

The Effect of Political Knowledge on Political Tolerance

by

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Abstract

Traditional democratic theory holds that an educated electorate, capable of making informed decisions regarding government policy, is required to maintain a healthy relationship between the government and the governed (Bardes and Oldendick 2012). A “paradox of modern democracy” has been identified in that the contemporary American electorate is largely uninformed about a host of details concerning the American governing system and policy issues (Carpini and Keeter 1996). Explorations of specific levels of knowledge about government have shown that Americans are disturbingly uninformed about the Constitution, basic government functions, national history, and basic economic principles (Cribb 2008). According to past research (Carpini and Keeter 1996), political knowledge can affect individual opinions on social tolerance. Given the wide range of diversity in the American population, it is important to further explore the effect of political knowledge on social tolerance. This study examines how knowledge of the American Constitution affects social tolerance toward gay rights, specifically same-sex marriage. In addition, this study examines how the framing effect influences political tolerance toward marriage equality. The framing effect is seen when different presentations of an issue cause different reactions among those who are exposed to that issue. Using a pretest/posttest quasi-experimental survey design, I found statistically significant relationships between respondents who were given educational lectures involving the U.S. Constitution and increases in their political tolerance toward marriage equality. In addition, this study found the

framing effect to be influential in increasing the political tolerance of the respondents toward same-sex marriage. These results shed light on the possibility of increasing the political tolerance of Americans toward same-sex marriage. This research also identified the ability of increased knowledge to affect public opinion in general, which could be of great importance to individuals studying electoral politics, minority discrimination, and public-opinion theory. Finally, this research identified the ability of contact with minority groups to increase political tolerance toward those groups.

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Chapter One

Introduction

In 1981 the American people witnessed the genesis of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in North America. In the first few years of this health crisis, information available to the public was scarce. In addition, most Americans, while having heard of the new virus, had little to no contact with anyone suffering from the disease. As it became more apparent to the nation that the medical community did not have a cure for this new scourge, the message from national media outlets began to be framed predominantly through a lens of fear. As a result, public opinion toward those who had contracted the HIV/AIDS virus tended to be overwhelmingly negative (Kaiser 2011).

Over the next three decades, however, scientific discoveries in several different medical fields shed light on the HIV/AIDS virus and produced numerous anti-viral medications that made it possible to live with the virus for extended periods of time. As medical knowledge of the virus has increased over the years, so too has the knowledge made available to the public. This knowledge reduced the aggregate levels of fear experienced by many within the American public. By 1987, two-thirds of Americans polled had identified HIV/AIDS as the most urgent health problem facing the country. This number was down to only seven percent in 2011 (Kaiser 2011). In addition, as the virus evolved since the 1980s, more Americans knew someone with the HIV/AIDS virus (41% in 2011 compared to 2% in 1983) (Kaiser 2011). Finally, over the last thirty years, national media outlets became more informative regarding their reporting of the HIV/AIDS virus than in the past. Today, sixty percent of Americans say that their knowledge of the AIDS virus comes entirely from the media, putting it ahead of other sources like schools, doctors, friends, family, and the church (Kaiser 2011).

As a result of these three changes in the reality of HIV/AIDS today (increased public knowledge, change in the media's framing of the message, and personal contact with the disease) public opinion is far more supportive of those who suffer from the effects of the HIV/AIDS virus today than in the past. Today, fewer Americans think of HIV/AIDS as a form of punishment (16%) than in the mid-80s (43%), and fewer Americans believe it is an individual's own fault for contracting the disease today (29%) than thirty years ago (51%) (Kaiser 2011). As knowledge of and contact with HIV/AIDS has increased over the last few decades, public tolerance of the victims of the virus has also increased. Additionally, as the media have framed the issue of HIV/AIDS from the lens of medical knowledge, as opposed to fear and misunderstanding, public tolerance of the victims of the virus has increased. This research extends the analysis to gay marriage, and explores the role of political knowledge and contact with minority couples, along with a positive framing of the issue, in increasing political tolerance for same-sex marriage rights in contemporary America.

Civil Liberties, Public Opinion, Framing, and Contact Theory

Civil liberties in America are guaranteed and protected by government. While state and local entities play an important role, it is generally the federal government that serves as the last line of defense for American rights. Policy decisions made at the federal level generally have a significant impact on civil liberties, both positive and negative. Public opinion often represents an important factor in shaping the decisions of government policy-makers. Policy-specific public opinion has been shown to have the largest effect on policy-makers' decisions (Lax and Phillips 2009). This research examined the connection between political knowledge and public opinion on minority rights; specifically, whether or not increasing political knowledge would significantly affect public opinion on same-sex marriage rights.

This research asked the following questions: Does political knowledge have an effect on political tolerance of same-sex marriage rights? Does the way the issue of same-sex marriage is framed effect political tolerance of same-sex marriage equality? Does an individual's contact with non-traditional couples affect his or her political tolerance of same-sex couples? This research explored the different effects that political knowledge has on political tolerance. In addition, this research tested the ability of political tolerance to change depending on the way the issue of same-sex marriage is framed. Finally, this research explored the effect prior contact with non-traditional couples has on public opinion of same-sex marriage equality.

Public opinion has been described in a number of different ways by a multitude of different researchers over the last century. V.O. Key offered a definition of public opinion as "those opinions held by private persons that governments find it prudent to heed" (1967, 14). Simon referred to public opinion as "the aggregate of views people hold regarding matters that affect or interest the community" (1974, 7). According to Hennessy, public opinion is "the complex of preferences expressed by a significant number of people on an issue of general importance" (1981, 4). Public opinion has also been described as "the expression of attitudes relevant to government and politics" (Cummings and Wise 1974, 168). Contemporary definitions of public opinion describe it as "the preferences of the adult population on matters of relevance to government" (Erikson and Tedin 2011, 8). Public opinion researchers have discovered evidence that national policy changes correspond to trends in public opinion (Page and Shapiro 1983; Stimson, MacKuen, and Erikson 1995). Public opinion serves a vital role in shaping government policy provided that public opinion is recognized and coherent.

The development of public opinion is determined in part by the knowledge available to the general population whose opinion is being sought. An informed populace is required for

developing coherent public opinion regarding the policy decisions of government. Good public judgment is a “state of highly developed public opinion that exists once people have engaged an issue, considered it from all sides, understood the choices it leads to, and accepted the consequences of the choices they make” (Yankelovich 1991, 6). Unfortunately for public opinion as a method for affecting policy decisions, many within a given population do not possess a great deal of political knowledge or interest in current events. The non-attitudes of many within the population lead to low levels of public opinion reliability (Converse 1964). One method used to combat the non-attitudes of many within a population is to use a deliberative opinion poll which takes a small sample population and educates them on a particular issue until the individuals have acquired a suitable knowledge to discuss their opinions (Fishkin 1996).

The importance of public opinion on policy-makers’ decisions and the frequent ignorance of much of the public regarding political knowledge can decrease public opinion’s ability to force the hand of government when minority rights are being denied. Education, and the knowledge it fosters, has been found to be “the most powerful predictor of political knowledge” (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996, 188). More than 60% of college graduates are considered to have high political knowledge compared to 20% of those with less than a high school diploma (Kohut, Morin, and Keeter 2007). Education has been shown to have a significant impact on the application of democratic principles and political tolerance (Bardes and Oldendick 2012). Stouffer’s research has found that “the better educated tend to be more tolerant than the less educated” (1955, 91). Unfortunately for many minority groups in American history, public opinion has not demanded equal treatment for all groups throughout the 225-year history of the Republic. The inability of American populations to maintain high levels of political knowledge, referenced by Converse’s descriptions of the intractability of political ignorance (1990), has

allowed many groups to go without government protections for their rights, often with little to no public outcries in protest.

Struggles over minority rights represent a fundamental element of American history and can be seen as one of the most important conflicts in any democratic government possessing a diverse population (Lax and Phillips 2009). The history of the American democratic experiment is rife with examples of some groups being excluded from the constitutional protections afforded ostensibly to all persons in the U.S. As a group, African-Americans have progressed socially and legally from involuntary servitude, to legally-established second-class citizenship, to full incorporation into American society. American women have followed a similar path to reach legal and social equality (with the exception of white women not having spent more than two centuries in slavery). Different religious and cultural groups have experienced a variety of struggles in order to successfully assimilate within the heterogeneous American population. The one characteristic of American history that is as consistent as discrimination is the eventual inclusion within the American collective. In time, groups that have been denied the Constitution's guarantee of equal protection of the law emerge victorious after hard-fought struggles to gain membership within the American melting pot. According to Alexis de Tocqueville, in democratic governments "The gradual progress of equality is something fated" (1988, 12). While each group's struggles are different, with respect to the time required and nature of the oppression experienced, eventually most groups become legally recognized equals within the Republic. In republican forms of government, "inconsistent values and institutions are not likely to persist" (Lichbach 1984, 11).

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex (LGBTQI) Americans, however, have thus far proved to be an exception to this informal rule of American history.

LGBTQI Americans, while enjoying several legal rights, like voting and serving on juries, are still denied membership into one of the most socially, religiously, and culturally significant institutions in the world: the institution of marriage. The legal, economic, social, and psychological ramifications of marriage inequality are addressed by the literature in several academic fields (Badgett and Goldberg 2009; Steinberger 2009; Goldberg 2009; Pizer, Konnoth, Mallory, and Sears 2012; Badgett and Gates 2006).

The reality of discriminatory policies against same-sex couples is that they have relegated millions of Americans to a legal state of second-class citizenship. This research attempts to illuminate important factors associated with marriage inequality in America and public opinion of those inequalities. Public opinion research is important in democratic governments because “what the public wants is in some way translated into public policy” (Bardes and Oldendick 2012, p. 9). For example, there is a linkage between the views of members of Congress and their constituents in the formulation of policy decisions on certain issues (Miller and Stokes 1963). Similarity between constituency opinions and Congressional voting have been shown to be the most closely aligned on issues related to social welfare, foreign involvement, and civil rights. Federal policy outcomes have been found to be consistent with public preferences two-thirds of the time (Monroe 1979). This study attempts to determine, among other things, whether or not public opinion on same-sex marriage rights can be influenced by receiving information about the U.S. Constitution.

This research includes an examination of public opinion’s tendency to be influenced by the framing effect. The framing effect is seen when different presentations of an issue cause different reactions among those who are exposed to that issue (Jacoby 2000). The primary idea behind framing theory is that individual issues can be viewed from a number of different

perspectives and affect multiple core values and considerations (Chong and Druckman 2007).

According to Jacoby (2000), different frames can produce widespread changes in the ways that people respond to the same issue. In fact, Jacoby considers the competition between varying presentations, or frames, of social problems to be one of the most important dynamics at the foundation of contemporary political conflict.

This study also examines prior contact with minority couples in an effort to ascertain whether or not it had an identifiable effect on political tolerance toward same-sex marriage rights. Contact theory, as it is called, refers to the potential for intergroup contact to reduce potential intergroup prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp 2000). This theory proposes the potential for intergroup interactions to promote “mutual understanding” (Lett 1945, 35) while preventing the negative implications of intergroup isolation which can cause “prejudice and conflict to grow like a disease.” (Brameld 1946, 245). In general, contact theory stipulates that as groups interact with one another more often, they will begin to recognize the similarities they share with one another while focusing less on their insignificant differences, leading to higher levels of understanding and tolerance.

This study collected data about feelings toward same-sex marriage, operationalized by using a one hundred point feeling thermometer determining how favorable respondents’ opinions are toward same-sex marriage, and by then asking if respondents supported legally-recognized same-sex marriages. Having determined their initial opinions on same-sex marriage rights, a brief lecture was given to treatment group members and their opinions on same-sex marriage were retested two days later. There were four different lectures given to four individual groups: a lecture on American Constitutional Law, a lecture on the U.S. Constitution, a lecture on same-sex marriage rights from an equality frame, and a second lecture on same-sex marriage rights

using a golden rule frame. A fifth group of respondents received no lecture intervention and served as the control group. Using a pretest/posttest general survey design, this research attempted to identify any change in public opinion on the matter of same-sex marriage rights after the respondents were exposed to relevant information about the Constitution. In addition, this study attempted to identify the power of the framing effect through the equality and golden rule frame lectures. This research also examined whether or not previous contact with non-traditional couples affects respondents' pretest opinions on same-sex marriage equality.

This paper also collected qualitative data from respondents by asking several open-ended questions at the end of the pretest/posttest surveys. These questions asked respondents to extrapolate on their opinions regarding same-sex marriage. One question determines the origin(s) of the respondents' feelings toward same-sex marriage. A second question asks respondents to describe whether they believe they could or could not change their opinions on same-sex marriage and why. A third question on experimental group one and two posttests asks students to identify any new information they gained concerning the U.S. Constitution.

The results show that as access to information concerning American civil liberties and civil rights increases, public opinion in support of same-sex marriage rights increases as well, controlling for relevant factors. Otherwise put, the more knowledgeable the survey respondents became regarding the rights of American citizens, guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution, the more tolerant they became toward the rights of minority groups and their access to legal equality. This research also shows a relationship between contact with non-traditional couples and support for same-sex marriage equality. As contact with non-traditional couples increases so too does support for same-sex marriage rights. In addition, this research identified a relationship between

the respondent's prior formal education and basic knowledge of American government and increased levels of political tolerance.

Before exploring the relevant literature associated with the previously mentioned topics, I will take a moment to reiterate my hypotheses for this survey research. First, I hypothesized that an increase in knowledge of the U.S. Constitution will lead to an increase in the political tolerance scores of the respondents in this survey research.

$H_1 =$ Increasing knowledge of the U.S. Constitution will Δ political tolerance.

$H_0 =$ Increasing knowledge of the U.S. Constitution will not Δ political tolerance.

Second, I hypothesized that exposure to the framing effect, specifically the equality frame and the golden rule frame, will increase the political tolerance scores of the respondents.

$H_2 =$ Exposure to the equality/golden rule framing effect will Δ political tolerance.

$H_0 =$ Exposure to the equality/golden rule framing effect will not Δ political tolerance.

Third, I hypothesized that higher levels of formal education will result in higher political tolerance scores on the pretest survey.

$H_3 =$ Higher levels of formal education will Δ political tolerance.

$H_0 =$ Higher levels of formal education will not Δ political tolerance.

Finally, I hypothesized that previous contact with non-traditional couples will increase tolerance of same-sex marriage resulting in higher political tolerance scores on the pretest survey.

$H_4 =$ Contact with non-traditional couples will Δ political tolerance.

$H_0 =$ Contact with non-traditional couples will not Δ political tolerance.

In the second chapter of this research, I identified several valuable reasons to invest time and resources into the study of public opinion and same-sex marriage rights. These include

economic and non-economic justifications for marriage equality. I also provided a summary of the LGBTQI movement in America including a brief discussion of its recent progress. In addition, this research includes a brief overview of the U.S. Constitution and several key elements of U.S. constitutional law. All of the elements of the Constitution involve characteristics important to the same-sex marriage equality movement in America. I described several portions of the Constitution and U.S. constitutional law that were presented to the first two experimental groups of this survey research, in the form of ten-minute lecture interventions. I explored the most important elements of public opinion theory, stressing the importance of the discipline and the most important examples of progress that have been made over the last century. Chapter Two gives the reader a brief examination of Cognitive Psychology literature, specifically dealing with the leading theories associated with the acquisition of knowledge and the development of cognitive dissonance. The second chapter concludes with a discussion of my expectations for the survey research data that I have collected.

Chapter Three provides a detailed description of the methodology used in this quasi-experimental survey research design. I describe all of the steps I have taken and the methods used to collect pretest and posttest opinions of the survey respondents regarding same-sex marriage rights. The third chapter includes a brief discussion of my sampling methods, the piloting process, and the identification of my dependent variables and relevant independent variables that have been examined in my research. I have also provided a brief list of previous research conducted in several different fields of political science that are closely associated with the research questions I have asked and examined.

Chapter Four provides the data analysis for my dissertation research. I offer a detailed explanation of my univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses. I discuss some of the relevant

findings throughout chapter four while identifying the location of pertinent tables at the end of my dissertation. Chapter Four also provides a brief list of the limitations of my research design and possible recommendations for overcoming those limitations in the future.

In chapter four, I detail my findings. These show a relationship between political knowledge and political tolerance, as well as an increase in political tolerance toward same-sex marriage rights by those in the constitutional law experimental group. Those respondents who received a ten-minute lecture on U.S. constitutional law showed a higher level of support for same-sex marriage rights on their posttest surveys. This suggests the ability of political knowledge to increase political tolerance in a statistically significant manner.

Chapter four also provides a detailed examination of the increase that occurred in the mean-feeling thermometer scores for those respondents who received the equality and golden rule framed lectures. On a one hundred point scale, determining support for same-sex marriage rights, the experimental group that experienced the equality-framed lecture showed a mean aggregate increase of almost one half-point between the pretest and the posttest. The experimental group that heard a ten-minute lecture framed around the principle of the golden rule witnessed a mean aggregate increase in its posttest feeling thermometer scores of over 1.2 points. This paper will show that the framing of the issue of same-sex marriage is an important factor in determining public tolerance, when measured through public opinion polls.

The analysis also supports my third and fourth hypotheses involving formal education and prior contact with minority couples. By using a general knowledge index, created by combining the answers to five general political knowledge questions on the pretest survey, the results show a relatively strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between increased political knowledge and support for same-sex marriage rights ($r = 0.244$; $p \leq 0.01$). In

addition, there is a statistically significant and positive correlation between the amount of contact the respondents had with minority couples and their pretest survey support for same-sex marriage rights. Those respondents who reported contact with minority couples had a higher level of approval for same-sex marriage rights ($r = 0.298$; $p \leq 0.01$) than those respondents who did not report contact with any of the minority groups involved.

I conclude my research with a discussion of my findings and their possible implications for future research in Chapter Five. The results suggest a relationship between knowledge of U.S. constitutional law and increased levels of support for same-sex marriage rights. As I explain in chapter two, the literature suggests a positive relationship between political knowledge and political tolerance. This is supported in my results, and can have implications for public education leaders. If it is possible to increase political tolerance for minority groups by increasing political knowledge, advocates and elected officials can increase their demand for and resources allocated toward the education of students in primary, secondary, and post-secondary academic institutions. Elected and unelected leaders could require higher levels of support for teaching U.S. constitutional law in primary and secondary institutions of education. Mandatory introductory constitutional law courses for postsecondary education students majoring in liberal arts could be a relatively simple method for increasing the social harmony within a country that is known for its heterogeneous population. Increases in political tolerance, brought about by increasing the nation's dedication to public education, could be a resource in the continued attempt to increase the political harmony of the U.S. population.

This research possesses the additional advantage of focusing exclusively on variables that can increase political tolerance specifically involving same-sex marriage rights. As I have discussed in Chapter Two, a great deal of research literature is available examining the effect of

political knowledge on political tolerance in general. Foundational research by Stouffer (1955) focused on political tolerance toward communists, socialists, and atheists. Improvements to Stouffer's model were later made by Sullivan et al. (1982) that dealt with political tolerance toward all possible minority groups that may have been viewed negatively by the research respondents. More recently, research has examined the link between political tolerance and religion (Eisenstein 2006). These researchers have examined the possible effects of different variables on political tolerance towards minority groups. My research, however, adds value to the existing literature by focusing exclusively on political tolerance toward same-sex couples' right to legally wed.

The ability of knowledge acquisition to affect public opinion can also be potentially valuable to researchers in the field of cognitive psychology; particularly those studying cognitive dissonance theory. My research could be improved upon by cognitive psychologists wishing to improve our understanding of the acquisition of knowledge by human subjects. The ability of new information to change the opinions of my respondents could also be useful to those wanting a better understanding of dissonance and whether or not it can be created in a short amount of time.

The ability of the framing effect to alter public opinion on specific issues, which is shown to be the case in my research, could have an impact on several academic fields. Those interested in the ability of political campaigns to sway the electorate based on the way issues are framed would have a great deal of interest in this research as it could better inform them how to shape their political messages. Public administrators would also find the framing effect's ability to shape public opinion to be a valuable tool in their hands as they attempt to craft policy implementation strategies that will receive positive public support. Elected leaders would also

benefit through a better understanding of the public's susceptibility to the framing effect as they attempt to create public legislation that would both help the public and improve their chances at electoral success.

Public and private sector organizations endeavoring to improve minority population's access to equal rights could also benefit from an enhanced appreciation of the framing effect's ability to direct public opinion. By utilizing specific frames to describe particular issues to the public, non-profit organizations struggling to improve minority rights could improve the public's sympathy for their important causes. Public and private organizations may increase their ability to achieve greater success at improving the lives of minority groups within America if they are able to successfully frame their issues in a way that draws more attention from the voting public. LGBTQI organizations could use the findings of this research to promote campaigns that stress equality to win support for marriage equality legislation. In addition, LGBTQI organizations could possibly gain support in traditionally conservative regions of the American South by launching campaigns that frame the issue of marriage equality through the lens of the golden rule, which would be more applicable to evangelical Christians in predominantly republican states.

The relationship I have identified between personal contact with minority couples and support for same-sex marriage rights also could be of great interest to elected officials and public and private school administrators. Recognition of the ability of contact between different groups of people to increase political tolerance could be another motivation for the continued integration of public and private schools if individual administrators choose to do so. The ability to improve social tolerance within the U.S. by increasing the levels of interaction between different groups

could represent yet another possible method for this research to increase the social harmony within the racially, religiously, and culturally-divided Republic.

Important Reasons to Study Public Opinion and Same-Sex Marriage

The issue of same-sex marriage rights represents a challenge to the basic civil liberties guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution to all persons within America. The outcome of the political and social conflict over same-sex marriage equality will have an effect on millions of tax-paying Americans. Supporters of same-sex marriage seek access to state and federal privileges that heterosexual couples already enjoy. Additionally, legal recognition of same-sex marriage rights would end the implied federal government's view of homosexuality as a deviant and illegitimate lifestyle (Diaz & McVeigh 2009).

The study of same-sex marriage inequality also offers several theoretical advantages to a number of academic fields. The mobilization of interest groups, on both sides of the issue, offers a unique look into the ability of these groups to affect policy decisions. In addition, public opinion on the issue of same-sex marriage provides an opportunity to better understand how individual ideology directs government actions on controversial issues that possess high levels of saliency. Both of these characteristics of same-sex marriage contribute to our understanding of the distinction between American democratic functioning from a Majoritarian versus a Pluralist lens. Finally, the unique characteristics of same-sex marriage rights allows researchers to view policy formulation from the perspective of morality, as opposed to the more frequently studied areas of social welfare and economic policy (Soule 2004).

This study in particular is unique due to the fact that the contemporary realities of same-sex marriage were changing while this research was being conducted. Possibly the biggest change occurred on June 26, 2013, when the U.S. Supreme Court issued a 5-4 decision striking down a provision of the Defense of Marriage Act that defined marriage as an institution between

a man and a woman. This decision, *U.S. v. Windsor*, required the federal government to recognize same-sex marriages in states that allowed them to occur. The *Windsor* decision, and the growing number of states that allow same-sex marriages (19 of 50 states and the District of Columbia), have made this research particularly interesting, given the time period in which this research was conducted (Reuters 2014).

Same-Sex Marriage and Economic Resources

One way discriminatory laws negatively affect LGBTQI Americans involves issues related to personal finances. Same-sex couples are denied several federal tax benefits enjoyed by heterosexual married couples. Federal estate tax laws provide unequal treatment of same-sex couples over the course of their lives. Generally, federal estate tax law allows the transfer of unlimited assets to surviving spouses who are not subject to estate tax liability. Same-sex couples are limited in their ability to transfer financial assets to their surviving partners upon death. While federal estate tax laws affect a minority of Americans, the homosexual citizens that are affected by their inability to enjoy estate tax protections can suffer millions of dollars of payments that are not required of their heterosexual peers (Steinberger 2009).

Additional federal tax liabilities can be identified as unfairly punishing same-sex couples. Despite the ability of same-sex couples to legally wed in several U.S. states, the federal government does not recognize same-sex couples as being legally wed, regardless of individual state laws. While many heterosexual married couples enjoy reduced federal income taxes by filing joint tax returns, same-sex couples are not afforded the same tax-reducing option. Same-sex couples must fill out separate state and federal tax returns, resulting in increased time and money, due to their sexual orientation (Badgett and Goldberg 2009).

Same-sex couples also experience increased taxes paid on employer-provided health benefits. Many employers provide health insurance benefits for their employees. Heterosexual married couples do not experience any tax penalties for those employer-provided benefits that are received by non-employed spouses of heterosexual married couples. Domestic partner benefits for homosexual couples are taxed as income to the employee receiving the benefits. These taxes represent payments made to the federal government by same-sex couples that are the direct result of their inability to obtain marriages legally recognized by that same federal government (Badgett and Goldberg 2009).

Limitations on marriage equality can have a negative impact on the acquisition of healthcare benefits from private-sector organizations. Homosexual couples experience several difficulties stemming from employer practices and federal and state legal institutions that create an environment of legally-recognized inequality. Lacking the ability to gain legally-recognized marriages has prevented many same-sex couples from enjoying the full benefits of employers' retirement programs. Same-sex couples also experience disadvantages in retirement assets and savings, primarily caused by employers that do not recognize same-sex relationships, which have a derogatory effect on their ability to plan for future events. Same-sex couples are not afforded the same legal protections of heterosexual married couples which can leave them with fewer options for retirement planning. Limitations on groups' abilities to prepare for their own retirement can lead to increased dependence on government services in the future (Goldberg 2009).

Same-sex couples may also be denied spousal impoverishment provisions if they are receiving Medicaid benefits when their partner dies. Medicaid, a federally-mandated program which ensures access to healthcare for those low-income and disabled individuals and families

who qualify, has previously attempted to recoup expenses of long-term care costs by seizing the assets of individuals admitted into extended-care facilities. In order to protect heterosexual spouses from living in poverty when their loved one joins a long-term care facility, Congress passed provisions in 1988 designed to protect spouses from losing their homes. While same-sex couples have been allowed to receive similar spousal impoverishment protections, due to a 2011 decision by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, individual states may or may not choose to provide these additional protections for those couples. The federal government has not, as of yet, made spousal impoverishment protections for same-sex couples mandatory (Pizer, Konnoth, Mallory, and Sears 2012).

Non-Economic Factors Associated with Same-Sex Marriage

Economic factors are not the only characteristics negatively associated with the legal discrimination of homosexuals regarding marriage equality. Social scientists in the European Union describe the effects of “social exclusion” (Percy-Smith 2000). The fundamental element of this exclusion is found in the social, legal, and economic limitations placed on certain groups’ abilities to fully participate in society. Research has shown a correlation between the right to marry and effective social inclusion into a particular society. Exclusion from the right to legally marry can lead to the belief that marriage is an undesirable institution, further widening the ideological distance between homosexual and heterosexual members of a population (Badgett 2011).

Several important characteristics of same-sex marriage equality can be found in the precedents set by the federal Supreme Court. The Court has previously found that a right to privacy exists as a substantive due process right, in *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965), and that anti-sodomy laws specifically targeting homosexuals are unconstitutional, *Lawrence v. Texas*

(2003). However, the opinions of several justices have shown a constitutional incompatibility with legal bans on same-sex marriage. Justice Anthony Kennedy, writing in the abortion case of *Planned Parenthood of Southeast Pennsylvania v. Casey* (1992), said

‘These matters, involving the most intimate and personal choices a person may make in a lifetime, choices central to personal dignity and autonomy, are central to the liberty protected by the Fourteenth Amendment. At the heart of liberty is the right to define one’s own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life. Beliefs about these matters could not define the attributes of personhood were they formed under compulsion of the State’

(*Planned Parenthood* 1992).

Justice Kennedy’s description of personal dignity and autonomy are good examples of the requests for legal equality currently being made by same-sex rights advocates. Justice Kennedy also provides insight into the limitations of the states’ abilities to define attributes of personhood.

Several distinct advantages have been proposed for the national legalization of same-sex marriage rights. Due to an increased access to employer-provided healthcare already being enjoyed by heterosexual married couples, employees will be healthier and less likely to leave their current places of employment. Spousal benefits for same-sex couples will increase the competitiveness of employers in recruiting and retaining talented and committed employees. An increase in wedding ceremonies has been estimated to represent a two-billion-dollar revenue producer that is currently not being collected by state and local governments. Marriage equality would allow multistate and multinational corporations to transfer employees with greater speed and convenience, reducing an artificial hindrance that currently exists within the U.S. economy (Badgett and Gates 2006).

A final factor regarding same-sex marriage rights can be found in the uniquely American diversity of homosexuals. In the past, before the Civil Rights Act of 1964, state legislation was passed to specifically target African-American citizens. Specific legislation has been passed dealing with limitations on the rights of women. During the Second World War, a Supreme Court decision allowed federal legislation that called for the internment of Japanese-American citizens. American history is rife with examples of individual groups being targeted for legal discrimination based on their race, ethnicity, religion, or gender. Homosexuals, however, represent a kaleidoscope of American diversity. Discriminatory laws limiting the rights of homosexuals limit the rights of all Americans. Homosexual Americans represent Caucasians, African-Americans, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Islanders, and many other racial groups. Homosexual Americans represent a variety of religious faiths and cultural backgrounds. And finally, of course, homosexual Americans represent both men and women. In short, discriminatory laws are not only offensive to homosexual Americans; they are offensive to all Americans.

Attempts to alleviate the political controversy with civil unions and domestic partnerships only mask the underlying constitutional problem with same-sex discrimination. Domestic partnerships and civil unions are well-intentioned attempts to provide legally separate marriage institutions that provide an equal level of legal rights for same-sex couples. That bears repeating: legally separate institutions that provide equal benefits to homosexual Americans - legally separate but equal - separate but equal. The American Supreme Court has long since found, in its 1954 decision of *Brown v. the Board of Education, of Topeka, Kansas*, that separate institutions were inherently unequal before the law. Attempts to improve the issue of same-sex

marriage inequality with civil unions and domestic partnerships amount to no more than creative manipulations of nomenclature.

This study examines whether or not an increase in information has an effect on public opinion. The increased information presented takes the form of facts describing the American Constitution and constitutional law cases involving civil liberties. This study requires a basic understanding of the U.S. Constitution and constitutional law in order to appreciate why the information chosen for the lectures is germane to the study. It is also important to understand the basic characteristics of public opinion research in order to appreciate the importance of public opinion surveys. It is equally important to comprehend how individuals acquire and process new information when it is presented to them. As a result, the next few sections of this research explore the disciplines of American Constitutional Law, Public Opinion Theory, and Cognitive Psychology. I begin this journey through the literature by briefly discussing the history of LGBT rights in America.

Chapter Two

Public Opinion and Same-Sex Marriage Theory Development

LGBTQU rights have fluctuated since the first English settlements began appearing on the North American Continent. LGBTQI individuals have existed in Colonial American societies that did not recognize them as legitimate groups and those that would punish homosexual acts with whippings and imprisonment. LGBTQI individuals, in the first few hundred years of American culture, have been viewed in a light that has resembled both curious ambivalence and open hostility (Alsenas 2008).

This research attempts to better understand the position of American public opinion regarding same-sex marriage rights. This study attempts to identify whether there is a relationship between public opinion on same-sex marriage and basic knowledge of civics by the respondents. While the details of the approach will be covered more thoroughly in the chapter on methodology, in general, this research examines the effect of civic knowledge on the public opinion of same-sex marriage. A simple convenience sample survey research design was used to administer a pretest/posttest examination of public opinion on same-sex marriage. Between the two tests, a ten-minute lecture was given to one experimental group that covered several concepts of U.S. constitutional law. A second experimental group was given a brief ten-minute lecture describing the American Constitution. A third experimental group was presented with a ten-minute lecture covering the realities of marriage inequality from an equality frame. A fourth experimental group received a ten-minute lecture from the perspective of the golden rule frame. Finally, a fifth group served as the control and received no lecture intervention between the pretest and posttest.

