

Edited by **DAVID RAYSIDE** and **CLYDE WILCOX**

FAITH POLITICS and SEXUAL DIVERSITY

in Canada and the United States

RAYSIDE & WILCOX FAITH, POLITICS, and SEXUAL DIVERSITY

pressive book that makes invaluable contributions to a number
res. It should be read by all political scientists, as well as those
in navigating their way through this contested terrain. Written
of impressive scholars and analysts, the volume is clear and
and helps us understand the dynamics of religion, sexuality, and
Canada and the United States.

BERMAN, author of *The Lesbian and Gay Movements:
Liberation or Liberation?*

the primary impediment to LGBT equality? This book puts
our hypothesis to the test with a comprehensive investigation of
religious positions and their insertion into the political realm.
The one-stop reference for religious debates on sexuality and how
to affect the legislative sphere.

M, co-editor of *The Global Emergence of Gay and Lesbian Politics*

es, agitation by lesbians, gays, and other sexual minorities for
recognition has provoked a heated response among religious
in both Canada and the United States. The contributors to this
comparative study examine the tenacity of anti-gay sentiment,
the dramatic shifts in public attitudes towards queer groups
and faith communities on both sides of the border. Their analysis
shows that, despite ongoing conflict, some bridge-building is occurring
and religious adherence does not invariably entail opposition to
LGBT rights.

DAVID RAYSIDE is a professor of political science and former director of the
Donham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies at the University

CLYDE WILCOX is a professor of government at Georgetown
University in Washington, DC.

ISBN 978-0-7748-2010-3



9 780774 820103



Canada

Author: Martyn Schmoll

press.ca

© UBC Press 2011

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without prior written permission of the publisher, or, in Canada, in the case of photocopying or other reprographic copying, a licence from Access Copyright, www.accesscopyright.ca.

20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in Canada on FSC-certified ancient-forest-free paper
(100% post-consumer recycled) that is processed chlorine- and acid-free.

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Faith, politics, and sexual diversity in Canada and the United States /
edited by David Rayside and Clyde Wilcox.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-7748-2009-7 (bound); ISBN 978-0-7748-2010-3 (pbk.)

1. Gay rights – Canada – Religious aspects. 2. Gay rights – United States – Religious aspects. 3. Same-sex marriage – Canada – Religious aspects. 4. Same-sex marriage – United States – Religious aspects. 5. Gay rights – Canada – Public opinion. 6. Gay rights – United States – Public opinion. 7. Homosexuality – Religious aspects. 8. Public opinion – Canada. 9. Public opinion – United States. I. Rayside, David M. (David Morton), 1947- II. Wilcox, Clyde, 1953-

HQ76.3.C3F34 2011

323.3'2640971

C2010-907163-8

e-book ISBNs: 978-0-7748-2011-0 (pdf); 978-0-7748-2012-7 (epub)

Canada

UBC Press gratefully acknowledges the financial support for our publishing program of the Government of Canada (through the Canada Book Fund), the Canada Council for the Arts, and the British Columbia Arts Council.

This book has been published with the help of a grant from the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, through the Aid to Scholarly Publications Program, using funds provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Printed and bound in Canada by Freisens

Set in Futura Condensed and Warnock by Artegraphica Design Co. Ltd.

Text design: Irma Rodriguez

Copy editor: Joanne Richardson

Proofreader: Dallas Harrison

UBC Press
The University of British Columbia
2029 West Mall
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z2
www.ubcpress.ca

Dedicated to those who build bridges at the
intersections of faith and sexual diversity

2

Culture War? A Closer Look at the Role of Religion, Denomination, and Religiosity in US Public Opinion on Multiple Sexualities

SHAUNA L. SHAMES, DIDI KUO, AND
KATHERINE LEVINE

Even in 2010, it still appears that the United States is in the middle of a culture war over public recognition of multiple sexualities. The justices of several state supreme courts (including Massachusetts, Vermont, California, Connecticut, Iowa, and, to some extent, New Jersey)¹ have legalized or paved the way for same-sex marriages, while in other states (including New Hampshire, Vermont, and the District of Columbia) the state legislatures have legalized the practice. In some states, including California and Maine, courts or legislatures have approved the extension of marriage rights, only to have their attempts overturned by voter initiatives. In others, such as Washington, Oregon, and Nevada, governors or state legislatures have extended to same-sex couples all the rights of marriage without the name. Beyond the six (Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Iowa, and the District of Columbia) with full marriage, two recognize marriages in other states, and five have comprehensive recognitions of domestic partnerships, making a total of thirteen. At the same time, thirty-eight states have added provisions to their constitutions to prevent same-sex marriages or have enacted prohibitory statutory restrictions. Many of these amendments and laws reach beyond marriage to deny official recognition for civil unions. The conventional wisdom, as in the mainstream media hype over “values voting” in recent national elections, suggests that the divide is between religious and secular voters. In this chapter we present evidence to

By showing broad trends in public opinion, the chapters in this section help set the overall context for the rest of the book. In Chapter 2, Shauna Shames, Didi Kuo, and Katherine Levine show a trend towards acceptance of sexual difference in the United States. They show variations across religious groups and regions but also that all religious groups have become more supportive of equality policies in the United States, a point to which a few authors in later sections return. Shames and her colleagues point to the need for more research on attitudes towards transgendered citizens, and we would argue that the same is true for bisexuality.

In Chapter 3, Amy Langstaff draws on proprietary survey data to show a dramatic liberalization of Canadian attitudes between 1987 and 2008. As in the United States, the public has become more accepting of sexual diversity over time, and differences in attitudes towards LGBT rights issues have become more partisan. She shows that recent immigrants are more conservative on these issues, especially marriage, a finding that undoubtedly has parallels in the United States.

Both chapters suggest that policy progress is enabled by changing attitudes as well as that changing policies help to create more egalitarian attitudes, though the relationship between court decisions, legislative action, and public opinion is complex. The lessons from Canada are that, even in a setting in which courts have played an important role in advancing equality rights for sexual minorities, judges have not been notably out of tune with public opinion on questions of sexual diversity. What we draw from the US case is that the slow spread of legal and policy inclusiveness has, in general terms, been lagging behind the dramatic shifts across religious communities in attitudes towards sexual diversity.

dispute, at least in part, such a claim. To fully understand the complexity of the current situation, we must go beyond a religious/secular divide and instead look more closely at the positions of people from various religions, denominations, and levels of religiosity and scriptural traditionalism.

