

THE POLITICS OF DISGUST:
PUBLIC OPINION TOWARD LGBTQ PEOPLE & POLICIES

by

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Dedication

For my parents, Susan and Lawrence, who gave me everything.

For my sister, Erin, who makes me a better person.

This would not have been possible without your love.

And for the thousands (millions) of queer and trans people who we have lost to violence, hate, and ignorance - all too often fueled by disgust. You are not forgotten.

I hope that this small effort might lead to some small relief for us all someday.

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Chapter 1:
Introduction

On June 26, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court legalized gay marriage nationwide. For many, this decision was emblematic of the enormous and seemingly rapid gains made by LGBTQ people over the past thirty years. Yet just a few short months later, the LGBTQ community in Houston, Texas experienced a startling defeat when anti-discrimination protections – a policy issue that enjoys supermajority support in every state in the nation (Flores et al 2015) – were rejected 61%-39% at the ballot, following egregiously transphobic bathroom-centered ads and rhetoric. Since then, so called “bathroom bills” have been introduced in states and municipalities throughout the country, most notably North Carolina’s “HB2.”

The specificity of this moment – the sudden hyper-visibility of transgender issues and bathroom panic coming on the heels of legal marriage equality – exemplifies the complex, often conflicting roles of emotions in prejudice and politics. It also reveals or calls attention to the significant opposition that remains to LGBTQ people and issues. I argue that the emotion of disgust has played a critical role in the history of LGBTQ politics in America and continues to do so today as an important and underappreciated source of this continued opposition.

Disgust is a powerful tool in politics. Scholars in psychology, political science, and other fields have demonstrated that, across a variety of policy issues such as welfare, immigration, and LGBTQ politics, feeling disgust has significant political implications. Feeling disgust leads to harsher moral judgments, increased prejudices, avoidant and

distancing behavior, and “resistance to rational argument” (Cunningham et al 2013; Dasgupta et al 2009; Faulkner et al 2004; Inbar et al 2009; Navarrette & Fesler 2006; Olatunji 2008; Terrizzi et al 2010). The avoidant behavior is particularly relevant to LGBTQ politics, given that one of the central strategies of the gay movement has been the use of contact (Stone 2012) to reduce prejudice toward LGBTQ people. In other words, disgust contributes to prejudicial attitudes toward out groups (including sexual minorities) and deters the very behaviors (e.g., contact) often relied upon to combat these negative attitudes.

Additionally, disgust has been used to pass legislation and encode prejudice into political and social institutions (e.g., Canaday 2011; Foucault 1978; Nussbaum 2004; Rubin 1984). These actions illustrate how disgust operates both as a psychological phenomenon that structures interpersonal interactions, and as a sociopolitical norm that is taught, learned, reinforced, and embedded in cultures and institutions.

From the history of homosexuality as a diagnosable disease, to HIV/AIDS and fears of potential disease transmission, to modern day “culture wars” and fear of “moral contamination” or corruption, the historical association between homosexuality and disease/contagion has been and continues to be employed in political rhetoric to evoke and perpetuate disgust reactions among the public. Current LGBTQ policy issues, such as gay marriage, gay adoption, employment discrimination, and transgender rights, all grapple, with varying degrees of success, with disgust and its consequences. Gay rights organizations have responded, implicitly or otherwise, through their rhetoric and other persuasive strategies, often using normalizing and or assimilationist language (e.g., Warner 1999) that, in effect, seeks to diffuse disgust reactions: “We’re not so different or strange; we’re just like you; virtually normal” (e.g., Sullivan 1995). In short, disgust has influenced LGBTQ history, structured 20th and 21st century political opposition, and dictated LGBTQ activist strategies. Closer attention to the politics of disgust is vital for understanding both how LGBTQ politics in America arrived at this particular moment, and what lies ahead.

Paying critical attention to the politics of disgust is also important for many of the LGBTQ movement's general aspirations, as well as researchers' and scholars' own interests and goals. For example, even prior to the legalization of gay marriage, many activists and academics alike declared "Victory!" for the "Triumphant Gay Revolution."¹ However, this appearance of steady progress and the supposed inevitability of LGBTQ legal equality may lead to too-ambitious missteps. Careful attention to disgust and lingering negative attitudes toward LGBTQ people and issues will help illuminate a fuller understanding of the current political landscape as well as future obstacles, whereas assumptions that past progress will continue linearly and rapidly into the future may lead to costly mistakes.

For example, one lesson from Houston and the spate of bathroom bills in the past year is that support for LGBTQ issues may not be (1) as solid as believed, or (2) as transferable across different issues. Again, nondiscrimination protections are supported by a supermajority of residents in every state in the nation, and yet when put to a vote at the Houston ballot box and elsewhere around the country, these measures failed miserably (or in the case of the North Carolina legislature, anti-LGBTQ protections passed easily). This also suggests that public opinion on these issues is easily manipulated, subject to framing effects (Brewer 2003b; Hull 2001; Lofton & Haider-Markel 2007), social desirability bias (Powell 2013), language choices and wording effects (Flores 2015b; McCabe & Heerwig 2011), and other influences. This should give pause to scholars and advocates alike who seek to interpret polling data and political events.

Additionally, general support for LGBTQ people, or even specific support for a given issue, does not necessarily translate to support for another LGBTQ issue. The voters in Houston had previously elected out lesbian Annise Parker to be Houston's mayor three consecutive terms, yet still rejected these nondiscrimination protections while she was still in

¹ See, for example, Linda Hirshmann's 2012 book, *Victory: The Triumphant Gay Revolution: How a Despised Minority Pushed Back, Beat Death, Found Love, and Changed America for Everyone*.

office. As Mucciaroni (2008) argued in his book about the varying successes and failures of individual LGBTQ policies, “Different policies produce different politics (Lowi 1972).” They also evoke different emotions. Both academics and advocates should approach the study of public opinion more critically than bundling a variety of issues together and expecting common attitudes and common outcomes, simply because they happen to be more or less affiliated with the same group (i.e., LGBTQ people).

Finally, the LGBTQ context is still relatively new. Though sexuality has played a critical role in American history and politics (e.g., Canaday 2011), the current narrative of inevitable victory and continual progress risks scholars deeming “the issue” of LGBTQ politics already settled, thus putting away any related research agenda when there is still much more to learn about the roles of sexuality, gender, and more in politics. For example, how do people balance difference and inclusion? In what ways are the dynamics of LGBTQ politics similar to or distinct from the dynamics of racial politics, or class politics, or disability politics? If homophobia is the main reason why people oppose LGBTQ-friendly policies, then why do some individuals, for example, support nondiscrimination protections but not gay adoption, or support gay marriage but not transgender-friendly bathroom policies? What could the answers to these questions also tell us about gender or racial or class or disability politics in America?

This project seeks to lay out a theoretical framework for understanding the lingering prejudice and negative attitudes toward LGBTQ people and issues. Using a variety of methods, including quantitative analysis of public opinion data from the American National Election Studies, theory development and historical review, and original experimental analysis and survey research, this project examines how LGBTQ policy issues directly elicit disgust, how this disgust affects support for a number of important LGBTQ policy issues, and how disgust reactions and their impact differ in response to different subgroups of the LGBTQ community.

This project contributes to the broader literature of public opinion and political psychology by illustrating the ways in which emotions have policy-specific interactions. It also

demonstrates interactions between emotions and subgroups of a larger social group (e.g., different reactions to gay men than to transgender women). These findings are relevant across group politics literatures, as no single group is internally homogenous, and very few groups are concerned with or affected by only a single policy issue. This project also complements existing research on the contact hypothesis and its limitations in efforts to reduce intergroup prejudice. Taken together, these findings and implications provide a framework for examining the influence of disgust in other political domains, such as immigration or racial politics (e.g., Hancock 2004). The findings also suggest that continued success for the LGBTQ movement – and any other movement that confronts disgust – will require the understanding that disgust influences many beliefs and opinions, even among presumed supporters, and that new strategies based on engaging this difficult emotion will be vital.

I begin the dissertation by examining the conventional wisdom surrounding the massive shifts in public opinion toward LGBTQ issues in recent years. Then I discuss the importance of viewing disgust not just as an individual level experience, but as a social phenomenon reflective of dominant norms and values. I trace the thread of disgust through LGBTQ politics in the 20th century in America, showing that disgust has played an important historical role. I then use original survey-embedded experiments to examine the contemporary role of disgust in modern attitudes toward LGBTQ people and issues. I demonstrate that even the mention of LGBTQ policy issues elicits disgust, and that different LGBTQ policy issues elicit varying levels and intensities of disgust. I show that these disgust reactions correspond to declines in support for LGBTQ policies. I then go on to show that disgust reactions are particularly prevalent in attitudes toward transgender people, and transgender women in particular, as well as transgender related policies. I conclude by offering broader implications for public opinion research and political science more generally.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 2 begins with the commonly asked question, what has caused the remarkable shifts in public opinion toward LGBTQ people in recent years? Many argue it is the positive influence of contact, or the transformative effect of getting to know someone who is gay or lesbian. Using survey data from the American National Election Studies (ANES), I illustrate that the conventional wisdom surrounding the influence of contact is not as far-reaching or consistent as widely believed. Indeed, there are many people who know lesbian and gay people but do not support LGBTQ issues, or who support LGBTQ issues without knowing a single gay person. I argue that disgust is an important motivator of these findings, as well as a useful alternative to understanding modern attitudes.

In Chapter 3, I lay out a theoretical justification for the study of disgust in LGBTQ politics. Drawing from psychology (e.g., Herek 2004), feminist and queer theory (e.g., Cohen 1997; Rubin 1984), and legal and political theory (e.g., Canaday 2011; Nussbaum 2004), I argue that disgust operates not just as a psychological phenomenon, but also as a sociopolitical norm that is learned, reinforced, and embedded in cultures and institutions. Disgust reactions both express and reify existing dominant norms, and as such are more a reflection of what a particular culture (de)values, and not a signal of some inherent repugnance. Understanding disgust in this way is important because it shifts the focus from individual-level understandings and interventions (i.e., contact) to structural-level understandings of the systematic ways in which disgust is deployed in American politics, by whom, and at whose expense. Importantly, it also highlights that disgust can be *unlearned*.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I use a series of original experiments to examine the relationship between disgust, LGBT-related attitudes, and policy support. I show that, across party affiliations, many people still experience disgust in reaction to LGBTQ issues, with significant consequences for public opinion, policy support, and persuasion. I also illustrate how these

impacts vary by subgroup of the LGBTQ community - the strongest effects and largest drops in support are consistently in response to transgender people and issues. This reveals that, even following national events like the legalization of gay marriage, political questions surrounding social acceptance and rights for LGBTQ people are far from settled.

In the final chapter, I conclude by reflecting on the implications of these findings for LGBTQ politics in the post-marriage era, as well as for group politics, public opinion, political psychology, and political science more generally.

Overall, the implications of the project suggest that people who continue to feel disgust, even after (or perhaps because of) the attainment of legal marriage equality, may be much more difficult to persuade - in sharp distinction to the conventional wisdom that public opinion toward LGBTQ people will continue its rapid progress. In short, for LGBTQ politics, the influence of disgust means a very different and more difficult future than both activists and scholars currently imagine. At the same time, understanding how disgust affects beliefs and behaviors can help guide future efforts in understanding public opinion on LGBTQ issues, and can help advocates calibrate their strategies more effectively. Ultimately, I argue that LGBTQ advocates will need to develop different persuasive tactics that more directly confront the impact of disgust moving forward, particularly as transgender issues become more central.

This project focuses on understanding this current turning point in LGBTQ politics and anticipating the political landscape that lies ahead. I argue that understanding this turning point critically depends on understanding the underlying emotional components, particularly disgust, of attitudes toward LGBTQ people and issues. This work sheds light on how marriage equality and bathroom bills can exist contemporaneously, and even be supported by the same individual (i.e. a person who is both pro-marriage equality and against trans-friendly bathroom policies). Additionally, in my work I strive to connect feminist and queer theory and critical conversations within LGBTQ activism with scholarship and methods in political science and psychology. Putting these diverse fields and spheres into conversation

with one another enriches the overall argument and illustrates the unique challenges that lay ahead for both researchers and advocates in LGBTQ politics and beyond.

Chapter 2:

Friends and Allies? Revisiting the Influence of Contact On LGBTQ-Related Attitudes²

“All types of contact have positive effects on support for gay rights.”

-Barth, Overby, and Huffmon (2009)-

“It is useful to distinguish between allies who are motivated mainly by their personal relationships and those who are motivated mainly by their political values.”

-Gregory Herek (2011)-

1. Introduction

Harvey Milk, one of the first openly gay elected officials, is famously quoted as saying, “If they know us, they don’t vote against us!” This quote speaks to more than a basic belief about the possible influence of being out as a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBTQ) person. It has come to reflect the central strategy of the modern LGBTQ political movement, as well as the underlying assumption of much of political science’s existing literature on LGBTQ politics. Conventional wisdom in both modern scholarship and activism on LGBTQ politics relies on this extension of the contact hypothesis (Allport 1954), or the idea that

² Many thanks to the Interdisciplinary Workshop in American Politics (IWAP) for feedback on early drafts of this chapter, and to Chris Skovron and Hakeem Jefferson for many conversations (often over darts) that helped me clarify the friends and allies framework and argument that guides the chapter.

contact with LGBTQ people is the primary determinant of attitudes toward LGBTQ people and issues. That is, if you are a “friend,” you will also be an “ally.”³ This is a testable claim.

Using a simple exploration of American National Election Studies data, I illustrate that the conventional wisdom is not universally applicable: contact is neither necessary nor sufficient for LGBTQ-policy support. Anywhere from 40% to 60% of people are unaccounted for in this view of the world. Contact also cannot explain the considerable variability in public opinion on different LGBTQ issues. Many people support some LGBTQ-friendly policies but not others. These findings suggest policy-specific effects. I will show that this variation is consistent with a growing literature that examines the limitations of the contact hypothesis.

If the conventional wisdom – what I call the “friends and allies” framework – cannot explain modern attitudes toward LGBTQ people and policies, what else can? Why do people support some LGBTQ policies but not others? Why is contact sufficient for changing some people’s opinions, but not others?

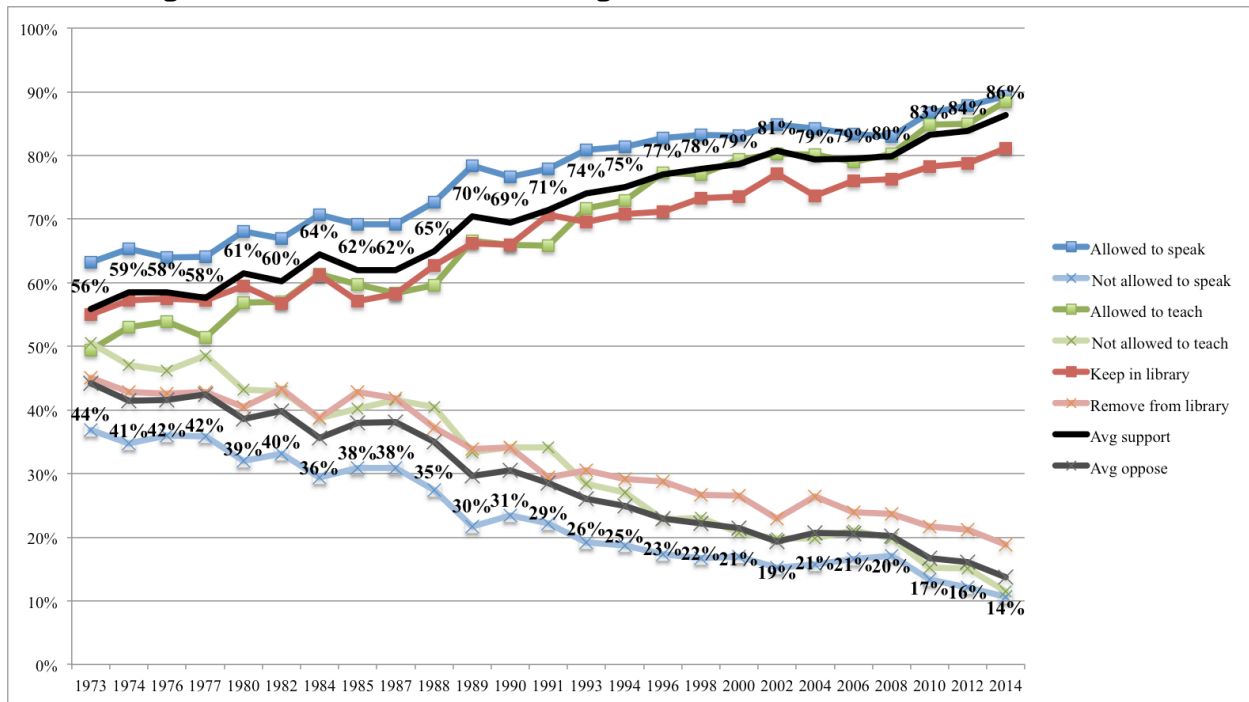
2. Influences on LGBTQ-Related Attitudes

For over a century, hostility and prejudice have dominated attitudes toward LGBTQ people and issues. Only in the past ten to twenty years have these attitudes shown a sustained shift toward more positive opinion, though troubling prejudices persist. Opinions on some LGBTQ issues have remarkably and rapidly shifted, while other attitudes remain entrenched or at least with troublingly large minorities who continue to hold anti-LGBTQ beliefs.

For example, Figure 2.1 shows General Social Survey (GSS) data that reveals significant shifts in support for civil liberties for gay and lesbians, such as willingness to allow an openly gay person speak in public, teach at a college, or keep a gay-authored book in a local library. though troubling remainders of those who would deny rights.

³ The term “ally” is one with considerable purchase in LGBTQ communities. It is generally used to refer to non-LGBTQ individuals who nonetheless support LGBTQ people and related issues.

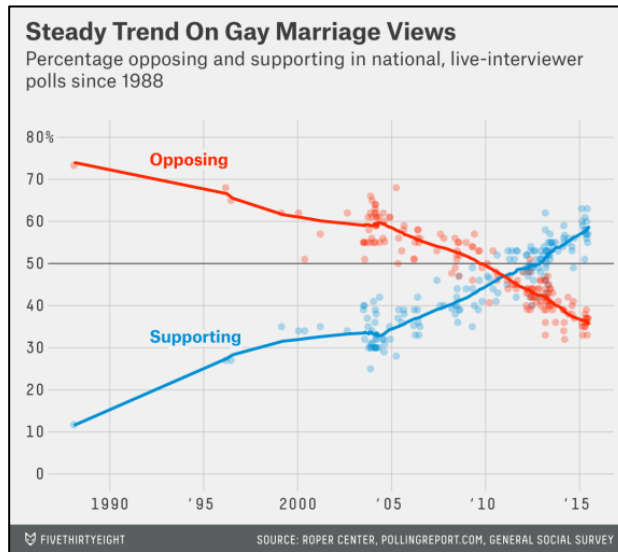
Figure 2.1: 1973-2014 GSS Polling on Civil Liberties for ‘Homosexuals’



During the forty years tracked here, average support across these three civil liberties questions rose thirty percentage points (from 56% to 86%), while average opposition dropped thirty points (from 44% to 14%).

Similarly, Figure 2.2 shows the “steady trend on gay marriage views” from 1988 to 2016. This graph further depicts the remarkable opinion change in past years.

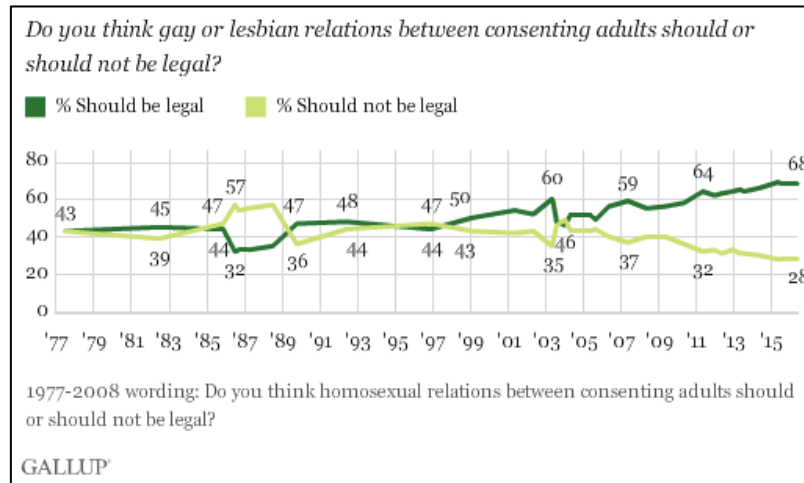
Figure 2.1: 1988-2016 Aggregated Polling on Gay Marriage



(Source: 538.com)

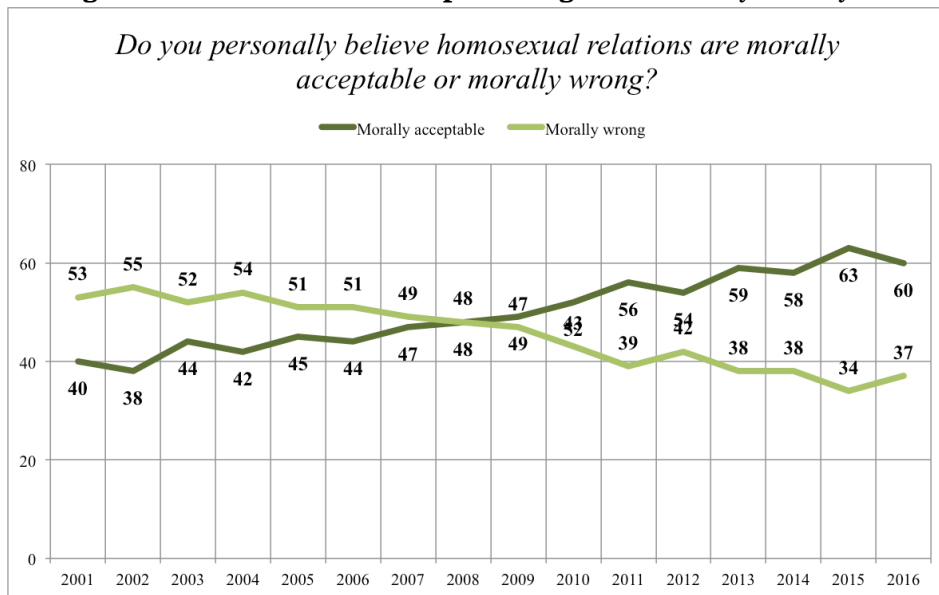
However, other attitudes are slower to change. For example, as shown in Figure 2.3, Gallup polling from 1977 to 2016 shows that for the first roughly twenty years the polling time frame, roughly half of Americans believed consensual gay sex should be illegal, with even higher opposition during the AIDS crisis in the late 1980s and surrounding the 2003 *Lawrence v. Texas* decision overturning the criminalization of sodomy. As recently as 2004, 46% of Americans still believed consensual gay sex should be illegal. While that belief has declined in the past decade, in 2016 a full 28% of Americans still believe – even after the legalization of gay marriage – that gay sex should be illegal.

Figure 2.2: 1977-2016 Gallup Polling on Legality of Gay Sex



Similarly, Figure 2.4 shows that 2010 was the first time a bare majority of Americans considered consensual gay sex a morally acceptable act. In 2016, 37% of Americans still consider it morally wrong. The General Social Survey further corroborates these findings, showing that in 2014, 41% of Americans considered gay sex to be “always wrong” and another 10% who find it “almost always wrong” or “sometimes wrong.”

Figure 2.3: 2001-2016 Gallup Polling on Morality of Gay Sex



Since political science began studying LGBTQ politics, roughly thirty years ago, researchers have paid significant attention to explaining these attitudes toward LGBTQ people and issues, as well as what might change these attitudes.

2.1 Influences on LGBTQ-Related Attitudes

One of earliest established influences on attitudes toward LGBTQ people and policies is gender. As early as 1980, women were found to be more tolerant than men of homosexuality (Larsen, Reed & Hoffman 1980) and more supportive of pro-gay policies such as employment protections (Herek 1988; 2000; 2002a). These gender gaps persist today. Relatedly, endorsement of gender stereotypes and traditional gender roles is associated with more negative attitudes toward LGBTQ people and less support for LGBTQ policies (Gaines & Garand 2010; Herek 1988; Herek & Gonzalez-Rivera 2006).

Older cohorts are less likely than younger generations to support LGBTQ people and policies (Baunach 2012). However, multiple scholars have argued that the significant changes in LGBTQ-related attitudes over the past twenty years cannot be explained by generational replacement, but rather by a cultural shift in attitudes within all cohorts (Anderson & Fetner 2008; Baunach 2012).

Religion and religiosity also play a powerful role in attitudes toward gay people and policies. More conservative or evangelical Christian protestant traditions are typically far less supportive of gay people and issues, and especially so for those with higher levels of religiosity (Adamczyk & Pitt 2009; Baunach 2012; Bramlett 2012; Brewer & Wilcox 2005; Herek 1988; Lewis 2003; Olson, Cadge, & Harrison 2006).⁴ Atheists, agnostics, and the nonreligious are generally more supportive (Adamczyk & Pitt 2009; Olson, Cadge, & Harrison 2006). Strand (1994), however, argued that measures of moral traditionalism or beliefs in naturalness offered

⁴ Religiosity is most often measured as frequency of attendance at religious services, but can also be measured through other ways. Herek (1988), for example, also examines the orthodoxy subscale of the Religious Ideology Scale (Putney & Middleton 1961).

more explanatory power than religious affiliation. Others similarly employ discussions of morality or “values” in their examination of opinions on gay issues (Brewer 2003^{a,b}; Brewer & Wilcox 2005; Craig et al 2005; Hillygus & Shields 2005; Olson, Cadge, & Harrison 2006), though with generally similar findings: more conservative values – or even the invocation of the phrase “moral values” or “family values” – are associated with less support for LGBTQ people and issues.

Conflicting evidence has been offered for racial and ethnic differences in support for LGBTQ policies. Some argue that blacks and Latinos are less likely to support LGBTQ people and issues than their white counterparts (Baunach 2012; Camp 2008), while others argue anti-LGBTQ attitudes are just as prevalent among blacks or Latinos as among whites (Herek & Capitanio 1995; Herek & Gonzalez-Rivera 2006). Others offer evidence that lower support for LGBTQ issues among communities of color are due to other factors. For example, Lewis (2003) finds that blacks are less supportive than whites, but shows that these differences drop out when controlling for religion (see also Sherkat, De Vries, & Creek 2010). Bramlett (2012) also points out that “religious blacks are actually more liberal and Democratic than nonreligious blacks,” and further discusses the cross-pressures of black religious affiliation with a theological tradition of liberation and civil rights activism (e.g., Calhoun-Brown 2000).

Finally, partisanship has played a varied role in attitudes toward LGBTQ people and issues. Until the mid-to-late 1990s, partisanship played little if any role, as negative attitudes toward LGBTQ people and policies were nearly universal (Baunach 2012). Since then, “Republicanism has been shown to independently reduce approval of same-sex marriage attitudes,” even controlling for other factors such as the higher religiosity of the Republican Party compared to the Democratic Party (Baunach 2012, 366; see also Brewer 2003; Sherkat et al. 2011).” Since 2015, just prior to the legalization of gay marriage, more and more Republicans are coming out in favor of gay marriage; however, partisan differences remain on

other LGBTQ issues, most notably transgender-related policies such as bathroom and healthcare access (e.g., Gass 2016).

2.2 The Contact Hypothesis

One of the largest portions of LGBTQ politics literature is on the influence of *contact* with LGBTQ people on heterosexuals' opinions of LGBTQ people and, by extension, support for LGBTQ issues. The contact hypothesis describes this effect, where, under certain conditions, coming in to contact with a member of an out-group reduces prejudice toward that out-group (Allport 1954). While this theory was originally developed in the context of interracial contact and attitudes, scholars across a variety of disciplines have demonstrated its influence across many group contexts, including sexuality (Pettigrew & Tropp 2006).

The positive influence of contact with gays and lesbians on heterosexuals' attitudes toward gay people has been thoroughly documented in the literature (e.g., Barth & Perry 2009; Bartos, Berger, & Hegarty 2014; Cunningham & Melton 2012; Herek & Capitano 1996; Lewis 2011; Morales 2009; Pettigrew & Tropp 2006; Smith, Axelton, & Saucier 2009). In a meta-analysis of 41 articles, Smith and colleagues (2009, 189) found that, across the board, "individuals who have had more prior or current contact with homosexuals show more positive attitudes toward homosexuals" than those without contact.

In addition to reducing prejudice or negative attitudes, contact can also improve support for policy issues. Numerous studies have shown that contact with LGBTQ people is related to higher support for issues like same-sex marriage (e.g., Barth, Overby, & Huffmon 2009; Barth & Parry 2009; Bramlett 2012; Gaines & Garand 2010; Lewis 2011) and higher likelihood to engage in pro-LGBTQ political behaviors such as petition signing (Swank, Woodford, & Lim

2013).⁵ Modern pro-LGBTQ activism, much like the literature discussed here, also relies extensively on contact for winning policy support (Stone 2012).⁶

Barth and Parry (2009, 47) argue for the critical importance of this finding for efforts at persuasion and pro-LGBTQ policy change: “[...] [A]ll lesbians and gay men — be they coupled or not — who are open about their sexuality with family, coworkers, and acquaintances can all serve as ‘change agents’ on straights’ attitudes about public matters related to their group.”

Lewis (2011, 217) makes an even stronger claim: “The [contact] effect holds for every issue, in every year, for every type of relationship, and for every demographic, religious, and political subgroup.”

3. Friends and Allies

Conventional wisdom in both scholarship and activism on LGBTQ politics is that contact with LGBTQ people is the primary positive influence on attitudes toward LGBTQ people and issues. As a result, many research and advocacy efforts work from a general premise that only people who know or like gay or trans people will support policies that promote LGBTQ rights. That is, if you are a “friend,” you will also be an “ally.” This is a testable claim. Using data from the American National Election Studies (ANES), an exploratory analysis and simple hypothesis testing allows us to test if the conventional wisdom about contact is correct.

⁵ To be clear, much of the literature on contact and LGBTQ issues has thus far focused on the impact of contact on support for same-sex marriage, often to the exclusion of other issues (see Barth and Parry 2009 for an exception). In other words, the impact of contact on support for non-marriage related LGBTQ policies is assumed, but less definitively established.

⁶ For example, Harvey Milk, one of the earliest openly gay elected officials, was famously quoted as saying “If they know us, they don’t vote against us!” More recently, National Coming Out Day has been celebrated every October since 1987, following a nearly half-million person march on Washington D.C. for gay rights. Many marriage related campaigns relied explicitly on this logic. For example, a 2006 campaign advertisement from the Alliance for Full Acceptance (AFFA) ran in South Carolina against Amendment 1, which proposed to ban both gay marriages and civil unions. It read: “Someone you know, someone you love is gay. They need your help in November.” Similarly, “The Breakthrough Conversation,” a campaign that emerged after the failure to defeat California’s Proposition 8 in 2008, was designed to educate LGBTQ people on how to most effectively communicate with heterosexual people about gay marriage, in effect maximizing the influence of contact on opinion change. Likewise, the Out to Dinner campaign, founded in 2012, based its efforts heterosexual opinion change on a *single* interaction with a gay or lesbian couple. These are just a few of many such examples.

The “friends and allies” conventional wisdom relies upon the logic of the contact hypothesis, but in doing so focuses attention only on two types of people, as shown in Table 2.1: those who are neither friends nor allies (lower right cell), and those who – through their contact with LGBTQ people – are or have become allies (upper left cell). It also only considers one direction of movement or persuasion, from opposition to support.