Those in the experimental groups were expected to exhibit a statistically significant change in their opinions regarding same-sex marriage when compared to the control group. Before discussing this research methodology in more detail, it is important to clarify the issues discussed in this research. This study involves knowledge of the U.S. Constitution, landmark decisions in American Constitutional Law, contemporary theories of public opinion theory (specifically the importance of the equality and golden rule framing effects), and fundamental concepts of information processing found within the discipline of Cognitive Psychology. Having briefly described the fundamental elements of the research, this paper turns to a brief examination of the literature found in these three important fields.

Overview of American LGBTQI History

The genesis of contemporary gay rights in America can be seen in the Stonewall Inn, in New York's Greenwich Village. The tavern in the Stonewall Inn had long-since been a well-known bar for Manhattan's homosexual community to frequent during the 1960s. On occasion, New York police officers would investigate the establishment to ensure there were no violations of the city's liquor license requirements. In general, the patrons of the famous gay bar would passively wait until the police had left before continuing to openly practice their homosexual lifestyles. On an evening on June 27, 1969, the patrons of the Stonewall tavern responded quite differently to the police intimidation to which they were subjected. When that night's raid continued with the standard insults and rough handling to which the patrons had become accustomed, the homosexual guests began to respond to the authorities with a rage and discontent of their own (Alsenas 2008).

Police were stunned when guests of the Stonewall gay bar began throwing bottles and coins at them; members of gay bars had never responded this way to police intimidation. Before

the night was over, riot police were needed to rescue the original police who were forced to take refuge inside the bar. Though it took contemporaries time to understand the significance of the Stonewall riots, eventually, this violent response of homosexuals became the first act of the modern gay rights movement. As the 1970s began, the Stonewall Inn would come to represent the moment when American gays would begin to expect legal equality (Alsenas 2008).

The late 1960s became one of the more violent and revolutionary periods in American history. Along with gay rights activists, African-Americans, women, environmentalists, and antiwar groups openly challenged the mainstream American vision of the nation's future (Alsenas 2008). However, it is here that many of the movements of the late 1960s began to move away from the gay rights movement in the most important area imaginable - results. Eventually, African-Americans began to enjoy access to an America that no longer openly discriminated on the basis of race. In time, women enjoyed all the same employment and social benefits of men. Environmental protections began to be implemented through federal and state legislation. By 1975, the war in Vietnam had officially come to an end. For homosexuals, living in America twelve years after the turn of the last millennia, no finish line has yet been achieved regarding equality, specifically and most importantly, in the realm of same-sex marriage.

Progress for Same-Sex Marriage

Despite a lack of federal protection for same-sex marriage equality, American public opinion has recently swung in favor of same-sex marriage as a valid legal and spiritual institution. A May, 2011, Gallop Poll found that 53% of American respondents viewed same-sex marriage as a union that should garner recognition as a valid method of marriage. The increase in public support for same-sex marriage can be broken down by political subgroups. In 2011, 69% of Democrats and 59% of Independents were in favor of same-sex marriage

legalization. These figures can be contrasted against only 28% of Republicans who responded favorably to legal same-sex marriage in the survey. Age was shown to be just as effective an indicator of same-sex marriage approval with 70% of those age 18 – 34 in favor of same-sex marriage and only 39% of those 55 and over in favor of homosexual marriage rights. These data had a margin of error of (+-) four (Gallop 2011).

Progress has also been made over the last decade for same-sex marriage equality at the level of state government. As of January, 2013, Massachusetts, Iowa, Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Maryland, Washington, and New York issued same-sex couples marriage licenses with no special qualifications separate from heterosexual couples. The District of Columbia also allows same-sex marriage licenses to be issued in its district. Eleven states offer civil unions or domestic partnerships for homosexual couples, but as this research has already indicated, separate-but-equal marital institutions will not be equally compared to the eight states and the District of Columbia (D.C.) that offer full marital status for same-sex couples. Despite the availability of same-sex marriage in eight states and D.C., the availability of same-sex marriages does not seem to equal the majority of Americans supporting the legal recognition of homosexual marriage rights (National Conference of State Legislatures 2012).

The LGBT is currently pushing for the expansion of legal rights for the LGBTQI community in one of the more recognizable areas of American life: marriage. Any discussion of civil rights expansion in America must involve an adequate knowledge of the U.S. Constitution. The American Constitution represents the first and final protection for civil liberties for all persons within the Republic. The Constitution specifically details several limitations imposed on the federal and state government's power to curtail the civil liberties of Americans. Most of the twenty-seven amendments to the U.S. Constitution involve specific identification of rights

enjoyed by Americans that cannot be arbitrarily taken away by either federal or state governments. The next section will briefly discuss the elements of the U.S. Constitution that are germane to the discussion of expanded rights for the LGBTQI community. It will also involve descriptions of landmark federal and state court decisions that have directly or indirectly expanded civil liberties and rights for the LGBTQI population.

Constitutional Realities Concerning Same-Sex Marriage

This research turns briefly to a discussion of the constitutional realities affecting or potentially affecting same-sex marriage equality. It attempts to identify a relationship between information concerning constitutional law and public opinion regarding same-sex marriage. It is important to briefly explore whether or not the U.S. Constitution contains any provisions that could be interpreted as guaranteeing same-sex marriage rights.

Federalism

When examining whether or not the Constitution allows for state governments to prohibit same-sex marriage rights, it is equally important to first ask whether or not the federal government has the right to become involved at all. The unique government created by the U.S. Constitution was based upon the revolutionary political concept of federalism. Federalism describes the governing structure in the United States that separates political power between one central (federal) government and several state governments. Fearing the development of an oppressively strong central government in the U.S., the Framers of the Constitution created a federal government of strictly limited powers. The powers of the new federal government were specifically enumerated in the first six articles of the Constitution. Powers not specifically granted the federal government were reserved for the states and the people. As a result, if a power is not specifically enumerated in the U.S. Constitution to the federal government, it is a

power that the federal government does not possess. The issue of marriage, like so many other non-enumerated areas, has fallen into the jurisdiction of state governments' exercising their police powers.

Privileges and Immunities

One of the more obvious constitutional items possibly related to same-sex marriage equality can be found in the privileges and immunities clause of the Constitution. This clause is, in theory, responsible for guaranteeing to all citizens of the U.S. the same rights and privileges that are enjoyed by other citizens of the U.S. All citizens in a particular state are guaranteed the same privileges and immunities of the citizens of all other states. This right has a history stretching back to Colonial America. Prerevolutionary Americans felt they had a natural right to common privileges like jury trials, the right to travel, and the right to conduct economic business on their own accord. This clause also ensures that state governments do not prohibit employment to visitors from other states or limit their ability to engage in contracts. In short, if citizens in one state had a particular privilege of rights or immunities from government intrusion, all citizens would have access to the same (Vile 2011). The importance of this clause is obvious for same-sex marriage rights: if heterosexual citizens in one state are allowed the right to marry, homosexual citizens in all states could be allowed the same privilege.

The complexity of the Privileges and Immunities Clause can be better understood when one recognizes that this clause appears twice in the Constitution. The reason for this duplication has to do with the unique nature of federalism. When guaranteeing rights in a nation governed by federalism, the rights must be specifically applied to protections from the federal government, the state governments, or both. Article Four, Section Two, of the U.S. Constitution includes a privileges and immunities clause affording civilian protections from the federal government. In

fact, for almost the first century of American history, the entire list of civil liberty guarantees found within the national Bill of Rights only applied to the federal government. Since the Constitution did not specifically place marriage regulation within the enumerated powers of the federal government, the state governments have been recognized as having constitutional jurisdiction over this institution. As a result, those looking to expand same-sex marriage rights, based on the Privileges and Immunities Clause of Article Four, are expecting the federal government to become involved in an activity in which it does not have the constitutional grounds to become involved (Gillman, Graber, and Whittington 2013).

The second appearance of the Privileges and Immunities Clause can be found in Section One of the Fourteenth Amendment. This placement of the clause applied the guaranteed rights of all to the state governments. Ratified in 1868, following the American Civil War and the abolition of slavery, through the Thirteenth Amendment, the clause was originally intended to ensure the rights of recently-freed African-American citizens. The privileges and immunities enjoyed by all Americans in the several states could now be enjoyed by African-Americans. Despite the original intent of the Fourteenth Amendment, it is clear that this clause could have important ramifications for same-sex marriage rights in America. If citizens in one state enjoyed the privilege of same-sex marriage, and the multitude of taxation immunities that marriage would create, then same-sex couples in all states should enjoy the similar privilege. The Fourteenth Amendment's Privilege and Immunities Clause represented a potential guarantee of same-sex marriage equality in the late 1860s (O'Brien 2008).

Dilution of the 14th Amendment's Privileges and Immunities Clause

Unfortunately for same-sex marriage advocates, the Fourteenth Amendment's Privilege and Immunity Clause would not last long as a guarantee of many rights at all. In the landmark

Supreme Court Decisions of the Slaughterhouse cases (1873), the Privileges and Immunities Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment were largely made ineffective. The cases dealt with the state licensing of slaughterhouse districts in and around New Orleans, Louisiana. In an effort to combat cholera, caused by the pollution of waterways along upriver slaughterhouses, the Louisiana legislature mandated that all slaughterhouses around New Orleans be relocated to particular areas of the city. The government had given one slaughterhouse a twenty-five-year contract guarantee forcing local and state unions to sue on the grounds that the state government was denying them their professional livelihood. Professional livelihoods were privileges granted other citizens in other states; therefore, the Louisiana slaughterhouse legislation represented an unconstitutional violation of Fourteenth Amendment rights. The Supreme Court did not agree. The Court found that the privileges and immunities protected by the Fourteenth Amendment were those enjoyed by citizens of the United States, not citizens of individual states. What this meant was that the rights guaranteed to citizens by the federal government would be ensured by the clause. The rights guaranteed by individual states, with countless distinctions being found within each particular state, were not protected by the clause. In other words, privileges and immunities afforded citizens by the federal government would be ensured for all. Privileges and immunities afforded by the state of Mississippi were allowed to be unique to that state's citizens. For the Fourteenth Amendment's Privilege and Immunities Clause to apply to same-sex marriage rights, the federal government would have to recognize this as a right of all citizens, which it does not presently do. The Slaughterhouse Cases essentially gutted the Fourteenth Amendment's Privileges and Immunities Clause less than a decade after the amendment was ratified (Mason and Stephenson 2002).

Full Faith and Credit

Another element of the U.S. Constitution that could provide for same-sex marriage rights can be found in Article Four's Full Faith and Credit Clause. This clause was intended to further unite the individual states under the new federal government by requiring each state to recognize, or give "full faith and credit," to "public Acts, Records, and Judicial Proceedings" of other states, subject to congressional regulation (Meese 2005). This clause ensured that the public acts (e.g., drivers' licenses issued to citizens), the public records (e.g., debt owed to private or public entities), and judicial proceedings (e.g., criminal convictions for violating state statutory laws) of one state would be given the full faith and credit of other states. The benefits of this clause can be seen today by automobile drivers from Alabama not having to stop and purchase a Georgia drivers' license upon entering that state.

The Full Faith and Credit Clause successfully integrated the previously sovereign states into the Union created by the U.S. Constitution. Each state, recognizing the public acts of all other states, allowed the U.S. to grow into a fully-functioning and economically-powerful republic. The advantages for same-sex marriage advocates that could be found within the Full Faith and Credit Clause are obvious. If the public acts of one state (e.g., issuing same-sex marriage licenses) must be given full faith and credit by all other states, then the first same-sex marriage license issued by the state of Massachusetts would have resulted in universal same-sex marriage rights throughout America. If all states had a constitutional obligation to recognize the legitimacy of same-sex marriage performed in other states, then the legitimacy of same-sex marriage would be accepted throughout the Republic (Rakove 2009).

The second portion of the Full Faith and Credit Clause limits the ability of this portion of the Constitution to allow a de facto national recognition of same-sex marriages. The latter

portion of the clause gives Congress the power to prescribe the manner in which public acts will be recognized by other states and the effects of that recognition. In short, Congress has the power to single out certain public acts that will not apply to the Full Faith and Credit Clause. Congress did exactly that with the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) of 1996, which allowed states to refuse to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states while also guaranteeing that the federal government would not recognize any same-sex marriages performed within the Republic (Barbour and Wright 2009). DOMA has since been stricken down by the U.S. Supreme Court preventing the federal government from refusing to recognize the legitimacy of same-sex marriages throughout the union. The Supreme Court decision did, however, allow individual state governments to choose whether or not they would allow or recognize same-sex marriages.

Equal Protection

Another constitutional provision that could be involved with same-sex marriage equality can be found in the Fourteenth Amendment: the Equal Protection Clause. This clause prevents state governments from denying, to any individuals within their jurisdiction, the equal protection of the law. This clause, ratified soon after the American Civil War, was possibly intended to protect the rights of newly-freed African-Americans. This intention, however, would not be fulfilled by a late 19th century Supreme Court that interpreted the clause in the narrowest possible way. Instead of guaranteeing social and racial equality in America, the Court interpreted equal protection of the law to mean exactly that: the law and only the law. Americans would have their legal rights protected (e.g., the legal right to serve on a jury, to sign a contract, or to vote), but no such protection would be afforded social rights involving equal access to areas of public accommodation. The Supreme Court's unanimous decision, in *Brown v. Board of Education*, of

Topeka, Kansas, 1954, witnessed the Court's overturning the policy of separate-but-equal accommodations in public education. This decision strengthened the chances of possibly using the Equal Protection Clause as a justification for federal recognition of same-sex marriage rights.

Federal Court Decisions

This review of constitutional arguments involving or possibly involving same-sex marriage rights will now turn to several Federal and State Supreme Court decisions concerning same-sex marriage. Several U.S. Supreme Court cases have been instrumental in extending legal protections for homosexuals, but none have advanced the right of same-sex marriage. In *Lawrence v. Texas*, 2003, the Supreme Court overturned a Texas state law banning sodomy between consenting same-sex adults. The Court's rationale rested on the fundamental right of consenting adults to privately engage in sexual conduct that was "common to a homosexual lifestyle" (O'Brien 2008, 1310). This decision liberated homosexuals across the country who had been subjected to anti-sodomy laws preventing them from legally expressing themselves physically with their loved ones.

One of the most important U.S. Supreme Court decisions regarding same-sex marriage actually had nothing to do with homosexual Americans. In the 1968 Supreme Court decision of *Loving v. Virginia*, the Court overturned the state of Virginia's anti-miscegenation law. Miscegenation is a term used to describe the intermarriage of people of different races. In the case of Virginia, and all other states that passed such legislation, anti-miscegenation laws were specifically intended to prevent legal marriages between Caucasian-Americans and African-Americans. The Court's decision banned anti-miscegenation laws in all states allowing blacks and whites to legally marry. The importance of this decision for same-sex marriage advocates can be found in the opinions of the Court. Most obviously would be the opinion of Chief Justice

Earl Warren who described the freedom to marry as “one of the vital personal rights essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness by free man” (Mason and Stephenson 2002, 595). One does not have to stretch the imagination to see how Chief Justice Warren’s belief in the freedom to marry could be applied to same-sex couples.

State Court Decisions

While the Federal Supreme Court has not upheld same-sex marriage on the basis of the Fourteenth Amendment’s Equal Protection Clause, State Supreme Courts have. The first landmark State Supreme Court decision concerning same-sex marriage can be found in Hawaii. In 1993, the Hawaii Supreme Court found that the state’s refusal to grant same-sex couples marriage licenses, while simultaneously granting them to heterosexual couples, was a violation of the state constitution’s equal protection clause. Barring any compelling justification, the Court found that the unavailability of marriage certificates to homosexual couples represented a violation of the strict-scrutiny standard for sex-based classifications. Proponents of same-sex marriage and justices on the Hawaii Supreme Court felt this decision would compel all states within the Union to recognize same-sex marriages if they were to remain in compliance with Article Four’s Full Faith and Credit Clause. In fact, Article Six’s Supremacy Clause would not have given the other forty-nine states any choice but to recognize same-sex marriages in Hawaii (Rosenberg 2008).

The potential success of the Hawaii Supreme Court’s 1993 decision, in *Baehr v. Lewin*, was to be short-lived. Following the Court’s decision, conservative interest groups inundated the state of Hawaii with funding to pass a constitutional amendment to the state constitution to specifically limit the institution of marriage to opposite-sex couples. This amendment was

successfully ratified and the pro-same-sex marriage movement would have to look to other states for reform (Rosenberg 2008).

The wait for gay couples receiving the benefits of marriage would begin to end in the state of Vermont in 1999. The Vermont Supreme Court found, in *Baker v. Vermont*, that the state's refusal to issue marriage licenses to gay men and lesbians was an unconstitutional violation of the state's Common Benefits Clause. Unlike the Hawaii Supreme Court, which sought to impose a judicial remedy, the Vermont High Court offered the state legislature time to remedy this violation of gay rights on their own. By 2000, the Vermont State Legislature had passed, and the Democratic Governor Howard Dean had signed, a law allowing homosexuals the right to enter into domestic partnerships that would provide most of the privileges of traditional marriage without the formal name. While increasing the rights of same-sex couples to formally bond with one another, the domestic partnership served as a reminder that while additional rights had been conferred upon the gay community, that community was still legally viewed as different. Gays in Vermont were now to enjoy equal access to marriage, but through a separate institution. In addition to the limited victory for gay rights provided by separate-but-equal institutions in Vermont, it must also be pointed out that this victory for gay rights in 2000 was only for those in Vermont (Rosenberg 2008).

The first true victory for advocates of same-sex marriage came in the state of Massachusetts in 2003. In the case of *Goodridge v. Massachusetts Department of Public Health*, the State Supreme Judicial Court found that it was a violation of the state constitution to deny marriage licenses to same-sex couples while providing them to opposite-sex couples. The Massachusetts Court also found that separate distinctions of marriage, like Vermont's domestic partnerships, were equally unconstitutional as they established second-class citizenship for

homosexual Americans. Despite attempts by conservative groups to amend the Massachusetts Constitution on May 17, 2004, the first same-sex marriages were legally held within the United States. Appropriately, this day marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Supreme Court's 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education, of Topeka, Kansas*, which had formally called for an end to separate-but-equal accommodations in public education. Fifty years after the *Brown* decision attempted to end second-class citizenship in America, homosexual Americans made an important step in removing themselves from legal discrimination (Brewer and Wilcox 2005).

Since the Commonwealth of Massachusetts became the first state to issue same-sex marriage licenses in 2004, seven other states and the District of Columbia have legalized gay marriages. Several states offer domestic partnerships, or civil unions, that offer the majority of rights conferred upon married couples without the formal title. In addition, New Jersey and Rhode Island recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states, but do not offer them within their own borders. This cannot be construed as representing dramatic progress for same-sex marriage equality because, over that same time period, thirty-one states have enacted constitutional amendments limiting marriage to opposite-sex couples only (NCSL 2012).

As the previous discussion has shown, there are several elements within the Constitution that can be used to argue in favor of same-sex marriage. The Equal Protection Clause guarantees that all persons will receive equal protection of the law. Same-sex couples living in states that have constitutionally banned them from taking part in an activity in which the majority of individuals can take part would feel that their equal protection guarantees were being violated. The Privileges and Immunities Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, having been interpreted to apply only to privileges and immunities of U.S. citizens, could be interpreted by same-sex couples as guaranteeing them access to the federal tax privileges that are afforded to married

couples. This can be seen as a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of access to federal privileges that other Americans enjoy.

Some of the unique characteristics of the U.S. Constitution allow arguments for or against same-sex marriage equality. Those in favor of state bans on same-sex marriage could point to the Tenth Amendment which reserves all rights not specifically given to the federal government, or specifically prohibited to the state governments, to the states. Those in favor of individual homosexuals having the legal right to marry could look to the Ninth Amendment, which reserves all rights not given specifically to the federal government to the individual people. Those who favor states' rights over the institution of marriage could look to the Defense of Marriage Act as a good example of the federal government's exercising its constitutional right to regulate the Full Faith and Credit Clause. Those who would like the federal government to take the lead by declaring same-sex marriages legal could direct their attention to the Commerce Clause, in Article One, Section Eight, which allows Congress to regulate commerce, or the Necessary and Proper Clause, also Article One, Section Eight, which gives Congress the power to make all laws that are necessary and proper.

The realities of the Constitution, for the purposes of this study, will be examined for their ability to affect individuals' opinions regarding same-sex marriage. Whether an increased understanding of the U.S. Constitution has an effect on public opinion is one of the primary questions examined in this research. This study is offering the hypothesis that an increased familiarity with the U.S. Constitution will affect public opinion on same-sex marriage. In order to support this assertion, I will now briefly explore the leading theories presented by researchers in the field of public opinion. While examining what may or may not affect public opinion, it is important to understand why public opinion is so important in the first place.

Public Opinion Research

Public opinion is communication among many individuals within society and has been used since ancient times in an attempt to gauge the feelings of the mass population, regardless of the government institutions in place (Davison 1958). Many public issues are generally widely-known and represent potential action by individuals who recognize the potential actions of other individuals. In addition, situations that have gained public attention are generally transitory in that they will sooner rather than later be replaced by other issues that will gain the public's attention (Allport 1937). There are many definitions of public opinion that have been offered throughout the last century of research. One of the simplest contemporary descriptions of public opinion describes it as "the aggregate of the views of individual adults on matters of public interest" (Bardes and Oldendick 2012, 5).

Public opinion is valuable for representative governments to govern effectively. According to Hume, public opinion is invaluable for the population because man had not agreed to surrender his right of "approving and of disapproving to the state" (1963, 29). In addition, Hume recognized a natural tendency of humans to listen to the opinions of others and considered this to be a valuable tool in the affairs of state governments. For James Madison, governments "rested" on the opinions of the population (1961, 340). Public opinion also allows individuals within a certain population to ascertain how their thoughts relate to the opinions of others. This has been helpful to those who do not want to alienate themselves from the collective (Neumann 1979).

In America, early 19th century attempts at discovering public opinion were generally less concerned with understanding the public's views on particular issues and more concerned with ascertaining the voting intentions of the electorate. Straw polls which asked voters their opinions

on presidential candidates were used as far back as the election of 1824. Early American political leaders were interested in the opinions of American voters in order to improve their chances at electoral victories (Bardes and Oldendick 2012).

Contemporary public opinion survey research has improved public opinion acquisition with the use of advanced forms of systematic quantitative analysis. The early 20th century researchers of public opinion began to analyze interesting questions that could be answered with the survey tool to explain why some people did or did not favor a particular policy. The survey design has allowed researchers the ability to try to understand the opinions of individual citizens on matters related to national and international issues. Surveys are expected to explain why attitudes develop the way they do and how attitudes connect to behaviors on an individual basis. After millennia of speculating why people did what they did, the survey method has enabled researchers a way to ask them why they do what they do (Stimson 1999).

Analysis of public opinion is the analysis of private opinion about public affairs. This micro-focus has led public opinion to be referred to as “political psychology.” Public opinion researchers’ focus on individuals has allowed them to use many existing tools and concepts found within the discipline of psychology (Stimson 1999). Public opinion’s focus on micro-behavior has been considered a distinct paradigm within the discipline (Kuhn 1962). According to Burstein (2003), the central issue of contemporary public opinion theory involves the degree to which public opinion is reflected in government policies and what makes public opinion more or less decisive.

Problems Associated with Public Opinion

One of the paramount problems associated with the formulation of public opinion can be seen in the general public’s inability to acquire full knowledge of national, or even regional,

events. Citizens in increasingly-populated societies are forced to rely on information from individuals who are not closely associated with them (Zaller 1992). Lippmann's analysis of the informative nature of the population can best summarize the difficulty of accessing well-informed public opinion in order to assess the true pulse of the people. According to Lippmann,

‘Each of us lives and works on a small part of the earth’s surface, moves in a small circle, and of these acquaintances knows only a few intimately. Of any public event that has wide effects we see at best only a phase and an aspect...Inevitably our opinions cover a bigger space, a longer reach of time, a greater number of things, than we can directly observe. They have, therefore, to be pieced together out of what others have reported and what we can imagine.’

(1922, 59)

Lippmann's assessment of public opinion identifies the importance of recognizing what you will actually find when you attempt to capture the public's mood. While the public may be firm on one element of public opinion, the derivation of that public opinion may be questionable regarding the public's informative sources.

Lippmann's analysis of public opinion still offers a unique insight into the complex difficulties associated with the field. For Lippmann, there are an immeasurable number of variables that create individuals' impressions of the invisible world around them. Each individual experiences limited points of information contact, stereotyped expectations, and a variety of different interest levels concerning the outside world. The different impressions of the world are extremely personal and not easily transferable to others' opinions through quantitative statistical methods. For Lippmann, each individual's opinions are so personal that they become uniquely challenging to formalize the aggregate of all personal opinions into something

resembling public opinion. In short, all people see and experience the world on such personal levels that they have fundamentally different opinions not easily given to mass production. Lippmann recognizes the difficulty in taking so many private feelings and turning them into something resembling the common will. Simple and constant ideas are not easily produced from this highly complex amalgamation of highly-personalized individuality (Lippman 1922).

In general, the information that reaches the public is not a fully-developed, independently-researched vision of global realities. Instead, we rely on those individuals who have devoted a substantial portion of their lives to the study of one particular element of a field on which we are forming an opinion. These political elites, as Zaller calls them, are depended upon to provide the raw information for the eventual formulation of public opinion. Depending on which of these political elites to which one chooses to respond will determine the creation of public opinion for that individual (Zaller 1992).

The information that reaches the public is rarely a complete story of developments in the national or international community. The public's information represents a highly-stereotyped version of reality, depending on the political elite that is communicating the information (Zaller 1992). In reality, there are few ways public opinion could be formed otherwise. In order for individuals to become well-versed in all of the realities of the world, they would be forced to thoroughly research all issues of the day. Few have the time or interest to independently evaluate all actions of political and economic actors in order to formulate a truly independent opinion on world affairs. Few people have the time or desire to independently become experts on a wide range of social issues in order to better formulate their own contribution to public opinion. As a result, the masses must rely on the output of political elites for the genesis of their opinions on national and international matters. One of the most important decisions individuals

can make can be found in the source of information they choose to consume more readily than others (Zaller 1992).

Non-attitudes within Public Opinion

One important limiting factor of public opinion polls was uncovered by Phillip Converse. In his research, he found that the most glaring problem associated with mid-20th century public opinion polls was the fact that the researchers assumed the answers being given were in fact valid and reliable. It was an understandable assumption for early public opinion researchers to make: Why would you assume that an individual's answer to public opinion polls was not to be trusted as being accurate of their actual opinions? As Converse would show, it was not that respondents were purposefully answering questions in an way that would be found to lack both validity and reliability, it was that the respondents did not know enough about the issues being examined, or did not care. Converse would describe this phenomenon of public opinion as the "non-attitude" (Converse 1964).

Converse's non-attitude theory deals with both the validity and the reliability of public opinion responses. When a respondent does not know anything related to a particular question concerning government policy or social issues, he or she will not want to appear uninformed. As a result, respondents will generally fabricate the answers they feel will closest resemble an intelligent response in the eyes of the survey-giver. The act of making up an answer on the spot represents a problem with regard to response validity because the survey is not actually acquiring the genuine feelings of the respondent. Instead, the survey will eventually analyze the best-guess of the individual as opposed to his or her actual opinion. In addition, the non-attitude theory describes those respondents who simply do not care or those who do not know enough to care. In situations where the respondent has no opinion, according to Converse, they will again make

up something to prevent the possible embarrassment of appearing uninformed to a stranger. Converse recognizes the simple fact that some people do not care about issues that do not have a direct impact on their lives or the lives of those in their communication networks. The non-attitude of respondents, coupled with their lack of pertinent knowledge, can lead to high levels of inconsistency which poses, by definition, a problem with survey data reliability. Converse recognizes the non-attitude of respondents as being responsible for producing response instability that is similar to simple chance. This response instability involves the inconsistency between the respondent's answers to similar questions at different times (Converse 1964).

Preexisting Considerations within Public Opinion

Research by Zaller and Feldman has taken the difficulty of gaining valid and reliable public opinion, introduced by Converse, a step further. Zaller and Feldman agree with Converse's non-attitude theory and its proposition that many respondents simply do not care about the issues to which they are being asked to respond. However, most individuals have pre-existing sets of assumptions that are relatively consistent and that can be used to assimilate new information, such as survey questions to issues about which they do not care (Zaller and Feldman 1992). These "considerations," a phrase coined by Jennifer Hochschild, are defined as being a reason for favoring one side of an issue rather than another (Hochschild 1981). This becomes useful when rapidly forming an opinion on an issue about which one is ambivalent.

Zaller and Feldman have questioned the assumption of public opinion research that all citizens have well-formed ideas on major political issues. This assumption appears reasonable when one expects citizens to have a fundamental understanding of issues that are of paramount importance to government policy or social problems. However, similarly to Converse, Zaller and Feldman recognize that most citizens do not possess preformed attitudes on social and

political issues, especially at the levels of specificity required by public opinion surveys. To compensate for this, respondents rely on a set of malleable ideas, or considerations, that represent consistent ideologies that can incorporate more specific data on a case-by-case basis. This loose collection of ideas is seen to be responsible for the unsettling amount of randomness that can be found in most respondents' answers to survey questions (Zaller and Feldman 1992).

Zaller and Feldman recognize several characteristics of the inability of citizens to possess strong opinions on a wide range of political issues explored through public opinion polls. Their "ambivalence axiom" describes the ability of most respondents to have preexisting considerations that could lead them to answer public opinion polls in either direction. These opposing considerations represent respondents' abilities to identify the positive and negative attributes of two different ideas, or plans of action, being tested in a public opinion poll (Zaller and Feldman 1992).

Respondents also can be characterized by the response axiom which allows survey questions to be answered by accessing the consideration that happens to be salient at the time of questioning. The saliency of considerations is determined by the "accessibility axiom" which involves the most recent activities of respondents affecting their responses to survey questions. However, the response axiom can be identified when you have a generally conservative respondent being asked questions that are of little concern. If the answers available are of little interest, the response axiom dictates that the respondents will choose the one that better fits their conservative considerations. This can also be described by recognizing that conservatives will answer uninteresting survey questions with the most conservative response available to them. This phenomenon has been shown to affect liberals in much the same way (Zaller and Feldman 1992).

The “reception axiom” involves the differences that can exist in survey responses based on individuals’ cognitive engagement with an issue. If respondents are actively engaged in a particular issue, they are more likely to be exposed to and comprehend, or receive, political messages concerning that issue. For example, if individuals are active in prolife issues, they will recognize and absorb prolife political messages more so than someone who does not spend a great deal of time on abortion issues. Those who are engaged in a particular issue are more than likely to identify questions related to that issue on survey research (Zaller 1992).

Zaller’s “resistance axiom” describes the ability of respondents to resist arguments that are inconsistent with their political predispositions. This resistance is done only to the extent that the respondents recognize a relationship between the message in a survey question and one of their previously held predispositions. In short, some respondents bring cognitive baggage to the table that will affect the way they respond to the subject of a survey question (Zaller 1992).

Finally, the “accessibility axiom” influences respondents’ answers based on the recent activities of those individuals making certain considerations more accessible than others. Conversations, television or radio viewing habits, and random thoughts could strongly affect survey responses if they occurred recently before a question was asked. Individuals who had recently seen a documentary on environmental protection would be more likely to respond to questions on the environment in a more liberal fashion simply because that consideration was the most recent consideration to be entertained (Zaller and Feldman 1992).

Outside Influences on Public Opinion

Another factor affecting the opinions given by respondents to public opinion polls can be found in the reference group effect. Few respondents are well-versed in the complexities of any one issue, much less all of them, and some respondents will rely on their membership in a

particular group to answer questions if their membership in that group is made salient before the question. For example, if Catholics were asked their opinions, as Catholics, about a particular policy issue, they will generally provide a more “Catholic” answer. The response to the same question would be statistically different if their membership in the Catholic religion had not been brought up in the survey question (Charters and Newcomb 1958).

