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Competing social movements and local political culture : voting on ballot propositions to ban same-sex marriage.

Arnold Fleischmann

Laura Moyer

University of Louisville, laura.moyer@louisville.edu

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**“Competing Social Movements and Local Political Culture:
Voting on Ballot Propositions to Ban Same-Sex Marriage in the American States”***

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Arnold Fleischmann
University of Georgia

Laura Moyer
Louisiana State University

Direct all correspondence to Laura Moyer, Department of Political Science, Louisiana State University, 240 Stubbs Hall, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-5433 (XXX@lsu.edu). Professor Moyer will provide all data and coding information to those wishing to replicate the study. Our thanks to Wendy Gross for her exceptional assistance in building our database, and to Robert Grafstein and Damon Cann for their guidance.

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This paper uses social movement theory to explain variation in local support for proposed constitutional amendments to ban same-sex marriage in 22 states during 2004 and 2006. *Methods:* The analysis uses OLS regression with county-level data to explain variation in local support for the amendments. *Results:* Support for the amendments in both years was positively related to the proportion of a county that was evangelical or Republican, but negatively related to its level of education and proportion of Catholics. Amendment support was positively related in only one year to the percentage of a county’s population that was professional, young, black, in female-headed households, and Mormon. Amendment support was negatively related to the concentration of gay organizations in 2006, but positively related to the presence of megachurches in 2006. *Conclusions:* Community characteristics have a substantial effect on levels of support for same-sex marriage bans, thus reinforcing the utility of cultural explanations of policy decisions.

“Competing Social Movements and Local Political Culture: Voting on Ballot Propositions to Ban Same-Sex Marriage in the American States”

Large-scale social movements during the twentieth century led to major policy changes in the United States, including the civil rights, women’s, and environmental movements. Other, more conservative, movements developed to resist unwanted social changes and what many saw as the growing encroachment of government.

Scholars generally examine a social movement in terms of its grievances, resources, mobilization, and political opportunity structure (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, 2001: 14-18, 38-71). Based on the grievances of those who see themselves as marginalized or threatened, movements frequently rely on existing organizations in their initial stages, e.g., churches during the U.S. civil rights movement. They also devote great effort to identity formation, which has increasingly become based on non-economic factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation, and disability. Identity formation is critical to attracting and retaining members, making demands, and distinguishing the movement from both the targets of its actions and its opponents (Tilly, 2004: 1-14, 65-71; Wald, Silverman, and Fridy, 2005: 125-131). Identity serves as the foundation for political mobilization, which is expected to include a range of unconventional tactics (Tilly, 2004: 3-4). Social movements are not a series of random protests, however, and resources for mobilizing “vary in form, quality, and quantity from movement to movement” and are not just material (Wald, Silverman, and Fridy, 2005: 131).

Most studies link a movement’s success to its available “political opportunities,” including events, political access points, and alliances. Opportunities can be negative (i.e., threats), for which the actions of elites and counter-movements can be especially critical. Over time,

however, social movements can look more like traditional interest groups in using lobbying, campaign contributions, litigation, and similar “mainstream” techniques (Wald, Silverman, and Fridy, 2005: 136-140; Tarrow, 1994: 85-99, 165-169).

Some have argued that social movements, like public policies, vary substantially by place and time, particularly in settings with different political cultures. Erikson, Wright, and McIver (1993, 2006) have shown strong links between the ideological disposition of a state’s residents and the types of policies that it adopts. Likewise, the racial and ethnic diversity of a county had a significant effect on local support for state ballot measures to make English the “official” language and to restrict illegal immigrants’ access to government services (Hero, 1998). In a test for the presence of a “religious threat,” David Campbell (2006) found that the likelihood of fundamentalists voting Republican was positively related to the relative size of the nonreligious population in their community. Similarly, Sharp (2005) identified local political culture as one of the factors shaping “morality politics” in a sample of large American cities, particularly local government actions related to gay rights, drug programs, and abortion clinics. Thus, a range of literature suggests that local context matters for the policy gains of social movements. This might be especially true for the gay and lesbian movement and the Christian right.

