

# The Significant Step Towards Validation of Same-Sex Marriage

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**ABSTRACT:** *The present research investigated whether the adoption of government policy, which signals the prevailing views of the local majority, was associated with changes in the attitudes of people in a given area. In particular, we looked at whether state-by-state same-sex marriage legislation was associated with reductions in implicit and explicit anti-gay prejudice, using about 1 million answers collected over a 12-year time span. Over the course of five operationalizations, the results consistently offer evidence in support of this hypothesis. The prevalence of implicit and overt discrimination declined before the legalization of same-sex marriage; however, the rate of decline increased following the legalization. Whether or not states enacted laws at the state level was intended to mitigate this effect. While states that passed legislation reported a larger reduction in anti-gay prejudice after federal legalization, those that did not approve legislation reported an increase in anti-gay bias following the federal legalization of homosexuality. Even though people's views may be deeply entrenched and dynamic in terms of social and political context, our study demonstrates how government policies may influence individual attitudes.*

**KEYWORDS:** Attitudes, Behaviors, IAT, Legalization, Same-Sex Marriage.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Social norms may have a significant impact on people's actions and attitudes. The majority of the time, individuals alter their beliefs and actions in order to conform to the established standards in their community. Norms are not inherently obvious and must sometimes be derived from other factors. People have a tendency to infer and enhance social standards as a result of their social interactions. When you examine the implicit presence of social norms, it is probable that the attitudes and actions that are deemed acceptable will change through time. Through cognitive dissonance, an individual may choose to maintain a normatively agreed-upon behaviour, even if they personally disagree with it on some level[1].

In particular, to the extent that one continuously adjusts their behaviour to be consistent with perceived standards; personal views, including prejudice towards social groupings, may often alter over time. The present research focuses on the role played by local governments in communicating such standards to the public at large. Our research investigates whether changes in local government policies that benefitted a disadvantaged social group had an impact on people's biases towards that group.

For a variety of reasons, legislation enacted by a democratic government may be seen as a model to be followed by others. The exact meaning of democracy is "rule of the people," and a democracy is ideally a form of government in which elected representatives make laws that are aligned with the interests of the majority of the population. As a practical matter, while the process by which legislation is drafted is much more complex, individuals will typically interpret laws within a democratic framework in order to reflect the desire of the majority of the population. As a result, individuals may view legislation that has been passed as being compatible with the values and beliefs of the majority[2].

People draw the conclusion that policies chosen by a group reflect the support of the group even though the policy was not enacted by a majority of the organization's members in accordance with this viewpoint. As a result, laws that have been enacted may be seen as a strong representation of the values that exist in a municipality. If there is any law that has an impact on the effects of certain socioeconomic classes, this legislation may be regarded more broadly as reflecting prevailing cultural views about such groups. As a result of contextual cues, people's perceptions of social standards may shift over time, according to research. Individuals may also learn through local legislation to what extent they may be in the majority or minority, and as a result, how acceptable it is to express any views toward certain social classes[3].

The ability to examine the impact of government policy on views toward disadvantaged social groups is very uncommon; nevertheless, there is some evidence that government policy can influence attitudes toward disadvantaged social groups. For example, after the legalization of interracial marriage in 1978, there was a 60 percent increase in support for interracial marriage, a trend that many academics have ascribed in part to the

Supreme Court's ruling. Following Donald Trump's election as President of the United States in 2016, participants saw an increase in the acceptability of racism towards stigmatized groups in recent history, particularly in recent years. Additional experimental data supports these results, demonstrating that the presentation of consensus evidence causes changes in the views of those who are involved.

A interesting development, legalization of same-sex marriage provides a chance to investigate the connection between municipal legislation and the views of people. This is because, despite the fact that, as of June 26, 2015, 35 states and Washington, DC have legalized same-sex marriage at the state level in some form or another prior to this date at different points during the preceding 11 years, the right to marry remained fundamental and inalienable. It is possible to obtain this pattern of legalization over time through a natural, quasi-experimental design that includes multiple groups and disrupted time series. This design, which mitigates many of the challenges to causal conclusions that are typically associated with observational evidence, allows for phased treatments across groups (states).

When it comes to whether or not government policy has an impact on people's views, the data is conflicting. The ability of organizations to influence human attitudes about political or social problems is variable, although attitudes toward contentious topics requiring personal contacts or strong religious and political convictions are more difficult to influence in certain cases. As a result, it may have a lower likelihood of influencing public opinion on the legalization of same-sex marriage and sexuality issues in general[4].