The United States is an extremely diverse country religiously, with hundreds of active religions and denominations. Moreover, Americans are more religiously active than are citizens of most comparable countries. Thus, unsurprisingly, despite constitutional provisions enshrining religious freedom and non-establishment, US public opinion and policy are inevitably affected by the deep religiosity of the American people.

Writing in 1835, Alexis de Tocqueville (2005) noted that, "upon my arrival in the United States, the religious aspect of the country was the first thing that struck my attention." This legacy continues: over 40 percent say they go to weekly religious services, over 60 percent say they belong to a church or synagogue, and 54 percent say religion is "very important" in their lives, with another 26 percent calling it "fairly important" (Gallup 2009). Similarly, the World Values Survey (2009) reports that 36 percent of Americans surveyed report attending church or synagogue once or more a week. These numbers are vastly higher than self-reports of weekly church attendance in such countries as Australia (14 percent), Great Britain (17 percent), Spain (16 percent), Canada (25 percent), Sweden (3 percent), Japan (3 percent), France (7 percent), and the Netherlands (12 percent).

It is important to note that researchers have found that church attendance reports in the United States are exaggerated, although they disagree as to the extent of the "attendance gap," and no evidence seriously discredits the high ranking of Americans in overall religiosity compared to citizens of other Western industrialized countries (see Hout and Greeley 1987, 1998; Hadaway, Marler, and Chaves 1993; and Marler and Hadaway 1999). This tendency to exaggerate church attendance highlights the social pressure in the United States to be, or to appear to be, religious.

If religion is a dominant factor shaping political beliefs, are the divisions between secular and religious Americans or among religions and religious denominations? We explore these questions here using the lens of US public opinion regarding multiple sexualities and the laws concerning them and – when possible – looking at how this opinion has changed in the past several decades. Support for moral issues – as well as the strength of such support – may vary among religious denominations in ways that the literature on public opinion has just begun to explore more fully (see Campbell and

Robinson 2007). Following the trend of recent literature, we investigate not only individuals' self-identified religion and denomination (what Wald and Glover 2007 call "official religion") but also their levels of religious traditionalism (Campbell and Robinson 2007) and levels of religiosity, such as frequency of Bible reading and church attendance. Throughout, our focus is on the *impact of religion, denomination, and religiosity* in creating or modifying public sentiment about the public policies relating to homosexuality and other sexualities. Using recent survey data and maps of religious denominational support, we find that denomination and religiosity are often overlooked factors that are deeply important in shaping the attitudes of religious Americans.

Public Opinion: Homosexuality, Gays and Lesbians, and Civil Rights

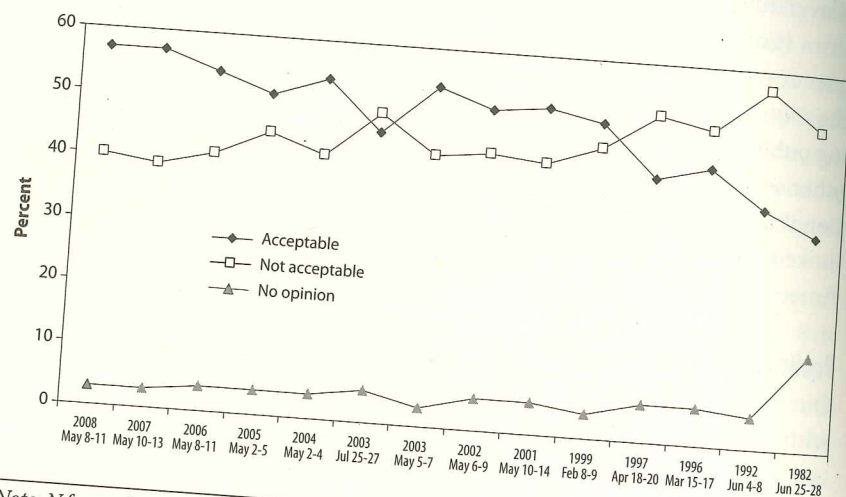
Our initial task in this section is to establish the overall liberalizing trends within public opinion regarding homosexuality and other "morality"/social issues over the past several decades. Subsequently, we use individual-level survey data and mapping to investigate specifically the role of religion in these and other trends within public opinion.

Americans have been more supportive of granting rights and non-discrimination laws to gays and lesbians than they have been of accepting them morally. Questions framed in terms of morality or religion may elicit a very different response from people than a question couched in the language of laws and rights. Polling evidence suggests that public opinion about same-sex marriage, for example, is highly susceptible to change based on the framing of the question (Wilcox et al. 2007). This also holds for placement and context matter: in a report from 2007, Gallup noted that, when its question about supporting gay marriage follows a number of questions about other homosexual rights, it found a higher level of support than it did when the gay-marriage question was asked on its own. This suggests that public opinion on these issues remains malleable, shifting in a more conservative direction if respondents think about homosexuality within a morality frame and in a more liberal direction if they think about it within a legal rights and equality frame.

Let us first examine some basic data on public opinion concerning the morality of homosexuality and opinions about gays and lesbians themselves. Although many of the questions and issues have changed over time, a few national surveys have asked the same question about homosexuality with the same wording for decades. Since 1982, Gallup has asked respondents

FIGURE 2.1

Should homosexuality be considered an "acceptable alternative lifestyle?" Survey of general population, 1982-2008



Note: N for each Gallup poll is 1,000.

Source: Gallup (2009).

whether or not "homosexuality should be considered an acceptable alternative lifestyle" (Gallup 2009). As Figure 2.1 shows, in 1982 only 34 percent of people said homosexuality should be an acceptable alternative lifestyle, with 51 percent calling it not acceptable and 15 percent registering no opinion. By 2007, 57 percent called it acceptable as an alternative lifestyle.

Not so long ago, in 2001, when asked directly if they considered homosexuality to be "morally acceptable" or "morally wrong," 53 percent said "wrong" and 40 percent said "acceptable" (Gallup 2009). In the past few years, however, this 13-point gap has narrowed significantly, and, by 2007, the numbers were roughly even, with 47 percent choosing "acceptable" and 49 percent choosing "wrong." This was the first year that a majority of Americans had not characterized homosexual relations as morally wrong in Gallup polling.

This trend is in line with a liberalizing of American moral attitudes more generally. Homosexuality now occupies something of a moral middle ground between the negatively viewed acts of adultery and polygamy and the increasingly acceptable acts of having sex or a baby outside of marriage. Divorce, viewed until relatively recently as a sin or perhaps even a necessary

evil, is now regarded as morally acceptable by 70 percent of Americans (Gallup 2009).

