

The Evolution of Attitudes on Same-Sex Marriage in California and the U.S.

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Introduction

On May 15, 2008, the California Supreme Court ruled that existing statutory and initiative measures that limited civil marriage to heterosexual couples violated the California Constitution's guarantee of equal protection (*In Re Marriage Cases* 2008). On November 4, 2008, California voters passed Proposition 8, a constitutional initiative invalidating *In re Marriage Cases* and stopping same-sex marriage in the state. The proposition itself was ruled unconstitutional by a U.S. Federal District Court in 2010 (*Perry v. Schwarzenegger* 2010). The U.S. Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit, affirmed in 2012 that Proposition 8 was a violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution (*Perry v. Brown* 2012).

The U.S. Supreme Court accepted the appeal of Proposition 8 proponents and held oral arguments on March 26, 2013. On June 26, 2013, the Supreme Court ruled that the petitioners, the authors of Proposition 8, did not have standing to sue if the state refused to defend the legislation (*Hollingsworth v. Perry* 2013). The decision reinstated the original decision in *Perry v. Schwarzenegger* to declare Proposition 8 unconstitutional.

Research done in the aftermath of the election confirmed that voter partisanship, ideology, religiosity, and ethnicity played central roles in the final 52% to 48% vote (Abrajano 2010; Egan and Sherrill 2009). Surveys since the passage of Proposition 8 have suggested a sea change in public opinion on the issue of same-sex marriage across nearly all groups with a majority now supporting same-sex marriage across the country (Pew Research Center 2014; see also Baunach 2012). In California, support for same-sex marriage has risen to a 61% majority (Field Research Corporation 2013; Petek 2014).

This article focuses on the impact of morality politics and issue framing on attitudes toward same-sex marriage in California and the United States. The comparative data from this analysis come from surveys conducted by the Public Policy Institute of California between 2005 and 2013 and from national surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center and the National Opinion Research Center during the same period.

Support for same-sex marriage increased in both the United States and in California, although support for same-sex marriage was stronger in California than in the U.S. by about five percent. Using logistic regression, the strongest direct explanatory factors were similar to those at the U.S. level: partisanship, ideology, Protestant religious affiliation, and whether the respondent classified him or herself as born again. A range of demographic, political, social, regional, and time factors also had a significant effect on support. The relative influence of the factors was

virtually identical in both California and the United States as a whole with the correlation between the changes in odds ratios for the two analyses reaching 0.97.

Issue Framing in the Same-Sex Marriage Debate in California

Issue framing has played a critical role in the debate on same-sex marriage. The literature on issue framing suggests that elite framing of policy issues is a major tool for shaping political debate on policy issues in the U.S. “Invented by elites and carried by mass media, frames influence public opinion by circumscribing the considerations citizens take seriously” (Nelson and Kinder 1996, 1074). Much of the debate on same-sex marriage, and gay rights generally, has turned on a fundamental conflict in values between traditional morality and equality.

Drawing from the Supreme Court decision in *Romer v. Evans* that struck down a Colorado constitutional initiative banning government action to protect sexual orientation (*Romer v. Evans* 1996), Brewer (2008) has identified three issue frames that have consistently dominated the discussion of gay rights generally and same-sex marriage specifically: traditional morality, equal rights, or special rights. The equality frame appears in the majority opinion by Justice Anthony Kennedy:

A century ago, the first Justice Harlan admonished this Court that the Constitution “neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens.” *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537, 559 (1896; dissenting opinion). Unheeded then, those words now are understood to state a commitment to the law’s neutrality where the rights of persons are at stake. The Equal Protection Clause enforces this principle and today requires us to hold invalid a provision of Colorado’s Constitution (*Romer v. Evans* 1996, 623).