Another important component of understanding public opinion is the framing effect. This phenomenon is seen when the wording of survey questions unintentionally affects the response given. How the words of a survey question are framed can have a great deal of effect on the responses given. For example, if questions regarding the performance of a political leader are asked in conjunction with respondents’ personal income environments, the respondents will answer more or less favorably to the elected leader’s job performance depending on the positive or negative characteristics of their own personal finances. This can best be described when asking respondents to respond to the possibility of decreasing taxes in a given region. Respondents will answer more favorably to the thought of decreasing taxes when that is the only question being asked. If the question begins, or ends, by discussing the possible decrease in public services, the respondents’ answers will begin to noticeably vary. In short, if a survey question is framed in one direction or another, the responses given will vary in a way that is statistically significant (Lau and Sears 1983).

A compelling demonstration that wording can be important in a survey question has been shown by Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman’s (1982) survey results on a hypothetical Asian disease that would strike the U.S. Respondents were told to expect 600 fatalities from the disease and were given two possible government plans to endorse. In one option, 200 people were guaranteed to be saved. In the second option, there was a 1/3 option that all 600 people

would be saved and a 2/3 chance that all 600 people would die. Over 70% of the respondents chose the first option that afforded a guarantee of 200 saved and 400 dead citizens. When this question was worded differently, the answers were significantly changed depending on the amount of chance left in the options. The way questions are worded has a remarkable effect on the answers given by the respondents (Kahneman and Tversky 1982).

The endorsement effect can also alter the answers given by respondents in survey research. Endorsement effects are the identification of a popular or unpopular figure that will sway respondents' answers to survey questions. If uninformed Democrats are told President Bill Clinton favors a particular policy decision, they will be more likely to answer positively regarding that same issue even though they know little or nothing about it. In this example, President Clinton's approval of the policy decision in question, or his endorsement, will have provided sufficient information to the uninformed respondents. The endorsement effect can have the same effect in the different direction. If Democrats were to be informed by a survey research question that President George W. Bush was in favor of a particular policy decision, they will be more likely to oppose the same policy decision because the Republican president was in favor of it. Without knowing the complex details of a survey question's policy area, respondents use endorsements in a way that is similar to allowing a trusted professional to make their decision for them (Mueller 1973).

When a topic chosen for study involves public policy issues that are contemporary and underway, and researchers measure issues mainly when they are "hot," they may gain responses that are not as well-thought-out as they would be at a later date. Atypical responses have been found to exist when studying highly-contemporary issues that are attractive to their necessarily higher levels of saliency. An example of this phenomenon can be seen in communist sympathy

public opinions polls conducted during and after the blacklisting period of American McCarthyism. During the early 1950s, when U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy was aggressively attacking suspected communist sympathizers in an America consumed with fears of global communist domination, sympathy of communist members was noticeably less strong than it would be years later. Having had time to remove themselves from the highly-contentious period of communist fear, individual's opinions of communist sympathizers was less negative in the 1960s than it had been during McCarthy's reign of terror (Stimson 1999).

The difficulties associated with reliably assessing public opinion identify the peculiar relationship between democratic governments and the electorate. The challenges of public opinion acquisition have not reduced government leaders' desires to get public opinion on their side, or at least the side of their policies. Public opinion is difficult to possess, but the pursuit of public opinion has never been abandoned. If philosophers were in command of government services, public opinion polls would lose their importance. However, absent a philosopher-king, democratic nations have governments that find it advantageous to rule with the opinions of the people on their side (Wilson 1942).

Contact Theory and Public Opinion

Contact theory suggests that the presence of a minority group near a majority group will offer opportunities for positive or negative interaction between the two. Provided that interaction is positive, or possibly neutral, it has the ability to reduce the prejudices of the majority population toward the minority group (Allport 1954). This is a phenomena that many people have experienced in their personal lives if they have become personal friends with someone they may have had negative attitudes toward in the past. As the interactions become more frequent,

individuals are allowed to see how much they have in common with others, as opposed to focusing on their presumed differences.

Interactions between minority and majority groups allows for the acquisition of knowledge by both groups. However, the effect of contact theory to produce positive responses depends heavily on the quality of the interactions (Allport 1954). Whether or not the interaction is voluntary, between majority and minority group members of equal status, or based on competition or collaboration have a great deal of influence on the positive or negative nature of the intergroup interactions (Davidio, Gaertner and Kawakami 2003; Forbes 1997; Pettigrew 1998). Contact between the respondents in this research will only have a positive effect on opinions toward same-sex marriage equality if those contacts have been positive. One factor that could provide contrary evidence to contact theories' expectations would be found in respondents that had poor experiences with minority couples.

Allport (1954) hypothesized that positive intergroup contact could affect intergroup relations when several distinct conditions were met. First, each group must enjoy equal status within certain situations. Each group must expect and believe they have achieved equal status in a given situation (Cohen & Lotan 1995, Cohen 1982, Riordan & Ruggiero 1980, Robinson & Preston 1976). Provided all groups are receiving some level of equal status during the interactions, contact theory has been shown to be relatively consistent at improving the outlook of different groups toward one another.

Allport also stressed the need for goal-oriented efforts if prejudice reduction through contact is expected to be successful. Actively seeking an understanding between different groups is an important characteristic of contact theory. While striving to win in athletic competition, interracial teams find that they need one another to work together to meet their

goals. Seeking out the same goals is an important reason athletic teams are seen as successful examples of contact theory (Pettigrew 1998).

Intergroup cooperation is another characteristic of successful contact between groups leading to a reduction in prejudice. Attainment of common goals must be an interdependent effort not hampered by competition between group members (Bettencourt et al 1992). Working together to achieve common goals allows groups to overcome stereotypical prejudices that may have represented barriers to cooperation in the past.

Finally, Allport identifies the sanction of authorities, laws, and/or customs as another required characteristic of successful contact theory application. When social sanctions have been formally given to intergroup activity, contact between groups tends to have more positive effects. Support from authorities is thought to establish norms of acceptance for the intergroup activities (Pettigrew 1998).

Issue-Framing in Public Opinion

One of the most important elements in public opinion formulation can be found in issue-framing. Issue frames are “a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning” (Gamson and Modigliani 1987, 143). Framing effects are often seen when small changes in the presentation of an event or issue produce significant changes in the opinions of that event or issue (Chong and Druckman 2007). Issue-framing of public opinion can be seen when political leaders attempt to describe issues in a manner that makes their position appear to be more attractive. For example, same-sex marriage can be presented to the public in several different ways (or frames). Individuals favoring same-sex marriage may attempt to garner a favorable response in public opinion polls by discussing same-sex marriage in the language of equality. Groups opposed to same-sex marriage may attempt to achieve negative responses in public

opinion polls by discussing same-sex marriage in the language of traditional morality. Calls for traditional morality will generally result in public opinion less favorable to same-sex marriage equality (Price, Nir, and Cappella 2005).

Equality and morality are examples of core values that are shared by individuals within any society. Core values are “abstract beliefs about how the world should work” (Clawson and Oxley 2008, 162). Core values represent broad philosophies that help individuals shape attitudes on specific policy questions (Conover and Feldman 1984; Feldman 1988; Hurwitz and Peffley 1987; McClosky and Zaller 1984). According to Brewer (2003), egalitarianism and moral traditionalism can be found at the heart of the debate over same-sex marriage. Egalitarianism, or favoring equality, is strongly correlated with support for same-sex marriage while a focus on morality is correlated with an opposition to same-sex marriage rights (Johnson 2012). Issue-framing can be seen as the process used by groups or individuals, like the media or elites, to focus the public’s attention to one core value over another.

The golden rule frame represents another example of a core value shared by individuals in most societies. The golden rule refers to the general belief that individuals should treat others, particularly strangers, with the same respect they would like to be treated with themselves. This golden rule belief is common in most recognized religions (Smith 1991; Terry 2007). Several researchers have found that when religious individuals are primed with reminders of their golden rule requirement, delivered from their religious teachers, to treat others the way they would like to be treated, they can prioritize tolerance and compassion for gay people (Oth et al., 2010). This priming can influence behaviors and attitudes even when the subjects are not aware of the subtle manipulation (Bargh and Chartrand 2000).

Issue-framing is valuable when policy-makers encounter issues in which the public is divided on well-known policy concerns. People on different sides of an issue have a tendency to understand the issue differently. Those with differing opinions on a single issue will focus on different characteristics of the issue. This makes issue-framing important for those attempting to affect public opinion (Gamson 1988). Manipulation of public opinion through issue-framing generally focuses on information-processing so as to encourage opinion in favor of one or another policy leader's preferences. An example can be seen in groups that want to decriminalize marijuana and groups that want to keep the drug illegal. Proponents of marijuana decriminalization could frame the issue from the perspective of costs. Legalizing marijuana could save economic resources currently dedicated to police efforts and prisons. Those groups against the legalization of marijuana would possibly frame the issue from the perspective of unhealthy drug abuse. This group could attempt to show marijuana as an unhealthy drug that can lead to more dangerous drug use and dependence. How an issue is framed can have a significant impact on public opinion of that issue (Price, Nir, and Cappella 2005).

Due to the vast number of possible issues concerning the public, one of the most important powers of any member of the political elite, is the ability to frame issues. When competing political elites share different opinions on the same issue, they will often present the public with different issue frames in an effort to win as much support as possible. The venues individual citizens choose to acquire information on public issues can have a significant impact on the opinions they eventually form. Individual values are often important in assessing the success of political elites as they attempt to frame issues to garner the highest levels of support from public opinion (Brewer 2003).

Public Opinion on Homosexuality

Over the last forty years, since the Stonewall riots discussed earlier, state and federal laws have been changed to prevent the punishment of homosexual relationships and activities. The changing legal environment has been followed with an increasing support for homosexual rights within American public opinion polls. By 2010, 70% of respondents to a Gallup Poll favored allowing openly gay men and lesbians to serve in the U.S. military. In 1977, only 56% of the American public polled believed that homosexuals should have equal rights in employment. By 2008, 89% of Americans polled favored legally-protected equality in the realm of employment. As recently as 1996, only 27% of Americans polled favored equal legal recognition of same-sex marriage. This number has risen to 53% of Americans polled favoring legal recognition of same-sex marriage in 2011. This represents a simple majority of Americans polled supporting legal recognition of same-sex marriage (Bardes and Oldendick 2012).

Public opinion of homosexual rights, specifically same-sex marriage, represents an important factor in the future expansion or contraction of those rights. Increasing information concerning same-sex marriage rights could play an important role in higher levels of issue saliency among the American electorate. This could lead to increased demands from the public for government policies extending further same-sex marriage rights. According to Burstein, one can expect the government to “do what the people want in those instances where the public cares enough about an issue to make its wishes known” (1981, 295). Government responsiveness is high for salient policies, but tends to decline as issues become less well-known by the public (Lax and Phillips 2009).

The Future of Public Opinion Research

One of the most important developments dictating the future of public opinion research can be seen in the increased use of the internet. The internet provides a previously unimaginable resource for acquiring public opinion survey data. Large-scale data collection is no longer restricted to well-funded organizations, but can be carried out by smaller groups interested in the public's opinion regarding several specific issues. Future public opinion researchers will be able to conduct analysis that would have possibly been overlooked in the past by larger survey organizations focusing on more universally-important issues (Bardes and Oldendick 2012).

The relatively low costs associated with internet surveys will continue to offer new opportunities for smaller organizations looking to analyze public opinion on an ever-increasingly specific set of subfields (Couper 2000). Given the anonymous nature of the global internet, one of the fastest-growing problems for the future of public opinion research will be the assurance that sample populations are truly representative of the overall targeted population. Drawing inferences from internet samples to the general population remains a significant problem that researchers of public opinion are still trying to solve.

Having discussed some of the problems identified by public opinion researchers, it is important to briefly turn attention to the recognition of the importance of public opinion. Does public opinion matter or is its pursuit an exercise in futility? As it turns out, public opinion is important, particularly in democratically-elected governments, and the public's opinion is considered when policy is created. Many researchers of public opinion recognize the principles of the democratic theory that says governments respond to the policy wants recognized in public opinion. The main question can be found in how much an elected government cares about public opinion.

So far, this study has provided a brief summary of the literature in the fields of U.S. Constitutional Law and Public Opinion. The overall purpose of this study is to identify any affect an increase in constitutional law information has on public opinion. However, any understanding of the effects of information acquisition will require a brief exploration of cognitive psychology. This subfield of Psychology is involved with the learning process of the human mind. This will provide a better understanding of the mechanisms involved as the respondents are presented with new information in the brief lectures. Cognitive psychological theories of learning will provide the proper foundation for this experiment's data analysis to be better understood.

Cognitive Psychology

Having discussed advancements in public opinion theory and several constitutional elements affecting same-sex marriage, this research will briefly turn its attention to the mechanisms involved with human learning. One independent variable of this experiment is knowledge of constitutional law. One of the dependent variables of this experiment is public opinion of same-sex marriage. This experiment attempts to identify any correlation between an increase in the independent variable and a subsequent change in the dependent variable. Since the explanatory variable involves increasing a respondent's knowledge of constitutional law, it is important to review existing literature concerning knowledge acquisition. This will take the research into the discipline of cognitive psychology.

History of Cognitive Psychology

Cognitive psychology research has evolved significantly from its early days in the mid-1950s. At the dawn of the 20th century, American psychological research was dominated by those belonging to the behaviorist school of thought. Behaviorism, as it is called in several

academic disciplines, stresses the need of psychological research to focus on immediately observable phenomenon. Behaviorism was interested in a variety of different stimuli and the subsequent responses of humans to those stimuli. Behaviorist theories study the specific methods that cause responses from different stimuli and how the consequences of the responses establish relationships with future stimuli. Behaviorist theories were interested in the outward behavior of humans in attempting to describe the realities of human psychology. Behaviorist theory was very seldom interested in the internal processes of the human mind (Smith and Kosslyn 2007).

Before World War II, American psychology had become an academically-based science primarily interested in the study of animal behavior. The ability to predict specific outward responses (behaviors) to specific stimuli was one of the driving forces in psychology during the first half of the 1900s. While some early 20th century research was conducted on animal learning, it was generally isolated to lab rats responding to different stimuli to better navigate a maze. Behaviorism, as the name suggests, was interested in animal behavior, not necessarily the complex internal processes that directed that behavior (Sokal 1984).

Focusing little attention on the internal processes of human thought led to several limitations of behaviorists in the field of psychological research of learning. Thanks to the development of the computer in the 1950s and 1960s, a new psychological methodology was created that sought to understand the internal mechanisms of human thought. Researchers like Herbert Simon, Alan Newell, and Noam Chomsky furthered this paradigm shift in the field of psychology by recognizing the possibility of comparing the human mind to a computing machine. This realignment of psychological theory from emphasis on stimuli and responses to

internal mental operations was called the cognitive revolution and continues to exhibit a great deal of influence on contemporary psychological research (Smith and Kosslyn 2007).

Piaget's Contributions to Cognitive Psychology

One of the early intellectual giants of cognitive psychology was Jean Piaget. Piaget's contributions to understanding the internal processes of cognition dealt primarily with the mental characteristics of children. Piaget focused on the cognitive development of young minds and described how they experience new information and increase knowledge. Piaget's assimilation-accommodation model identifies the step-by-step process of acquiring new knowledge. When individuals are introduced to new experiences the brain responds by assimilating the new information into the already-formed mental constructs used to view the world. These mental constructs are also seen as categories of knowledge that allow individuals to understand the world. Piaget referred to these categories of knowledge as schemas. After assimilation, the brain begins the accommodation process which includes the changing or altering of existing schemas in light of new information. This characteristic of the learning process, described by Piaget, will be involved in the experiment when new information (e.g., constitutional law literature) is presented to the experimental group (Flavell 1996).

Piaget's concept of schema has been used in several different fields of social science research. Robert Axelrod recognized the importance of individuals' schemas in organizing a complex world by using preexisting assumptions about human interaction to understand how the world is organized. New information must be assimilated into mental patterns that have been used to understand certain realities in the past. When the new information does not neatly fit into previously-established schemas, individuals can experience difficulty in knowledge acquisition. Schemas have a tendency to evolve into sets of ideological doctrines that serve to provide

individuals with accepted interpretations of new events and decisions that can be used in the future. In addition, doctrines can provide confidence for decision-making in new environments that present new problems while also enabling decision-makers to avoid future blame due to their reliance on well-established doctrines (Axelrod 1973).

Piaget's schema theory has been used by several scholars attempting to understand the connection between cognitive psychology and political ideology. Schemas are used by individuals to better understand a complex environment. As a result, schemas should be thought of as cognitive mechanisms used by individuals, not groups or populations. Schemas can also be seen to aid in the processing of new information in a way that is understandable. Advances in the study of schema theory can help in better understanding the decision-making capacity of individuals. Personal schemas are expected to significantly affect the responses of the experimental group members in the upcoming experiment (Axelrod 1973).

Further contributions of Piaget include his identification of the intrinsic motivations for cognitive development. For Piaget, cognitive adaptation to the environment is a natural method for humans to improve survival rates. He also pioneered the concept of equilibration which describes the cognitive ability to balance the processes of information assimilation and accommodation. Piaget found it important to maintain a balance between applying previous knowledge (assimilation) and changing behavior to account for new knowledge (accommodation). Piaget's Equilibration Theory could be useful in analyzing those respondents who classify themselves as conservative while having to accommodate the civil liberties issues presented in the experiment's independent variable (Flavell 1996).

Cognitive Psychology and Intelligence

The attempts of cognitive psychology to identify the mental processes that allow individuals to think, perceive, remember, and learn have often been closely associated with intelligence. The theoretical divide in the study of intelligence can be found between those who view intelligence as a monolithic, general ability and those who view it as a variety of different skills and talents. Pioneering the former view is the research of Charles Spearman and his General Intelligence Theory. For Spearman, intelligence was a general cognitive ability that enabled those individuals who were talented in one mental exercise to be good in most other mental exercises. Spearman's general intelligence, or g factor, led him to view certain individuals as being naturally intelligent in all fields of interest while others were naturally less talented in all fields of study (Lovie and Lovie 1996).

Contrary to Spearman's General Intelligence Theory, there has been abundant research regarding the belief that intelligence is subdivided into several different categories with individuals possessing different levels of strength in each. Louis Thurstone proposed that humans possessed several different "primary mental abilities" instead of one single form of intelligence (Psychologist, 1936). Thurstone's research identified several different categories of intellect in which individuals could excel. Some people were naturally better with numbers while some were better suited to information in the forms of words. Some people have enhanced abilities in visualization exercises while others are better at remembering information. Other distinct intellectual talents recognized by Thurstone were perceptual speed, verbal comprehension, and reasoning. The identification of a unified intelligence theory has yet to be offered by the cognitive psychology community (Psychologist 1936).

Howard Gardner proposed a continuation of the existing theories regarding intelligence. Like Thurstone, Gardner recognized several different characteristics within the realm of personal intelligence and the importance of each in the ability of humans to successfully learn specific types of new information. Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences defines seven types of intelligence: linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Depending on the type of intelligence one possessed, individuals will master certain materials faster or slower than others. Some individuals are better suited to learn new languages and understand poetry (linguistic learners) while others are better equipped to master mathematical calculations and formula (logical-mathematical learners). Some individuals learn by working with others (interpersonal learners) while other students (intrapersonal learners) develop faster when allowed to work alone (Gershkoff 2005).

Cognitive Psychology and Learning

Following Thurstone and Gardner's theories of multiple intelligences, several cognitive psychological researchers have developed theories governing the learning process of individuals. David Kolb offered the Experiential Learning Model theory to better understand the methods used to acquire new knowledge. Kolb's model divides the learning process into four distinct stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Concrete experience involves the active participation of an individual with a new concept that will be learned through experience. Reflective observation allows individuals to understand the experiences they have had during the previous stage. Abstract conceptualization allows an individual to assimilate the observations and experiences of the past into theories or general concepts. Active experimentation allows individuals to test the new theories that have been created through experience, observation, and conceptualization.

Different personalities utilize each of Kolb's stages better than others depending on individual skills and characteristics (Brock and Cameron 1999).

In addition to developing four distinct learning stages, David Kolb developed four specific learning preferences: divergers, assimilators, convergers, and accommodators. As Kolb describes, divergers prefer learning through actual experiences and reflective observation. Assimilators learn best when they are allowed to utilize abstract conceptualization and reflective observations. Convergers thrive when able to utilize abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. Finally, accommodators learn at their highest levels when able to use concrete experience and active experimentation. According to Kolb, where individuals fit in the previous list will help in determining their occupational pursuits and academic strengths (Kolb 1988).

One of the most important recognitions of cognitive psychology is the simple fact that individuals learn in many instances by observing the actions of others. Albert Bandura conducted research on the learning patterns of children that evolved into the social learning theory. This theory proposes that people learn various behaviors by observing others who act as teaching models. Four processes are involved in the act of learning through observation: observation of the model, memory of model behavior, imitation of actions, and the willingness to repeat model behavior. Bandura's research with children identified the power of adult models to direct the learning methods of children. When children were shown adults acting violently toward a toy clown, the children then acted violently toward the same toy when given the opportunity. The power of modeling on the learning process is still being examined by contemporary researchers (Huffman, Vernoy, and Vernoy 1997).

Physiological Factors Governing Cognitive Psychology

Psychological researchers have continued to improve their understanding of the physical realities controlling cognitive abilities. The Basic Systems Model describes the mind and brain as being a part of an overall system with differentiation of specific tasks. The mental processes are recognized as being divided into basic systems which include separate systems for each of the human senses. Spatial imagery, language, emotion, narrative, and motor output are the systems identified by David Rubin. Each of these systems possesses its own unique functions, processes, structures, kinds of schemata, and types of errors that can be studied individually (Rubin 2006).

Biological considerations have increased in psychological research over the last three decades. Scientists studying brain functions recognize the importance of neural connections in the processing of information (McLeod, Plunkett, and Rolls 1998). Scientists have discovered that the pattern of activation through separate neurons can be manipulated by changing the connections between the neurons. Psychologists have predicted that different neuron connections within the brain can affect the different abilities in the acquisition of information. Brain development studies have shown that the connections between different neurons are relatively consistent throughout childhood while becoming more elaborate as individuals enter maturity. Studies have also shown that neural connections can adapt depending on environmental stimuli. The burgeoning study of human learning as it relates to systems within the brain represents the future of psychological research on information processing (Garlick 2003).

Cognitive Dissonance Theory

One final element of psychology that is most important to the current study is the theory of cognitive dissonance. Developed by L. Festinger (1957), this theory predicts that the perception of an inconsistency among an individual's cognitions generates a negative intrapersonal state, referred to as dissonance. According to Festinger, this state of dissonance is alleviated when an individual attempts to reduce the cause of the dissonance between their beliefs and their environment. This theory is based on many individuals' desires to remain consistent in their thoughts and beliefs. In general, this theory states that if an individual embarks on activities that are not consistent with their own ideas and beliefs, that individual will experience dissonance. If other means of reducing this dissonance are not available, individuals may be more likely to change their original attitudes that are no longer allowing them to achieve consonance.

Festinger identified three possible methods used by individuals to reduce cognitive dissonance. First, a person may try to change his or her beliefs when confronted with new information that creates dissonance. Second, an individual may seek out new information that will buttress the opinions that have been held in the past. Finally, a person may attempt to reduce the significance of the new information that is causing dissonance by convincing themselves that the new information is not important. Examples of this change in attitude have been seen in employees forced to transfer from a large metropolitan area to a more rural destination. Recognizing their inability to change their future destination, they will begin to dislike the city while still living in it while they prepare to move into the rural environment. Individuals with conservative or liberal political ideologies, who witness their preferred political candidates endorsing issues they themselves would not, can also experience this transformation.

Voters will either begin to change their opinions on controversial issues endorsed by their favored candidate or stop favoring that candidate (Smith 1961). In short, much like a smoker who is aware that smoking is unhealthy, cognitive dissonance occurs when one's beliefs do not correspond to the realities of the environment around them that are identified by their cognitive recognition of reality.

Two general assumptions have been put forth concerning the realities of cognitive dissonance: individuals attempt to validate their personal attitudes, opinions, and behaviors while also seeking to make related attitudes, opinions, and behaviors consistent (Eckhardt and Hendershot 1967). These assumptions recognize that individuals are in a constant state of processing their environment in a way that forces them to adapt their mental perceptions. In addition, these assumptions identify the ability of individuals to change their cognitive realities to accommodate environmental factors that are unfamiliar (Eckhardt and Hendershot 1967).

A great deal of cognitive dissonance research has shown the ability of dissonance to dictate certain actions (Aronson & Mills 1959; Festinger & Carlsmith 1959; Freedman 1965; Aronson & Carlsmith 1963; Linder, Cooper & Jones 1967), but my research involves the ability of dissonance to change attitudes. Goethals and Cooper (1975) found that dissonance could change attitudes more frequently when the consequences of the dissonant behavior are apparent. This should support any dissonance created in this research since opinions on same-sex marriage can lead to voting patterns that will have consequences on marriage equality legislation. In addition, the ability of dissonance to affect long-term behavior has been found to be influenced by the salience of the subject involved (Walster & Berscheid 1968). Same-sex marriage equality enjoys near-universal acceptance as an issue that characterizes the highest levels of issue saliency. Finally, if an individual has no choice but to act in a manner inconsistent with his or

her beliefs, little dissonance will be created as the individuals see themselves as passive victims of fate (Davis & Jones 1960). However, respondents to my survey are not forced to think positively or negatively toward same-sex marriages and have every opportunity to change their opinions.

While not actively examining cognitive dissonance in this study, it is the hope of this researcher that cognitive dissonance would be created. The preexisting opinions of respondents (their beliefs) were introduced to possibly new information describing the environment (their reality). The independent variables used in this study attempted to increase an individual respondent's understanding of American civil liberties in a way that may not comfortably fit into their opinions regarding same-sex marriage rights. If an individual's opinions on same-sex marriage rights do not comfortably coexist with new information regarding American constitutional law, they will experience dissonance requiring them to alter their opinions on same-sex marriage or their thoughts on the U.S. Constitution. The creation of cognitive dissonance in the respondents by introducing new information regarding the constitutional rights of minority groups may prove to be the most valuable contribution of cognitive psychology to this survey research.

Summary of Expectations

This study attempts to describe one of the several processes involved in the formulation of public opinion involving the civil rights and liberties of minority groups. It analyzes whether those in the majority who believe rights should be refused to others, that they enjoy themselves, can change their minds. The tested catalyst is a better understanding of American Constitutional protections for the civil rights and liberties of minority groups. The participants' knowledge of the American Constitution was manipulated in order to determine if public opinion changed.

The existence of the framing effect is also tested during this research. One experimental group received a lecture involving same-sex marriage framed from the value of equality while another experimental group received a lecture framed from the value of the golden rule.

Knowledge is important in three ways: participation, consistency, and tolerance. First, individuals with high levels of political knowledge are considerably more likely to vote than individuals with low levels of political knowledge. The more politically knowledgeable someone is, the more likely they are to engage in several forms of political participation, like contributing money to political campaigns, attending political campaign functions, and trying to affect the voting of others (Bardes and Oldendick, 2013). Second, increased political knowledge has also been found to increase an individual's probability of possessing consistent opinions on a broad range of political topics. This advanced political knowledge allows individuals to identify their true interests and vote for those who are more representative of their policy preferences (Carpini and Keeter 1993). Finally, knowledge has been shown to have a significant impact on political tolerance. The percentage of "democratic" responses to basic democratic principles questions was higher in cases for those with more than a high school education than for those with less than a high school education (Prothro and Grigg 1960). The better educated are consistently found to be more tolerant than the less educated (Stouffer 1955). A 2010 General Social Survey (GSS) report showed that the percentage of respondents that would permit a Muslim clergyman preaching hatred of the U.S. to give a public speech was 14% among those who had not completed high school, 30% among those with a high school diploma, 43% for those with some college education, and 65% for those with a college degree or more (Bardes and Oldendick 2013).

[Figure 2.1 About Here]

Several reasons have been offered for the differences in public opinion that are recognized after levels of knowledge have increased. Higher levels of political knowledge, generally produced through access to education, are believed to introduce individuals to diverse ways of thinking and understanding new ideas (Stouffer 1955). Increased levels of cognitive sophistication have been attributed to higher levels of knowledge-increasing formal education. Formal education can increase recognition of connections between theoretical rights and those seen in the actual world (Bobo and Licari 1989). In addition, increased levels of knowledge improve the basic understanding of the tenets of liberal democracies (McClosky and Brill 1983).

The American Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s provides a good example of groups who had been denied their civil liberties winning legal equality over time, in part because of increases in public opinion. For African-Americans, the struggle for equal protection of the law began in a state of slavery and ended centuries later with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s was important for gaining access to equal rights for African-Americans who had been denied these rights for so long. The Civil Rights era has been identified for its importance because, “In little more than two decades, a racial caste system that had prevailed for more than three centuries was stripped of every vestige of legal and moral support” (Mayer 1992, 22).

Several elements have played a role in increasing public opinion of African-American rights over the last half century. One of the more important mediums used to alter public opinion by increasing political knowledge is the media. Television cameras sending images of police dogs and fire hoses in Birmingham, Alabama, were instrumental in changing national opinion of African-Americans by informing the public of African-American treatment in the Deep South. As technology has increased, more venues have been created by the internet to increase the

public's knowledge of violations of civil liberties when they occur. The media play an important role in altering American public opinion by providing information and setting the agenda of the issues that become most talked about in modern nations (Bardes and Oldendick 2012). In general, American public opinion that favors the denial of certain civil rights to certain minority groups eventually evolves into American public opinion that favors extension of those rights to those groups. The increased saliency of political issues in the 1960s and the electorate's increasing educational opportunities have also been seen as possible contributing factors to increased levels of tolerance for African-American rights (Nie, Verba, and Petrocik 1976).

In addition to having an effect on public opinion in general, increased knowledge has been shown to affect the susceptibility of respondents to the framing effect. Using National Election Study data, Kinder and Sanders (1990) showed that individuals with less general political knowledge were more susceptible to the framing effect when it was involved with their opinion on affirmative action policy. Individuals who were better informed were more likely to possess a "frame of their own" and less likely to be influenced by frames from the outside (p. 90). Sniderman and Theriault also found framing effects to be more influential on less informed respondents when they tested public opinion on government spending for the poor and tolerance of public rallies by extremist groups (1999). The reliance of my framing effects experimental lecture on the realities of the U.S. Constitution and the core value of equality should improve my chances of identifying significant variance in the opinions of my respondents experiencing that lecture. Previous studies of civil liberties controversies indicate that constitutional principles and attitudes toward political groups are generally the most important frames used when deciding whether or not to grant rights to controversial groups (Chong 1993).

Hypotheses

I hypothesized that as the political knowledge of individuals increases so will their political tolerance.

H_1 = Increasing knowledge of the U.S. Constitution will Δ political tolerance.

H_0 = Increasing knowledge of the U.S. Constitution will cause no Δ in political tolerance.

The information given to the experimental groups should increase their political knowledge of minority group rights in America. As political knowledge increases the survey respondent's opinions on same-sex marriage rights should become more positive. I expect some respondents who do not favor same-sex marriage rights before they experienced the experimental group's lecture to have changed their opinions after having heard the lectures. In short, some of those who do not favor same-sex marriage rights should begin to favor those rights after being exposed to new information regarding the American Constitution and American constitutional law.

In addition, I hypothesized that individuals who receive the equality-framed lecture and the golden rule-framed lecture will support same-sex marriage more than those in the control group who do not.

H_2 = Exposure to the equality/golden rule framing effect will Δ political tolerance.

H_0 = Exposure to the equality/golden rule framing effect will cause no Δ in political tolerance.

When comparing those respondents within the equality and golden rule frame experimental groups that have experienced an opinion change, I also expect those with more formal education to be less likely to experience any variance in their opinion of same-sex marriage.

My third hypothesis involved my expectation that students with a higher level of formal education in their academic pasts will possess a higher level of political tolerance, when compared to those who have had less formal education.

H_3 = Higher levels of formal education will Δ political tolerance.

H_0 = Higher levels of formal education will cause no Δ in political tolerance.

This hypothesis was tested by examining the political tolerance of respondents in relation to their self-identified academic pasts. Whether or not the respondents had taken AP courses in high school is one of the principle characteristics used in this experiment for determining formal education.

Finally, I hypothesized that those respondents reporting prior contact with homosexuals would have a higher level of political tolerance toward same-sex marriage rights.

H_4 = Contact with homosexuals will political tolerance.