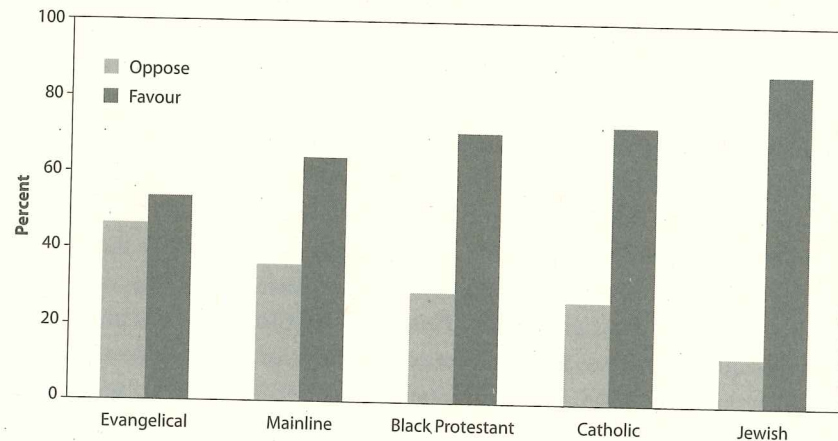
Other related questions have also shown great movement over time. Since 1977, Gallup has asked this question: "In your view, is homosexuality something a person is born with, or is homosexuality due to factors such as upbringing and environment?" The over-time trend shows a steady increase in the number of Americans who view homosexuality as genetic, which most likely relates to the increased acceptance of gays and lesbians (intuitively, it's easier to blame someone for a "choice" than for an immutable, genetic feature). There has also been a sharp increase in the number of Americans who say that someone close to them is gay, another factor that seems to be changing public opinion – or at least correlating with that change. In 1985, the *Los Angeles Times* poll reported that 54 percent of people said they had no friends, family members, or co-workers who were gay or lesbian; by 2004, this figure had dropped to 27 percent, suggesting that a vast majority of respondents did know someone who was gay or lesbian. In 2009, Gallup reported that 58 percent of the population said they have friends, relatives, or co-workers who have personally told the respondent that they are gay or lesbian. In the 2008 American National Election Studies poll, half of respondents reported that they knew someone gay, lesbian, or bisexual "among [their] immediate family members, relatives, neighbors, co-workers, or close friends." These polls suggest that between half and three-quarters of Americans are close to someone whom they think or know is gay or lesbian.²

From these data, we cannot tell if the liberalization in attitudes towards gays, lesbians, and homosexuality is a cause or a consequence of Americans knowing more out-gay/lesbian friends and family. It could be that personally knowing more gays and lesbians is having an impact on how people view homosexuality; conversely, it is also possible that, as people become more liberal, their gay and lesbian friends and family members feel more comfortable coming out to them. Or perhaps these two factors are both at work, in a kind of virtuous circle, with each leading to the other as attitudes liberalize and more people personally know gays/lesbians. Previous studies by Overby and Barth (2002) and Herek and Capitanio (1996) have shown that people who come into contact with homosexuals – especially those who count gays and lesbians as close friends – are much more likely to support gay rights.

There is more support for lesbian and gay issues when survey questions ask about laws and rights rather than about morality. Starting in 1977, Gallup began asking respondents this question: "Do you think homosexual relations

FIGURE 2.2

Do you favour or oppose laws protecting homosexuals against employment discrimination?
Survey results by selected religious traditions, 2000 and 2004



Note: Question wording: "Do you FAVOR or OPPOSE laws to protect homosexuals against job discrimination?" Percentages displayed are proportions of those who answered that they either favoured or opposed the policy (with those answering "don't know" eliminated from this analysis). Denomination classification is from Layman (2001). *N*s are as follows: evangelical = 1,038; mainline = 1,069; black Protestant = 354; Catholic = 1,482; Jewish = 132.

Source: ANES Cumulative Data File, results aggregated from 2000 and 2004 ANES surveys.

between consenting adults should or should not be legal?" and the proportion of Americans saying they should be legal jumped from 43 percent in 1977 to 56 percent in 2009. Public attitudes about employment discrimination offer another clear view of the liberalizing trend. Between 1992 and 2005, Gallup measured Americans' opinions on whether homosexuals should be hired as salespersons, military personnel, doctors, clergy, elementary and high school teachers, and members of the president's cabinet. For several jobs, the change in opinion is drastic, including an increase of 25 percentage points in public acceptance of homosexuals as doctors and a nearly 20-point jump in acceptance of gays/lesbians in the armed forces. And, despite the media story about a "culture war," relatively strong public support for civil rights protections persists across religious traditions and denominations, despite their adherents' differing levels of opposition to homosexuality. As Figure 2.2 shows, large proportions of religious people favour the implementation of laws to protect homosexuals from discrimination on the job.

Even among evangelical Christians, the group least likely to support such protections, 54 percent favour a non-discrimination law.³

Survey Data: Religion and US Public Opinion

To begin to pull apart the effects of religious affiliation, denomination, and measures of religiosity, we examine data from the 2004 and 2008 American National Election Studies (ANES), which contain a battery of items that test for public opinion on homosexuality and rights for gays and lesbians, and the ANES Cumulative Data File, which contains survey data from 1948 to the present.

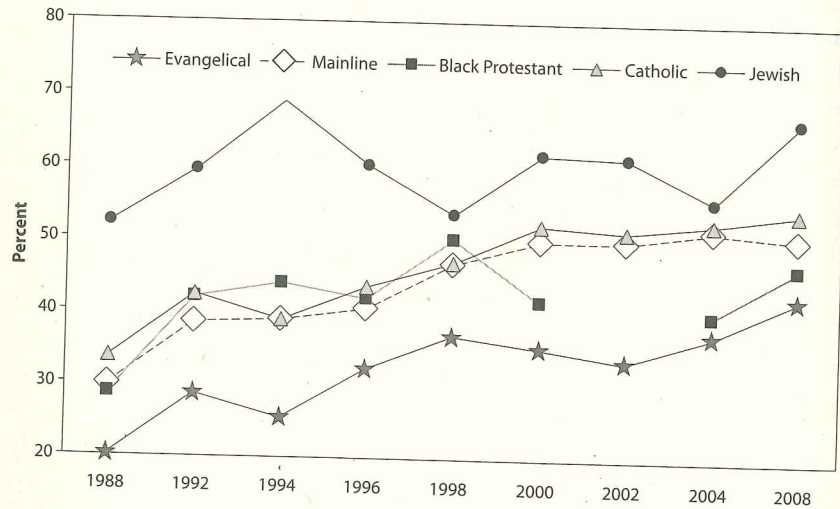
As a first cut, we start by comparing adherents of different religious traditions with respect to their attitudes towards homosexuality and rights for gays/lesbians. One easy way to determine a group of people's attitudes towards gays and lesbians is to look at their average "feeling thermometer" rating. Since 1984, the ANES has asked respondents to rate homosexuals on a feeling thermometer scale, with a maximum rating of 100 (meaning strong positive feeling) and a minimum of 0 (meaning intense dislike). Figure 2.3 plots the average ratings of members of three religious traditions (Catholics, Protestants, and Jews) on the feeling thermometers in the ANES from 1984 to 2004, also plotting data on mainline versus evangelical versus black Protestants. Although the number of Jews in the samples for each year is quite small, we still see some major differences.