Table 2.1: Conventional Wisdom

	Allies	Not Allies
Friends	Friends and allies	-
Not Friends	-	Neither friends nor allies

This basic visualization also allows us to see that the conventional wisdom overlooks two other types of people: friends but not allies (upper right cell), and allies but not friends (lower left cell). Table 2.2 includes these new profiles, and further illustrates the additional possibilities of movement from one cell to another. For those who seek to create “friends and allies,” it is not necessarily true that all people begin as “neither friends nor allies.” These two new profiles can also be targets for persuasion, but it is reasonably conceivable that each of these profiles might require different persuasive efforts or strategies to be moved to the “friends and allies” category.

Table 2.2: Friends and Allies

	Allies	Not Allies
Friends	Friends and allies	Friends but not allies
Not Friends	Allies but not friends	Neither friends nor allies

The American National Election Study (ANES) – one of the most reputable, methodologically rigorous, and nationally representative surveys on American electoral behavior and political attitudes – has relatively little data on LGBTQ politics: one contact question, one group thermometer question for gays and lesbians, and four relevant policy questions. However, these six questions are useful for a establishing a basic yet rigorous examination of the basic question: are friends also allies?

Before proceeding with this examination, a second visualization is also useful for further understanding important variance in policy attitudes. If homophobia were the primary determinant of heterosexuals' LGBTQ policy preferences, then we would expect that prejudice to persist across multiple policy issues: if someone opposes gay marriage because they are prejudiced against LGBTQ people, then we would expect them to also oppose gay adoption, or job discrimination protections for LGBTQ people, and so on, for the same reason. If this is true, then we should also *not* observe people who oppose some LGBTQ policies but not others. For this to occur would imply that some other consideration --- perhaps specific to the policy, rather than the LGBTQ association --- is also important in explaining opposition to LGBTQ policies.

The ANES asks about four LGBTQ-related policy questions: job discrimination protections, openly serving in the military, adoption rights for gay couples, and legalizing gay marriage. These four policy issues generate sixteen unique sets of policy preferences, as shown below in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Four Policies and Sixteen Unique Sets of Policy Preferences

Case	Job Disc	Military	Adoption	Marriage
1	Pro	Pro	Pro	Pro
2	Pro	Pro	Pro	Anti
3	Pro	Pro	Anti	Pro
4	Pro	Pro	Anti	Anti
5	Pro	Anti	Pro	Pro
6	Pro	Anti	Pro	Anti
7	Pro	Anti	Anti	Pro
8	Pro	Anti	Anti	Anti
9	Anti	Pro	Pro	Pro
10	Anti	Pro	Pro	Anti
11	Anti	Pro	Anti	Pro
12	Anti	Pro	Anti	Anti
13	Anti	Anti	Pro	Pro
14	Anti	Anti	Pro	Anti
15	Anti	Anti	Anti	Pro
16	Anti	Anti	Anti	Anti

The ANES data reveals that a substantial portion of the population does not conform to conventional wisdom. As shown in Table 2.4, anywhere from 35% to 53% of people support all

four policies, but fewer than 10% oppose all four.⁷ This leaves a significant segment of Americans’ LGBTQ-related policy preferences unexplained.

Table 2.4: Sixteen Cases

Type	Case	Job Disc	Military	Adoption	Marriage	n		%
“Pro-gay”	1	Pro	Pro	Pro	Pro	1974	1974	53.4%
3 pro, 1 anti (four cases)	2	Pro	Pro	Pro	Anti	140	417	11.3%
	3	Pro	Pro	Anti	Pro	111		
	5	Pro	Anti	Pro	Pro	25		
	9	Anti	Pro	Pro	Pro	141		
2 pro, 2 anti (six cases)	4	Pro	Pro	Anti	Anti	376	488	13.2%
	6	Pro	Anti	Pro	Anti	9		
	7	Pro	Anti	Anti	Pro	12		
	10	Anti	Pro	Pro	Anti	66		
	11	Anti	Pro	Anti	Pro	13		
	13	Anti	Anti	Pro	Pro	12		
1 pro, 3 anti (four cases)	8	Pro	Anti	Anti	Anti	125	472	12.8%
	12	Anti	Pro	Anti	Anti	328		
	14	Anti	Anti	Pro	Anti	12		
	15	Anti	Anti	Anti	Pro	7		
“Anti-gay”	16	Anti	Anti	Anti	Anti	346	346	9.4%
<i>ANES 2012; unweighted; Marriage measure omits civil unions</i>						3,697		100%

This demonstrates important variance in policy attitudes, which I will seek to explain in subsequent chapters. For now, I return to the “friends and allies” framework to illuminate another of the limitations of conventional wisdom.

Given the available measures on the ANES, I measure “friendship” using self-reported contact with gays and lesbians. I measure “allyship” as stating support for a pro-gay policy.

⁷ The ranges are because in 2012, the ANES gay marriage question offers three options: support for legal marriage, opposition to legal marriage, and support for civil unions but not legal marriage. This table shows the 16 sets of policy preferences but omits civil unions as a response option, emphasizing respondents who have taken a clear position. I replicated this analysis categorizing civil unions as an expression of support, and also as an expression of opposition, given its failure to endorse full legalization of gay marriage. The overall pattern remains the same: a significant segment of Americans’ opinions are unexplained by conventional wisdom.

With respect to contact, the ANES 2012 time series question is as follows: “Among your immediate family members, relatives, neighbors, co-workers, or close friends, are any of them gay, lesbian, or bisexual as far as you know?” Respondents may only answer “yes” or “no.” Overall, approximately 44.4% of respondents reported any contact with LGB individuals, while 55.6% reported no known contact.⁸

With respect to LGBTQ policy questions, the ANES asks about gay marriage, gay adoption, job discrimination protections, and serving openly in the military. There are no transgender specific questions. If contact with LGBs determines policy preferences, then we should not observe people who have contact with LGB people but still oppose LGB-related policies. We should also not observe people without contact who nonetheless support these policies. However, in the ANES data, we observe both.⁹ There are a significant number of people who are friends but are not allies, and people who are allies but not friends.

In other words, there are large numbers of people who are entirely overlooked by this conventional wisdom. In what follows, I show just how many people, for each policy.

First, let us examine job discrimination protections for gays and lesbians. In the 2012 ANES, the question wording was changed. Half the sample received the language “homosexuals,” while the other half received “gays and lesbians,” in the following form: “Do you FAVOR or OPPOSE laws to protect [homosexuals/gays and lesbians] against job discrimination?” I combine these two samples in the reporting below.¹⁰

Among those who took a position (i.e., dropping those who responded “don’t know” or refused the question), 76.2% support job discrimination protections for LGBs, while 23.8%

⁸ Surprisingly, this is a decrease from 2008 ANES data, where 53% of respondents reported contact with gays or lesbians and 47% reported no contact. Both the 2008 and 2012 data are weighted.

⁹ I have replicated these analyses using the feeling thermometer scores in place of contact, and the results hold. For brevity of exposition, the following tables report data only using contact.

¹⁰ T-testing showed no significant difference of means corresponding to the wording difference in the job discrimination question ($M_{diff} = -0.003$, $t = -2.9$, $p = 0.773$).

oppose.¹¹ If conventional wisdom were universally correct, then these 76.2% of respondents would fall into the upper left cell, the 23.8% opposed into the lower right cell, and no one in the off-diagonals. This is represented in Table 2.5a.

Table 2.5a: Conventional Wisdom on Job Discrimination Protections

	Allies (Support)	Not Allies (Oppose)
Friends (Contact)	76.2%	?
Not friends (No Contact)	?	23.8%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

However, as Table 2.5b illustrates, this is not the case. Only about 54% of respondents fall into the two typical profiles, with the remaining 46% in the alternate profiles: 7% are friends but not allies, and 38.8% are allies but not friends. In the specific case of job discrimination protections, conventional wisdom overlooks nearly 45% of respondents.

Table 2.5b: Actual Distribution on Job Discrimination Protections

	Allies (Support)	Not Allies (Oppose)	
Friends	37.4%	7%	44.4%
Not friends	38.8%	16.9%	55.6%
	76.2%	23.8%	100%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

We can also consider this 45% another way. Consider the category of friends generally: 7% of respondents are friends but not allies. However, this is 7% of all respondents. If we reconsidered this profile relative to the category “friends,” rather than to all respondents, the number becomes even more significant. Table 2.5c illustrates these same data, reframed as proportions (“Among Friends”), which brings stark attention to the shortcomings of the “friends and allies” framework.

Table 2.5c: Job Discrimination, Among Friends

	Allies (Support)	Not Allies (Oppose)	
Friends	84%	16%	100%
Not Friends	69.8%	30.4%	100%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

¹¹ In the “homosexual” sample, 1.6% of respondents (weighted) answered “don’t know” or refused. In the “gays and lesbians” sample, 1.7% of responses (weighted) answered “don’t know” or refused.

Not only are there people in the off-diagonals, but these cells are heavily populated. Among all “friends,” or those who report contact with gays and lesbians (44.4% of the entire sample), 16% still remain opposed to job discrimination protections (=7/44.4). Contact was not sufficient for creating political support. Among “not friends,” or those who report no contact with gays and lesbians (55.6% of the entire sample), nearly 70% (=38.8/55.6) in fact support this policy. Contact was not necessary for creating political support. The following tables demonstrate the same examination for military service, adoption, and marriage.

Tables 2.6a and 2.6b show a continuing pattern. Respondents were asked, “Do you think [gays and lesbians/homosexuals] should be allowed to service in the United States Armed Forces, or don’t you think so?” This question also had a split sample, and I again combined the responses and dropped those who refused or responded, “don’t know.”¹² Overall, 86.2% of respondents expressed support for allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military, while 13.8% opposed this. Table 2.6a shows that nearly 50% of respondents are overlooked by conventional wisdom.

Table 2.6a: Military Service

	Allies (Support)	Not Allies (Oppose)	
Friends	40.7%	3.6%	44.3%
Not friends	45.6%	10.1%	55.7%
	86.2%	13.8%	100%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

Table 2.6b shows that while friends do tend by and large to be allies, a small remainder (roughly 8%) of those who know a gay or lesbian person do not support this policy. More notably, though, is the reappearance of the sizable split amongst “not friends,” where again a significant majority (over 80%!) is supportive of this policy *despite not having any contact with LGBs*.

¹² T-testing showed no significant difference of means corresponding to the wording difference in the military service question ($M_{diff} = -0.0004$, $t = -0.05$, $p = 0.962$). In the “homosexual” sample, 1.7% of respondents (weighted) answered “don’t know” or refused. In the “gays and lesbians” sample, 0.87% of respondents (weighted) answered “don’t know” or refused.

Of additional note and similar to the job discrimination data, there are notably more “allies but not friends” than there are “friends but not allies.”

Table 2.6b: Military Service, Among Friends

	Allies (Support)	Not Allies (Oppose)	
Friends	92%	8%	100%
Not friends	81.9%	18.1%	100%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

Regarding adoption, respondents were asked, “Do you think gay or lesbian couples should be legally permitted to adopt children?” Approximately 63.2% of all respondents favored allowing gay couples to adopt, while about 36.8% opposed, as shown in Table 2.7a.¹³ Again, over 40% of respondents are overlooked by conventional wisdom.

Table 2.7a: Gay Adoption

	Allies (Support)	Not Allies (Oppose)	
Friends	32.9%	11.1%	43.9%
Not Friends	30.3%	25.8%	56.1%
	63.2%	36.8%	100%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

Table 2.7b: Gay Adoption, Among Friends

	Allies (Support)	Not Allies (Oppose)	
Friends	74.8%	25.2%	100%
Not Friends	54%	46%	100%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

Table 2.7b shows interesting shifts in the previous patterns. Compared to job discrimination and open military service, attitudes on adoption are more split and less consistent with conventional wisdom. Over a quarter of those who have contact with gays and lesbians remain unsupportive of gay adoption. Conversely, over half of those without contact nonetheless support gay adoption. Again, the conventional wisdom cannot explain a significant portion of respondents.

Tables 2.8a and 2.8b consider the final ANES question on gay policy issues in 2012. Respondents were asked, “Which comes closest to your view?” and given the options of “Gay

¹³ 3.7% of respondents (weighted) refused to answer or responded, “don’t know.”

and lesbian couples should be allowed to legally marry,” “Gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to form civil unions but not legally marry,” and “There should be no legal recognition of a gay or lesbian couple’s relationship.”¹⁴ As shown in Table 2.8a, roughly 25% of respondents opposed marriage, 33.5% supported civil unions but not legal marriage, and 41.5% supported legal marriage for gay and lesbian couples.

Table 2.8a: Gay Marriage

	Allies (Support)	(Civil Unions)	Not Allies (Oppose)	
Friends	23.5%	13.4%	7.2%	44.1%
Not Friends	18%	20.1%	17.8%	55.9%
	41.5%	33.5%	25%	100%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

From the outset, this illustrates another related weakness of the “friends and allies” framework: this is no explicit consideration of individuals who occupy some sort of middle ground in their policy preferences, such as civil unions. In that regard, already 33.5% of respondents are overlooked by conventional wisdom. When examining marriage support based on contact, Table 2.8a shows that nearly 60% of respondents do not fall into one of the two expected profiles of the friends and allies framework.

Table 2.8b: Marriage, Among Friends

	Allies (Support)	(Civil Unions)	Not-Allies (Oppose)	
Friends	53.3%	30.4%	16.3%	100%
Not-Friends	32.2%	36%	31.8%	100%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

Table 2.8b shows that nearly 47% of respondents who know a gay or lesbian person nonetheless do not support legal marriage recognition, while over 30% of respondents who did not know a gay person nonetheless supported legalizing gay marriage. For both those with and without contact with a gay person, roughly a third of respondents expressed some middle preference. Again, the influence of contact and the expression of policy preferences are not following conventional wisdom.

¹⁴ 1.2% of respondents (weighted) were omitted due to “don’t know” responses or refusal to answer.

When using feeling thermometer ratings, rather than contact, the general pattern of observing a significant number of respondents in the off-diagonals persists. This is true across all four issues. Opinions about job discrimination and military service continue to appear distinct from opinions about adoption and marriage. The appendix also displays the same examination by partisanship, another strong influence on modern LGBTQ-related policy preferences, and the results again hold.

In sum, the “friends and allies” framework consistently overlooks 40-60% of respondents. It seems to work better for explaining the attitudes of friends than it does for people who report no contact with LGBs, but there remains widespread variation in support for LGBTQ-friendly policies among both those with and without contact. Furthermore, there exists significant variation in contact’s influence across different policies, suggesting a policy-specific interaction.

4. From Contact to Disgust

What explains the varying influence of contact on LGBTQ-related policy attitudes? There is a growing body of research about the limitations of contact to effect change in prejudicial attitudes, or the conditions under which contact will actually be effective. The above ANES data examination and the following literature both illustrate the need for rethinking scholarly approaches to understanding modern attitudes toward LGBTQ people and issues. Ultimately, I argue that the study of emotions, and particularly disgust, is critical for understanding LGBTQ-related attitudes.

There is a growing body of literature on the influence of contact, and particularly the specific, sometimes narrow conditions under which contact actually induces opinion change. For example, contact’s influence may in fact vary by the depth or context of the relationship. Barth, Overby and Huffmon (2009) find that the more proximal a relationship, the more influential: the effect of having a close, gay friend is greater than the effect of a gay neighbor

or acquaintance. Barth and Parry (2009) go further, finding that the influence of contact is context- or policy-specific: when heterosexuals knew a gay couple, they were more likely to support marriage equality, but this increased support did not extend to other LGB issues like military service. The contact effect was limited to the relevant policy realm.

Relatedly, Herek (2011, 421) argues that the mere fact of contact may be insufficient for producing attitude change, and that “a better indicator may be the extent to which a heterosexual has discussed a gay or lesbian friend or relative’s experiences as a sexual minority.” In other words, contact is only likely to produce change if there are specific behaviors (i.e., communication) associated with it. However, these types of personalized appeals or discussions have produced mixed results. Harrison & Michelson (2011) showed they were ineffective for fundraising on marriage equality, and policy advocates are now advising LGBTQ activists to feature heterosexual allies in their persuasive campaigns rather than LGBTQ people themselves (e.g., Erickson 2011). In contrast, Broockman & Kalla (2016) recently showed that even a brief conversation that encouraged perspective taking about transgender rights produced lasting and meaningful opinion change, though recent work shows that this kind of perspective taking can also elicit increased sexual prejudice and disgust reactions (Mooijman & Stern 2016). Additionally, Broockman and Kalla’s sample was limited to one state and was conducted prior to the current outbreak of “bathroom bills” and heightened hostile, national attention to the transgender community, which may lead individuals to be less receptive to opinion change. Finally, though contact with gays and lesbians has recently been shown to have a positive spillover effect onto attitudes toward transgender people, the same study showed that direct contact with transgender people had no effect on transgender-related attitudes (Flores 2015a). Little other work has yet examined the influence of direct contact with transgender people.

Contact may also be mediated by other relevant factors. For example, Southerners are less influenced by contact with gays and lesbians (Overby & Barth 2002; Barth & Overby

2003), as are the strongly politically conservative (Skipworth, Garner, & Dettrey 2010).

Bramlett (2012) also finds that religious affiliation can mediate the influence of contact:

[P]eople of most religious traditions are more likely to support same-sex marriage when they have a close relationship with a gay individual. The effects are the greatest for black Protestants and Latino Catholics. However, white Protestants with close relationships with gay people are just as opposed to same-sex marriage as those without similar contact. (13)

Additionally, Tropp and Pettigrew (2005), in a meta-analysis of contact effects across a variety of group contexts, found that the relationship between contact and reduced prejudice was weaker for members of minority groups than for majority group members (e.g., contact would be less influential for people of color than for whites).¹⁵

In short, the influence of contact is mediated by a number of contextual, behavioral, or individual characteristics. Indeed, it seems that recent literature is increasingly addressing or uncovering conditions that contact must meet in order to actually lead to opinion change. Among these articles that interrogate contact's limitations, rather than taking its effect as a given, the authors return to similar theme or unsettled question:

While others have found that different *types* of contact with gays and lesbians can have different effects on attitudes about gay rights issues (e.g. Barth and Parry 2009), this study has shown that interpersonal contact will have a different effect on different *individuals*. (Skipworth et al 2010, 902)

Why does contact with gays and lesbians lead some individuals to move their attitudes in the direction of support [for gay issues], while for others contact has little or no effect? (Gaines & Garand 2010, 564)

Herek (2011, 420) summarizes neatly: "...a survey question that asks simply whether the respondent knows any lesbians or gay men may be a less reliable predictor of sexual prejudice now than was once the case."

Why is contact sufficient for some but not for others? What might other alternative approaches to understanding modern LGBTQ-related attitudes be? Despite this recent attention to the limitations of contact hypothesis in LGBTQ politics, the literature still has yet

¹⁵ This point is of particular interest for future research on attitudes within the LGBTQ community, i.e., the attitudes of gays and lesbians toward transgender people.

to pursue alternative (to contact) measures for understanding modern opinion on LGBTQ attitudes, and is only just recently considering what alternative persuasive strategies to contact might be (e.g., Broockman & Kalla 2016; Harrison & Michelson 2016).

The limits of the “friends and allies” framework and the contact hypothesis more generally also illustrate a broader shortcoming of this current understanding of LGBTQ-related attitudes. Though contact has clearly and historically had a powerful influence on attitudes toward LGBTQ people and issues, both modern ANES data and a growing literature show that there is simply more to these attitudes than the simple fact of whether or not an individual happens to know a gay or lesbian person. As Cottrell and Neuberg (2005) argue, “The traditional conception of prejudice—as a general attitude or evaluation—can problematically obscure the rich texturing of emotions that people feel toward different groups.” I argue that the influence of emotions – particularly disgust – is critical in understanding modern (and historical) attitudes toward LGBTQ people and issues in America.

Disgust is an emotion with potentially powerful political implications. Scholars in psychology, political science, and other fields have demonstrated that feeling disgust leads to harsher moral judgments, increased prejudices, avoidant and distancing behavior, and “resistance to rational argument” (Cunningham et al 2013; Dasgupta et al 2009; Inbar et al 2009; Olatunji 2008; Terrizzi et al 2010). The avoidant behavior is particularly relevant to LGBTQ politics, given that one of the central strategies of the gay movement has been the use of contact (Stone 2012) to reduce prejudice toward LGBTQ people. For example, Lewis (2011, 232) discusses some of the diverse effects of contact among different demographic groups: “Knowing LGBs has significantly larger effects for liberals and moderates than for conservatives, for Democrats than for Republicans, for mainline Protestants than for evangelicals, and for women than for men.” But all these groups for whom contact is less effective also are more prone to feeling disgust in the first place (Balzer & Jacobs 2011; Inbar, Pizarro, & Bloom 2009) – which I argue explains the limited influence of contact in the first

place.¹⁶ Disgust reactions limit the efficacy of contact: if an individual considers gay people disgusting, then coming into contact with a gay or lesbian person may only stoke prejudicial attitudes rather than reduce them.

In other words, I will argue that disgust contributes to prejudicial attitudes toward out groups, including LGBTQ people, and deters the very behaviors (e.g., contact) often relied upon to combat these negative attitudes. Additionally, disgust has been used to pass legislation and encode anti-LGBTQ prejudice into political and social institutions (e.g., Canaday 2011; Foucault 1978; Nussbaum 2004; Rubin 1984). This illustrates how disgust operates both as a psychological phenomenon that structures interpersonal interactions, and as a sociopolitical norm that is taught, learned, reinforced, and embedded in cultures and institutions. In this way, disgust is a political value of its own, and as Gregory Herek (2011) argues, “It is useful to distinguish between allies who are motivated mainly by their personal relationships and those who are motivated mainly by their political values.”

¹⁶ Literature generally suggests that women are more disgust sensitive than men, but more recent literature suggests that this is due to women simply being more willing to report their emotional reactions; men and women’s physiological responses to disgusting stimuli are typically consistent, even if their self-reports of the emotion differ (see Balzer & Jacobs 2011).

Chapter 3:
Disgust: A Hegemonic Emotion¹⁷

“Law, then, does not just describe existing emotional norms;
it is itself normative, playing a dynamic and educational role.”

-Martha Nussbaum (2004, 12)-

“Thus, discerning what is disgusting is not wholly dissimilar from discerning that which
society deems abnormal, inappropriate, immoral, or simply inferior.”

-Laura Beth Citrin (2004, 5)-

1. Introduction

Conventional wisdom, which argues contact with LGBTQ people is the predominant predictor of LGBTQ-related attitudes, cannot explain the attitudes and preferences of a substantial proportion of the population. I argue that emotional responses to LGBTQ people and issues are critical for understanding both the historical experiences of LGBTQ people in America and the modern political tensions facing the LGBTQ movement. In particular, I argue that the emotion of disgust has long structured social and political responses to LGBTQ people and policies in America, and continues to be a dominant factor in modern attitudes toward gay and transgender people and political issues.

¹⁷ Many thanks to Angela Carter, Raechel Tiffe, Dara Strolovitch, and Bonnie Washick for their guidance and feedback on multiple drafts of this chapter.

From the history of homosexuality as a diagnosable disease, to HIV/AIDS and fears of potential disease transmission, to modern day “culture wars” and fear of “moral contamination” or corruption, the language of contagion has been and continues to be employed in political rhetoric to evoke and perpetuate disgust reactions toward LGBTQ people and issues among the public. Disgust is often referred to as a disease-avoidance mechanism, and so associations with disease and language invoking contamination are implicit, if not explicit signals of disgust. This is politically consequential, because disgust is associated with harsher moral judgments, avoidant and distancing behavior, and “resistance to rational argument” (Cunningham et al 2013; Dasgupta et al 2009; Inbar et al 2009; Olatunji 2008; Terrizzi et al 2010). This has important implications for the possibility of persuasion among those who feel disgust toward LGBTQ people.

Furthermore, one of the central strategies of the contemporary gay movement is the use of contact (Stone 2012), based on the belief that contact with a member of an out-group can reduce prejudice toward that out-group (Allport 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp 2006). Knowing that many contagions are transmitted through person-to-person contact, then the language of “contact” in this context takes on new meaning: contact provides an opportunity for the transmission of pro-LGBTQ beliefs. However, if people find LGBTQ people disgusting, they are likely to avoid any type of contact. In short, disgust contributes to prejudicial attitudes toward LGBTQ people and deters the very behaviors often relied upon to combat these negative attitudes.

I also offer a new understanding of disgust not just as an individually experienced emotion, but also as a socio-political ideology that is learned, reinforced, and embedded in American culture, politics, and institutions. In this way, I refer to disgust as an emotion that is used to communicate and reify existing hegemonic norms about sexuality, gender, and politics. Recognizing disgust as such is important because it highlights that since disgust is learned and manipulated, it can also be *un*learned and interrupted.

2. Disgust: An Expression of Social Norms

“Although disgust evolved as a food-related emotion,
it was well suited for use as an emotion of social rejection.”

-Schnall et al (2008, 1097)-

2.1 *Existing definitions*

Disgust is an emotion. One of the foremost philosophers of disgust, Martha Nussbaum (2004, 88–89), argues: “Disgust concerns the borders of the body: it focuses on the prospect that a problematic substance may be incorporated into the self.” Miller (2004, 5) describes disgust as “fundamentally about protecting and maintaining the self,” even beyond the boundaries of the physical body. Both these definitions focus on the role of the emotion as it relates to and is experienced by the individual. This focus on disgust as an emotion of protection against contamination in the individual body carries across disciplines and literatures.

Many scholars argue that emotions serve evolutionary functions (Ekman 1992; Hutcherson & Gross 2011; Lazarus 1991; Scherer 2000). Scholars in this literature describe the evolutionary purpose of disgust as protecting the individual from harmful contamination, such as spoiled food (Angyal 1941; Darwin 1872). This protection primarily takes the form of distance: disgust compels us to distance ourselves from the offending stimuli (Rozin, Haidt, & McCauley 2000). This distance can occur through facial expressions or involuntary actions, as disgust’s characteristic pinched lips and wrinkled nose literally restrict oral access and pull the nose away from the source, while retching or vomiting attempt to expel a disgusting object away from the body. Schnall et al (2008, 1106) describe how disgust “can trigger nausea, throat clenching, and the very physical process of food expulsion to protect the body from harmful

contaminants.” This distance can also occur through both subconscious and intentional behavioral choices, such as avoiding contact with objects, experiences, individuals, or groups that one finds disgusting. This avoidance protects the individual by helping them evade potential sickness, disease, or harm. In this view, disgust is understood as a literal tool for survival, and is often referred to as a disease-avoidance mechanism (e.g. Faulkner et al 2004; Navarrete & Fessler 2006; Oaten, Stevenson, & Case 2009).

Related, often overlapping bodies of literature argue that emotions, such as disgust, also serve adaptive purposes in modern life and social interactions. While disgust’s evolutionary function was to reject potentially contaminated foods or objects, its modern function is to reject potentially contaminated people or groups (e.g., Schnall et al 2008). The contamination here may come in the form of perceived threats that are physical (such as an actual disease) or social or moral (such as different languages or values). Schaller (2006) refers to disgust’s relationship to social rejection and ingroup/outgroup attitudes as part of the “behavioral immune system” (BIS), which Terrizzi, Shook, and Ventis (2013, 100) review as follows:

The BIS has implications for social interactions and intergroup attitudes. As long as humans have lived in groups, they have shared diseases. Other people, especially outgroup members who may harbor novel pathogens, are potential sources of infectious disease. As such, Schaller and Duncan (2007) have argued that the BIS should encourage individuals to prefer ingroup members over outgroup members. Indeed, researchers have demonstrated that the BIS as indexed by [perceived vulnerability to disease] is correlated with negative attitudes toward outgroups, including individuals who are disabled, obese, or foreign (Park, Faulkner, & Schaller 2003; Faulkner et al 2004; Navarrete & Fessler 2006; Park, Schaller, & Crandall 2006). Likewise, disgust sensitivity has been correlated with prejudice toward homosexuals using both explicit and implicit measures (Inbar et al 2009; Olatunji 2008; Terrizzi, Shook, & Ventis 2010). Moreover, activating the BIS (e.g., priming disease-threat) increase negative attitudes toward outgroups and increases positive attitudes toward the ingroup (Faulkner et al 2004; Navarrete & Fessler 2006). Together, these results suggest that BIS strength and activation of the BIS encourage individuals to exhibit positivity toward ingroup members and negativity toward outgroup members.

In this view, disgust's evolutionary purpose of rejecting contaminated foods has adapted to the social purpose of rejecting contaminated people or groups.¹⁸ The operation of protecting the individual has expanded from the actual body to the broader notion of the self. Additionally, the threat has expanded from spoiled food to spoiled identities (e.g., Goffman 1963), and from real to perceived: the mere imagination or perception of potential contamination is sufficient for eliciting disgust (e.g., Elliott & Radomsky 2012).¹⁹

For example, many scholars who study disgust in the context of immigration discuss two forms of contamination: both the physical form, such as diseases being carried across political borders, and the more symbolic, namely the perception of “cultural contamination” or different values being carried across – and infecting – moral and social borders. In both cases, the “threat” can be real or perceived.²⁰

These shifts to the social highlight an important element of disgust (and indeed, any emotion): that it is socially specific and constructed. While disgust reactions are generally consistent across people and cultures (Morales & Wu 2013, 73), what triggers these reactions is not. For example, there is significant variation in what food is regarded as either disgusting or a delicacy across various cultures. Time may also influence what or whom a specific society perceives as disgusting: slavery was once regarded as a normal practice but now is generally regarded as reprehensible and repulsive. All these variations in emotional norms highlight the socially constructed nature of emotions, including what triggers them in the first place.

¹⁸ This is not to say that modern day prejudice and disgust toward LGBTQ people and other groups is a “survival tool,” necessary for survival, or justifiable. Rather, this is simply to say that this emotion – not the prejudice(s) it bolsters – has, according to scholars, historically worked in service of self-protection.

¹⁹ This is especially relevant for politics, as merely suggesting that a group is dangerous, diseased, or somehow contaminated may elicit disgust among the public. I will return to this point later.

²⁰ Anti-immigrant rhetoric routinely cites concern for potential disease transmission and contamination of American language, jobs, and values. Even when these “threats” are “real,” such as the presence of the Ebola virus in 2014, the response far outweighs the actual risk of disease transmission (virtually zero during the Ebola outbreak) or any other contamination.

That disgust is socially constructed highlights that it is taught, learned, and reinforced. In the next sections, I turn to the critical importance of this point for understanding the power and operation of disgust in modern American politics.

2.2 *My definition*

Current literature generally argues that disgust operates to protect the individual — whether the actual body or the broader notion of the self — from contamination or harm, whether real or perceived. Though these various fields of scholarship take different approaches to studying or theorizing disgust, one common element is a focus on disgust as an individual-level experience or phenomenon. Certainly these literatures conceptualize disgust as a basic, common emotion shared across humanity, with significant impacts on group-level interactions, but they still imagine and study disgust as something contained, felt within the *individual*, that compels *individuals* to expression and action in specific ways.

I argue, however, emotions are hegemonic: while they are an individually experienced psychological phenomenon, they also operate as both an expression and reification of existing dominant cultural norms and values. Disgust serves as a marker of a relationship to power (e.g. Cohen 1997), or rather a lack of power: as Citrin (2004, 5) argues, “discerning what is disgusting is not wholly dissimilar from discerning that which society deems abnormal, inappropriate, immoral, or simply inferior.” When disgust is used to demarcate social out-groups, this validates and perpetuates a status quo that positions the out-group as inferior and with disproportionately fewer rights and resources. Knowing the powerful influence of emotions on political attitudes and behaviors, this also obstructs the potential for change in public opinion and policymaking.