There has only been a small amount of prior study on the impact of legalizing same-sex marriage on personal views, and the results have been inconsistent. As an example, researchers discovered greater support for the legalization of same-sex marriage once it was made legal, but only among specific demographic categories, and their data was limited to Iowa. A number of other states found that their attitudes toward homosexual men and lesbians had improved following legalization, while three states were limited to the panel's findings.

According to researchers who examined data from a nationally representative two-wave panel, citizens of states with same-sex marriage legalization laws experienced the greatest reduction in overt anti-gay prejudice. However, these data were collected for a plurality of legalizing states before state-level legalization and before national legalization. Recent research focused on the one-year period around federal legalization revealed that there was no change in attitudes toward homosexual persons following legalization, but that there was an improvement in expectations of social standards after legalization. We are expanding the scope of our investigation in a number of important ways[5].

Secondly, based on the study, we look at the attitudes of about 500,000-1 million people, while the biggest samples previously gathered were approximately 1,000 people. Second, in contrast to prior studies that collected data during 1- to 2-year periods, this research collected views about homosexual individuals across a 12-year period, providing a wider lens through which to detect consistency or change in societal opinions over time. Most importantly, the present research is the first to investigate attitudes assessed using methods that are less susceptible to social desirability rather than self-reports, which is a first in the field.

We examine how the legalization of same-sex marriage at the state level has changed both hidden and overt anti-gay prejudice over time. Bias may be assessed in two ways: relatively directly (i.e. explicitly) or implicitly (i.e., implicitly). Implicitly calculated biases are thought to represent relatively intentional and conscious mental processes, often predicting deliberate decisions and behaviors, whereas unconscious biases have traditionally been conceptualized as representing less deliberate or regulated processes that can affect judgments and behaviors without the individual's knowledge or consent[6].

The answers to particular questions (e.g., "How warmly or coldly do you feel towards gay men and lesbians?") have been used in all prior research examining changes in views about homosexual persons as a consequence of the legalization of same-sex marriage. These earlier findings may have been at least in part attributable to respondents' unwillingness to disclose actions that were at variance with their perceptions of what was expected of them.

Therefore, it is necessary to examine such views using measures that are less susceptible to social desirability than overt self-reported attitudes in order to draw conclusions about whether or not changing government legislation would have an impact on real attitudes among people. Using implicit tests to determine bias solves

this problem because they measure bias indirectly from the speed or precision of the response rather than from the substance of the response itself. implicit tests are used to determine bias because they measure bias indirectly from the speed or precision of the response. This point of concern is addressed in the present research, which examines the evolution of both implicit and overt anti-gay biases.

### *1.1 The Current Research:*

In order to track down participants who participated in unconscious and explicit anti-gay prejudice treatments at Project Implicit, we geo-located about 1 million respondents. A website called [projectimplicit.org](http://projectimplicit.org) has been up and operating since 2002, and it allows visitors to take an implicit association test (IAT), which is one indication of implicit bias. The overwhelming bulk of study on discrimination has focused on individuals, but researchers have just lately started to investigate correlations between various results by geo-locating the millions of answers to Project Implicit, which has collected data from all around the world[7].

In line with the study finding that social norms influence personal views and vice versa, we will collect evidence in favor of our hypothesis if implicit and explicit anti-gay prejudice reduced following state-level legalization. In other words, we predicted that changes in government policy would result in changes in the behaviors of individuals who are impacted by the policies on a local level. Our results were made possible by the manner in which same-sex marriage was legalized in the United States at the state level, as described in the previous section. In order to achieve legalization, phased treatments were administered to groups in a regular, quasi-experimental setting with several groups and a disturbed time sequence (i.e., states).

The fact that we have a large number of bias findings both before and after legalization, as well as the fact that the procedure (that is, legalizing same-sex marriage) was carried out in a phased fashion over a 12-year period in a diverse sample of different states, makes it unlikely that an unmeasured variable could be responsible for the observed reductions in bias. Due to the empirical nature of the information, this approach does not provide convincing proof of causation[8].

Nonetheless, it allows for more certain conclusions on whether the legalization of same-sex marriage was a contributing factor to the declines in implicit and explicit bias in anti-gay communities. Implicit and explicit anti-gay biases have been regressed in various models on our main interest variables (i.e., time and whether the date was before or after the legalization of same-sex marriage) and demographic factors, with varied results. At the respondent level, all models for gender, age, and racial majority-minority status were checked to ensure that they were accurate. There are no models that are not controlled at the state level when it comes to average employment rates, education, salaries, and population density. When zero-order correlations were tested, the findings were almost identical[9].