Both the traditional morality frame and the special rights frame appear in the dissenting opinion by Justice Antonin Scalia:

The constitutional amendment before us here is not the manifestation of a “bare . . . desire to harm” homosexuals, ante, at 634, but is rather a modest attempt by seemingly tolerant Coloradans to preserve traditional sexual mores against the efforts of a politically powerful minority to revise those mores through use of the laws [Traditional morality] (p. 636). . . . The amendment prohibits special treatment of homosexuals, and nothing more [Special rights] (p. 638).

As a result, the debate on same-sex marriage falls squarely in the area of morality politics. Unlike other policy arenas characterized by high information costs and limited access, morality politics features conflict over fundamental values. Gusfield has argued that debates over morality are really about the redistribution of values (Gusfield 1963; see also Meier 1999). The competing sides attempt to replace one set of values in society with another.

Because morality policies concern fundamental values, they are marked by simplicity, low information requirements, and high salience to the public. The ease of access and importance to individual citizens generates high levels of citizen participation (Mooney 1999). Since morality politics focuses on fundamental notions of right and wrong, everyone can act as an expert on the issue and genuine expertise (if such a thing exists in morality policy) has little impact on the outcome.

The key to morality policy is issue framing. All “bad” human behaviors (“sins”) are multidimensional in practice (Meier 1999). If one side of the debate can successfully characterize the behavior under examination as sin, the development of a counter-balancing political opposition

becomes much less likely. As Meier notes, “Legislators do not rise and recite the joys of drunk driving, the pleasures of prostitution, or the thrill they get from serial killings” (Meier 1999, 683). On the other hand, if opponents of regulating the behavior can frame the issue in a constructive way, the debate begins to resemble the classic political model of redistributive politics, an arena where the most important explanatory factors are “the distribution of citizen values, the competitiveness of parties, and the party affiliations of politicians” (Haider-Markel and Meier 1996).

The available evidence clearly suggests that gay rights as an issue has made the transition from the politics of sin to the politics of redistribution. Like many other issues initially defined as traditional morality issues such as miscegenation (Novkov 2008), abortion (Norranders and Wilcox 1999), and gambling (Pierce and Miller 1999); gay rights as an issue has shifted from an overall condemnation of homosexuality to an increasing acceptance of gay rights on equality grounds. Brewer reported majority support for protections against job discrimination and service in the military as early as 1977 (2008, 22).

Even more controversial issues have reached majority or plurality approval. A Gallup/*USA Today* poll reported support for gay adoption reached major status nationally in 2008 (Princeton Survey Research Associates International/*Newsweek* 2008). The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press identified plurality support for same-sex marriage in late 2011 (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press 2011).

In California, available evidence suggests that the shifts occurred earlier and more broadly, despite the final vote on Proposition 8. Support for Proposition 21, a statutory initiative that limited marriage to a man and a woman, was 61.4% in 2000, passing in 52 of 58 counties (California Secretary of State 2000). Support for Proposition 8 in 2008 was 52.3%, passing in 41 of 58 counties (California Secretary of State 2008). This represented a nine percent and 11 county shift in eight years. Results reported earlier from the Field Poll suggest an additional nine percent increase in support for same-sex marriage in less than five years.

The polling data clearly suggest that elites, the media, and the public had identified the competing frames of traditional morality and equality as early as the 1970s on workplace discrimination against gays and lesbians and that these frames have become increasingly representative of the nationwide and California debate over gay rights. The public debate on the passage of Proposition 8 certainly used all of these frames to promote or oppose the proposition. The official campaign sign of ProtectMarriage.com, the official sponsor of Proposition 8 stated simply, “Yes on 8: Restore Marriage.” The official sign of No on Proposition 8 just as bluntly argued, “Vote No on Prop 8: Unfair and Wrong.”

The rise of competitive issue frames suggests that political conflict and public attitudes toward same-sex marriage should reflect, at least in part, the factors noted by Haider and Markel: ideology, party competitiveness, and partisanship (Haider-Markel and Meier 1996). I examine these and other influences in the next section.