H_0 = Contact with homosexuals will cause no Δ in political tolerance.

This hypothesis was tested by asking the respondents if they had any prior contact with interracial, interfaith, or same-sex couples. Respondents who had contact with one or all of these minority couples are expected to have higher pretest approval of same-sex marriage rights.

This research could have an important impact on policy development at the national level. If education efforts are made that can increase the political knowledge of the population it would be possible to increase the political tolerance of the population as well. Increasing the political tolerance of the public toward minority group rights would be important because there is a “definite tendency for public policy to be in accordance with public opinion, though the relationship is decidedly imperfect” (Monroe 1979, 8). As Manza and Cook (2002) have mentioned, the ability of existing political systems to respond to the opinions of its citizens is a

necessary function of democratic theory. If public opinion were to demand equal protection for all minority groups, specifically same-sex marriage equality, then public-policy makers would ignore those calls for equality at their peril.

[Figure 2.2 About Here]

Chapter Three

Methods

This study used a quasi-experimental design with change gauged by a pretest/posttest survey with both close and open-ended responses to determine if public opinion was affected by increased political knowledge. Respondents were asked to identify their opinions on same-sex marriage with a one-hundred-point-scale feeling thermometer. Having done this, the respondents were asked to identify their opinions on the legal recognition of same-sex marriages. Demographic data were also collected from the sample. The pretest and posttest are shown in Appendix Two.

After completing the pretests the respondents were given a ten-minute lecture involving either American Constitutional Law; the U.S. Constitution; a pro-same-sex marriage lecture from an equality frame; or, a pro-same-sex marriage lecture from a golden rule frame. The first four groups served as the experimental groups while the fifth represented the control group. Having experienced these lectures, all groups were given a posttest, two days later, similar to the pretest, which I used to determine if their opinions on same-sex marriage had changed after being exposed to the new information. Additionally, open-ended questions were used in both the pretest and posttest surveys to allow for the collection of qualitative data on the opinions of the respondents. These questions asked respondents to describe the origins of their opinions on same-sex marriage and whether they could identify any future variables that would have a high likelihood of changing their minds about the topic. A third question, on the posttests of the first and second experimental groups, examined whether or not the respondents had learned anything about the U.S. Constitution from the lecture they experienced.

[Figure 3.1 About Here]

Sampling

This study used a convenience sampling technique drawing on a sample population from Auburn University, in East-Central Alabama. The convenience sample was used to accommodate the limited resources at my disposal. Although convenience samples are not as valuable as true random samples in strength of both internal and external validity, they have proved unavoidable.

The sample population for my study was drawn from college students enrolled in social sciences classes, primarily political science classes, at Auburn University (AU). I asked several professors for permission to use students in their classes to serve as the sample for my study. College students were used in this study because they represented the best cohort available that could provide a relatively large sample size in an environment that made data collection as simple as possible. Having access to a group of individuals, who were already sitting in the same area, prepared to learn, made college students a valuable target for this study.

Pilot Study

In order to identify any potential problems with the wording of the survey questions, I conducted a pilot study that provided valuable feedback from college students. I gave the survey questions to a class of six undergraduate students taking State and Local Government at Troy University Montgomery, on March twenty-fifth, 2013. After finishing the pilot survey, I brought the students together in a moderated focus group to discuss their experience taking the pretest and posttest surveys and hearing the intervention lecture on U.S. constitutional law. I gave each student a piece of paper and a pen and asked them to write down any characteristics of the pretest or posttest that was confusing to them. After roughly ten minutes, the students individually discussed with me and their colleagues which parts of the surveys were less than clear. The only

problem that was described involved the pretest question about annual income. Students were not clear if the question was asking for their personal annual income or that of their parents. This question was clarified by adding a passage describing annual income as the student's individual income or their parents, whichever amount was most comfortable for them.

Beyond that particular question, the respondents to the pilot survey did not find any other elements of the pretest/posttest to be inherently confusing. After discussing the surveys, I turned the student's attention to the lecture they had been given. The students were then given another ten minutes to record any elements of the lecture that did not appear clear to them when they heard it. Students were then asked to individually discuss any issues they had with the intervention lecture. The only concern that was addressed by the students involved the difficulty they experienced following my lecture. After discussing several different options, it was agreed that a handout would be helpful for students as they listened to the lecture. I then wrote one-page outlines for my intervention lectures that were eventually handed out to the experimental groups after they had taken their pretest surveys.

After directing the focus group with my students at Troy University Montgomery, I asked for two volunteers to remain after class to conduct individual interviews in an attempt to find out any additional information regarding my surveys or the lecture intervention. After discussing the matter with each student individually, for roughly five minutes, no new problems were presented that could have been improved. One of the most valuable developments that came from the piloting process involved the higher level of confidence I had with my surveys and my lecture intervention. The piloting process further encouraged me that I had selected a proper research instrument for identifying the several variables in which I am interested.

Prior Research

This study attempted to determine if an increase in political knowledge would have any effect on the opinions of the survey respondents. Specifically, I explored whether or not an increased knowledge of American civics changed respondents' opinions on same-sex marriage. The idea that knowledge and opinions possess some degree of correlation is not unique to this study. Several experiments have been conducted in the past that dealt with similar variables.

For example, Carpini and Keeter (1996) examined whether or not an increase in political knowledge changed the tolerance of their respondents. They showed that as levels of political knowledge increased so did levels of tolerance for the political rights of many different groups. Keeter and Carpini developed a social learning hypothesis which states that an increased knowledge of the norms and procedures of liberal democracies increases the tolerance of respondents (1996).

Keeter and Carpini used multiple regression analyses to determine the net impact of civil liberties knowledge on tolerance among their sample group. Their results showed a strong correlation between civil liberties knowledge and tolerance. Political knowledge was shown to have a significant influence on political tolerance independent of education and other factors (Carpini and Keeter 1996).

Keeter and Carpini's research showed the importance of political knowledge among the populations of liberal democracies. Political knowledge was shown to promote civic virtues like political tolerance. Political knowledge was also shown to be an important indicator in determining the amount of active participation in the political process. Political knowledge was thought to help citizens construct stable and consistent opinions on a broad array of political topics. Political knowledge was seen to help citizens identify their individual interests with their

political attitudes. Political knowledge was expected to assist in citizens' abilities to link their attitudes with their participation so that their participation would better serve their individual interests (Carpini and Keeter 1993).

Carpini and Keeter's research was important for identifying the value of political knowledge in shaping the political tolerance of individuals within liberal democracies. However, their research also identified one of the problems associated with the proper definition of political knowledge. It is difficult to identify one test that will adequately determine the political knowledge of an individual. My study attempted to avoid the problem of properly defining political knowledge in general by dealing specifically with knowledge of the American Constitution.

Research by Fishkin (1994) has shown that relevant political knowledge promotes other norms and values of liberal democracies. Fishkin's research attempted to determine the effect of political knowledge on the public opinion of respondents on the issue of legal rights for those accused of criminal activities. Fishkin used what he called a deliberative opinion poll to randomly select a panel of voters (869 total) who were provided with three days of extensive and politically-balanced briefings on crime and the criminal justice system. These respondents became substantially more supportive of measures to ensure the procedural rights of criminal defendants. A greater familiarity with the procedures and logic of the system led many to support protecting the rights of those accused of crimes. In short, those who knew more about the criminal justice system were more in favor of the legal protections of accused criminals (Fishkin 1994). This research is valuable due to its reliance on extensive three-day tutorials to increase the political knowledge of the participants. My research is unique for its reliance on brief ten-minute lectures intended to increase the respondents' political knowledge. In addition

to monitoring any change in respondent opinions, my research attempted to shed light on the importance of long or short-term information exposure in changing the opinions of respondents.

Education has been found to be strongly correlated with tolerance (Nunn, Crockett, and Williams 1978). Education's effect on political tolerance has been linked to its ability to increase individuals' access to diverse ways of thinking and inform individuals as to the rules and procedures of civic laws. The first theory stipulates that one of the inevitable consequences of formal education is the introduction to diverse ideas and ways of thinking. Formal education places individuals into contact with others who possess different ways of thinking about the world. Increasing the levels of formal education increases individuals' contact with the opinions of others (Stouffer 1955).

Bobo and Licari (1989) have shown that education can foster cognitive sophistication. Using a 1984 GSS list of 15 questions meant to determine respondents' (n=1,473) support for civil liberties and a ten-question basic vocabulary test, they identified links between cognitive sophistication and tolerance. Higher levels of cognitive sophistication are expected to increase individuals' ability to understand the connection between theoretical rights and those seen in the actual world. Understanding the legal rights of individuals or groups is thought to enhance the opinion of respondents when asked if they have respect for those rights. Respondents who are not aware of legal rights may have less respect for the rights of minority groups. Unlike Bobo and Licari's research, which relied on basic vocabulary knowledge, my study attempts to examine political knowledge specifically involving the American Constitution in addition to basic vocabulary knowledge of American government.

A second theory claims that education is responsible for providing the basic instructions regarding the norms and procedures of liberal democracies. Education is one way that

knowledge of societal values are acquired and understood. Research has been shown to support the hypothesis that education begets knowledge of the system of government required to support the rights of others when they are threatened by forces within the majority. Without an understanding of the civic values of a particular society that happens to protect minority rights, it would be difficult for individuals to understand that the rights of minorities actually deserve protection (McClosky and Brill 1983).

In addition to testing the importance of knowledge on public opinion of minority rights, this research examines whether or not the framing effect has an impact on the public opinion of the respondents. As I have mentioned, the third experimental group received a lecture on same-sex marriage rights from an equality frame. This lecture addresses several realities associated with marriage inequality for homosexual Americans in 2013. The lecture was heavily framed from the core value of egalitarianism and stressed the importance of equality in contemporary American law.

Framing issues in a specific manner can significantly influence the output of public opinion. Which core value is used to frame an individual political issue can dramatically affect the direction of public opinion. Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley found that support for or against a hate group's ability to hold a public rally depended on the frame used to describe the event (1997). When the Ku Klux Klan's rally in Columbus, Ohio, was framed from the core value of free speech, public opinion favored their ability to demonstrate. However, when the possible Klan rally was framed from the core value of public order, a majority of those polled were in favor of prohibiting the planned march.

Equality frames have been shown to significantly influence public opinion on same-sex marriage in the past. While examining aggregate level opposition to same-sex marriage and civil

unions between 2004 and 2011, Johnson (2012) found that an increase in media messages framed from the perspective of equality witnessed an increase in support for same-sex marriage in public opinion polls. Likewise, it was found that as morality frames were used to present the issue, support for same-sex marriage could be found to decline.

The golden rule frame has also been shown to affect changes in public opinion regarding marriage equality. Vilaythong, Nosek, and Lindner (2010) conducted surveys on self-identified Christians (n=581) and found that those who were primed with passages of the golden rule were significantly affected in their attitudes toward homosexuals and their feelings toward gay controllability. However, when the golden rule was attributed to Buddha, Christians began reporting more negative attitudes toward gay people than the control.

Cognitive dissonance theoretical research has offered several examples that are encouraging to the possible results of this research. Elliot and Devine (1994) conducted experiments on college students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison which involved essay writing on topics with which they did not agree. Their research showed that the subjects experienced attitude changes after having written essays on the advantages of raising tuition, a policy with which they did not agree. This showed an example of cognitive dissonance leading to individuals changing their attitudes in order to reduce the dissonance and increase the consonance of their beliefs and their environment. In a similar manner, this experiment attempted to create dissonance in the respondents that did not originally favor same-sex marriage equality by introducing them to constitutional realities that can be interpreted as supporting equality for same-sex couples. The equality frame lecture was also used to possibly create dissonance among respondents who had never been exposed to the many negative characteristics of homosexual Americans who are currently denied access to marriage equality.

This study expands on the existing literature by examining the possible effects on public opinion after having increased the political knowledge of the respondents. It furthers the existing research by specifically testing the effect an increase in political knowledge involving civil liberties has on respondents' opinions concerning same-sex marriage. Whether or not the respondents become more or less supportive of homosexual marriage rights based on their own knowledge of American civil liberties can be valuable in determining the amount of civics classes required in secondary and postsecondary academic institutions. The value of civics knowledge can be recognized in respondents who are significantly affected by the independent variables used in this survey. Additionally, by testing the framing effect in the third experimental group, this research helps to further our understanding of the power of frames on the formulation of public opinion.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variable used in this study is public opinion on same-sex marriage and was operationalized in two ways. First, the pretest and posttest asked for respondents to give their opinions on same-sex marriage on a feeling thermometer similar to that utilized by the American National Elections Studies (ANES) survey. The feeling thermometer question asked respondents to identify the level of positive or negative feelings they had toward same-sex marriage couples on a scale of 0 – 100. The pretest and posttest are shown in Appendix Two. Second, the respondents were asked to identify their thoughts on the legalization of same-sex marriage rights. Respondents were asked to answer whether they support the legal recognition of same-sex marriage by responding yes, no, or no opinion. In addition, the respondents were asked to differentiate whether they feel the legalization of same-sex marriage should be handled at the federal or state levels of government or whether they thought it should be addressed by a

state-wide popular vote of the people. These data were gathered in the pretest and posttest of the study.

[Figure 3.2 About Here]

Finally, this research asked open-ended questions involving respondent's opinions on same-sex marriage at the end of both the pretest and posttest. The first of these questions asked the respondents to describe the origin of their opinions regarding same-sex marriage. The respondents were asked to briefly describe who or what in their respective pasts had the most influence on their current thoughts on same-sex marriage. These responses fell within one or more of the following categories: parents, siblings, friends, clergy, media (television, magazine, internet, or radio), celebrities, political leaders, or not sure/no answer. The second open-ended question asked the respondents to describe anything they believe could change their current opinions on same-sex marriage. These responses fell into one or more of the following categories: legislative changes, court decisions, executive branch announcements, family members changing opinions, friends changing opinions, clergy members changing opinions, media coverage changing, celebrities changing opinions, or no change possible. Finally, the posttest asked the respondents, from the first and second experimental groups, to identify any new information they learned during the U.S. Constitution lectures they experienced.

[Figure 3.3 About Here]

Key Explanatory Variables

Several independent variables were accounted for throughout this survey research. The first independent variable examined in this study involved the introduction of political knowledge between the pretest and the posttest. The political knowledge variable was presented in two of the brief lectures given between the pretest and the posttest of the first two

experimental groups. All respondents were given a pretest that tested several independent variables in a limited amount of time. This pretest was followed by one of four distinct lectures no longer than ten minutes in length. Within two days of the lecture, a posttest was administered gauging whether or not the opinions of the respondents had changed having been exposed to the brief lecture. Also, the framing effect was examined as a potentially important explanatory variable affecting the respondents' opinions regarding same-sex marriage equality.

Each of the sample respondents was exposed to one of the following four types of brief lectures. Twenty-three percent of respondents ($n = 88$) experienced a lecture covering several elements of American constitutional law. This constitutional law lecture focused on federal and state Supreme Court cases that have dealt with civil liberties issues. Eighteen percent of respondents ($n = 68$) experienced a brief lecture covering elements of the U.S. Constitution specifically dealing with civil liberties. Twenty percent of respondents ($n = 75$) experienced a brief lecture presenting the issue of same-sex marriage from the perspective of the equality frame, which purposefully encouraged respondents to respond positively to same-sex marriage rights. Fifteen percent of respondents ($n = 59$) received a lecture intervention from the golden rule frame. Finally, 24% of the control group ($n = 93$) were given pretests and posttests with no lecture interventions between them. Dummy variables were assigned indicating which of the respondents were in the four experimental groups and which of the volunteers were in the control group. Transcripts for these four lectures are available in Appendices Three, Four, Five, and Six, respectively.

Demographic Variables

This study collected data on several different demographic and socioeconomic variables. The survey questions asked for information regarding the respondents' age, race, and religious

affiliation. Respondents' ages were determined by asking respondents to list their current age. Data pertaining to race were gathered using the following categories: white, black, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, or other. These characteristics were copied from the ANES survey questions located on their website. Respondents were allowed to select more than one category. Religious affiliation was categorized along the following available choices: Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Atheist/Agnostic, or other.

The collection of the respondents' religious affiliations introduced an unexpected source of confusion. Following the known religious parameters of the American South, the majority of students (51%; $n = 193$) self-identified as Protestant. The remaining respondents were 15% Catholic ($n = 58$), 8% Atheist/Agnostic ($n = 31$), and 1% Jewish ($n = 3$). However, the data analysis showed an unexpected 24% ($n = 94$) of respondents self-identifying as "other," as compared to slightly more than 12% nationally. Given the vast Christian majority in the American South, specifically Alabama, and the fact that "Protestant" and "Catholic" were available responses, it is not clear why almost one quarter of the sample respondents identified themselves as "other" in the religion category. Several possible explanations may be given for this unpredicted variance in religious affiliation: students identifying as Evangelical Christians did not recognize themselves as either Protestant or Catholic, students did not feel comfortable identifying their religious affiliation on a survey, or students may have been in a transitional period in their lives with regard to their personal religious beliefs. Many other possible explanations could have caused the high percentage of students to self-identify as having "other" religious leanings. Future research on this interesting development could produce fascinating results.

The survey questions also asked for information pertaining to gender, marital status, and political affiliation. The gender of the respondents was gathered by asking them to respond to a simple male/female question. Marital status data were collected by asking the respondents to identify themselves as one of the following: married for first time, married for second or more times, single, divorced for first time, and divorced for second or more times. Political party identification was ascertained by asking respondents to identify themselves as leaning toward Democrat, Republican, Libertarian, or other.

Respondents' opinions on marriage rights were gathered by asking them if they are in favor of interracial marriages and interfaith marriages. These questions were answered with yes, no, or not sure. Personal experiences with interracial, interfaith, and same-sex couples were identified by asking respondents if they have had any personal contact with people fitting any of these three groups. The possible answers to these questions were presented in the form of yes, no, or not sure.

Finally, the research questions gathered data concerning educational achievement, economic conditions, geographical origins, and college-level constitutional law experience. The survey questions determined educational achievement by presenting the following choices: grade school/some high school, high school diploma, some undergraduate college/no diploma, college diploma/graduate school, or no opinion. Economic data were collected by asking respondents to provide estimates of their annual incomes. If they are dependents, respondents were asked to provide estimates of their parents' annual incomes. Finally, the survey asked respondents to identify whether they have had any college-level Constitutional Law classes with the following possible answers: yes, no, or not sure.

Chapter Four

Analysis

The data collected were analyzed to determine if there was any statistically significant change in the opinions of the experimental and control groups. Significant changes in opinions on same-sex marriage were determined using paired sample difference of means tests and proportion tests. This provided answers to the fundamental research question involving changes in opinion potentially caused by changes in political knowledge.

This data analysis also identifies how the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of individuals affect opinions related to feelings toward same-sex marriage. OLS regression was used to determine how the feeling thermometer variable was affected by the independent variables. LOGIT regression was used to determine the strength of the independent variables on individual support for or against same-sex marriage rights.

I will take a moment to reiterate my hypotheses for this survey research. First, I hypothesized that an increase in knowledge of the U.S. Constitution will lead to an increase in the political tolerance scores of the respondents.

H_1 = Increasing knowledge of the U.S. Constitution will cause Δ in political tolerance.

H_0 = Increasing knowledge of the U.S. Constitution will cause no Δ in political tolerance.

This was tested by giving the first experimental group a ten-minute lecture on U.S. constitutional law after having given them a pretest survey. Two days after taking the pretest survey and hearing the ten-minute lecture on U.S. constitutional law, the respondents in experimental group one were given a posttest survey. The purpose of the intervention lecture was to determine whether or not there would be any statistically significant change in opinion toward same-sex

marriage rights, identified by any differences in the pretest and posttest responses involving support for marriage equality. This hypothesis was further tested by giving experimental group two's respondents a ten-minute lecture describing the U.S. Constitution. This lecture focused on the structural elements of the Constitution while emphasizing those features that could be involved with marriage equality. The experimental group was tested for changes in opinions toward same-sex marriage rights by comparing opinions on the pretest with opinions on the posttest, after respondents had experienced the intervention lecture on the U.S. Constitution.

Second, I hypothesized that exposure to the framing effect, specifically the equality frame and the golden rule frame, will increase the political tolerance scores of the respondents.

H_2 = Exposure to the equality/golden rule framing effect will cause Δ in political tolerance.

H_0 = Exposure to the equality/golden rule framing effect will cause no Δ in political tolerance.

This second hypothesis was tested by giving a third experimental group an intervention lecture concerning the realities of same-sex marriage in America that was heavily framed from the perspective of equality. This lecture used the equality frame to identify for the respondents several of the inequalities experienced by homosexual Americans who are currently unable to enjoy the same freedoms as other Americans, specifically the freedom to legally marry. This inequality was described as a direct result of their sexual orientations and nothing more. This equality frame lecture was intended to show the audience a negative picture of same-sex marriage rights when viewed with the American core value of equality in mind. A fourth experimental group was given an intervention lecture framed from the lens of the golden rule. The golden rule lecture, describing the religious principle that all people should be treated as

individuals would want to be treated themselves, stressed the existence of the golden rule principle in all major religions throughout time. This lecture was intended to force the members of experimental group three to view the plight of homosexual Americans wanting, but unable, to get married as a reality they would not like to experience themselves. This lecture was attempting to remind the religiously-inclined members of experimental group three of their responsibility to treat others in the same manner they would like to be treated. The purpose of this golden rule lecture was to see if there would be a statistically significant change in support for same-sex marriage rights after the respondents were reminded of their religious obligations to their fellow men and women.

Third, I hypothesized that higher levels of formal education, before having taken the survey, will result in higher political tolerance scores on the pretest survey.

H_3 = Higher levels of formal education will cause Δ in political tolerance.

H_0 = Higher levels of formal education will cause no Δ in political tolerance.

My third hypothesis was tested by comparing the past educational experiences of the respondents with their reported opinions of same-sex marriage rights on the pretest survey. The respondents were asked if they had taken any AP courses during their high school careers. In addition, respondents were asked if they had taken any college entrance exams before beginning their college careers. Those who had taken college entrance exams were asked if they had passed. Also, respondents were asked if they had taken any college-level constitutional law courses prior to that semester. Finally, five multiple choice questions were asked at the beginning of the pretest survey that tested the respondent's general knowledge of American government. These questions asked the students to identify the United States as a republic; the method for calculating a state's electoral vote; the current Secretary of State of the federal government; the

number of justices on the United States Federal Supreme Court; and, whether or not the word “God” appeared in the U.S. Constitution. All of these variables were used to determine the amount of formal education the individual respondent’s had received prior to taking the pretest survey. The individual questions were used to determine a level of actual knowledge each individual respondent possessed regarding American government. All five multiple-choice questions were combined to form a political knowledge index that was also compared to pretest opinions on same-sex marriage rights. These education and political knowledge variables were compared to the pretest feeling thermometer scores (testing support for same-sex marriage rights) and the pretest opinions concerning the respondents’ support for legal recognition of same-sex marriage by the federal government, state governments, and a popular vote of the people.

Finally, I hypothesized that previous contact with homosexuals will increase the respondents’ tolerance of same-sex marriage resulting in higher political tolerance scores on the pretest survey.

H_4 = Contact with non-traditional couples will cause Δ in political tolerance.

H_0 = Contact with non-traditional couples will cause no Δ in political tolerance.

This last hypothesis was tested by comparing the interactions of the respondents with minority couples to their pretest opinions regarding same-sex marriage rights. Respondents were asked if they had personal any past or current contact with interracial couples, interfaith couples, or same-sex couples. These responses were given in simple yes or no answers. Whether or not the respondents had past experiences with minority couples was then compared to their levels of support for or against same-sex marriage rights on the pretest survey.

I will now provide a brief examination of the univariate, bivariate, and multivariate statistical analyses that I have performed on the survey data collected. Each of the statistical test's descriptions will be accompanied by a summary of the results that have been found. Due to several issues related to multicollinearity, I have used a number of different regression models in the section discussing my multivariate analysis. A discussion of the significance of these findings, personal thoughts, and recommendations for future research can be found in chapter five of this paper.

Univariate Statistics

The students who volunteered for the pretest and posttest surveys were predominantly undergraduate students taking introductory classes in Political Science at Auburn University. Of the students surveyed (n=383), the average student was a Caucasian female. Eighty-six percent of the respondents were Caucasian (n = 331), 7% were African American (n = 30), and 1% were Asian (n = 3), Pacific Islander (n = 1), Native American (n = 3), or "other" (n = 6). Fifty-eight percent of respondents were female (n = 222) while the remaining 42% were male (n = 160).

In addition, the average student self-identified as a Protestant Republican with Republican parents. Fifty-one percent (n = 193) of survey respondents identified with the Protestant faith, 15% (n = 58) considered themselves Catholic, 8% (n = 31) reported Atheist/Agnostic leanings, 1% (n = 3) were Jewish, and the remaining 24% (n = 94) identified as "other." As I discussed earlier, that was an unexpectedly large number of students at a Southern University to identify themselves as belonging to another religious faith after having been given the option to select Protestantism or Catholicism.

The respondents' political affiliations closely resembled my initial expectations. Fifty-three percent (n = 201) of the students taking part in the survey reported political ideologies that

resembled the Republican Party, while 25% (n = 96) of students considered themselves to be closely aligned with the Democratic Party. An additional 13% (n = 49) of respondents were Libertarian and the remaining 9% (n = 34) selected the “other” political affiliation option. The respondents’ paternal and maternal political affiliations resembled their own, although there was a higher level of representation for the Republican Party in the respondents’ fathers and mothers. The respondents reported having Republican fathers 72% (n = 258) of the time and Republican mothers 68% (n = 250) of the time. Twenty-one percent (n = 76) of fathers were reported to be Democrats while 25% (n = 93) of mothers were given Democratic classifications. The remaining fathers were found to be Libertarian on 2% of occasions (n = 9) while the last 6% were considered to have “other” political leanings (n = 20). Two percent (n = 7) of the respondents’ mothers were considered Libertarians and 6% (n = 17) were thought to be found in some “other” political party. These demographic variables are listed in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2.

[Table 4.1 About Here]

[Table 4.2 About Here]

I found a strong relationship between the political affiliations of my respondents and the political affiliations of their parents. Democratic respondents with Democrat mothers were strongly and positively correlated ($\chi^2 = 121.41$; $p \leq .01$; $V = 0.58$), while Democratic respondents were strongly and negatively correlated with Republican mothers ($\chi^2 = 98.58$; $p \leq .01$; $V = -0.51$). Republican respondents were strongly and negatively correlated with Democratic mothers ($\chi^2 = 65.64$; $p \leq .01$; $V = -0.42$), while Republican respondents having Republican mothers were found to be strongly and positively correlated ($\chi^2 = 75.02$; $p \leq .01$; $V = 0.45$). Libertarian respondents with Democratic mothers were found to have a weak and negative correlation ($\chi^2 = 6.70$; $p \leq .01$; $V = -0.14$), while Libertarian Respondents had a weak and positive correlation

with Libertarian mothers ($\chi^2 = 5.35$; $p \leq .05$; $V = 0.12$) and Republican mothers ($\chi^2 = 3.33$; $p \leq .01$; $V = 0.12$). Democratic respondents had a strong, positive correlation with Democratic fathers ($\chi^2 = 86.55$; $p \leq .01$; $V = 0.49$), while showing a strong, negative correlation with Republican fathers ($\chi^2 = 79.28$; $p \leq .01$; $V = -0.47$). Republican respondents were found to be negatively correlated to Democratic fathers ($\chi^2 = 64.53$; $p \leq .01$; $V = -0.42$) and Libertarian fathers ($\chi^2 = 6.83$; $p \leq .01$; $V = -0.14$), while being positively correlated to Republican fathers ($\chi^2 = 85$; $p \leq .01$; $V = 0.48$). Finally, Libertarian respondents were found to have a weak, positive correlation to Libertarian fathers ($\chi^2 = 7.84$; $p \leq .01$; $V = 0.15$). I have provided the correlations between maternal and paternal political affiliations and the political loyalties of the respondents in Tables 4.3 and 4.4

[Table 4.3 About Here]

[Table 4.4 About Here]

In order to examine any connection with past education and opinions regarding same-sex marriage, I also collected information on the respondents' academic pasts. Of the sample used in this research, 42% ($n = 158$) had taken advanced placement (A.P.) classes in high school. Of those students who had taken A.P. classes in high school, 60% ($n = 101$) had taken some form of college entrance exam before attending Auburn University. Of those students who had taken some form of college entrance exam, 87% ($n = 89$) reported having passed them. In addition, of the students who responded to the survey, 22% ($n = 81$) had taken at least one college-level Constitutional Law class before taking part in my research. The students' past formal education data can be seen in Table 4.5.

[Table 4.5 About Here]

I also identified a great deal of experience, among the respondents, with mixed marriages in the past. Sixty-nine percent of the respondents (n = 262) personally knew interracial couples; 73% of the respondents (n = 267) knew interfaith couples; and 61% of the participants in this research (n = 225) knew at least one same-sex couple. The students who knew interracial, interfaith, and same-sex couples are listed in Table 4.6.

[Table 4.6 About Here]

Bivariate Statistics

One of the first bivariate analyses for this study involves a simple examination of the before and after feeling thermometer scores of the respondents in this research. Of the survey respondents in this research, 59% (n = 195) were in favor of same-sex marriage being legally recognized by the federal government on the pretest survey while 60% (n = 202) were in favor of federal recognition of same-sex marriages on the posttest survey. This represents a one percent overall increase in support for same-sex marriage recognition by the federal government. Support for same-sex marriage recognition by state governments increased from the pretest (54%; n = 171) to the posttest (56%; n = 184) as well. This represents a two percent overall increase in support for same-sex marriage recognition by state governments. Support for same-sex marriage recognition by popular vote did not experience any meaningful change between the pretest survey (60%; n = 201) and the posttest survey (60%; n = 203). The before and after opinions of the respondents favoring legal recognition of same-sex marriage by the federal or state governments and by popular vote can be seen in Table 4.7.

[Table 4.7 About Here]

The distribution of the respondents in the four experimental groups and control group are shown in Table 4.8. Twenty-three percent of the respondents were in experimental group one (n

= 88), eighteen percent of respondents were in experimental group two (n = 68), twenty percent of respondents were placed in experimental group three (n = 75), fifteen percent of respondents could be found in experimental group four (n = 59), while the remaining twenty-four percent of respondents were in the control group (n = 93). The respondents were placed in each of the five groups in a manner that would provide the most even distribution possible.

[Table 4.8 About Here]

The mean feeling thermometer scores for the four experimental groups show that the respondents' political tolerance toward same-sex marriage increased after the interventions for experimental groups one, three, and four. Experimental group one showed the largest feeling thermometer score increase ($\Delta = 1.93$), while experimental group three witnessed the smallest increase ($\Delta = 0.42$). Experimental group four increased in collective support for same-sex marriage by more than one point ($\Delta = 1.22$), while the control group experienced a half-point increase ($\Delta = 0.48$). One of the most unexpected developments can be found in the posttest feeling thermometer results for experimental group two, which witnessed the only decrease in feeling thermometer support for same-sex marriage ($\Delta = -0.27$). While lectures on U.S. constitutional law (experimental group one) and the equality (experimental group three) and golden rule (experimental group four) framing effect led to increases in support for same-sex marriage rights, the lecture on the U.S. Constitution (experimental group two) led to a decrease in support for marriage equality. One possible explanation for the lower posttest scores on the same-sex marriage feeling thermometer for experimental group two could be the individuals that were placed in that group. When looking at pretest feeling thermometer scores for all five groups, experimental group two reported the lowest level of support for same-sex marriage (55.54) than group one (59.80), group three (62.46), group four (57.10), or the control group (57.89). It is possible that the lack of a true random sampling procedure for this quasi-experiment led to a

chance gathering of respondents in the second experimental group who experienced unusually low levels of support for same-sex marriage rights. Experimental group two, as evidenced by their low pretest approval of same-sex marriage rights, may have had a larger number of volunteers who were simply not susceptible to changes in their opinions on marriage equality. The pretest and posttest feeling thermometer scores for all five groups, as well as the feeling thermometer Δ 's for each group are found in Table 4.9.