That disgust operates as an expression of dominant norms and values is particularly important to recognize because the literature on disgust has disproportionately focused on the evolutionary, biological elements or functions of disgust, often to the exclusion of the relevant

social context. For example, conceptions of disgust that rely exclusively on an evolutionary function of rejecting disgusting food (Darwin 1872) would overlook that disgusting food in one community might be a delicacy in another. Recognizing the socially constructed nature of disgust and other emotions moves the focus from the individual (i.e., the person feeling disgust) to the social and structural (the institutions that teach what is and is not disgusting). This shift from the individual to the structural is also important because it suggests different interventions and approaches for opinion change, advocacy, and scholarship. An individual-level understanding will likely focus on individual level strategies (e.g., contact), whereas a structural-level understanding would more likely beget structural level strategies (e.g., .e. changing incentive structures, or what is culturally believed about what or who is disgusting). These structural level strategies could be more effective in the long term.

Recognizing disgust (and emotions more generally) as an expression of dominant ideology also highlights the heightened difficulty of persuasion. Disgust already makes persuasion difficult (Olatunji 2008), but when an individual's disgust reaction is constantly reinforced on a social and structural level, persuasion is even less likely. We often experience disgust as a seemingly natural occurrence; it is thought to be natural, preexisting current social structures and identities – and to an extent it is. Scholars describe disgust as one of the core human emotions, consistent in its expression (even if not its targets or triggers) across cultures and time (Morales & Wu 2013) and serving evolutionary purposes (e.g., Darwin 1872; Ekman 1992). Citrin (2004), however, argues that disgust reactions also seem natural due to their internalization: “these moralizing emotions, particularly disgust, facilitate a psychological process in which social norms ... are internalized by individual society members, making these norms feel *natural* and *right*” (3, emphasis in original).

Disgust's “naturalness” is then taken in turn as a sign of its natural “truth.” For example, bioethicist Leon Kass (1997; 2002) argues for the “wisdom of repugnance,” or the idea that disgust operates as an inherently truthful signal of that which should not be transgressed.

The instinctive recoil and feeling of repulsion, he argues, reveals an underlying truth about the disgusting object being observed or considered:

We intuit and feel, immediately and without argument, the violation of things that we rightfully hold dear. Repugnance, here as elsewhere, revolts against the excesses of human willfulness, warning us not to transgress what is unspeakably profound. Indeed, in this age in which everything is held to be permissible so long as it is freely done, in which our given human nature no longer commands respect, in which our bodies are regarded as mere instruments of our autonomous rational wills, repugnance may be the only voice left that speaks up to defend the central core of our humanity. Shallow are the souls that have forgotten how to shudder. (Kass 1997, 20)

Kass concludes, therefore, that disgust is a reasonable, even preferred basis for making law and structuring society. William Miller (1997) further argues that the more things a society finds disgusting, the more “evolved” the society. Arguments such as these routinely cite the physiological experience and evolutionary nature of disgust, positing that this “naturalness” and intensity should be a signal to us of the truth-value of this emotion.

The expression of this emotion both reflects and reinscribes the normative values that have produced or determined this object, act, or person to be (perceived as) disgusting. In saying, “This disgusts me,” the speaker is saying “I have been taught this is disgusting,” and in this speech act they are also teaching the audience that this ought to be perceived as disgusting. Much like reciting the pledge of allegiance or the national anthem in public, the recitation reveals that we have been asked to memorize a script that reflects certain values and perform it on command at socially appropriate times. The performance itself then continues the cycle of communicating to others that these are “our” values, and that others ought to hold and express these values as well.

Citrin refers to this as “emotional socialization,” or the shaping, teaching, and general social transference of both the experience and expression of emotions (4). She further argues that “the expression of disgust (and other moralizing emotions) toward bodies that transgress social norms may not only be a *consequence* of the transgression itself but may actually play a role in the *internalization* of and continued conformity to these norms, in effect constructing a

particular body that is morally appropriate” (2004, 3). Disgust marks certain behaviors or people as transgressive, which communicates to both the observer and the transgressor that the disgusting element is unacceptable according to social norms. This then reinforces that belief in both the observer and the transgressor, effectively coercing both parties to conform to these norms or else face continued demarcation as transgressive.²¹

In this way, disgust operates as an ideology: it communicates to us both what is and what ought to be, and because it is also an individually felt or experienced emotion with intensely strong physiological components, it is already, literally, internalized. This only strengthens the perception of its presumed truth-value. As a result, the values attached to disgust reactions also become internalized and perceived to be natural. This leads individuals experiencing this emotion to police both others and themselves in accordance with what is perceived to be disgusting by existing social norms.

2.3 Why does this matter?

That disgust is hegemonic is important to recognize for multiple reasons. First, it reveals that disgust can be used to influence many policy domains. Second, the intense physiological experience of this individual emotion combined with the intense socialization of hegemonic values about what ought to evoke disgust means that opinion change may be difficult when an individual feels disgust. However, that disgust can be socialized and socially constructed nonetheless means that unlearning this reaction, or at least diffusing its political consequences, is possible.

²¹ The impact of disgust on the perceived transgressor can be powerful. See, for example, literature in psychology or on the influence of minority stress on LGBTQ communities (e.g., Berg, Munthe-Kass, & Ross 2015), or feminist and queer studies for theoretical engagements with shame (e.g., Halperin & Traub 2009; Moore 2004) and unhappiness (e.g., Ahmed 2010).

2.3.1 Hegemonic Disgust Can Influence Many Groups or Policy Domains

Understanding disgust as a tool of hegemony reveals even further the power of this emotion. Considerable scholarship has demonstrated the influence of disgust on individual-level moral judgments, prejudice, interpersonal behaviors, and policy preferences in some areas such as immigration (Casey 2014; Faulkner et al 2004; Navarette & Fessler 2006), welfare (Hancock 2004), and LGBTQ issues. But understanding that disgust is also a tool used to express and reify existing cultural norms means that it can be invoked against many types of people or in many arenas, and to potentially great effect.

As discussed above, when an object or behavior is perceived as disgusting, that disgust is often used to justify avoiding, rejecting, or otherwise drawing boundaries around it (Kass 2002; Miller 1998). Hancock (2004) identifies two key components of disgust in politics, one of which is that disgust begins with an object or action that an individual finds offensive. This offense leads the individual on a search for other attributes: it “turns our attention... toward the subject in a search for evidence to justify such a reaction” (9). This focuses the negative feeling on the offending person who committed the act, forming connections between the visceral reaction and the out-group member. Thus the disgust at an action or object transforms into disgust at the person who committed the action or is somehow affiliated with the object. What started as a disgusting act can often transform the actor into a disgusting person.

When *people* or entire groups are imagined to be disgusting or contaminants, they will be treated as such: something to be isolated, separated, possibly even eradicated for the safety of others.²² The very concept of a “behavioral immune system” (Schaller 2006) describes the ways in which actions typically used for preserving the boundaries of the individual’s body and physiological health are transformed and repurposed to police the boundaries of desirable social and moral health – and often to police *others*, potentially to great prejudicial effect. The

²² See, for example, the responses to immigrants and anyone even peripherally related to the Ebola outbreak in 2014 (e.g., Casey 2015).

immune system is turned outward and acts to keep people and groups perceived as contagious, contaminants, or otherwise undesirable from coming any closer or putting the individual in (perceived) harm's way. We feel disgust and then push others away to protect ourselves. In this way, disgust facilitates the transformation of others into Others, of people who are different into a "Them," separate from the "Us." This has important political implications.

In every policy domain, hegemonic ideology has (by definition) influenced the current status quo and also shapes relevant and viable policy alternatives. For example, Social Security was established as an expression of existing cultural norms, particularly in the context of the Great Depression, that our society should take care of its workers and elderly. Now, those same norms also foreclose the likelihood of substantive change to the system. This is observable in public opinion toward virtually any proposed reform to Social Security, as well as in the electoral (dis)incentives for legislators. I argue that disgust can be used as an expression or tool of these norms, even here in the context of a policy that does not appear to be particularly sexual or otherwise disgust-eliciting. Social Security does not benefit a disliked out-group; rather, seniors are generally held in high esteem (e.g., "The Greatest Generation") and hold considerable political power. Nonetheless, one could easily imagine a campaign that invokes the rhetoric of disgust to effect or prevent change: "Candidate X's proposal to increase the retirement age is simply disgusting in its effort to strip life-long workers of their right to their hard-earned benefits," or "Representative Y's bill that would increase social security taxes makes me sick. She wants to take even more money away from today's workers!" In these ways, disgust is potentially manipulable for many policy arenas. This is consistent with other literature on the use of emotion in politics, such as Huddy and Gunthorsdottir (2000) who describe the political tactic of using visual appeals (i.e., campaign ads) to elicit an emotion and transfer that emotion to a neutral object (i.e., an unknown political candidate). Emotions can be and are elicited and used to achieve specific political purposes; disgust is no exception.

2.3.2 Implications for Persuasion

A second reason to expect disgust to influence politics is its implications for persuasion. Disgust is a deeply physiological emotion. Hancock's (2004) second key component is that disgust is an instinctive response, a *gut* reaction, "somehow out of the hands of the perceiver" (10). Scholars have argued that it is perhaps the most embodied of all emotions: Schnall et al (2008, 1106) described how "disgust is often experienced as a particularly visceral feeling, possibly because it can trigger nausea, throat clenching, and the very physical process of food expulsion to protect the body from harmful contaminants." They went on to argue, "Although emotions generally involve a physical, embodied component, we suspect that the strong physical basis might be even more pronounced for disgust."

An important implication of disgust's deep embodiment is that appeals to reason could be less successful than in other contexts. Persuasion attempts based on logic, reason, or just generally cognitive-focused arguments may be unsuccessful when the audience is feeling such a visceral, gut-level, emotional response. Indeed, Olatunji (2008) argues that feeling disgust makes one "resistant to rational argument." Therefore, on an individual level, feeling disgust may impede the possibility of persuasion. However, understanding disgust expressions as indicative of existing social norms, this suggests that opinion change may be additionally difficult beyond just individual-level resistance. Disgust reflects cultural norms, and media, elected officials, laws, our social networks and more are constantly reinforcing those cultural norms. In other words, persuasive efforts are not just working against individuals' personal resistance or disgust reactions; these persuasive efforts are also combating a larger society that teaches and reinforces these individual disgust reactions in the first place.

The individual, physiological component of disgust makes persuasion difficult enough; that disgust is also ideological makes it even more difficult. To the extent that the American political process relies on reasoned argument and deliberation, this research suggests that those who feel disgust may be much more difficult for LGBTQ advocates to engage.

Finally, and perhaps most important: if disgust is socially constructed, taught, and reinforced (e.g., Citrin 2004), then that means it can also be deconstructed, interrupted, and unlearned. As discussed above, what is perceived or constructed as disgusting varies across time, cultures, and contexts. This means that, though disgust is a predominant feature of history of LGBTQ people and politics in America and is still powerful today, its influence moving forward can be dramatically lessened. This is also true beyond the LGBTQ context.

3. Disgust in LGBTQ Politics

3.1 Disgust's Particular Importance for LGBTQ Politics

I argue that disgust, as an expression of existing cultural values, can be used to great political effect across many issues. However, for multiple reasons, I expect disgust to have particularly large effects in the domain of LGBTQ politics and policy.

First, disgust is intimately connected to sex and sexuality. As Rubin (1984) argues, “Western cultures generally consider sex to be a dangerous, destructive, negative force. ...It may be redeemed if performed within marriage for procreative purposes and if the pleasurable aspects are not enjoyed too much.”²³ Any sex act that transgresses this “charmed circle” of socially acceptable parameters are stigmatized and taboo – and taboo or unusual sex is often cited as a primary elicitor of disgust (Haidt, McCauley, & Rozin 1994). As Angyal (1941, 394) argues, “The more intimate the contact, the stronger the [disgust] reaction.” Indeed, a growing body of research confirms a link between sex, sexuality, and disgust reactions. Mosher and O’Grady (1979), for example, showed that exposure to gay pornography elicited disgust in heterosexuals, whereas heterosexual pornography did not. More recent studies also show that disgust reactions were common in response to gay and lesbian people, particularly in intimate or sexual contexts (Bishop 2015; Cottrell & Neuberg 2005; Doan et al 2014). Given that

²³ Even in 2015, arguments against gay marriage often invoke procreation as the purpose of sex and marriage. See the oral arguments presented at the Supreme Court in *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015).

LGBTQ people, as an out-group, are primarily defined by their sexual identities, it seems likely, if not all but certain, that disgust would play an influential role in gay politics.²⁴ Discussions of LGBTQ issues could prompt thoughts of sex and sexuality, and by extension disgust reactions. Indeed this is exactly how Martha Nussbaum (2004) describes what she calls “projective disgust,” or the disgust that some people feel upon imagining gay sex acts. She argues that individuals, particularly those who are uncomfortable with their own bodies, sexuality, and “animality,” project their own self-oriented disgust onto individuals or groups who bring up those feelings of shame, disgust, or vulnerability in them. “In this way,” she argues (2010), “the uncomfortable people displace their discomfort onto others, who are then targeted for various forms of social discrimination.”

Second, disgust is also deeply concerned with bodies. Scholars of disgust argue that perceived mutilations and other “body envelope violations” are strong triggers of disgust (Rozin, Haidt, & McCauley 2000). This makes disgust of particular relevance to transgender and gender non-conforming communities. These reactions may also be triggered by thoughts of actual or perceived/assumed changes made by trans people to their physical bodies or social identities. Many critiques leveled at trans people refer to these interventions (e.g. surgery, hormones) as “mutilations” of one’s body. Other criticisms imply that medical and related interventions are simply superficial and unnecessary alterations to one’s “true” or unchangeable self. For example, disgust is being signaled when transgender people’s gender-affirming healthcare is referred to as “elective mutilation.” This use of language calls specific attention to the object of disgust (gender transgressions, particularly on a physical/bodily level)

²⁴ Generally, “transgender” should not be defined by reference to sexual identity, but rather to gender identity. However, many people are unaware of how transgender identities differ from LGB identities. While 65% of Americans report that they have a close friend or family member who is gay (and the number is likely higher for knowing anyone who is gay), barely 9% of Americans report that they know someone who is transgender (Jones Cox, & Navarro-Rivera 2014). To the extent that contact mediates understanding of LGB(T) identities, this gap in contact likely reflects a gap in understanding. Additionally, Murib (2015) shows how the evolution of “transgender” as a political identity, nested within the LGB movement, obscured important distinctions between sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as within the category “transgender” itself.

felt toward transgender people.²⁵ Indeed, many negative characterizations of trans people focus on the physical interventions and presumed changes made to the body itself. Additionally, given the historical stereotyping of sexuality with gender deviance, violations (by anyone) of gendered norms may also elicit disgust. These reactions may be triggered by acts of non-compliance, such as gender-atypical dress, behavior, or desire – regardless of whether an individual identifies as transgender.

Third, disgust is perhaps most relevant to LGBTQ politics because of the behavior it produces. It compels individuals to distance themselves from the offending stimuli, as a method of protection from contamination or harm (Rozin et al 2000). On a basic level, this means simply that upon smelling spoiled milk, one might turn their face or push the carton away to get out of reach of this unpleasant odor: disgust produces a desire for and then an action to create distance from the offensive object. On an interpersonal level, this effect is politically significant. For example, in one study, inducing disgust among politically conservative participants was related to increased avoidance of contact with gays and lesbians (Terrizzi et al 2010). This is significant given the demonstrated ability of contact to influence opinion (e.g., Allport 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp 2006). While this avoidant behavior is characteristic of disgust generally, this is particularly important for the LGBTQ political movement due to the LGBTQ movement's heavy reliance on contact as a central strategy for persuasion (Stone 2012). This implication is especially pronounced given that conservatives make up the significant majority of those who remain opposed to gay marriage and other LGBTQ issues (Jones, Cox, & Navarro-Rivera 2014; McCarthy 2014), but also have been shown to be more easily disgusted than liberals on average (Inbar et al 2009).

²⁵ Schilt and Westbrook (2009) also connect this to maintenance of heterosexuality.

4. Disgust in U.S. LGBTQ History

As I have argued, there are particular reasons to anticipate disgust's relevance to LGBTQ politics. These expectations are borne out, and indeed are pervasive, in the history of LGBTQ people in America. Disgust and its related language of contamination, contagion, disease and perversion figure centrally in this history. What started as the medical, psychological condition of homosexuality (and, relatedly, gender non-conformity) transformed into the social, moral contaminant that is ubiquitous in modern politics. These affective legacies continue to structure LGBTQ politics in America today.

4.1 A Medical & Psychological Condition

In the late 19th century, as Victorian era morals became deeply entrenched in Western culture and medicine, long-existing but previously less-troubling behaviors, including same-sex desires and sex acts, became increasingly stigmatized (Foucault [1978] 1990). Prior to this, sexuality did not operate as a category of identity; sex acts of course occurred, but were not the basis for social or political identities. As this stigmatization and moralization intensified, a name was given to these now deviant behaviors: homosexuality.²⁶ Summarizing Foucault, queer theorist Jagose (1997, 9) writes:

Foucault argues that although same-sex sex acts were condemned in both religious and civil law before 1870, they were regarded as temptations to which anyone might succumb. Sinful and illegal, those forbidden acts were not understood to constitute a certain kind of individual. After 1870 same-sex sex acts began to be read as evidence of a particular type of person about whom explanatory narratives began to be formed: 'The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species.'

These "explanatory narratives" about homosexuality and homosexuals were, from the start, rooted in language of Victorian ideals of cleanliness, purity, (im)morality, and the perceived contagiousness of moral and physical corruption. Over time, these narratives about

²⁶ Foucault ([1978] 1990) dates the invention of homosexuality to 1870. The first known uses of the word heterosexual or heterosexuality were not until 1892 (Katz 1990). In this way, homosexuality existed before heterosexuality, and both are purely modern inventions (Katz 1990).

homosexuality became embedded in notions of health, medicine, morality, and citizenship, and they shaped law and culture.

Sexologists of the late 1800s first examined sexual desire and behaviors from medical and psychological perspectives. Their work helped establish the belief that human sexuality is both natural and, for some of these researchers, naturally heterosexual (Seidman 2011, 3). Early sexologists sometimes referred to homosexuality as “sexual inversion” (e.g., Ellis 1897) – something literally twisted within the individual. Richard von Krafft-Ebing, credited with establishing the field of sexology, in particular argued that the sole purpose of human sexuality was procreation, and any act not in this service was perverse: “With opportunity for the natural satisfaction of the sexual instinct, every expression of it that does not correspond with the purpose of nature—i.e., propagation,—must be regarded as perverse” (1892, 79).²⁷ This argument remains familiar and continues to be invoked even at the U.S. Supreme Court in 2015 (*Obergefell v. Hodges*). Given sexology’s establishment of heterosexuality as “natural,” this explicitly positions homosexuality as “unnatural” – also language that persists in modern political rhetoric. Thus, this early (pseudo)scientific approach to the study of sexuality established same-sex sex acts as abnormal, perverse, and unnatural.

The discipline of sexology also established sexuality as a domain of medicine, health, and psychology, and this continued into and throughout the 20th century. Sigmund Freud, perhaps the most notable psychologist of the 20th century, asserted that sexuality was more about pleasure than reproduction, in contrast with some earlier sexologists. Though Freud described homosexuality as a natural result of both inborn qualities and childhood experiences, he nonetheless argued that the preferred, “healthy” form of sexuality was “genital-centered, intercourse-oriented heterosexuality based on love and monogamy” (Seidman 2011,

²⁷ Though sexologists Havelock Ellis and (especially) Magnus Hirschfield offered a more positive view of gay and transgender people, they still contributed to the study of sexuality through psychology, medicine, and health perspectives.

4). This continued the construction of homosexuality as unhealthy and mentally abnormal, an existing but undesirable condition.

Homosexuality was “treated” using psychotherapy, electroshock therapy (both to the brain and to the genitals), conversion or “reparative” therapy, aversion therapy, institutionalization, and even lobotomization, among other methods (for a fuller list and discussion, see Kutchins & Kirk 1997; also Drescher 2010; Richards 1993; Silverstein 1996).²⁸ Many of the treatments illustrate the conflation of gender non-conformity with sexual non-conformity. For example, one common treatment was hormone therapy: men were administered testosterone or androgen in order to “restore” a properly gendered hormonal balance and thus properly gendered sexual behavior (Kutchins & Kirk 1997).²⁹ As Canaday (2009, 11) notes, “It was that perverts wanted to be penetrated *like women*, rather than the fact that they had sex with men, that made them perverse.” Thus, homosexuality was a literal disease that was diagnosable, treatable, and believed in many cases to be recoverable if not entirely curable. Indeed, in 1952, homosexuality was officially classified in the American Psychological Association’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-I).³⁰ This medicalization, pathologization, and related responses show the extent to which homosexuality and gender nonconformity were viewed as a disease.

4.2 *The Political & Moral Turn*

The mid-twentieth century, however, marked an important shift in the American construction of and relationship to homosexuality. From its inception around 1870 to the

²⁸ Interestingly, “aversion therapy” describes a practice wherein individuals (patients) are *taught* to be disgusted by some stimulus, in an effort to change their behavior related to that stimulus, i.e., breaking an addiction or, in this case, ceasing homosexual behavior or desires. This again highlights the basic point of this chapter, that disgust is employed to teach and reify certain social norms – and if it can be learned, then it can also be unlearned.

²⁹ Alternately, “cross-sex” hormones were sometimes used as a punitive form of chemical castration to reduce the individual’s (homo)sexual desires, as in the 1952 case of Alan Turing, the British computer scientist and logician who broke the German Enigma during World War II.

³⁰ Bayer (1987) and Kutchins & Kirk (1997) trace the removal of homosexuality from the DSM in 1973.

1940s, homosexuality was largely under the purview of medicine and psychology. However, in the time surrounding World War II, homosexuality became an integral element of citizenship and a contested category in politics, economics, culture, and morality. During this time, the conception of homosexuality shifted from a physical and/or psychological disease to a moral and social one.

American political development scholar Richard Valelly (2012) argues, “Until the middle of the twentieth century, sexual orientation was simply not widely and deeply politicized in the United States. But abruptly, in a period of a decade and a half (roughly 1940-1955), national political and bureaucratic actors created a national sexuality regime that has taken 60 years of LGBTQ struggle to partly reverse” (Valelly 2012, 313). By the mid-twentieth century, same-sex sex acts, often referred to as “crimes against nature,” were already criminalized in every state in the nation (Eskridge 2008).^{31,32} Canaday (2009) traces a detailed history of the policing of sexual and gender non-conformity at the *federal* level, and particularly in the developing American bureaucracy in the twentieth century. She shows that sodomy and gender non-conforming bodies became particularly scrutinized by the state, characterized as disgusting or indicative of disease and moral corruption, and likely to become a “public charge” – unwilling or unable, due to their perversity, to support themselves and contribute to society. These characterizations, Canaday argues, played decisive roles in determining who was allowed access to economic benefits, military service, and indeed the American state itself (via immigration policy).

This attention to homosexuality in the military became increasingly relevant during World War II, which “resulted in the first major effort to define and examine homosexuality as a ‘problem’... Overall this wartime effort created an understanding of the homosexual not

³¹ Interestingly, until the 19th century, sodomy was also referred to in Anglo-American texts as “buggery,” a term that “was originally used to slander heretical groups that were believed to originate from [Bulgaria]” (AGLP 2012). Given disgust’s influence in fears of unknown others, this again highlights the role of disgust in even the earliest labels and understandings of same-sex sex acts.

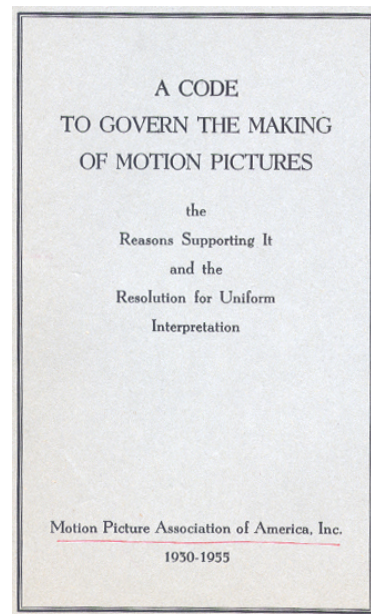
³² Eskridge (2008) provides a richly detailed history of sodomy laws in America.

only as a military ‘problem’ but also as a problem posing a danger to national interests and security” (Fejes 2008, 13-14).³³ In other words, homosexuality became a newly *political* (i.e., rather than medical) problem for the federal government, and this further reinforced the regulation of sexuality in the already burgeoning American bureaucracy (Canaday 2009).

The government bureaucracy was not the only one to turn its attention to the surveillance of homosexuality. Institutions of art and culture did so as well. In fact, so dangerous was the specter of homosexuality that from 1930 to 1968, the Motion Picture Production Code banned any representation of homosexuality in film. Will Hays, the first president of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MMPDA, now the MPAA), in an effort “to improve the image of the motion picture industry... introduced the Production Code, a document designed to help the industry regulate itself by following certain moral principles and guidelines” (Oscars.org 2016). Now famous for its influence on film, subversion, and culture (e.g., Russo [1981] 1987), the Hays Code’s move to ban

homosexuality in film was also blatantly tied to and invoked disgust in its proscriptions. Calling to mind Krafft-Ebing’s description of homosexuality, Rule II.4 of the Production Code states “Sex perversion or any inference to it is forbidden.” Rule II.7 further states, “Sex hygiene and venereal diseases are not subjects for motion pictures,” highlighting the continued connection between forbidden sex and disease. Other sections of the code are entitled “Vulgarity,” “Obscenity,” and “Repellent Subjects,” all further highlighting the role of disgust in guiding these “moral principles.”

Figure 3.4:
The Motion Picture
Production Code, 1930-1955
(Oscars.org 2016)



³³ See also Bérubé (1990) for a history of gay men and women in the military during World War II.

Shifting economic forces also facilitated this shift from perceiving homosexuality as a medical condition to a moral and social contaminant. D’Emilio (1993) argues that the radical restructuring of the American economy during the World War II era allowed for the emergence of a gay identity. As capitalism flourished and the economy shifted from an agrarian, family-unit-centered structure to an increasingly industrial, wage-labor-centered structure, this produced new opportunities for individual identities outside of the family to emerge. Both the economy and sexuality, D’Emilio argued, shifted from mainly (re)productive purposes to more independently-focused and pleasure-driven endeavors.

Capitalism has gradually undermined the material basis of the nuclear family by taking away the economic functions that cemented the ties between family members... On the other hand, the ideology of capitalist society has enshrined the family as the source of love, affection, and emotional security, the place where our need for stable, intimate human relationships is satisfied. ...Thus, while capitalism has knocked the material foundation away from family life, lesbians, gay men, and heterosexual feminists have become the scapegoats for the social instability of the system. (D’Emilio 1993, 473)

This shift is, in part, how homosexuality came to be perceived as explicitly “anti-family,” a commonly used refrain in modern American politics.³⁴ It also illustrates the shift from conceiving of homosexuality as a psychological problem to a moral contaminant that threatened the American family and society.

From the 1950s to the 1970s, this understanding of homosexuality as a contagious threat to the social and moral fabric of the American nation-state only intensified. For example, McCarthyism viewed homosexuality as a contagious element that would lead an individual to betray his or her nation, “a weakness that opened the door to Communist subversion” (Fejes 2008, 9; see also Johnson (2004) for a thorough history of this “Lavender Scare”). Furthermore, the Kinsey reports (1948; 1953) heightened American attention to the surprising prevalence of homosexual behavior, which in turn led the public to realize they were “no longer sure how to recognize a homosexual” (Fejes 2008, 14). As a result,

³⁴ See, for example, the following anti-LGBTQ organizations, as characterized by the Southern Poverty Law Center: the American Family Association, the Family Research Council, the Family Research Institute, and Focus on the Family.

“Homosexuality, like communism, was frequently referred to as a disease and invasion; both were seen as infections that were not locatable under the boundaries of ethnicity, dress, language, or religion” (Field 2005, 8).

This pervasive but clandestine condition led to heightened scrutiny and vigilance on the part of anti-gay forces in their efforts to police the boundaries of acceptable expressions of gender and sexuality. Through the 1960s and 1970s, government and law officials rigorously enforced existing anti-sodomy laws, continued McCarthy-style review of government employees for “sexual perversion,” and commonly raided gay and lesbian establishments (Eskridge 2008; Mallory, Hasenbush, & Sears 2015). The most common targets and victims of these efforts were the most visible or identifiable members of the LGBTQ community: typically transgender or gender non-conforming people, and especially people of color. For example, police often arrested butch women during bar raids for not wearing a minimum of three pieces of “feminine” clothing (Mogul, Ritchie, & Whitlock 2012). These efforts to limit or control LGBTQ people and their expressions in public sectors and spaces (i.e., government, places of business, public meeting places for sex) highlighted the growing understanding of homosexuality as a specifically *public*, social threat.

At the same time, a nascent homophile and gay rights movement was building, pressuring local governments and organizations for equal treatment, political rights, and redress to social discrimination. The 1966 Compton Cafeteria Riots and the 1969 Stonewall Riots marked the first times LGBTQ people fought back against police brutality and state surveillance, both times led by gender non-conforming and transgender people of color (Stryker 2008). In 1972, the first gay rights ordinances were passed in East Lansing and Ann Arbor, Michigan, and over the next four years another 27 cities and counties would enact some similar form of nondiscrimination law (Fejes 2008, 53). By 1973, gay advocates had also successfully pressured the American Psychological Association to remove homosexuality as a disorder from the DSM (Bayer 1987; Kutchins & Kirk 1997), and in 1977, Harvey Milk became

one of the first openly gay elected officials in the United States. The movement was slowly gaining traction around the country.

However, responses to these events illustrate the persistence of disgust and stigma even in the face of early progress and growing LGBTQ visibility. Police and state regulation continued, if not intensified (Mogul, Ritchie, & Whitlock 2012), and Harvey Milk was assassinated only eleven months after he took office, just months after he sponsored a successful gay rights ordinance for the city of San Francisco (Shilts 1982).³⁵ Though the APA removed homosexuality from the DSM, they simultaneously added “gender dysphoria,” a category that effectively characterized gender non-conformity as a psychological disorder (Drescher 2010; Kutchins & Kirk 1997).³⁶ This category continues to dictate transgender people’s access to gender-affirming healthcare, resources, and state recognition to this day.

Other efforts around the country to promote legal rights for gay people were met with moral and political outrage, most notably the rise of Anita Bryant’s “Save Our Children” campaign in response to Miami-Dade County’s gay non-discrimination ordinance (Fejes 2008). Anita Bryant’s rhetoric and other similar campaigns around the country also relied on disgust, conceptions of homosexuality as anti-family, and fears of gay men in particular as predators of both children’s bodies and morality. Fejes (2008) argues that the 1978 Miami ordinance was particularly instrumental in catapulting gay rights into the national spotlight. Of equal importance, the specific terms of this debate – Anita Bryant’s terms – also went national. This concretized the “moral panic” surrounding gay rights and LGBTQ progress that has structured LGBTQ political efforts (e.g., Stone 2012) to this day.

³⁵ His assassin, Dan White, was also an elected member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, and was the only Supervisor who voted against Milk’s 1978 gay rights ordinance (Shilts 1982).