Factors Influencing Opinion on Same-Sex Marriage

Stacey Horn has argued that attitudes about sexual orientation are more multidimensional and complex than is frequently given credit in the literature on the subject (Horn 2013). After examining the available literature, she concludes that these attitudes reflect a complex interaction among demographic and situational factors, personality traits, and target characteristics affecting specific attitude issues within a particular social, cultural, or situation context. The relevant factors mix changes depending on the specific attitude under examination.

An individual may have negative attitudes toward homosexuality and also believe that individuals should not be legally discriminated against because of those behaviors. The specific attitudes may reflect the influence of different factors. To prevent inconsistent interpretations, this article focuses on a single issue: attitudes toward same-sex marriage.

A range of demographic and situational factors is used to explain attitudes toward same-sex marriage. Across the literature, gender, age, religious affiliation, religious intensity, education, income, marital status, ethnicity, and contact with gay people have all been suggested as significant sources of variation in attitudes on gay rights issues. In most studies, males, older respondents, Protestants, Catholics, those with greater church attendance, those with less education, lower-income respondents, African Americans, Latinos, married respondents, those from rural areas, Southerners, and those with limited contact with gays and lesbians all demonstrated lower support for same-sex marriage and were more likely to vote for bans (Barth, et al. 2009; Baunach 2012; Becker 2012a, 2012b; Becker and Scheufele 2009; Brewer 2008; Brumbaugh, et al. 2008; Burnett and Salka 2009; Dyck and Pearson-Merkowitz 2012; Egan and Sherrill, 2009; Fleischmann and Moyer 2009; Gaines and Garand 2010; Lewis and Gossett 2008; McKenzie and Rouse 2013; McVeigh and Diaz 2009; Olson et al. 2006; Salka and Burnett 2012; Sherkat et al. 2010; Sherkat et al. 2011). Several of these studies report inconsistent results for some variables including gender, age, income, ethnicity, and marital status.

In California, Egan and Sherrill identify age and gender as the dominant demographic factors in their study of voting on Proposition 8 (Egan and Sherrill 2009). Older voters were less supportive of same-sex marriage than younger voters; men were more likely to support Proposition 8 than women. African-American voters and Latino voters were less supportive of same-sex marriage than other voters when controlling for religiosity, partisanship, and ideology.

In their study of attitude change in California on same-sex marriage, Lewis and Gossett (2008) reached similar conclusions, noting that Protestants, younger age cohorts, less educated, and male respondents showed lower levels of support for same-sex marriage. They concluded that African Americans and Latinos demonstrated lower support, whereas Catholics did not. In an earlier article, Sherkat and others noted that affiliation with Sectarian Protestant faiths and religiosity accounted for lower levels of support among African Americans (Sherkat et al. 2010). Egan and Sherrill noted a similar effect for African Americans in California on Proposition 8, but additional controls for partisanship and ideology reestablished the lower levels of support.

Several authors have found significant effects for religious affiliation with the greatest opposition to same-sex marriage coming from Protestants, especially evangelical Protestants, and those identifying themselves as born again (Bramlett 2012; Bushong 2011; Campbell and Monson 2008; Denton Jr. 2005; Drenner 2011; Ellison et al. 2011; Guth et al. 2006; Hines 2011; McKenzie and Rouse 2013; Miller 2009; Olson et al. 2006; Sherkat et al. 2010; Sherkat et al. 2011). The religious variable with the greatest impact across most of these studies was religious commitment or religiosity. Frequently measured by church attendance, the greater the level of religious commitment, the greater was opposition to same-sex marriage.

Finally, nearly all authors have noted the importance of ideological orientation and partisanship on support for and opposition to same-sex marriage. As of 2012, Republicans and conservatives generally opposed same-sex marriage by large margins (60 to 80% opposition); Democrats and liberals supported same-sex marriage by equally large margins (see, for example, Barth et al. 2009; Becker and Scheufele 2009; Becker 2012a).