Competing Movements

Conservative Christian activists are nothing new in U.S. politics (Wilcox, 1992). As the modern movement developed, it built networks around congregations, Christian bookstores and schools, and a variety of local groups. Greater visibility, potential to evangelize, and closer ties to politics came with the rise of TV evangelists, the birth of organizations such as Christian

Voice and the Moral Majority, and Pat Robertson's 1988 presidential campaign. The Christian Right built a national and local presence that contested what were seen as threats to both traditional values and religion more generally. In addition to homosexuality, activists mobilized over issues like abortion, home schooling and school curricula, public religious displays and exercises, pornography, divorce, euthanasia, and stem cell research. Such efforts found allies among secular conservatives, including prominent Republican politicians (Wilcox, 1992: 10-20; Gibson, 2004; Green, Rozell, and Wilcox, 2003).

The earliest efforts at a gay rights movement occurred during the 1950s and 1960s in cities such as New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Washington. National groups proliferated during the 1970s and 1980s, with state organizations generally established later. The original aims of the movement were eliminating state sodomy laws and medical protocols classifying homosexuality as a psychological disorder. Later campaigns dealt with legal protection from discrimination (mainly in communities with a gay and lesbian presence), AIDS, and the ban on homosexuals in the U.S. military. Most recently, activists have sought changes in policies such as employment benefits for same-sex couples, adoption, child custody, and the contractual characteristics of marriage. Efforts have also expanded government to target religious denominations, nonprofit organizations, and private-sector employers (Wald, Button, and Rienzo, 1996; D'Emilio, 1998; Nownes, 2004; Mezey, 2007: chap. 1).

By the late 1990s, both the gay rights movement and the Christian Right included multiple organizations, headquarters buildings, professional staffs, election efforts, lobbying, and other characteristics of interest groups. To be sure, elements within each still used unconventional tactics, but seldom have competing social movements faced each other directly at the ballot box

like Christian conservatives and the gay rights movement did in the constitutional amendment campaigns over same-sex marriage (see Rimmerman and Wilcox, 2007).

Battling over Marriage

Litigation by gay organizations in the early 1990s prompted Christian activists and Republican politicians to promote laws to prevent recognition of same-sex marriage, including the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) passed by Congress and signed by President Clinton in 1996. Fourteen states passed laws that year banning same-sex marriage, as did another ten in 1997 (Mezey, 2007: 94-102). Because state courts could still strike down such statutes under their respective constitutions, the Christian Right sought stronger protections for traditional marriage with constitutional amendments at the state and national levels.

Marriage debates intensified after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the remaining state sodomy laws in June 2003 and the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court opened marriage in that state to same-sex couples a few months later. Some local officials responded by issuing marriage licenses and performing ceremonies, although outside Massachusetts, such efforts were halted by injunction or other legal means (Mezey, 2007: 104-113). Opponents of same-sex marriage heightened their mobilization, often with attacks on “activist” judges. In early 2004, President George W. Bush publicly stated his support for a U.S. constitutional amendment limiting marriage to one man and one woman. Republican efforts in Congress to submit such an amendment to the states for ratification failed. The two political parties and their candidates clashed over the issue throughout the 2004 election campaign (Mezey, 2007: 113-119).

Within this intense national debate, these two social movements engaged each other at two stages in each state: getting amendments on the ballot and campaigning over ratification. Proposed amendments reached the ballot in thirteen states during 2004, six as a result of state initiative procedures. Missouri held its vote in August, Louisiana did so in September, and the remaining eleven states voted in November on the same day as the presidential election. All thirteen of the amendments were ratified – eleven of them by more than 60 percent of voters. Evidence from Michigan and Ohio suggests that these ballot measures did not boost turnout, but did enhance President Bush’s margin of victory (Hillygus and Shields, 2005; Smith, DeSantis, and Kassel, 2006).

In 2006, the Christian Right and its Republican allies got legislatures to place amendments on the ballot in six states (Alabama, Idaho, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and Wisconsin) and used the initiative process in three others (Arizona, Colorado, and South Dakota). The Democratic party made substantial gains in these off-year elections, and marriage amendments were more closely contested, including a defeat in Arizona, more counties voting against ratification, and fewer counties backing amendments by large majorities.

Save Oregon and Wisconsin, the 22 states voting on amendments already had a law banning same-sex marriage. Ten states still had sodomy laws when the U.S. Supreme Court overturned them in 2003. Several states, most notably Colorado and Oregon, previously had gay rights issues on the ballot. Only Oregon provided domestic-partner benefits and had nondiscrimination and hate crimes laws covering sexual orientation by 2000; Kentucky, Louisiana, and Missouri also had hate crimes laws. There was substantial policy variation at the

local level, however, once again suggesting the importance of local political culture, political opportunities, and mobilization (Green, Rozell, and Wilcox, 2003; van der Meide, 2000).

