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University of Nevada, Reno

Demographic Correlates Associated with LGBT Rights in the United States

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

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science

by

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Abstract

Research regarding lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights in the United States is limited because the LGBT movement is still young in the U.S. Most research on the matter explores attitudes toward the LGBT community by identifying demographic correlates that are associated with either positive or negative attitudes toward the LGBT community. This study tests to see which demographic correlates explain why the number of LGBT rights vary from state to state. The primary test used in this study is multiple regression analysis. The findings demonstrate that religiosity, political party affiliation, and the percentage of people within a state who identify as being White are the only significant demographic correlates that contribute to the number of rights states have in support of the LGBT community. The aforementioned variables are the only demographic correlates affecting the number of rights in support of the LGBT community, while attitudes toward the LGBT community are affected by a greater number of variables.

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Introduction

Twenty-one states and Washington D.C. outlaw discrimination based on sexual orientation. Nineteen states and Washington D.C. allow same-sex couples to adopt children. Eighteen states and Washington D.C. allow second parent adoptions by same-sex couples. Sixteen states and Washington D.C. outlaw discrimination based on gender identity. Only nine states and Washington D.C. authorize same-sex marriages within their borders. Why is there variation among the states with respect to the number of rights afforded to people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT)? This paper will explore which factors contribute to the number of rights afforded to the LGBT community in the United States.

“It is of great importance in a republic not only to guard the society against the oppression of its rulers, but to guard one part of the society against the injustice of the other part. Different interests necessarily exist in different classes of citizens. If a majority be united by a common interest, the rights of the minority will be insecure” (Madison, 1788). James Madison wrote these famous lines in the 51st of the *Federalist Papers*. Madison argues that the Federal Government is responsible for protecting minority groups from injustices caused by majority factions. Protecting the minority from the majority has not been the case with respect to LGBT rights in the United States, however. Marriage equality has been one of the most difficult rights for LGBT individuals to gain in the United States. States have banned same-sex marriage by means of ballot initiatives, referenda, and legislation. In the United States, laws regarding rights for the LGBT community are determined by the state, so variation exists in terms of the number of rights afforded to LGBT people depending on which state they live in.

Today, same-sex marriage is still a highly debated issue. Less than one-fifth of the states in the country authorize same-sex marriage. On March 26, 2013 the United States Supreme Court heard oral arguments regarding California's Proposition 8 in *Hollingsworth, et al. v. Perry, et al* 12 U.S. 144. Proposition 8 is a statewide ban on same-sex marriage. While there are many possible decisions that could be handed down from the court, two possibilities are most ideal for opponents and proponents of marriage equality. For those who oppose same-sex marriage, the best possible outcome from this case is if the Supreme Court overturns the decision by the Ninth Circuit Court thereby upholding the ban on same-sex marriage. While supporters of same-sex marriage would be pleased if the Supreme Court ruled Proposition 8 unconstitutional, a decision by the Supreme Court that finds all bans on same-sex marriage to be unconstitutional is the best possible outcome; because supporters of LGBT rights would no longer have to battle for marriage equality in the United States. Until the Supreme Court decides that all bans on same-sex marriage are unconstitutional the states have the right not only to ban same-sex marriage, but also to choose not to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states.

For supporters of LGBT rights, *Hollingsworth, et al. v. Perry, et al* (12-144) is potentially problematic. In the first part of the oral arguments in the Proposition 8 case, the attorney for the petitioners and the justices primarily deal with the issue of standing. Standing is a legal term which means the ability to file a law suit in court. Justice Ginsberg asked whether or not the Supreme Court has ever granted standing to supporters of a ballot initiative. The answer to Justice Ginsberg's question was no. If supporters of marriage equality want the Supreme Court to determine that all bans on same-sex

marriages are unconstitutional, the issue of standing may be detrimental. If the petitioners lack standing in this case, the decision by the California Supreme Court will be upheld, and Proposition 8 will be overturned. While a decision by the Supreme Court holding that the petitioners lack standing is a good decision for same-sex couples who want the ability to get married in California, all other bans on same-sex marriage in the United States will remain in place. For those who want the United States Supreme Court to lift all bans on same-sex marriage, the petitioners will need to have standing to file the appeal.

Research

LGBT rights in the United States is a relatively new issue, so little research exists on the topic. This study is designed to answer one question: which factors contribute to variation in the number of rights that support the LGBT community from state to state? This paper begins by briefly describing the LGBT rights movement in the United States as a movement that has not always been about equal rights. This paper demonstrates that the LGBT community was faced with violence and hatred in the early stages of the LGBT rights movement. While the LGBT community today is still faced with violence, the movement has evolved not only to ask for fair treatment of the LGBT community, but also equal rights.

The relevant research for this study has been conducted to show which demographic factors contribute both to positive and negative attitudes about the LGBT community. This study uses those demographic correlates that contribute to attitudes toward the LGBT community to determine which ones have an effect on the number of LGBT rights in the United States. The primary test used in this paper is multiple regression analysis. This study uses religiosity as the primary independent variable. The

control variables are race/ethnicity, education, gender, political party affiliation, per capita income and age. The dependent variable in this study is a score assigned to each state called the LGBT Equality Index. The LGBT Equality Index is based on the number of rights each state has in support of the LGBT community. The results from the multiple regression analysis demonstrate that religiosity, political party affiliation, and the percentage of people who identify as White are the only significant demographic correlates affecting the number of rights a state has in support of the LGBT community.

Literature Review

LGBT Rights in the U.S.: A Brief History

The LGBT rights movement in the United States began in the 1950s with the founding of just three major groups; The Mattachine Society, ONE, and Daughters of Bilitis (Adam, Duyvendak, & Krouwel, 1999; Williams & Retter, 2003). The small push for change grew from three groups into a large movement in the United States consisting not only of a growing number of groups that support LGBT rights, but also of a number of groups that hope to stifle LGBT rights in the United States. The U.S was slow to see a demand for equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals. Many European countries began to see organizations push for LGBT rights in the late 1800s and early 1900s (Adam et al., 1999). When the movement in the United States finally began, several cities were more open than others to the prospect of sexual attraction to members of the same sex, and offered a more comfortable environment to the LGBT community (Adam et al., 1999).

As the LGBT community became more open in the United States, fear of these groups of people emerged (Adam et al., 1999). Fear by the general public and the

government, therefore, is one of the earliest attitudes toward the LGBT community to manifest in the United States. Congress passed a law in 1952 that prohibited “sex deviants” from crossing the borders into the United States (Adam et al., 1999). Congress’ passage of laws like the 1952 law prohibiting “sex deviants” from coming to the country, essentially labeled LGBT people as sex-deviants and led to nationwide unfair treatment of the LGBT community in employment and in the public realm (Adam et al., 1999). The efforts of newly established LGBT advocacy groups such as the Mattachine Society, One, and Daughters of Bilitis were important, but did not immediately solve the problems faced by the LGBT community in the United States in the 1950s.

In the 1960s the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) began to challenge anti-LGBT laws in the courts (Williams & Retter, 2003). The LGBT movement in the 1960s faced notable adversity from law enforcement officials. Police raided and shut down gay bars in the United States (Williams & Retter, 2003). Some officers stood outside the bars to intimidate the patrons so customers would not enter (Williams & Retter, 2003). The ACLU handled cases like these in the 1960s, where LGBT people were intimidated or even physically harmed. The end of the 1960s brought considerable attention to the LGBT movements in the United States. On July 28, 1969 police officers raided a gay bar in New York called the Stonewall Inn (Adam et al., 1999; Hunt, 1999; Myers, 2003). The police arrested the patrons of the bar, which was not an unusual action by the police at the time, and a fight broke out between the customers and the police (Adam et al., 1999). This riot is definitely not the beginning of the LGBT rights movement, but it helped the movement gain support, and probably opposition as well (Adam et al., 1999; Williams & Retter, 2003). Attitudes toward the LGBT community in the 50s and 60s were hostile.

The government, the police, and the citizens of the United States harbored anti-LGBT attitudes in the early stages of the LGBT rights movement.

Grassroots activism for LGBT people became more important than ever in the 1970s. The formation of more groups that supported the LGBT rights movement helped individuals to organize and protest issues that negatively affected the LGBT community. The Los Angeles Gay Liberation Front (GLF), for example, discovered that a particular conference would show a video of gay men undergoing electroshock therapy, a therapy designed to decrease physical attraction between men (Williams & Retter, 2003). Several of the members of the GLF attended the conference and shouted “barbarism” when the men in the videos were electrocuted (Williams & Retter, 2003). This group and many others like the National Gay Task Force and the Lambda Legal Defense Fund worked to combat negative actions taken toward the LGBT community in the United States.

Aside from creating national groups and legal groups designed to protect LGBT people and end sodomy laws in the U.S., proponents of the LGBT rights movement sought assistance from the Democratic Party (Adam et al., 1999). The attempt to gain support from the Democratic Party ultimately failed in the 1970s, probably because politicians would lose considerable constituent support by taking stances that supported the LGBT community. Since support by the Democratic Party did not occur in the way the movement would have liked, supporters of the LGBT rights movement worked to elect openly gay individuals to the government (Adam et al., 1999). One of the most notable, openly gay individuals to be elected to public office was Harvey Milk. Milk, elected to the Board of Supervisors in San Francisco in 1977, was in a position to make LGBT rights issues a national issue through speeches and advocating for pro-LGBT

legislation (Adam et al., 1999; Williams & Retter, 2003). Dan White, a former policeman and former member of the Board of Supervisors in San Francisco, murdered Harvey Milk in 1978. The jury convicted White for voluntary manslaughter instead of murder, by utilizing a controversial legal strategy that has come to be known as the “Twinkie Defense¹” (Williams & Retter, 2003). The voluntary manslaughter verdict outraged the LGBT community, causing many to riot in the streets of San Francisco (Williams & Retter, 2003). The outrage sparked by this decision combined with the work that Milk dedicated his last few years helped to politicize the issues faced by the LGBT community. Once the issue became politicized, it became easier for supporters of LGBT rights to shape attitudes toward LGBT people and advance the LGBT movement.

Probably one of the biggest setbacks for the LGBT movement in the United States was the rising awareness of HIV/AIDS in the United States in the 1980s. HIV/AIDS affected both gay and straight men in the U.S., but was considered to be a “gay disease” by many (Adam et al., 1999). Since gay men became associated with HIV/AIDS, negative attitudes toward LGBT people, as well as complete avoidance of contact with the LGBT community increased in the 1980s (Adam et al., 1999). While HIV/AIDS did affect both gay and straight men in the United States, there was an HIV/AIDS epidemic in the LGBT community (Adam et al., 1999).

While HIV/AIDS persisted in the 1980s, the LGBT movement still focused on its political agenda (Adam et al., 1999). Activists focused on civil rights legislation and anti-discrimination laws that were designed to protect LGBT individuals (Adam et al., 1999).

¹ The “Twinkie Defense” has become the name for the position taken by Dan White’s attorneys during the course of his trial. The attorney’s argued that White faced depression caused by junk food, which diminished his ability to distinguish between right and wrong.