³⁶ As Judith Butler argues, “The ‘diagnosis’ can operate in several ways, but one way it can and does operate, especially in the hands of those who are transphobic, is as an instrument of pathologization. To be diagnosed with gender identity disorder is to be found, in some way, to be ill, sick, wrong, out of order, abnormal, and to suffer a certain stigmatization as a consequence of the diagnosis being given at all.” (275)

The events of the 1970s illustrated and cemented the mid-twentieth century shift from understanding homosexuality and gender non-conformity as a psychological, medical condition to a social, moral threat to the nation. However, the lingering associations between homosexuality and disease were soon to be reactivated in the 1980s.

4.3 HIV/AIDS & The Reification of Disease

On June 5, 1981, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention first reported five cases of a rare lung infection in young gay men in California. This was the first official report of what would become known as the AIDS epidemic (AIDS.gov 2015).³⁷ Unlike prior conceptions of homosexuality as a psychological or social disease, the HIV/AIDS epidemic involved an actual, physical disease with actual risk of contagion or contamination. As knowledge emerged that HIV/AIDS was primarily afflicting the gay community, the association between homosexuality and disease only grew stronger.

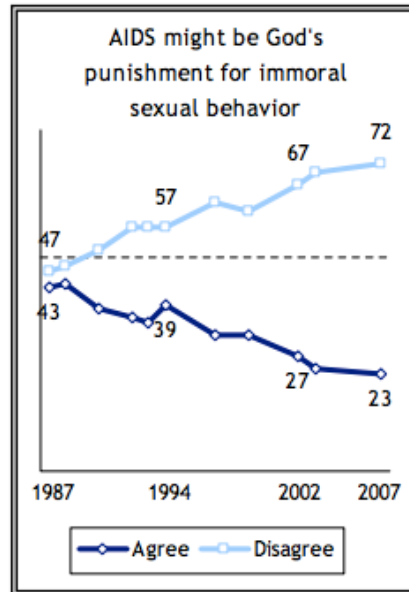
As news of the disease spread and the number of its victims climbed, a panic spread across the nation. For nearly three years, the source, cause, and method of transmission of the disease was unknown (AIDS.gov 2015), and so for three long years the public remained similarly uncertain of how to avoid transmission or potential contagions. However, what was known was that the disease was primarily affecting gay male and intravenous drug-using communities. Indeed, one of the early names for the disease was actually “gay-related immune deficiency,” or GRID. This bolstered fears of and prejudice toward the gay community (e.g., Herek 2002), and further acted as “proof” of the social, moral, and now physical threat supposedly posed by (homo)sexual deviance.³⁸ Even as knowledge about HIV/AIDS grew,

³⁷ For a history of this time, see Shilts ([1987] 2007). See also Gould (2009) for a history of ACT UP, the LGBTQ community’s fight against AIDS, and the influence and use of emotions in this struggle.

³⁸ This is consistent with the more general pattern that disease outbreaks increase anxiety, prejudice toward outgroups, and support for restrictive and punitive policies (e.g., Albertson & Gadarian 2015).

many in the public continued to view the disease as a form of “divine punishment” intended specifically for the gay community and their “immoral sexual behavior,” as seen in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: 1987-2007 Pew Findings on American Beliefs that “AIDS Might Be God’s Punishment for Immoral Sexual Behavior”



(Source: Pew 2007)

By 2013, this belief had further declined to 14% of all Americans, though slightly higher (20-25%) among some religious denominations (Jones, Cox, & Navarro-Rivera 2014). However, even in 2014, 65% of Americans believe that people living with HIV or AIDS in the U.S. became “infected because of irresponsible personal behavior,” rather than through no fault of their own (Jones, Cox, & Navarro-Rivera 2014). By contrast, only 41% of Americans think that people with HIV or AIDS in developing countries contracted the disease through irresponsible behavior. Furthermore, “[t]here are few differences on this issue among Americans from different political, religious, racial backgrounds” (46). This disparity shows the lingering connotations in America of blaming HIV on an individual’s sexual behavior.

From its outset, then, HIV/AIDS has been understood as a disease associated with the gay community. However, this occurred in a way that is relatively unique to disease affliction: few, if any, other diseases are as closely associated with and stigmatizing of the population they

primarily afflict.³⁹ For example, breast cancer affects mainly women but generally does not result in prejudicial attitudes toward women, let alone widespread belief that women deserved cancer simply because they are women. In a closer analogy, even other sexually transmitted infections, though often stigmatizing, typically do not result in the loss of employment or housing. Rather, the preexisting understanding of homosexuality through a lens of disease, pathology, and disgust *framed and dictated* this response to HIV/AIDS. The public already viewed the gay community as disgusting, and American society had generally regarded homosexuality as some variant of a disease or condition for a century by this time. As a result, the connection between the gay community and this disease transformed quickly in the public's mind to a specifically gay disease. This association with disgust also sheds light on the fact that the public and the government alike engaged in a committed pattern of avoidance – a behavior disgust is known to produce – of both the HIV epidemic and the community it was most affecting. Indeed, it was 1987 before President Reagan even used the word AIDS in public, by which point over 25,000 people had already died in the United States alone (amfAR.org 2016).

In short, while homosexuality had historically been viewed as disgusting and in turns both a psychological and a social disease, HIV/AIDS reified this connection for the modern era, as a *literal*, physical, potentially fatal disease became primarily associated with the gay male community. These fears and associations with disease show the continued, powerful impact of disgust, and they also continue today in numerous forms, such as the Federal Drug Administration's continued prohibitions on blood donations from gay men and the ongoing criminalization in many states of the sexual behavior of people with HIV (e.g., Hoppe 2014).⁴⁰

³⁹ The CDC shows that, as recently as 2014, gay and bisexual men, particularly men of color, are the U.S. populations most affected by HIV (CDC.gov 2016). HIV/AIDS is also still a critically important issue and political priority for many in the LGBTQ community, though there are generational differences in prioritization (Egan & Sherrill 2005).

⁴⁰ Until December 2015, the Federal Drug Administration still banned men who have sex with men from donating blood. However, the current policy only allows men who have sex with men to donate blood if they have abstained from sex for at least one year. Additionally, transgender people are universally incorrectly coded according to the sex they were assigned at birth. The FDA believes (incorrectly) that this allows for the tracking of specific types of sex (i.e. penises having sex with other

4.4 Lessons From History/Looking Forward

From the beginning of homosexuality, disgust has operated as an expression of dominant social norms and beliefs, exerting powerful influence over the very definitions and understandings of sexuality and gender non-conformity, as well as the experience of LGBTQ people in America. The conflation of sexual deviance with gender deviance illustrates the enmeshing of sexual orientation and gender identity, even prior to the modern terms of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. Sexology and early psychology established homosexuality and gender non-conformity as medical conditions or diseases. In the twentieth century, the development of capitalism and wage labor and its impact on the American family unit helped transform understandings of homosexuality from a medical, psychological disease, to a social and moral one. This also illustrates how homosexuality came to mean “anti-family” and to threaten the social and moral fabric of the United States in the modern era. Responses to HIV/AIDS in the 1980s were all but pre-determined, due to this century-old association between homosexuality, disease, and disgust. This history continues to structure responses to LGBTQ people and issues today.

That disgust is a deeply embodied, individually experienced emotion also makes disgust reactions seem natural, inherently true, and less subject to questioning. Furthermore, when something is labeled a disease, this increases disgust and fear reactions (e.g., Herek 2002) due to disgust’s connection to self-protection and disease-avoidance behaviors. This connection to protecting the self helps explain why people who oppose gay rights often articulate a discourse of perceived harm (to marriage, to the family, to America, etc). If one believes that gay people are disgusting and to be avoided, then any move toward gay acceptance or rights means that

penises), as part of their ongoing fears of HIV/AIDS transmission (Cathleen Hipps, Director of Collections, American Red Cross, Great Lakes and Southeast Michigan Blood Services Region, in discussion with the author, May 2016). Both these practices contradict existing best practices in medicine, including the recommendations of the American Medical Association (AMA 2016).

avoidance is less likely and that the imagined harm is increasingly imminent. This is confirmed in recent work showing a direct link between disgust sensitivity and support for specifically (self) protectionist policies (Kam & Estes 2016).

Importantly, the process of labeling acts or people as disgusting is mutually constitutive, in two ways. The first way is between the object and the observer: for example, the object of homosexuality (or the homosexual) was labeled a disease because observers perceived it to be disgusting, but this labeling only increased the perception that the homosexual was disgusting. The second way is between individuals and structures: individual-level feelings and experiences collect and manifest to a social and structural level. For example, as individual prejudices aggregate into public opinion, legislators then create policies that institutionalize these prejudices (e.g., sodomy laws). These structural, institutional expressions then reinforce and reinscribe individual level prejudices. In a more elegant explanation, Canaday (2009) shows how homosexuality played a critical role in the production of the modern American state, which also played a critical role in the production of sexuality:

...Homosexuality went from a total nonentity to a commonly understood category in the same years that the federal government went from a fledgling to a full-service bureaucracy. That timing helps to explain why the American bureaucracy was so much more homophobic than its corollaries in western Europe, where bureaucracies reached their modern form well before sexologists began talking and writing about sexual perversion. Homosexuality was a novel concern in the years that the American bureaucracy took shape, and so it was etched deeply into federal institutions, giving us a state that not only structures but is itself structured by sexuality. (258)

When the social level response is even further integrated into every sphere of society, such as medicine (i.e., the *DSM*) and citizenship (i.e., the family, the state; Brandzel 2005; Canaday 2009; Valelly 2012), this facilitates the transmission of these beliefs and reactions from one generation to the next and from one sphere of life to another. In this way, disgust works both to label and reinforce existing social norms, in an ongoing cycle of emotional socialization and expression, and the mutual constitution of individual beliefs and American law and culture.

However, because disgust has historically structured policy making does not require that it continue to do so. Philosopher Martha Nussbaum offers an important counterpoint to Miller (1997), Kass (1997; 2002), and others who argue for the legitimacy of disgust as a basis for law making. She argues that because disgust is felt with such intensity and has such extreme effects on the body and mind, this is precisely why it *cannot* be trusted as a reliable indicator of where law ought to proceed (in sharp distinction to Miller and Kass, who argue this is exactly why it *should* be used for guiding law).

I concur with Nussbaum that disgust is not a reliable indicator of where law ought to proceed, but I further argue that disgust is nonetheless a reliable indicator of the predominant or hegemonic values of a society. Disgust should not lead to laws that prohibit or restrict the perceived-to-be-disgusting act or person, but rather to an investigation of *why* this act or person is perceived as such. Given disgust's basis in cultural values and the historical pattern of discriminating against that which we find disgusting, the only inherent truth-value disgust actually has is in telling us what is valued and what is dismissed by a society, and perhaps also what work lies ahead for dismantling prejudice.

5. Conclusion

Reading these diverse literatures together (e.g., psychology, feminist and queer theory, American political development), we see that disgust operates not just as a psychological phenomenon, but also as a cultural practice (Ahmed 2004), as a sociopolitical norm that is learned, reinforced, and embedded in cultures and institutions. Importantly, this recognition calls attention to the fact that disgust can also be *unlearned*.

The roles of disgust, disease, and contamination in LGBTQ history are also integral to understanding the modern tensions facing the LGBTQ movement. These affective legacies continue to structure LGBTQ politics in America today, entrenching negative attitudes and making opinion change difficult. In the following chapters, I return to the individual level

analysis, as this is how political science generally begins to measure public opinion. I will show the continued existence of disgust in attitudes toward LGBTQ people and issues (i.e., that disgust is not isolated to LGBTQ *history*, but rather continues today), as well as the differing impact of disgust on different subgroups of the LGBTQ community.

Chapter 4:
Does LGBTQ Politics Trigger Disgust?⁴¹

1. Introduction

Emotions play a critical role in politics. Notable attention is paid to the impact on politics of anger (Banks & Valentino 2012; Valentino et al 2011), anxiety (Albertson & Gadarian 2015; Huddy et al 2005; Valentino et al 2008), fear (Brader 2005; Lerner et al 2003), and more. Less such attention, at least in political science, is paid to disgust (for notable exceptions see Clifford & Wendell 2016; Hancock 2004; Kam & Estes 2016).

Existing research generally finds that feeling disgusted leads to harsher moral judgments, heightened prejudice toward out groups, and aversive or avoidant behaviors (Cunningham et al 2013; Dasgupta et al 2009; Inbar et al 2009; Olatunji 2008; Smith et al 2011; Terrizzi et al 2010). These studies, particularly in psychology, largely focus on inducing disgust among participants using nonpolitical primes, such as a bad smell or dirty environment, and then asking about political opinions. The disgust elicited in these scenarios is referred to as an incidental emotion, because the emotion is not caused by or related to the topic of interest (in these studies, political opinions). Rather, the emotion was caused by something unrelated, such as the bad smell or dirty environment. Much of the research on disgust's impact on LGBTQ attitudes shares this approach, showing that inducing disgust leads

⁴¹ Thank you to Richard Anderson, Jenn Chudy, Hakeem Jefferson, and Trevor Johnston for their guidance on various drafts of this chapter.

to less support for policies like gay marriage and lower expressions of warmth toward LGBTQ people.

In this chapter, I present a different approach with more immediate political implications. I use fictional news stories about an LGBTQ policy to examine whether these simple stories alone can elicit disgust – without any other potential prime. Given the arguments I presented in the previous chapter, namely that disgust is intimately connected to sex, sexuality, and bodies, I expect that LGBTQ political issues are likely to directly elicit disgust, without any primes, bad smells, or dirty environments – that disgust in the LGBTQ context is not incidental, but rather integral: directly related to and caused by the topic itself. Put another way, while existing literature shows the impact of disgust as an independent variable *on* LGBTQ-related attitudes, in this chapter I examine disgust as an outcome elicited directly *by* LGBTQ political issues. Existing literature reveals the significant impact of disgust on political attitudes, policy preferences, and behaviors. If simply reading or thinking about an LGBTQ political issue is sufficient to *cause* or elicit disgust, then these established consequences for opinion, persuasion, and behavior are more likely to occur any time an LGBTQ political issue is considered.

2. Literature

2.1 *Emotions & Group Attitudes*

Feelings and emotions toward others are an everyday part of life. Many emotional reactions to others are not strictly about them as individuals, but also as responses to the groups those individuals are perceived to belong to, such as racial, gender, or economic groups (e.g. Tajfel & Turner 1979).⁴² These emotional responses are particularly important in structuring beliefs and motivating behaviors, including in the political realm. For example, if a

⁴² The individual's own group membership(s) and that membership's relative importance also shape these emotional reactions to others (e.g., Jardina 2014; Mackie & Smith 2014; Tajfel & Turner 1979).

person likes or feels warmly toward a particular group, she is more likely to support a policy that benefits members of that group; if she dislikes the group, then she is more likely to oppose such a policy (Conover 1988; Feldman & Huddy 2005; Nelson & Kinder 1996; Small & Lerner 2008).

However, different groups elicit different emotions. Whites, for example, may feel anger (Banks & Valentino 2012), resentment (Kinder & Sanders 1996), or sympathy (Chudy 2016) toward blacks, compared to anxiety about Latinos or perceived immigrants (Brader et al 2008; Valentino et al 2013). Many people feel resentment toward the rich and sympathy toward the poor (Piston 2014), though Hancock (2004) illustrates the disgust felt toward welfare recipients. These distinctions are important because these specific emotions motivate different behaviors and political outcomes. If a person feels anger, she is more likely to support punitive policies, while fear increases support for precautionary ones (Lerner et al 2003). Valentino et al (2008) find that anxiety can increase information seeking, while anger can deter it. Positive emotions like enthusiasm can stimulate participation and likelihood to vote (Brader 2005). Little work, however, has focused on the specific emotions elicited by LGBTQ people.

2.2 Emotions & LGBTQ Attitudes

The earliest LGBTQ work in political science discussed heterosexuals' attitudes toward homosexuals as a group and homosexuality more generally, often by reporting basic polling data without analysis of related emotional reactions to lesbian and gay people (e.g., DeBoer 1978).⁴³ Contemporaneous work in psychology illustrated significant relationships between negative attitudes toward homosexuality and endorsement of other attitudes such as authoritarianism, sexual conservatism, or gender stereotypes (Dunbar et al 1973; MacDonald & Games 1974), but again without related emotional investigation.

⁴³ These types of poll or trend reporting still occur in recent literature (e.g., Schafer & Shaw 2009; Yang 1997), while others both report and analyze trends (e.g., Andersen & Fetner 2008; Baunach 2012).

Common in these early articles were presentations of the remarkably hostile attitudes toward homosexuality, LGB people (transgender people would not be considered for many years to come), or even remotely gay-friendly policies. There was rarely discussion of the emotions underlying these beliefs or policy positions. De Boer (1978), for example, drew from U.S. and European polling about beliefs regarding LGB civil rights and families: more than 75% of Americans believed that homosexual men should not be allowed to work as judges, teachers, or ministers, while 77% believed that homosexuals should never be allowed to adopt children. But there were no polling questions or discussion of the emotional components surrounding these attitudes. Studies in the 1980s developed scales of heterosexuals' attitudes toward LGB people (e.g., Larsen et al 1980; Kite & Deaux 1986), but they too continued to focus more on the influence of other belief structures, such as authoritarianism or religion, rather than emotional substrates.

However, Herek's (1984; 1988) Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gays (ATLG) Scale explicitly introduced emotional components – namely disgust – and also distinguished between lesbians and gay men, rather than referring to homosexuality or homosexuals in general. Notably, Herek showed that attitudes toward gay women were typically warmer than toward gay men, a pattern that persists today (Doan & Haider-Markel 2010; Herek 2002; Massey 2009). Indeed, Herek's contribution is one of the formative contributions to the field of public opinion on LGBTQ people and issues: many modern measurements of attitudes toward LGBTQ people include questions from or are based on Herek's ATLG scale. Herek describes the variety of contexts beyond the United States where his scale has been adapted for use and remains a powerful tool for researchers:

The ATLG was developed for administration to English-speaking adult heterosexuals in the United States. It has also been used in research conducted in England (Hegarty, 2002) and Canada (Mohipp & Morry, 2004), and translated versions have been administered in the Netherlands (Meerendonk, Eisinga, & Felling, 2003), Singapore (Detenber et al., 2007), Brazil (DeSouza, Solberg, & Elder, 2007), Chile (Cardenas & Barrientos, 2008; Nierman, Thompson, Bryan, & Mahaffey, 2007), and Turkey (Gelbal

& Duyan, 2006). In addition, a Spanish-language version was created for a study of California adults of Mexican descent (Herek & Gonzalez-Rivera, 2006). [Herek 2016]

The far-reaching utility of Herek's measure demonstrates the importance of capturing both emotional responses and policy beliefs, as well as the intersections of attitudes toward sexuality and gender.

Despite this success and utility, Herek's scale is rarely used in political science scholarship on attitudes toward LGBTQ people (save for Herek himself (2002)). Political science literature generally does not employ such attitude scales when considering heterosexuals' opinions of gay or transgender people. Some scholars employ a single or several questions about homosexuality (e.g., Andersen & Fetner 2008; Doan & Haider-Markel 2010; Lewis 2003), but which specific questions and how many are used vary from scholar to scholar. Many simply report LGBTQ-related policy preferences as a proxy for attitudes toward LGBTQ people (e.g., Lewis 2003), which assumes a reasoning or motivation beyond what the data necessarily reveals.

In political science, there are currently few examinations of emotional components of attitudes toward LGBTQ people. The most commonly used affective measure is a simple feeling thermometer, which researchers generally use to make arguments such as, "...individuals' affect toward gays and lesbians has a highly positive and significant effect on attitudes toward same-sex marriage" (Gaines & Garand 2010, 560). Other work confirms this overall finding, that people who offer warmer ratings of gays and lesbians as a group tend to be more supportive of gay and lesbian rights (e.g., Barth & Overby 2003; Brewer 2003a). However, the feeling thermometer is a blunt measure, as it cannot distinguish between discrete emotions such as anger, disgust, hope, fear, and so on. And again, these distinctions are important because these specific emotions motivate different behaviors and political outcomes. Indeed, Cottrell et al (2010) show that, across multiple policy areas (i.e.,

immigration, terrorism, disaster relief, LGBTQ rights), specific emotions were more predictive of policy attitudes than was general prejudice or affect alone.

2.3 Disgust & LGBTQ Attitudes

Reflecting on social science scholarship on homophobia, Herek (2004, 10) argues that that disgust is “central to heterosexuals’ negative emotional responses to homosexuality.” As argued in the previous chapter, disgust has played an important role in attitudes toward LGBTQ people and related policies in American history. These disgust reactions to LGBTQ people persist today (Cottrell & Neuberg 2005), especially in intimate or sexual contexts (Bishop 2015; Doan et al 2014; Mosher & O’Grady 1979).

Though political science has thus far examined discrete emotional responses to LGBTQ people and policies in a limited way, scholars in psychology have more thoroughly explored the influence of emotion on LGBTQ-related attitudes. Given the focus of this project on disgust, I discuss here only the literature relevant to disgust’s impact on political attitudes, especially in an LGBTQ context.

Existing literature generally examines disgust’s influence in at least one of three ways. One standard psychological measure of disgust is the “DS-R,” or the Disgust Sensitivity-Revised scale (Haidt et al 1994). This is a 25-item questionnaire of self-reported responses to, or ratings of, the disgustingness of hypothetical scenarios, and it measures an individual’s overall sensitivity to disgust. Note that this is not the same as actually being disgusted; rather, this sensitivity measure captures an individual’s propensity toward being disgusted. It shows that some individuals are more or less susceptible or likely to feel disgust, given a potentially disgusting scenario. A more recently developed measure, the Three Domain Disgust Scale (TDDS) (Tybur et al 2009; Olatunji et al 2012), also examines disgust sensitivity and additionally refines the general sensitivity assessment into three categories of potential disgust elicitors. Finally, many studies actually induce disgust among participants using a foul odor,

graphic imagery, by asking the participant to reflect on a time they felt disgust, or conducting the study in an unclean environment (see Landy & Goodwin 2015 for a review). Using the DS-R, TDDS, or inducing disgust, scholars have illustrated a strong connection between disgust, moral judgments, prejudice and attitudes about out groups (including LGBTQ people), policy preferences, and behaviors.

This literature shows that, generally, people who feel disgusted or are more easily disgusted make harsher moral judgments (Cameron et al 2013; Eskine et al 2011; Horberg et al 2009; Schnall et al 2008; though for exceptions see David & Olatunji 2011; Landy & Goodwin 2015). Feeling disgust also leads people to express more negative or prejudicial attitudes toward out groups (Faulkner et al 2004; Hodson & Costello 2007; Inbar et al 2009; Naverette et al 2006). These effects extend to heightened prejudice toward LGBTQ people specifically (Cunningham et al 2013; Dasgupta et al 2009; Inbar et al 2012; Inbar et al 2009; Olatunji 2008; Terrizzi et al 2010).

Additionally, disgust has significant impacts on political ideology, policy preferences, and politically relevant behaviors. Generally, disgust sensitivity is also shown to correspond to heightened conservatism (for a review, see Terrizzi et al 2013) and even conservative vote choice (Inbar et al 2012). More specifically, disgust plays an important role in what Clifford and Wendell (2016) term “purity attitudes,” or new and emerging issues related to food and public health for which there are no clear partisan cues. They find that disgust sensitivity predicts support for organic foods, required labeling of genetically modified foods, and endorsement of anti-vaccination beliefs. Kam and Estes (2016) find that disgust is “distinct from simple out-group hostility,” and predicts support for policies perceived to “protect citizens from physical, moral, or imaginary contamination,” such as food regulation and immigration restrictions. The impact of disgust on immigration policy preferences has also been thoroughly explored, showing that disgust sensitivity predicts stricter immigration preferences if not outright prohibitions (Brenner & Inbar 2014; Faulkner et al 2004; though for exception see

Inbar et al 2009). In the LGBTQ context, Cottrell and colleagues (2010) found that disgust, but not anger or fear, predicted attitudes toward gay rights. This is a repeated finding throughout this literature, that disgust toward gays and lesbians corresponds with decreased support for issues like gay marriage (Balzer & Jacobs 2011; Cunningham et al 2013; Dasgupta et al 2009; Inbar et al 2009; Olatunji 2008; Smith et al 2011; Terrizzi et al 2010).

Additionally, disgust influences politically relevant behaviors. Disgust compels individuals to withdraw, avoid, or distance themselves from an offending stimulus, as a method of protection from perceived contamination or harm (Haidt 2003; Mackie et al 2000; Rozin et al 2000). In the political context, this means that feeling disgust leads to avoidance of contact with gays and lesbians, especially among conservatives (Terrizzi et al 2010). This is relevant because of the LGBTQ movement's reliance on contact as a central persuasive strategy (Stone 2012): if the LGBTQ movement seeks to improve attitudes toward LGBTQ people by making contact with unsupportive individuals, but these individuals prefer to avoid contact due to disgust-related reactions, this will severely limit the usefulness of this strategy moving forward. This is especially important given that conservatives make up the significant majority of those who remain opposed to gay marriage and other LGBTQ issues (Jones et al 2014; McCarthy 2014), but also have been shown to be more easily disgusted than liberals on average (Inbar et al 2009).

2.4 My Contribution

This chapter is distinct from and contributes to the existing literature in two ways. First, I examine integral disgust – that is, whether LGBTQ topics can directly trigger disgust, rather than triggering disgust in another way – and its impact on LGBTQ-related policy support. Second, I examine the interaction of disgust with different LGBTQ-related policy issues.

The difference between incidental and integral emotions (e.g. Schwarz 2012) is important. Incidental emotions refer to those that an individual may be feeling at a particular time, but are unrelated to the present moment. Integral emotions, however, are caused by the immediate situation or object at hand. As discussed above, existing literature illustrates a strong connection between *incidental* disgust and opinions toward LGBTQ people and issues: researchers induce disgust amongst participants using sensory experiences (a foul odor, grotesque images, or other (non-political) elicitors), and then ask participants about LGBTQ issues. They show that upon feeling a non-politically-induced disgust reaction, individuals are more likely to express conservative political preferences, make harsher moral judgments, and express heightened degrees of prejudice toward others. However, I argue that the connection between disgust and LGBTQ politics is *integral*: given disgust's intimate connection to bodies, sex, and sexuality, as discussed in the previous chapter, I expect that the mere policy issues themselves can elicit disgust. In other words, while existing literature often considers disgust as an influence on LGBTQ-related political attitudes, I argue that LGBTQ political issues are also a cause of disgust.

This distinction is important because it concerns the scope of the influence of disgust. The former work considers the implications of experiencing disgust, without commenting on how widespread or common this may be. My work considers the actual cause of disgust, as well as for whom and for how many people LGBTQ-related disgust matters. If the very subject of gay people or politics causes disgust, this intensifies the emotion's potential consequences for public opinion, policy formation, and persuasion.

Given that previous literature has established the influence of incidental disgust, I focus my design on integral disgust. Other work has shown that merely thinking or reading about elicitors can produce disgust (e.g., Jones & Fitness 2008; Royzman et al 2008). Therefore, I use fictional news stories about an LGBTQ policy to examine whether these simple stories alone can elicit disgust – without any other potential prime. Additionally,

recalling the previous chapter’s argument that emotional responses will interact with policy content to produce unique reactions, I vary the specific policy issue presented to respondents in the following experiment. Based on the above literature, I hypothesize the following.

- (1) LGBTQ-related news stories will elicit disgust.
- (2) Disgust will decrease support for LGBTQ policy issues.
- (3) These effects will vary across different LGBTQ policy issues.

3. Methods

To examine these hypotheses, I conducted an original survey experiment using Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). This experiment was designed to simulate a routine experience – reading a news story online – that might lead an individual to think briefly about LGBTQ people or issues. I designed an intentionally low-information and low-threat presentation to provide a difficult test for the central hypothesis: does LGBTQ politics itself elicit disgust? Can disgust be elicited by even the mere mention of an LGBTQ-related policy?

3.1 Design

The survey was hosted on Qualtrics and subjects were recruited via MTurk. The survey was described as “a short survey about news stories and memory.” At intake, subjects were informed that the study concerned “people’s memory about certain policies in American politics today.” These references to memory were used to encourage attention to the survey and the news story in particular. After giving their informed consent to participate in the study, subjects answered a brief pre-treatment consisting of age, party identification, and ideology. They were then randomly assigned to one of five experimental conditions.

All conditions contained a short fictional news story about an unnamed state’s legislature considering a proposed bill. All stories were intentionally written as generically as

possible, providing little information beyond identifying the issue.⁴⁴ They were also written as non-threateningly as possible, to elicit responses only to the issue itself, separate from potential threat. Overall, the stories were sparsely descriptive of the bill's content, offered only a vague timeline for a potential vote, and did not describe any likely success or failure of the bill. Subjects were required to view the news story for at least fifteen seconds before advancing, again to encourage attention to the treatment.

The control condition described a proposed bill prohibiting texting-while-driving. I use this non-LGBTQ political issue to differentiate between disgust toward LGBTQ politics specifically and toward politics generally. The bills in the treatment conditions discussed one of the following LGBTQ-related policies: employment nondiscrimination, same-sex marriage, same-sex adoption, and transgender healthcare. All were framed as pro-LGBTQ bills. The text of each story is included in the appendix, with the full text of the gay marriage condition shown in Figure 4.1 as an example.

Figure 4.1: Gay Marriage Treatment Story



Please read the following clip of this newspaper article published last summer. You will not be able to advance to the next page for 15 seconds.

State lawmakers to consider legalizing same-sex marriage

SPRINGFIELD -- State lawmakers are considering a bill that would legalize gay marriage statewide.

Last week's session of the State House of Representatives began with a discussion of the proposed legislation. Currently, state law prohibits gay and lesbian couples from marrying. If the bill passes, it would grant same-sex couples the right to marry and receive state benefits afforded by marriage.

The bill comes as the country continues to consider questions about gay rights. The House is set to vote on the bill later this month. The Governor has made no statement about whether he would sign the bill if it passes.

3.2 Measures

In the post-treatment battery, subjects were asked about their emotional responses to the issue in the news article, their feelings toward a variety of social and political groups, opinions on LGBTQ-related policy issues, and finally a series of demographic questions.

⁴⁴ The average length was 116 words. The precise text of each is included in the appendix.

Following the news story, respondents were prompted: “Now we would like to ask you about some of the feelings you may have about the issue in the article you just read. The following questions will ask you how the issue in the article makes you feel.” They were then asked to self-report their reactions across a range of negative emotions. The emotions were presented in alphabetical order to all participants. For each emotion, a respondent could choose: “not ___ at all,” “a little ___,” “somewhat ___,” “very ___,” or “extremely ___.”⁴⁵

I asked about multiple negative emotions in order to distinguish between disgust and other potential negative reactions, such as anger and anxiety. To account for the possibility that respondents used different language or labels for their emotions, I also asked about three related terms for anger (angry, furious, irritated), anxiety (anxious, fearful, worried), and disgust (disgusted, revolted, sick). This resulted in nine questions relating to negative emotions.⁴⁶ In what follows, I present results using both the single self-report of “disgusted,” as well as a “disgust index” that combines the responses of the three disgust-related terms. The choice between the self-report and the index does not affect the main findings, but I present models using both methods for transparency.

Respondents in each condition were also asked to evaluate all LGBTQ-related policies used in the study: employment nondiscrimination, gay marriage, gay adoption, and transgender healthcare. Moreover, I asked the employment nondiscrimination policy question twice: once about protections for LGB people only, and once about protections for transgender people only. For each policy question, response options ranged from “strongly oppose” to “strongly support.”

⁴⁵ Following Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen (2000), the questions used to gauge emotional reactions were unipolar rather than bipolar: that is, subjects were asked to report their experience of each emotion individually (“How happy does that make you feel?”), rather than of one emotion relative to another (“Does that make you feel happy, sad, or neither?”). Marcus and colleagues argue that unipolar response options are preferable because otherwise subjects are forced to collapse multiple emotional responses into a single, overly simplistic answer (162).