Research Design

The analysis below examines the 2004 and 2006 ballot measures. The unit of analysis is the county, which ranges from 15 in Arizona to 159 in Georgia. The dependent variable is the percent of “yes” votes on the proposed amendment in the county. Election returns are from each state’s secretary of state or elections board. Population data are from the U.S. Census Bureau. Based on social movement theory, independent variables will be used to assess the impact of political culture, opportunity structure, and mobilization capacity.

Independent Variables

Political Culture. Rather than label counties as dominated by a specific political culture (e.g., traditionalistic), we measure the concept indirectly based on population characteristics, which permits us to use several continuous variables. The goal remains to examine the extent to which community characteristics shape its public policies. Survey research does suggest the types of groups that might be most supportive and opposed to same-sex marriage. For example, support for amendments to ban same-sex marriage should be weaker in cities with a high concentration of the young and better educated – what Richard Florida (2005) labels the “creative class.” Similarly, Sharp (2005: 22-38) classifies cities as having an “unconventional” subculture based on the presence of nontraditional households. Thus, one would hypothesize a negative relationship between a county’s level of support for these amendments and its educational level, percentage of young people, and percentage of female-headed households.

Our measure of educational attainment is the percentage of a county's residents age 25 and older in 2000 with a bachelor's degree or higher. The relative "youth" of a county is measured as the percentage of its population between the ages of 18 and 24 in 2000. This group was born between 1976 and 1982, and thus 30 or under during the amendment campaigns. Finally, the "creative class" is the percentage of the civilian work force in 2000, age 16 and over, that is employed in professional or related occupations: computer and mathematical; architecture and engineering; life, physical, and social science; social service; legal; arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media; and health care and technical occupations. Because more urbanized areas are expected to be more "gay-friendly," we hypothesize that a county's population density (population per square mile) is negatively related to amendment support..

There is uncertainty about how a community's racial and ethnic mix might influence issues related to homosexuality (see Wald, Button, and Rienzo, 1996). On the one hand, some would expect that the history of civil rights in the United States might prompt minorities to sympathize with proposals that seem to extend rights to other marginalized groups. However, as national opinion polls indicate (Pew Research Center For The People & The Press, 2003, 2006b), African Americans tend to be strong opponents of same-sex marriage, but Hispanics are more evenly divided on the matter. Thus, one might hypothesize that a county's support for amendments would be positively related to its percentage of blacks and Hispanics. For the former, we include those who self-identify as black or African American only rather than two or more races.

Political Opportunity Structure. A movement's political opportunity structure includes both possible alliances and threats. One such indicator is the extent to which local governments have adopted gay-friendly policies. Such policies suggest that interest groups, activists, and

politicians have built winning coalitions that might be sympathetic to the gay rights movement. Thus, we included the percentage of a county's population living in jurisdictions where the government and/or private sector were required to provide domestic partner benefits as of 2000. With over 100 local nondiscrimination ordinances in place by the late 1990s, a second variable is the percentage of the county's population in jurisdictions with such ordinances (Wald, Button, and Rienzo, 1996; van der Meide, 2000).¹ We expect both to be negatively related to a county's percentage voting "yes" on proposed amendments.

A community's ideological and partisan make-up are also likely to affect alliances on social issues. There are no measures of ideology available at the county level, but given the positions of the two political parties on the marriage issue, one would hypothesize that the more Republicans a county is, the higher its support for an amendment. Partisanship is difficult to measure since the majority of these states does not require voters to register by party. As a measure of Republican strength, we use the percentage of votes for George W. Bush in the previous presidential election.

Also in terms of alliances and threats, two factors are expected to have opposite effects on amendment support. A larger Christian Right presence in a county should produce higher levels of amendment support, especially in a presidential year, when religious conservatives could be expected to be highly mobilized (Campbell, 2006; Wilcox and Sigelman, 2001). On the other hand, a larger gay and lesbian presence in a community should be associated with a higher percentage of "no" votes (Wald, Button, and Rienzo, 1996; Haider-Markel, Joslyn, and Kniss, 2000; Smith, DeSantis, and Kassel, 2006).

The Census Bureau does not count people based on sexual orientation or religion. The best data source on religion in American communities is a decennial survey of congregations by the Glenmary Research Center. The data are not without their problems, including omission of independent congregations, reliance on an overall estimate for Jews in each county without differentiation among branches of Judaism, and the lack of systematic data on historically black denominations (Jones et al., 2002: xiii). Glenmary sums the number of “adherents” reported for each congregation, as well as its average attendance, with the results aggregated by religious affiliation for each county. In calculating the Christian Right presence in each county, we followed the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA, 2006) classification of 73 Protestant denominations as “evangelical,” ranging from the huge Southern Baptist Convention to many other groups of Baptists, several types of Mennonites, and a range of other faiths.