Furthermore, a large number of national LGBT organizations were created in the 1980s including Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) and the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) (Adam et al., 1999). In the 1980s the LGBT movement received considerable national political attention, and new LGBT advocacy groups worked to keep the issue focused nationally rather than in small local communities. The LGBT rights movement still faced many obstacles in the 1980s. As national LGBT activist groups grew, so did opposition for the movement. The Religious Right gained momentum in fighting back against LGBT activists in the 1980s. The Religious Right refers to several social and political movements from the 1970s and 1980s composed mainly of Christians and the more conservative members of other religious sects such as Jews (Berlet, 2008). There are a number of national and local groups dedicated to preventing the passage of pro-LGBT legislation in the United States through tactics like grassroots campaigns, such as the Westborough Baptist Church. Because these national groups, both for and against LGBT rights, entered the political arena on a large scale in the 1980s, U.S. citizens became more aware of the issues, and LGBT rights gained more national attention than they had in the past.

The 1990s was the start of a particularly difficult time in LGBT rights history that continues to this day. Members of the LGBT community and LGBT rights activists spent a considerable amount of resources fighting the repeal of LGBT rights in various places around the country (Adam et al., 1999). In 1992, Measure 9 was on the ballot in Oregon, which not only attempted to categorize homosexuality, pedophilia, sadism and masochism as being similar activities, but also made it explicit that the Oregon government would recognize homosexuality as “wrong, unnatural, and perverse” (Adam

et al., 1999; Williams & Retter, 2003). Measure 9 ultimately failed. The defeat of Measure 9 is one example of a victory for LGBT rights activists, but in Colorado, LGBT rights supporters faced defeat at the voting booth in 1992. A Colorado ballot measure passed that repealed existing supportive LGBT rights laws. The Colorado ballot measure also prohibited the passage of those laws supporting the LGBT community in the future (Adam et al., 1999). The passage of the Colorado ballot measure was a defeat for the LGBT community. Soon after the passage of the Colorado initiative, law suits were filed and the case would be appealed to the United States Supreme Court (Adam et al., 1999). The Supreme Court found that Colorado could not ban the LGBT community from attempting to gain rights through legislative action (Adam et al., 1999).

The Issues Facing the LGBT Community Today

The late 1990s and 2000s have been marked by a notably difficult fight for advocates of LGBT rights. Marriage equality has been given much attention in the last fifteen years, and it will likely continue to be an issue in the future. In the early 1990s the House of Representatives passed the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) by a vote of 342-67, and the Senate passed DOMA by a vote of 85-14 (Perkins 2004). In 1996, President Bill Clinton signed the Defense of Marriage Act. If President Clinton had vetoed the bill, the House of Representatives would have overridden the veto. With no signing ceremony, President Clinton reluctantly signed the bill into law (Perkins 2004). The Defense of Marriage Act not only upheld the right of states to ban same-sex marriage within their borders, but also allowed for states not to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states (Myers, 2003; The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life). The passage of the Defense of Marriage Act has made the battle for marriage equality difficult because

LGBT couples married in one state would have to remain in that state for their marriages to be recognized.

Since the passage of DOMA, nearly every state has passed a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage. These amendments to state Constitutions have presented obstacles to LGBT rights activists, but in 2004, proponents of marriage equality had a victory when Massachusetts authorized same-sex marriages (The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life). Since 2004, when same-sex marriage became legal in Massachusetts, advocates of marriage equality have had a number of victories. Same-sex marriages are now performed in 10 places in the United States; Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Maryland, Washington, Iowa, and the District of Columbia. The 2012 election was important to LGBT rights activists because it was an unusual election in terms of same-sex marriage. Minnesota became the first state in the U.S. to vote against an amendment to the state constitution that defined marriage as being between a man and a woman within its borders (Shapiro, 2012). Furthermore, Maine, Maryland, and Washington became the first states in the country to legalize same-sex marriage via popular referenda (Shapiro, 2012). The 2012 election indicates that attitudes toward the LGBT community as well as attitudes toward marriage equality are generally becoming more supportive.

The issues that face the LGBT community are still numerous today despite several advancements made with respect to the LGBT rights movement over the years. There are a large number of civil rights groups that have identified the issues that face the LGBT community, and are committed to the advancement of equal rights for LGBT individuals. One of the many issues that the LGBT community deals with is

discrimination in the work place and public places (American Civil Liberties Union; Human Rights Campaign). It is illegal to discriminate in the workplace based on race, gender and religion (Civil Rights Act of 1964). Sexual orientation however, is still a legal reason to discriminate in the workplace in some states. Another important issue that should be noted is the ability for LGBT couples to adopt children (American Civil Liberties Union; Human Rights Campaign). A number of organizations attempt to demonstrate why LGBT parents would be unfit to raise a child (American Civil Liberties Union; Human Rights Campaign). No national law exists that allows same-sex couples to adopt children, so the states are left to legislate on the matter of same-sex couple adoption. Discrimination against LGBT students and teachers is another issue that LGBT rights activists strive to overcome (American Civil Liberties Union; Human Rights Campaign). Marriage equality is the issue that receives the most attention in the United States (American Civil Liberties Union; Human Rights Campaign). It should also be noted that some states do not allow for civil unions let alone marriage, which is also harmful to the LGBT community. Marriage equality, same-sex couple adoption, and anti-discrimination laws are just a number of issues that LGBT activist groups strive to improve, and these are the issues that will be the focus of this thesis.

Groups that Support LGBT and LGBT Opponents

As of 2013, there are a number of groups that support LGBT rights in the United States. Some of the most notable supporters of LGBT rights are the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Human Rights Campaign (HRC), Amnesty International and Freedom House. The ACLU, HRC, Amnesty International and Freedom House are just a few of the largest groups dedicated to the advancement of LGBT in the United States and

around the world. How these groups have framed arguments is important to understanding how they sway the opinions of the public. The ACLU presents the issue of LGBT rights as one that is constitutional. By presenting its arguments as constitutional rights to equality and privacy, the ACLU attempts to make a legal argument, rather than one that appeals to emotions. The Human Rights Campaign also works to gain equal rights for LGBT people, but its tactics are different from the ACLU. The HRC uses grassroots campaigns to promote LGBT rights, and elect to public office those who will support their cause. A number of strategies are used to sway the public opinion about LGBT rights at a given time.

There are also a number of groups that work hard to oppose the LGBT movement in the United States. Abiding Truth Ministries, American Family Association, Americans for Truth About Homosexuality, Family Research Council, and the National Organization for Marriage are just a few of the groups that promote anti-LGBT legislation in the United States and work to limit the rights of the LGBT community in the U.S. and throughout the world. Groups that oppose LGBT rights use a particular rhetoric when they state their mission. The AFA appeals to religion and states that they “promote virtue” and work to “strengthen the moral foundations of America.” When groups like the AFA claim to be fulfill a religious mission, citizens in the United States can identify with them. But like many LGBT activist groups, not every group that opposes LGBT rights deal with the movement in its entirety. The National Organization for Marriage focusses just on the issue of marriage equality. The mission of the National Organization for marriage is “to protect marriage and the faith communities that sustain it.” By using the word “protect” the National Organization is making a statement that it is fulfilling a noble

mission. Activist groups representing all sides of these issues make arguments that each side must then counter in one way or another. Groups that try to prevent the advancement of LGBT rights in the United States have had success in the past. Attitudes toward the LGBT community are changing, however, and therefore LGBT rights activists may experience more success in the future.

Research on Attitudes toward the LGBT Community in the United States

Since the 1970s, research has been conducted to find correlates in attitudes toward homosexuality. Almost all of the information regarding attitudes toward the LGBT community comes from surveys conducted by researchers asking questions about homosexuality in general, or issues that affect the LGBT community. By using these surveys, researchers interested in LGBT issues in the United States have determined several correlates and demographic factors that can predict attitudes toward homosexuality and LGBT issues in the United States. Understanding correlates and predictors of positive attitudes toward homosexuality in the United States can lead to the identification of why some states pass more legislation that favor LGBT rights than other states.

Hicks and Lee note several variables that influence attitudes toward the LGBT community in the U.S. Factors that influence attitudes toward the LGBT community are, “sex, sex role attitudes, education, religion and religiosity, right-wing authoritarianism, region of residency, personal contacts with homosexuals and bisexuals, age and cohort effects, and whether the dependent variable was homosexuals in general or specifically gay men or lesbians” (Hicks & Lee, 2006). The Contact Thesis argues that contact with groups that are considered minority groups makes those minority groups more tolerable

to the majority (Overby & Barth, 2002). Herek notes that known personal contact with the LGBT community is the biggest factor that contributes to supportive attitudes toward homosexuality (Herek & Glunt, 1993). Studies show that heterosexual attitudes are more supportive of the LGBT community if that person has contact with LGBT people (Herek & Capitanio, 1996). It is interesting to note that Herek reports, “Interpersonal contact was more likely to be reported by respondents who were highly educated, politically liberal, young, and female” all of which are demographics associated with more positive attitudes toward the LGBT community (Herek & Glunt, 1993). While this study will not examine personal contact with people who identify as LGBT, it should be noted that personal contact with the LGBT community is an important factor that contributes to attitudes toward the LGBT community.

A strong relationship exists between a person’s age, and that person’s attitudes toward the LGBT community. The research shows that younger people have much more positive attitudes toward the LGBT community and issues such as same-sex marriage, than do older people (De Boer, 1978; Hicks & Lee, 2006; Sherkat, de Vries, & Creek, 2010). Aside from attitudes toward the LGBT community in general, research also shows that older age in men can be attributed to negative attitudes about adoption by same-sex couples (Averett, Strong-Blakeney, Nalavany, & Ryan, 2011). A survey from 1977 that De Boer references shows that a majority of younger people feel that homosexuals should have equal opportunity in the work place, while less than half of the survey respondents in the U.S. felt that the LGBT community should have equal working opportunities (De Boer, 1978). Similarly another poll shows that a larger percentage of younger respondents feel that homosexual relationships should be legal in the U.S. than older

respondents in 1997 (De Boer, 1978). The younger respondent attitudes toward homosexual relationships indicates a shift in attitudes toward LGBT individuals over time if a person's beliefs on matters of LGBT rights do not change as they get older.

Religiosity has proven to be one of the best indicators of attitudes toward homosexuality in the United States. Religiosity and religion have been measured in several different ways. Hicks for example created a scale to measure religiosity which is based on church attendance, how often the individual prays, and how often the individual reads the bible (Hicks & Lee, 2006). Hicks and Lee have determined that the more religious individuals are, the more likely they are to harbor anti-LGBT attitudes (Hicks & Lee, 2006). Other researchers have decided not to view all religions in aggregate, and instead elect to figure out which religions have more positive attitudes toward the LGBT community than others. Studies show that Protestants tend to have stronger views that homosexuality is morally wrong, Catholics are more tolerant of people who identify as LGBT, and Jews and people who are not affiliated with religion are the most tolerant of homosexuality (Olson, Cadge, & Harrison, 2006; Sherkat et al., 2010). Another study demonstrates that higher levels of religiosity are associated with negative attitudes toward same-sex couples adopting children, which is consistent with the theory that religiosity plays a part in negative attitudes about the LGBT community in general (Averett et al., 2011).