Most of these conclusions have been based on single, cross-sectional surveys or exit polls. Several authors have examined the change in attitudes over time. Using surveys by the Pew Re-

search Center, Brewer and Wilcox noted small but consistent reductions in opposition to same-sex marriage and civil unions from 1988 to 2005 (Brewer and Wilcox 2005). Crehan and Rick-enbacker (2006–2007) analyzed the issue frames used by liberal and conservative news magazines noting a significant decline in the use of religious and morality arguments by both types of magazines and an increasing use of social scientific arguments and rights-based arguments by both between 1996 and 2006.

Significantly, Baunach (2012) concluded from a cross-sectional time-series analysis of General Social Survey data from 1988 to 2010 that opposition to same-sex marriage declined from 1988 to 2010. More significantly, in 1988, opposition to same-sex marriage was broadly based with support isolated to a few subgroups in the population. By 2010, support for same-sex marriage was more broadly based with opposition isolated to a few subgroups. These changes reflected a cultural shift in public attitudes (Baunach 2012, 376).

Research Design and Methodology

Most of the research on California attitudes is cross-sectional, focusing on a single survey or a single election. The few longitudinal studies have a national focus. To test the impact of issue framing in the same-sex marriage debate and expand our knowledge of changing attitudes in California, I examined two interrelated research questions: (1) Is the gradual shift in public opinion noted by the Pew Research Center at the national level present among California voters? (2) Are the factors affecting attitudes toward same-sex marriage the same in California and the United States?

Data Sets

To examine these questions, I have drawn California data from 10 surveys conducted by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) between 2005 and 2013.¹ I selected these surveys because they asked a consistent question on support for same-sex marriage: Do you favor or oppose allowing gay and lesbian couples to be legally married? I excluded another six surveys (January 2000, February 2004, September 2006, June 2007, September 2011, and January 2013) because PPIC did not request marital status, religious affiliation, or both. The total weighted N for the entire data set was 19,432. The total weighted N using listwise deletion of missing data was 16,379.

I have drawn U.S. data from 33 surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center (29 surveys) and the National Opinion Research Center (The General Social Survey, four surveys) between 2005 and 2013.² To make the data sets comparable, I excluded the 14 surveys conducted prior to

¹ The surveys include Public Policy Institute of California, 2005; Public Policy Institute of California, 2008a; Public Policy Institute of California, 2008b; Public Policy Institute of California, 2009; Public Policy Institute of California, 2010a; Public Policy Institute of California, 2010b; Public Policy Institute of California, 2012a; Public Policy Institute of California, 2012b; Public Policy Institute of California, 2013a; and Public Policy Institute of California, 2013b.

² The 33 surveys were drawn from Pew Internet and American Life Project, Princeton Survey Research Associates International, 2012; Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d, 2009, 2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2013a, 2013b; Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, Pew Forum on Religion

2005. The total weighted N for the entire data set was 56,054. The total weighted N using list-wise deletion of missing data was 43,179.

Measurement

Dependent Variables

For the first research question, I examined the percentage supporting or strongly supporting same-sex marriage in the U.S. and California from 2005 to 2013.³ To evaluate the second research question, I used the PPIC survey question, “[Changing topics], [D]o you favor or oppose allowing gay and lesbian couples to be legally married? Opposition scored zero, support one. I recoded the dependent variable of both the General Social Survey question, “Homosexual couples should have the right to marry one another [Strongly agree to strongly disagree with neutral response]”, and the Pew Research Center question, “Do you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally? [No neutral response],” to zero for opposition, don’t know, neutral, or refused responses and one for any level of support.

Independent Variables

For the California data set, I used the standard set of demographics factors identified in the research reviewed above. I included gender (female dummy variable), age (65 and over dummy variable), education (coded in years completed), Latino (dummy variable), African American (dummy variable), marital status (married dummy variable), income in \$1,000s (measured at the midpoint of the range), partisanship (as % Democratic), and ideology (as % liberal).⁴ I used Protestant and Catholic dummy variables to measure religious affiliation.⁵ I identified Evangelical and fundamentalist respondents using the question: Would you describe yourself as a “born again” or evangelical Christian, or not. I used the California Department of Social Services definition of California regions to create a regional variable (California Department of Social Services 2002). In particular, I used dummy variables representing the Bay Area and Central/Southern Farm.⁶ I used the number of years from January 2000 (zero years) to measure changes in attitude over time.