One analysis of 1996 national survey data found Religious Right identification associated with theological positions (e.g., Biblical inerrancy) and a socioreligious movement membership (e.g., Pentecostal, traditional Catholic), along with conservative positions on social issues (Hood and Smith, 2002). Thus, it is important to code denominations based on beliefs, not merely being conservative (see Gibson, 2004). A county’s percentages of Mormons and Catholics, whose church leaders have opposed same-sex marriage, but are not classified as evangelical by ARDA, are two additional independent variables. Counties for which adherents add to more than 100 percent of the population in the survey are omitted.

In terms of a gay and lesbian presence, the 2000 census included a questionnaire sent to a sample asking for the sex and relationships of household members. Only 0.6 percent of the 105 million U.S. households were occupied by same-sex couples, as compared to the slightly more

than 4 percent of households inhabited by opposite-sex, unmarried partners. Same-sex households for the 22 states examined here ranges from zero to 1.35 percent in Pima County (Tucson), Arizona, and 2.1 percent in Shannon County, South Dakota. Obviously, the census underestimates the gay and lesbian population by not counting homosexuals living alone or unwilling to self-identify. Nevertheless, same-sex households as a percentage of all households is the most direct measure of gay presence available at the county level.

Mobilization. Social movement theory also places great importance on resource mobilization, which involves networks and organizations capable of getting people to volunteer, contribute, and vote. It is impossible to measure mobilization directly at the local level for these amendment campaigns. However, the presence of certain organizations in each county represents mobilization potential, or what Wald, Button, and Rienzo (1996: 1158-1160) labeled “political capacity.”

One major seedbed for supporting these amendments could be so-called megachurches. The Hartford Institute for Religion Research (2005) lists megachurches in terms of average weekly worship attendance of at least 2,000 people in 2005, a “charismatic, authoritative senior minister,” a “very active” daily “congregational community,” a “multitude” of ministries, and a “complex differentiated” structure. The Institute’s database includes almost 500 congregations in the 22 states analyzed here.

On the opponents’ side, the number of gay and lesbian organizations is available from two annual guides that have been used in previous studies (Damron Company 2004a, 2004b). The guides list local information lines, social service agencies, congregations and spiritual groups, and other nonprofits, as well as businesses such as publications, bars, restaurants, lodging

establishments, and retailers. The total of such organizations in these 22 states is just over 1,000. Both guides identify businesses known to be gay-owned, but the measure used here might undercount possible mobilization because it excludes organizations and businesses listed as “gay-friendly” in the guides, larger organizations that target gays and lesbians to some extent, and entities that could not be identified with a specific county, e.g., a regional gay newspaper.

For both gay organizations and megachurches, street addresses were mapped against county boundaries with both print atlases and on-line searches. We then calculated the number of gay organizations and megachurches per 100,000 residents for each county.

Finally, we control for the timing of elections. All but three states (Missouri in August 2004, Louisiana in September 2004, and Alabama in June 2006) voted on amendments at the same time as national elections, when political parties, candidates, and the media are more likely to inform and mobilize voters. Thus, we include a variable (November = 1) to control for such effects.

Findings

Explaining Variation in Local Support

Table 1 reports OLS results of support for these amendments by county, with robust standard errors.² Standard checks revealed no multicollinearity threats in the two models.³

<Table 1 about here>

Four variables stand out as statistically significant and with signs in the expected direction for both years. Most notably, education had the greatest negative impact on amendment support in both years. In 2004, this meant that for every ten percent increase in a county’s population with a bachelor’s degree or higher, there was a corresponding 7.4 percent decrease in support for

a same-sex marriage ban. Republican partisanship, measured as the percent support for George W. Bush in the previous presidential election, had a strong positive effect on the percent casting a “yes” vote. The concentration of evangelicals in a county also had a positive effect on support, although the size of this coefficient is noticeably larger in 2006. Finally, the larger the Catholic proportion of a county’s population, the lower its support for these amendments.