Gender also predicts attitudes toward the LGBT community. Men compared to women, generally have less favorable attitudes toward homosexuality and homosexuals (Herek, 1988). Herek notes that in general, heterosexual men have more negative attitudes toward gay men than lesbians, and heterosexual women compared to gay men,

have more negative attitudes toward lesbians (Herek, 1988). Women are not only more supportive of homosexuals in general, but women are also more supportive of same-sex marriage than men (Sherkat et al., 2010). Herek suggests that the gender differences in attitudes toward the LGBT community may be a result of social situations, and the different ways men and women experience other key correlates that are believed to have an effect on attitudes toward the LGBT community (Herek, 1988). However, no one correlate appears to have more of an effect on men and women's attitudes toward homosexuality than any other correlate (Herek, 1988).

The political party people identify with also has an influence on their attitudes toward the LGBT community in the U.S. Hicks and Lee note that party affiliation has a close relationship with political ideology in the United States (Hicks & Lee, 2006). Hicks and Lee found that respondents to a survey had more anti-LGBT attitudes if they were Republicans rather than Democrats (Hicks & Lee, 2006). In the study conducted by Averett et al., conservative political ideology was found to be associated with negative attitudes about same-sex couple adoption (Averett et al., 2011). These findings are consistent with prior research regarding attitudes toward the LGBT community and political ideology.

Another variable that contributes to attitudes toward homosexuality is race. Hicks and Lee demonstrated that whites were more tolerant of the LGBT community than non-whites (Hicks & Lee, 2006). The authors Sherkat, De Vries and Creek attribute the lack of tolerance for same-sex marriage by African Americans to the fact that many African Americans identify with religions that are typically not tolerant of people who identify as LGBT (2010). Schulte and Battle attribute negative attitudes in general by the African

American community to be one of religiosity rather than ethnicity (2004). It should also be noted that attitudes toward same-sex marriage have become more positive amongst whites over time (Sherkat et al., 2010). Gregory Lewis conducted a study that demonstrated blacks are less tolerant of homosexuality than whites, but blacks are generally supportive of civil rights for LGBT community (2003).

The level of education a person received also ties into attitudes toward homosexuality. Researchers concede that the higher the education level a person has attained the more likely he or she is to have positive attitudes toward the LGBT community (Hicks & Lee, 2006; Sherkat et al., 2010). A study conducted by Averett et al. demonstrated that the three groups they tested (married men, married women, and single women) had more negative attitudes toward adoption by same-sex couples when they had low levels of education (2011). The 2011 study by Averett et al. is consistent with the premise that lower levels of education are attributed to negative attitudes toward homosexuality in general. Furthermore, a study conducted by Julianne Ohlander, Jeanne Batalova, Judith Treas had findings consistent with generally accepted principles about education and its relationship to tolerance of LGBT individuals (2005). Ohlander et al. found that college educated people are far more likely to tolerate the LGBT community than those who only attain a high school diploma (2005).

Income levels are a factor that is measured, but not typically found to be important. The regression analysis conducted by Hicks and Lee shows a weak relationship between income and attitudes toward LGBT individuals. Sherkat, however, found that income becomes a significant factor when controlled for religious factors. Additionally, it is reasonable to think that the presence of a significant relationship

between income and attitudes toward the LGBT community can be attributed to other factors such as education.

While there are still key variables that can predict negative attitudes toward homosexuality, research indicates that attitudes are becoming more positive over time. From October 2000 to May 2004, opposition to civil unions decreased (Avery et al., 2007). Similarly, opposition to same-sex marriage decreased from 1988 and 2006 (Avery et al., 2007; Baunach, 2011). In addition, attitudes regarding equal work opportunities for the LGBT community, as well as attitudes toward legalizing same-sex relationships have become increasingly positive from 1977 to 2002 (Avery et al., 2007). This information indicates a steady increase in positive attitudes toward the LGBT community over time. In a study conducted by Alan Yang, however, results show that shifts in attitudes toward the LGBT community are specific to particular issues. For example, Yang purports that a majority of people have felt that homosexuality was morally wrong since the 1970s (1997). At first glance it may look as though attitudes are not changing; however, Yang notes that the number of people who believe homosexuality is something one is born with rather than a choice has increased dramatically (Yang, 1997). Yang is correct to point out that shifts in relationships can exist in one area but not others, which explains why most states may have one type of LGBT law, but not others.

This literature review demonstrates the LGBT community wanted to be treated fairly in the early stages of the LGBT rights movement. Today, proponents of the LGBT rights movement not only ask for nonviolence toward the LGBT community, but also equal rights for LGBT individuals. The LGBT community and civil rights groups argue that marriage equality, non-discrimination laws for LGBT people, and the ability to adopt

children are rights that people should have, and the Federal and State governments are infringing on the rights of the LGBT community.

This paper will continue by identifying which factors contribute to the variation in the number of rights each state has in support of the LGBT community. Based on previous research, religiosity, education, age, race, political ideology, and gender should be factors that contribute to the number of laws a state has in support of the LGBT community. The primary test used in this study is multiple regression analysis. By using multiple regression analysis, significant demographic correlates with respect to the number of rights a state has in support of LGBT individuals will be identified.

Methodology

This study is designed to see if those demographic correlates that are said to be predictors of attitudes toward the LGBT community, have a relationship to the number of rights a state has that favor LGBT individuals. Previous studies have concluded that certain demographic factors can be used to predict positive or negative attitudes toward LGBT. This study assumes that the number of rights an LGBT individual has in any given state is influenced by the attitudes of those citizens within that state, and that those attitudes are influenced by certain demographic correlates. It is fair to assume that the number of rights a state has in support of the LGBT community is influenced by the attitudes of the state's citizens. The legislature in every state will pass laws that reflect the desires of their constituents. If the legislatures do not pass laws that reflect the desires of their constituents the people by means of direct democracy will pass legislation that is desirable. The primary tests used in this study are multiple regressions using the equation

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_{51} X_{51} + \epsilon.$$

The dependent variable in this study is a score assigned to each state, which I have named the LGBT Equality Index. The index assigns every state a score (0-7.5). The higher the score a state has, the more rights for LGBT individuals that state has in place. Conversely, states with lower scores have fewer rights for LGBT people in place. The components that make up the LGBT Equality Index are the rights listed as important by various civil rights groups such as the Human Rights Campaign and the American Civil Liberties Union. The rights that comprise the LGBT Equality Index and the point values for each right are listed as follows:

- State authorizes same-sex marriages (1.5)
- State recognizes same-sex marriage performed in other states (1)
- State recognizes civil unions (1)
- State outlaws discrimination based on sexual orientation (1)
- State outlaws discrimination based on gender identity (1)
- State allows same-sex couples to adopt children (1)
- State allows gay and lesbian individuals to adopt children (1).

If the state authorizes same-sex marriages it receives 1.5 points rather than 1 point. The increased point value for states that authorize same-sex marriages was conducted so that states that authorize same-sex marriages receive more points than those states that recognize civil unions. The assumption is that marriage provides more equality for LGBT couples than do civil unions. Since marriage provides more quality for LGBT couples than civil unions, same-sex marriage is perceived as more important, and therefore receives the highest point value. Additionally, states where each right has only been successfully exercised in some counties, rather than statewide, receive 0.5 points instead

of a full point. Each state's points are added up, and this total number is the states' LGBT Equality Index score. The Human Rights Campaign's website has numerous resources where the information necessary to assign each state a LGBT Equality Index score can be found.

The primary independent variable in this study is religiosity (belief in God or not). The control variables are race/ethnicity (White, Black, Asian, Hispanic), education (high school diploma or higher and bachelor's degree or higher), gender (male or female), political party affiliation (lean Republican or lean Democrat), per capita income and age (percent people over 65 years old). The information on race/ethnicity, education, gender, income and age were all obtained from the United States Census Bureau website. The information on religiosity was obtained from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life Website, while the information on political party affiliation was obtained from a poll conducted by the Gallup organization in 2008 (State of the States: Political Party Affiliation, 2008). All of these items were selected as independent variables for this study because previous studies on attitudes toward the LGBT community, for the most part, agree that these are important factors in predicting public attitudes toward the LGBT community. Previous studies on attitudes toward the LGBT community have generally used surveys to collect data, which has proven to be an excellent method for identifying demographic correlates used to predict attitudes toward homosexuality. I did not want to use surveys to collect data in this study, because my cross-section is large, and it is unlikely I would receive enough surveys to be representative of the entire United States. By using information from the census, I am able to use a cross-section large enough to be

representative of the United States. The previous studies have laid the foundation for which correlates I test, as well as the results I can expect in my research.

Measurements

The data on religiosity come from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. This study uses information from the surveys conducted by the organization. The study conducted by the organization uses 35,556 from every state plus Washington D.C. The organization asked participants, “Do you believe in God or a universal spirit? [IF YES, ASK:] “How certain are you about this belief? Are you absolutely certain, fairly certain, not too certain, or not at all certain?” Once the answers to the question were obtained, the organization created a map that breaks down the states’ response to the question. I recorded the percentage of people who believe in God with any certainty and the percentage of people who do not believe in God for all fifty states and Washington D.C. For the race and ethnicity variable, I recorded the percentage of people who are listed in the most recent census as White, Black, Hispanic, or Asian for all fifty states and Washington DC. The education data is also obtained from the United States Census Website (State and Country Quickfacts, 2010). I recorded the percentage of people who earned a high school diploma and the percentage of people who earned a bachelor’s degree or higher for all fifty states and Washington DC. The income variable is measured as the states’ per capita income from the year prior to when the census was taken. The age variable is measured as the percentage of the population over the age of 65 for all fifty states and Washington DC. The party affiliation data come from a tracking poll conducted by the Gallup organization in 2008. The survey was conducted using telephone interviews. There were 355,334 respondents, who were all adults over the age

18 years old. The organization created a table that shows the percentage of people who lean Democrat and lean Republican in all 50 states and Washington D.C. I used the percentages from the Gallup poll as the data for the party affiliation control variable. The model that will be produced from the tests will show which factors are significant to the number of laws a state has that support the LGBT community, as well as which factors are not significant.

Hypotheses

Religiosity should prove to be an important demographic factor in this study. A study conducted by Hicks and Lee demonstrates that the more religious people are, the more likely they are to harbor anti-LGBT attitudes (Hicks & Lee, 2006). Similarly other studies have shown that while people of some religions tend to be more supportive of LGBT rights than others, I still suspect religiosity in general has an impact on the number of laws in support of LGBT rights a state may have. The hypotheses for this paper are:

- The null hypothesis: no significant relationship exists between the percentage of people within a state that believe in God, and the number of rights LGBT people have within that state.
- The alternative hypothesis: a strong, negative relationship exists between the percentage of people within a state that believe in God, and the number of rights LGBT people have within that state.
- The null hypothesis: no significant relationship exists between the percentage of people within a state that do not believe in God, and the number of rights LGBT people have within that state.

- The alternative hypothesis: a strong, positive relationship exists between the percentage of people within a state that do not believe in God, and the number of rights LGBT people have within that state.

Control Variables

Race:

While religiosity should have the biggest impact on the number of rights that support the LGBT within a state, several other variables are accounted for in this experiment. One of those variables is race/ethnicity. Hicks and Lee demonstrate that Whites were more tolerant of the LGBT community than people of other races (Hicks & Lee, 2006). However, if the study by Gregory Lewis is accurate, and Blacks generally support civil rights for the LGBT community, then race may not have a significant relationship with the number of supportive LGBT laws a state has. However, if race does have a significant impact on the dependent variable, it can be expected that states with a higher percentage of people who are white to have more rights for LGBT people than states with higher percentages of people who identify with a race other than white.