I included an identical set of independent variables for the national sample. The analysis included gender (female dummy variable), age (65 and over dummy variable), education (coded in years completed), African American (dummy variable), Latino (dummy variable), marital status (married dummy variable), income in \$1,000s (measured at the midpoint of the range), partisanship (as % Democratic), and ideology (as % liberal). I used Protestant and Catholic dummy variables to measure religious affiliation.

and Public Life, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012a, 2012b; Pew Research Social and Demographic Trends, 2010; and Smith, et al., 2013.

³ The U.S. survey data are drawn from multiple surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center and the National Opinion Research Center. These data are summarized in footnote 3.

⁴ Both partisanship and ideology were recoded to run from 0 to 100%. Independents were coded at 50%.

⁵ Protestant included Protestant, Christian, Jehovah’s Witness, and Mormon. Catholic included Orthodox.

⁶ The Bay Area consisted of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Sonoma counties. Central/Southern Farm was Fresno, Imperial, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Monterey, San Benito, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Stanislaus, and Tulare counties.

Evangelical and fundamentalist respondents were identified using the question: Would you describe yourself as a “born again” or evangelical Christian, or not? I used the U.S. Census regions coded as Northeastern, Midwestern, and Western region dummy variables (the Southern region was the base category). The analysis used the number of years from February 1988 (zero years) to measure changes in attitude over time. The only difference in the sets of independent variables is the fact that the California sample has two region dummies and the U.S. sample has three.

Analysis

The first question evaluated graphic trend lines for the United States and California from 2005 to 2013. The second research question examined the effect of the demographic, religious, political, regional, and time variables on attitudes toward same-sex marriage for the period from 2005–2013 using separate logistic regressions on the California and U.S. samples.

Limitations

The research literature has emphasized the importance of contact with gays and lesbians as a moderating influence on attitudes toward gay rights. Haider-Markel and Joslyn highlighted the powerful relationship between religiosity and ideology and the selection of issue frames used to characterize homosexuality. The inconsistency with which the PPIC developed their questions made it impossible to directly assess the influence of either contact or attitudes toward homosexuality on opinions about same-sex marriage.

However, the close relationship between those attitudes and ideology suggests that at least some of the influence will appear in the coefficients for the variables. Religiosity is typically measured using church attendance; however, the church attendance question was not asked consistently in the PPIC sample. The effects of religiosity will be reflected to some degree in both ideology and in whether the respondent describes him or herself as born again.