Two conclusions are quickly apparent from this figure: first, Protestants, and in particular evangelicals, generally give gays and lesbians the lowest thermometer ratings, with mainline Protestants, black Protestants, and Catholics giving relatively mid-level ratings and Jews giving the highest ratings. Interestingly, black Protestant respondents gave thermometer scores similar to those given by Catholics and white mainline Protestants from 1988 to 1998, but afterwards their mean scores decline until, by 2004-08, they come close to the mean scores given by evangelicals. Yet even Protestants' feeling thermometer scores had risen by 2008 to a score of around 45 across denominations, far higher than just a decade or two earlier. Across all groups, the general over-time trend shows an increase in warmth.

Even negative feelings, however, frequently coincide with supports for civil rights protections. Among those evangelicals and Catholics who rate homosexuals less than a 50 on the feeling thermometer, majorities still support policies to protect gays and lesbians from job discrimination. Of all those across religions and denominations who rate homosexuals less than a

FIGURE 2.3

Feeling thermometer scores on homosexuals by selected religious traditions, 1988-2008



Note: Classification scheme for religions/denominations from Layman (2001). *Ns* are as follows for all years aggregated: evangelical = 2,498; mainline = 2,304; black Protestant = 922; Catholic = 3,469; Jewish = 256. The *N* of black Protestants in 2002 was extremely small (9), and the results of this analysis for that year were far out of line with the general trend, so we exclude that clearly unrepresentative data point. Thermometer scores range from a very cold zero (negative) to very warm (positive) of 100 degrees.

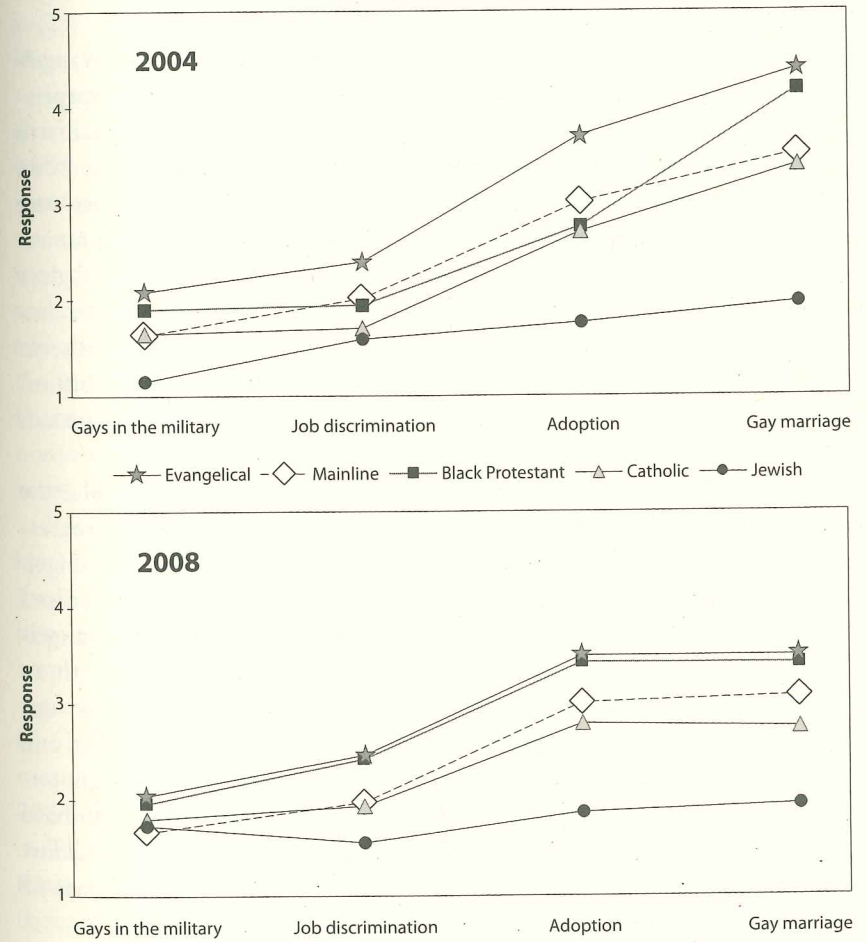
Source: ANES Cumulative Data File.

30 on the thermometer, nearly half favour laws to protect against job discrimination (48.5 percent) and believe gays and lesbians should be able to serve in the military (50.2 percent) (ANES Complete Data File).

Figure 2.4 displays differences across denominations in the levels of opposition to gay marriage, gays in the military, protections against job discrimination, and gay adoption. Higher response values indicate higher levels of opposition: on gay adoption, for example, responses received a 1 if gays should be allowed to adopt and a 5 if they shouldn't. Generally, members of the religions/denominations tested were supportive of gays and lesbians in the military and of policies to protect against job discrimination, with evangelicals being slightly less supportive and Jews being most supportive. Turning to the family-related issues, we see more dispersion in the responses, with evangelicals least likely and Jews most likely to support same sex marriage or adoption, and Catholics, mainline, and black Protestants in the

FIGURE 2.4

Opposition to homosexual rights by selected religious traditions, 2004 and 2008



Note: Charts give the means for each religion/denomination in each year. A response of 1 indicates approval for the policy in question, and a response of 5 indicates opposition. For the gay marriage question only, a response of 1 indicates that gays should be allowed to marry, 3 indicates that gays should be allowed to enter civil unions, and 5 indicates that gays should not be allowed to marry. For 2008, note that religious measures are approximate because, as of this publication, the full religious codes have yet to be released. *Ns* for 2004 (average across the four questions) are as follows: evangelical = 169; mainline = 127; black Protestant = 70; Catholic = 257; Jewish = 29. *Ns* for 2008 (average across the four questions) are as follows: evangelical = 605; mainline = 266; black Protestant = 366; Catholic = 509; Jewish = 23. Source: ANES (2004, 2008).

middle. Yet by 2008, resistance to all gay rights issues, even marriage and adoption, had dropped somewhat across all denominations except black Protestants (where opposition remained fairly constant) and Jews (where opposition had been the lowest and stayed low).