There are also some noteworthy differences between the two years. Turning first to 2004, there are positive relationships between amendment support and the percent black, the percent of a county’s residents age 18-24 in 2000, and the percent in professional occupations. The positive effect of black concentration on amendment support is consistent with survey data showing African Americans among the groups that are most hostile to same-sex marriage. The other two variables have positive signs, which is contrary to expectations. Surprisingly, none of these three variables reached the .05 level of statistical significance in 2006. The concentration of gay organizations had a negative effect on a county’s vote in favor marriage bans – the only mobilization measure to reach statistical significance in 2004. Surprisingly, the November dummy variable had a slight negative effect on support, suggesting that amendment opponents were able to mobilize better in the 2004 general election than in the earlier elections in Missouri and Louisiana, when national offices were not on the ballot and the debate over amendments had not reached such a frenzy.

In 2006, percent female-headed households, percent Mormon, and the concentration of megachurches were positively related to support. None of these variables reached statistical significance in 2004. The latter two variables behaved as hypothesized. However, the concentration of female-headed households had a sign opposite the one hypothesized and

contrary to the image of an “unconventional” subculture, possibly because Sharp (2005) looked only at central cities, whereas the data here also cover suburban and rural counties. The remaining variables failed to reach the .05 level of significance in either regression equation.

The Role of State-Level Factors

It seems quite likely that the effect of local-level factors, such as the political opportunity structure, may be conditioned by state factors, such as state ideology, spending, and awareness. However, OLS regression does not account for the hierarchical structure of counties “nested” within states. One possible approach to modeling this relationship is to use an interactive model in which there is a cross-level interaction between state variables and county-level variables. Such models have the advantage of accounting for causal heterogeneity (i.e., the possibility that different state factors affect different kinds of counties in varying ways), unlike the least-squares dummy variable approach.⁴ However, Steenbergen and Jones (2002: 221) argue that, “because interactive models incorporate random error only at the lowest level of analysis [but] at the higher levels of analysis (i.e., subgroups) the error components are assumed to be zero. This is a very strong assumption that will usually prove to be false.” Therefore, they conclude that the statistical problems associated with this approach outweigh its benefits.

Increasingly, researchers in political science, sociology, public health, and education utilize multilevel, or hierarchical, models (HLM) to address the issue of hierarchically structured data. In HLM, level one represents the lowest level of analysis (i.e., the county in this study), while level two represents the groups to which the level-one units belong (i.e., states).

This method, too, presents statistical problems. While the number of level-one observations is high for both 2004 (973) and 2006 (601), the number of level-two observations

for each year is quite low (13 and 9). Bowers and Drake (2005: 301-303) explain that the N at the highest level of analysis is the most restrictive element in the research design and advocate large sample sizes for all levels of analysis. A small level-two N, like a small N in a single-level model, will produce inconsistent estimates and unreliable hypothesis tests. Maas and Hox (2002) suggest a minimum N of 50. Consequently, even combining the 2004 and 2006 data, the level-two N would yield 22 states – too low to provide reliable estimates. Bowers and Drake (2005: 303-304) suggest an alternative way to analyze hierarchically structured data without using HLM inappropriately: “graphical presentations of the data rather than formal hypothesis testing [permits] analysts to tell compelling stories and to assess the implications of theories while remaining honest about what kinds of inference a given research design will bear.”

Several state-level characteristics seem most likely to influence the magnitude of local-level effects across states: money spent on the amendment, state ideology, and the effects of campaigns for state offices. For example, two counties with the same percentage of evangelicals might have different levels of amendment support as a consequence of differences between their two states in campaign spending. A series of scatterplots with counties as the units of analysis (not shown here, but available from the authors) reveals some notable patterns. First, in terms of state political culture, the relationship between the evangelical presence in a county and its level of amendment support in 2004 is stronger in the least conservative quartile of states than in the most conservative states. This is consistent with Campbell’s (2006) expectation of voters responding to a religious “threat.” It also suggests the problem of motivating voters when their side seems very likely to win. There is little difference in county support in 2006, however, based on state ideology.

Second, in terms of mobilization, we divided states into quartiles based on the percentage of total spending attributable to amendment supporters. For both 2004 and 2006, in the quartile of states with the lowest dominance by pro-amendment spending, the share of evangelicals in a county had a stronger and more positive relationship with support than in the highest-spending quartile. Third, and in terms of the effects of state campaigns on mobilization, the relationship between a county's partisanship and its amendment support was unaffected by the percentage of state legislators also on the ballot that year.