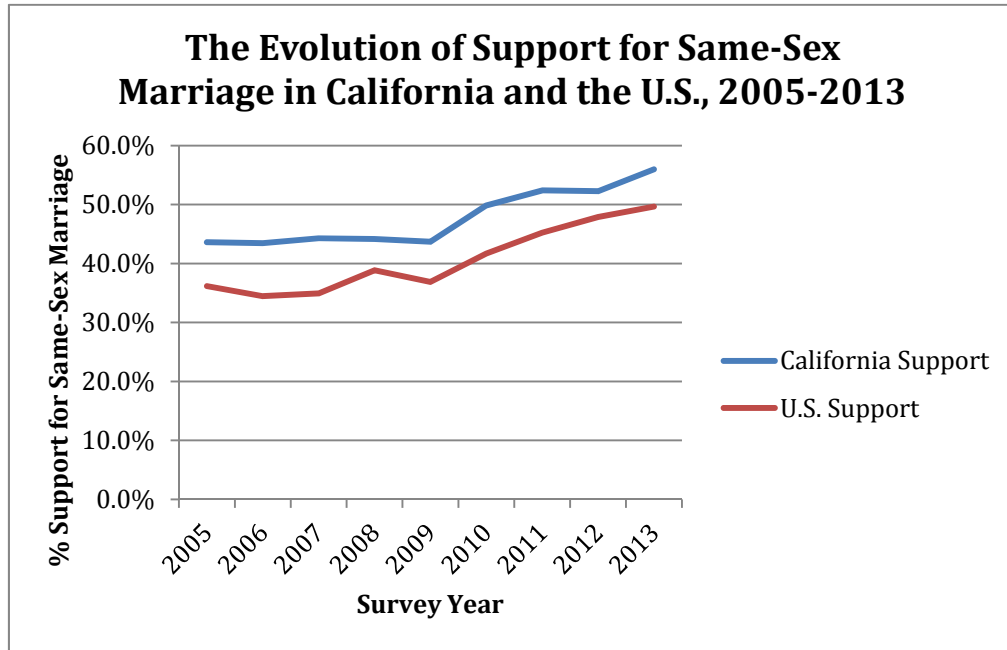
Results

Has Support for Same-Sex Marriage Increased in California and the U.S.?

The change in issue framing is apparent in the comparison between changes in U.S. attitudes toward same-sex marriage and the earlier and stronger shifts in California. **Figure 1** summarizes the trends in the United States and California between 2005 and 2013. The percentages are those favoring or strongly favoring same-sex marriage. Opposition, don’t know, and refused are included in the opposition category.

From 2005 to 2009, California and the U.S. as a whole experienced a fairly long period of stable minority support (about 44% in California and 36% at the national level). Support in both California and the United States increased after 2009. California support for same-sex marriage peaked at 55% in 2013. U.S. support peaked at 50% in 2013. U.S. support increased somewhat more rapidly than California support. The gap between U.S. and California support declined by about 0.3% per year (a difference that was not significant). The most interesting finding from Figure 1 is the consistent higher levels of support for same-sex marriage in California. The gap between U.S. and California opinion averaged about 7% throughout the period.

Figure 1. Increasing U.S. and California Support for Same-Sex Marriage, 2005-2013



The Dominant Influences on Support for Same-Sex Marriage in California and the U.S.

Same-Sex Marriage Attitudes in California

The results of the logistic regression of California attitudes toward same-sex marriage appear in [Table 1](#). The full model has a chi-square of 5,027, $df = 15$, and a significance of $p < 0.001$. Using the Cox and Snell pseudo- R^2 , the model explained roughly 25% of the variation in the attitudes toward same-sex marriage. The model correctly classified 73% of the cases and improved on the baseline correct prediction (50%) by 45%.

The explanation is somewhat lower than would be the case if the full model, including religiosity (church attendance), contact with gays and lesbians, and attitudes toward homosexuality, were included. However, these variables are not available across the PPIC surveys. Nevertheless, many of these influences appear in other variables including ideology and classification as born again.

The logistic regression results have been sorted by impact. The coefficients represent the multiplicative effect on the odds-ratio of a one-standard deviation unit change in the independent variable. The four dominant influences were ideology, Protestant affiliation, classification as born again, and partisanship.

A one-standard deviation increase in liberalism (about 29 points on a 100-point scale) nearly doubled the odds of support for same-sex marriage. A similar change in the proportion of Protestant affiliation (about 45%) decreased the odds of support by a factor of 1.45. A standard deviation increase in the proportion of the population identified as born again reduced the odds

Table 1. The Impact of Social, Political, Economic, Demographic, and Regional Factors on Attitudes toward Same-Sex Marriage in California, 2005–2013