The push for anti-gay legislation has been strongly supported by evangelical denominations such as the Southern Baptist Convention. Not surprisingly, then, evangelicals are more likely than are mainline Protestants to support bans on gay marriage (with a mean of 4.1 versus 3.6 in the 2004 ANES and a mean of 3.4 versus 2.8 in the 2008 ANES). Evangelicals were also much more likely to oppose gay adoption and laws protecting homosexuals from job discrimination. By 2008, attitudes had become slightly more tolerant. For example, fewer members of all denominations prefer outright bans on gay marriage and gay adoption. However, there does not seem to be much more tolerance across the board. There has not been a shift towards general favour of gays in the military or laws to protect homosexuals from job discrimination.

When we tested to see whether demographic factors that might blur the relationship between denomination and moral values were at play, regression results consistently showed a significant relationship between evangelicalism and opposition to gay rights.⁴ Being older and married decreased support for gay marriage but not nearly to the same extent as did evangelicalism. Even when controlling for church attendance, affiliation with an evangelical denomination was still significantly correlated with greater opposition to gay marriage. Jews remain the most supportive of gay rights, and Catholics are somewhat more tolerant than are their Protestant counterparts. Evangelicals still display more intolerant attitudes but seem to have softened: in 2008, evangelicals supported some laws to protect gays against job discrimination and were just as likely to support either gay marriage or civil unions as they were to oppose gay marriage.

Evangelicalism alone is not driving all variation in public attitudes towards homosexuals and gay/lesbian rights. A closer look at religiosity variables reveals important intra-denominational differences in such attitudes based on church attendance, frequency of prayer, and frequency of Bible reading. Frequent churchgoing corresponds with lower average feeling thermometer scores, though mean scores for weekly attendees increased from the mid-20s in 1984 to nearly 40 by 2004. Those who attend church less than monthly rose to just above the 50 threshold by 2004. The increase over time is strongest for those who rarely or never attend worship services,

while those who attend every week continue to give the lowest average ratings. As of 2008, frequent churchgoers and those who pray daily prefer bans on gay marriage, whereas less religious people are much more likely to support legalizing gay marriage. Religiosity therefore continues to be an important factor determining tolerant attitudes.

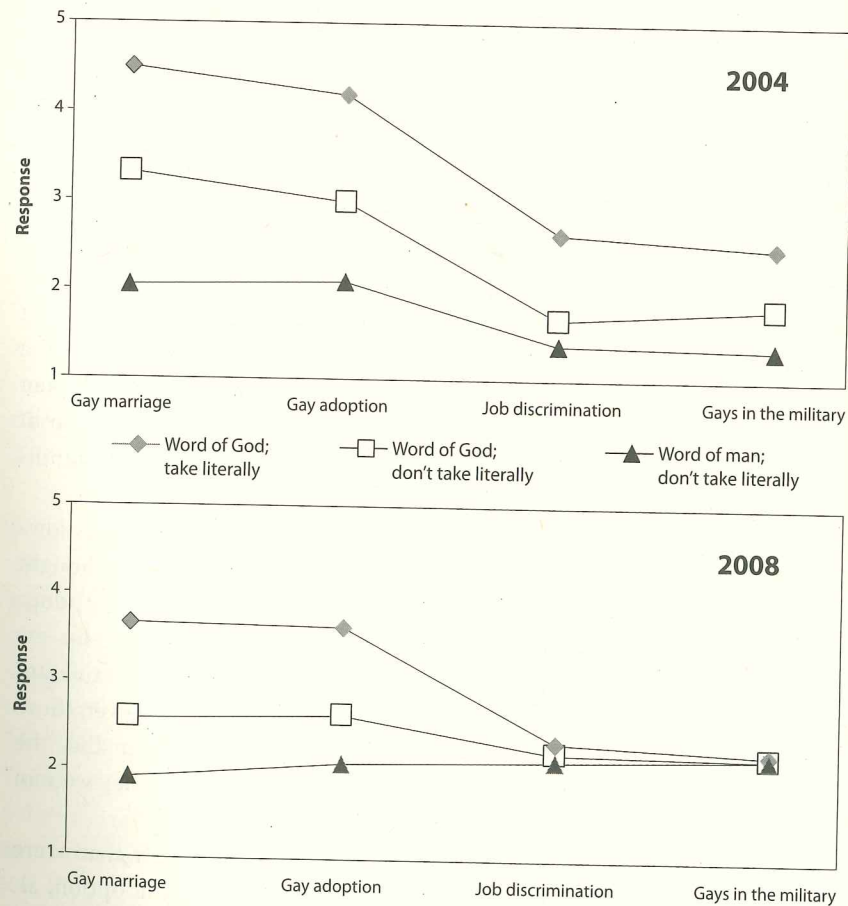
Frequency of Bible reading and tendency to view the Bible as the word of God (not the work of humans) also have important effects on people's attitudes. Figure 2.5 shows that over one-third of respondents said the Bible was the word of God and should be taken literally. These respondents were the most opposed to marriage/union rights for homosexuals and were far more likely to support full governmental bans on both same-sex marriage and gay adoption. Those who believe the Bible is the word of God but should not always be taken literally were more supportive of civil unions, while those who believe the Bible is the word of man and should not be taken literally exhibited the most liberal attitudes towards public recognition of homosexual partnerships. These are dramatic differences, and their significance withstands all controls.

Results from the 2008 ANES indicate some convergence towards low-level tolerance of gay rights. Whereas in 2004 many people who thought the Bible was the word of God wanted bans on gay marriage and gay adoption, by 2008 they felt more moderate – supporting civil unions, for example. Those who do not take the Bible literally have become more tolerant regarding issues of gay marriage and gay adoption. Overall, however, those who take the Bible literally showed somewhat *less* tolerance in that the means of their responses were all above 2 (as opposed to what they were in 2004, when they were frequently between 1 and 2).

Those who prayed several times a day were far more likely than were those who did not to support banning gay marriage and gay adoption, although they generally supported gays in the military and anti-discrimination laws. Respondents who prayed once a day were only slightly more liberal: they still showed support for banning both gay marriage and gay adoption. Evangelical Protestants are more likely to take the Bible literally, to pray several times a day, and to view religion as an important guide in everyday life than are their mainline counterparts. Yet, as we have already seen, there are large within-group contrasts in attitudes towards gays and lesbians. While 41 percent of evangelicals oppose job discrimination protections for gays and lesbians, fully 25 percent support such protections (with the remainder either not being asked the question or answering "don't know").