Education:

Another factor that is said to have an impact on attitudes toward the LGBT community is education. It can be expected that people with a higher education level will be more tolerant of homosexuality than people who are less educated (Sherkat et al., 2010). Since peoples' attitudes help shape legislation, it can be expected that states with a higher percentage of high school graduates will have a higher LGBT Equality Index score than states with lower high school diploma attainment rates. Additionally, since the study conducted by Ohlander et al. finds that college educated people are more likely to

tolerate homosexual sex than those who only attained a high school diploma, it can be expected that states with a higher percentage of college graduates will have a higher LGBT Equality Index score than states with a lower percentage of college graduates.

Gender:

Gender is accepted as a variable that contributes to attitudes toward LGBT individuals in the United States. Men generally have less supportive attitudes toward LGBT in general in the United States than women, and women are more supportive of same-sex marriage than men (Herek, 1988; Sherkat et al., 2010). Gender will, therefore, be a factor in the number of rights LGBT people have within a state. States with a higher percentage of males will likely have fewer rights in support of the LGBT community than states with a higher percentage of women.

Party Affiliation:

Political party affiliation is also a control variable in this experiment. This study uses party affiliation rather than political ideology, because the two have a close relationship (Hicks & Lee, 2006). Voter registration is based on party affiliation, and therefore when we see a trend in Republican voter attitudes, conservative attitudes will be relatively similar. Democratic attitudes and liberal attitudes can be assumed to be similar as well. States with a higher percentage of people who identify as Democrats will have a higher LGBT Equality Index score than states with a higher percentage of people who identify as Republicans.

Income:

Although previous studies have demonstrated a weak relationship between income and attitudes toward LGBT, it is possible that income may prove to be significant

when examined on a larger scale. However, based strictly on prior research no significant relationship will exist between the dependent variable and income.

Age:

Since younger people tend to have more positive attitudes toward the LGBT community than older people, it is reasonable to assume that states with a higher percentage of people over the age of 65 will have a lower LGBT Equality Index score than those states with a lower percentage of people over the age of 65.

Test

The first test in this study obtains the correlations between the LGBT Equality Index and the independent variables. The independent variable and control variables will be tested against the dependent variable in order to obtain a best fit regression line. Once the correlations are obtained, the primary tests used in this study, multiple regressions, can be conducted. Once the multiple regressions test is conducted and the levels of significance are obtained, it will be determined whether or not to reject the null hypotheses.

Analysis**LGBT Equality Index**

To begin, this study examines the differences in states' LGBT Equality Index scores. Table 1 lists each state and Washington D.C. in order from highest to lowest LGBT Equality Index score. The scores range from 0-7.5. Three states earn an LGBT Equality Index score of 0: Georgia, Mississippi, and Utah. Georgia, Mississippi, and Utah have a number of demographic factors in common. All three states have a percentage of people who believe in God equal to 95% or higher (The Pew Forum on Religion and

Public Life). The Gallup Poll also indicates that Georgia, Mississippi, and Utah have percentages of people who lean Republican at 42%, 44%, and 55% respectively. Additionally, the last time any of these three states gave its electoral votes to a democratic nominee for president was in 1992 when Georgia's electoral votes went to Bill Clinton (Dave Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections). Five states and the Nation's Capital earn a perfect LGBT Equality Index score of 7.5: Connecticut, District of Columbia, Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont and Washington. Appendix B demonstrates that each one of the states with an LGBT Equality Index score of 7.5 had lower percentages of people who believe in God than each of the three states with an LGBT Equality Index score of zero (The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life). Furthermore, the Gallup poll measuring political party identification notes that the five states with an LGBT Equality Index score of 7.5 have percentages of people who lean Democrat at 53% or higher. Appendix C demonstrates the components that make up each states' LGBT Equality Index score.

Table 1: States and the Corresponding LGBT Equality Index Score

States	Index Score	States	Index Score
Connecticut	7.5	Alabama	1.5
District of Columbia	7.5	Alaska	1.5
Maine	7.5	Louisiana	1.5
Massachusetts	7.5	Texas	1.5
Vermont	7.5	Arizona	1
Washington	7.5	Florida	1
Iowa	7	Idaho	1
Maryland	6.5	Kansas	1
New Hampshire	6.5	Kentucky	1
New York	6.5	Michigan	1
California	6	Missouri	1
Illinois	6	Montana	1
Nevada	6	Nebraska	1
New Jersey	6	North Carolina	1
Oregon	6	North Dakota	1
Rhode Island	6	Ohio	1
Colorado	5	Oklahoma	1
Delaware	5	South Carolina	1
Hawaii	5	South Dakota	1
Minnesota	4	Tennessee	1
New Mexico	3.5	Virginia	1
Arkansas	3	West Virginia	1
Wisconsin	3	Wyoming	1
Indiana	2	Georgia	0
Pennsylvania	2	Mississippi	0
		Utah	0

The remaining four states that authorize same-sex marriage, but did not receive an LGBT Equality Index score of 7.5 are Iowa, Maryland, New Hampshire and New York. Iowa received a score of 7, while Maryland, New Hampshire and New York received a score of 6.5. Iowa's score of 7 was a result of second parent adoptions being authorized in only some districts within the state, while states receiving a score of 7.5 authorized second parent adoptions statewide. Maryland, New Hampshire and New York received a score of

6.5 because these states do not expressly outlaw discrimination based on gender identity, while states receiving a score of 7.5 do outlaw this type of discrimination. The only right afforded to LGBT people in states receiving a score of 1 was the ability to adopt children as a single gay or lesbian parent. States with a score above a 1 and below a 6.5 varied in terms of which rights were afforded to the LGBT community within their borders.

The LGBT Equality Index is not only the dependent variable in this study, but is also representative of the political nature of LGBT rights in the United States. There is considerable variation not only in the LGBT Equality Index scores among the several states, but also variation in which rights are present in each state. Variation among the states indicates that while the nation as a whole is aware of the LGBT movement in the United States, the issue of LGBT rights is not yet nationalized. The state governments are still charged with making laws with respect to LGBT rights in the United States. A shift may occur in the summer of 2013 from the state governments' legislating on rights for the LGBT community to the national government, should the United States Supreme Court determine that laws outlawing same-sex marriage are unconstitutional.

Correlation Analysis

The three demographic correlates having the strongest correlation with the LGBT Equality Index were percentage of people who believe in God ($r = -0.75$), percentage of people who do not believe in God ($r = 0.72$), and the percentage of people who lean Republican ($r = -0.73$). These three demographic correlates were the only correlates having a strong correlation with the LGBT Equality Index (strong being measured as the $r < -0.7$ or > 0.7). Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 12 in Appendix A demonstrate the strong correlation between these three variables and the LGBT Equality Index.

The variables that have a moderately strong correlation with the LGBT Equality Index are the percentage of people who obtained a bachelor's degree or higher ($r = 0.62$), percentage of people who lean Democrat ($r = 0.68$), and per capita income ($r = 0.66$). In this case, moderately strong is measured as a $r < -0.6$ or > 0.6 . The relationship between these variables is demonstrated by Figure 8, Figure 11, and Figure 13. The remaining demographic correlates had a weak correlational relationship with the LGBT Equality Index (weak measured as the $r < 0.6$ and > -0.6). Table 2 is a correlation matrix between each independent variable and the control variables with respect to the LGBT Equality Index.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

Variable	Correlation Coefficient LGBT Equality Index
Percentage of people who believe in God	-0.75*
Percentage of People Who do not believe in God	0.72
Percentage of people who identify as White	-0.06*
Percentage of people who identify as Black	-0.06
Percentage of people who identify as Asian	0.31*
Percentage of people who identify as Hispanic	0.16
Percentage of people who have obtained a high school diploma or higher	0.24
Percentage of people with a bachelor's degree or higher	0.62
Percentage of males	-0.24
Percentage of females	0.24
Percentage of people who lean Democrat	0.68*
Percentage of people who lean Republican	-0.73
Per capita money income	0.63
Percentage of people over the age of 65	0.11

* $p < 0.05$

While the correlation analysis does not control for other variables, the analysis does provide some insight on the relationship between these variables independently and the LGBT Equality Index. A strong correlation coefficient indicates that an association exists between the independent variable being tested and the LGBT Equality Index.

Belief in God:

The correlation coefficient for the percentage of people who believe in God and the LGBT Equality Index was -0.75. The correlation coefficient demonstrates that an association exists between the percentage of people who believe in God and the LGBT Equality Index. States with a higher percentage of people who believe in God tend to have a lower LGBT Equality Index score than states with a lower percentage of people who do not believe in God. The association between the LGBT Equality Index and the percentage of people who believe in God is in keeping with previous research. It is said that people who are more religious tend to be opposed to rights for LGBT individuals in the United States (Hicks & Lee, 2006). The other measurement of religiosity in this study was the percentage of people who do not believe in God. The percentage of people who do not believe in God also had a strong correlation with the LGBT Equality Index ($r = 0.72$). Therefore, states with a higher percentage of people who do not believe in God tend to have a higher LGBT Equality Index score than those states who have a lower percentage of people who do not believe in God. The association between the LGBT Equality Index and the percentage of people who do not believe in God has merit given that people who are less religious tend to have more positive attitudes toward the LGBT community than religious people (Hicks & Lee, 2006).

Race:

Previous research indicates that race is an important factor when predicting attitudes toward the LGBT community. White people tend to be more tolerant of homosexuality than other races in the United States (Hicks & Lee, 2006). Prior research, therefore, indicates it is possible for some correlational relationship to exist between race and the LGBT Equality Index. However, only weak correlations exist between the percentage of people who are White ($r = -0.06$), the percentage of people who are Black ($r = -0.06$), the percentage of people who are Asian ($r = 0.31$), the percentage of people who are Hispanic ($r = 0.16$) and the LGBT Equality Index. While race may be a good predictor of attitudes toward the LGBT community, there is a weak association between race and the number of rights a state has in support of the LGBT community.

Education:

In this study, education was measured by the percentage of people within a state that obtained a high school diploma or higher, and the percentage of people within a state that obtained a bachelor's degree or higher. A weak correlation exists between the LGBT Equality Index and the percentage of people obtaining a high school diploma or higher ($r = 0.24$). However, a moderately strong correlation does exist between the percentage of people earning a bachelor's degree or higher and the LGBT Equality Index ($r = 0.62$). It is likely that the percentage of people who have a high school diploma is weakly correlated with the LGBT Equality Index score because, in general, all states have a high percentage of high school graduates (range: 80% - 92%). The percentage of people who have obtained a college degree is better associated with the LGBT Equality Index score for two reasons: 1) the range of percentages of college graduates among the states varies

dramatically (range: 18% - 51%); 2) people with college degrees are more likely to vote; and therefore they influence policy more than people without college a college degree. Therefore, states with a higher percentage of people obtaining a bachelor's degree or higher tend to have a higher LGBT Equality Index score than those states with a lower percentage of people obtaining a bachelor's degree.