⁴⁶ Respondents were also asked about six positive emotions: happy, hopeful, optimistic, overjoyed, proud, and sympathetic. Due to this project’s focus on disgust and negative attitudes, I will not report on these positive emotions here. This is an area for future research.

3.3 Sample

Participants in this study were recruited using Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), an online labor market that is increasingly popular for data collection in academic research. MTurk samples have been shown to be more representative and diverse than the typical undergraduate convenience sample (Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz 2012; Krupnikov & Levine 2014). MTurk workers are still generally younger, more educated, and more liberal than the general population (Levy et al 2016; Paolacci & Chandler 2014). However, given that each of these demographics are more supportive of LGBTQ people and issues (e.g., Barth & Parry 2009), it is less likely that MTurk workers will demonstrate the negative attitudes or emotions at the center of this project. In other words, using MTurk provides a more difficult test for these hypotheses. Can disgust toward LGBTQ people be elicited even among such a supportive sample? If disgust can be elicited under these difficult conditions and in the context of an inconsequential, anonymous online survey, then the implications of disgust for the higher-stakes context of modern politics and a less-LGBTQ friendly population are significant.

The survey ran August 26-27, 2014 (prior to the Supreme Court's decision legalizing gay marriage in 2015). Subjects were offered \$0.50 for their participation. Average completion time was approximately nine minutes. Of the 1,028 who took the survey, 23 requested to have their data removed from the study. The following results are based on the remaining 1,005 participants. Participants represented 47 states and the pool was approximately 59% male, 76% non-Hispanic white, and 55% non-religious (agnostic, atheist, "nothing in particular").⁴⁷ The median income category was \$25,000-\$34,999, and nearly 58% had an associate's degree or higher. Roughly 60% of participants identified as Democrats, 23% as Republicans, and 17% as independents. Ideologically, 56% identified as liberal, and 22% each as independent or conservative.

⁴⁷ South Dakota, Wyoming, and Alaska were unrepresented.

Approximately 59% of subjects reported knowing someone who is gay, lesbian, or bisexual, while only 9% reported knowing anyone who identifies as transgender. These self-reports are roughly consistent with recent, nationally representative data from the Public Religion Research Institute, which found that 65% of Americans have a close friend or family member who is LGB, but only 9% have a transgender friend or family member (Jones et al 2014). To the extent that contact mediates attitudes toward LGBTQ people, the representativeness of this sample on this particular dimension is helpful for drawing conclusions about broader populations.

4. Analysis

The findings reveal that (1) some LGBTQ news stories elicit disgust; (2) individuals who are disgusted are much less supportive of LGBTQ policy issues; and (3) these effects vary by policy issue. I also find that Republicans report more disgust than Democrats, and that disgusted Republicans experience larger drops in support for LGBTQ policies than do disgusted Democrats.

4.1 Eliciting Disgust

Table 4.1 reports the percent of respondents in each condition who reported any level of disgust in response to the news story they read. In the control condition, approximately 19% of subjects reported any level of disgust (that is, responded “a little disgusted,” “somewhat disgusted,” “very disgusted,” or “extremely disgusted;” excluding those who answered “not disgusted at all”). The nondiscrimination and adoption conditions elicited similar and even slightly lower reports. However, over 25% of respondents in the gay marriage condition, and 33.5% of respondents in the transgender healthcare condition, reported disgust. This provides some (mixed) evidence in support of Hypothesis 1, that stories about LGBTQ policies elicit

disgust more disgust than non-LGBTQ policies. It also suggests that disgust varies by policy issue (i.e., Hypothesis 3).

Table 4.1: Disgust Report by Condition

Condition	% Reporting Any Disgust
Control (Texting & Driving)	19.0%
Nondiscrimination	18.9%
Gay marriage	25.4%
Gay adoption	17.4%
Transgender healthcare	33.5%

In Table 4.2, I account for relevant demographic influences on disgust and LGBTQ-related attitudes. Women tend to be more supportive than men of both LGBTQ people (Herek 2002) and LGBTQ policies (Brewer 2003), and are also more disgust sensitive on average (Balzer & Jacobs 2011). The Religious Right has historically opposed the gay movement and LGBTQ-friendly policies (Bull & Gallagher 1996). Bramlett (2012) shows that the influence of religion on LGBTQ-related attitudes varies by one’s denomination. Contact with LGBTQ people tends to increase support for LGBTQ policies (e.g. Barth et al 2009; Flores 2015), though not universally (Skipworth et al 2010).

In Table 4.2, I use both a logit model and an ordinary least squares regression model to examine whether LGBTQ news stories elicit disgust among respondents, controlling for relevant demographic factors. The logit analysis (Model 1) examines reporting disgust as a binary outcome (reporting no disgust or any level of disgust at all). The ordinary least squares regression (Model 2) examines reporting disgust along its full range of variance: not disgusted at all, a little disgusted, somewhat disgusted, very disgusted, or extremely disgusted.

Table 4.2: Treatment Effects on Reporting Disgust

Variable	Model 1 Logit (0/1)	Model 2 Ordinary Least Squares Regression
All LGBT Treatments	0.367* (0.22)	0.025 (0.02)
Republican	1.069*** (.19)	0.126*** (0.02)
White	-0.245 (.26)	-0.004 (.02)
Black	-0.281 (.37)	0.001 (.03)
Latino	-0.201 (.37)	-0.004 (.03)
Female	-0.419** (.18)	-0.018 (.01)
Age	0.188 (.35)	0.020 (.03)
Education	-0.523 (.36)	-0.043 (.03)
Non-Religious	-0.720*** (.19)	-0.058*** (.02)
Born Again	0.907*** (.24)	0.118*** (.02)
LGB Contact	-0.455*** (.17)	-0.044*** (.01)
Constant	-0.837** (0.38)	0.127*** (0.03)
R-Squared	0.139	0.182
Adj R-Squared	(Pseudo)	0.173
N	974	974

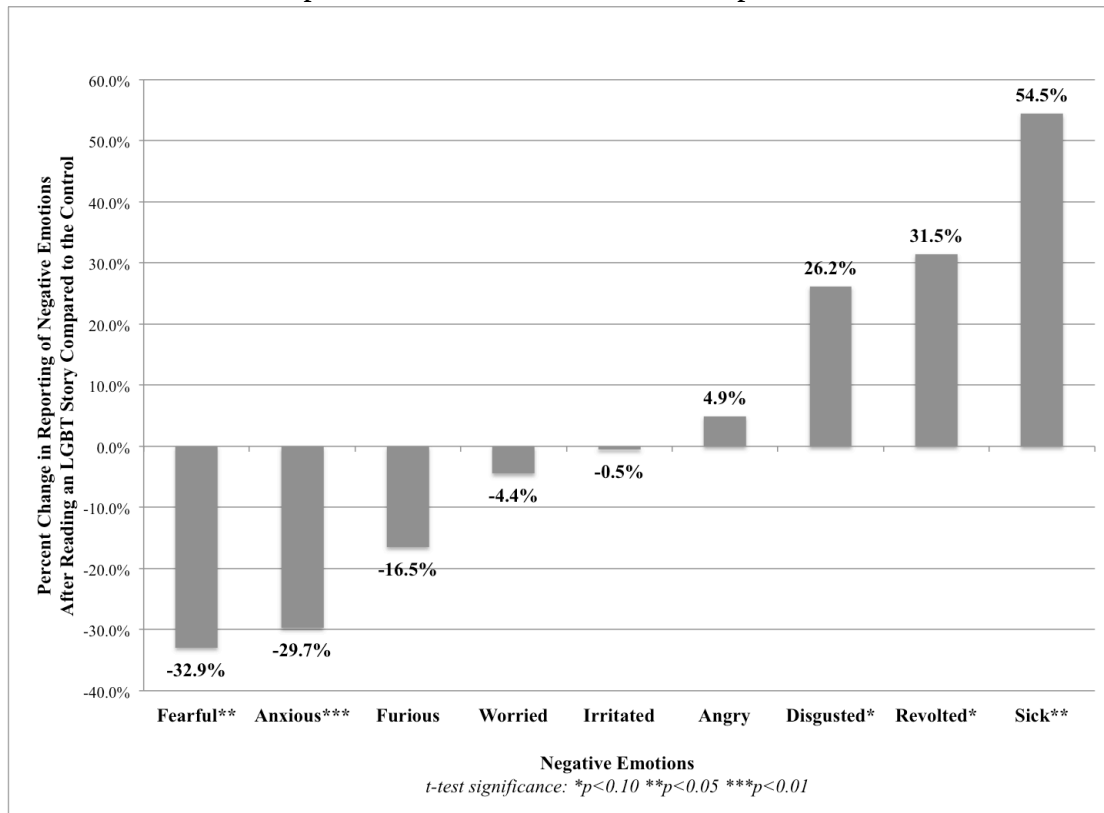
Standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$

Table 4.2 shows a slight but statistically significant impact of LGBTQ stories on overall reporting of disgust (Model 1), but not on the mean score of disgust (Model 2): in the logit model only, respondents in the LGBTQ conditions were more likely to report disgust than respondents in the control condition. These results were overshadowed by the influence of partisanship, contact with LGB people, and religious (non)affiliation – but they demonstrate that even the weak stimulus of a generic news story about an LGBTQ policy still is enough to elicit disgust.

Figure 4.2 examines the possibility that other negative emotions are also elicited by these stories, or by LGBTQ politics in general. The figure shows the extent to which LGBTQ stories elicit each negative emotion about which respondents were asked. The categories are sorted by size and direction: the further to the right, the larger the increase in reporting of that emotion.

Figure 4.2: Percent Change in Mean Scores of Negative Emotions Reported in LGBT Conditions Compared to Control



The figure shows that, compared to reading a story about texting while driving, reading an LGBTQ-related news story increased average reports of disgust by 26.2%, revulsion by 31.5%, and sickness by 54.5%. These were by far the largest increases, and they are statistically significant differences.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ I replicated this analysis for each individual LGBTQ condition, rather than combining those conditions as in Figure 2. In every case, while the particular order of the negative emotions may slightly vary, the three disgust-related terms are consistently the furthest to the right: disgust, revulsion, and sickness are the largest increases in every condition. This suggests that disgust is the primary negative emotion being elicited by these LGBTQ news stories.

4.2 Policy Impact

Recall that participants read a news story, reported their emotional responses, and then were asked about their support for various LGBTQ policies. While Table 4.1 shows disgust in response to the news story, Table 4.3 shows the difference in support for LGBTQ policies between those who were disgusted and not disgusted.⁴⁹

Table 4.3: Differences in Support for LGBTQ Policies
Among Disgusted and Non-Disgusted Respondents

Policy	% of Respondents Who Supported Policy		Difference
	Not Disgusted	Disgusted	
LGB nondiscrimination	96%	73%	-23%
Transgender nondiscrimination	95%	66%	-29%
Gay marriage	93%	52%	-41%
Gay adoption	92.5%	50%	-42.5%
Transgender healthcare	74%	31%	-43%
<i>Average</i>	<i>90.1%</i>	<i>54.5%</i>	<i>-35.6%</i>

For respondents who said they were “not disgusted at all” by their respective news story, most supported each policy. Respondents who felt disgusted were less likely to support each policy, with only 50% supporting gay adoption and less than a third supporting transgender healthcare. Indeed, there is a 23–43 percentage point difference in policy support between respondents who were disgusted and those who were not, with an average difference of about 35.6 percentage points. This provides initial evidence in support of Hypothesis 2, that those who are disgusted will be less supportive of LGBTQ policies. We also see evidence in support of Hypothesis 3, that disgust’s influence will vary by policy: the smallest difference here is for nondiscrimination, and the largest difference is for transgender healthcare.

Turning again to other potential demographic influences, Tables 4.4 and 4.5 show further evidence supporting Hypothesis 2, that disgust decreases support for LGBTQ-related policies. Table 4.4 shows the results of a linear regression analysis examining disgust and other

⁴⁹ Support includes those who said they strongly support or somewhat support the policy. I excluded those who said they neither support nor oppose the policy, and I also excluded these neutral respondents from the denominator. The numbers should be interpreted as, for example: of all respondents who both took a position on gay adoption *and* said they were not disgusted at all, 92.5% supported adoption. Of those who both took a position on this policy *and* said they were disgusted to any degree, only 50% supported it.

influences on support for LGBTQ policies. In these models, all variables are scaled zero to one to improve comparability.⁵⁰ Model 1 considers all respondents, and Models 2 and 3 consider Democrats or Republicans only, respectively. Table 4.5 shows the same models, but uses an additional robustness test to show that the findings are not an artifact of a single word choice: I combine the responses of “disgusted,” “revolted,” and “sick” into a disgust index (Table 4.5), rather than using the single self-report alone. The findings using the disgust index are comparable to, and sometimes even stronger than, using only the single self-report.

⁵⁰ “White” is a binary variable, marking white respondents (~74%). “Female” marking female-identified participants (~41%). “Age” contains the same age groups used in the survey instrument: 18-24, 25-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-64, and 65 or over. Zero represents the youngest age group, and one represents the highest age group. “Education” reflects these levels: some high school, no diploma; high school graduate or equivalent (GED); some college, no degree; associate’s degree; bachelor’s degree; some graduate school, no graduate degree; some advanced degree (Master’s, professional, or doctorate). Zero means “some high school, no diploma,” while one means “some advanced degree.” “Born again” is a binary variable, marking the respondents who identified as born again (~13%). “LGB contact” is a binary variable, marking respondents who reported that they knew an LGB person (~59%).

Table 4.4: Disgust's Influence on Support for LGBTQ Policies ("LGBTQ Index")

Variable	Model 1 All	Model 2 Democrats	Model 3 Republicans
Disgust	-0.432*** (0.03)	-0.350*** (0.04)	-0.393*** (0.05)
White	0.024 (0.02)	0.045** (0.02)	0.002 (0.06)
Black	-0.002 (.03)	0.012 (.03)	-0.064 (.11)
Latino	-0.017 (.03)	-0.001 (.02)	-0.108 (.08)
Female	0.052*** (0.01)	0.043*** (0.01)	0.072** (0.03)
Age	-0.148*** (0.03)	-0.084*** (0.03)	-0.251*** (0.06)
Education	0.082*** (0.03)	0.069** (0.03)	0.113* (0.06)
Non-Religious	0.064*** (.01)	0.050*** (.01)	0.025 (.04)
Born Again	-0.160*** (0.02)	-0.187*** (0.03)	-0.054 (0.04)
LGB Contact	0.094*** (0.01)	0.082*** (0.01)	0.091*** (0.03)
Constant	.694*** (0.03)	0.730*** (0.03)	0.592*** (0.08)
R-Squared	0.420	0.317	0.430
Adj R-Squared	0.414	0.305	0.403
N	974	587	226

Standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$

In every model of Table 4.4, self-reported disgust is a statistically significant influence on LGBTQ-related policy preferences, with a large and negative coefficient indicating that experiencing disgust decreases support for LGBTQ policy preferences. Consistent with existing literature, the influence of gender, education, age, religion, and having contact with LGB people were also significant influences on support for LGBTQ policies. Women, respondents with more education, and respondents who reported having contact with LGBs were more supportive, while older respondents were less supportive. White respondents were slightly more supportive, but this effect drops out for Republicans, as there were very few non-white Republicans ($n=33$) in this sample. The effects of (non)religious affiliation also drops out for

Republicans. However, these effects are all considerably smaller than disgust. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the effect of disgust is as large as it is after accounting for these alternative explanations.

Table 4.5 shows the same analysis, this time using the disgust index. In Table 4.4, “Disgust” is measured using the single question self-report only, and is scaled zero to one. Zero reflects no disgust, while one reflects the highest level of reported disgust (“extremely disgusted”). In Table 4.5, “Disgust Index” combines the reports of “disgusted,” “revolted,” and “sick.” A score of zero therefore means a respondent answered that they were not disgusted, revolted, or sick at all. A score of one means they selected “extremely” for all three emotions. This produces more variation within the measure, and acts as an additional test that the findings are not an artifact of word choice.

Table 4.5: Disgust Index's Influence on Support for LGBTQ Policies ("LGBTQ Index")

Variable	Model 1 All	Model 2 Democrats	Model 3 Republicans
Disgust Index	-0.546*** (0.04)	-0.512*** (0.06)	-0.460*** (0.05)
White	0.022 (0.02)	0.048** (0.02)	-0.023 (0.06)
Black	-0.001 (.03)	0.021 (.02)	-0.108 (.11)
Latino	-0.021 (.03)	-0.0003 (.03)	-0.128 (.08)
Female	0.052*** (0.01)	0.041*** (0.01)	0.073** (0.03)
Age	-0.142*** (0.03)	-0.085*** (0.03)	-0.249*** (0.06)
Education	0.082*** (0.03)	0.071*** (0.03)	0.117* (0.06)
Non-Religious	0.063*** (.01)	0.047*** (.01)	0.024 (.04)
Born Again	-0.150*** (0.02)	-0.171*** (0.03)	-0.059* (0.04)
LGB Contact	0.087*** (0.01)	0.078*** (0.01)	0.078*** (0.03)
Constant	.697*** (0.03)	0.731*** (0.03)	0.619*** (0.08)
R-Squared	0.432	0.340	0.431
Adj R-Squared	0.426	0.328	0.405
N	974	587	226

Standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$

In the appendix, I replicated these analyses for each individual LGBTQ policy, rather than combining them into a policy index as in Tables 4.4 and 4.5. The patterns remained consistent across all specifications: for each policy, the effect of disgust (or the disgust index) remained the largest magnitude and statistically significant, even when controlling for other influences. Again, while demographic variables remain significant across models, the effect of disgust remains the largest and persists across parties.

4.3 Partisan Differences

One finding that emerged were noticeable partisan differences in reporting disgust, as well as the impact of that disgust on LGBTQ policy support.

Table 4.6: Differences Between Partisans in Reported Disgust (Respondents From LGBTQ Conditions Only)

Degree of Disgust	Democrats	Republicans
<i>Not at all</i>	85.8%	49.7%
A little	8.0%	18.6%
Somewhat	4.5%	14.8%
Very	1.4%	7.1%
Extremely	0.2%	9.8%

Table 4.6 uses only respondents from LGBTQ conditions to distinguish disgust that is specifically related to LGBTQ policies, rather than disgust elicited from the control story. Nearly 86% of Democrats reported that they were “not disgusted at all” after reading a news story about an LGBTQ policy. Barely 50% of Republicans reported this. Just over 50% of Republicans reported some degree of disgust after reading an LGBTQ news story, compared to only 24.3% of Republicans in the control condition.

Figures 4.3 and 4.4 further examine whether there are partisan differences in drops in support for LGBTQ policies. Figure 4.3 shows the decrease in support for LGBTQ policies among Democrats. On average, disgusted Democrats have a mean score of support for LGBTQ policies that is 26.3% lower than non-disgusted Democrats. Figure 4.4 shows that, for Republicans, the difference is much larger: disgusted Republicans average 47 percentage points less support for LGBTQ policies than do non-disgusted Republicans. Most of this drop in support is driven by marriage, adoption, and transgender healthcare. Disgusted Republicans’ drop in support for nondiscrimination protections are comparable to disgusted Democrats’ drop in support.

Figure 4.3:
Democrat Decreases in Mean Score of Support
for LGBT Policies When Reporting Disgust
(Respondents from LGBT Conditions Only)

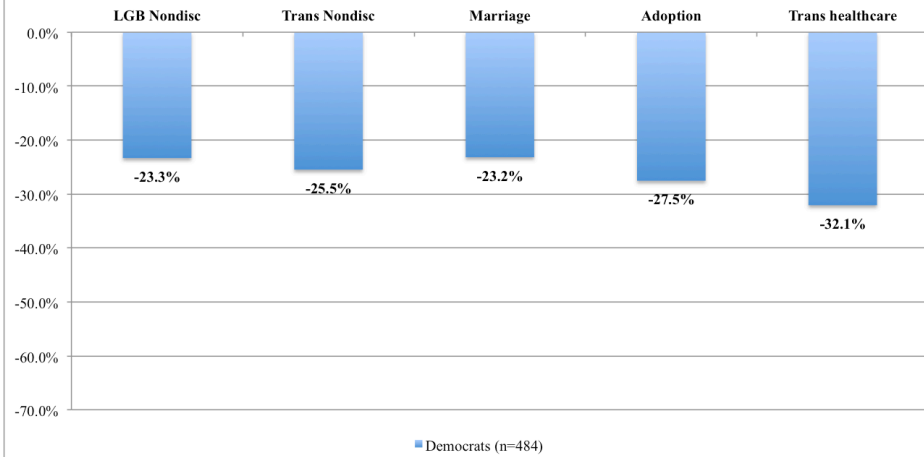
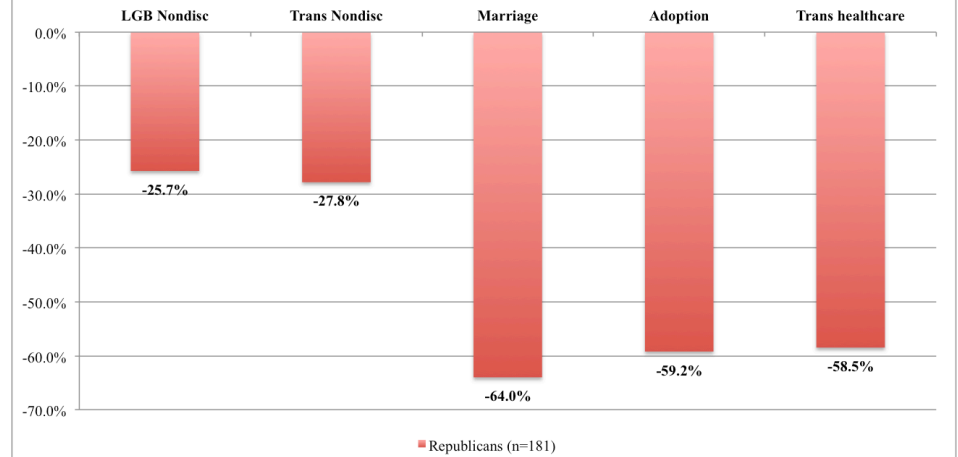


Figure 4.4:
Republican Decreases in Mean Score of Support
for LGBT Policies When Reporting Disgust
(Respondents from LGBT Conditions Only)



5. Discussion

Disgust emerges as a significant response to (some) LGBTQ news stories. These stories do not elicit other negative emotions as strongly as they elicit disgust and the disgust-related terms, revulsion and sickness. Disgust also emerges as a strongly negative influence on support for LGBTQ policies. Individuals who reported higher levels of disgust were, on average across policies, 36% points less supportive of LGBTQ policies. The largest drops in support were for transgender healthcare and gay marriage. The smallest drops were in response to nondiscrimination policies, though the effect is larger when transgender people were the beneficiaries rather than LGB people. These effects persist even when controlling for contact, partisanship, gender, religion, age, and more.

Beyond these hypotheses, I also show that Republicans reported more disgust than Democrats, and that Republicans experienced larger drops in support for LGBTQ policies when feeling disgusted. Many more Republicans than Democrats reported disgust – just over 50% of Republicans, compared to roughly 15% of Democrats (Table 4.6). This is consistent with existing research that shows a partisan bias in disgust’s influence (Inbar et al 2009). The data also reveal another partisan bias in disgust: disgusted Republicans reported significantly larger decreases in endorsement of LGBTQ policies (47 percentage points), compared to disgusted Democrats (26 points; Figures 4.3 and 4.4).

However, it is important to note that while Republicans report higher frequencies of feeling disgust and larger drops in policy support, the implications of disgust remain relevant for Democrats as well. Among Democrats who do report disgust (~15% of Democrats), there are statistically significant drops in support for LGBTQ policies, even when controlling for gender, age, education, contact with LGB people, and more. Disgusted Democrats average 26 percentage points less support for LGBTQ policies than non-disgusted Democrats (Figure 4.3). The largest drop in support among Democrats is for transgender healthcare (~33 points).

In short, once disgust is felt, policy support significantly declines, for members of either party. This drop is particularly pronounced for gay marriage and transgender healthcare.

6. Conclusion

Previous research shows that disgust contributes to negative attitudes toward LGBTQ people and undermines the very strategies often relied upon to combat these negative attitudes. However, these studies typically artificially induce incidental disgust in a laboratory setting, and then ask about attitudes toward LGBTQ people or issues. This project simulates a more common experience of reading news online, and also demonstrates that the very topic of LGBTQ politics itself elicits disgust. By showing that LGBTQ-related phenomena trigger disgust and that that support for LGBTQ politics is affected by this emotion, this research broadens the set of ways in which disgust can affect both individual-level opinion formation and LGBTQ political campaigns or social movement strategies.

In particular, I show that (1) stories about (some) LGBTQ policies can and do actually *cause* disgust, and (2) this disgust significantly decreases support for LGBTQ policies. This experiment also (3) illustrates the policy-specific effects or interactions of this emotion. These effects persist even controlling for other influences like gender, religion, and contact with LGB people. These results hold for both Democrats and Republicans, though the effects are particularly strong among Republicans.

That these results occurred should give pause to those anticipating that, after policy achievements like national marriage equality, future LGBTQ advocacy efforts will come easily. Rather, as LGBTQ advocates (and opponents) turn from marriage equality to other issues like transgender rights, disgust will likely be *more* difficult to avoid. This is already coming to bear in the first year following marriage equality, as more than 200 anti-LGBTQ bills have been introduced in states around the country, many targeting transgender people and issues such as bathroom access. Continued success for the LGBTQ movement will require understanding that

disgust influences many beliefs and opinions, even among friends of LGBTQ people, and that new strategies based on engaging and confronting this difficult emotion will be vital.

In the next chapter, I turn to closer examination of what might explain the concurrent success of gay marriage and the struggle of transgender rights and visibility. Namely, I examine potential differences between responses to specific policies and responses to specific subgroups within the LGBTQ community – that is, whether these disgust reactions are due to policy content or the perceived beneficiary of the policy.

Chapter 5:
Variations in Disgust Toward Subgroups⁵¹

1. Introduction

The previous chapter established that disgust reactions to LGBTQ people and issues persist in modern politics and that disgust interacts differently with different policies. This chapter examines whether disgust reactions also vary toward different members of the LGBTQ community. The results show that disgust toward LGBTQ people is not homogenous or “equally” felt. Just as disgust has policy-specific interactions, it also has (sub)group-specific interactions. In particular, disgust has a larger impact on transgender people, and trans women in particular than on gay men, with sharper drops in support for transgender policy issues.

2. Emotions, Subgroups, and Public Opinion

Policy support is often influenced by an individual’s feelings toward the perceived beneficiaries of the policy (e.g., Feldman & Huddy 2005; Schram & Soss 2003). Disgust is an important emotion that influences attitudes toward LGBTQ people and policy issues. Given that the LGBTQ community is not a single group, but rather a collection of subgroups, it is possible that individuals will have unique reactions to gay men relative to lesbians, or to transgender people relative to gay people.

⁵¹ I thank Jesse Chandler, Jenn Chudy, Ashley Jardina, and Andrew Proctor for their guidance or assistance on various aspects of this chapter, particularly regarding the re-contacting and picture pre-testing discussed in the methods section.

In general, men and women differ in their attitudes toward LGBTQ people and issues. Women on average feel more warmly or positively than men toward gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (Doan & Haider-Markel 2010; Haider-Markel & Joslyn 2008; Herek 2002a; 2002b; Herek & Capitanio 1995; LaMar & Kite 1998; Larsen, Reed & Hoffman 1980). Women also tend to be more supportive than men of gay-friendly policies (Brewer 2003b; Herek 2002a).

Men and women also differ in their attitudes toward lesbians and toward gay men. In the context of evaluating gay and lesbian candidates for political office, women are less likely than men to attribute negative traits to lesbians, though women and men offer similarly negative evaluations of gay men (Doan & Haider-Markel 2010; Golebiowska 2001; Haider-Markel 2010).⁵² Similarly, women are less likely than men to consider lesbian candidates less competent than heterosexuals, but women and men both believe that gay male candidates are less competent (Doan & Haider-Markel 2010) in general than heterosexual candidates. In other words, men and women both respond more negatively to gay men than to gay women (Herek 2002a), but women respond more favorably than men to gay women specifically.

This is consistent with the theory of subgrouping or subtyping (e.g., Richards & Hewstone 2001), or the idea of “individuals’ cognitively meaningful differentiation of social groups or their decomposition of those groups into defined sub-categories” (McConaughy & White 2011). This research shows distinctly different attitudes toward black men than toward black women, for example (McConaughy & White 2011). Given the categorical distinctions between gay and transgender people (i.e., sexual orientation and gender identity are different categories), it is also reasonable to expect divergent attitudes toward each group, despite their political alignment.

There is considerably less research examining attitudes toward transgender people, let alone differing attitudes toward gay and transgender people. However, available research shows

⁵² For more literature on LGBTQ candidates for political office, see: Casey & Reynolds 2015; Doan & Haider-Markel 2010; Haider-Markel 2010; Herrick & Thomas 1999; 2002; Reynolds 2013.

interesting and provocative contradictions. For example, heterosexuals rate transgender people considerably lower on a feeling thermometer than they rate gays and lesbians (Norton & Herek 2012), and states are much more hesitant to pass transgender-inclusive discrimination laws than gay anti-discrimination protections (Taylor et al 2012). However, nearly 80% of Americans in every state support job discrimination protections for transgender people (Flores, Herman, & Mallory 2015), and more than two-thirds are able to (roughly) accurately define what being transgender means (Jones, Cox, & Navarro-Rivera 2014). A brief conversation that encourages perspective taking reduces prejudice toward transgender people (Broockman & Kalla 2016), but perspective taking can also elicit increased sexual prejudice and disgust reactions (Mooijman & Stern 2016). These conflicting findings suggest that attitudes toward transgender people and issues are far from settled, and susceptible to considerable movement depending on information, framing, and persuasive efforts in the near future.

Examining how attitudes differ toward subgroups is important. As Huffaker and Kwon (2016) argue, “research examining sexual prejudice [should] include attitudes toward diverse subgroups within the larger LGBTQ community, in order to facilitate development of underlying constructs and identify unique contributing factors.” Furthermore, as Golebiowska (2001) argues, “The question is also worth pursuing because of the overlap in group memberships defined by sexual orientation and gender (existence of both male and female homosexuality, that is). Scrutiny of this topic, for this reason, promises not only to advance our knowledge of the role of sexual orientation in political evaluation but also to contribute to the literature on gender in politics” (538).

Given this literature on divergent attitudes toward men and women, as well as toward gay people and transgender people, I hypothesize the following:

- (1) Overall, disgust toward gay people will be lower than toward transgender people.
- (2) Among the four subgroups, disgust toward transgender woman will be highest.
- (3) Among the four subgroups, disgust toward lesbians will be lowest.

Though it might seem at first as though, given more positive attitudes toward lesbians than gay men, that attitudes toward trans women would similarly be more positive than attitudes toward trans men, in fact the reverse is to be expected. Respondents inclined to negative or prejudicial attitudes toward transgender people are unlikely to recognize the legitimacy of trans women as women.

Building on findings from Chapter 4, where the largest reports of disgust and drops in support were in response to a transgender-related policy, I expect this experiment to show similar differences in the impact of disgust on different subgroups of the LGBTQ community: namely, I expect more frequent and stronger disgust reactions to transgender people, and less support for transgender issues as a result.