We make the assumption that our first model is the most effective test of our hypothesis, and we restrict testing to individuals who have identified as heterosexual. We did, however, perform a number of additional investigations on variations of this dataset to verify that our findings were not the consequence of skewed researcher decisions made throughout the analysis process. Model 2 comprised individuals of various sexual orientations in order to verify that our original results were not attributable to the sexual orientation of our sample. Model 3 addressed the question of generalizability by reproducing our findings using a nationally representative American National Election Studies (ANES) dataset employing a self-identifying heterosexual population, as opposed to the previous two models. Model 4 examined changes in bias after the legalization of same-sex marriage in states that enacted legislation locally versus states that legalized same-sex marriage only after the federal legalization of same-sex marriage was passed. We used a "multiverse" method, assessing how steady our effects were over the course of studies on unavoidable subjective researcher choices. We investigate the impact of legalizing same-sex marriage on both implicit and explicit prejudice using a variety of models and findings. The consistency of our results across all research is an even stronger argument in our favor[10].

## **2. DISCUSSION**

According to the National Health Interview Survey conducted in 2013, there are about 690,000 same-sex couples in the United States, according to the data. As a result of the highly politicized nature of problems surrounding same-sex partnerships, there has been an on-going political, legal, and societal debate about these issues. Researchers have been pushed to offer more information about this group as their visibility has grown in recent

decades, which has resulted in an explosion of study into same-sex relationships. Historically marginalized by society and society's institutions, same-sexual couples are more vulnerable than heterosexual couples when it comes to the health of their relationships. They will very certainly face both normal life stresses that affect all couples and minority stressors that are linked with being a member of a stigmatized group while attempting to establish good partnerships.

Efforts to address the consequences of various kinds of sexual minority stress on the well-being of same-sex relationships have grown in recent decades, with increased attention being paid to this issue. Despite the fact that there is no universally accepted "optimal" or "correct" time point at which to conduct a meta-analytical literature review on a specific topic, the necessity and importance of systematically reviewing the current research on the relationship between sexual minority stress and same-sex relationship well-being have been highlighted by a number of considerations. History has shown that there has been significant variation in the legal choices accessible to same-sex couples throughout time, which is likely a contributing factor to the substantial variation in their relationship histories across various generations.

As a result, even if they may continue to be socially stigmatized, same-sex couples' relationship experiences may be (at least somewhat) different before and after the introduction of the United States' national legalization of same-sex marriage (i.e., *Obergefell v. Hodges*). Due to the historic nature of the marriage equality decision, it is imperative for scholars who are interested in the effects of sexual minority stress on same-sex relationship well-being to evaluate what has been done and what is not known about this topic, and to use this social policy reform as an opportunity to develop a scientifically driven agenda for moving research in this field forward.

Due to the fact that the studies included in this analysis were all conducted prior to the legalization of same-sex marriage across the United States, this study may provide a systematic overview of research conducted within a specific historical time period and lay the groundwork for future research. Given the fact that research in this area is still in its infancy, there may be questions regarding whether there has been a sufficient number of studies conducted to date to allow for the execution of a meta-analysis. The fact that research in this area has been steadily increasing in recent years is noteworthy, as is the fact that the number of reports included in the current study is similar to the number of reports included in previously published meta-analyses on marriage and family problems.

In addition, because it is clear that research on this topic (i.e., sexual minority stress and same-sex relationship well-being) will increase dramatically and rapidly over the next few decades, a systematic and critical meta-analytic review of the newly emerged (yet still a substantial amount of) research in this domain can effectively guide this field to get on the right tracks and develop in the future.

### 3. CONCLUSION

We find compelling evidence in support of the notion that changes in local government policy are responsible for variations in people's behaviour. According to our findings, which are consistent with previous research, both unconscious and explicit anti-gay prejudice reduced or remained constant over time prior to the legalization of same-sex marriage. However, on average, anti-gay racism dropped at a faster rate when legislation was passed that was seen to be inclusive of this disadvantaged group, according to the study. This conclusion is consistent with prior study findings showing citizens of states that have passed state-level legislation have seen the greatest decrease in anti-gay views of their neighbors. There is consistent evidence for five different operationalizations, as well as data from two different sources.

The limited "multiverse" approach that we used to get our findings helps to guarantee that these outcomes are robust to any future subjective choices made by the researchers. Given its quasi-experimental design, which includes multiple groups and time intervals staggered over time, the natural progression of same-sex marriage legalization across the United States mitigates many of the difficulties in determining cause and effect that are typically associated with observational evidence. According to the results, there may be a mutual reinforcing effect between actions and laws in the future. More specifically, since results generally indicate that views about the homosexual community changed prior to legalization in all jurisdictions, shifting attitudes toward same-sex marriage may have served as an incentive and source of support for both state and federal legalization, according to the findings. In essence, these laws were enacted to reinforce and solidify positive attitudes about lesbians and gay men in society.

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