Gender:

Previous research has suggested that women are typically more tolerant of the LGBT community than men, and women are more likely to support marriage equality than men (Herek, 1988; Sherkat et al., 2010). Gender, however, is weakly associated with the LGBT Equality Index score. A weak correlation exists between the percentage of men and the LGBT Equality Index ($r = -0.24$) and the percentage of women and the LGBT Equality Index (correlation coefficient = 0.24). The reason behind a weak correlational relationship between the dependent variable and the gender independent variables is that all states are nearly 50% male and 50% female.

Party identification:

Party identification shows a strong association with a state's LGBT Equality Index score. The percentage of people who lean Democrat have a moderately strong correlation with the LGBT Equality Index ($r = 0.68$). States with a higher percentage of people who lean Democrat tend to have a higher LGBT Equality Index score than those states with a lower percentage of people who lean Democrat. Conversely, States with a higher percentage of people who lean Republican tend to have a lower LBT Equality Index score than those states with a lower percentage of people leaning Republican ($r = -0.73$). These correlations are reasonable considering prior research suggests that

conservatives tend to be less supportive of LGBT Rights than liberals (Hicks & Lee, 2006). Again, it is important to keep in mind that while not all conservatives are Republicans and not all liberals are Democrats, political ideology is closely related to party identification, and the two can be used interchangeably for the purposes of this research (Hicks & Lee, 2006).

Per capita income:

While prior research suggests that there is no significant relationship between income, and attitudes toward the LGBT community, this study finds that income has a moderately strong correlation with the LGBT Equality Index score ($r = 0.66$). This correlation indicates that the higher a state's per capita income is, the higher the state's LGBT Equality index score tends to be. Why would income influence the LGBT Equality Index score? While a correlation between the two variables does exist, the correlation is influenced by another variable. A strong correlational relationship exists between per capita income and percentage of people who have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher ($r = 0.90$). The relationship between per capita income and the percentage of people with bachelor's degrees or higher indicates that the states with a higher percentage of people who have obtained a bachelor's degree have a higher per capita income than states with a lower percentage of college graduates. Since prior research indicates income does not influence attitudes toward the LGBT community, education influences the correlation between per capita income and the LGBT Equality Index.

Age:

Age is an excellent predictor of attitudes toward the LGBT community, but age is

weakly associated with the LGBT Equality Index score. A weak correlation exists between the LGBT Equality Index and percentage of people over the age of 65 ($r = 0.24$). The weak correlation between these two variables could be explained by the fact that people over the age of 65 are not the only people who turn out to vote.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was the primary test in this study. I measured the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables. The multiple regression analysis considered all of the independent variables simultaneously with the LGBT Equality Index. Because multiple variables are regressed in this study, the beta coefficient indicates how much the LGBT Equality Index is expected to increase or decrease when the independent variables increases by one unit, given that all other independent variables remain constant. The multiple regression analysis provides some insight as to which demographic correlates are significant with respect to the LGBT Equality Index. Those demographic variables that are ultimately significant ($p < 0.05$) are the percentage of people who are white ($p = 0.026$), the percentage of people who are Asian ($p = 0.012$), the percentage of people who lean Democrat ($p = 0.002$), and the percentage of people who believe in God ($p = 0.001$). Table 3 lists the standardized beta coefficient for all demographic correlates that were tested.

There are two key variables missing from the model: 1) percentage of people who lean Republican and 2) percentage of people who do not believe in God. These variables are missing from the multiple regression analysis because they are inversely related to the percentage of people who lean Democrat and percentage of people who believe in God. When regressed together, neither variable is significant. The percentage of people who

lean Republican, and the percentage of people who do not believe in God would, in fact, be significant variables if the percentage of people who lean Democrat and the percentage of people who believe in God were not included in the multiple regression analysis.

Table 3: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Demographic Correlates**Predicting LGBT Equality Index Score (N=51)**

Variable	Standardized Beta Coefficient (Std. Err.)
	Model 1
Percentage of people who identify as Hispanic	0.00 (0.02)
Percentage of males	0.20 (0.66)
Percentage of people with a bachelor's degree or higher	-0.03 (0.09)
Per capita money income	0.00 (0.00)
Percentage of people over the age of 65	-0.10 (0.18)
Percentage of people who identify as Black	0.11 (0.08)
Percentage of people who identify as White	0.14* (0.06)
Percentage of people who identify as Asian	0.28* (0.11)
Percentage of people who lean Democrat	0.15* (0.05)
Percentage of people who believe in God	-0.38* (0.11)

* p < 0.05 prob>F= 0.00 r-squared= 0.79

Table 3 has a prob>F = 0.00 indicating that the model as a whole is statistically significant. Additionally, the model accounts for 79% of the variation from the test (r-squared = 0.79). This model demonstrates that the null hypothesis can be rejected, and religiosity is the strongest indicator of the number of rights states reserve in support of

the LGBT community. The beta coefficient for the percentage of people who believe in God indicates that the LGBT Equality Index score decreases when the percentage of people who believe in God increases ($\beta = -0.38$). The relationship between the LGBT Equality Index and the percentage of people who believe in God in this model is consistent with prior research. The second most significant demographic correlate was percentage of people who lean Democrat. I suggest that the significance of this correlate indicates that party affiliation is a key indicator of how many rights each state has in support of the LGBT community. The model suggests that when the percentage of people who lean Democrat increases, the LGBT Equality Index increases ($\beta = 0.15$), which is consistent with prior research.

The other two demographic correlates that are significant in this model are percentage of people who identify as White, and the percentage of people who identify as Asian. While the percentage of people who identify as being White did not have correlational relationship with the LGBT Equality Index notwithstanding other demographic variables, the percentage of people who identify as being White is significant when accounting for other demographic correlates. The apparent discrepancy indicates that while the percentage of people who identify as White has a weak correlational relationship with the LGBT Equality Index, when controlling for all other variables, this demographic correlate does become important. While the percentage of people who are Asian is significant in this model, an outlier accounts for its significance. Figure 5 demonstrates the relationship between the percentage of people who are Asian and the LGBT Equality Index. There is a clear outlier in figure 5, which is the state of

Hawaii (Appendix B), having a significantly higher Asian population than all other states in the U.S.

Conclusion

The conclusions drawn from this study are somewhat consistent with the prior research discussing attitudes toward LGBT rights in the United States. While the factors that are significant with respect to LGBT Equality Index are also significant with respect to attitudes toward LGBT individuals in the United States, many of the demographic correlates that are significant with respect to attitudes toward the LGBT community are not significant in the regression model from this study. Only three demographic factors have a significant relationship with the number of rights a state has in support of the LGBT community: 1) religiosity, 2) political party affiliation and 3) percentage of people who identify as White within the state. The same three factors in addition to other race/ethnic identity, education, age, and gender are thought to be associated with attitudes toward the LGBT community. A possible explanation for why there are less demographic correlates that are significant with respect to the LGBT Equality Index than attitudes toward the LGBT community may be that voter turnout in the United States is not 100 percent. If everyone in the United States voted, then a greater number of demographic correlates may have been significant in the regression model in this study.

Based on the information from the regression analysis, I urge groups that support the LGBT movement for equal rights to focus attention on religiosity, political party affiliation and race when making an argument in support of LGBT rights. The model from this study suggests that these three demographic correlates are the only significant ones with respect to the passage of laws in favor of LGBT rights in the United States.

Organizations like the Human Rights Campaign and the ACLU may want to spend more time making arguments to these demographic groups, and less time making arguments that appeal to gender, education, or age.

Further research attempting to discover why there are differences in the number of laws that support the LGBT community from state to state, should explore political factors rather than demographic factors. The model from this study concludes that religiosity, political party affiliation, and percentage of people who identify as white are the only demographic correlates significant to the number of rights LGBT people can expect to have in a given state. Because there are so few demographic factors that account for the differences in the LGBT Equality Index, political factors not measured in this study may also be significant.

A possible variable that may attribute to the number of rights states have in support of the LGBT community is direct democracy. Several states have methods for direct democracy, where the people draft and/or vote on legislation directly. There are three basic components of direct democracy: the initiative, the referendum, and the recall. The first component is the initiative. “The initiative allows voters to propose a legislative measure (statutory initiative) or a constitutional amendment (constitutional initiative) by filing a petition bearing a required number of valid citizen signatures” (Cronin, 1989, 2). The second component is the referendum. “The referendum refers a proposed or existing law or statute to voters for their approval or rejection” (Cronin, 1989, 2). It is important to note that not every state allows for referenda, while some states require referenda, and in other states the legislature may choose to use referenda (Cronin, 1989). Direct democracy in these forms did not exist in the United States until the late 1800s. The

Framers feared that if the majority groups were allowed to legislate for the country, they would infringe upon the rights of minority groups. The premise that the Framers feared majority groups infringing on minority groups' rights has been one of the main arguments against direct democracy for as long as it has been debated (Matsusaka, 2004). It remains unclear whether or not this argument against direct democracy is true. Matsusaka argues, "...the initiative process is not a greater threat to minority rights than legislatures" (Matsusaka, 2004, 118). Others like Stone argue that direct democracy is a useful tool for the Religious Right to pass anti-LGBT legislation (Stone, 2012). Furthermore Daniel Lewis has argued that states with methods for initiatives and referenda are more likely to pass legislation banning same-sex marriage than those states that do not use direct democracy (2011).

Another possible political factor to consider is the demographics of the judges on the courts in each state. When law suits over various issues regarding LGBT rights are filed, the cases heard by judges. The Courts have not been consistent in ruling on LGBT rights, particularly in cases regarding same-sex marriage in the United States. On May 15, 2008 the California Supreme Court ruled that the California Constitution guarantees marriage equality for same-sex couples (The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life). In Nevada *Sevcik v. Sandoval*, a similar case to the California case challenging a ban on same-sex marriage, was heard. In November 2012, The Nevada Supreme Court ruled that Nevada's ban on same-sex marriage was constitutional under the Nevada state constitution (Lambda Legal, 2012). The inconsistency in the courts' decisions on same-sex marriage is an indicator that judges play a significant role in the number of rights afforded to LGBT people in the United States.

This research project contributes to LGBT studies in the United States. As long as each state has the authority to pass laws with respect to sexual orientation, the LGBT community in the United States will experience varying degrees of inequality depending on where they reside. The issue of equal rights for the LGBT community will continue to be the topic of considerable debate in the United States. This research should provide some insight into which factors are affecting the rights of LGBT individuals and families in the United States.