For this experiment, I use pictures to prime attitudes toward specific subgroups. Using images to examine attitudes toward specific groups is well established in the literature on group attitudes. Images are effective at eliciting emotions (e.g., Banks & Valentino 2012). For example, Brader (2005) shows how campaign ads use images and music to manipulate emotional responses and voter behavior. Images also elicit stronger emotional reactions than text alone. Visual imagery does a great deal of work to communicate race, gender, and other group-based cues and prime existing attitudes toward those groups. News stories with images of minority group members can prime attitudes toward those minority groups (Hancock 2004; Mendelberg 2001; Valentino 1999). For example, Iyengar and Kinder ([1987] 2010) show how the same news story about unemployment depicting either a white or black person led to drastically different beliefs about the importance of unemployment as a national issue; white viewers considered it nearly twenty points less important when they saw an unemployed black person than when they saw an unemployed white person. Over time, these stories create “scripts,” such that racialized and gendered attitudes can be evoked even without imagery or

explicit cues (e.g., Gilliam & Iyengar 2000). Similarly, the “script” that associates LGBTQ people with disgust is well established (Chapter 3) and easy to evoke (Chapter 4).

Additionally, ads and images evoking negative emotions are more memorable (Bradley, Angelini, & Lee 2007; Lang 1991; Newhagen & Reeves 1991). Disgust-evoking images in particular catch and hold attention longer than images that evoke other emotions (van Hooff et al 2013). Taken together, this means that imagery that evokes disgust is more likely to be remembered and for a longer amount of time. Furthermore, knowing that disgust heightens prejudice, increases the severity of moral judgments, alters policy preferences, and increases avoidant behaviors, these means that even images or news stories of gay and transgender people can alter attitudes not just in the immediate moment, but over the long term.

3. Methods

To examine these hypotheses, I conducted another survey experiment using Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), this time involving an increased recruitment of Republicans to improve the partisan representation of the sample. This experiment extended and modified the design used in Chapter 4. While the previous experiment analyzed disgust reactions to different LGBTQ policy issues, this experiment held the policy issue constant in order to analyze responses to different groups within the LGBTQ community, namely gay or lesbian people and transgender people.⁵³ This experiment also examined the intersection of these attitudes with gender: gay men, gay or lesbian women, transgender men, and transgender women were all considered separately. Attitudes toward each of these groups were primed by including a picture of and quote from a man or woman, identified in the news story as either gay or transgender.

⁵³ Due to research budget constraints, I omitted conditions examining attitudes toward bisexual people. Theoretically, however, I expect that disgust reactions toward bisexual people would be more similar to reactions toward gays and lesbians, rather than toward transgender people. I would also expect gendered differences toward bisexual men versus bisexual women. Herek (2002c) examines attitudes toward bisexual men and women in greater detail.

The previous chapter established that people still feel disgust toward LGBTQ people and issues, and that this disgust continues to influence policy support. This chapter builds from this knowledge and asks: does disgust vary in response to different subgroups of the LGBTQ community? Are attitudes different toward gay people than toward transgender people, as well as toward men than toward women?

3.1 Design

The survey was hosted on Qualtrics and subjects were recruited via MTurk.⁵⁴ On MTurk, the survey was described as “Give us your opinion about issues in the news.” Within the survey itself, subjects were informed that the study “will give us a better sense of how voters think about important issues in American politics today. You will be asked to read a news story and tell us your honest opinions.”

The first two questions screened for age and partisanship. I screened for age to ensure a voting-age population, and for partisanship to ensure a more representative sample than in the previous experiment; I discuss this further in the “Sample” section below. Subjects were then asked to give informed consent to participate in the study. After this, participants answered two distractor questions and were then randomly assigned to one of five experimental conditions.

All conditions contained the same a short fictional news story about an unnamed state’s legislature considering a proposed nondiscrimination bill; this was the same news story used in Chapter 4. I extended the design used in Chapter 4 by adding a picture of the emphasized subgroup in the treatment conditions, consistent with the aforementioned literature on priming group attitudes using imagery.

In the treatment conditions, the proposed bill prohibited discrimination on the basis of either sexual orientation or gender identity. The picture was of either a man or a woman, and

⁵⁴ The University of Michigan’s Institutional Review Board determined this study, ID HUM00116235, to be exempt from oversight.

the picture's caption identified the person as either gay or transgender.⁵⁵ Thus, these two pictures combined with the two possible captions produced four conditions emphasizing a gay man, gay woman, transgender man, or a transgender woman as a likely beneficiary. I also added a quote to the news story from the pictured individual, explaining their support for the proposed bill and identifying the person again as either gay or transgender. Both these additions emphasized a particular subgroup as a likely beneficiary of the bill in order to prime attitudes toward that specific subgroup, rather than LGBTQ people as a whole. An attention check immediately following each story confirmed this priming succeeded, as 90% to over 95% of respondents in each condition successfully identified the appropriate subgroup as the likely beneficiary of the proposed bill.⁵⁶

The control condition described a proposed bill prohibiting discrimination on the basis of age. Senior citizens were emphasized as the primary beneficiary.⁵⁷ The image depicted a generic state capitol building with an American flag, and no quote was added. Because this

⁵⁵ Pre-testing showed the two pictures to be similar or indistinguishable on attractiveness, trustworthiness, and perceived age, while also being significantly different on perceived gender, femininity, and masculinity in stereotype-consistent ways (i.e., the man was perceived to be male and also both more masculine and less feminine than the woman). For a full explanation of the picture pre-testing and selection process, see the appendix. This pre-testing process was included in the IRB exemption for the larger experiment (UM study ID HUM00116235). Many thanks to Ashley Jardina and Jennifer Chudy for their thoughts and advice on this process.



⁵⁶ The question read: "People often think that some policies give benefits to certain people, while others lose out. What about you? Thinking back to the story you just read, who do you think will benefit most from the policy mentioned in the story?" Response options were "Veterans," "Christians," "People with disabilities," "Someone else" (with a text box to write in their answer, and the emphasized subgroup within that condition. The order of these response options was randomized. Respondents who did not select the emphasized subgroup were not excluded from analysis, as (1) attention checks such as these only capture attention during a brief snapshot, and (2) the question was worded in such a way that answers could reasonably vary. For example, some respondents wrote that they believed lawyers would mainly benefit from such laws. Responses such as these do not necessarily indicate that a respondent was inattentive or that the subgroup priming was ineffective, but rather only that the survey question was written with more room for opinion than as a strictly fact-based attention check.

⁵⁷ For the control, I selected age discrimination and emphasized senior citizens or "the elderly" as the primary beneficiaries because this is a group that would feasibly still require legal protection against discrimination but is also a generally well-regarded, "conventional" social group (e.g., Lambert & Chasteen 1997). This preserves the feasibility of the proposed bill, keeps the policy issue consistent, and allows for an examination of emotional reactions to a "conventional" group compared to more transgressive or stigmatized groups. Additionally, I decided against a control that was simply an LGBTQ nondiscrimination policy with no added emphasis on any subgroup, because the previous chapter's nondiscrimination condition already examined that.

experiment’s design uses images, I needed to use the same pictures across conditions to minimize changes in the experimental stimulus. However, the pictures selected were not of elderly individuals, and so would not credibly depict beneficiaries of a policy described as meant to benefit senior citizens. Still, it was still important to include a picture in the control in order to reduce the likelihood that any differences between the control and treatments were due to the introduction of (any) imagery, rather than due to who is depicted in that imagery. Therefore, rather than a picture of a senior citizen, I used the state capitol image.

The text and imagery of each story is included in the appendix, with the lesbian and transgender woman conditions shown below in Figure 5.1 as examples.

Figure 5.1: Lesbian & Transgender Women Conditions

<p>State lawmakers to consider discrimination protections for lesbian and gay residents Associated Press – February 12, 2016</p> <p>SPRINGFIELD -- State lawmakers are considering a bill that would amend the state's anti-discrimination law to prohibit discrimination against lesbian, gay, and bisexual residents.</p> <p>Last week's session of the State House of Representatives began with a discussion of the proposed legislation. Currently, state law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race and age, among other categories. If the bill passes, it would add sexual orientation as a protected class.</p>  <p><i>Carol Johnson, a lesbian, spoke in favor of the bill at a local rally.</i></p> <p>At a local rally, Carol Johnson, a lesbian, spoke in favor of the bill. "This bill would protect lesbian and gay people against discrimination in the workplace and housing. This is critically important for our community," she said.</p> <p>The bill comes as the country continues to consider questions about lesbian and gay rights. The House is set to vote on the bill later this month. The Governor has made no statement about whether he would sign the bill if it passes.</p>	<p>State lawmakers to consider discrimination protections for transgender residents Associated Press – February 12, 2016</p> <p>SPRINGFIELD -- State lawmakers are considering a bill that would amend the state's anti-discrimination law to prohibit discrimination against transgender residents.</p> <p>Last week's session of the State House of Representatives began with a discussion of the proposed legislation. Currently, state law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race and age, among other categories. If the bill passes, it would add gender identity as a protected class.</p>  <p><i>Carol Johnson, a transgender woman, spoke in favor of the bill at a local rally.</i></p> <p>At a local rally, Carol Johnson, a transgender woman, spoke in favor of the bill. "This bill would protect transgender people against discrimination in the workplace and housing. This is critically important for our community," she said.</p> <p>The bill comes as the country continues to consider questions about transgender rights. The House is set to vote on the bill later this month. The Governor has made no statement about whether he would sign the bill if it passes.</p>
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Following the story and the attention check, all respondents were asked the same battery of questions regarding fifteen emotional responses as was used in Chapter 3. If respondents selected that they felt any degree of disgust, they were asked to expand upon that answer in an open-ended text box. Participants were then asked about their hypothetical reaction to a gay or transgender person moving in next door (as a proxy for contact avoidance),

feeling thermometer ratings of different age groups, partisan groups, and subgroups of the LGBTQ community, and finally a series of questions about LGBT-related policy preferences. The survey ended with a brief series of demographic questions.

3.2 Measures

The emotional response battery included the same fifteen emotions as the previous chapter. Respondents were prompted, “Think back again to the story you just read, and who you think will benefit from the policy mentioned. The following questions will ask you how you feel when you think about this. When you think of this issue, how much do you feel each of these emotions?” For each emotion, respondents could choose “not at all,” “a little,” “somewhat,” “very,” or “extremely.” The fifteen emotions were presented in alphabetical order, as follows: angry, anxious, disgusted, fearful, furious, happy, hopeful, irritated, optimistic, overjoyed, proud, revolted, sick, sympathetic, and worried.

Respondents were also asked to rate fourteen different social groups using a feeling thermometer. These groups were: Republicans, Democrats, gay men, lesbians, bisexual men, bisexual women, transgender men, transgender women, heterosexual men, heterosexual women, Millennials, Generation X, Baby Boomers, and the Silent Generation. The age groups were included to mirror the control condition’s focus.

All respondents were asked an expanded set of policy questions. They were asked whether they favor or oppose: job discrimination protections for gay, lesbian, and bisexual people; job discrimination protections for transgender people; “bathroom bills” that require transgender people to use facilities based on their assigned sex at birth; allowing business owners to refuse service to LGB on the basis of religious objection; allowing business owners to refuse service to transgender people on the basis of religious objection; gay adoption; gay marriage; and transgender inclusive healthcare policies. This expanded battery includes four explicitly transgender-focused policies and four policies focused on LGB people, which allows

for closer analysis of potentially differing impact of disgust on gay people and policies, compared to transgender people and policies.

3.3 Sample

This survey ran July 10-20, 2016, and subjects were offered \$1.50 for their participation. This survey was open for a longer amount of time than the previous experiment due to improved recruitment methods.

Across multiple modes of implementation, early responders to surveys tend to be substantively different than peers who respond later in the data collection period, and longer fielding times allow for sample demographics to approach more representative means (Aviv et al 2002; Casey et al 2016; Ebersole et al 2015; Sigman et al 2014).

Additionally, in March-April 2015, I conducted a large-scale ($n=9,770$) demographic survey on MTurk in order to (1) locate under-represented populations in this survey pool, such as conservatives or people of color, and (2) determine whether there are any effects on sample demographics based on the time of day, day of week, or other temporal considerations that a survey is posted (see Casey et al 2016). To improve the partisan representativeness of this experiment, I contacted workers who (in the 2015 survey) identified as Republican and/or conservative to invite them to participate in this study.⁵⁸ Realizing that this likely also increased the whiteness of the sample, I also contacted and invited workers who (in the 2015 survey) identified as non-white to participate in this study.⁵⁹

The sample for this experiment was $n=2,334$. I employed a larger sample for this experiment to improve overall power, representativeness, and the ability to analyze differences

⁵⁸ I am deeply indebted and thankful to Andrew Proctor, Princeton University, for his guidance in the re-contacting process, and to Jesse Chandler (University of Michigan & Mathematica Research) for his guidance in the 2015 demographic survey.

⁵⁹ For a more detailed explanation of the 2015 demographic survey and its findings, see Casey et al 2016. For a more thorough discussion of this experiment's recruitment process, see the appendix. The 2015 survey had only demographic questions and contained no substantive questions (e.g., policy preferences) related to the content of this experiment.

within groups. All 50 states were represented. Table 5.1 reports the overall demographics of the sample, and illustrates the considerably improved representativeness of the sample compared to the previous chapter. The proportion of men and women is more balanced, as is the partisan representation. Interestingly, reports of contact with both LGB and transgender people have considerably increased since the previous experiment in 2014. Table 5.2 shows the demographic balance across all conditions.

Table 5.1: Demographic Means⁶⁰

	Experiment 1 <i>n</i> =1,005	Experiment 2 <i>n</i> =2,334
Age (years)	25-29	37
Gender	59% men 41% women	48.5% men 51.5% women
Partisanship	23% Repub 17% Indep 60% Dem	41.9% Repub 11.1% Indep 47.1% Dem
Non-Hispanic Whites	71%	66.4%
Black	7.8%	11%
Latino	8.2%	8.9%
Non-Religious (Agnostic, Atheist, or "Nothing in Particular")	55%	41.2%
Born Again	13.4%	23.2%
Education (% Bachelor's or higher)	48.1%	51.7%
Income	\$25,000-\$34,999	\$45,000-\$49,999
Sexuality (% Heterosexual)	88.3%	91%
LGB Contact	59%	89%
Trans Contact	9%	31.6%

⁶⁰ Some category differences are different due to improved questionnaire design. In this second experiment, I used more numerous and specific response options for income (26 categories compared to 10), and I captured age as an open-ended numeric response rather than grouped into categories *a priori*.

Table 5.2: Demographic Means Across Conditions

		Conditions				
	Overall sample <i>n</i> =2,334	Control <i>n</i> =466	Gay men <i>n</i> =466	Lesbians <i>n</i> =471	Trans men <i>n</i> =465	Trans women <i>n</i> =466
Age (years)	37	36.6	37.3	37.4	36.7	37.3
Gender	48.5% men 51.5% women	46.1% men 53.9% women	50.3% men 49.7% women	47% men 53% women	49.8% men 50.2% women	49.2% men 50.8% women
Partisanship	41.9% Repub 11.1% Indep 47.1% Dem	40.8% Repub 11% Indep 48.2% Dem	41.6% Repub 11.7% Indep 46.8% Dem	38.9% Repub 13.3% Indep 47.7% Dem	44.6% Repub 8.8% Indep 46.6% Dem	44.1% Repub 10.1% Indep 45.8% Dem
Ideology	40.2% Cons 19.9% Mod 39.8% Lib	38% Cons 18% Mod 44% Lib	39.9% Cons 21.3% Mod 38.8% Lib	40% Cons 22.3% Mod 37.7% Lib	43.1% Cons 17.2% Mod 39.7% Lib	40.2% Cons 20.7% Mod 39.1% Lib
Non-Hispanic Whites	66.4%	65.9%	66.9%	65.2%	69.2%	67.8%
Black	11%	12.4%	12%	11.9%	8.0%	9.4%
Latino	8.9%	9.5%	7.1%	8.1%	9.5%	9.9%
Non-Religious (Atheist, Agnostic, or “Nothing in Particular”)	41.2%	43%	43.8%	40.5%	39.4%	39.3%
Born Again	23.2%	21.5%	22.5%	22.9%	25.4%	23.7%
Education (% Bachelor’s or higher)	51.7%	51.1%	49.7%	53.1%	51.4%	53.1%
Income	\$45,000-\$49,999	\$45,000-\$49,999	\$45,000-\$49,999	\$45,000-\$49,999	\$45,000-\$49,999	\$45,000-\$49,999
Sexuality (% Heterosexual)	91%	89.5%	94.1%	90.4%	89.8%	91.4%
LGB Contact	89%	89.5%	87.3%	89.5%	90.7%	87.9%
Trans Contact	31.6%	33%	26.2%	35%	32.5%	31.3%

4. Analysis

The findings reveal that, consistent with hypotheses, disgust reactions were (1) notably higher in response to transgender people than to gays and lesbians, (2) highest in response to transgender women⁶¹, and (3) lowest in response to gay women. This is true for both reporting any degree of disgust (binary outcome) or the mean score or average intensity of disgust (continuous variable). Similarly, significant differences in policy support and comfort with a gay or transgender neighbor further demonstrate the diversity of attitudes toward different subgroups of the LGBTQ community.

4.1 Eliciting Disgust by Subgroup

Because the experiment presented the same policy issue across all conditions and only varied in its emphasis on a particular beneficiary, any variation in average respondent attitudes is reasonably attributed to the change in the stimulus. In other words, reactions to the news story are a proxy for reactions to or attitudes toward the group represented in the news story.

Table 5.3 presents the differences in reports of disgust across each condition, showing both the overall averages of reporting any degree of disgust (constructed as a binary variable comparing “not at all” responses to the combined responses of “a little,” “somewhat,” “very,” and “extremely” disgusted) and the mean score of disgust (scaled zero to one, where zero means “not at all” and one means “extremely.”)

⁶¹ This assumes that respondents were able to correctly understand transgender men and women as distinct from one another. While I did not explicitly test for this understanding, I relied on the image in the news story to further communicate the current gender presentation and identity of the speaker/subgroup being represented. That is, I also relied on the picture to support the respondent’s comprehension of a transwoman as female-presenting and a transman as male-presenting. (I recognize this overlooks genderqueer and other non-binary presenting people of trans experience. This is meant as a starting point only, and future research should examine more directly public opinion toward a wider variety of gender identities and expressions.)

Table 5.3: Disgust Report by Condition

Condition (Emphasized beneficiary)	% Reporting Any Disgust	Mean Disgust Score (0=None, 1=Extremely)
Control (Seniors)	15.3%	0.058
All LG/T Conditions	27.8%	0.141
Gay men	27.8%	0.133
Lesbians	24.3%	0.115
Transgender men	29.2%	0.154
Transgender women	29.9%	0.162

Compared to the control, an average of over twelve percentage points more respondents in the gay or transgender conditions reported any degree of disgust ($M_{diff}=0.124$, $t=5.5$, $p=0.000$), an over 80% increase. Additionally, the mean score – how intensely that disgust was felt – in the treatment conditions nearly tripled compared to the control ($M_{diff}=0.083$, $t=6.4$, $p=0.000$).

Table 5.3 also confirms distinct disgust reactions to each subgroup. As expected, disgust reactions were notably higher in response to transgender people than to gays and lesbians, both for overall levels of reporting any disgust ($M_{diff}=0.035$, $t=1.7$, $p=0.089$) and the mean score or intensity of that reported disgust ($M_{diff}=0.034$, $t=2.7$, $p=0.006$).

Disgust reactions were the lowest in response to gay women, for both any reported disgust ($M_{diff}=-0.047$, $t=-2.0$, $p=0.048$) and the mean disgust score ($M_{diff}=-0.034$, $t=-2.4$, $p=0.017$). Disgust reactions were the highest in response to transgender women, though difference of means testing was only significant for the mean score ($M_{diff}=0.028$, $t=1.9$, $p=0.052$), not for overall reporting ($M_{diff}=0.028$, $t=1.2$, $p=0.241$).

Notably, disgust reactions toward gay men were reported with nearly identical frequency to overall LGBTQ reports, and disgust reactions to gay women were lower than overall reports. This suggests that measures that ask about the LGBTQ community are likely revealing attitudes toward gay and lesbian people specifically, and likely obscuring attitudes toward transgender people.

Tables 5.4 and 5.5 display t-test or difference of means statistics for both measures of disgust. Statistically significant differences are bolded. “ M_{diff} ” denotes the difference in disgust

means. Positive values of “ M_{diff} ” denote that the row group resulted in more frequent reports (Table 5.4) or higher scores (Table 5.5) of disgust than the column group.⁶²

Tables 5.4 and 5.5 show that all the treatment conditions, both individually and collectively, elicit more disgust than the control (Column 1). They also show that respondents report disgust toward transgender people significantly more often (Table 5.4) and significantly higher in intensity (Table 5.5) than they do toward gays and lesbians (Row 7, Column 2-3).

Table 5.4: Difference of Means Testing for % Reporting Any Disgust (Binary)

	(1) Control	(2) Gay men	(3) Lesbians	(4) Trans men	(5) Trans women
(1) Control	-				
(2) Gay men	$M_{diff}=0.125$ $t=4.7, p=0.000$	-			
(3) Lesbians	$M_{diff}=0.089$ $t=3.4, p=0.001$	$M_{diff}= -0.036$ $t= -1.2, p=0.215$	-		
(4) Trans men	$M_{diff}=0.139$ $t=5.1, p=0.000$	$M_{diff}=0.014$ $t=0.5, p=0.639$	$M_{diff}=0.050$ $t=1.7, p=0.087$	-	
(5) Trans women	$M_{diff}=0.146$ $t=5.4, p=0.000$	$M_{diff}=0.021$ $t=0.7, p=0.486$	$M_{diff}=0.057$ $t=1.9, p=0.053$	$M_{diff}=0.007$ $t=0.2, p=0.818$	-
(6) All LGT ⁶³	$M_{diff}=0.124$ $t=5.5, p=0.000$	$M_{diff}=0.001,$ $t=0.02, p=0.981$	$M_{diff}=0.047,$ $t=2.0, p=0.048$	$M_{diff}=0.019,$ $t=0.8, p=0.426$	$M_{diff}= -0.028,$ $t= -1.2, p=0.241$
(7) Trans people	$M_{diff}=0.142,$ $t=5.8, p=0.000$	$M_{diff}=0.035, t=1.7, p=0.089$		-	

Significant differences are bolded. If $M_{diff} > 0$, then row treatment triggered more disgust than column treatment (e.g., gay men elicited more disgust than control).

⁶² For example, Table 5.4 shows that respondents in the news story emphasizing gay men reported disgust significantly more frequently than respondents who read the control story, and the difference between these two means was 0.125 (on a scale of zero to one). Conversely, respondents in the news story emphasizing lesbians reported disgust significantly more frequently than those in the control (Row 3, Column 1), but less often than those who read the gay male story (Row 3, Column 2). However, these latter differences were insignificant.

⁶³ “All LGT” in Column 1 means all four treatment conditions compared to the control. In Columns 2-5, it means the column condition compared to the remaining treatment conditions, e.g., comparing disgust reports in the gay male condition to disgust reports in the lesbian, transgender male, and transgender female conditions. This examines the uniqueness and statistical significance of reports in response to each subgroup, relative to the other LGBTQ subgroups.

Table 5.5: Difference of Means Testing for Mean Score of Disgust (Continuous, 0-1)

	(1) Control	(2) Gay men	(3) Lesbians	(4) Trans men	(5) Trans women
(1) Control	-				
(2) Gay men	M_{diff}= 0.074, t=5.4,p=0.000	-			
(3) Lesbians	M_{diff}= 0.057, t=4.3,p=0.000	M _{diff} = -0.017, t= -1.1,p=0.293	-		
(4) Trans men	M_{diff}= 0.096, t=6.4,p=0.000	M _{diff} = 0.022, t=1.2, p=0.221	M_{diff}=0.039, t=2.3, p=0.002	-	
(5) Trans women	M_{diff}=0.104, t=6.7,p=0.000	M _{diff} =0.030, t=1.6, p=0.104	M_{diff}=0.047, t=2.6,p=0.009	M _{diff} = 0.008, t=0.4,p=0.677	-
(6) All LGT	M_{diff}=0.083, t=6.4,p=0.000	M _{diff} =0.011, t=0.8, p=0.444	M_{diff}=0.034, t=2.4, p=0.017	M _{diff} = -0.018, t=-1.2,p=0.221	M_{diff}= -0.028, t=-1.9,p=0.052
(7) Trans people	M_{diff}=0.100 t=7.0,p=0.000	M_{diff}=0.034, t=2.7, p=0.006		-	

Significant differences are bolded. If $M_{diff} > 0$, then row treatment triggered more disgust than column treatment (e.g., gay men elicited more disgust than control).

Importantly, these tables also show that the gap between attitudes toward transgender and gay people is driven by attitudes toward lesbians: disgust toward gay men is statistically indistinguishable from disgust toward other subgroups (Column 2), but disgust toward lesbians is significantly lower than other groups (Column 3).

4.2 Controlling for Other Factors

As previously discussed, demographic characteristics such as gender, religion, partisanship, and contact, among others, have all been demonstrated to influence attitudes toward LGBTQ people. Tables 4.6, 4.7, and 4.8 control for these relevant demographic factors, and they show that disgust persists in response to LG/T people but is particularly strong in response to transgender people, even when accounting for these other influences.

As before, these tables examine disgust as both a binary and continuous variable, using logit and ordinary least squares (OLS) models, respectively. Table 5.6 models disgust based on being in any LG/T condition and pertinent demographic variables. Table 5.7 uses only logit models to examine the specific effects of each treatment condition on reporting any degree of

disgust (no disgust compared to any nonzero level of disgust). Table 5.8 uses OLS to model treatment effects on reporting disgust as a continuous variable along its full range of variance (not at all, a little, somewhat, very, or extremely). All variables are coded from zero to one to improve inference and comparability.

Table 5.6: Treatment Effects on Reporting Disgust

Variable	Model 1 Logit (0/1)	Model 2 OLS (0-1)
All LG/T Treatments	0.748*** (.15)	0.075*** (.01)
Republican	1.013*** (.12)	0.088*** (.01)
White	-0.028 (.17)	0.013 (.02)
Black	0.353* (.22)	0.024 (.02)
Latino	-0.404 (.25)	-0.015 (.02)
Female	-0.393*** (.11)	-0.020* (.01)
Age	-0.221 (.18)	-0.038** (.018)
Education	-0.018 (.22)	-0.005 (.02)
Non-Religious	-0.591*** (.13)	-0.058*** (.01)
Born Again	0.577*** (.12)	0.084*** (.01)
LGB Contact	-0.359** (.16)	-0.053*** (.02)
Trans Contact	0.029 (.12)	-0.007 (.01)
Constant	-1.575*** (.29)	0.097*** (.03)
R-Squared	0.109	0.124
Adj R-Squared	(Pseudo)	0.120
N	2,270	2,270

Standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$

Table 5.6 shows that, compared to respondents in the control condition, respondents in any of the treatment conditions were significantly more likely to report any degree of disgust (Model 1) and a higher level of disgust (Model 2). Identifying as Republican or born again also

increased these reports, while identifying as female or non-religious significantly decreased these reports. Knowing a gay or lesbian person also decreased disgust reports, but reported contact with transgender people was insignificant. In the logit model, identifying as Black increased reports of disgust, but this effect drops out in Model 2. In the OLS model, older age was associated with decreased disgust; this is seemingly a contradictory observation, but recall that the comparison group is age-based discrimination.

Table 5.7 shows the effects of each specific condition on reports of any disgust.

Table 5.7: Treatment Effects on Reporting Any Disgust (Logit)

Variable	Model 1 All LG/T	Model 2 Gay men	Model 3 Lesbians	Model 4 Trans men	Model 5 Trans women
All LG/T Treatments	0.748*** (.15)	-	-	-	-
Gay men	-	0.734*** (.17)	-	-	-
Lesbians	-	-	0.543*** (.17)	-	-
Trans men	-	-	-	0.772*** (.17)	-
Trans women	-	-	-	-	0.851*** (.17)
Republican	1.013*** (.12)	0.643*** (.19)	0.453** (.20)	0.866*** (.20)	0.736*** (.19)
White	-0.028 (.17)	-0.215 (.27)	-0.174 (.26)	0.229 (.30)	-0.095 (.28)
Black	0.353* (.22)	0.261 (.33)	0.307 (.32)	0.509 (.37)	0.538 (.35)
Latino	-0.404 (.25)	-0.172 (.39)	-0.120 (.38)	-0.046 (.40)	-0.220 (.39)
Female	-0.393*** (.11)	-0.419** (.18)	-0.376** (.18)	-0.449** (.18)	-0.438** (.17)
Age	-0.221 (.18)	-0.307 (.31)	-0.245 (.31)	-0.390 (.32)	-0.590* (.31)
Education	-0.018 (.22)	-0.231 (.36)	0.202 (.36)	0.207 (.35)	0.122 (.34)
Non-Religious	-0.591*** (.13)	-0.396** (.20)	-0.652*** (.21)	-0.353* (.20)	-0.451** (.20)
Born Again	0.577*** (.12)	0.467** (.21)	0.257 (.21)	0.386* (.20)	0.346* (.20)
LGB Contact	-0.359** (.16)	-0.415* (.24)	-0.0004 (.27)	0.036 (.29)	0.180 (.27)
Trans Contact	0.029 (.12)	-	-	0.179 (.19)	0.137 (.19)
Constant	-1.575*** (.29)	-1.045** (.42)	-1.489*** (.43)	-2.168*** (.46)	-1.962*** (.44)
Pseudo R-Squared	0.109	0.073	0.051	0.085	0.082
N	2,270	907	917	902	904

Standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$

Model 1 is the same as Model 1 in Table 5.6, presented again for ease of comparison. Models 2-5 compare the condition to the control (hence the smaller n).⁶⁴ Models 2 and 3 do not include the trans contact variable because the conditions were about gays or lesbians. Models 4 and 5 include the LGB contact despite being about trans people because, in this sample, having contact with a trans person is highly correlated with contact with LGB people: over 98% of respondents who reported knowing a trans person also knew a gay or lesbian person. Including both contact variables determines whether there is a unique influence of transgender contact. I replicated Models 4 and 5 omitting LGB contact and using only transgender contact, but the results were the same: transgender contact remained insignificant.

Table 5.7 shows that each treatment condition had a statistically significant effect on overall reports of disgust, even when controlling for other factors. The largest coefficient was in Model 5 for transgender women, and the smallest coefficient was Model 3 for lesbians. The influence of identifying as Republican, female, or non-religious persisted across all conditions. Republicans were more likely to report disgust in response to every gay, lesbian, or transgender story (compared to the control), whereas women and the non-religious were less likely. Being born again significantly increased reports of disgust, except in response to lesbians. Contact was only significant in reducing disgust reactions to gay men, but not lesbians or transgender people. There was no evidence of racial influence in any treatment condition.

Table 5.8 replicates this analysis using OLS regression and examining disgust reports as a continuous variable, scaled zero to one. The overall results are generally similar: each treatment condition had a statistically significant impact on the mean score of reported disgust.