[Table 4.9 About Here]

Each of the individual variables involving education identified an association between education and pretest feeling thermometer scores toward same-sex marriage equality that are both positive and statistically significant. Respondents who had already earned a college diploma possessed a positive association with support for same-sex marriage ($\mu = 58.64$; $p \leq .01$; $t = 27.16$). Another positive association was found between supportive feeling thermometer scores and respondents who had taken AP courses prior to college ($\mu = 58.73$; $p \leq .01$; $t = 27.08$). Positive associations were also found between support for same-sex marriage and respondents who had taken college entrance exams ($\mu = 67.20$; $p \leq .01$; $t = 21.75$), passed college entrance exams ($\mu = 63.94$; $p \leq .01$; $t = 15.36$), and taken college constitutional law courses prior to the survey ($\mu = 59.23$; $p \leq .01$; $t = 26.89$).

In addition, the preexisting political knowledge of the respondents, measured by the five American government questions at the beginning of the pretest survey, was shown to have a positive association with political tolerance of same-sex marriage rights. Students answering the political knowledge questions correctly had a positive and statistically significant association with marriage equality support on their feeling thermometer scores. Correct answers on the five questions were quite similar in their association with support for same-sex marriage as seen in those respondents that correctly identified the American form of government ($\mu = 58.64$; $p \leq .01$;

t = 27.18), the source of electoral votes for individual states ($\mu = 58.64$; $p \leq .01$; $t = 27.19$), the current Secretary of State for the United States ($\mu = 58.59$; $p \leq .01$; $t = 27.06$), the number of U.S. federal Supreme Court justices ($\mu = 58.58$; $p \leq .01$; $t = 26.86$), and whether or not God is written in the U.S. Constitution ($\mu = 58.66$; $p \leq .01$; $t = 27.20$).

Finally, personal contact with mixed and/or minority couples was shown to have a positive and statistically significant association with pretest feeling thermometer scores involving same-sex marriage equality. Respondents who reported prior contact with interracial couples were positively associated with support for same-sex marriage rights ($\mu = 58.91$; $p \leq .01$; $t = 27.08$), in addition to respondents who knew interfaith couples ($\mu = 59.93$; $p \leq .01$; $t = 26.91$) and respondents who knew same-sex couples ($\mu = 59.08$; $p \leq .01$; $t = 26.84$). Associations between the respondent's education, political knowledge, and personal contact with mixed couples are displayed in Table 4.10.

[Table 4.10 About Here]

After examining the individual variables associated with the respondent's knowledge, I generated a knowledge index which combined all of the political knowledge questions from the pretest survey. This knowledge index was created by adding all five American government questions together, using a STATA program, to create a five-point knowledge index. Respondents were given one point for correctly answering each of the five questions. This created a knowledge index with a possible high score of five and a possible low score of zero. Respondents who had a knowledge index score of five correctly answered all five American government questions. Respondents who had a knowledge index score of zero had failed to answer any of the American government questions correctly. The knowledge index had a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation with the pretest feeling thermometer scores of the respondents ($r = 0.244$; $p \leq .01$). This suggests that higher levels of political knowledge have

a positive effect on whether an individual will support same-sex marriage rights. This correlation reveals the possibility of primary, secondary, and postsecondary curriculums to be used to increase national levels of political tolerance. If students at all three levels of education were encouraged to take additional courses on American government then it could be possible to artificially inflate American political tolerance for minority groups.

In addition, I generated a contact index from the three variables examining the respondents' personal contacts with mixed couples. This contact index was created by synthesizing the prior experience of the respondents with minority couples. The three pretest survey questions asking the respondents if they had prior contact with interracial, interfaith, or same-sex couples were combined to form a three-point scale. If respondents personally knew interracial couples, they were given one point. The same approach was followed for respondents who personally knew interfaith and same-sex couples. Respondents who knew at least one example of all three groups were scored three points. Respondents who did not know interracial, interfaith or same-sex couples were scored zero points. The contact index I created showed a positive and statistically significant correlation with pretest feeling thermometer scores ($r=0.298$; $p < .01$). This suggests, following the predictions of contact theory discussed in chapter two, that prior contact with minority couples has a positive effect on whether or not individuals will support same-sex marriage rights. This finding suggests the ability of past and future integration policies to increase political tolerance in America. If contact with alternative groups increases political tolerance for those groups, it could be beneficial to encourage higher levels of contact between students in primary, secondary, and postsecondary academic institutions. The correlations between the knowledge and contact indexes and pretest feeling thermometer scores can be found in Table 4.11.

[Table 4.11 About Here]

I also examined the relationship between education, political knowledge, and personal contact with mixed/minority couples and the respondents' pretest support for same-sex marriage equality. I have identified three possible avenues for the respondents to support/not support legal recognition of same-sex marriage rights. Respondents were asked if they supported same-sex marriage equality through an act of the federal government, by a popular vote of the people, and by an act of state governments. Some of the respondents supported all three options, some supported none, and some supported some but not others. The education variables were shown to have statistically significant relationships with support for same-sex marriage recognition through all three of the available methods given. Respondents who had taken AP courses prior to college showed positive relationships with support for same-sex marriage recognition by the federal government ($\chi^2 = 9.00$; $p \leq .01$; $V = 0.17$). Additionally, support for same-sex marriage recognition showed a positive relationship with those respondents who had taken AP courses ($\chi^2 = 5.30$; $p \leq .01$; $V = 0.13$), while having a negative relationship with those who had previously earned a college degree ($\chi^2 = 4.97$; $p \leq .05$; $V = -0.12$). Finally, support for same-sex marriage recognition was positively associated with attendance in AP courses prior to college ($\chi^2 = 8.69$; $p \leq .01$; $V = 0.17$) while again being negatively associated with those respondents who had already earned a college degree ($\chi^2 = 3.26$; $p \leq .010$; $V = -0.10$).

Several of the individual knowledge questions were shown to have associations with respondents' support for legally recognizing same-sex marriages that were both statistically significant and positive. Support of legal recognition of same-sex marriage by the federal government was positively associated with respondents correctly answering the question describing the form of American government ($\chi^2 = 11.47$; $p \leq .01$; $V = 0.19$), correctly

identifying the current U.S. Secretary of State ($\chi^2 = 6.06$; $p \leq .01$; $V = 0.14$), and correctly identifying that the word “God” is not in the U.S. Constitution ($\chi^2 = 3.69$; $p \leq .05$; $V = 0.11$). Support for legally recognizing same-sex marriages by statewide popular votes was positively associated with correctly answering America’s form of government question ($\chi^2 = 9.72$; $p \leq .05$; $V = 0.17$) and correctly identifying the current Secretary of State ($\chi^2 = 4.16$; $p \leq .05$; $V = 0.11$). Finally, Support for legalizing same-sex marriages through state governments was found to be positively associated with correctly identifying the form of U.S. government ($\chi^2 = 9.24$; $p \leq .01$; $V = 0.17$), the U.S. Secretary of State ($\chi^2 = 5.15$; $p \leq .05$; $V = 0.13$), and correctly recognizing the absence of the word “God” in the U.S. Constitution ($\chi^2 = 3.8$; $p \leq .10$; $V = 0.11$).

The individual contact questions showed a great deal of association between the prior contact of the respondents with minority couples and their support for the legal recognition for same-sex marriage. Support for the legal recognition of same-sex marriage by the federal government showed a positive association with respondents who knew interracial couples ($\chi^2 = 6.58$; $p \leq .01$; $V = 0.14$), interfaith couples ($\chi^2 = 7.67$; $p \leq .01$; $V = 0.16$), and same-sex couples ($\chi^2 = 31.33$; $p \geq .01$; $V = 0.31$). Support for the legal recognition of same-sex marriage through a statewide popular vote was only positively associated with respondents who knew same-sex couples ($\chi^2 = 24.27$; $p \geq .01$; $V = 0.27$). Finally, support for the legal recognition of same-sex marriage by state government institutions was positively associated with those respondents who knew interracial couples ($\chi^2 = 4.84$; $p \geq .05$; $V = 0.12$), interfaith couples ($\chi^2 = 3.26$; $p \geq .10$; $V = 0.10$), and same-sex couples ($\chi^2 = 17.33$; $p \geq .01$; $V = 0.24$).

Education, political knowledge, and contact with minority couples have all been shown to be positively associated with some degree of support for the legal recognition of same-sex marriage by federal or state governments and by a popular vote of the people. These statistically

significant associations serve to further support my first, third, and fourth hypotheses. The associations between education, political knowledge, and contact with mixed couples and support for the legal recognition of same-sex marriage by the federal or state governments or by a popular vote of the people are shown in Tables 4.12, 4.13, and 4.14.

[Table 4.12 About Here]

[Table 4.13 About Here]

[Table 4.14 About Here]

Multivariate Statistics

I began my multivariate analysis by looking at the effect of group membership on changes in respondents' feeling thermometer scores. Using bivariate regression analysis, I found that experimental group one (E.G. One) had a positive and statistically significant Δ in feeling thermometer scores (Δ fts) from the pretest survey to the posttest survey ($\beta = 1.89$; $p < .10$; one-tailed test).

$$\Delta \text{ fts} = \alpha + \beta(\text{E.G. One}) + e$$

In addition, experimental group two (E.G. Two) was found to produce a negative and statistically significant Δ in feeling thermometer scores between the pretest and posttest surveys ($\beta = -2.42$; $p < .05$; one-tailed test).

$$\Delta \text{ fts} = \alpha + \beta(\text{E.G. Two}) + e$$

As I have addressed earlier in this chapter, while the increased beta coefficient for the feeling thermometer scores for group one were expected, the negative beta coefficient for group two were quite surprising. As the pretest feeling thermometer scores for group two were lower than the other four groups, there is a possibility that group two was inadvertently populated with a

larger number of respondents who were less susceptible to changing their negative opinions toward same-sex marriage rights. These bivariate regressions are shown in Table 4.15.

[Table 4.15 About Here]

The most appropriate next step in my multivariate analysis would be to use an OLS regression model to determine the effect of experimental group membership on the Δ in feeling thermometer scores, with the control group serving as the constant. However, I have experienced several issues related to multicollinearity with my data analysis when using all four experimental groups in the same regression model. This multicollinearity has been severe enough to change the significance levels of my independent variables, specifically the significance of experimental group two's effect on Δ in feeling thermometer scores. Table 4.17 shows multiple regression models using all four experimental groups, the knowledge and contact indexes, AP class membership, political party membership, race, and religious affiliation as independent variables affecting the Δ in the respondents' feeling thermometer scores.

[Table 4.17 About Here]

I have performed several other OLS regression models examining the effect of membership in experimental group one or experimental group two on changes in feeling thermometer scores from the pretest to the posttest survey. I included my knowledge and contact indexes as well as whether or not the respondents had taken AP courses prior to college. Membership in experimental group one, which received a lecture on U.S. constitutional law, had a positive and statistically significant effect on Δ feeling thermometer scores ($\beta = 2.29$; $p \leq .05$; one-tailed test) when controlling for the knowledge index ($\beta = -0.57$; $p \leq .10$; one-tailed test), taking AP classes prior to college ($\beta = -0.42$; $p \geq .10$; one-tailed test), and the contact index ($\beta = 0.46$; $p \geq .10$; one-tailed test)

$$\Delta \text{ fts} = \alpha + \beta(\text{E.G. One}) + \beta(\text{knowledge}) + \beta(\text{AP}) + \beta(\text{contact}) + e$$

Holding knowledge, contact, and AP class attendance at zero, hearing the ten-minute lecture on U.S. constitutional law had a positive effect on Δ feeling thermometer scores, which provides additional support for my first hypothesis. However, membership in experimental group two had a negative effect on Δ feeling thermometer scores ($\beta = -2.36$; $p \leq .05$; one-tailed test) when controlling for the knowledge index ($\beta = -0.42$; $p \geq .10$; one-tailed test), AP class attendance ($\beta = -0.53$; $p \geq .10$; one-tailed test), and the contact index ($\beta = 0.43$; $p \geq .10$; one-tailed test).

$$\Delta \text{ fts} = \alpha + \beta(\text{E.G. Two}) + \beta(\text{knowledge index}) + \beta(\text{AP classes}) + \beta(\text{contact index}) + e$$

Holding knowledge, contact, and AP class attendance at zero, hearing the ten-minute lecture on the U.S. Constitution actually had a negative effect on the Δ in feeling thermometer scores, which does not support my first hypothesis.

I also included several demographic variables to my regression model to control for race, religion, and political affiliation. Membership in experimental group one had a positive and statistically significant effect on Δ feeling thermometer scores ($\beta = 2.01$; $p \leq .05$; one-tailed test) when controlling for knowledge ($\beta = -0.44$; $p \geq .10$; one-tailed test), AP classes ($\beta = -0.43$; $p \geq .10$; one-tailed test), contact ($\beta = 0.56$; $p \geq .10$; one-tailed test), Catholicism ($\beta = -0.43$; $p \geq .10$; one-tailed test), and Republican party affiliation ($\beta = 1.92$; $p \leq .05$; one-tailed test).

$$\Delta \text{ fts} = \alpha + \beta(\text{E.G. One}) + \beta(\text{knowledge}) + \beta(\text{AP}) + \beta(\text{contact}) + \beta(\text{Catholic}) + \beta(\text{Republican}) + e$$

In this model, both membership in experimental group one and affiliation with the Republican Party positively affected Δ feeling thermometer scores. While the positive effect of membership in experimental group one was expected, the positive effect of membership in the Republican Party was not. This could possibly be due to the lower levels of support for same-sex marriage

by Republicans on the pretest survey giving these respondents more room to increase their feeling thermometer scores than other volunteers in the survey.

I also created a regression model that replaced the Republican variable with an African-American variable. Membership in experimental group one had a positive and statistically significant effect on Δ feeling thermometer scores ($\beta = 2.40$; $p \leq .05$; one-tailed test) when controlling for knowledge ($\beta = -0.59$; $p \leq .10$; one-tailed test), AP classes ($\beta = -0.42$; $p \geq .10$; one-tailed test), contact ($\beta = 0.38$; $p \geq .10$; one-tailed test), African-American ($\beta = -3.57$; $p \leq .05$; one-tailed test), and Catholicism ($\beta = -0.40$; $p \geq .10$; one-tailed test).

$$\Delta \text{ fts} = \alpha + \beta(\text{E.G. One}) + \beta(\text{knowledge}) + \beta(\text{AP}) + \beta(\text{contact}) + \beta(\text{A.A.}) + \beta(\text{Catholic}) + e$$

When replacing the Republican variable with the African-American variable, membership in experimental group one had an even greater positive effect on Δ feeling thermometer scores. This shows support for the possibility that African-Americans have an even greater lack of support for same-sex marriage rights than Republicans.

When examining the effect of these demographic variables on the membership in experimental group two, the results show a continued negative Δ feeling thermometer scores for those respondents who experienced a ten-minute lecture on the U.S. Constitution. Membership in experimental group two had a negative effect on Δ feeling thermometer scores ($\beta = -2.26$; $p \leq .05$; one-tailed test) when controlling for knowledge ($\beta = -0.29$; $p \geq .10$; one-tailed test), AP classes ($\beta = -0.52$; $p \geq .10$; one-tailed test), contact ($\beta = 0.55$; $p \geq .10$; one-tailed test), Catholicism ($\beta = -0.69$; $p \geq .10$; one-tailed test), and affiliation with the Republican party ($\beta = 2.06$; $p \leq .05$; one-tailed test).

$$\Delta \text{ fts} = \alpha + \beta(\text{E.G. Two}) + \beta(\text{knowledge}) + \beta(\text{AP}) + \beta(\text{contact}) + \beta(\text{Catholic}) + \beta(\text{Republican}) + e$$

Again, the negative Δ feeling thermometer scores for those members of experimental group two could be reflected in the fact that experimental group two showed the lowest levels of pretest support for same-sex marriage as a possible result of having more respondents who were against marriage equality.

When controlling for the African-American variable instead of the Republican variable, the experimental group two variable retains its negative effect on Δ feeling thermometer scores. Membership in experimental group two had a negative and statistically significant effect on Δ feeling thermometer scores ($\beta = -2.26$; $p \leq .05$; one-tailed test) when controlling for knowledge ($\beta = -0.43$; $p \geq .10$; one-tailed test), AP classes ($\beta = -0.54$; $p \geq .10$; one-tailed test), contact ($\beta = 0.37$; $p \geq .10$; one-tailed test), African-American ($\beta = 3.22$; $p \leq .05$; one-tailed test), and Catholicism ($\beta = -0.63$; $p \geq .10$; one-tailed test).

$\Delta \text{ fits} = \alpha + \beta(\text{E.G. Two}) + \beta(\text{knowledge}) + \beta(\text{AP}) + \beta(\text{contact}) + \beta(\text{A.A.}) + \beta(\text{Catholicism}) + e$

As in the previous model, African American respondents were shown to have significantly less support for same-sex marriage rights than republicans or Catholics. In fact, Republicans and Catholics showed positive Δ feeling thermometer scores, though the Catholic variable was not statistically significant.

The previous regression models show that experiencing the ten-minute lecture on U.S. constitutional law had a positive effect on Δ feeling thermometer scores when controlling for knowledge, AP class attendance, contact, race, political affiliation, and religion. In addition, the regression models have shown that hearing a ten-minute lecture on the U.S. Constitution had a negative effect on Δ feeling thermometer scores when controlling for the same independent variables. The regression models examining feeling thermometer Δ scores can be found in Table 4.18.

[Table 4.18 About Here]

I have also examined the effect of knowledge, contact, and having taken an AP class in high school on pretest feeling thermometer scores (pfts). As these variables would have been determined before taking part in this survey, their impact on pretest scores were examined for their effect on feeling thermometer scores supporting same-sex marriage rights. My first regression model examines the effect of my knowledge index, AP class attendance, and my contact index on pretest feeling thermometer scores for all respondents on the pretest survey.

$$pfts = \alpha + \beta(\text{knowledge}) + \beta(\text{AP}) + \beta(\text{contact}) + e$$

The knowledge index ($\beta = 6.41$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test), AP class attendance ($\beta = 10.87$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test), and the contact index ($\beta = 10.80$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test) all showed a positive and statistically significant effect on pretest feeling thermometer scores. The strong effect of the knowledge and AP class variables on pretest feeling thermometer scores supporting same-sex marriage rights provides additional support for my third hypothesis. Those students who had a strong understanding of basic concepts related to American government and those students who had advanced academic training prior to college were more likely to support same-sex marriage rights. The strong effect of the contact variable on feeling thermometer support for same-sex marriage offers additional support for my fourth hypothesis. Those respondents who had prior contact with minority couples were also significantly more likely to support marriage equality.

The knowledge index, AP class attendance, and the contact index were still positive and statistically significant indicators of support for same-sex marriage rights when controlling for race, religion, and political affiliation. The knowledge index ($\beta = 4.6$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test), AP class attendance ($\beta = 8.4$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test), and the contact index ($\beta = 9.35$; $p \leq .01$;

two-tailed test) were still shown to have positive effects on pretest feeling thermometer scores supporting same-sex marriage rights when controlling for Catholicism ($\beta = 6.93$; $p \geq .10$; two-tailed test) and Republican party membership ($\beta = -30.63$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test).

$$pfts = \alpha + \beta(\text{knowledge}) + \beta(\text{AP}) + \beta(\text{contact}) + \beta(\text{Catholicism}) + \beta(\text{Republican}) + e$$

In addition, the knowledge index ($\beta = 6.64$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test), AP class attendance ($\beta = 8.64$; $p \leq .05$; two-tailed test), and the contact index ($\beta = 10.64$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test) were shown to have strong, positive effects on pretest feeling thermometer scores when controlling for African-American racial membership ($\beta = -10.54$; $p \geq .10$; two-tailed test) and Catholicism ($\beta = 1.69$; $p \geq .10$; two-tailed test).

$$pfts = \alpha + \beta(\text{knowledge}) + \beta(\text{AP}) + \beta(\text{contact}) + \beta(\text{A.A.}) + \beta(\text{Catholicism}) + e$$

Table 4.20 shows that knowledge, contact, and having taken an AP class prior to college have a positive and statistically significant effect on pretest feeling thermometer scores. The bivariate regressions for each of these independent variables are shown in Table 4.21.

[Table 4.20 About Here]

[Table 4.21 About Here]

A final examination of the respondents' opinions toward same-sex marriage involves the variables involving the legal recognition of same-sex marriage by the federal government, state-wide popular vote, or state governments. Applying the same independent variables from the previous regression model (knowledge/contact indexes, AP class attendance, race, religion, and political affiliation), I have shown the effect these variables have on the respondents' opinions toward legalizing same-sex marriage using one of the three different methods listed above. The results for these regression models can be found in Tables 4.22, 4.23, and 4.24.

[Table 4.22 About Here]

[Table 4.23 About Here]

[Table 4.24 About Here]

As Table 4.22 indicates, support for same-sex marriage recognition by the federal government (ssm fed) is positively affected by knowledge ($\beta = 0.23$; $p \leq .05$; two-tailed test), AP class attendance ($\beta = 0.56$; $p \leq .05$; two-tailed test), and contact ($\beta = 0.58$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test). Each of these three variables had a positive and statistically significant effect on the support for legally recognizing same-sex marriage rights by federal and state governments in addition to statewide popular votes, according to the LOGIT regression model.

$$\text{same-sex marriage recognition} = \alpha + \beta(\text{knowledge}) + \beta(\text{AP}) + \beta(\text{contact}) + e$$

Knowledge ($\beta = 0.17$; $p \leq .10$; two-tailed test), AP class attendance ($\beta = 0.60$; $p \leq .05$; two-tailed test), and contact ($\beta = 0.53$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test) retained their positive effect on support for same-sex marriage recognition by the federal government when controlling for Catholicism ($\beta = 0.52$; $p \geq .10$; two-tailed test) and Republican party affiliation ($\beta = -1.96$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test).

$$\text{ssm fed} = \alpha + \beta(\text{knowledge}) + \beta(\text{AP}) + \beta(\text{contact}) + \beta(\text{Catholicism}) + \beta(\text{Republican}) + e$$

In addition, knowledge ($\beta = 0.23$; $p \leq .05$; two-tailed test), AP class attendance ($\beta = 0.53$; $p \leq .05$; two-tailed test), and contact ($\beta = 0.57$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test) had positive, statistically significant effects on support for same-sex marriage recognition by the federal government when controlling for the African-American race ($\beta = -0.26$; $p \geq .10$; two-tailed test) and Catholicism ($\beta = 0.12$; $p \geq .10$; two-tailed test).

$$\text{ssm fed} = \alpha + \beta(\text{knowledge}) + \beta(\text{AP}) + \beta(\text{contact}) + \beta(\text{A.A.}) + \beta(\text{Catholicism}) + e$$

As Table 4.23 indicates, AP class attendance ($\beta = 0.42$; $p \leq .10$; two-tailed test) and the contact index ($\beta = 0.32$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test) have positive, statistically significant effects on

support for same-sex marriage recognition by a statewide popular vote (ssm pv), although the knowledge index ($\beta = 0.14$; $p \geq .10$; two-tailed test) is no longer statistically significant.

$$\text{ssm pv} = \alpha + \beta(\text{knowledge}) + \beta(\text{AP}) + \beta(\text{contact}) + e$$

When controlling for Catholicism ($\beta = 0.46$; $p \geq .10$; two-tailed test) and Republican affiliation ($\beta = -0.81$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test), AP class attendance ($\beta = 0.40$; $p \leq .10$; two-tailed test) and contact ($\beta = 0.26$; $p \leq .05$; two-tailed test) are still statistically significant indicators of support for same-sex marriage recognition by statewide popular votes while the knowledge index ($\beta = 0.10$; $p \geq .10$; two-tailed test) remains positive but not statistically significant.

$$\text{ssm pv} = \alpha + \beta(\text{knowledge}) + \beta(\text{AP}) + \beta(\text{contact}) + \beta(\text{Catholicism}) + \beta(\text{Republican}) + e$$

AP class attendance ($\beta = 1.48$; $p \leq .10$; two-tailed test) and contact ($\beta = 1.35$; $p \leq .05$; two-tailed test) remain positive, statistically significant indicators of same-sex marriage recognition by statewide popular votes when controlled for African-American racial variable ($\beta = 0.50$; $p \geq .10$; two-tailed test) and Catholicism ($\beta = 1.30$; $p \geq .10$; two-tailed test) while the knowledge index remains positive but not statistically significant.

$$\text{ssm pv} = \alpha + \beta(\text{knowledge}) + \beta(\text{AP}) + \beta(\text{contact}) + \beta(\text{A.A.}) + \beta(\text{Catholicism}) + e$$

As Table 4.24 indicates, knowledge ($\beta = 0.21$; $p \leq .05$; two-tailed test), AP class attendance ($\beta = 0.53$; $p \leq .05$; two-tailed test), and contact ($\beta = 0.45$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test) have positive, statistically significant effects on the respondents' pretest survey support for legal recognition of same-sex marriage by state governments (ssm state gov).

$$\text{ssm state gov} = \alpha + \beta(\text{knowledge}) + \beta(\text{AP}) + \beta(\text{contact}) + e$$

The knowledge variable ($\beta = 0.17$; $p \leq .10$; two-tailed test), AP class variable ($\beta = 0.50$; $p \leq .05$; two-tailed test), and contact variable ($\beta = 0.37$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test) retain their positive, statistically significant effects on support for same-sex marriage recognition by state

governments when controlling for Catholicism ($\beta = 0.30$; $p \geq .10$; two-tailed test) and Republican party affiliation ($\beta = -1.12$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test).

$$\text{ssm state gov} = \alpha + \beta(\text{knowledge}) + \beta(\text{AP}) + \beta(\text{contact}) + \beta(\text{Catholicism}) + \beta(\text{Republican}) + e$$
Knowledge ($\beta = 0.22$; $p \leq .05$; two-tailed test), AP class attendance ($\beta = 0.50$; $p \leq .05$; two-tailed test), and contact ($\beta = 0.42$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test) are also positive, statistically significant indicators of support for recognition of same-sex marriage rights by state governments when controlling for African-American race ($\beta = -0.75$; $p \geq .10$; two-tailed test) and Catholicism ($\beta = 0.12$; $p \geq .10$; two-tailed test).

$$\text{ssm state gov} = \alpha + \beta(\text{knowledge}) + \beta(\text{AP}) + \beta(\text{contact}) + \beta(\text{A.A.}) + \beta(\text{Catholicism}) + e$$

Summary of Results

This study has identified several variables that can have an effect on political tolerance. This research has examined the relationship between political tolerance and several specific independent variables that can affect it: political knowledge, issue framing, and contact with minority couples. The manipulation of each of these variables was shown to have an effect on the political tolerance of my respondents toward same-sex marriage rights.

Political knowledge was shown to have a positive effect on political tolerance toward marriage equality when the respondents were lectured on U.S. constitutional law. This was not, however, the case when the respondents were lecture on the U.S. Constitution itself. In fact, those volunteers who heard the U.S. Constitution lecture were shown to have less support for same-sex marriage than before their constitutional lectures. The focus of the constitutional law lecture on individual Supreme Court cases may have allowed the respondents to experience the discrimination of the past and change their opinions on contemporary inequality. The constitutional law lecture may have helped the respondents to think about marriage equality in a

different way than they had prior to their participation in the survey. This research has reinforced the possibility that exposure to new information can be responsible for altering the perceptions of those who have gained the new information.

The political knowledge of the individual respondents was also shown to have a positive relationship with political tolerance toward same-sex marriage rights. The respondents who scored highest on the basic American government questions, at the beginning of the pretest survey, had higher levels of pretest support for same-sex marriage rights than their fellow respondents who scored lower. This research has offered further support for increased attention to public education programs that endeavor to increase the general knowledge of the population.

The framing effect was shown to have an effect on the political tolerance of respondents, depending on the particular frame used for each group. However, after using multivariate analysis to determine some level of causality, the framing effect lectures failed to effect political tolerance in a manner that was statistically significant. This research's attempt to change opinions toward same-sex marriage through specifically framed lectures may have been limited by the amount of time available. While this research has shown mean feeling scores toward same-sex marriage increasing from the pretests to the posttests, prolonged exposure to similar framed messages may have had more of an identifiable change in the tolerance levels of the respondents.

Personal contact with minority couples was shown to be influential in the political tolerance of the respondents. Those volunteers in this research who had contact with interracial, interfaith, and same-sex couples were far more likely to support same-sex marriage rights than those who had not. Personal contact with minority groups was one of the strongest indicators in

this research for support of same-sex marriage rights. This helps to identify the importance of interaction between diverse groups within any nation not possessing a homogenous population.

Chapter Five

Conclusions

Research Purpose and Summary of Findings

This research has attempted to identify several different variables that can have an effect on political tolerance toward same-sex marriage rights. I have examined the ability of political knowledge to effect political tolerance, specifically, increases in individual's knowledge of U.S. constitutional law and the U.S. Constitution. I have also examined the ability of the framing effect to change political tolerance, specifically, the ability of the equality frame and the golden rule frame to increase political tolerance. Finally, I have examined the tendency of political tolerance to be effected by contact with minority couples. I will now briefly describe a summary of my data analysis results followed by a discussion of the importance of my findings and recommendations for possible future research in related fields.

My research has identified several examples of political tolerance increasing due to an increase in political knowledge. With regard to my first experimental group, which received a ten-minute lecture on U.S. constitutional law, there are a number of instances where the respondents presented a higher level of political tolerance toward same-sex marriage rights. When examining the aggregate political tolerance scores (based on the one-hundred-point feeling thermometer) of experimental group one, the group's posttest mean political tolerance of same-sex marriage was higher than the group's pretest mean political tolerance scores (pretest mean feeling thermometer score = 59.80; posttest mean feeling thermometer score = 61.73). In addition, bivariate ($\beta = 1.89$; $p \leq .10$; one-tailed test) and multivariate regression models, controlling for knowledge, AP class attendance, and contact with minority couples ($\beta = 2.29$; $p \leq .05$; one-tailed test), identified political knowledge as having a positive effect on political tolerance.

Political knowledge that respondents possessed before the experiment was also shown to have a statistically significant, positive effect on political knowledge. Using an index I created from five general political knowledge questions on the pretest survey, I created a five-point preexisting political knowledge index for the respondents. My data analysis has shown that those respondents who scored higher on the knowledge index were positively correlated with higher levels of political tolerance toward same-sex marriage on the pretest survey ($r = 0.244$; $p \leq .01$). In addition, higher scores on the political knowledge index ($\beta = 7.79$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test) and attendance in AP classes prior to college ($\beta = 13.08$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test) had positive effects on political tolerance when measuring pretest feeling thermometer scores through bivariate regressions. Finally, higher scores on the knowledge index had a positive effect on support for legal recognition of same-sex marriage by the federal government ($\beta = 0.23$; $p \leq .05$; two-tailed test) and by the state governments ($\beta = 0.21$; $p \leq .05$; two-tailed test) when controlling for AP class attendance and contact with minority couples.

My results for the framing effect's ability to alter political tolerance were both encouraging and discouraging. When looking at the aggregate pretest feeling thermometer scores for experimental group three (equality frame lecture) and experimental group four (golden rule frame lecture) I found both groups to have higher feeling thermometer scores on their posttest surveys. The equality frame group's mean feeling thermometer scores increased (pretest mean feeling thermometer score = 62.46; posttest mean feeling thermometer score = 62.88) less than the golden rule frame group's mean feeling thermometer scores (pretest mean feeling thermometer score = 57.10; posttest mean feeling thermometer score = 58.32). However, I was unable to find any statistically significant effect of either framing effect group when examining feeling thermometer score differences in multivariate OLS regression models.

My data analysis results were highly supportive of the possible effect of prior contact with minority couples on political tolerance. Using a three-point contact index, created by combining the respondent's prior contact with interracial, interfaith, or same-sex couples, I found a positive, statistically significant correlation with contact and pretest feeling thermometer scores ($r = 0.298$; $p \leq .01$). In addition, contact with minority couples was found to have a statistically significant, positive effect on pretest feeling thermometer scores ($\beta = 10.80$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test) when controlling for knowledge and AP class attendance. Bivariate regression analysis showed contact with minority couples to have had an even stronger effect on pretest political tolerance of same-sex marriage rights ($\beta = 12.35$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test). Finally, prior contact with minority couples was found to have a positive, statistically significant effect on respondents' support for same-sex marriage recognition by the federal government ($\beta = 0.58$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test), popular vote ($\beta = 0.32$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test), and state governments ($\beta = 0.45$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test) when controlling for knowledge and AP class attendance.