Independent Variable	B	St. Dev.	Sig. ^a	Exp(B)	Exp(B*SD) ^b	Odds Rank ^c
Liberalism	.021	29.110	**	1.02	1.83	1.83
Protestant	-.776	.483	**	0.46	0.69	(1.45)
Born again?	-.816	.445	**	0.44	0.70	(1.44)
Democratic	.010	32.696	**	1.01	1.37	1.37
Married	-.579	.496	**	0.56	0.75	(1.33)
Catholic	-.564	.469	**	0.57	0.77	(1.30)
Years since 2000	.094	2.364	**	1.10	1.25	1.25
Over 65	-.625	.344	**	0.54	0.81	(1.24)
Female	.412	.500	**	1.51	1.23	1.23
African-American	-.824	.234	**	0.44	0.82	(1.21)
Income in 1000s	.003	63.069	**	1.00	1.18	1.18
Education	.059	2.785	**	1.06	1.18	1.18
Hispanic	-.250	.464	**	0.78	0.89	(1.12)
Bay Area	.220	.405	**	1.25	1.09	1.09
Central/Southern						
Farm	-.180	.322	*	0.84	0.94	(1.06)
	-					
Constant	2.520		**	0.08		

N = 16,379

Model: $\chi^2 = 5026.569$, $df = 15$, $p < 0.001$

Cox and Snell R² = 0.246

Percent correctly classified: 72.7%

Percent improvement over baseline (50.1%): 45.1%

^a Sig.: * $p < 0.005$; ** $p < 0.001$

^b Coefficients represent the change in the odds ratio produced a one-standard deviation unit change in the independent variable.

^c The relative rank of the effects of each independent variable. Reductive factors are in red and parentheses.

of support by a factor of 1.44. A standard deviation increase in Democratic Party identification increased the odds of support by 37% (1.37).

Although ideology, partisanship, and religion dominate the explanation, they are not the only significant influences. All of the variables are significant to a greater or lesser degree. Marital status and Catholicism both reduced the odds of support. The increase in support over time was significant. The odds of support increased for women, those with higher income, and those with higher education. The odds declined for African Americans and those over 65. Latino ethnicity and region had significant but substantively minor effects. Being Latino slightly reduced the odds of support. Living in the Bay Area increased the odds of support; whereas living in the

farming regions of the Central and Southern San Joaquin Valley slightly reduced the odds of support.

Same-Sex Marriage Attitudes in the U.S.

The results of the logistic regression of U.S. attitudes toward same-sex marriage appear in **Table 2**. The full model has a chi-square of 13,023, $df = 16$, and a significance of $p < 0.001$. Using the Cox and Snell pseudo- R^2 , the model explained roughly 26% of the variation in the attitudes toward same-sex marriage, very similar to the California results. The model correctly classified 73% of the cases (again, similar to California) and improved prediction over the baseline (58%) by 27%. The full model, including religiosity (church attendance), contact with gays and lesbians, and attitudes toward homosexuality, explained about 41% of the variation in attitudes toward same-sex marriage (Daniels 2014).

As with the California model, the logistic regression has been sorted by impact. The results are virtually identical. The same four factors dominate the U.S. model, albeit in somewhat different order: ideology, born-again identification, partisanship, and Protestant affiliation. The effects are also similar. A one-standard deviation increase in liberalism (25%) increased the odds of support for same-sex marriage by a factor of 1.7. A one-standard deviation increase in the proportion of the population identifying as born again (46%) decreased the odds of support for same-sex marriage by a factor of 1.6.

A similar increase in Democratic Party identification (34%) improved the odds of support by 1.55. The equivalent increase in Protestant affiliation (50%) reduced the odds of support by 1.34. The effects of time, marital status, gender, Catholicism, age, income, education, and African-American identification were very similar to their effects in California. Again, region and Latino ethnicity had the most limited effects on the odds of support for same-sex marriage.

Discussion

The clearest conclusion that can be drawn from the two analyses is the virtually identical influences of the social, economic, political, demographic, and geographical factors on the California and U.S. samples. If the region variables are excluded because they represent different regional breakdowns, the correlation between the standard deviation effect coefficients for the California sample and the U.S. sample is 0.97 (with an r-square of 0.94). In both models, ideology, partisanship, and religion (affiliation and born again) dominate the model; Latino ethnicity and region have the least influence.