⁶⁴ I replicated these analyses comparing the particular treatment condition to all the remaining treatments (e.g., gay men vs lesbian, trans men, and trans women). This replication revealed that reading the gay or lesbian news stories had an insignificant effect on reporting disgust in the logit model, but a significant effect in the OLS model. Only Lesbians and transwomen were significant in the OLS model. This is consistent with the patterns suggested in the differences of means testing in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 5.8: Treatment Effects on Reporting Disgust (OLS)

Variable	Model 1 All LGBTQ	Model 2 Gay men	Model 3 Lesbians	Model 4 Trans men	Model 5 Trans women
All LGBT Treatments	0.075*** (.01)	-	-	-	-
Gay men	-	0.070*** (.01)	-	-	-
Lesbians	-	-	0.054*** (.01)	-	-
Trans men	-	-	-	0.083*** (.01)	-
Trans women	-	-	-	-	0.098*** (.02)
Republican	0.088*** (.01)	0.034** (.03)	0.021 (.02)	0.072*** (.02)	0.067*** (.02)
White	0.013 (.02)	-0.016 (.02)	-0.007 (.02)	0.035 (.02)	0.029 (.03)
Black	0.024 (.02)	0.001 (.03)	0.024 (.03)	0.041 (.03)	0.053 (.03)
Latino	-0.015 (.02)	-0.025 (.03)	0.004 (.03)	0.018 (.03)	-0.004 (.03)
Female	-0.020* (.01)	-0.029** (.01)	-0.006 (.01)	-0.033** (.02)	-0.025 (.02)
Age	-0.038** (.018)	-0.035 (.02)	-0.030 (.02)	-0.026 (.03)	-0.065** (.03)
Education	-0.005 (.02)	-0.015 (.03)	0.014 (.03)	0.033 (.03)	0.004 (.03)
Non-Religious	-0.058*** (.01)	-0.045*** (.02)	-0.056*** (.02)	-0.035** (.02)	-0.045** (.02)
Born Again	0.084*** (.01)	0.065*** (.02)	0.024 (.02)	0.067*** (.02)	0.040** (.02)
LGB Contact	-0.053*** (.02)	-0.056* (.02)	-0.024 (.02)	0.005 (.02)	-0.007 (.02)
Trans Contact	-0.007 (.01)	-	-	0.015 (.02)	0.006 (.02)
Constant	0.097*** (.03)	0.148*** (.04)	0.097*** (.03)	-0.002 (.04)	0.053 (.04)
R-Squared	0.124	0.094	0.053	0.117	0.102
Adj R-Squared	0.120	0.083	0.041	0.105	0.090
N	2,270	907	917	902	904

Standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$

Being non-religious decreased mean scores of disgust, but all other variables had inconsistent effects depending on the emphasized subgroup. Being Republican or born again

generally increased mean scores of disgust, except toward lesbians. Identifying as female decreased disgust scores in response to gay and transgender men, but had no impact on disgust reactions to lesbian and transgender women. Contact reduces disgust scores of gay men, but for no other subgroup. Again, there was no evidence of racial influence on disgust reactions toward any LG/T group.

In sum, since the policy issue is held constant across conditions, these responses reveal underlying attitudes toward different subgroups. This experiment shows significantly different reports of disgust in response to differing subgroups of the LGBTQ community, and particularly higher and stronger reports of disgust toward transgender people, relative to gays and lesbians.

4.3 Neighbors & Feeling Thermometers

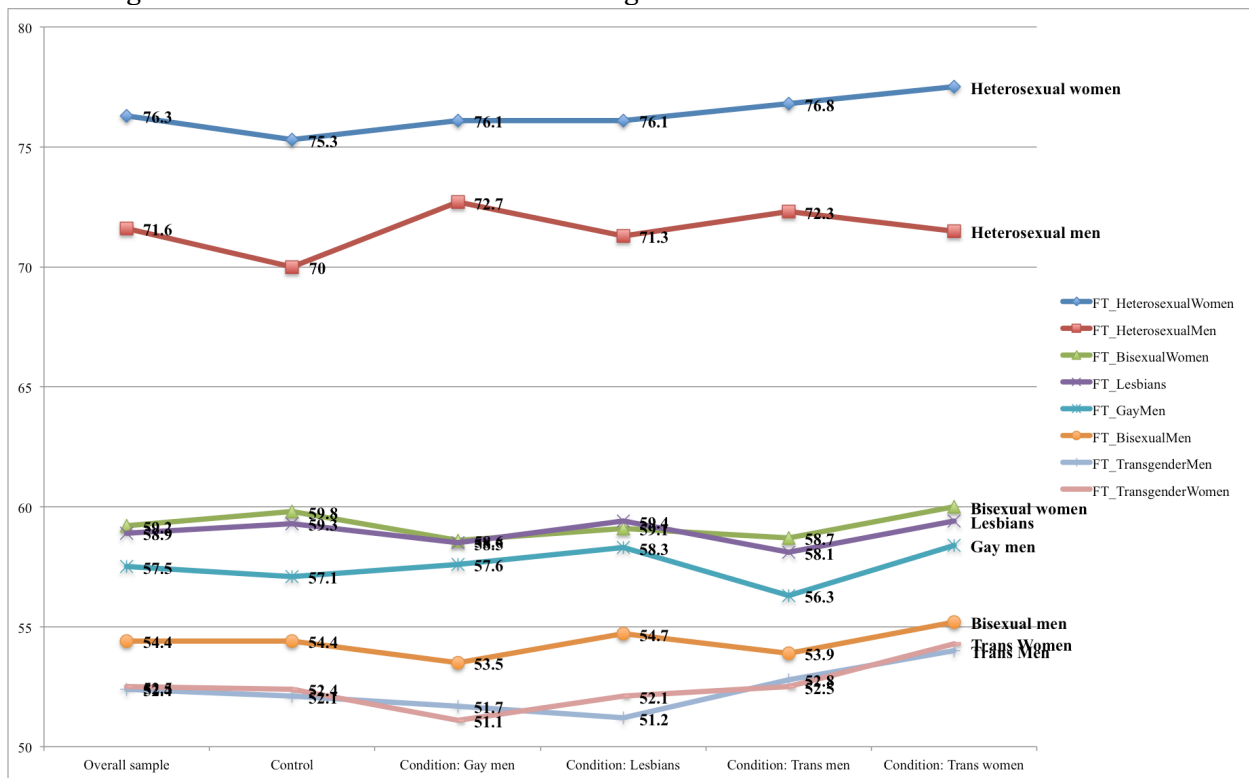
Following the emotion self-reports, respondents were then asked two hypothetical questions about a gay or transgender person moving in next door.⁶⁵ Being in the treatment conditions alone had no overall difference on reported comfort with a gay neighbor ($M_{diff}=0.003$, $t=0.25$, $p=0.806$) or a transgender neighbor ($M_{diff}=-0.004$, $t=-3.01$, $p=0.764$), with one exception: respondents who read the news story emphasizing transgender women expressed slightly more happiness at the idea of a potential transgender neighbor ($M_{diff}=-0.033$, $t=-1.94$, $p=0.052$). However, there were significant differences among respondents who were disgusted compared to those who were not. Respondents who reported any degree of disgust were significantly less interested in a gay neighbor ($M_{diff}=0.138$, $t=12.9$, $p=0.000$) or transgender neighbor ($M_{diff}=0.178$, $t=15.2$, $p=0.000$) moving in next door, compared to respondents who

⁶⁵ Q9.1: “How would feel if a lesbian, gay, or bisexual person, with about the same income and education as you, moved next door?” Q9.2: “How would feel if a transgender person, with about the same income and education as you, moved next door?” Response options: [I would be very unhappy about this./I would be a little unhappy about this./I would be neither happy nor unhappy./I would be a little happy about this./I would be very happy about this.]

report no disgust. This is consistent with other findings that disgust leads to avoidant behaviors.

However, there was relatively minimal variation in feeling thermometer scores across different subgroups or conditions, as shown in Figure 5.2. Despite the considerable and statistically significant differences in disgust reactions and comfort with a potential gay or transgender neighbor, feeling thermometer ratings varied only minimally across different conditions. This further illustrates the relative power of examining discrete emotions such as disgust compared to a more blunt instrument like a feeling thermometer. It also suggests that using a feeling thermometer to capture affective responses will likely obscure important variation in opinion.

Figure 5.2: Minimal Variation in Feeling Thermometer Scores Across Conditions



4.4 Policy Impact

Recall that participants read a news story, reported their emotional responses, and then were asked about their support for various LGBTQ policies.

Table 5.9 shows overall support for eight LGBTQ policies, separated by those that primarily benefit (or disadvantage) LGB people and those that primarily benefit (or disadvantage) transgender people. Policies that are generally disadvantageous to LGBTQ people are reverse coded so that the number reported represents the proportion of respondents who took the pro-LGBTQ position. Table 5.9 shows that on average there is at least 10% more support for LGB-targeted policies than for transgender policies, among this sample.

Table 5.9: Support for LGBTQ Policies Across Conditions

<i>Policy</i>	<i>Condition</i>	% of Respondents Who Supported Policy		
		Overall sample	Control	LG/T Conditions
LGB nondiscrimination		71.3%	73.1%	70.8%
Gay marriage		65%	67.6%	64.4%
Gay adoption		64.1%	66.5%	63.5%
LGB business refusal*		54.7%	52.5%	55.2%
<i>LGB Policy Average:</i>		<i>63.8%</i>	<i>64.9%</i>	<i>63.5%</i>
Transgender nondiscrimination		65.4%	68.1%	64.7%
Trans business refusal*		54.1%	53%	54.4%
Trans healthcare		49.1%	49.9%	48.9%
Bathroom bills*		41.2%	42.9%	40.8%
<i>Trans Policy Average:</i>		<i>52.5%</i>	<i>53.5%</i>	<i>52.2%</i>

*These policy questions are reverse coded, so the number here represents the proportion of respondents who took the pro-LGBTQ position (i.e., opposed bathroom bills or refusal of service).

Table 5.10 shows the difference in support for various LGBTQ policies between those who were disgusted and not disgusted.⁶⁶ This shows only respondents who were in the treatment conditions, to demonstrate the impact of disgust that is specifically in response to a gay, lesbian, or transgender person.

⁶⁶ Support includes those who said they strongly support or somewhat support the policy. I excluded those who said they neither support nor oppose the policy, and I also excluded these neutral respondents from the denominator. The numbers should be interpreted as, for example: of all respondents who both took a position on gay adoption *and* said they were not disgusted at all, 77.1% supported adoption. Of those who both took a position on this policy *and* said they were disgusted to any degree, only 27.7% supported it. (I attribute the notable difference in LGBTQ policy support in this chapter, compared to Chapter 3, to the improved representativeness of the sample.)

Table 5.10: Differences in Support for LGBTQ Policies
Among Disgusted and Non-Disgusted Respondents (LG/T Conditions Only)

Policy	% of Respondents Who Supported Policy		Difference
	Not Disgusted	Disgusted	
LGB nondiscrimination	84%	35.7%	-48.3%
Gay marriage	78.6%	26.7%	-51.9%
Gay adoption	77.1%	27.7%	-49.4%
LGB business refusal*	65.7%	27.3%	-38.4%
<i>LGB Average:</i>	<i>76.4%</i>	<i>29.4%</i>	<i>-47%</i>
Transgender nondiscrimination	78.5%	28.2%	-52.7%
Trans business refusal*	65%	26.5%	-38.5%
Transgender healthcare	58.8%	22.7%	-36.1%
Bathroom bills*	46.8%	24.9%	-21.9%
<i>Trans Average:</i>	<i>62.3%</i>	<i>25.6%</i>	<i>-36.7%</i>
<i>Total Average:</i>	<i>69.3%</i>	<i>27.5%</i>	<i>-42%</i>

*These policy questions are reverse coded, so the number here represents the proportion of respondents who took the pro-LGBTQ position (i.e., opposed bathroom bills or refusal of service).

This shows again the gap in support for transgender policies compared to LGB issues, as well as the significant impact of disgust on support across all policies. Among respondents who reported no disgust, an average of 76.4% supported the gay and lesbian policies, and roughly 69% supported the transgender policies. Among respondents who reported any degree of disgust, the percent of those endorsing pro-LGB positions dropped 47 percentage points to a mere average of 29.4%. Support for transgender policies also dramatically decreased, nearly 37% points to 25.6%. Across all eight policy issues, the difference in support among disgusted and not disgusted respondents was roughly 42 points.

Both Tables 5.9 and 5.10 demonstrate the powerful influence of disgust on policy attitudes, the differing baseline support for transgender issues compared to LGB issues, and the differing impact of disgust on policy support for trans and LGB issues.

5. Discussion

As hypothesized, disgust reactions were (1) notably higher in response to transgender people than to gays and lesbians, (2) lowest in response to gay women, and (3) highest in

response to transgender women. This is true for both reporting any degree of disgust (binary outcome) or the mean score or average intensity of disgust (continuous variable).

Overall, disgust reactions to gays and lesbians were similar to or less than the average across all LGBTQ conditions. This suggests that looking at questions that ask about attitudes toward the general LGBTQ community likely only reveals attitudes toward gays and lesbians specifically, and is likely to obscure attitudes toward transgender people and issues. Similarly, the significant differences in disgust reactions to each subgroup (Tables 5.3-5.8), comfort with a gay or transgender neighbor, and drops in policy support (Tables 5.9-5.10) demonstrate the diversity of attitudes toward different subgroups of the LGBTQ community.

That said, this photos used in this experiment depicted white people only, and therefore the results should be interpreted with caution if generalizing to attitudes toward LGBTQ people of color. Relatedly, these results show very little evidence for more negative attitudes among people of color compared to white people, an important contrast to those who argue that homophobia and sexual prejudice are more prevalent in communities of color.

6. Conclusion

By holding the policy issue constant and varying the emphasis on different subgroups, this design reveals how people differently respond to gay people compared to transgender people, independent of the policy content. Attitudes toward transgender people, and transgender women in particular, are considerably more negative than toward gays and lesbians. Additionally, that participants who reported disgust were significantly less happy about a hypothetical gay or transgender neighbor moving next door – a measure that is a proxy for contact or avoidance – offers further evidence that the consequences of disgust will make contact a difficult task for LGBTQ advocates moving forward.

Finally, it is important to note that this survey ran during a time of heightened attention (relative to previous history) to transgender people and particularly bathrooms. This may weaken the claim that these attitudes were “independent of policy content.” In other words, even though the experiment conditions considered the same policy, it is possible that anti-discrimination protections for transgender people are now associated with bathrooms, and that the same policy protections when presented as a policy for LGB people is more associated with employment or housing. Future research should examine this question. In the next chapter, I suggest further ideas and directions for new research based on this project’s findings.

Chapter 6:
Conclusion

1. Reflection

In the summer this dissertation project drew to a close, just over a year had passed since the Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage. Sarah McBride, a white trans woman, made history when she became the first openly transgender person to speak at a major party's presidential convention, and she is widely expected to run for political office herself in the near future. And during the same time, dozens of anti-LGBTQ bills were introduced in states and municipalities across the country, including in Michigan, where I lived the past eight years as a graduate student and a transgender man, with luckily only few personal experiences of transphobia and discrimination. This summer in Orlando, Florida, 49 mostly Latinx LGBTQ people and allies, were murdered in a mass shooting at Pulse Nightclub. As of Aug 1, 2016, there were 17 reported murders of transgender women across the country, on pace to break the previous record set just last year. National transgender advocates estimate that the average life expectancy for a transgender woman of color to be 32 years.

These are times of painful progress. Legal declarations of equality are sometimes little comfort alongside the untimely loss of a community member, or an experience of personal violence or discrimination. The emotional weight of these often conflicting experiences is a heavy burden for many in the LGBTQ community, myself included. In this project, I sought at least in part to understand how these events, and the attitudes driving them, could coexist in the same moment, sometimes in the same person. I followed this emotional weight, and it led me to my dissertation.

In Chapter 2, I examined the predominant explanation for opinion change on LGBTQ issues: contact with a gay or lesbian person. What I characterize as the “friends and allies” framework proved to be limited in its ability to capture or explain important variation in attitudes, namely the attitudes of those who know an LGBTQ person but nonetheless oppose policies, as well as those who do not know an LGBTQ person but nonetheless support policies. In the 2012 ANES data, 40-60% of respondents fell into these unexplained categories.

In Chapter 3, I made a case for the relevance of disgust and emotions more generally to the study of LGBTQ politics. I argued that emotions are both individually experienced and also expressions of existing cultural, social, and political norms. Therefore, disgust reactions are not simply an indicator of how an individual feels about an LGBTQ person or issue, but also a potential indicator of how that individual’s social context may feel as well. Additionally, I traced a history of disgust through 20th century American politics as it related to LGBTQ people and issues. I showed that disgust has played a significant role historically, and in Chapters 4 and 5 I showed its contemporary role.

In Chapter 4, I took up the question of whether modern LGBTQ politics directly triggers disgust. It does, particularly in response to gay marriage and transgender healthcare. This disgust also led to significant decreases in support for every LGBTQ policy that was studied: job discrimination, adoption, marriage, and transgender healthcare. In Chapter 5, I turned to disgust reactions toward specific subgroups of the LGBTQ community, and I showed that disgust is significantly higher in response to transgender people, the highest toward transgender women, and the lowest toward lesbians. Though powerful across most model specifications, disgust has a particularly disproportionate and negative impact on attitudes toward the trans community and support for trans-related policies.

I conclude here, by discussing the implications of these findings, limitations of the project, and directions for future research.

2. Implications

Based on these findings, let us revisit the conventional wisdom discussed in Chapter 1, that friends will be allies. Using my own data now, we can compare the usefulness of contact and disgust in understanding LGBTQ-related policy preferences.

For example, Table 6.1 shows the conventional wisdom’s approach to understanding policy attitudes, using contact to examine support for gay marriage. This shows that 24.4% of respondents are not explained by this approach. Table 6.2, however, shows the same approach but replacing contact with any report of disgust. The number of respondents omitted or unexplained by this approach is reduced to only 18.9%, which amounts to a 22% reduction (from 24.4% to 18.9%) in “unexplainable” opinions. This demonstrates just one of many ways that disgust is a useful analytic tool and measure for understanding attitudes toward LGBTQ people and issues in America.

Table 6.1: Contact & Gay Marriage

<i>Allies?</i> <i>Friends?</i>	Support	Oppose	
Contact	70.8%	19.1%	89.9%
No Contact	5.3%	4.7%	10%
	76.1%	23.8%	100%

Source: Dissertation Experiment 2, 2016; n=1,951; omitting “neither favor nor oppose” responses

Table 6.2: Disgust & Gay Marriage

<i>Allies?</i> <i>Friends?</i>	Support	Oppose	
No Disgust	66.7%	9.5%	76.2%
Disgusted	9.4%	14.4%	23.8%
	76.1%	23.9%	100%

Source: Dissertation Experiment 2, 2016; n=1,956; omitting “neither favor nor oppose” responses

Additionally, as Chapter 5 showed, reports of both LGB and transgender contact have significantly increased. Indeed, in the 2016 sample, nearly 90% of respondents said they knew a gay person and over 30% said they knew a transgender person. As more and more people know LGB people, the usefulness of the measure will decline due to the lack of meaningful variation. It is possible that in the near future, contact with transgender people will be a meaningful measure due to its relative novelty (i.e., that many fewer people know someone who is transgender), but both Flores (2015) and my own experiments here show that trans contact currently has no independent influence on transgender (or LGB) attitudes.

Of course there are other explanations and influences for public opinion on any policy issue, and no single variable alone can wholly determine or predict an opinion. However, given the academic literature's focus on the positive influence of contact, as well as the multitude of political advocacy and resources devoted to contact-based strategies, it is important to call attention to alternative features of public opinion toward LGBTQ people and issues. Disgust is clearly one such feature that merits further attention. The findings emphasize the strong relationship between religious (non)affiliation, disgust, and LGBTQ attitudes, as well as the lack of relationship between an individual's racial identity and their reported disgust or support for LGBTQ policies.

Disgust is also important for political science to consider beyond LGBTQ politics. Disgust has the potential to alter the dynamics of opinion formation, persuasion, behavior, and policy-making in any issue domain in which it is triggered. This is of particular importance to scholars who study racial politics and immigration, where rhetoric of moral and cultural contamination also evokes disgust reactions (Faulkner et al 2004; Hancock 2004). This is also important to scholars who study the intersections of racial and sexual politics (Novkov 2008). Overall, this project builds a theoretical edifice for thinking about a range of different groups and movements, and the broader emotional conditions under which American society extends political rights and offers social acceptance to marginalized groups.

3. Limitations & Future Research

The limitations of this project also point to potential future research. For example, although I attempted throughout the project to use racially diverse samples and discuss the intersections of racial and sexual attitudes, I did not explicitly or separately analyze the ways in which disgust differently impacts LGBTQ people of color. LGBTQ people of color, particularly transgender women of color, are uniquely and disproportionately the subjects of homophobic and transphobic violence and discrimination (e.g., Grant et al 2011), and disgust has also

played a significant role in American racial politics (e.g., Banks & Valentino 2012; Hancock 2004; Novkov 2008). Though the results of Chapter 5 highlight the acutely negative attitudes and disgust reactions toward transgender people and transgender women in particular, the photos used only depicted white people and therefore the results are limited in their ability to speak to attitudes toward LGBTQ people of color. Future work could, for example, replicate this experiment and vary the race of the person depicted, but in general should extend this project's examination of disgust to a variety of racial, economic, and other additional subgroups to shed further light on what motivates these negative attitudes, discrimination, and violence.

Similarly, one of the more beautiful and vibrant elements (in the author's opinion) of the LGBTQ community is its breadth of diversity in gender expression and gender non-conformity. For example, drag queens and kings, butch dykes, fairies, studs, femmes, nonbinary folks, bears, cubs, twinkies, genderqueer folks, and countless more gender expressions and gendered, sexualized categories – not to mention transgender people themselves, who of course represent an equally diverse range of gender expression – all exist within (and beyond) the LGBTQ community. This diversity of gender expression, particularly gender non-conformity, is also central to many negative attitudes toward LGBTQ people (e.g., stereotypes of gay men as effeminate, lesbians as hypermasculine, transgender women as “men in dresses,” and so on). Golebiowska (1996, 1010) argues, “the extent to which individuals of negatively stereotyped political groups will be tolerated depends not only on their group membership, but also on the extent to which they fit their group's stereotype” (see also Golebiowska 2001; 2002). Are disgust reactions different in response to a butch lesbian than to a femme lesbian? To a transgender person who expresses themselves in more gender-typical ways (i.e., a conventionally masculine trans man or a traditionally feminine trans woman) than to a trans person who does not or is not interested in “passing” (see e.g., Halberstam 1998; Sycamore 2011)? This project largely overlooked these questions, and so future research should also

examine variation in disgust reactions based on gender non-conformity in contrast with gender-typicality, or more generally based on consistency with group stereotypes.

Other future directions may also include examining the impact of disgust on and within LGBTQ communities. Many scholars, advocates, and LGBTQ community members have written at great length about the internalization of homophobic and transphobic disgust, the transformation into shame, and the subsequent policing of our own behaviors, gender expression, sexual desire, and more (e.g., Halperin & Traub 2009; Monette 1992; Yoshino 2007). Additionally, intra-group disgust and prejudicial attitudes also structure the mental, emotional, physical, and sociopolitical health of LGBTQ people. In other words, examining the impact of disgust on LGBTQ people themselves, and LGBTQ people's disgust reactions toward *other* LGBTQ people are both fertile grounds for future work in this area.

Moving beyond disgust, future research should examine other emotions and their influence on LGBTQ politics. Banks and Valentino (2012) describe the trajectory of American racial attitudes and politics in America as previously emotionally dominated by disgust, but now governed primarily by anger. In particular, following the 2015 legalization of gay marriage and as the LGBTQ movement continues to gain political ground, it seems likely that anger will play a larger and more relevant role moving forward. Some research has already begun investigating the question of whether backlash occurs in response to these policy gains (e.g., Bishin et al 2015), but generally this work has focused on policy support and/or feeling thermometers, and not on discrete emotional reactions and their potential consequences.

Additionally, looking to other emotions is key because different policies evoke different emotions. Transgender healthcare is likely to elicit a very different set of emotions and political obstacles than, for example, gay marriage, if for no other reason than the pre-existing, hyper politicization of laws governing healthcare – especially in the post Obamacare age. Different policies produce different politics (Lowi 1972; Mucciaroni 2008), and they also produce different emotions, each with unique political implications.

Finally, this project began as a proposal to create a new measure of modern sexual prejudice that was theoretically-grounded, useful for explaining a variety of LGBTQ-related attitudes (including seemingly contradictory opinions, as in Chapter 2), and still brief enough for public opinion research.⁶⁷ At the excellent advice of my committee, I focused on only one of my proposed elements of modern attitudes: disgust. Future research should continue to interrogate other elements that structure sexual prejudice today, such as sexism and gender norms, religion and morality, and other emotions.

4. “Not Yet Here”

As the LGBTQ community and America as a whole finally moves past the marriage agenda, many are pausing to reflect on past achievements and failures, and to imagine what horizons lay ahead.

Reflecting on the “friends and allies” framework, I am reminded of John D’Emilio’s words: “These myths have limited our political perspective. They have contributed, for instance, to an overreliance on a strategy of coming out – if every gay man and lesbian in America came out, gay oppression would end – and have allowed us to ignore the institutionalized ways in which homophobia and heterosexism are reproduced” (1993, 468). There is great value in studying public opinion and individual-level attitudes, because we learn how to better understand one another and, where applicable, advocate for positive change. But we cannot lose sight of the ways these attitudes have become institutionalized at much deeper levels. Pursuing attitude change on an individual level is both necessary and far from enough to combat the deep historical entrenchment of homophobia, sexism, racism, and more in the American political system. Structural efforts must also be pursued.

Additionally, the general decline of reported animus toward LGBTQ people and issues should not (yet) be interpreted as definitive signs of progress. Certainly hard-won policy gains

⁶⁷ See Massey 2009 for a theoretically rich and powerful instrument... with 70 questions.

and substantive belief change have occurred; but many scholars and activists alike (e.g., Wendy Brown) offer thorough and compelling critiques of “tolerance” as a signal of depoliticization of an issue or group, without corresponding and meaningful change in underlying attitudes toward that issue or group. For example, while arguments that homosexuality is genetic or inborn were persuasive to many heterosexual Americans and led to positive changes in support for gay and lesbian issues (e.g., Haider-Markel & Joslyn 2008; Hegarty 2002), this framework may be less likely to succeed in the transgender context. Attribution-based beliefs may actually make it more difficult for some people to (initially) accept trans people as being “born that way,” when in fact many transgender people were born another way (that is to say, they were assigned a sex at birth). Additionally, partisanship and pre-existing sexual prejudice have both been shown to mediate the relationship between accepting attribution beliefs in the first place, as well as their potential positive influence on policy support (Garretson & Suhay 2015; Hegarty & Golden 2008; Smith et al 2011). In other words, the tolerance that resulted from attribution-based arguments wasn’t entirely acceptance, but rather a conditional acceptance; a contingent belonging. This is one reason among many that there is potentially a more difficult road ahead for trans issues than the road gay issues faced in the past.

The affective legacies of disgust must be confronted if we are to traverse this road without losing too many more of us.

Appendix A Friends & Allies Using Feeling Thermometer

This measures “friendship” using feeling thermometer (FT) scores toward gays and lesbians, rather than self-reported contact with gays or lesbians. “Positive” denotes “warm” scores of 51 or above. “Negative” denotes “cold” scores of 49 or below. This omits respondents who offered the neutral rating of “50.” This analysis shows that 17% - 35.1% of respondents are omitted by conventional wisdom, even when measuring “friendship” through the affective measure of a feeling thermometer rather than direct contact.

Table A1a: Job Discrimination

	Allies (Support)	Not Allies (Oppose)	
Positive	54.8%	4.4%	59.2%
Negative	19.1%	21.7%	40.8%
	73.9%	26.1%	100%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

Table A1b: Job Discrimination, Among Friends

	Allies (Support)	Not Allies (Oppose)	
Positive	92.6%	7.4%	100%
Negative	46.8%	53.2%	100%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

Table A2a: Military Service

	Allies (Support)	Not Allies (Oppose)	
Positive	56.6%	2.4%	59%
Negative	27.2%	13.8%	41%
	83.8%	16.2%	100%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

Table A2b: Military Service, Among Friends

	Allies (Support)	Not Allies (Oppose)	
Positive	95.9%	4.1%	100%
Negative	66.3%	33.7%	100%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

Table A3a: Gay Adoption

	Allies (Support)	Not Allies (Oppose)	
Positive	52.1%	6.7%	58.8%
Negative	10.3%	30.9%	41.2%
	62.4%	37.6%	100%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

Table A3b: Gay Adoption, Among Friends

	Allies (Support)	Not Allies (Oppose)	
Positive	88.6%	11.4%	100%
Negative	25%	75%	100%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

Table A4a: Gay Marriage

	Allies (Support)	Civil Unions	Not Allies (Oppose)	
Pos.	40.2%	14.4%	4%	58.6%
Neg.	3.8%	12.9%	24.7%	41.4%
	44%	27.3%	28.7%	100%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

Table A4b: Gay Marriage, Among Friends

	Allies (Support)	Civil Unions	Not- Allies (Oppose)	
Pos.	68.6%	24.5%	6.8%	100%
Neg.	9.2%	31.1%	59.7%	100%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

Appendix B Friends & Allies Using Partisanship

Another common variable considered in more recent attitudes toward LGBTQ policy issues is partisanship, namely that Democrats are more likely to support LGBTQ policies while Republicans are more likely to oppose. The below tables show the same “friends and allies” examination comparing LGBTQ policy support with partisanship, rather than contact or feeling thermometer scores. Again, this demonstrates that the conventional approaches to understanding a primary determinant of LGBTQ-related policy support are insufficient for explaining many respondents. As represented by the highlighted cells below, 35% - 51.3% of respondents fall into categories not suggested by conventional wisdom.

Table B1a: Job Discrimination

	Allies (Support)	Not Allies (Oppose)	
Democrats	48.2%	8.2%	56.4%
Republicans	27.3%	16.4%	43.6%
	75.5%	24.5%	100%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

Table B3a: Gay Adoption

	Allies (Support)	Not Allies (Oppose)	
Democrats	41%	14.9%	55.9%
Republicans	20.1%	24%	44.1%
	61.1%	38.9%	100%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

Table B1b: Job Discrimination, Among Friends

	Allies (Support)	Not Allies (Oppose)	
Democrats	85.5%	14.5%	100%
Republicans	62.6%	37.6%	100%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

Table B3b: Gay Adoption, Among Friends

	Allies (Support)	Not Allies (Oppose)	
Democrats	73.3%	26.7%	100%
Republicans	45.6%	54.4%	100%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

Table B2a: Military Service

	Allies (Support)	Not Allies (Oppose)	
Democrats	50.5%	5.6%	56.1%
Republicans	33.9%	10%	43.9%
	84.4%	15.6%	100%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

Table B4a: Gay Marriage

	Allies (Support)	Civil Unions	Not Allies (Oppose)	
Dem	31.3%	14.5%	10.2%	56%
Rep	8.4%	18.2%	17.4%	44%
	39.7%	32.7%	27.6%	100%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

Table B2b: Military Service, Among Friends

	Allies (Support)	Not Allies (Oppose)	
Democrats	90%	10%	100%
Republicans	77.2%	22.8%	100%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

Table B4b: Gay Marriage, Among Friends

	Allies (Support)	Civil Unions	Not-Allies (Oppose)	
Dem	55.9%	25.9%	18.2%	100%
Rep	19.1%	41.4%	39.5%	100%

Source: ANES 2012, full sample weighting

Appendix C

Experiment 1 News Stories

Control (111 words)

State lawmakers to consider texting-while-driving ban

SPRINGFIELD -- State lawmakers are considering a bill that would amend the state's distracted driving law to prohibit texting while driving.

Last week's session of the State House of Representatives began with a discussion of the proposed legislation. Currently, state law prohibits teenagers from using hand-held devices at all while driving. If the bill passes, it would prohibit texting while driving for all ages.

The bill comes as the country continues to consider questions about distracted driving. The House is set to vote on the bill later this month. The Governor has made no statement about whether he would sign the bill if it passes.