FIGURE 2.5

Policy positions by belief in divine authorship of Bible, 2004 and 2008



Note: Question wording for belief in divine authorship of Bible: "Which of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about the Bible?" Three responses were as follows: (1) "The Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word"; (2) "The Bible is the word of God but not everything in it should be taken literally, word for word"; and (3) "The Bible is a book written by men and is not the word of God." For policy positions, means indicate level of opposition to expanding the rights of gays/lesbians, with 1 indicating low opposition and 5 indicating high opposition. *N*s for 2004 are as follows: Word of God, take literally = 1,541; Word of God, don't take literally = 1,976; Word of man, don't take literally = 678. *N*s for 2008 are as follows: Word of God, take literally = 955; Word of God, don't take literally = 897; Word of man, don't take literally = 309.

Source: ANES (2004, 2008).

Devotional and scriptural differences within other faith communities are even more pronounced and coincide with very different views of homosexuality (ANES Complete Data File). In most cases, therefore, intra-denominational variations in religiosity and religious traditionalism account for more differences on gay rights than does denomination.⁵ Recent controversies within the Episcopal church highlight this fact. The denomination's official stance on homosexuality currently threatens a worldwide rift that may divide the American church from the rest of the worldwide Anglican Communion. The recent ordination of a gay bishop in the United States sparked an outcry from conservative and influential bishops in the global South, causing the Anglican Communion to threaten to expel the US church and the bishops in the United States to declare a moratorium on ordaining gay or lesbian bishops.

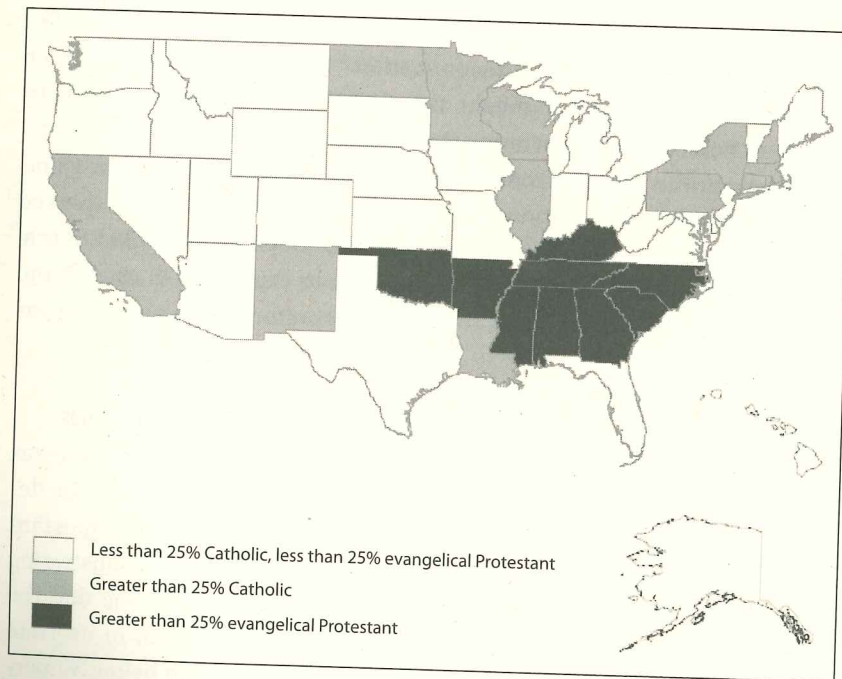
Mapping Religious Variables and Same-Sex Partnership Policies across the States

One way to grasp the aggregate relationship between religion and same-sex legislation is through mapping. While maps cannot prove causality or describe individual-level behaviour, they can offer an overview of important regional variations. For example, if we were to look at a map illustrating percentage of Christian adherents by state, we would quickly see that the United States is an overwhelmingly Christian nation. Indeed, in no state does the percentage of self-identified Christian adherent dip below 30 percent (Glenmary Research Center 2000). Figure 2.6 plots states in which more than 25 percent of the population is either evangelical Protestant (coloured in black) or Catholic (grey). This map demonstrates that evangelical Protestants are clustered in a group of southern states, while heavily Catholic states are predominantly found in the Northeast, Southwest, and Upper Midwest.

As a comparison, Figure 2.7 displays state same-sex marriage legislation in 2008. For ease of representation, several categories of legislation were necessarily lumped together. Thus, states with constitutional bans, defence of marriage acts, or something similar are coloured black. Similarly, states with civil unions or domestic partnerships are coloured grey. States with legalized gay marriage are coloured white, and states lacking either an allowance or a ban are striped. Before analyzing this map, it is important to remember that this figure represents a snapshot of *contemporary* legislation and that laws – even constitutions – are mutable.

FIGURE 2.6

Percentage of Catholics and evangelical Protestants by state, 2008



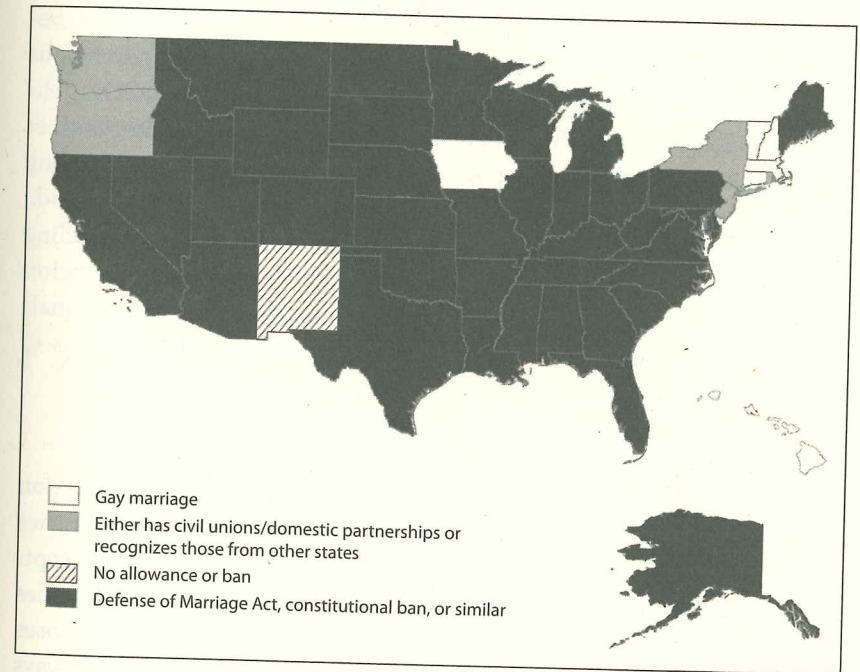
Source: Map constructed by authors, based on data from the Association of Religion Data Archives (2008).