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Appendix A

Figure 1

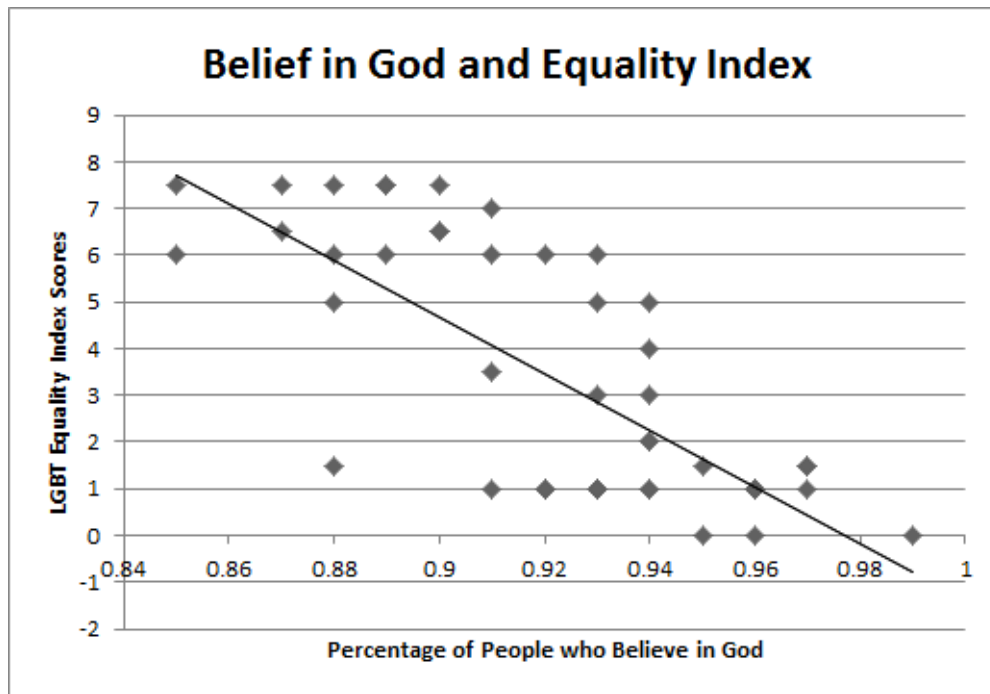


Figure 2

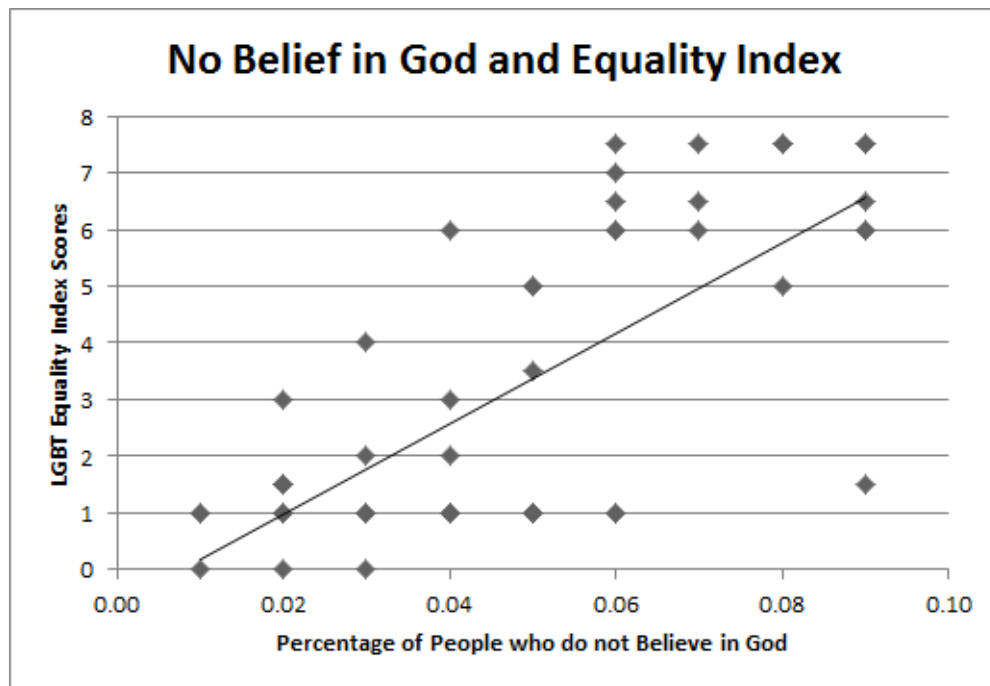


Figure 5

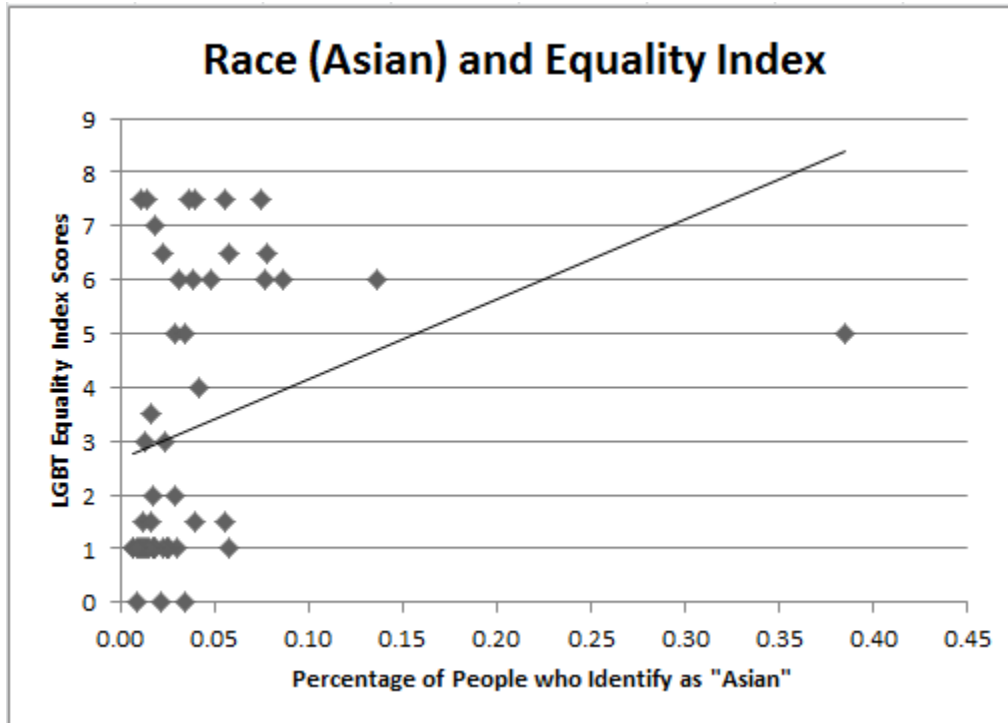


Figure 6

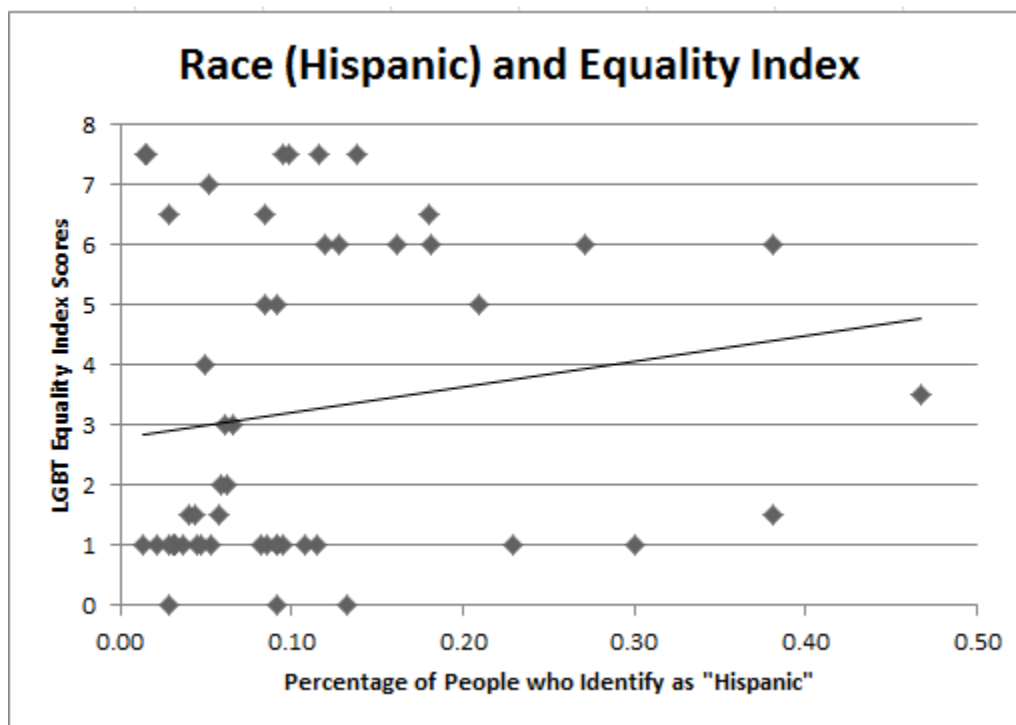


Figure 9

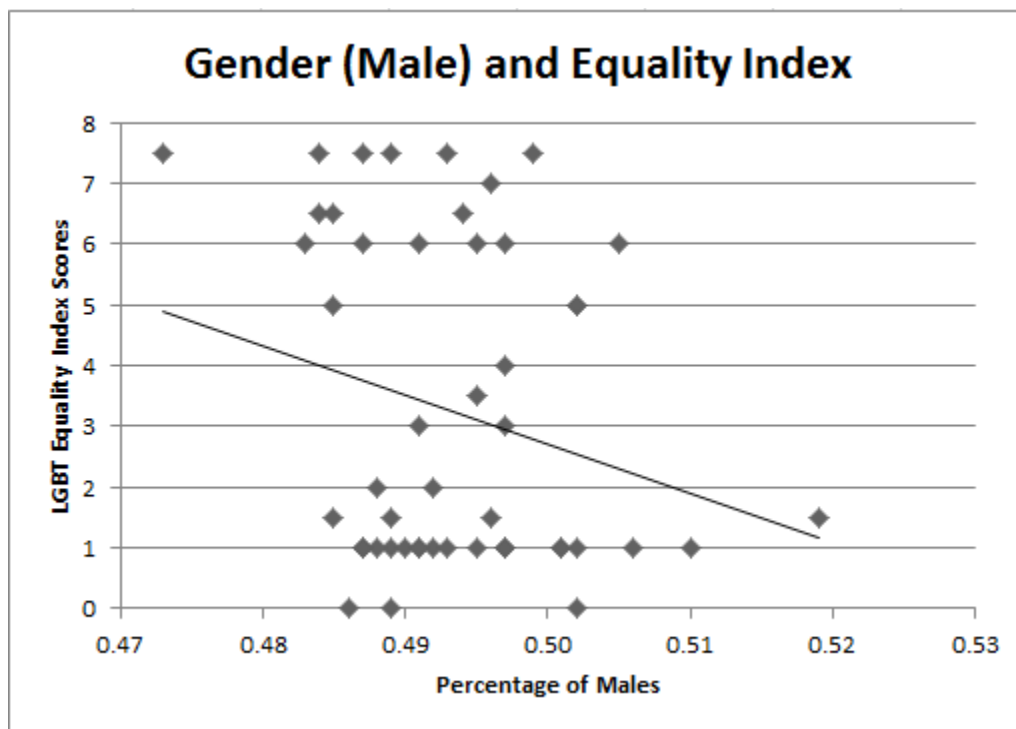


Figure 10

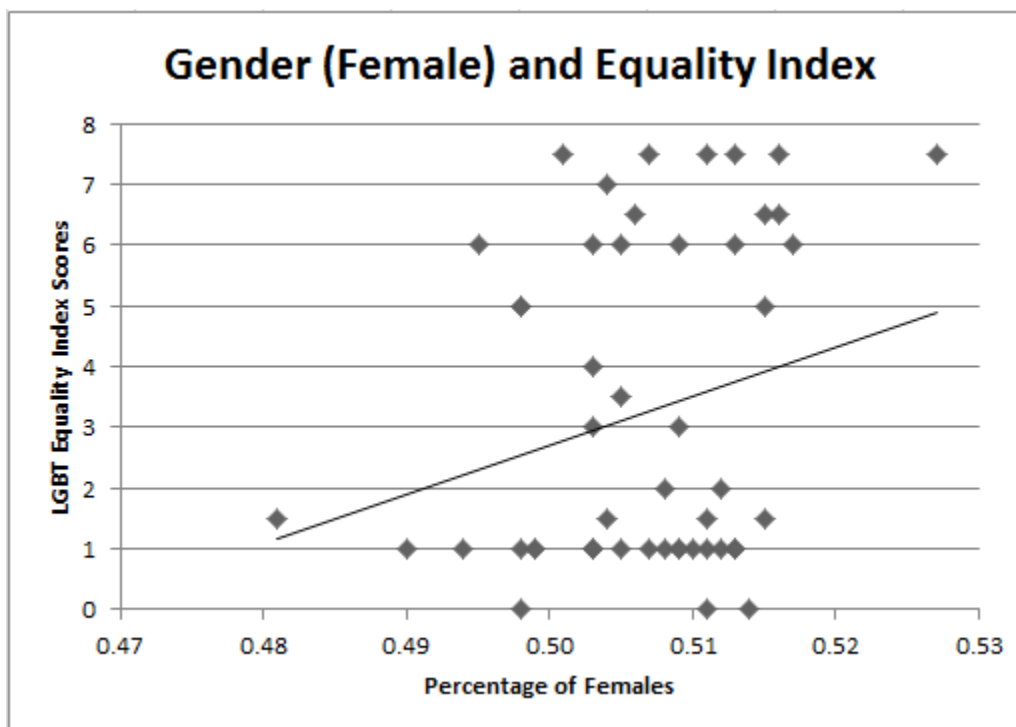


Figure 11

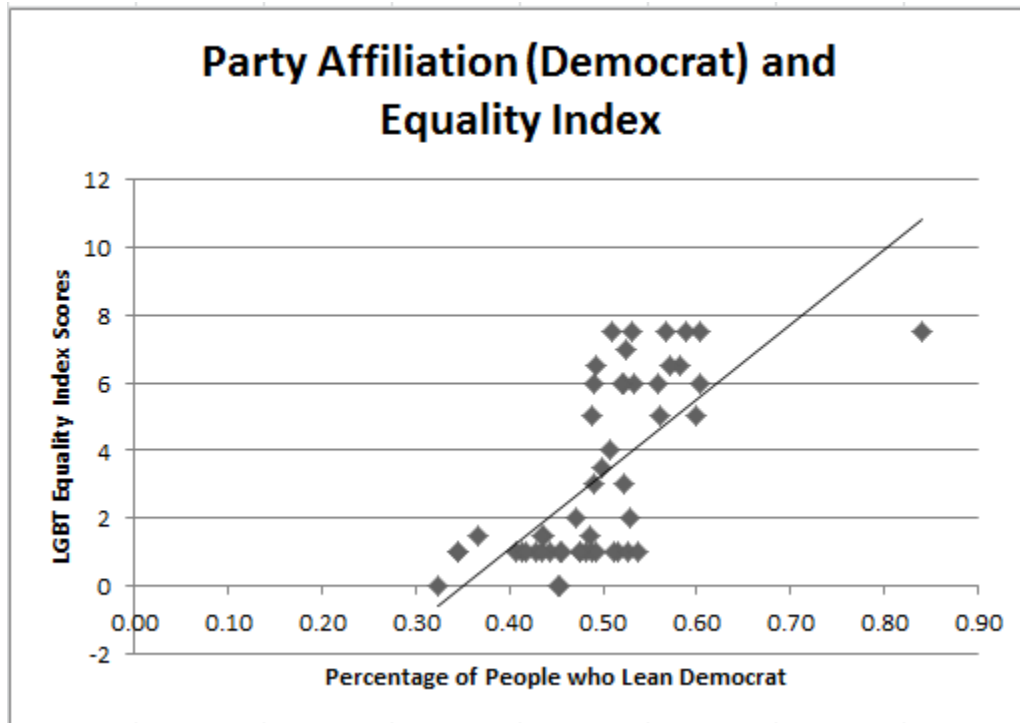


Figure 12

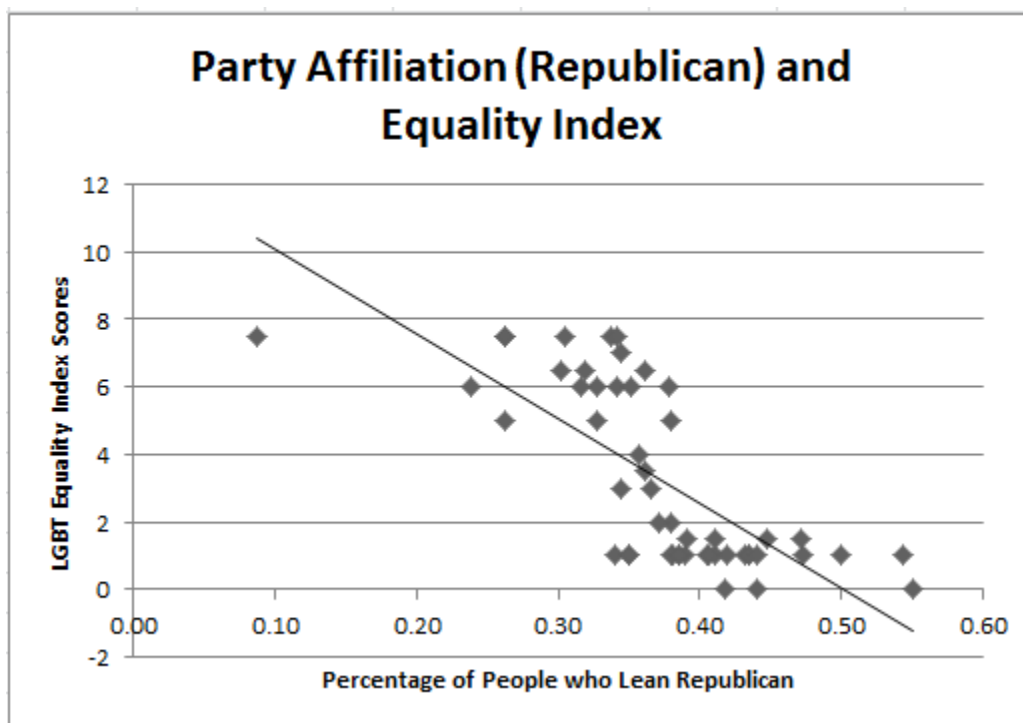


Figure 13

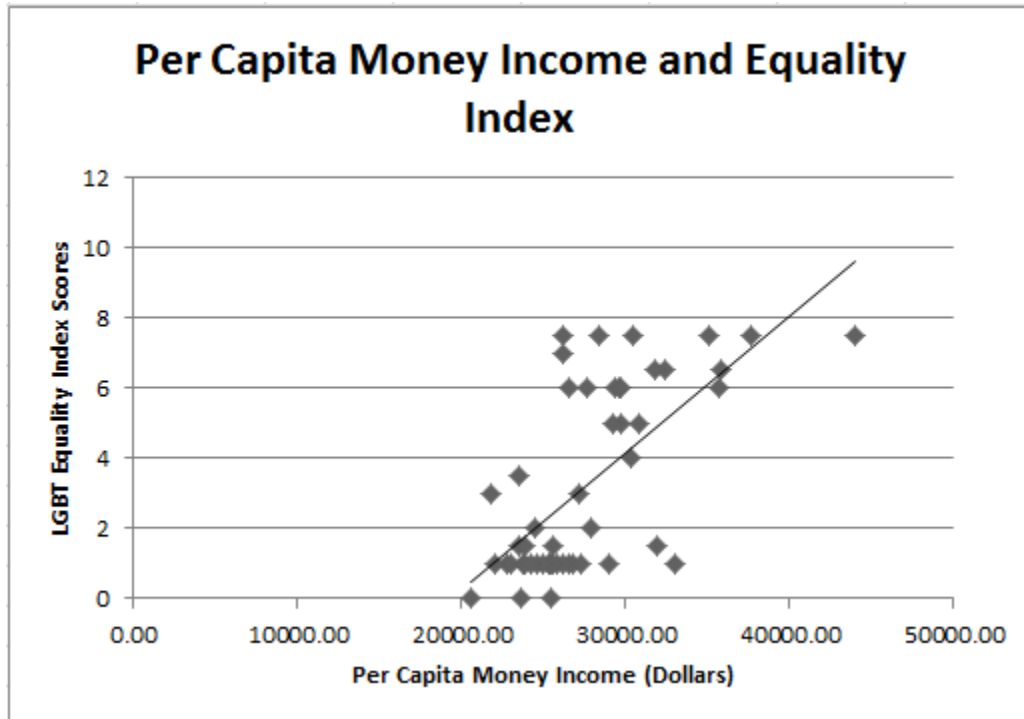


Figure 14



Appendix B: State Demographic Information

	Religion			Race/Ethnicity			
	Believe in God with any Amount of Certainty	Do Not Believe in God		White	Black	Asian	Hispanic
Alabama	0.97	0.02		0.70	0.27	0.01	0.04
Alaska	0.88	0.09		0.68	0.04	0.06	0.06
Arizona	0.91	0.06		0.85	0.05	0.03	0.30
Arkansas	0.94	0.02		0.80	0.16	0.01	0.07
California	0.89	0.07		0.74	0.07	0.14	0.38
Colorado	0.88	0.08		0.88	0.04	0.03	0.21
Connecticut*	0.85	0.09		0.82	0.11	0.04	0.14
Delaware	0.93	0.05		0.72	0.22	0.03	0.08
District of Columbia**	0.90	0.06		0.42	0.51	0.04	0.10
Florida	0.92	0.06		0.79	0.17	0.03	0.23
Georgia	0.96	0.02		0.63	0.31	0.03	0.09
Hawaii	0.94	0.05		0.26	0.02	0.39	0.09
Idaho	0.92	0.05		0.94	0.01	0.01	0.12
Illinois	0.93	0.04		0.78	0.15	0.05	0.16
Indiana	0.94	0.03		0.87	0.09	0.02	0.06
Iowa	0.91	0.06		0.93	0.03	0.02	0.05
Kansas	0.93	0.04		0.87	0.06	0.03	0.11
Kentucky	0.96	0.01		0.89	0.08	0.01	0.03
Louisiana	0.97	0.02		0.64	0.32	0.02	0.04
Maine	0.89	0.08		0.95	0.01	0.01	0.01
Maryland**	0.90	0.06		0.61	0.30	0.06	0.08
Massachusetts	0.88	0.08		0.84	0.08	0.06	0.10
Michigan	0.93	0.05		0.80	0.14	0.03	0.05
Minnesota	0.94	0.03		0.87	0.05	0.04	0.05
Mississippi	0.99	0.01		0.60	0.37	0.01	0.03
Missouri	0.96	0.03		0.84	0.12	0.02	0.04
Montana***	0.94	0.04		0.90	0.01	0.01	0.03
Nebraska	0.96	0.01		0.90	0.05	0.02	0.10
Nevada	0.91	0.06		0.78	0.09	0.08	0.27
New Hampshire****	0.87	0.09		0.95	0.01	0.02	0.03
New Jersey	0.92	0.06		0.74	0.15	0.09	0.18
New Mexico	0.91	0.05		0.83	0.03	0.02	0.47
New York	0.90	0.07		0.72	0.18	0.08	0.18
North Carolina	0.96	0.02		0.72	0.22	0.02	0.09
North Dakota*****	0.93	0.05		0.90	0.01	0.01	0.02
Ohio	0.93	0.04		0.84	0.12	0.02	0.03
Oklahoma	0.97	0.02		0.76	0.08	0.02	0.09
Oregon	0.88	0.09		0.89	0.02	0.04	0.12
Pennsylvania	0.94	0.04		0.84	0.11	0.03	0.06
Rhode Island*	0.85	0.09		0.86	0.07	0.03	0.13
South Carolina	0.96	0.03		0.68	0.28	0.01	0.05
South Dakota*****	0.93	0.05		0.87	0.01	0.01	0.03
Tennessee	0.96	0.02		0.80	0.17	0.02	0.05
Texas	0.95	0.02		0.81	0.12	0.04	0.38
Utah	0.95	0.03		0.92	0.01	0.02	0.13
Vermont****	0.87	0.09		0.96	0.01	0.01	0.02
Virginia	0.92	0.05		0.71	0.20	0.06	0.08
Washington	0.89	0.07		0.82	0.04	0.08	0.12
West Virginia	0.93	0.03		0.94	0.04	0.01	0.01
Wisconsin	0.93	0.04		0.88	0.07	0.02	0.06
Wyoming***	0.94	0.04		0.94	0.01	0.01	0.09

	Education		Gender	
	High School Diploma or Higher: Age 25+	Bachelor's Degree or Higher: Age 25+	Male	Female
Alabama	0.82	0.22	0.49	0.52
Alaska	0.91	0.27	0.52	0.48
Arizona	0.85	0.26	0.50	0.50