Summary of Hypotheses

This research has examined the ability of several different independent variables to alter the political tolerance of college students at Auburn University. I reiterate these independent variables by providing my individual hypotheses once more. Following this, I briefly summarize the significant results of my data analysis and discuss the possible implications of these results for other fields of study.

My first hypothesis involved the possibility of individuals' knowledge of the U.S. Constitution to increase their political tolerance toward minority groups; specifically, same-sex couples.

H_1 = Increasing knowledge of the U.S. Constitution will Δ political tolerance.

H_0 = Increasing knowledge of the U.S. Constitution will not Δ political tolerance.

This research tested whether or not an increase in knowledge of the U.S. Constitution could increase political tolerance of same-sex marriage rights. Knowledge of the Constitution was bifurcated into knowledge of U.S. constitutional law and knowledge of the U.S. Constitution. Experimental group respondents were given pretests and posttests to measure any change in their political tolerance of same-sex marriage. This tolerance was operationalized by giving respondents a one-hundred-point feeling thermometer to identify their support for same-sex marriage rights, with higher scores indicating higher levels of support. The possible increase in political tolerance was expected to be a direct result of a ten-minute lecture intervention given to each group between their pretests and posttests. Experimental group one received an intervention lecture discussing American constitutional law, specifically stressing Court decisions involving minority rights and marriage equality. The second experimental group received a lecture intervention discussing the U.S. Constitution, specifically detailing the elements of the document dealing with civil liberties.

The data analysis from this research has identified statistically significant support for my first hypotheses. Interestingly, the data I collected simultaneously supported my first hypothesis while offering evidence that it may also be incorrect.. With regard to experimental group one, the aggregate mean feeling thermometer scores increased from the pretest surveys to the posttest surveys (pretest feeling thermometer scores – 59.80; posttest feeling thermometer scores – 61.73). In addition, OLS bivariate regression analysis identified a statistically significant, positive increase in experimental group one's Δ feeling thermometer scores from the pretests to

the posttests ($\beta=1.89$; $p \leq .10$; one-tailed test). Finally, after performing OLS multivariate regression experimental group one experienced a positive and statistically significant change in feeling thermometer scores when controlling for knowledge/education/and contact with minority couples ($\beta=2.29$; $p \leq .05$; one-tailed test), race and religion ($\beta=2.40$; $p \leq .05$; one-tailed test), and political affiliation and religion ($\beta=2.01$ $p \leq .05$; one-tailed test).

These results support my first hypothesis which predicted a positive relationship between increases in political knowledge of the American Constitution (specifically constitutional law) and political tolerance of same-sex couples. The increased political tolerance scores of those respondents who were lectured on American constitutional law suggests an ability of past civil liberties arguments to increase contemporary audiences' tolerance of groups that are currently experiencing discriminatory government policies. The implications of this relationship are profound and will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

While experimental group one's experience supported my first hypothesis, experimental group two provided the exact opposite results. After hearing a ten-minute lecture on the U.S. Constitution, the aggregate feeling thermometer scores for experimental group two actually went down (pretest feeling thermometer scores – 55.54; posttest feeling thermometer scores – 55.27). Also, I discovered, using OLS bivariate regression analysis, that experimental group two experienced a statistically significant, negative change in feeling thermometer scores between the pretests and the posttests ($\beta=-2.42$; $p \leq .05$; one-tailed test). Finally, after performing OLS multivariate regression on the feeling thermometer score changes for experimental group one, I found a statistically significant and negative relationship after controlling for knowledge/education/and contact with minority couples ($\beta=-2.36$; $p \leq .05$; one-tailed test), race

and religion ($\beta=-2.26$; $p \leq .05$; one-tailed test), and political affiliation and religion ($\beta=-2.26$; $p \leq .05$; one-tailed test).

The results from experimental group two's feeling thermometer Δ scores indicated an interesting discovery in my data analysis. Having been exposed to ten-minute lectures discussing the U.S. Constitution, the respondents exhibited a decrease in their political tolerance of same-sex marriage rights. In direct contradiction to my first hypothesis, increasing the group's political knowledge of the U.S. Constitution led to a decrease in their political tolerance of same-sex marriage couples having access to legal marital unions.

The data analysis proved to offer mixed results regarding my second hypothesis. My second hypothesis predicts a positive relationship between political tolerance and the framing effect, specifically the use of the framing effect to encourage support for same-sex marriage rights through an equality-framed lecture and a golden rule framed lecture.

H_2 = Exposure to the equality/golden rule framing effect will Δ political tolerance.

H_0 = Exposure to the equality/golden rule framing effect will not Δ political tolerance.

This hypothesis involves the ability of public opinion to increase or decrease depending on the manner in which an issue is framed to the audience. The equality frame stresses the importance of equal treatment for all groups and provides a reminder of America's constitutional guarantee of equal protection of the law for all persons, especially those in the minority. The golden rule frame offers the audience a summary of a foundational doctrine found in the majority of religious teachings throughout history, namely the requirement of all religious followers to treat those around them in the same way they themselves would like to be treated. Experimental

group three received a ten-minute lecture intervention framing the issue of same-sex marriage rights from the perspective of the core value of equality. This lecture emphasized the reality that homosexuals in America are not provided universal, legal equality with regard to marriage rights. Experimental group four received a ten-minute lecture emphasizing their religious duty to treat all people with the same respect they themselves would expect. The significance of this lecture was expected to be found in an increased level of religious dissonance in those respondents who had previously supported policies that treated homosexuals differently from heterosexuals.

The aggregate mean feeling thermometer scores, for experimental group three, did indicate an increase in political tolerance of same-sex marriage rights from the pretests to the posttests (pretest feeling thermometer scores – 62.46; posttest feeling thermometer scores – 62.88). However, the results of OLS bivariate regression analysis show a negative feeling thermometer score Δ for experimental group three, although this relationship was not statistically significant.

Similar to experimental group three's results, experimental group four experienced a positive change in its aggregate mean feeling thermometer scores from the pretests to the posttests (pretest feeling thermometer scores – 57.10; posttest feeling thermometer scores – 58.32). Also, like experimental group three, experimental group four did not have a statistically significant feeling thermometer score Δ after performing bivariate OLS regression analysis.

The data analysis has presented disappointing results for my second hypothesis. The respondents that experienced the equality frame lecture presented a surprisingly negative relationship between the equality frame and political tolerance, but these results were lacking statistical significance. The respondents who received the golden rule frame lecture displayed a

positive feeling thermometer score Δ but, like experimental group two, also lacked statistical significance.

My third hypothesis has received strong support from the data analysis results. My third hypothesis involves the expectation that formal education will have a positive and statistically significant effect on political tolerance.

H_3 = Higher levels of formal education will Δ political tolerance.

H_0 = Higher levels of formal education will not Δ political tolerance.

I expected respondents who displayed higher levels of formal education to have higher levels of basic knowledge of American political institutions. Increased political knowledge in this case was expected to lead to increased support for same-sex marriage, identifiable in the political tolerance scores on the pretest surveys. I operationalized formal education by asking respondents to indicate whether they had taken AP courses prior to attending college. Students who had taken AP classes prior to college displayed a statistically significant, positive opinion of same-sex marriage in their pretest feeling thermometer scores ($\pi=58.73$; $t=27.08$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test). Respondents who had taken AP classes also displayed a positive, statistically significant level of support for same-sex marriage legalization by the federal government ($\chi^2=9.00$; $V=0.17$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test), legalization by statewide popular vote ($\chi^2=5.30$; $V=0.13$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test), and legalization by state governments ($\chi^2=8.69$; $V=0.17$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test).

In addition to the AP class variable, I constructed a general knowledge index, based on the respondents' correct answers to five multiple-choice questions involving issues related to basic American government. The five-point scale I created indicated a positive and statistically significant correlation between general political knowledge and pretest feeling thermometer

scores ($r=0.244$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test). After performing OLS multivariate regression, this general knowledge index proved to be both statistically significant and positive in its relationship to pretest feeling thermometer scores after controlling for AP class attendance and contact with minority couples ($\beta=6.41$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test), race and religion ($\beta=6.64$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test), and political affiliation and religion ($\beta=4.60$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test).

My fourth and final hypothesis was also supported by the results of the data analysis. My fourth hypothesis involved the expectation that individual tolerance of specific groups increases as contact with those groups increases.

H_4 = Contact with nontraditional couples will Δ political tolerance.

H_0 = Contact with nontraditional couples will not Δ political tolerance.

I operationalized contact with minority/nontraditional couples by asking respondents to indicate whether they personally knew interracial, interfaith, or same-sex couples. After obtaining the contact data of the respondents, I created a three-point scale for my contact variable to represent the amount of prior contact the individual respondents had with nontraditional couples.

The results of my data analysis identified a positive and statistically significant correlation between increased contact with minority couples and increased political tolerance for same-sex marriage rights ($r=0.298$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test). In addition, OLS multivariate regression analysis identified a positive and statistically significant relationship between higher levels of contact with nontraditional couples and support for same-sex marriage rights when controlling for AP class attendance and general political knowledge ($\beta=10.80$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test), race and religion ($\beta=10.64$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test), and political affiliation and religion ($\beta= 9.35$; $p \leq .01$; two-tailed test). Finally, after using LOGIT regression analysis, contact with minority couples had a positive and statistically significant effect on support for

legalization of same-sex marriage by the federal government, state governments, and popular vote of the people.

Limitations

Although true experimental and control groups derived from random sampling are seen to provide higher levels of internal validity, this study used quasi-experimental research techniques to accommodate limited resources (Adler and Clark 2003). All of the participants in the experimental and control groups were taken from college classes in South Central Alabama. The sampling used in this research design enabled the highest possible number of participants in the sample population. The results of the data analysis may be limited to the population of college students in the American South as opposed to the population of the U.S. As all Americans do not attend, or never did, college, the results of this research would only be able to be inferred to other college students. In addition, as the American South is not identical to other regions of the country, college students outside the southern U.S. states may have different opinions toward same-sex marriage and would, thus, be affected by this research's independent variables differently.

I recommend future research that tests similar variables while using a truly random sample. It would be beneficial to identify variables that can positively affect political tolerance in an experiment that could infer findings to the entire American population. Similar research with access to higher levels of funding could repeat my current research on a national level with a random sample representative of the national population.

The nature of the survey questions and the sample population could have resulted in nonresponse bias, due to the students that chose to take part in the study. Given that the survey questions were given during the last 15 minutes of several college classes, many students

recognizing their ability to leave chose to do so, limiting the internal validity of the results. As this research only presented the data of college students who agreed to voluntarily stay in class to take the survey, the results do not reflect those students who were not open to participation in volunteer projects. It was important to encourage the students to take part in the survey even though it was made clear that they did not have to. I stressed the simplicity of the survey questionnaire and the minor amount of time needed to take it in order to maintain high levels of participation.

To alleviate the problems associated with nonresponse bias, a researcher with access to greater resources could repeat my current research with respondents who could be financially compensated for their time. Some form of compensation could lead to a higher level of respondents responding to the pretest and posttest surveys. In addition, better incentives for participation could prevent the number of volunteers this research experienced who participated in the pretest survey but not the posttest survey.

One ethical concern that could represent a design limitation could be the use of group questionnaires. In many public settings, individuals may feel unusually high levels of pressure to take part in a survey that they do not actually want to take (Adler and Clark 2003). I attempted to alleviate this pressure by stressing the ability of the students to leave the classroom without participating in the survey. The lack of punitive action for students choosing not to participate was mentioned on several occasions during the introduction. Given the nature of my research questions, which involved political tolerance of same-sex marriage rights, it may be difficult to remove this limitation in future research projects.

Another potential limitation of the survey could be seen in the interviewer effect. It was important to maintain an atmosphere of neutrality so students did not feel pressured to answer

questions in a manner they believed would please the interviewer. Students who felt the need to answer questions in a socially-acceptable manner could have experienced greater pressure in a college environment that is generally more liberal than the greater civilian population. This is an especially important concern for this research design because students have been found to respond differently when given surveys at home or at school (Neuman 2003). I tried to limit the interviewer effect by stressing on several occasions the complete anonymity of the students' responses to the survey. This could be reduced by future research that administered the pretest and posttest surveys to respondents in an online format. This could allow respondents to take part in future survey research without feeling any pressure to conform to socially-acceptable answers to questions involving political tolerance.

Another possible concern could be the nature of the questions on the pretest and the posttest. Having given the respondents the pretest followed by a brief lecture covering several elements of the U.S. Constitution, many of the students may have believed they were expected to change their opinions on same-sex marriage rights. It is possible that students in the experimental groups became compelled to change their minds on this controversial social issue because they believed the researcher expected them to do so. I have tried to limit this possible problem by administering the questionnaire to students in a pilot survey to help determine if the series of questions and lectures are in any way noticeably leading. I have conducted interviews with participants of the pilot test and have found that they thought the survey questions were content neutral. Given the nature of the variables involved in this research, it may be difficult to completely eliminate this limitation in future research.

Again, the limitations associated with quasi-experimental designs, that lack a true random sample for the experimental and control groups, could not be entirely avoided in this research

due to several resource limitations. However, the previous actions were taken to reduce the limitations of the design. The most important possible limitation to the external validity of the data analysis is that it will only be applicable to college students in the American South. Further research using a random sample that is more representative of the population of the American Republic will be explored later when more resources are available.

Significance of Findings

Unlike previous work that has examined the general characteristics of political knowledge (Carpini and Keeter 1996) and formal education (Bobo and Licari 1989; McClosky and Brill 1983; and Stouffer 1955) for their effect on political tolerance, this study deals specifically with the respondents' knowledge of the American Constitution. The independent variables chosen in this survey identified characteristics that can increase individuals' support for the civil liberties of fellow citizens. The specific attention of this research on the American Constitution allows this researcher to recommend increased attention to American civics classes as opposed to recommending increased attention to education in general. The ability of political knowledge to possibly increase the acceptance of civil liberties for individual groups within the population identifies a possible need for increased political science requirements in postsecondary education. This recognition could also create a possible demand for increased emphasis on civics courses in secondary education curricula. Having possibly increased political tolerance by increasing individuals' knowledge of American constitutional law, it may be more realistic to implement policies aimed at increasing attention to American constitutional law than to increased knowledge in general. This could be of great value to public and private school administrators and teachers interested in increasing the political tolerance levels of their students; thereby increasing the political tolerance of future generations of Americans.

The reliance of this study on quick ten-minute lectures helps to determine the possibility that political knowledge can be noticeably affected in a short amount of time. Statistically significant changes in opinions related to tolerance from these short lectures offers encouraging evidence to those examining whether or not political tolerance could be changed through targeted academic efforts requiring relatively little time and effort. While extended education programs targeted at changing tolerance levels are valuable (Fishkin 1994), this study identified the possibility of increasing political tolerance rapidly. This research could also be valuable to professionals within the field of cognitive psychology as it offers valuable information involving the acquisition of knowledge in a short period of time.

This research could be of great interest to individuals researching in the field of public opinion theory. Having the ability to possibly increase the political tolerance of a given population by increasing their political knowledge could be valuable to political analysts involved with electoral campaigns, elected leaders attempting to garner support for specific policy decisions, public administrators interested in preventative measures to combat intolerance, and civil rights advocates striving for higher levels of political equality.

This research has also shown the powerful effect of prior contact with minority groups on political tolerance. This could have a significant impact on programs attempting to create higher levels of integration at the federal, state, and local levels of government. Having a highly heterogeneous population, American elected leaders could find it advantageous to increase the political tolerance of individuals through directed efforts to increase contact between different religious, political, and ethnic groups. This research has confirmed what has already been suggested by the existing literature; that the more people interact with one another, the more they

tend to value the rights of others. This could have strong implications for policy leaders seeking an environment that fosters social harmony between different groups.

The results of this research also offer valuable insights for individuals within any given civilization. The ability to increase political tolerance within a society represents the opportunity to increase the social harmony of that society. This can be especially important in heterogeneous populations possessing a variety of different religious, racial, ethnic, and cultural characteristics. Identifying realistic methods for possibly increasing social tolerance offers invaluable opportunities for any society.

By following the prescription of my data analysis, governments could significantly increase the opportunity for different groups to coexist by increasing the educational requirements of public education institutions. Also, populations could possibly improve their social harmony by discussing minority rights in a positive manner that reminds government actors of their constitutional requirements to offer equal protection of the law while reminding individuals of their moral obligations to treat others as they would wish to be treated themselves. Finally, diverse groups could improve their ability to live together peacefully by increasing their interaction with one another so as to increase familiarity between individuals and groups. Increasing general political knowledge, speaking of minority groups in a positive way, and encouraging the interaction of different groups are three recommendations derived from this research that can be adopted by any group of people with positive implications for the future.

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Figure 2.1

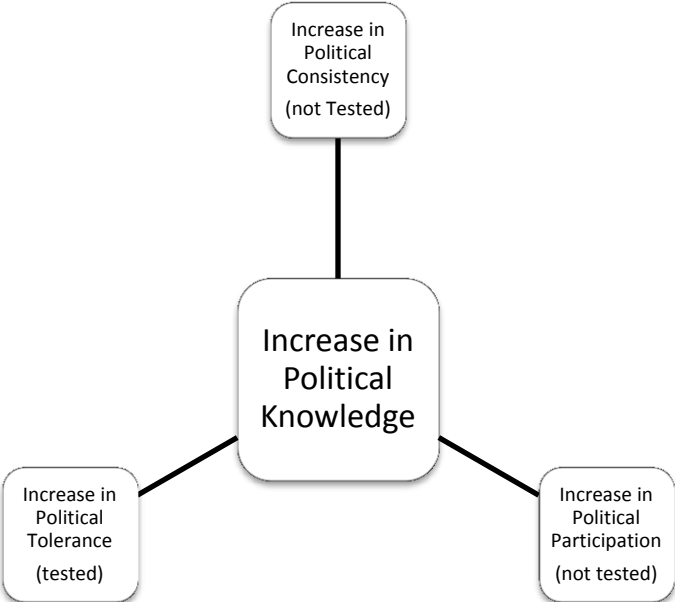


Figure 2.2

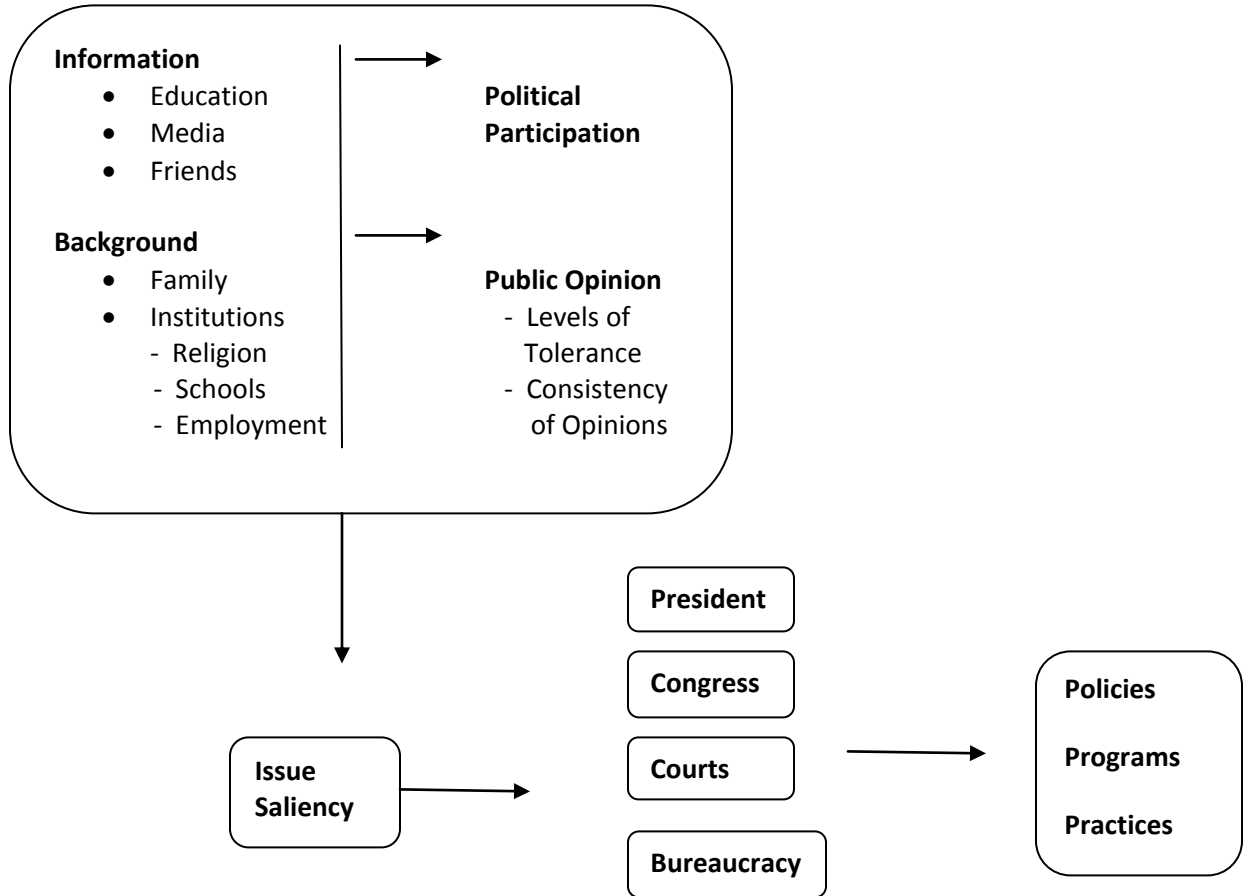


Figure 3.1

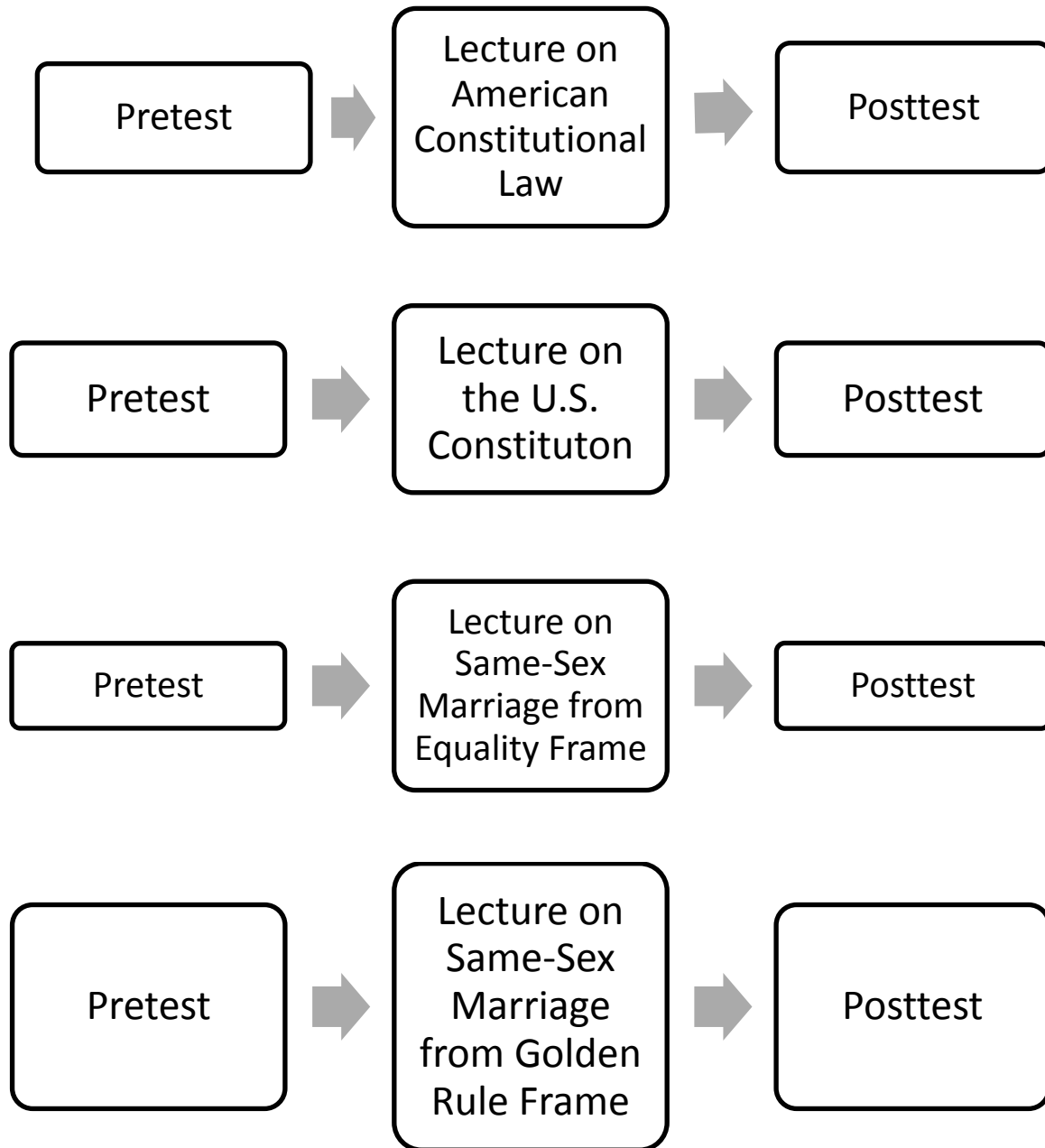


Figure 3.2

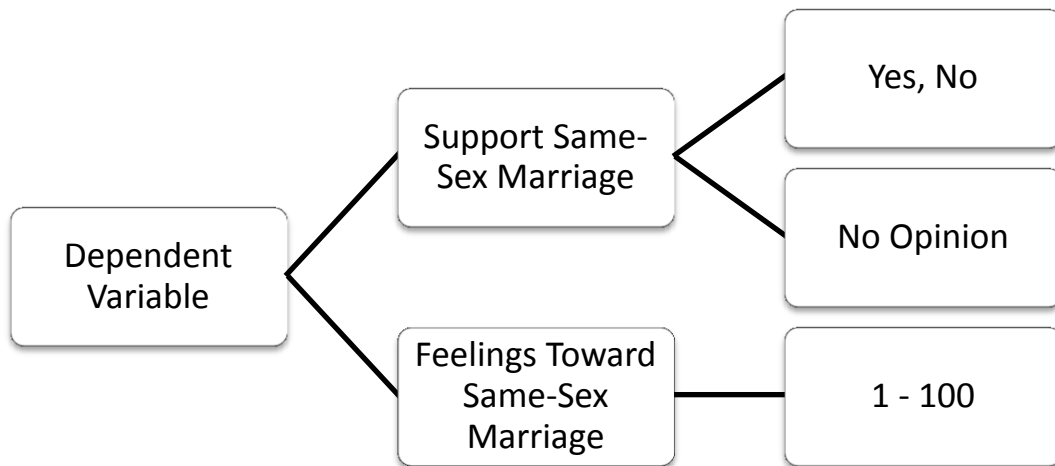


Figure 3.3

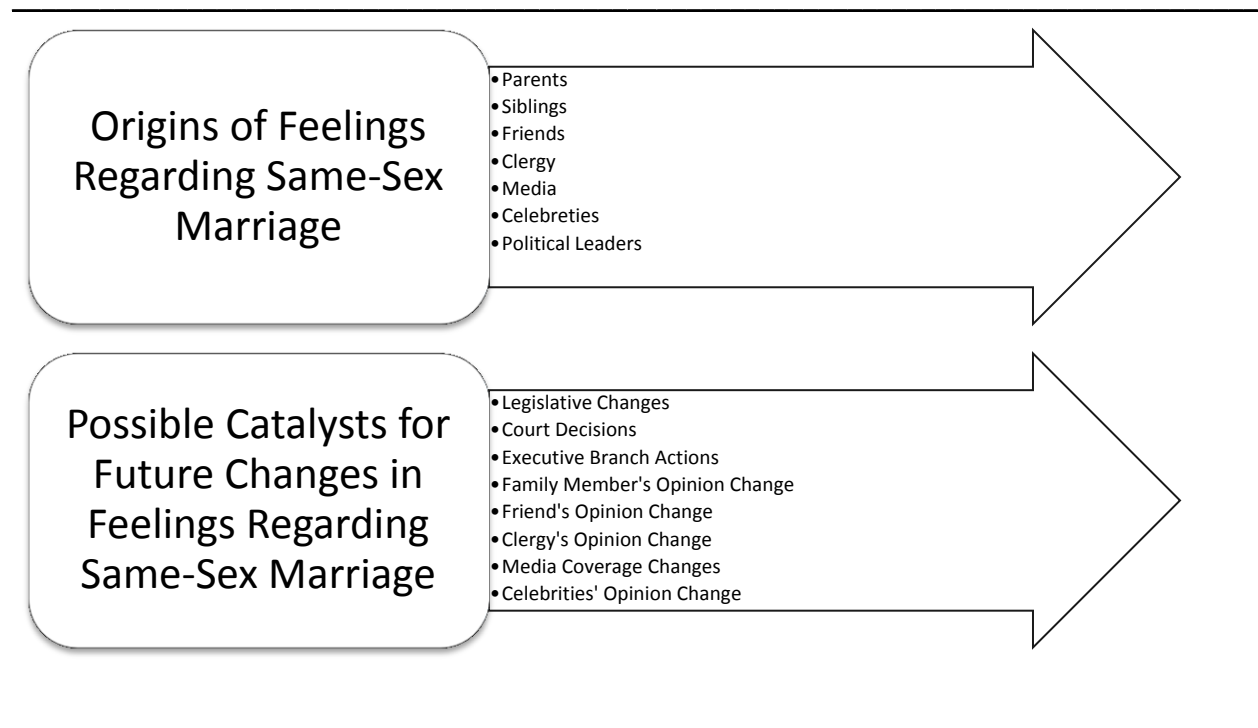


Table 4.1
Race/Gender of Respondents

Variable	%
Race/Ethnicity	
White	86 (331)
Black	7 (30)
Asian	1 (3)
Pacific Islander	1 (1)
Native American	1 (3)
Other	1 (6)
Gender	
Female	58 (222)
Male	42 (160)
Religion	
Protestant	51 (193)
Catholic	15 (58)
Jewish	1 (3)
Atheist/Agnostic	8 (31)
Other	24 (94)

Table 4.2

Political Affiliation

Political Affiliation	Respondent %	Paternal %	Maternal %
Republican	53 (201)	72 (258)	68 (250)
Democrat	25 (96)	21 (76)	25 (93)
Libertarian	13 (49)	2 (9)	2 (7)
Other	9 (34)	6 (20)	6 (17)

Table 4.3

Political Affiliation (Maternal Correlation)

Variable	χ^2	V
Democratic Respondent (Democratic Mother)	121.41***	0.58
Democratic Respondent (Republican Mother)	95.58***	-0.51
Democratic Respondent (Libertarian Mother)	0.41	-0.03
Republican Respondent (Democratic Mother)	65.64***	-0.42
Republican Respondent (Republican Mother)	75.02***	0.45
Republican Respondent (Libertarian Mother)	0.35	-0.03
Libertarian Respondent (Democratic Mother)	6.70***	-0.14
Libertarian Respondent (Republican Mother)	3.33*	0.09
Libertarian Respondent (Libertarian Mother)	5.35**	0.12

Note: (*) $p \leq .10$
 (**) $p \leq .05$
 (***) $p \leq .01$

Table 4.4

Political Affiliation (Paternal Correlation)

Variable	χ^2	V
Democratic Respondent (Democratic Father)	86.55***	0.49
Democratic Respondent (Republican Father)	79.28***	-0.47
Democratic Respondent (Libertarian Father)	0.44	0.04
Republican Respondent (Democratic Father)	64.53***	-0.42
Republican Respondent (Republican Father)	85.00***	0.48
Republican Respondent (Libertarian Father)	6.83***	-0.14
Libertarian Respondent (Democratic Father)	1.35	-0.06
Libertarian Respondent (Republican Father)	0.42	0.03
Libertarian Respondent (Libertarian Father)	7.84***	0.15

Note: (*) $p \leq .10$
 (**) $p \leq .05$
 (***) $p \leq .01$

Table 4.5

Respondents' Educational History

Variable	n	%
Students who had taken high school AP classes	379	42 (158)
Respondents who had taken college entrance exams	167	60 (101)
Respondents who had passed college entrance exams	102	87 (89)
Respondents who had taken a college Constitutional Law	363	22 (81)

Table 4.6

Respondents' Contact with Nontraditional couples

Variable	n	%
Respondents who knew interracial couples	379	69 (262)
Respondents who knew interfaith couples	367	73 (267)
Respondents who knew same-sex couples	368	61 (225)

Table 4.7

Respondents' Pretest/Posttest Marriage Equality Scores

Variable	pretest n	pretest proportion	posttest n	posttest proportion	Δ
Interracial Marriage (Yes/No)	338	.94 (318)	342	.93 (318)	-0.01
Interfaith Marriage (Yes/No)	322	.94 (304)	336	.92 (309)	-0.02
Same-Sex Marriage Legally Recognized by Federal Government (Yes/No)	331	.59 (195)	338	.60 (202)	0.01
Same-Sex Marriage Legally Recognized by Statewide Popular Vote (Yes/No)	338	.60 (201)	338	.60 (203)	0.00
Same-Sex Marriage Legally Recognized by State Government (Yes/No)	319	.54 (171)	326	.56 (184)	0.02
Feelings Thermometer for Same-Sex Marriage	370	58.64	376	59.42	0.78

Note: Interracial Marriage, Interfaith Marriage, Same-Sex Marriage Legally Recognized by Federal Government, Same-Sex Marriage Legally Recognized by Statewide Popular Vote, and Same-Sex Marriage Legally Recognized by State Government are yes/no dummy variables (yes=1, no=0).