Some variation does exist. The influences of partisanship and ideology are more nearly equal in the U.S. sample versus the California sample. Marital status is more influential in the California sample. By contrast, education is more influential in the U.S. sample. As noted above, the time coefficient is larger in the U.S. sample than in the California sample, reinforcing the degree to which the two sets of opinion are converging. In general, however, the estimates in the two samples are very stable and very similar to one another. This similarity suggests that the forces producing increasing support for same-sex marriage are generally similar across nearly all regions and groups.

Conclusion

The data clearly suggest that the issue frame on same-sex marriage has changed from traditional morality to equality especially from 2010 on. The result has been a rapid increase in sup-

Table 2. The Impact of Social, Political, Economic, Demographic, and Regional Factors on Attitudes toward Same-Sex Marriage in the U.S., 2005–2013

Independent Variable	B	St. Dev.	Sig. ^a	Exp(B)	Exp(B*SD) ^b	Odds Rank ^c
Liberalism	.021	24.957	**	1.02	1.70	1.70
Born again?	-1.042	0.462	**	0.35	0.62	(1.62)
Democrat	.013	34.100	**	1.01	1.55	1.55
Protestant	-.580	.498	**	0.56	0.75	(1.34)
Years since 1988	.119	2.382	**	1.13	1.33	1.33
Catholic	-.597	.431	**	0.55	0.77	(1.29)
Female	.503	.500	**	1.65	1.29	1.29
Over 65	-.705	.356	**	0.49	0.78	(1.29)
Education	.088	2.813	**	1.09	1.28	1.28
African-American	-.678	.329	**	0.51	0.80	(1.25)
Married	-.365	.495	**	0.69	0.83	(1.20)
Northeast	.377	.385	**	1.46	1.16	1.16
Income in 1000s	.003	47.326	**	1.00	1.14	1.14
West	.267	.414	**	1.31	1.12	1.12
Midwest	.147	.419	**	1.16	1.06	1.06
Hispanic	-.117	.327	*	0.89	0.96	(1.04)
Constant	-5.216		*****	0.01		

N = 43,279

Model: $\chi^2 = 13022.601$, df = 16, p < 0.001

Cox and Snell R² = 0.260

Percent correctly classified: 73.3%

Percent improvement over baseline (57.9%): 26.6%

^a Sig.: * p < 0.005; ** p < 0.001

^b Coefficients represent the change in the odds ratio produced a one-standard deviation unit change in the independent variable.

^c The relative rank of the effects of each independent variable. Reductive factors are in red and parentheses.

port for same-sex marriage. The change clearly happened earlier in California. The universality of the change in attitudes is reflected in the virtually identical effects of the social, economic, political, demographic, and geographical factors in California and the United States.

This article asked two initial research questions about the evolution of the attitudes of California citizens toward same-sex marriage: (1) Have attitudes toward same-sex marriage in California matched the U.S. trends? (2) What were the dominant influences on attitudes toward same-sex marriage in California and United States? The answer to the first question is yes, especially after 2009. Support for same-sex marriage increased by 13 percentage points from 2005 to 2013 in both California and the United States as a whole.

More generally, attitudes toward same-sex marriage arise from ideological, partisan, and religious predispositions. Democrats, liberals, and the less religious all tend to support gay marriage with greater intensity. Protestants, Catholics, and especially those who describe themselves as born again are far more opposed to same-sex marriage. Demographically, opposition to same-sex marriage is concentrated among men, those over 65, married individuals, Latinos, and African Americans. Higher education and higher-income individuals have greater support.

These conclusions are essentially identical to conclusions about the relative influence of factors at the national level. One author (Daniels 2014) has concluded that “the dominant positive influences were ideology (liberalism), partisanship (Democratic intensity), change over time, education, and gender (female). The dominant negative effects included religious intensity (church attendance), born-again identification, Protestant affiliation, and Catholic affiliation.”

More generally, I conclude that Dawn Baunach’s conclusions about the shifting nature of support for same-sex marriage apply to California as well as across the country (Baunach 2012). Support for same-sex marriage has shifted from a small set of isolated support groups to a more broad-based coalition in California. Opposition to same-sex marriage now appears to be increasingly isolated across a handful of groups.

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