Arkansas	0.83	0.20	0.49	0.51
California	0.81	0.30	0.50	0.50
Colorado	0.90	0.36	0.50	0.50
Connecticut*	0.89	0.36	0.49	0.51
Delaware	0.87	0.28	0.49	0.52
District of Columbia**	0.87	0.51	0.47	0.53
Florida	0.86	0.26	0.49	0.51
Georgia	0.84	0.28	0.49	0.51
Hawaii	0.90	0.30	0.50	0.50
Idaho	0.89	0.25	0.50	0.50
Illinois	0.87	0.31	0.49	0.51
Indiana	0.87	0.23	0.49	0.51
Iowa	0.90	0.25	0.50	0.50
Kansas	0.90	0.30	0.50	0.50
Kentucky	0.82	0.21	0.49	0.51
Louisiana	0.82	0.21	0.49	0.51
Maine	0.90	0.27	0.49	0.51
Maryland**	0.88	0.36	0.48	0.52
Massachusetts	0.89	0.39	0.48	0.52
Michigan	0.88	0.25	0.49	0.51
Minnesota	0.92	0.32	0.50	0.50
Mississippi	0.80	0.20	0.49	0.51
Missouri	0.87	0.25	0.49	0.51
Montana***	0.91	0.28	0.50	0.50
Nebraska	0.90	0.28	0.50	0.50
Nevada	0.84	0.22	0.51	0.50
New Hampshire****	0.91	0.33	0.49	0.51
New Jersey	0.88	0.35	0.49	0.51
New Mexico	0.83	0.25	0.50	0.51
New York	0.85	0.33	0.49	0.52
North Carolina	0.84	0.27	0.49	0.51
North Dakota*****	0.90	0.27	0.51	0.49
Ohio	0.88	0.25	0.49	0.51
Oklahoma	0.86	0.23	0.50	0.51
Oregon	0.89	0.29	0.50	0.51
Pennsylvania	0.88	0.27	0.49	0.51
Rhode Island*	0.84	0.31	0.48	0.52
South Carolina	0.84	0.24	0.49	0.51
South Dakota*****	0.90	0.26	0.50	0.50
Tennessee	0.83	0.23	0.49	0.51
Texas	0.80	0.26	0.50	0.50
Utah	0.91	0.30	0.50	0.50
Vermont****	0.91	0.34	0.49	0.51
Virginia	0.87	0.34	0.49	0.51
Washington	0.90	0.31	0.50	0.50
West Virginia	0.83	0.18	0.49	0.51
Wisconsin	0.90	0.26	0.50	0.50
Wyoming***	0.92	0.24	0.51	0.49

	Party Affiliation			Income		Age
	Lean Democrat	Lean Republican		Per Capita Money Income in the past 12 months		Persons over 65
Alabama	0.44	0.45		23483.00		0.14
Alaska	0.37	0.47		31944.00		0.08
Arizona	0.43	0.43		25784.00		0.14
Arkansas	0.49	0.37		21833.00		0.15
California	0.52	0.33		29634.00		0.12
Colorado	0.49	0.38		30816.00		0.11
Connecticut*	0.57	0.30		37627.00		0.14
Delaware	0.56	0.33		29659.00		0.15
District of Columbia**	0.84	0.09		43993.00		0.11
Florida	0.48	0.39		26733.00		0.18
Georgia	0.45	0.42		25383.00		0.11
Hawaii	0.60	0.26		29203.00		0.15
Idaho	0.35	0.50		22788.00		0.13
Illinois	0.56	0.32		29376.00		0.13
Indiana	0.47	0.38		24497.00		0.13
Iowa	0.53	0.34		26110.00		0.15
Kansas	0.41	0.43		26545.00		0.13
Kentucky	0.52	0.38		23033.00		0.14
Louisiana	0.49	0.39		23853.00		0.13
Maine	0.53	0.34		26195.00		0.16
Maryland**	0.58	0.32		35751.00		0.13
Massachusetts	0.60	0.26		35051.00		0.14
Michigan	0.51	0.34		25482.00		0.14
Minnesota	0.51	0.36		30310.00		0.13
Mississippi	0.45	0.44		20521.00		0.13
Missouri	0.49	0.38		25371.00		0.14
Montana***	0.44	0.41		24640.00		0.15
Nebraska	0.41	0.47		26113.00		0.14
Nevada	0.49	0.38		27625.00		0.13
New Hampshire****	0.49	0.36		32357.00		0.14
New Jersey	0.53	0.34		35678.00		0.14
New Mexico	0.50	0.36		23537.00		0.14
New York	0.57	0.30		31796.00		0.14
North Carolina	0.49	0.39		25256.00		0.13
North Dakota*****	0.42	0.41		27305.00		0.14
Ohio	0.53	0.35		25618.00		0.14
Oklahoma	0.48	0.42		23770.00		0.14
Oregon	0.52	0.35		26561.00		0.14
Pennsylvania	0.53	0.37		27824.00		0.16