Note: Feelings Thermometer is on a scale of (0-100) with a higher score representing a higher level of support for legally-recognized same-sex marriage and a lower score representing a lower level of support for legally-recognized same-sex marriage.

Table 4.8

Percent of Respondents in Control and Experimental Groups

Group	n	%
Experimental Group One (Constitutional Law)	88	23
Experimental Group Two (U.S. Constitution)	68	18
Experimental Group Three (Equality Frame)	75	20
Experimental Group Four (Golden Rule Frame)	59	15
Control Group (No Lecture)	93	24

Table 4.9

Respondents' Mean Feeling Thermometer Scores by Group

Lecture Group	Before Intervention	After Intervention	Δ
Experimental Group One (Constitutional Law)	59.80	61.73	1.93
Experimental Group Two (U.S. Constitution)	55.54	55.27	-0.27
Experimental Group Three (Equality Frame)	62.46	62.88	0.42
Experimental Group Four (Golden Rule Frame)	57.10	58.32	1.22
Control Group (No Lecture)	57.69	58.17	0.48

Table 4.10

Associations between Education/Knowledge/Contact Variables and
Pretest Feeling Thermometer Score (t-test)

Variable	mean	t
Education		
Respondents with College Diploma	58.64	27.16***
Respondents who had taken high school AP classes	58.73	27.08***
Respondents who had taken college entrance exams	67.20	21.75***
Respondents who had passed college entrance exams	63.94	15.36***
Respondents who had taken a college Constitutional Law class	59.23	26.89***
Knowledge		
Government Question	58.64	27.18***
Electoral Vote Question	58.64	27.19***
Secretary of State Question	58.59	27.06***
Supreme Court Justice Question	58.58	26.86***
God in Constitution Question	58.66	27.20***
Contact		
Respondents who knew interracial couples	58.91	27.08***
Respondents who knew interfaith couples	59.93	26.91***
Respondents who knew same-sex couples	59.08	26.84***

Note: (***) $p \leq .01$

Table 4.11

Correlations between Knowledge/Contact Indexes and
Pretest Feeling Thermometer Score (Pairwise Correlations)

Variable	r
Knowledge Index ^f	0.244***
Contact Index ^u	0.298***

Note: (***) $p \leq .01$

^fNote: Knowledge index created by combining respondents' correct answers to the following dummy variables: correctly identifying the U.S. government as a federal system, correctly identifying the formula for allocation of electoral votes to the states, correctly identifying the current U.S. Secretary of State, correctly identifying the number of justices on the U.S. Supreme Court, and correctly acknowledging the absence of the word "God" in the U.S. Constitution.

^uNote: Contact index created by combining respondents' answers to the following dummy variables: whether they knew an interracial couple, whether they knew an interfaith couple, and whether they knew a same-sex couple.

Table 4.12

Relationships between Education/Knowledge/Contact Variables and
Pretest Approval of Same-Sex Marriage Recognition by the Federal Government (χ^2)

Variable	χ^2	V
Education		
Respondents with college diploma	2.43	-0.09
Respondents who had taken high school AP classes	9.00***	0.17
Respondents who had taken college entrance exams	1.30	-0.09
Respondents who had passed college entrance exams	0.07	0.03
Respondents who had taken a college Constitutional Law class	2.12	-0.08
Knowledge		
Government Question	11.47***	0.19
Electoral Vote Question	0.24	0.03
Secretary of State Question	6.06***	0.14
Supreme Court Justice Question	0.05	0.01
God in Constitution Question	3.69**	0.11
Contact		
Respondents who knew interracial couples	6.58***	0.14
Respondents who knew interfaith couples	7.67***	0.16
Respondents who knew same-sex couples	31.33***	0.31

Note: (**) $p \leq .05$
 (***) $p \leq .01$

Table 4.13

Relationships between Education/Knowledge/Contact Variables and
Pretest Approval of Same-Sex Marriage Recognition by Statewide Popular Vote (χ^2)

Variable	χ^2	V
Education		
Respondents with college diploma	4.97**	-0.12
Respondents who had taken high school AP classes	5.30***	0.13
Respondents who had taken college entrance exams	2.53	-0.13
Respondents who had passed college entrance exams	0.05	0.02
Respondents who had taken a college Constitutional Law class	0.29	-0.03
Knowledge		
Government Question	9.72**	0.17
Electoral Vote Question	0.07	-0.01
Secretary of State Question	4.16**	0.11
Supreme Court Justice Question	0.02	0.01
God in Constitution Question	0.23	0.03
Contact		
Respondents who knew interracial couples	1.71	0.07
Respondents who knew interfaith couples	0.02	0.01
Respondents who knew same-sex couples	24.27***	0.27

Note: (**) $p \leq .05$
 (***) $p \leq .01$

Table 4.14

Relationships between Education/Knowledge/Contact Variables and
Pretest Approval of Same-Sex Marriage Recognition by State Government (χ^2)

Variable	χ^2	V
Education		
Respondents with college diploma	3.26*	-0.10
Respondents who had taken high school AP classes	8.69***	0.17
Respondents who had taken college entrance exams	1.46	-0.10
Respondents who had passed college entrance exams	0.09	-0.03
Respondents who had taken a college Constitutional Law class	1.71	-0.08
Knowledge		
Government Question	9.24***	0.17
Electoral Vote Question	0.76	0.05
Secretary of State Question	5.15**	0.13
Supreme Court Justice Question	0.18	-0.02
God in Constitution Question	3.80*	0.11
Contact		
Respondents who knew interracial couples	4.84**	0.12
Respondents who knew interfaith couples	3.26*	0.10
Respondents who knew same-sex couples	17.33***	0.24

Note: (*) $p \leq .10$
 (**) $p \leq .05$
 (***) $p \leq .01$

Table 4.15

Effect of Group on Δ Feeling Thermometer Score (from bivariate regression analysis)

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	
Experimental Group One	Δ Feeling Thermometer Score	1.89* (1.18)
	n	370
	Adjusted R ²	0.0041
Experimental Group Two	Δ Feeling Thermometer Score	-2.42** (1.32)
	n	370
	Adjusted R ²	0.0064
Experimental Group Three	Δ Feeling Thermometer Score	-0.51 (1.27)
	n	370
	Adjusted R ²	-0.0023
Experimental Group Four	Δ Feeling Thermometer Score	1.73 (1.37)
	n	370
	Adjusted R ²	0.0016
Control Group	Δ Feeling Thermometer Score	-0.77 (1.18)
	n	370
	Adjusted R ²	-0.0016

Note: (*) $p \leq .10$; with a one-tailed test(**) $p \leq .05$; with a one-tailed test

Table 4.16

Effect of Group on Δ Same-Sex Marriage/Statewide Popular Vote (from bivariate regression analysis)

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	
Experimental Group One	Δ SSM/Popular Vote	1.75 (0.85)
	n	323
	Pseudo R ²	0.0082
Experimental Group Two	Δ SSM/Popular Vote	1.32 (0.70)
	n	323
	Pseudo R ²	0.0016
Experimental Group Three	Δ SSM/Popular Vote	1.44 (0.77)
	n	323
	Pseudo R ²	0.0028
Experimental Group Four	Δ SSM/Popular Vote	0.86 (0.55)
	n	323
	Pseudo R ²	0.0004
Control Group	Δ SSM/Popular Vote	0.15* (0.16)
	n	323
	Pseudo R ²	0.0368

Note: (*) $p \leq .10$; with a one-tailed test

Table 4.17

Effect of Group, Knowledge/Contact Indexes, AP Classes, and Demographic Variables on Δ Feeling Thermometer Score (from OLS regression analysis)

Δ Feeling Thermometer	#1	#2	#3	#4
Experimental Group #1	2.04* (1.46)	2.52** (1.50)	2.24* (1.52)	2.74** (1.52)
Experimental Group #2	-1.41 (1.58)	-1.18 (1.60)	-1.16 (1.61)	-0.95 (1.62)
Experimental Group #3	0.17 (1.53)	0.11 (1.54)	0.02 (1.55)	0.15 (1.55)
Experimental Group #4	2.04 (1.62)	2.26* (1.65)	2.38* (1.66)	2.46* (1.66)
Knowledge ^f	--	-0.58* (0.40)	-0.44 (0.42)	-0.61* (0.41)
AP Classes ^g	--	-0.41 (1.04)	-0.42 (1.05)	-0.41 (1.05)
Contact ^h	--	0.42 (0.51)	0.53 (0.52)	0.35 (0.52)
Black	--	--	--	-3.61** (1.98)
Catholic	--	--	-0.64 (1.45)	-0.60 (1.45)
Republican	--	--	2.00** (1.06)	--
Constant	0.15 (1.03)	0.72 (1.60)	-0.70 (1.79)	1.16 (1.63)
n	370	366	363	363
Adjusted R ²	0.0068	0.0074	0.0119	0.0113

Note: (*) $p \leq .10$; with a one-tail test
 (***) $p \leq .05$; with a one-tail test

^fNote: Knowledge index created by combining respondents' correct answers to the following dummy variables: correctly identifying the U.S. government as a federal system, correctly identifying the formula for allocation of electoral votes to the states, correctly identifying the current U.S. Secretary of State, correctly identifying the number of justices on the U.S. Supreme Court, and correctly acknowledging the absence of the word "God" in the U.S. Constitution.

^gNote: AP classes is a dummy variable identifying those respondents who took high school AP courses.

^hNote: Contact index created by combining respondents' answers to the following dummy variables: whether they knew an interracial couple, whether they knew an interfaith couple, and whether they knew a same-sex couple.

Table 4.18

Effect of Group, Knowledge/Contact Indexes, AP Classes, and Demographic Variables on Δ Feeling Thermometer Score (from OLS regression analysis)

Δ Feeling Thermometer	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
Experimental Group #1	2.29** (1.23)	2.01** (1.25)	2.40** (1.24)	--	--	--
Experimental Group #2	--	--	--	-2.36** (1.34)	-2.26** (1.35)	-2.26** (1.36)
Knowledge Index ^f	-0.57* (0.40)	-0.44 (0.41)	-0.59* (0.41)	-0.42 (0.40)	-0.29 (0.41)	-0.43 (0.40)
AP Classes ^g	-0.42 (1.04)	-0.43 (1.05)	-0.42 (1.05)	-0.53 (1.04)	-0.52 (1.05)	-0.54 (1.05)
Contact Index ^u	0.46 (0.51)	0.56 (0.52)	0.38 (0.52)	0.43 (0.51)	0.55 (0.52)	0.37 (0.52)
Black	--	--	-3.57** (1.97)	--	--	-3.22** (1.97)
Catholic	--	-0.43 (1.44)	-0.40 (1.44)	--	-0.69 (1.44)	-0.63 (1.45)
Republican	--	1.92** (1.06)	--	--	2.06** (1.05)	--
Constant	0.84 (1.41)	-0.53 (1.62)	1.36 (1.45)	1.52 (1.42)	-.002 (1.63)	1.99* (1.45)
n	366	363	363	366	363	363
Adj. R ²	0.0048	0.0086	0.0085	0.0038	0.0091	0.0058

Note: (*) $p \leq .10$; with a one-tail test

(**) $p \leq .05$; with a one-tail test

^fNote: Knowledge index created by combining respondents' correct answers to the following dummy variables: correctly identifying the U.S. government as a federal system, correctly identifying the formula for allocation of electoral votes to the states, correctly identifying the current U.S. Secretary of State, correctly identifying the number of justices on the U.S. Supreme Court, and correctly acknowledging the absence of the word "God" in the U.S. Constitution.

^gNote: AP classes is a dummy variable identifying those respondents who took high school AP courses.

^uNote: Contact index created by combining respondents' answers to the following dummy variables: whether they knew an interracial couple, whether they knew an interfaith couple, and whether they knew a same-sex couple.

Table 4.19

Effect of Group, Knowledge/Contact Indexes, AP Classes, and Demographic Variables on Δ Feeling Thermometer Score (from bivariate regression analysis)

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	
Experimental Group #1	Δ Feeling Thermometer Score	1.89* (1.19)
n		370
Adj. R ²		0.0041
Experimental Group #2	Δ Feeling Thermometer Score	-2.42** (1.32)
n		370
Adj. R ²		0.0064
Knowledge Index	Δ Feeling Thermometer Score	-0.44 (0.39)
n		370
Adj. R ²		0.0007
AP Classes	Δ Feeling Thermometer Score	-0.66 (1.03)
n		366
Adj. R ²		-0.0016
Contact Index	Δ Feeling Thermometer Score	0.36 (0.51)
n		370
Adj. R ²		-0.0013
Black	Δ Feeling Thermometer Score	-3.27** (1.90)
n		369
Adj. R ²		0.0053
Catholic	Δ Feeling Thermometer Score	-0.09 (1.41)
n		367
Adj. R ²		-0.0027
Republican	Δ Feeling Thermometer Score	2.07** (1.01)
n		368
Adj. R ²		0.0086

Note: (*) $p \leq .10$; with a one-tailed test
 (***) $p \leq .05$; with a one-tailed test

Table 4.20

Effect of Knowledge/Contact Indexes, AP Classes, and Demographic Variables on Pretest Feeling Thermometer Scores (from OLS regression analysis)

Pretest Feeling Thermometer Scores	#1	#2	#3
Knowledge Index ^f	6.41*** (1.63)	4.60*** (1.48)	6.64*** (1.57)
AP Classes ^g	10.87*** (4.29)	8.40** (3.81)	8.64** (4.13)
Contact Index ^u	10.80*** (2.12)	9.35*** (1.91)	10.64*** (2.06)
Black	---	---	-10.54 (7.75)
Catholic	---	6.93 (5.24)	1.69 (5.68)
Republican	---	-30.63*** (3.82)	---
Constant	18.16*** (5.88)	40.83*** (5.94)	18.98*** (5.72)
n	336	363	363
Adj. R ²	0.1420	0.2682	0.1406

Note: (**) $p \leq .05$; with a two-tailed test

Note: (***) $p \leq .01$; with a two-tailed test

^fNote: Knowledge index created by combining respondents' correct answers to the following dummy variables: correctly identifying the U.S. government as a federal system, correctly identifying the formula for allocation of electoral votes to the states, correctly identifying the current U.S. Secretary of State, correctly identifying the number of justices on the U.S. Supreme Court, and correctly acknowledging the absence of the word "God" in the U.S. Constitution.

^gNote: AP classes is a dummy variable identifying those respondents who took high school AP courses.

^uNote: Contact index created by combining respondents' answers to the following dummy variables: whether they knew an interracial couple, whether they knew an interfaith couple, and whether they knew a same-sex couple.

Table 4.21

Effect of Knowledge/Contact Indexes, AP Classes, and Demographic Variables on Pretest Feeling Thermometer Scores (from bivariate regression analysis)

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable
Knowledge Index	7.79*** (1.62)
n	370
Adj. R ²	0.0568
AP Classes	13.08*** (4.33)
n	366
Adj. R ²	0.0218
Contact Indexes	12.35*** (2.06)
n	370
Adj. R ²	0.0864
Black	-15.02* (8.09)
n	369
Adj. R ²	0.0066
Catholic	8.39 (5.99)
n	367
Adj. R ²	0.0026
Republican	-35.17*** (3.91)
n	368
Adj. R ²	0.1791

Note: (*) $p \leq .10$; with a two-tailed test

(***) $p \leq .01$; with a two-tailed test

Table 4.22

Effect of Knowledge/Contact Indexes, AP Classes, and Demographic Variables on Pretest Same-Sex Marriage by Federal Government (from LOGIT regression analysis)

Same-Sex Marriage Recognized (Fed)	#1	#2	#3
Knowledge Index ^f	0.23** (0.09)	0.17* (0.11)	0.23** (0.09)
AP Classes ^g	0.56** (0.25)	0.60** (0.27)	0.53** (0.25)
Contact Index ^u	0.58*** (0.12)	0.53*** (0.14)	0.57*** (0.13)
Black	--	--	-0.26 (0.47)
Catholic	--	0.52 (0.40)	0.12 (0.36)
Republican	--	-1.96*** (0.28)	--
Constant	-1.51*** (0.35)	-0.24 (0.42)	-1.47*** (0.35)
n	328	326	326
Pseudo R ²	0.09	0.2212	0.0917

Note: (*) $p \leq .10$; with a two-tailed test
 (***) $p \leq .05$; with a two-tailed test
 (***) $p \leq .01$; with a two-tailed test

^fNote: Knowledge index created by combining respondents' correct answers to the following dummy variables: correctly identifying the U.S. government as a federal system, correctly identifying the formula for allocation of electoral votes to the states, correctly identifying the current U.S. Secretary of State, correctly identifying the number of justices on the U.S. Supreme Court, and correctly acknowledging the absence of the word "God" in the U.S. Constitution.

^gNote: AP classes is a dummy variable identifying those respondents who took high school AP courses.

^uNote: Contact index created by combining respondents' answers to the following dummy variables: whether they knew an interracial couple, whether they knew an interfaith couple, and whether they knew a same-sex couple.

Table 4.23

Effect of Knowledge/Contact Indexes and AP Classes on Pretest Same-Sex Marriage by Statewide Popular Vote (from LOGIT regression analysis)

Same-Sex Marriage Recognized (State Pop Vote)	#1	#2	#3
Knowledge Index ^f	0.14 (0.09)	0.10 (0.09)	1.15 (0.10)
AP Classes ^g	0.42* (0.24)	0.40* (0.24)	1.48* (0.35)
Contact Index ^u	0.32*** (0.12)	0.26** (0.12)	1.35** (0.16)
Black	--	--	0.50 (0.22)
Catholic	--	0.46 (0.34)	1.30 (0.44)
Republican	--	-0.81*** (0.24)	--
Constant	-0.71** (0.32)	-0.13 (0.37)	0.52** (0.17)
n	334	331	331
Pseudo R ²	0.0352	0.0628	0.0426

Note: (*) $p \leq .10$; with a two-tailed test
 (**) $p \leq .05$; with a two-tailed test
 (***) $p \leq .01$; with a two-tailed test

^fNote: Knowledge index created by combining respondents' correct answers to the following dummy variables: correctly identifying the U.S. government as a federal system, correctly identifying the formula for allocation of electoral votes to the states, correctly identifying the current U.S. Secretary of State, correctly identifying the number of justices on the U.S. Supreme Court, and correctly acknowledging the absence of the word "God" in the U.S. Constitution.

^gNote: AP classes is a dummy variable identifying those respondents who took high school AP courses.

^uNote: Contact index created by combining respondents' answers to the following dummy variables: whether they knew an interracial couple, whether they knew an interfaith couple, and whether they knew a same-sex couple.

Table 4.24

Effect of Knowledge/Contact Indexes and AP Classes on Pretest Same-Sex Marriage by State Government (from LOGIT regression analysis)

Same-Sex Marriage Recognized State Government	#1	#2	#3
Knowledge Index ^f	0.21** (0.09)	0.17* (0.09)	0.22** (0.09)
AP Classes ^g	0.53** (0.24)	0.50** (0.25)	0.50** (0.24)
Contact Index ^u	0.45*** (0.12)	0.37*** (0.13)	0.42*** (0.13)
Black	--	--	-0.75 (0.51)
Catholic	--	0.30 (0.35)	0.12 (0.34)
Republican	--	-1.12*** (0.25)	--
Constant	-1.45*** (0.35)	-0.61 (0.40)	-1.36*** (0.35)
n	316	313	313
Pseudo R ²	0.0656	0.1128	0.0693

Note: (*) $p \leq .10$; with a two-tailed test
 (***) $p \leq .05$; with a two-tailed test
 (***) $p \leq .01$; with a two-tailed test

^fNote: Knowledge index created by combining respondents' correct answers to the following dummy variables: correctly identifying the U.S. government as a federal system, correctly identifying the formula for allocation of electoral votes to the states, correctly identifying the current U.S. Secretary of State, correctly identifying the number of justices on the U.S. Supreme Court, and correctly acknowledging the absence of the word "God" in the U.S. Constitution.

^gNote: AP classes is a dummy variable identifying those respondents who took high school AP courses.

^uNote: Contact index created by combining respondents' answers to the following dummy variables: whether they knew an interracial couple, whether they knew an interfaith couple, and whether they knew a same-sex couple.

Appendix One

Transcript for Instructions for All Four Groups

Researcher:

I would like to thank you all for taking the time to participate in this brief survey for my doctoral dissertation. I would also like to thank your professor for allowing me this opportunity to come into his/her classroom and use your valuable class time.

My name is John Powell Hall, and I am a doctoral candidate in Political Science at Auburn University. Over the next ten to fifteen minutes, you will be participating in a brief survey which will require you to answer questions on two short tests and listen to a brief ten-minute lecture.

I would like to remind all of you that this survey is entirely voluntary, and while your participation is highly appreciated, you are in no way obligated to stay. Your grades in this class will not be jeopardized or enhanced by your participation in this survey. (PAUSE) I would like to thank those of you who have remained for your valuable time.

I will now describe the details of the survey in which you are about to participate. First, you will all be given a package that will contain all the materials you will need to participate in this survey. If you will notice the front page of your packets that reads “Please do not open until asked.” After I have finished this introduction, I will ask you to open your pamphlets by turning this first page. As I hand out the survey pamphlets, I would like to reiterate the importance of your not opening them until we have begun.

Hand out the survey pamphlets

Researcher:

This survey will consist of one pretest and one posttest. I would like to stress to you that at no point should you put your name or any form of identification anywhere on the survey pamphlet, other than the page containing the consent form. In no way will I or anyone in the future know the identity of anyone who takes part in this survey. These tests will ask for several pieces of information describing you and your opinions along a range of topics. The pretest and posttest will consist of twenty-seven and six, respectively, multiple choice or fill-in-the-blank questions that should be simple to read and answer. At the end of the pretest and posttest you will be asked to answer three open-ended questions concerning your individual opinions on a particular matter. The pretest and the posttest are quite simple and should take no longer than ten minutes for everyone to complete. Again, I would like to stress the anonymous nature of this survey and ask that you feel free to answer the survey questions as honestly as possible.

Now I would like to describe how this survey will be conducted. In a moment, I will ask you to begin the survey by turning the first page of your pamphlet. On page two you will see the consent form that you will need to read and sign. On the third page, you will see the beginning of the pretest. You will be asked to complete the pretest survey. When everyone has finished the pretest, I will give you a brief ten-minute lecture on a specific topic within American government (or computer technology). I would like to stress that this lecture will not include a question and answer period. It is important for the research that I provide you with the particular information without any discussion from the audience. Again, I would like to stress the importance of, and thank you in advance for, no questions at any point during the lecture. At the end of this brief lecture, you will be asked to leave your survey answers on your desk and leave the class. In a couple of days, I will return and give you a posttest survey. Having completed the

posttest survey you will be finished with the experiment. In summary you will be asked to 1) answer the questions on the pretest, 2) listen to a brief lecture involving American government, and 3) take a posttest. That is all.

Once again I would like to thank you all for taking valuable time out of your schedules to participate in this brief survey. I would also like to thank your professor again for giving me this opportunity to conduct this survey during his/her class time. Now ladies and gentlemen, let us begin.

Appendix Two
Pretest/Posttest Survey Examination Packet

KEY

1-01-001

(1) -- Group

- 1= ex. Group One
- 2= ex. Group Two
- 3= ex. Group Three
- 4= Control Group

(01) -- University

- 01= Auburn University
- 02= Auburn University Montgomery

(001) -- Student Number

Mother's Maiden Initials: _____

Name of Favorite Pet: _____

Make and Model of Car: _____

For Testing Purposes. (Do not mark)

FR

FM

FL

MR

MM

ML

BR

BM

BL

(NOTE: DO NOT SIGN THIS DOCUMENT UNLESS AN IRB APPROVAL STAMP WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN APPLIED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

INFORMED CONSENT

for a Research Study entitled

“Political Knowledge and Political Tolerance”

You are invited to participate in a research study to *enhance our knowledge of public opinion on civil liberties*. The study is being conducted by John Powell Hall, Doctoral Candidate, under the direction of Dr. Mitchell Brown, Associate Professor in the Auburn University Department of Political Science. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a student in the Auburn University system and are age 19 or older.

What will be involved if you participate? If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to complete two brief survey questionnaires and listen to a ten-minute lecture. Your total time commitment will be approximately twenty minutes over two separate class periods.

Are there any risks or discomforts? The risks associated with participating in this study are no more than those found in everyday life.

Are there any benefits to yourself or others? If you participate in this study, you can possibly help us gain a better understanding of public opinion of civil liberties.

Will you receive compensation for participating? There will be no compensation for participating in this study.

Are there any costs? There are no costs associated with participation in this study.

If you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw at any time during the study. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw, your data can be withdrawn as long as it is identifiable. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University, the Department of Political Science or your professor.

Page

1 of 2

Your privacy will be protected. Any information obtained in connection with this study will remain anonymous (*or confidential*). Information obtained through your participation may be used to fulfill an educational requirement, published in a professional journal, and presented at a professional meeting.

If you have questions about this study, *please ask them now or* contact John Powell Hall at jph0012@auburn.edu or Dr. Mitchell Brown at brown11@auburn.edu. A copy of this document will be given to you to keep.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Human Subjects Research or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334)-844-5966 or e-mail at hsubjec@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES YOUR WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE.

Participant's signature Date

Investigator obtaining consent Date

Printed Name

Printed Name

Co-Investigator

Date

Printed Name

Page 2 of 2

Pretest/Posttest Survey Examination Packet

John Powell Hall
Auburn University
Doctoral Candidate

Pretest
Survey Questions

Instructions: Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. The majority of the questions are straight-forward and will require little time to complete. Please answer the final two questions in sentence or sentence fragment form, whatever is more comfortable for you. Please remember to stop when you have reached the page that reads “STOP.”

1. Which of the following do you think most accurately describes the system of government used in the United States?
 - a. Democracy
 - b. Republic
 - c. Authoritarian
 - d. Theocracy
 - e. None of the above

2. The state of Alabama has nine electoral votes. How many seats does the state of Alabama have in the United States House of Representatives?
 - a. 2
 - b. 7
 - c. 9
 - d. 14
 - e. Not enough information to determine the answer.

3. Who is the current Secretary of State for the United States government?
 - a. Hillary Clinton
 - b. Condoleezza Rice
 - c. Colin Powell
 - d. Henry Kissinger
 - e. John Kerry

4. How many justices are currently serving on the United States Supreme Court?
 - a. 9
 - b. 19
 - c. 50
 - d. 94
 - e. 538

5. While not specifically identifying the United States as a Christian nation, the Constitution mentions the word “God” on several occasions.
 - a. True
 - b. False

6. In what year were you born?

7. What is your race/ethnicity? (Check all that apply.)

- a. White
- b. Black
- c. Asian
- d. Pacific Islander
- e. Native American
- f. Hispanic
- g. Other

8. What is your religious affiliation?

- a. Protestant
- b. Catholic
- c. Jewish
- d. Muslim
- e. Atheist/Agnostic
- f. Other

9. What is your gender?

- a. Male
- b. Female

10. What is your marital status?

- a. Married for first time
- b. Married for second or more times
- c. Single/Never married
- d. Divorced for first time
- e. Divorced for second or more times

11. In which political party are you most closely affiliated?

- a. Democratic Party
- b. Republican Party
- c. Libertarian
- d. Other

12. In which political party is your father most closely affiliated?

- a. Democratic Party
- b. Republican Party
- c. Libertarian
- d. Other
- e. Not sure

13. In which political party is your mother most closely affiliated?
- a. Democratic Party
 - b. Republican Party
 - c. Libertarian
 - d. Other
14. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- a. Grade school, some High School
 - b. High School diploma
 - c. Some undergraduate college, no diploma
 - d. College diploma
 - e. Some grad school
15. What is your approximate annual income (or that of your mother and father if you are a dependent)? If you do not know, please provide a figure representing your best guess.
- _____
16. In what state did you graduate from high school (or the country if you are not an American citizen)?
- _____
17. Have you taken an AP government/civics class in high school?
- No _____ Yes _____
- If yes, did you take a college entrance exam? Yes _____ No _____
- If yes, did you pass? Yes _____ No _____
18. Have you taken, or are you currently taking, a college-level Constitutional Law class?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not sure
19. Do you believe inter-racial marriages should be legally recognized?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. No opinion
20. Do you believe inter-faith marriages should be legally recognized?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. No opinion

21. Please indicate your opinion of same-sex marriage by writing down a number associated with a feelings thermometer (between 0 and 100), with a one-hundred (100) representing your belief that same-sex marriage is an institution worthy of complete legal recognition and a zero (0) representing your belief that same-sex marriage is not an institution that is worthy of complete legal recognition.

0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30
31	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	40
41	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50
51	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	60
61	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	70
71	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	80
81	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	90
91	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100

22. Do you believe same-sex marriages should be legally recognized by the federal government?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. No opinion

23. Do you believe same-sex marriages should be legally recognized by the state governments (through a popular vote of the people)?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. No opinion

24. Do you believe same-sex marriages should be legally recognized by the state governments (through a vote of the state legislature and the signature of the governor)?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. No opinion

25. Do you personally know an inter-racial married couple?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. No opinion
26. Do you personally know an inter-faith married couple?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. No opinion
27. Do you personally know a homosexual couple?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. No opinion

28. In your own words, briefly describe the origins of your opinions on same-sex marriage.
In other words, from where do you think your opinions on same-sex marriage originated?

29. What, if anything, do you think would make you change your current opinions on same-sex marriage?

Posttest
Survey Questions

Instructions: Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. The majority of the questions are straight-forward and will require little time to complete. Please answer the final two questions in sentence or sentence fragment form, whatever is more comfortable for you. Please remember to stop when you have reached the page that reads "STOP."

1. Do you believe inter-racial marriages should be legally recognized?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. No opinion

2. Do you believe inter-faith marriages should be legally recognized?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. No opinion

3. Please indicate your opinion of same-sex marriage by writing down a number associated with a feelings thermometer (between 0 and 100), with a one-hundred (100) representing your belief that same-sex marriage is an institution that is worthy of complete legal recognition and a zero (0) representing your belief that same-sex marriage is not an institution worthy of complete legal recognition.