Figure 2.7 reveals the stunning extent to which same-sex marriage has been rejected by state legislatures nationwide. A majority of states in a wide swath of regions have constitutional bans on same-sex marriage or defence of marriage acts (DOMAs). The only two regions in which there appears to be some pocket of legislative tolerance for same-sex unions are the Northeast and the Northwest. In the Northeast, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, New York, and New Jersey have all legalized some form of same-sex union. On the opposite end of the country, Washington and Oregon offer same-sex domestic partnerships.

Comparing this map to the religious affiliations illustrated in Figure 2.6, we can see that every single state with a substantial cluster of evangelical Protestants has a constitutional ban on gay marriage or a DOMA. The

FIGURE 2.7

Same-sex marriage legislation by state, 2009



Source: Map constructed by authors, based on data from National Public Radio (2009).

impact of evangelical affiliation on attitudes towards homosexuality has been widely documented. Such affiliation is substantial across US regions, but mapping shows how strong the clustering is in the southern states.

While the official positions taken by the Roman Catholic hierarchy lead some observers to believe that formally adherent Catholics are more conservative on issues like abortion and homosexuality than are other Americans, survey evidence rarely if ever suggests that this is the case – a fact hinted at by the heavy concentration of Catholics in the Northeast, where tolerance for homosexuality appears greater than it does in other areas. Indeed, Catholics constitute more than 25 percent of the population in several of the states that permit same-sex marriages, civil unions, or domestic partnerships. And, as the survey data above have shown, Catholics tend to

express more liberal attitudes than do Protestants (particularly evangelicals) on measures of gay/lesbian rights and approval.

It is worth emphasizing that, because of the maps' reliance on aggregate data, these findings are illustrative rather than conclusive. Moreover, because of data constraints, these maps only examine the ethnoreligious thesis and do not delve into a second crucial tenet of the literature on religion and public opinion: the "religious restructuring" perspective (Guth et al. 1997, 225). This theory suggests that the most salient division among religious Americans is between orthodox and progressive factions (ibid., 226; Howse 2005; see also Campbell and Robinson 2007). Thus, according to this line of thought, the most important determinant of the role religion plays in shaping public attitudes is whether an individual holds traditionalist or secularist views, a conclusion supported by our earlier analysis of individual-level data.⁶

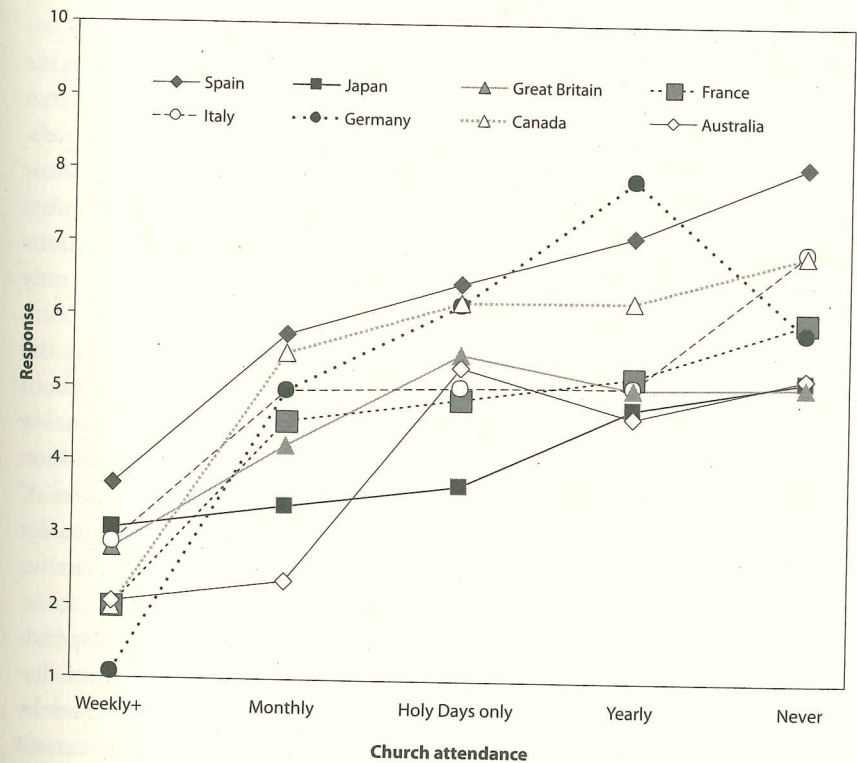
US Opinion and Religiosity in Comparative Perspective

Data from other liberal democratic countries display a strong connection between religiosity and rejection of homosexuality, though a few countries provide examples of faith acting as a less important impediment to acceptance than is the case in the United States. Here we use the World Values Survey (which asks whether or not homosexuality is justified, with responses ranging from 1 to 10, with 1 being "never justifiable" and 10 being "always justifiable").

Figure 2.8 shows the same pattern across all nations tested that we found in the ANES data: the less they attend church, the more likely respondents are to find homosexuality justifiable. Across this sample of developed democratic countries, based on frequency of church attendance, the relationship between churchgoing and support for homosexuality is direct and mostly linear. Although the Roman Catholic hierarchy has stood firmly against any formal recognition of same-sex relationships and adoption rights, the attitudes of nominal Catholics within those European countries with majorities nominally adherent to the Roman Catholic Church are significantly more egalitarian than are the attitudes of Americans. One reason for this is that churchgoing in most of Europe and other Western and predominantly Christian countries is much less frequent than it is in the United States. So, while churchgoing still serves as a strong predictor of attitudes towards homosexuality, the numbers of those who do attend church regularly are low.

FIGURE 2.8

Is homosexuality "justifiable?" Survey results by church attendance, 2005-09



Note: Higher values on the y-axis indicate greater acceptance of homosexuality. Question wording: "Please tell me for each of the following statements whether you think it can be justified, never be justified, or something in between: ... Homosexuality" (scale of 1 to 10, with 1 signifying "never justifiable" and 10 signifying "always justifiable." Ns are as follows: Spain = 1,106; Japan = 971; Great Britain = 925; France = 992; Italy = 924; Germany = 1,923; Canada = 1,998; Australia = 1,373; Sweden = 977.