Rhode Island*	0.60	0.24		29685.00		0.15
South Carolina	0.44	0.43		23854.00		0.14
South Dakota*****	0.45	0.44		24925.00		0.14
Tennessee	0.46	0.41		24197.00		0.14
Texas	0.43	0.41		25548.00		0.11
Utah	0.32	0.55		23650.00		0.09
Vermont****	0.59	0.26		28376.00		0.15
Virginia	0.48	0.39		33040.00		0.13
Washington	0.51	0.34		30481.00		0.13
West Virginia	0.54	0.35		22010.00		0.16
Wisconsin	0.52	0.34		27192.00		0.14
Wyoming***	0.35	0.54		28952.00		0.13

* Connecticut and Rhode Island were polled together on religion
** District of Columbia and Maryland polled together on religion
*** Montana and Wyoming Polled together on religion
**** New Hampshire and Vermont Polled together on religion
***** North Dakota and South Dakota Polled together on religion

Appendix C: LGBT Equality Index Components

	Authorize Same-Sex Marriages	Recognize Same-Sex Marriages Performed In other States	State Recognizes Civil Unions/Domestic Partnerships	State outlaws discrimination based on sexual orientation	State outlaws discrimination based on gender identity
Alabama					
Alaska					
Arizona					
Arkansas					
California			1	1	1
Colorado			1	1	1
Connecticut	1.5	1		1	1
Delaware			1	1	
District of Columbia	1.5	1		1	1
Florida					
Georgia					
Hawaii				1	1
Idaho					
Illinois			1	1	1
Indiana					
Iowa	1.5	1		1	1
Kansas					
Kentucky					
Louisiana					
Maine	1.5	1		1	1
Maryland	1.5	1		1	
Massachusetts	1.5	1		1	1
Michigan					
Minnesota				1	1
Mississippi					
Missouri					
Montana					
Nebraska					
Nevada			1	1	1
New Hampshire	1.5	1		1	
New Jersey			1	1	1
New Mexico				1	1
New York	1.5	1		1	
North Carolina					
North Dakota					
Ohio					
Oklahoma					
Oregon			1	1	1
Pennsylvania					
Rhode Island		1		1	1
South Carolina					
South Dakota					
Tennessee					
Texas					
Utah					
Vermont	1.5	1		1	1
Virginia					
Washington	1.5	1		1	1
West Virginia					
Wisconsin			1	1	
Wyoming					

	State outlaws discrimination based on gender identity	State allows Same-sex couples to adopt children	State Allows gay and lesbian persons to adopt	State Allows Second	Index
Alabama			1	0.5	1.5
Alaska			1	0.5	1.5
Arizona			1		1
Arkansas		1	1	1	3
California	1	1	1	1	6
Colorado	1	0.5	1	0.5	5
Connecticut	1	1	1	1	7.5
Delaware		1	1	1	5
District of Columbia	1	1	1	1	7.5
Florida			1		1
Georgia					0
Hawaii	1	1	1	1	5
Idaho			1		1
Illinois	1	1	1	1	6
Indiana		1	1		2
Iowa	1	1	1	0.5	7
Kansas			1		1
Kentucky			1		1
Louisiana			1	0.5	1.5
Maine	1	1	1	1	7.5
Maryland		1	1	1	6.5
Massachusetts	1	1	1	1	7.5
Michigan			1		1
Minnesota	1	0.5	1	0.5	4
Mississippi					0
Missouri			1		1
Montana			1		1
Nebraska			1		1
Nevada	1	1	1	1	6
New Hampshire		1	1	1	6.5
New Jersey	1	1	1	1	6
New Mexico	1		1	0.5	3.5
New York		1	1	1	6.5
North Carolina			1		1
North Dakota			1		1
Ohio			1		1
Oklahoma			1		1
Oregon	1	1	1	1	6
Pennsylvania			1	1	2
Rhode Island	1	1	1	1	6
South Carolina			1		1
South Dakota			1		1
Tennessee			1		1
Texas			1	0.5	1.5
Utah					0
Vermont	1	1	1	1	7.5
Virginia			1		1
Washington	1	1	1	1	7.5
West Virginia			1		1
Wisconsin			1		3
Wyoming			1		1