0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30
31	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	40
41	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50
51	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	60
61	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	70
71	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	80
81	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	90
91	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100

4. Do you believe same-sex marriages should be legally recognized by the federal government?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. No opinion

5. Do you believe same-sex marriages should be legally recognized by the state governments (through a popular vote of the people)?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. No opinion

6. Do you believe same-sex marriages should be legally recognized by the state governments (through a vote of the state legislature and the signature of the governor)?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. No opinion

Appendix Three
Transcript for Experimental Group #1
(American Constitutional Law)

The United States Constitution was written in 1787 and ratified a year later. This revolutionary document created the American federal government we all know today. Essentially, the United States Constitution is made up of seven original articles and 27 amendments that have been added over the last 226 years (with the first ten being ratified at the same time, in 1791, and referred to as the Bill of Rights). The first three articles of the constitution created the federal legislative branch, executive branch, and judicial branch respectively. The Fourth Article established the relationship between the states under the new federal government. The Fifth Article allowed for the constitution to be amended while the Sixth Article identified the supremacy of the new federal government over the state governments. The first six articles of the constitution establish the powers and limitations of the federal and state governments. The 27 amendments that followed deal primarily with the specific liberties persons within America possess that cannot be violated by either federal or state governments. This paragraph has been an elementary summary of the U.S. Constitution. U.S. Constitutional law describes the federal and state courts' attempts to solve all disputes that arise involving the rights of American citizens and the powers of federal and state governments.

One of the ultimate responsibilities of American courts is to balance the legitimate powers of the federal and state governments against the constitutionally guaranteed rights of the American people. Some of the more interesting examples of constitutional law are seen when federal or state governments infringe upon the rights of minority groups that may not represent the mainstream of America society. One of the more important characteristics of the American Constitution is the document's ability to protect the rights of those who are not members of the

majority. This presentation will briefly detail several federal and state court decisions dealing with the protections of non-majority groups within American society.

The case of *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) involves the protections constitutionally afforded to Americans who may not subscribe to the same religious sentiments of the majority of the population. This Supreme Court decision found it unconstitutional to have state-imposed prayer in public schools due to this activities' violation of the First Amendment's Establishment Clause. The Court found that historically governmentally established religions and religious persecution went hand in hand. Justice Black wrote "When the power, prestige, and financial support of government is placed behind a particular religious belief, the indirect coercive pressure upon religious minorities to conform to the prevailing officially-approved religion is plain" (Vile 2010, 213).

The U.S. Supreme Court offered further protections for those not practicing mainstream religious doctrines in the 1971 case of *Lemon v. Kurtzman*. This case established a three-part test to determine if any government activity was in violation of the symbolic wall of separation that was to be maintained between religion and government. This court decision determined that for a state action to be constitutional it must: be secular in nature, neither advance nor inhibit religion, nor foster excessive entanglement between church and state. The court cited the importance of avoiding the evils of "sponsorship, financial support, and active involvement of the sovereign in religious activity" (Vile 2010, 215). The court also recognized the importance of not allowing religious beliefs to lead the government to pass laws against actions that were considered non-mainstream by society. In *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972) Chief Justice Burger wrote that "A way of life that is odd or even erratic but interferes with no rights or interests of others is not to be condemned because it is different" (Vile 2010, 216). The court insisted that

just because a way of life appeared strange to the majority of the public, it could not be made illegal on that basis alone.

The federal Supreme Court has also handed down decisions protecting groups that have been discriminated against solely based on gender. In *Frontiero v. Richardson* (1973) the court found that the government's establishment of financial dependency on male employees was a violation of the Fifth Amendment's Due Process Clause. Justice Brennan wrote that classifications based on sex, like those based on race, alienage, and national origin "are inherently suspect and must therefore be subjected to close judicial scrutiny" (Vile 2010, 433). Brennan went on to write that sex, "like race and national origin, is an immutable characteristic determined solely by the accident of birth" and it "frequently bears no relation to ability to perform or contribute to society" (Vile 2010, 433).

The U.S. Supreme Court has also written decisions protecting the institution of marriage when its use was questioned by the majority of the population. During the 1960s, most American states had anti-miscegenation laws intended to control access to the institution of marriage. These laws specifically prohibited Caucasians and African Americans from legally marrying one another. In the landmark 1967 case of *Loving v. Virginia* a unanimous Supreme Court struck down all anti-miscegenation laws as unconstitutional. Chief Justice Warren found the laws to be violations of both the Equal Protection and Due Process clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment. According to Warren "the freedom to marry has long been recognized as one of the vital personal rights essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness by free men. Marriage is one of the basic civil rights of man, fundamental to our very existence and survival...Under our Constitution, the freedom to marry or not marry, a person of another race resides with the individual and cannot be infringed by the state" (Vile 2010, 412). The *Loving* decision was

instrumental in advancing the right of Americans to marry the partner of their choice without interference from the state.

Further federal court decisions have advanced the guaranteed constitutional rights of homosexual Americans. In the 1973 *Romer v. Evans* decision, the court found that a Colorado law banning any proactive protective legislation for homosexuals was unconstitutional. The Colorado legislation targeting homosexuals who may seek protective legislation in the future was considered a violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. According to Justice Kennedy, “Homosexuals, by state decree, are put in a solitary class with respect to transactions and relations in both private and governmental spheres...The amendment thus imposes a special disability upon those persons alone...The resulting disqualification of a class of persons from the right to seek specific protections from the law is unprecedented in our jurisprudence...it is a classification of persons undertaken for its own sake, something the Equal Protection Clause does not permit” (Vile 2010, 441).

The Court further recognized constitutional protections for homosexuals in the 2003 *Lawrence v. Texas* opinion. The court found a Texas law that defined sexual intercourse between individuals of the same sex as deviate to be an unconstitutional violation of the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Writing for the court, Justice Kennedy explained that “Laws prohibiting homosexual consensual conduct demean the lives of homosexuals and, in addition to criminal conviction, can result in stigma against them.” Justice Kennedy found “no legitimate state interest which can justify its intrusion into the personal and private life of the individual” (Vile 2010, 391). Justice Sandra Day O’Connor felt the Texas law “makes homosexuals unequal in the eyes of the law” by specifically outlawing homosexual but not

heterosexual sodomy (Vile 2010, 391). The court's decision recognized the inability of the government to discriminate against the lifestyle of homosexuals simply because they were different compared to the majority of heterosexual Americans.

Several state supreme courts have become involved in the protection of homosexual rights concerning the institution of marriage. The Hawaii Supreme Court found in the 1993 case of *Baehr v. Lewin* that the denial of marriage licenses to same-sex couples was a violation of the Hawaii state constitution (Hull 2001). The 2000 Vermont Supreme Court decision of *Baker v. Vermont* determined that same-sex couples in the state had constitutional access to all the rights and privileges of heterosexual married couples. The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court legalized same-sex marriage in the 2004 case of *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health* (Willets 2011). In 2008, the California Supreme Court ruled that a prohibition on same-sex marriages was a violation of the state constitution's equal protection clause (Randazzo, Waterman, and Fix 2011). This California case of *Perry v. Schwarzenegger* is currently on the docket to be argued before the U.S. Supreme Court in the spring of 2013.

American constitutional law is rich with a history of vindicating groups of people who have previously been denied constitutional liberties. Women, African Americans, minority religious groups, the disabled, homosexuals, and others have come to enjoy the civil liberties that had once been denied to them because the constitution provides a legal system that can examine and provide relief for dissatisfied groups. Some groups take longer than others to win the rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution but those rights are possible through the all-important process of judicial review.

Handout for American Constitutional Law

- **United State Constitution written in 1787 and ratified in 1788.**
 - **Basically created the federal government and regulated the relationship of the states with the new federal government and other states.**
 - **Article 1 – Created the Legislative Branch (Congress)**
 - **Article 2 – Created the Executive Branch (President)**
 - **Article 3 – Created the Judicial Branch (Supreme Court)**
 - **Article 4 – Defined the relationship between the states**
 - **Full Faith and Credit Clause (states honor the acts of other states)**
 - **Privileges and Immunities Clause (people from all states equal)**
 - **Article 5 – Amending the Constitution**
 - **Article 6 – Supremacy Clause (federal government supreme to states)**
 - **Article 7 – 9 states needed to ratify**
- **Primary responsibility of American courts is to balance the legitimate powers of the federal and state governments against the constitutionally guaranteed rights of the American people.**
 - **Constitution is unique in its ability to protect the rights of the minority**
 - **Federal Court Cases that have protected the rights of those with little political power**
 - **Engel v. Vitale (1962) – protected constitutional rights of Americans who choose not to subscribe to the religious beliefs of the majority.**
 - **Lemon v. Kurtzman (1971) – protected the wall of separation between religion and government.**
 - **Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972) – “A way of life that is odd or even erratic but interferes with no rights or interests of others is not to be condemned because it is different.” (Chief Justice Burger)**
 - **A way of life could not be made illegal just because it looked strange**
 - **Loving v. Virginia (1967) – ended ban on inter-racial marriages**
 - **“Marriage is one of the basic civil rights of man, fundamental to our very existence and survival...Under our Constitution, the freedom to marry or not marry...resides with the individual and cannot be infringed by the state.” (Chief Justice Warren)**
 - **Romer v. Evans (1993) – found a law banning any proactive protective legislation for homosexuals to be unconstitutional**
 - **Lawrence v. Texas (2003) – banned anti-sodomy laws**
 - **“Laws prohibiting homosexual consensual conduct demean the lives of homosexuals and...result in stigma against them.” (Justice Kennedy)**
 - **State Court Decisions that have protected the rights of those with little political power**
 - **Baehr v. Lewin (1993) – Hawaii Supreme Court protected gay marriage rights**
 - **Baker v. Vermont (1999) – Vermont Court determined same-sex couples must have same rights and privileges as heterosexuals. (First domestic partnerships)**
 - **Goodridge v. Department of Public Health (2004) – Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court legalized first same-sex marriage.**
 - **Perry v. Schwarzenegger (2008) – banning same-sex marriage violated the state of California’s equal protection clause.**

Appendix Four
Transcript for Experimental Group #2
(U.S. Constitution)

The United States Constitution was written in 1787, four years after the American Revolutionary War officially ended at the Treaty of Paris. The U.S. Constitution has proved to be one of the best and most efficient governing documents of all time as it is currently both the oldest and shortest active written constitution in the world. Overall, the constitution created the federal government and established the relationship between the American states. The constitution established the new government under a federal system which shared power between the central government and the state governments. Some powers were specifically given to the federal government, referred to as enumerated powers, while others were reserved to the state governments. One final characteristic of the constitution's new federal government is that it was restrained. Several passages in the original constitution specifically limit the powers of the federal government and the state governments. In 1791, the Bill of Rights was passed further limiting the federal government's ability to exercise power over the people of the new American Republic (Wasserman 2011).

The original constitution, not including the 27 amendments that would follow, is made up of seven sections called articles. The overall design of these seven articles is quite simple. Article One established the federal legislative branch of government, identifying the institution's powers and listing specific limitations on those powers. Article Two established the federal executive branch of government, specifying the individual powers of the newly created president and identifying qualifications for the position. Article Three created the federal judicial branch of government, only specifically mentioning the Supreme Court while giving Congress the

power to create lower federal courts as needed. To summarize, the first three articles of the U.S. Constitution created Congress, the President, and the Supreme Court.

Having created the three branches of the new federal government in the first three articles, the fourth article dealt with the relationship between the already-existing states and the newly created federal government. Article Four begins with the Full Faith and Credit Clause. This clause mandated that full faith and credit be given in each state to the public acts, records, and judicial proceedings of every other state. This clause guarantees that states will recognize marriages, contracts, wills, legal awards, and other transactions that other states have approved within their jurisdictions (Vile 2011). This clause ensures that a man and woman who get married in one state do not have to get remarried if they move to another state. This clause also allows an individual with a driver's license issued by one state to travel into another state without having to acquire a new license in order to legally drive within that state. In the previous two examples, each state will give full faith and credit to the marriage license and drivers license issued by another state. The Full Faith and Credit Clause can be seen as adding the "united" to the United States of America.

Another important element of Article Four can be found in the Privileges and Immunities Clause. This clause guarantees that the citizens of each state will be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in all other states. This is simply another obligation that states owe to one another under the constitution. In general, this clause requires states to treat visitors from other states as they would treat their own residents. States cannot deny employment opportunities to outsiders or prevent citizens of other states from having access to courts or purchasing real estate. This provision of the constitution prevents a married couple from one state from being treated differently than the married couples in another state in which they have moved. This

provision prevents an individual's driver's license from one state from being limited in terms of its validity and proper use in a different state. Overall, this clause is intended to ensure that citizens in one state will be treated relatively the same in all states. This clause gives Americans from one state the same rights in all states they may visit or live.

Article Five is seen as one of the more important reasons the U.S. Constitution is the oldest written constitution in the world because it allows the constitution to change over time. Article Five allows the constitution to be amended if a majority of people are so inclined. This article allows 2/3 of both houses of Congress or 2/3 of state legislatures to propose constitutional amendments. Following this requirement, if 3/4 of state legislatures or 3/4 of state conventions accept a proposed constitutional amendment, that amendment then becomes a new addition to the constitution. The power to amend the constitution has allowed the American democratic experiment to evolve with the ever-changing world over the last two-and-one-quarter centuries.

Article Six details one of the more important characteristics of the new federal government and the new system of federalism created by the constitution. Article Six mandates that the new constitution, and the laws of the United States which are made under the power of the constitution, are to be the supreme law of the land. This Supremacy Clause identifies the federal government, and the constitution that created it, as the supreme law within the new republic. This was an important provision for the Framers of the constitution who were creating a new form of government from scratch. In giving powers to the federal government and the state governments, a system of government called federalism, the Framers of the constitution had to contemplate the possibility that the federal government and the state governments would disagree on laws affecting citizens of both governing bodies. In the case of disagreement between the states and the federal government, the supremacy clause identifies the federal

government as the eternal winner. Historically, the ultimate test of the constitution's Supremacy Clause is generally considered to have been the American Civil War. The importance of the Supremacy Clause is further supported by Article Six's requirement that all individuals holding executive, legislative, or judicial office at the state or federal level take an oath to support the Constitution of the United States.

There are several other elements of the U.S. Constitution that are vitally important to life within the Republic that are found within the 27 Amendments that have been added to the constitution over the last 226 years. The First Amendment includes the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause. These two clauses are generally referred to incorrectly when someone describes the constitution's freedom of religion. The Establishment Clause prohibits Congress from passing any laws that recognize the establishment of religion. This simply means that the federal government cannot choose a religion that will be recognized as the official religion of the nation. The Free Exercise Clause prohibits Congress from passing any laws that inhibit an individual's ability to freely exercise his or her religious beliefs. These two clauses protect Americans from the religious persecution of the majority if their lifestyles are not in line with popular religious doctrine.

The Ninth Amendment is underestimated in its importance because it has not received a great deal of judicial attention throughout American constitutional law history. The Ninth Amendment ensures that any of the liberties not specifically discussed in the Constitution are not automatically denied to the American people. The Ninth Amendment reserves all un-specified rights to the American people. This prevents the government of the United States from denying Americans rights that were not specifically mentioned in the Constitution.

Finally, the Fourteenth Amendment represents one of the most important amendments passed since the Bill of Rights. Ratified soon after the American Civil War, the Fourteenth Amendment made all persons born or naturalized in the U.S. formal American citizens. This was primarily done to ensure citizenship for the millions of ex-slaves living throughout the nation. In addition, the Fourteenth Amendment incorporated almost all of the protections of the Bill of Rights to state governments. Until the passage of the Fourteenth, the protections of the Bill of Rights only applied to the federal government, not the states. The Fourteenth Amendment prohibited all state governments from denying life, liberty, or property without due process of law, much as the Fifth Amendment had done concerning the federal government. The Fourteenth Amendment also applied the Privileges and Immunities Clause to state governments. Finally, The Fourteenth Amendment prohibited state governments from denying to any person the equal protection of the laws.

The U.S. Constitution is made up of the seven original articles and 27 amendments passed over the last 226 years (with the first ten being ratified at the same time in 1791). This founding document created one of the most powerful governments in the history of human civilization while also guaranteeing the rights of the people. One of the most revolutionary characteristics of the American Constitution is that it created a government that derived its power from the consent of the governed, not the divine right of hereditary blood lines or the brutal force of military strength. Another unique characteristic of the American Constitution is that it has allowed groups who were once oppressed and discriminated against to eventually win legal and political rights in the future as the young nation continues to evolve and progress.

**Handout for Experimental Group #2
U.S. Constitution**

- **United States Constitution written in 1787 and ratified in 1789.**
 - The Constitution created the federal government and established the relationship between the states.
 - The Constitution established the new government under a federal system which shared power between the central government and the state governments.
- **The original Constitution, prior to the ratification of a total of 27 amendments, was made up of seven sections called articles.**
 - Article One established the federal legislative branch and identified that institution's specific powers and the limits on those powers.
 - Article Two established the federal executive branch and identified that institution's specific powers and position qualifications.
 - Article Three established the federal judicial branch which only included the one Supreme Court while giving Congress the power to create lower courts as needed.
 - Article Four dealt with the relationship between the state and federal governments.
 - **Full Faith & Credit Clause**
 - Full faith and credit must be given in each state to the public acts, records, and judicial proceedings of every other state.
 - This guarantees that states will recognize marriages, contracts, wills, legal awards, and other transactions approved by other states.
 - The Full Faith and Credit Clause added the "united" to the United States of America.
 - **Privileges & Immunities Clause**
 - Guarantees that the citizens of each state will be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in all other states.
 - This prevents married couples from one state from being treated differently than the married couples in another state if they move.
 - This clause requires states to treat visitors from other states as they would treat their own residents.
 - Article Five allows the Constitution to be amended.
 - Article Six mandates that the new Constitution, and the laws of the United States, are to be the supreme law of the land.
 - This Supremacy Clause identifies the federal government, and the Constitution that created it, as the supreme law within the new republic.
 - In the case of disagreement between the states and the federal government, the supremacy clause identifies the federal government as the eternal winner.
 - The American Civil War represents the ultimate test of the Supremacy Clause.
 - Individuals holding executive, legislative, or judicial office at the state or federal level take an oath to support the Constitution of the United States.
- **Several other elements of the U.S. Constitution are vitally important to life within the Republic.**
 - The 1st Amendment's Establishment Clause and Free Exercise Clause.
 - The 9th Amendment's reservation of rights not mentioned to the people.

- **The 14th Amendment's naturalization of native-born people, incorporation of the Bill of Rights to the states, and the equal protection of the law from state governments.**

Appendix Five
Transcript for Experimental Group #3
(Equality Frame)

Following the death of Eileen, her partner of fifteen years, Holly discovered that she did not have the legal authority to carry out Eileen's wishes to be cremated. In fact, she came to discover that doctors could even have barred her from seeing her dying spouse in the hospital. At work, Holly was not permitted to take bereavement leave. Then she was forced to pay taxes on Eileen's property without any benefit of a marital tax deduction, and to make matters worse, even though Holly inherited most of Eileen's estate, Eileen's family refused to permit her to be the administrator of the estate. All of these problems existed because Holly did not have the legal ability to marry Eileen, who happened to be the same sex as Holly. Holly's story provides a stark reminder that granting 1,049 federal rights and privileges to one class of persons and categorically denying them to another is a gross violation of fundamental principles of equality (Arguing Equality 2013).

In America today, equality can be considered a near-universally accepted important word. It is almost unimaginable to think of Americans being treated unequally before the law based simply on their race, religion, or gender. While racial, gender, and religious inequalities have existed in America's past, many current Americans believe these discriminatory elements of American history to be exactly that, history. However, if you are a gay or lesbian American living in 2013, the majority of American states possess constitutional limitations on your ability to marry a person of the same sex. This unequal treatment of Americans will make up the next few minutes of this lecture.

Supporters of marriage equality have commonly invoked the U.S. Supreme Court's 1967 decision in the case of *Loving v. Virginia*. There, the Court held that Virginia's criminalization

of interracial marriage violated two provisions of the U.S. Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment: the equal protection clause and the liberty element of the due process clause. The equal protection clause was violated by laws banning interracial marriage because Virginia's law could be explained only as the product of illegitimate racial prejudice. The liberty element of the due process clause was considered to have been violated due to the fact that the state of Virginia denied Mildred and Richard Loving "the freedom to marry" that "has long been recognized as one of the vital personal rights essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness by free men." Restricting marriage to opposite-sex couples likewise relies on prejudiced, or empirically dubious, propositions about gay people and their families, and denies them a status that confers dignity and a large number of tangible entitlements central to modern life (Karlan 2011).

Lacking the legal equality shared by heterosexual Americans can create unequal fiscal challenges for same-sex couples. Same-sex couples experience many economic challenges not faced by their heterosexual counterparts. For example, federal estate tax laws ensure that same-sex couples suffer from inequality even after death. Estate tax laws usually offer married heterosexual couples the opportunity to transfer unlimited assets to their spouses at the time of their deaths, preventing their surviving spouses from having to pay estate taxes while still alive. Same-sex couples, lacking the ability to join legally recognized marriages also lack the legal protections found within these estate tax deferrals. Instead of being protected by estate tax laws, same-sex couples are often forced to pay high taxes after the death of a loved one when they would have been spared this economic hindrance had they been involved in a heterosexual marriage. In 2010, this inability to enjoy spousal estate tax deferrals, based on their inability to become legally married, cost same-sex married couples to pay an average of \$1.1 million in estate taxes that would have been avoided had they been legally married. Lacking equal

protection of the law costs many same-sex couples significant economic hardships not shared by their heterosexual neighbors (Steinberger 2009).

Unequal treatment of same-sex couples can also affect retirement plans. Same-sex couples must plan for the financial challenges of retirement with unequal access to institutions and public programs that help workers save for and manage that phase of their lives. The lack of legal recognition for the same-sex partners of employees results in unequal treatment in employers' retirement plans. Many same-sex couples are treated differently than different-sex married couples in terms of employer-sponsored retirement plans. In addition, same-sex couples are unable to access social security spousal and survivor benefits. Surviving same-sex partners who have lower benefits than their deceased same-sex partner lose out on more than \$5,700 each year in survivor benefits that heterosexual married couples are able to access (Goldberg 2009).

Imagine if tomorrow, Congress enacted a law denying Jews the right to raise children together in a legally protected relationship. Or if by an act of law, African American couples who had lived together for years would no longer be permitted joint filing of tax returns, joint policies for their home, health or auto insurance. This is a daily reality for millions of gay and lesbian Americans. While it may not be readily apparent, marriage comes with a host of legal rights – 1,049 federal privileges and immunities to be exact. The following are rights that are enjoyed by heterosexual married couples but denied same-sex couples who are prevented by law from marrying their same-sex partners.

- Priority in being appointed guardian of an incapacitated spouse or in being recognized as acting for an incapacitated spouse in making health care decisions.
- The right to not have to testify against a spouse in court.

- The right to receive, or the obligation to provide, spousal support and (in the event of divorce) alimony and an equitable division of property.
- The right to conjugal visits with a spouse who is incarcerated in prison.
- The right to priority in claiming human remains and in making anatomical donations on behalf of a deceased spouse.
- The right for a non-American spouse to qualify as an “immediate relative” and gain American citizenship under federal law.
- The right to bring a lawsuit for the wrongful death of a spouse and for the intentional infliction of emotional distress through harm to a spouse.
- The right to file a joint bankruptcy petition with a spouse.
- The right to 59 distinct income tax deductions, credits, and exemptions.

These are only a few of the privileges and immunities that are afforded married couples and, by definition, denied same-sex couples who lack, not the will but, the legal right to get married.

This unequal treatment of same-sex couples has created a contemporary population of second-class citizens nearly sixty years after the Supreme Court outlawed such practices in their landmark decision in *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka Kansas*. The American principle of legal equality before the law is not being afforded to potentially nine million Americans in 2013. Almost four percent of Americans being openly and legally discriminated against is difficult for many to comprehend. That’s nearly one in twenty Americans being denied, on a daily basis, their constitutionally guaranteed access to equal protection of the law (Williams Institute 2013).

At some point, the Supreme Court will recognize that it is unconstitutional to exclude gays and lesbians from the benefits of marriage. Anti-gay-marriage laws will be viewed with the

same condemnation as anti-miscegenation laws. Justice Scalia may think it obvious that the Constitution's framers could never have envisioned that result-but neither would they have foreseen a world in which sex and race-based distinctions are presumptively unconstitutional. The Constitution is not static; it reflects the nation's deepest commitments, and adapts as those commitments evolve. Contemporary America has witnessed an evolution of public opinion that values equality for all persons that is not limited by race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation (Cole 2012).

Handout for Experimental Group #3 Equality Frame

- American homosexuals experience a gross violation of the fundamental American principle of equality.
- Contemporary American ideology values equality in an almost universal manner.
 - It would be almost impossible for American laws to be passed that:
 - Provided unequal treatment based on race, religion, or gender
 - Openly discriminated against groups in the minority for religious reasons.
 - The majority of American states possess legal limitations on homosexual American's abilities to marry a person of the same sex.
- Supporters of marriage equality often cite the U.S. Supreme Court's 1967 decision in the case of *Loving v. Virginia*.
 - The Court held that Virginia's criminalization of interracial marriage violated two provisions of the U.S. Constitution's 14th Amendment:
 - The Equal Protection Clause was violated by laws banning interracial marriage because those laws were the product of illegitimate racial prejudices.
 - The liberty element of the Due Process Clause was violated because the law denied "the freedom to marry" that "has long been recognized as one of the vital personal rights essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness by free men."
- Lacking legal equality presents homosexual Americans with several unequal fiscal challenges.
 - Federal estate laws are not applied to same-sex marriage couples.
 - Lacking access to federal estate tax deferments cost some homosexuals to pay \$1.1 million in 2010 that would not have been paid had they been heterosexual.
 - Same-sex couples do not have equal access to public programs that help heterosexual couples plan for retirement.
 - Same-sex couples also have unequal access to employer-controlled retirement plans.
 - Same-sex couples have no access to federal social security spousal and survivor benefits.
 - This cost an average of \$5,700 each year to survivors of same-sex couples.
 - There are a total of 1,049 federal privileges and immunities afforded to married heterosexual couples that are denied same-sex couples.
 - Priority in being appointed guardian of an incapacitated spouse.
 - The right to not testify against a spouse.
 - Right to receive spousal support or the equitable division of property.
 - The right to priority in claiming human remains and making organ donations.
 - The right for non-American spouse to qualify as an immediate relative and gain citizenship.
 - The right to 59 distinct income tax deductions, credits, and exemptions.
 - Contemporary American legal realities create a second-class citizenship for homosexuals nearly sixty years after *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka* Kansas prohibited such treatment in public education facilities.

- **Potentially 9 million Americans are not receiving equal protection of the law.**
 - **1 in 20 Americans are treated unequally before the law.**
- **The Constitution is not static; it reflects the nation's deepest commitments, and adapts as those commitments evolve.**

Appendix Six
Transcript for Experimental Group #4
(Golden Rule Frame)

The Golden Rule, or the ethic of reciprocity, is found in the scripture of nearly every religion. It is often regarded as the most concise and general principle of ethics. It is a condensation in one principle of all longer lists of ordinances. Several religious texts describe this rule as the ultimate responsibility of all true believers. It has been said to be so important that a proper adherence to it can overcome almost all transgressions built up over an entire lifetime.

Many examples of the Golden Rule can be found in the texts of most religious groups throughout the history of human civilization. For example, practitioners of Judaism and Christianity can both be seen to fall under the tenants of the Golden Rule when one reads the following lines from the Old Testament's Book of Leviticus which is the original reference to the Golden Rule in the history of civilization; "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The Talmud also discusses the importance of the Golden Rule when it says; "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor: that is the whole Torah; all the rest of it is commentary; go and learn." The Book of Leviticus goes further to specifically instruct all people to be treated well, whether domestic or foreign when it said "But treat them just as you treat your own citizens. Love foreigners as you love yourselves, because you were foreigners one time in Egypt. I am the Lord your God."

Christians are called to follow the doctrine of the Golden Rule after reading the New Testament's Book of Matthew which records Jesus Christ saying "Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them." The Book of Mathew also records the following conversation; "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the

great and first commandment. And a second is like it, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depends all the law and the prophets.” Loving one’s neighbor as one loves himself/herself was literally described as the second most important thing good Christians could do in their lives. This was not said by a brilliant contemporary political philosopher but Christ Himself.

Those of the Islamic faith are also called to the principles of the Golden Rule after reading the Forty Hadith which says “Not one of you is a believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.” Here, Muslims are told that they cannot be true followers of Islam until they love their brothers and to allow them to have the same things that they themselves love. Another reference to the Golden Rule found in Islam is “That which you want for yourself, seek for mankind.” and “The most righteous person is the one who consents for other people what he consents for himself, and who dislikes for them what he dislikes for himself.” Loving a particular item or institution for oneself and then denying it to others literally keeps the followers of Islam from being able to legitimately call themselves followers of Islam.

The Golden Rule is not just found in the three Abrahamic religions. Those who follow the teachings of Buddha are also guided in their treatment of others by the following statements: “Just as I am so are they, just as they are so am I.” “Here am I, fond of my life, not wanting to die, fond of pleasure and averse from pain. Suppose someone should rob me of my life...it would not be a thing pleasing and delightful to me. If I, in my turn, should rob of his life one fond of his life, not wanting to die, one fond of pleasure and averse from pain, it would not be a thing pleasing or delightful to him. For a state that is not pleasant or delightful to me must also be to him also; and a state that is not pleasing or delightful to me, how could I inflict that upon

another?" Here, the Buddha is directly saying that it is wrong to deny to others something that an individual finds pleasurable himself/herself.

The Golden Rule can also be found in the texts of Confucianism. Examples of this can be seen in the following teachings of Confucius; "Try your best to treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself, and you will find that this is the shortest way to benevolence." and when asked if there was one word that could serve as a principle of conduct for life Confucius replied "It is the word shu—reciprocity: Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you." In other words, Confucius was saying that in order to conduct your life in the best manner possible, do not deny others those things that you yourself enjoy or force onto others those things that you yourself do not have to experience. Confucius also said "Never impose on others what you would not choose for yourself." as well as "Regard your neighbor's gain as your won gain, and your neighbor's loss as your own loss."

The religious doctrines of Hinduism proclaim that "One should not behave towards others in a way which is disagreeable to oneself. This is the essence of morality. All other activities are due to selfish desire." African Traditional Religions have said "One going to take a pointed stick to pinch a baby bird should first try it on himself to feel how it hurts." Ancient Greek philosopher Isocrates said "Do not do to others what would anger you if done to you by others." In addition, Socrates was recorded as saying "...it has been shown that to injure anyone is never just anywhere." Roman philosopher Seneca summed up the Roman belief in reciprocity when he said "It is not so, as you might believe, that one is made happy through the unhappiness of others." Sikhism teaches "I am a stranger to no one, and no one is a stranger to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all." Even the Wiccan religious doctrine says "that which ye deem harmful unto

thyself, the very same shall ye be forbidden from doing unto another, for violence and hatred give rise to the same.”

In the realm of secular philosophy, the Golden Rule can be seen as the basis for the contemporary concept of human rights, where each individual has a right to just treatment, and a reciprocal responsibility to ensure justice for others. This concept of human rights can be traced to the writings of 18th century French political theorist Jean Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau’s theories were influential in the development of the political theories of American political leaders like Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Benjamin Franklin. These political theorists in late 18th century America incorporated Rousseau’s ideals into the “inalienable rights” discussed in the American Declaration of Independence in 1776.

In summary, the Golden Rule can be found in all of the prominent, and non-prominent, religious doctrines throughout the history of recorded human civilization. This Golden Rule has displayed an immense amount of staying power due to its overwhelming simplicity and the difficulty one would experience trying to refute it. It can be seen as a basic characteristic of the human condition to want to be treated fairly by those around you and, in turn, recognize a basic responsibility to treat others as you would wish to be treated. The fundamental basis of the universal Golden Rule can be seen in an almost instinctive drive to treat others the way we would want to be treated. To give others access to the same activities that bring us joy, while not simultaneously harming those around us. To respect the rights of others in the same way we expect and demand our own rights to be respected. Finally, to identify the humanity in others that we see in ourselves and to treat all people accordingly.