Treatment 1: Nondiscrimination (123 words)

State lawmakers to consider discrimination protections for gay residents

SPRINGFIELD -- State lawmakers are considering a bill that would amend the state's non-discrimination law to prohibit discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) residents.

Last week's session of the State House of Representatives began with a discussion of the proposed legislation. Currently, state law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, gender, and age, among others. If the bill passes, it would add sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes.

The bill comes as the country continues to consider questions about gay rights. The House is set to vote on the bill later this month. The Governor has made no statement about whether he would sign the bill if it passes.

Treatment 2: Gay Marriage (109 words)

State lawmakers to consider legalizing same-sex marriage

SPRINGFIELD -- State lawmakers are considering a bill that would legalize gay marriage statewide.

Last week's session of the State House of Representatives began with a discussion of the proposed legislation. Currently, state law prohibits gay and lesbian couples from marrying. If the bill passes, it would grant same-sex couples the right to marry and receive state benefits afforded by marriage.

The bill comes as the country continues to consider questions about gay rights. The House is set to vote on the bill later this month. The Governor has made no statement about whether he would sign the bill if it passes.

Treatment 3: Gay Adoption (110 words)

State lawmakers to consider legalizing same-sex adoption

SPRINGFIELD -- State lawmakers are considering a bill that would legalize adoption by gay and lesbian couples.

Last week's session of the State House of Representatives began with a discussion of the proposed legislation. Currently, state law prohibits gay and lesbian couples from adoption children. If the bill passes, it would grant same-sex couples the same rights to adoption as heterosexual couples.

The bill comes as the country continues to consider questions about gay rights. The House is set to vote on the bill later this month. The Governor has made no statement about whether he would sign the bill if it passes.

Treatment 4: Transgender healthcare (129 words)

State lawmakers to consider transgender healthcare coverage

SPRINGFIELD -- State lawmakers are considering a bill that would provide all state employees with access to transgender- related health care services.

Last week's session of the State House of Representatives began with a discussion of the proposed legislation. Currently, the state's health insurance policy for its own employees does not cover medical treatments or care related to gender transition, such as mental healthcare, hormone replacement therapy, or surgery. If the bill passes, it would extend this coverage to state employees.

The bill comes as the country continues to consider questions about transgender rights. The House is set to vote on the bill later this month. The Governor has made no statement about whether he would sign the bill if it passes.

APPENDIX D
Experiment 1 Supplemental Analyses

**Table D1: Disgust's Influence on Support for
LGB Nondiscrimination Policy**

Variable	Model 1 All	Model 2 Democrats	Model 3 Republicans
Disgust	-0.379*** (.04)	-0.313*** (.05)	-0.327*** (.07)
White	0.016 (.02)	0.035 (.02)	-0.070 (.09)
Black	-0.010 (.03)	0.009 (.03)	-0.178 (.16)
Latino	-0.041 (.03)	-0.004 (.03)	-0.223* (.12)
Female	0.054*** (.02)	0.035** (.02)	0.085* (.04)
Age	-0.036 (.03)	-0.005 (.03)	-0.076 (.09)
Education	0.041 (.03)	0.044 (.03)	0.072 (.09)
Non-Religious	0.039** (.02)	0.043** (.02)	0.006 (.05)
Born Again	-0.085*** (.03)	-0.100*** (.03)	-0.035 (.05)
LGB Contact	0.090*** (.02)	0.085*** (.02)	0.080* (.04)
Constant	0.768*** (.03)	0.780*** (.03)	0.759*** (.12)
R-Squared	0.229	0.191	0.190
Adj R-Squared	0.221	0.176	0.152
N	974	587	226

Standard errors in parentheses.
*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$

**Table D2: Disgust Index's Influence on Support for
LGB Nondiscrimination Policy**

Variable	Model 1 All	Model 2 Democrats	Model 3 Republicans
Disgust Index	-0.490*** (.04)	-0.452*** (.06)	-0.407*** (.08)
White	0.014 (.02)	0.038 (.02)	-0.091 (.09)
Black	-0.009 (.03)	0.017 (.03)	-0.213 (.16)
Latino	-0.043 (.03)	-0.003 (.03)	-0.238** (.12)
Female	0.053*** (.02)	0.035** (.02)	0.085* (.04)
Age	-0.030 (.03)	-0.006 (.03)	-0.071 (.08)
Education	0.042 (.03)	0.046 (.03)	0.075 (.09)
Non-Religious	0.038** (.02)	0.041** (.02)	0.003 (.05)
Born Again	-0.075*** (.03)	-0.085** (.03)	-0.036 (.05)
LGB Contact	0.084*** (.02)	0.082*** (.02)	0.067 (.04)
Constant	0.773*** (.03)	0.780*** (.03)	0.786*** (.04)
R-Squared	0.242	0.205	0.201
Adj R-Squared	0.235	0.192	0.164
N	974	587	226

Standard errors in parentheses.
*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$

Table D3: Disgust's Influence on Support for Transgender Nondiscrimination Policy

Variable	Model 1 All	Model 2 Democrats	Model 3 Republicans
Disgust	-0.404*** (.04)	-0.356*** (.05)	-0.312*** (.07)
White	-0.019 (.03)	0.035 (.03)	-0.175* (.09)
Black	-0.028 (.04)	0.010 (.03)	-0.233 (.16)
Latino	-0.072 (.04)	-0.027 (.03)	-0.279** (.12)
Female	0.061*** (.02)	0.056*** (.02)	0.060 (.04)
Age	-0.042 (.03)	0.007 (.03)	-0.161* (.09)
Education	0.060* (.03)	0.016 (.03)	0.172* (.09)
Non-Religious	0.047** (.02)	0.040** (.02)	-0.017 (.05)
Born Again	-0.095*** (.03)	-0.122*** (.04)	-0.044 (.05)
LGB Contact	0.090*** (.02)	0.090*** (.02)	0.071 (.04)
Constant	0.748*** (.04)	0.757*** (.04)	0.790*** (.12)
R-Squared	0.239	0.206	0.191
Adj R-Squared	0.231	0.192	0.153
N	974	587	226

Standard errors in parentheses.
 *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$

Table D4: Disgust Index's Influence on Support for Transgender Nondiscrimination Policy

Variable	Model 1 All	Model 2 Democrats	Model 3 Republicans
Disgust Index	-0.517*** (.04)	-0.543*** (.07)	-0.383*** (.08)
White	-0.021 (.03)	0.038 (.02)	-0.195** (.09)
Black	-0.027 (.04)	0.020 (.04)	-0.267* (.16)
Latino	-0.075** (.04)	-0.025 (.03)	-0.294** (.12)
Female	0.061*** (.02)	0.055*** (.02)	0.060 (.04)
Age	-0.036 (.03)	0.006 (.03)	-0.157* (.09)
Education	0.060* (.03)	0.019 (.03)	0.175* (.09)
Non-Religious	0.046** (.02)	0.037** (.02)	-0.019 (.05)
Born Again	-0.085*** (.03)	-0.103*** (.04)	-0.046 (.05)
LGB Contact	0.083*** (.02)	0.086*** (.02)	0.059 (.04)
Constant	0.752*** (.03)	0.760*** (.03)	0.815*** (.12)
R-Squared	0.250	0.231	0.199
Adj R-Squared	0.243	0.217	0.161
N	974	587	226

Standard errors in parentheses.
 *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$

**Table D5: Disgust's Influence on Support for
Gay Marriage Policy**

Variable	Model 1 All	Model 2 Democrats	Model 3 Republicans
Disgust	-0.532*** (.04)	-0.351*** (.06)	-0.544*** (.07)
White	0.043 (.03)	0.063** (.03)	0.068 (.09)
Black	-0.020 (.04)	-0.005 (.04)	-0.107 (.15)
Latino	0.035 (.04)	0.042 (.04)	-0.004 (.12)
Female	0.016 (.02)	0.004 (.02)	0.048 (.04)
Age	-0.215*** (.04)	-0.094** (.04)	-0.419*** (.08)
Education	0.092*** (.04)	0.061 (.04)	0.139 (.09)
Non-Religious	0.086*** (.02)	0.049** (.02)	0.120** (.05)
Born Again	-0.211*** (.03)	-0.266*** (.04)	-0.057 (.05)
LGB Contact	0.099*** (.02)	0.064*** (.04)	0.121*** (.04)
Constant	0.743*** (.04)	0.803*** (.04)	0.575*** (.11)
R-Squared	0.394	0.233	0.445
Adj R-Squared	0.388	0.220	0.419
N	974	587	226

Standard errors in parentheses.
*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$

**Table D6: Disgust Index's Influence on Support for
Gay Marriage Policy**

Variable	Model 1 All	Model 2 Democrats	Model 3 Republicans
Disgust Index	-0.662*** (.05)	-0.505*** (.08)	-0.624*** (.08)
White	0.040 (.03)	0.066** (.03)	0.033 (.09)
Black	-0.018 (.04)	0.004 (.04)	-0.169 (.15)
Latino	0.031 (.04)	0.043 (.04)	-0.031 (.12)
Female	0.016 (.02)	0.003 (.02)	0.050 (.04)
Age	-0.208*** (.03)	-0.095** (.04)	-0.417*** (.08)
Education	0.094*** (.03)	0.064* (.04)	0.143 (.09)
Non-Religious	0.086*** (.02)	0.047** (.02)	0.120** (.05)
Born Again	-0.201*** (.03)	-0.250*** (.04)	-0.065 (.05)
LGB Contact	0.091*** (.02)	0.061*** (.02)	0.105** (.04)
Constant	0.747*** (.04)	0.803*** (.04)	0.609*** (.12)
R-Squared	0.401	0.246	0.438
Adj R-Squared	0.395	0.233	0.412
N	974	587	226

Standard errors in parentheses.
*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$

**Table D7: Disgust's Influence on Support for
Gay Adoption Policy**

Variable	Model 1 All	Model 2 Democrats	Model 3 Republicans
Disgust	-0.481*** (.04)	-0.403*** (.06)	-0.459*** (.06)
White	0.056** (.03)	0.074*** (.03)	0.131 (.09)
Black	0.017 (.04)	0.016 (.04)	0.124 (.15)
Latino	0.017 (.04)	0.037 (.04)	0.006 (.11)
Female	0.054*** (.02)	0.042** (.02)	0.092** (.04)
Age	-0.230*** (.03)	-0.152*** (.04)	-0.323*** (.08)
Education	0.105*** (.03)	0.095*** (.04)	0.106 (.09)
Non-Religious	0.075*** (.03)	0.045** (.02)	0.068 (.05)
Born Again	-0.229*** (.03)	-0.266*** (.04)	-0.092* (.05)
LGB Contact	0.115*** (.02)	0.087*** (.02)	0.159*** (.04)
Constant	0.693*** (.04)	0.748*** (.04)	0.449*** (.11)
R-Squared	0.401	0.291	0.405
Adj R-Squared	0.395	0.279	0.377
N	974	587	226

Standard errors in parentheses.
***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.10

**Table D8: Disgust Index's Influence on Support for
Gay Adoption Policy**

Variable	Model 1 All	Model 2 Democrats	Model 3 Republicans
Disgust Index	-0.621*** (.05)	-0.586*** (.07)	-0.549*** (.07)
White	0.053** (.03)	0.078*** (.03)	0.102 (.09)
Black	0.018 (.04)	0.026 (.04)	0.073 (.15)
Latino	0.013 (.04)	0.038 (.03)	-0.016 (.11)
Female	0.054*** (.02)	0.040** (.02)	0.093** (.04)
Age	-0.223*** (.03)	-0.153*** (.04)	-0.319*** (.08)
Education	0.105*** (.03)	0.098*** (.04)	0.110 (.08)
Non-Religious	0.073*** (.02)	0.042** (.02)	0.066 (.05)
Born Again	-0.215*** (.03)	-0.246*** (.04)	-0.097** (.05)
LGB Contact	0.107*** (.02)	0.084*** (.02)	0.143*** (.04)
Constant	0.699*** (.04)	0.749*** (.04)	0.483*** (.11)
R-Squared	0.416	0.309	0.412
Adj R-Squared	0.410	0.297	0.385
N	974	587	226

Standard errors in parentheses.
***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.10

Table D9: Disgust's Influence on Support for Transgender Healthcare Policy

Variable	Model 1 All	Model 2 Democrats	Model 3 Republicans
Disgust	-0.364*** (.04)	-0.323*** (.07)	-0.320*** (.06)
White	0.021 (.03)	0.012 (.03)	0.053 (.08)
Black	0.027 (.04)	0.022 (.05)	0.074 (.13)
Latino	-0.028 (.04)	-0.057 (.04)	-0.054 (.10)
Female	0.060*** (.02)	0.062*** (.02)	0.073* (.04)
Age	-0.208*** (.04)	-0.163*** (.05)	-0.273*** (.07)
Education	0.111*** (.04)	0.125*** (.05)	0.081 (.08)
Non-Religious	0.070*** (.02)	0.071*** (.02)	-0.045 (.05)
Born Again	-0.169*** (.03)	-0.170*** (.05)	-0.037 (.04)
LGB Contact	0.058*** (.02)	0.063*** (.02)	0.020 (.04)
Trans Contact	0.157*** (.03)	0.137*** (.04)	0.101 (.09)
Constant	0.518*** (.04)	0.569*** (.05)	0.379*** (.10)
R-Squared	0.260	0.191	0.238
Adj R-Squared	0.252	0.175	0.199
N	974	587	226

Standard errors in parentheses.
*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$

Table D10: Disgust Index's Influence on Support for Transgender Healthcare Policy

Variable	Model 1 All	Model 2 Democrats	Model 3 Republicans
Disgust Index	-0.443*** (.05)	-0.469*** (.09)	-0.337*** (.07)
White	0.019 (.03)	0.015 (.03)	0.032 (.08)
Black	0.028 (.04)	0.030 (.05)	0.035 (.13)
Latino	-0.031 (.04)	-0.056 (.04)	-0.072 (.10)
Female	0.060*** (.02)	0.061*** (.02)	0.074** (.04)
Age	-0.203*** (.04)	-0.164*** (.05)	-0.274*** (.07)
Education	0.112*** (.04)	0.127*** (.05)	0.085 (.08)
Non-Religious	0.070*** (.02)	0.068*** (.02)	-0.041 (.05)
Born Again	-0.163*** (.03)	-0.155*** (.05)	-0.044 (.04)
LGB Contact	0.053*** (.02)	0.060** (.02)	0.014 (.04)
Trans Contact	0.162*** (.03)	0.137*** (.04)	0.114 (.09)
Constant	0.519*** (.04)	0.569*** (.05)	0.391*** (.10)
R-Squared	0.261	0.199	0.218
Adj R-Squared	0.253	0.183	0.177
N	974	587	226

Standard errors in parentheses.
*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$

Appendix E

Demographic Screening and Recruitment Process

After observing the partisan imbalance in my MTurk sample in the first experiment (Chapter 3), I designed a demographic screening and recruitment process to improve the sample in the second experiment (Chapter 4).⁶⁸ The overall process was relatively simple. First, I conducted a large-scale survey consisting of only demographic questions. Then I re-contacted workers who identified as conservative or Republican (or both) to invite them to participate in the second experiment. This resulted in a much-improved partisan balance. While in the first experiment the sample was roughly 60% Democrats and 23% Republicans, the second experiment was roughly 47% Democrats and 42% Republicans.

The demographic survey was conducted over an eight-week period in March through May 2015. The survey was approximately five minutes in length and contained a variety of demographic questions of interest, including partisanship, ideology, race, gender, education, employment, and more. Overall, the sample resulted in 9,770 unique respondents. I also used this survey as an opportunity to examine (separate from the dissertation) whether there are substantive differences in the MTurk sample pool depending on temporal effects such as the (1) time of day or (2) day of week that a survey is posted, or (3) the serial position of a respondent's participation (i.e., whether they participate earlier or later in data collection). The full process and results of this examination are available in Casey et al (2016).

After closing the demographic survey, I assigned a “qualification” in MTurk to participants who identified as conservative, Republican, or both. Then in 2016, I sent an email invitation through the MTurk platform to all respondents with this qualification, inviting them to participate in the second experiment. Respondents were not informed that they were being sought out due to their party or ideological identification, or that this was the meaning behind the qualification. This limited potential partisan priming going in to the survey.

When I launched the second experiment, it was visible/available only to respondents who had this qualification. This allowed conservative/Republican respondents time to participate before opening the survey to the full MTurk population (at which point the overall sample size would be met very quickly). The survey was open for only these respondents for a total of seven days. I sent an additional reminder invitation email midway through this week.

⁶⁸ Many thanks to Kristyn Karl for the original suggestion of conducting a pre-survey just for demographic purposes. Additional thanks to Jesse Chandler for his guidance in optimizing this demographic survey, and to Andrew Proctor for his help in the actual re-contacting of workers.

After seven days, I opened the survey to the broader MTurk population of workers (i.e., I removed the requirement that participants must have the Republican qualification). I met my desired sample size for the experiment within six hours.

However, I realized that trying to improve the representation of Republicans in my sample likely meant I had also increased the proportion of white respondents in an already disproportionately white sample pool. Therefore I created an additional MTurk qualification for respondents who identified in the 2015 demographic survey as anything other than white. I re-opened the survey but limited it to respondents who had this qualification, and sent an email invitation to these respondents to invite them to participate as well. I left the survey open for an additional three days to improve the racial composition of the sample. As noted in Chapter 4, this was relatively successful: the first experiment had roughly 8% Blacks and 8% Latinos, while this second experiment had roughly 11% Blacks and 9% Latinos. The overall proportion of non-Hispanic whites decreased from 71% in the first experiment to 66.4% in the second experiment.

APPENDIX F

Experiment 2 Picture Pre-Testing Protocol

For Experiment 2 (Chapter 5), I included pictures of individuals to prime attitudes toward specific subgroups of the LGBTQ community. Before conducting Experiment 2, I pre-tested the pictures to determine that participants would respond in predictable ways to the photos, namely that they perceived the images to be of either a man or a woman, and that their impressions of other dimensions of the images did not substantively differ, particularly along dimensions that might also be disgust-inducing.⁶⁹

This task was hosted on Qualtrics and participants were recruited through MTurk. The title of the task was “Rate your first impressions.” The introduction to the task read as follows: “People often say they can tell a lot about another person (e.g., about their personality or background), just by looking at him or her. These first impressions are something we seem to do automatically in our everyday lives. In this study, we want to learn more about these initial reactions to other people. You will be asked about 8 photographs in all.”

After giving informed consent, respondents were then shown a series of eight pictures with the same seven questions after each image. Images were shown at the same size and quality. Since I was most interested in how respondents would view these photos relative to one another, all respondents rated all eight photographs. I sampled a total of 324 respondents in all. I found these images from internet searches. I selected images of white people only in order to limit the possibility that in the actual experiment any reactions to photos were due to perceived racial differences in the person depicted. However, future research should examine exactly that possibility.

⁶⁹ Many thanks to Nicholas Valentino, Ted Brader, and Ashley Jardina (2013) for their model of photo pre-testing, and to Ashley Jardina in particular for sharing relevant materials and guidance on this process. Much of the introductory language and the overall process was modeled on their admirable example.

Female pictures

Figure F1: Photo A1



Figure F2: Photo A2



Figure F3: Photo A3



Figure F4: Photo A4



Male pictures

Figure F5: Photo B1



Figure F6: Photo B2



Figure F7: Photo B3



Figure F8: Photo B4



After each photo, respondents were asked the following questions. The photo remained on the screen while respondents answered.

1. “How would you rate the attractiveness of the person in this photo?”
[Very Unattractive, Unattractive, Neither Attractive Nor Unattractive, Attractive, Very Attractive]
2. “In your opinion, how trustworthy does the person in this photo appear to be?”
[Not at all Trustworthy, Slightly, Somewhat, A good deal, Very Trustworthy]
3. “In your opinion, how aggressive does the person in this photo appear to be?”
[Not at all Aggressive, Slightly, Somewhat, A good deal, Very Aggressive]
4. “If you had to guess, what age does the person in this photo appear to be?”
[18-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60 or older]
5. “If you had to guess, what gender does the person in the photo appear to be?”
[Man, Woman, Other (please specify)]
6. “In your opinion, how feminine does the person appear?”
[Not at all Feminine, Slightly, Somewhat, A good deal, Very Feminine]
7. “In your opinion, how masculine does the person appear?”
[Not at all Masculine, Slightly, Somewhat, A good deal, Very Masculine]

I asked about attractiveness, trustworthiness, and aggression because these might influence potential reactions to the photo. Perceived aggression could trigger a sense of threat in participants, and so I wanted to ensure that the images were perceived as similarly (non)aggressive. If respondents perceived the images to be of unattractive or untrustworthy people, this might elicit other feelings of disgust not related to whether the person pictured is gay or transgender.

I also asked about perceptions of gender, masculinity, and femininity to establish that respondents consistently perceived the images as male or female and masculine or feminine. As the difference of means testing show below, there were important differences for some pictures that were perceived as feminine men or masculine women. While future research should examine the implications of such perceptions for disgust reactions, for this project I chose to focus on largely gender-stereotype-consistent images in order to reduce additional variables that might elicit disgust.

Table F1:
Photo Pre-Testing Overall Means (n=324)

	A1	A2	A3	A4	B1	B2	B3	B4
Attractive (1=Very Unattractive, 5=Very Attractive)	3.66	3.36	1.71	2.23	2.66	3.37	3.07	3.00
Trustworthy (1= Not at all, 5=Very)	3.31	3.37	2.40	3.03	2.51	2.98	2.78	3.21
Aggressive (1 = Not at all, 5=Very)	2.10	1.79	3.26	2.21	1.72	2.71	2.72	1.83
Perceived Age (1=18-29; 2=30-39; 3=40-49; 4=50-59;5=65+)	2.48	2.22	3.36	3.18	1.17	2.17	2.36	1.71
Perceived Gender (1=Man, 2=Woman)	1.99	2.00	2.00	1.99	1.05	1.01	1.00	1.00
Perceived Femininity (1=Not at all Feminine, 5=Very Feminine)	3.87	3.86	2.60	3.01	3.14	1.21	1.35	1.58
Perceived Masculinity (1=Not at all Masculine, 5=Very Masculine)	1.38	1.32	2.27	1.93	2.26	3.93	3.61	3.45

As the below tables show, there were significant differences of means in many instances. However, as the above table (Overall Means) shows, some of these differences occur within the same response category. For example, photos A1 and A2 had a significant difference of means on perceived age, but the means were 2.48 and 2.22, respectively, which are both still solidly in the response category of “30-39 years.” As a result, though there are many instances of significant difference of means, the photos were still generally similar along important dimensions. Below I present the difference of means testing for each dimension, followed by the selection process of the two final photos.

Table F2: Difference of Means: Attractiveness

* = significant difference at $p < 0.05$

x = not significant

	A1	A2	A3	A4	B1	B2	B3	B4
A1	-	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
A2	*	-	*	*	*	x	*	*
A3	*	*	-	*	*	*	*	*
A4	*	*	*	-	*	*	*	*
B1	*	*	*	*	-	*	*	*
B2	*	x	*	*	*	-	*	*
B3	*	*	*	*	*	*	-	x
B4	*	*	*	*	*	*	x	-

Table F3: Difference of Means: Aggressiveness

* = significant difference at $p < 0.05$

x = not significant

	A1	A2	A3	A4	B1	B2	B3	B4
A1	-	*	*	x	*	*	*	*
A2	*	-	*	*	x	*	*	x
A3	*	*	-	*	*	*	*	*
A4	x	*	*	-	*	*	*	*
B1	*	x	*	*	-	*	*	x
B2	*	*	*	*	*	-	x	*
B3	*	*	*	*	*	x	-	*
B4	*	x	*	*	x	*	*	-

Table F4: Difference of Means: Trustworthiness

* = significant difference at $p < 0.05$

x = not significant

	A1	A2	A3	A4	B1	B2	B3	B4
A1	-	x	*	*	*	*	*	x
A2	x	-	*	*	*	*	*	*
A3	*	*	-	*	x	*	*	*
A4	*	*	*	-	*	x	*	*
B1	*	*	x	*	-	*	*	*
B2	*	*	*	x	*	-	*	*
B3	*	*	*	*	*	*	-	*
B4	x	*	*	*	*	*	*	-

Table F5: Difference of Means: Age

* = significant difference at $p < 0.05$

x = not significant

	A1	A2	A3	A4	B1	B2	B3	B4
A1	-	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
A2	*	-	*	*	*	x	*	*
A3	*	*	-	*	*	*	*	*
A4	*	*	*	-	*	*	*	*
B1	*	*	*	*	-	*	*	*
B2	*	x	*	*	*	-	*	*
B3	*	*	*	*	*	*	-	*
B4	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	-

Table F6: Difference of Means: Perceived Gender

* = significant difference at $p < 0.05$

x = not significant

	A1	A2	A3	A4	B1	B2	B3	B4
A1	-	x	x	x	*	*	*	*
A2	x	-	x	x	*	*	*	*
A3	x	x	-	x	*	*	*	*
A4	x	x	x	-	*	*	*	*
B1	*	*	*	*	-	*	*	*
B2	*	*	*	*	*	-	x	x
B3	*	*	*	*	*	x	-	x
B4	*	*	*	*	*	x	x	-

Table F7: Difference of Means: Perceived Femininity

* = significant difference at $p < 0.05$

x = not significant

	A1	A2	A3	A4	B1	B2	B3	B4
A1	-	x	*	*	*	*	*	*
A2	x	-	*	*	*	*	*	*
A3	*	*	-	*	*	*	*	*
A4	*	*	*	-	x	*	*	*
B1	*	*	*	x	-	*	*	*
B2	*	*	*	*	*	-	*	*
B3	*	*	*	*	*	*	-	*
B4	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	-

Table F8: Difference of Means: Perceived Masculinity

* = significant difference at $p < 0.05$

x = not significant

	A1	A2	A3	A4	B1	B2	B3	B4
A1	-	x	*	*	*	*	*	*
A2	x	-	*	*	*	*	*	*
A3	*	*	-	*	x	*	*	*
A4	*	*	*	-	*	*	*	*
B1	*	*	x	*	-	*	*	*
B2	*	*	*	*	*	-	*	*
B3	*	*	*	*	*	*	-	*
B4	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	-

Upon reviewing these differences of means tests, I selected photos A1 and B2 using the following thought process:

1. Eliminate A3: significantly lower attractiveness, higher age and aggressiveness scores
2. Eliminate A4: significantly higher age, lower attractiveness scores
3. Eliminate B1: significant difference in gender score, also has significantly lower masculinity and higher femininity scores than other B (male) photos
4. Eliminate B4: lower age than remaining A1, A2
5. B2, B3 indistinguishable on aggressiveness. Age, trustworthy, and attractive all in roughly same response categories, though distinguishable scores.
6. A1, A2 indistinguishable on gender, femininity, and masculinity. Age, attractive, and trustworthy same categories with distinguishable scores. A1 higher on aggression, but closer to B2/B3 aggression scores.
7. Select A1, since it is indistinguishable from or roughly similar to A2 on all dimensions except aggression, but it is closer to the remaining B photos on aggression.
8. Select B2, since its means on attractiveness and trustworthiness are closer to A1's than are B3's.

Figure F1: Photo A1



Figure F6: Photo B2



Appendix G Experiment 2 News Stories and Images

State lawmakers to consider discrimination protections for [senior/lesbian and gay/gay/transgender] residents

Associated Press – February 12, 2016

SPRINGFIELD – State lawmakers are considering a bill that would amend the state’s anti-discrimination law to prohibit discrimination against [senior/lesbian, gay, and bisexual/gay, lesbian, and bisexual/transgender] residents.

Last week’s session of the State House of Representatives began with a discussion of the proposed legislation. Currently, state law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race and [gender/age], among other categories. If the bill passes, it would add [age/sexual orientation/gender identity] as a protected class.

[In LGBTQ conditions:] At a local rally, [Carol/Carl] Johnson, a [lesbian/gay man/transgender woman/transgender man], spoke in favor of the bill. “This bill would protect [lesbian and gay/gay/transgender] people against discrimination in the workplace and housing. This is critically important for our community,” [she/he] said.

The bill comes as the country continues to consider questions about [the aging population/lesbian and gay rights/gay rights/transgender rights]. The House is set to vote on the bill later this month. The Governor has made no statement about whether he would sign the bill if it passes.

Figure G1: Control Condition



Figure G2: Gay female condition

State lawmakers to consider discrimination protections for lesbian and gay residents
 Associated Press – February 12, 2016

SPRINGFIELD -- State lawmakers are considering a bill that would amend the state's anti-discrimination law to prohibit discrimination against lesbian, gay, and bisexual residents.

Last week's session of the State House of Representatives began with a discussion of the proposed legislation. Currently, state law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race and age, among other categories. If the bill passes, it would add sexual orientation as a protected class.

At a local rally, Carol Johnson, a lesbian, spoke in favor of the bill. "This bill would protect lesbian and gay people against discrimination in the workplace and housing. This is critically important for our community," she said.

The bill comes as the country continues to consider questions about lesbian and gay rights. The House is set to vote on the bill later this month. The Governor has made no statement about whether he would sign the bill if it passes.



Carol Johnson, a lesbian, spoke in favor of the bill at a local rally.

Figure G3: Gay male condition


State lawmakers to consider discrimination protections for gay residents
 Associated Press – February 12, 2016

SPRINGFIELD -- State lawmakers are considering a bill that would amend the state's anti-discrimination law to prohibit discrimination against gay, lesbian, and bisexual residents.

Last week's session of the State House of Representatives began with a discussion of the proposed legislation. Currently, state law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race and age, among other categories. If the bill passes, it would add sexual orientation as a protected class.

At a local rally, Carl Johnson, a gay man, spoke in favor of the bill. "This bill would protect gay people against discrimination in the workplace and housing. This is critically important for our community," he said.

The bill comes as the country continues to consider questions about gay rights. The House is set to vote on the bill later this month. The Governor has made no statement about whether he would sign the bill if it passes.



Carl Johnson, a gay man, spoke in favor of the bill at a local rally.

Figure G4: Transgender female condition

State lawmakers to consider discrimination protections for transgender residents
 Associated Press – February 12, 2016

SPRINGFIELD -- State lawmakers are considering a bill that would amend the state's anti-discrimination law to prohibit discrimination against transgender residents.

Last week's session of the State House of Representatives began with a discussion of the proposed legislation. Currently, state law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race and age, among other categories. If the bill passes, it would add gender identity as a protected class.

At a local rally, Carol Johnson, a transgender woman, spoke in favor of the bill. "This bill would protect transgender people against discrimination in the workplace and housing. This is critically important for our community," she said.

The bill comes as the country continues to consider questions about transgender rights. The House is set to vote on the bill later this month. The Governor has made no statement about whether he would sign the bill if it passes.



Carol Johnson, a transgender woman, spoke in favor of the bill at a local rally.

Figure G5: Transgender male condition


State lawmakers to consider discrimination protections for transgender residents
 Associated Press – February 12, 2016

SPRINGFIELD -- State lawmakers are considering a bill that would amend the state's anti-discrimination law to prohibit discrimination against transgender residents.

Last week's session of the State House of Representatives began with a discussion of the proposed legislation. Currently, state law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race and age, among other categories. If the bill passes, it would add gender identity as a protected class.

At a local rally, Carl Johnson, a transgender man, spoke in favor of the bill. "This bill would protect transgender people against discrimination in the workplace and housing. This is critically important for our community," he said.

The bill comes as the country continues to consider questions about transgender rights. The House is set to vote on the bill later this month. The Governor has made no statement about whether he would sign the bill if it passes.



Carl Johnson, a transgender man, spoke in favor of the bill at a local rally.

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