on gender. The scale includes the following response options: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, and no answer/no opinion. For some of the items, coding is scaled from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree); however, some items are framed to gauge opposition; these questions are reverse-coded to show increased sexual prejudice: from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). No answer/no opinion options are coded as missing. The range of possible scores for the scale is 6 to 30.

To measure attributions of controllability, the present research used an item found in Lewis’s (2009) study, which was previously used in national public opinion polls spanning from 1983 to 2006. Question 24 of the survey reads as follows: “In your opinion, what causes homosexuality? Is it something that people are born with…or is it something that develops because of the way people are brought up…or is it just the way some people prefer to live?”
The options for answering this question are as follows: *Born With* (coded 1), *Upbringing* (coded 0), *Preference* (coded 0), and *no answer/no opinion* (coded as missing).

Contact with LGBTQ is based on separate two variables. The first variable, Question 37, asked whether or not the respondent has “a friend/acquaintance who is LGBTQ.” The second variable, Question 38, asks whether or not the respondent has “a family member who is LGBTQ.” Such items allow this study to gauge impact that contact with LGBTQ has on policy positions. The items may also help to identify differing effects of familial contact versus contact with friends. Response options for the questions are as follows: *yes* (coded as 1), *no* (coded as 2), and *don’t know/refuse to answer* (coded as missing). This research consulted a variety of works as a means to construct these questions (Carrick, 2010; Case and Stewart, 2010a; Case and Stewart, 2010b; Woodford, Silverschanz, Swank, Sherrer, and Raiz, 2012; Woodford et al., 2013).

To examine the impact that the media has in regards to gay rights policy, a question about LGBTQ in the media was included in the survey. Question 39 reads as follows: “Are you aware of any LGBTQ persons in the media (such as movies, television shows, and books?” Response options for the question are as follows: *yes* (coded as 1), *no* (coded as 0), and *don’t know/refuse to answer* (coded as missing). This research consulted a variety of works as a means to construct this particular question (Carrick, 2010; Case and Stewart, 2010a; Case and Stewart, 2010b; Woodford, Silverschanz, Swank, Sherrer, and Raiz, 2012; Woodford et al., 2013).

To measure the impact of course curricula on policy positions, two separate variables are used. One of the variables is based on diversity content in course curriculum. Question 42 reads as follows: “Have you ever been enrolled in a university course in which diversity was discussed
as part of the course curriculum?” Question 43 asks a question relating to LGBTQ course content: “Have you ever been enrolled in a university course in which LGBTQ issues were discussed as part of the course curriculum?” Response options for the question are as follows: yes (coded as 1), no (coded as 0), and don’t know/refuse to answer (coded as missing). This research consulted a variety of works as a means to construct these questions (Carrick, 2010; Case and Stewart, 2010a; Case and Stewart, 2010b; Woodford, Silverschanz, Swank, Sherrer, and Raiz, 2012; Woodford et al., 2013).

To gauge how opinions of women’s rights interact with that of gay rights policy positions, this research employs a measure that gauges support for abortion. The present research harnesses an item that has been used in a number of academic works (Gibson and Hare, 2012; Sanchez, 2006; Shaw, 2003), with similarly adapted versions of the item in other peer-reviewed studies (Kerevel, 2011; Bartowski, Ramos-Wada, Ellison, and Acevedo, 2012). Respondents were asked the following question: “Do you think abortion should be legal in all cases, legal in most cases, illegal in most cases, or illegal in all cases?” Answers to the question are as follows: legal in all cases (coded 4), legal in most cases (coded 3), illegal in most cases (coded 2), illegal in all cases (coded 1), and no answer/no opinion (coded as missing).

To gauge how opinions of civil rights for African Americans interact with opinions toward gay rights, the present research harnessed an item from an August 2011 USA Today/Gallup Poll question; the question item 28 on the present research’s survey, reads as follows: “Do you think new civil rights laws are needed to reduce discrimination against blacks, or not?” (“Race and Ethnicity”). Answer options to this question are as follows: are needed (coded as 1), are not needed (coded as 0), and no answer/no opinion (coded as missing).
Many demographic questions were used within this study. All options of *no answer/no opinion* or *don’t know/refuse to answer* are coded as missing. Age, gender (coded 1 for male, 0 for non-male), partisan identification (coded on a 7-point scale from Strong Republican (1) to Strong Democrat (7)), ideology (coded on a 7-point scale from Very conservative (1) to Very liberal (7)), religious affiliation (coded 1 for religious, 0 for non-religious), religious attendance (coded on a 10-point scale with increasing values indicating increased attendance), race (coded 1 for white, 0 for non-white), and class standing (coded 0 for freshman and sophomore, 1 for all other categories).

Respondents were asked about their state of origin (if they were born in the United States). To code for region, literature was consulted. Region was coded in accordance with a study by Hillygus and Shields (2008). The following states were coded as 1, indicating a Southern state: "Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Tennessee, and Virginia" (p.506). All other states and territories were coded as 0, indicating a region other than the South. *Unsure/Refuse to Answer* options were coded as missing.

Other variables were also included in the survey, but are not used for the purposes of this analysis: congressional approval, sexual orientation, whether or not individuals identify as queer or questioning (or both), socioeconomic status, whether or not individuals voted in the 2012 election cycle, for whom individuals voted for president in the 2012 election cycle, and in which country individuals were born.
APPENDIX E: TABLES FOR CHAPTER 4
Table 11 Model 4: Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression Model for Alternative Relationship Recognitions with Missing Cases Replaced with a Mean

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Table 12 Model 5: Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression Model for Socio-Political and Economic Goals with Missing Cases Replaced with a Mean

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Table 13 Model 6: Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression Model for Basic Freedoms with Missing Cases Replaced with a Mean

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