Source: World Values Surveys (2005-09).

Transgenderism, Transsexuality, and Bisexuality: Emerging Issues

Transgenderism, transsexualism, and bisexuality have not enjoyed such widespread support or attention as has homosexuality/lesbianism, despite a growing movement for public recognition.⁷ The national survey data we have from the 1970s through to today do not ask about transgendered,

transsexual, or bisexual people and their rights; questions on national surveys are phrased in terms of “homosexuals” or “gays and lesbians.” However, the recent congressional debate over the 2007 Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) seems to have hastened the explicit incorporation of transgender advocacy into the broader national gay rights platform. An article by the *Advocate*, an LGBT news source, suggests that the decision by Congress’s Democratic leaders to strip ENDA of its protections for gender identity and expression spurred “an unprecedented show of unity” among gay rights activists (Minter 2007). Within forty-eight hours of the congressional action, more than one hundred LGBT organizations came together to form United ENDA, “a grassroots campaign to pass only the original, unified bill.”

Conservative religious lobbies such as the Family Research Council, the Christian Coalition, and the Traditional Values Coalition say little about gender identities and other sexualities beyond condemning homosexuality and embracing heterosexuality; however, the Traditional Values Coalition (2008) website states the group’s belief that “nobody is born a transsexual,” and the Family Research Council (2008) states that it “does not consider homosexuality, bisexuality, and transgenderism as acceptable, alternative lifestyles.”

Polling by Lake Research Partners has found that 61 percent of respondents believed the country needed laws to protect trans people from discrimination, a lower level of affirmative response than was elicited by questions about job discrimination against lesbians and gays. There cannot be any doubt that evangelicals, other “traditionalists,” and those within other denominations who attend church frequently are substantially less likely than that to support anti-discrimination legislation. In the general population, 67 percent agreed that “it is possible for a person to be born as one sex but inside feel like another sex,” and here we would anticipate even more contrast between evangelicals and church-attendees than others, given the long-standing denial of biological origins for sexual diversity among conservative religious groups (HRC 2002). The general public’s opinion, however, won out in the enactment of the Hate Crimes Prevention Act, 2009, which added to existing US hate crimes legislation protection for crimes based on the “actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability of the victim.” Meanwhile, as this book was going to print, Congress was still debating the inclusion of transgender protections in ENDA.

Discussion

While gay rights have been on the American political agenda for decades, only recently have they been at the forefront of national politics. Political strategists and post-election analysts alike proclaimed that the 2004 presidential election had ushered in a new era of “moral values-based” voting among the public. Gay marriage in particular became inextricably tied to the voting agenda when more than one-fifth of states included gay marriage bans on their ballots. The common wisdom following the election was that religious Americans held strong beliefs about the sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman and that they tended to care more about moral issues on the public agenda than did their secular counterparts. Much debate ensued about the role of moral values in voter decisions, and the influence of the marriage debate in particular, but few could doubt that the debate over lesbian and gay family rights and obligations had moved to centre stage. The 2006 and 2008 elections brought yet more successful state-wide referenda prohibiting same-sex unions and/or marriages, and the fight reached a fever pitch in the battle over Proposition 8 in California, which was approved by a narrow margin of voters in November 2008 and which reversed the state’s judicial legalizing of same-sex marriage. Yet again, the media stories were rife with suggestions of a culture war between religious and secular people.

Our chapter suggests that there is a complex truth to some elements of the conventional wisdom. States with majorities of evangelicals have all banned gay marriage, and surveys show that, regardless of other demographic factors, evangelical Protestants are not only more likely to be opposed to abortion, gay marriage, and gay adoption than are other denominations but also more likely to feel more strongly about these issues. Across the whole population, religious traditionalism and regular adherence to church rituals play an even stronger role than does denomination.

Evangelicals aside, the fact that variations *within* denominations can loom larger than those *between* denominations indicates that practising Christians are often quite tolerant or accepting of gays and lesbians. For some, this comes from a belief in the separation of church and state, a view echoed historically by the Roman Catholic hierarchy in the United States and by mainline Protestant denominations. For some, too, it comes from a readiness to accord rights even to unpopular minorities. And for others, it reflects the steady increase in numbers of Americans who know someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered.

This chapter has explored the links between religion, religiosity, and public opinion on sexuality issues, taking as its starting point the assumption that religion, or even denomination, alone cannot explain individuals' divergent opinions on gay rights. Over the past few decades, Americans have become more tolerant of gays and lesbians overall: they count homosexuals as friends, family members, and co-workers, increasingly consider homosexuality to be an acceptable lifestyle, and are increasingly likely to view homosexuality as a genetic trait rather than as a personal choice. Over time, Americans have also become more likely to support legal rights for gays and lesbians, such as protections from workplace discrimination. Issues that seem particularly linked to the private rather than to the public sphere – such as those concerning gay couples as parents or spouses – remain controversial among Americans. This controversy, however, should not be called a religious-secular divide; rather, we must examine carefully the impact of denomination, religiosity, and scriptural traditionalism in order to understand the many factors that shape US public opinion about public recognition of multiple sexualities.

3

A Twenty-Year Survey of Canadian Attitudes towards Homosexuality and Gay Rights

AMY LANGSTAFF

The past two decades have seen tremendously rapid change in the rights accorded to lesbians and gay men in Canada. The country decriminalized homosexuality in 1967, a legal step that was accompanied by one of the more famous rhetorical flourishes in Canadian politics: Justice Minister Pierre Trudeau's declaration that there was no place for the state in the bedrooms of the nation. A decade later (1977), Quebec became the first province to name sexual orientation in its human rights act. In the late 1980s, the march of gay and lesbian rights accelerated; provincial human rights documents were amended in fairly brisk succession to include sexual orientation as a protected class, beginning with Ontario (1986) and Manitoba (1987) and ending with Newfoundland (1997) and Prince Edward Island (1998). In 1995, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in *Egan v. Canada* that sexual orientation should be read into section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (even if, on other grounds, the court rejected the challenge to old age pension legislation).

As laws were changed to grant gays and lesbians protection from discrimination as individuals, recognition of same-sex relationships also spread. In 1999, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in *M v. H* (a case in which a woman sued her former female partner for spousal support payments) that same-sex unions warranted the same rights and obligations as did opposite-sex common-law unions. The federal government responded the following year with its Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act, which amended

Note: the notes and references for this chapter were combined with those from all chapters in this book, making that section over 50 pages. In the interest of your time (and printing paper), I did not scan that whole section. However, I can do so easily, if you write to me to request it.

(shames@fas.harvard.edu)