Discussion

Several points are worth emphasizing. First are differences between the two years, which are highlighted by the value of the constants: with other terms equal to zero, amendment support would be 55 percent in 2004, but only 41 percent in 2006. One explanation might be that the Christian Right mobilized earlier in states that were easy to win. Indeed, many of the states voting in 2004 had a history of political activism by the Christian Coalition and similar organizations (Green, Rozell, and Wilcox, 2003). Six of the thirteen states had legislatures run by Republicans, who controlled one house in three other states. The four remaining states had Democratic legislatures (Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Oklahoma), but were among the dozen most conservative states (Erikson, Wright, and McIver, 1993, 2006). In 2006, Alabama, Idaho, South Carolina, South Dakota, and Tennessee were also among the dozen most conservative states. There were also four more moderate states, three of which (Arizona, Virginia, and Wisconsin) had Republican legislatures, and in the fourth (Colorado), the measure got to the ballot because the initiative process bypassed the Democratic legislature.

Another reason for differences is that opponents of marriage bans might have mounted more effective campaigns in the 2006 rematch. Some changes were rhetorical, as with the activists who avoided using the term “marriage” in favor of “fairness” and “diversity” (Beyond Marriage, 2006). Mobilization also increased. In Wisconsin, for example, the amendment passed by 59-41 percent, but efforts by opponents, especially on college campuses, helped Democrats gain control of the upper house in the legislature and reduced the Republican majority substantially in the lower house (Spivak and Bice, 2006). There were also substantial differences in fund raising. In 2004, amendment backers and opponents each spent around \$6.5 million across the thirteen states. In 2006, however, opponents spent more than \$14 million, while amendment supporters spent only \$4 million in the nine states (Moore, 2007).

Attitudes also could have shifted, especially after several states extended some form of recognition to same-sex couples. Polls generally reveal that support for homosexual rights in the U.S. has increased substantially since the late 1970s, but that does not extend to gay marriage, which was favored by only 32 percent of Americans in October 2003. By summer 2005, that support rose slightly, to 36 percent, but 55 percent of Americans favored arrangements such as civil unions (Pew Research Center For The People & The Press, 2003, 2005, 2006b; Olson, Cadge, and Harrison, 2006). This ambivalence was evident in Colorado, which had competing ballot measures in 2006. Only 30 of the state’s 64 counties took a firm stand against gay rights by voting in favor of banning same sex marriage and against recognizing domestic partnerships.

The political context for these two campaigns was also different. The 2004 amendments came on the heels of controversial court rulings that gave impetus to the amendment campaigns. They were also contested in the middle of a presidential campaign that highlighted social issues

and in a year when President Bush's approval ratings ranged between 43 and 58 percent. In 2006, Bush's approval ratings hovered between 33 and 40 percent, and Iraq was the preeminent issue, with the country decidedly more negative on the war than two years earlier (Pew Research Center For The People & The Press, 2006a).

Our results also have several implications. At a basic level, local context matters in statewide campaigns. This is contrary to the overly broad classification of states in partisan or ideological terms ("red" vs. "blue" in the media). Most notably, a community's partisanship, education level, and religious make-up are key determinants of policies associated with the so-called culture wars. Some characteristics were contrary to expectations, however. For instance, a higher concentration of Catholics was associated with lower amendment support in both years. A larger presence may increase the diversity of Catholics in a community, but gay rights is one of a number of social issues with differences between the church's official position and the opinions of those in the pews. Other variables did not perform the same in both years. They still suggest, though, that pro-amendment groups might successfully court African Americans and Mormons as allies and use churches to mobilize supporters. Moreover, analysis of state-level spending and ideology suggest that evangelical presence in a county has less effect in states that are more conservative and have a larger spending advantage in favor of amendments – results that seem consistent with Campbell's (2006) concept of a religious response to perceived secular threat. On the other side, opponents might be able to use gay and lesbian organizations to mobilize, but they could find their task easier when high-profile offices are on the ballot, and voters might already be attentive, as suggested by the November dummy variable in 2006.

The results also reinforce the value of social movement theory as a useful framework for studying these ballot measures, especially in terms of political opportunities and resource mobilization. There is little reason to doubt that these two movements will continue to confront each other. The findings bolster the viability of cultural explanations of public policy decisions (Sharp, 2005), especially those involving a referendum, which is true “issue voting” that is a useful complement to survey data about people’s attitudes about issues.

There are some questions our data cannot address. In particular, community characteristics can only identify conditions or settings that might be favorable to either side in campaigns. Our models performed reasonably well, but they cannot analyze conflict “in the trenches” of day-to-day politics. They do suggest the need to assess specific mobilization strategies (television and radio advertising, leafleting at churches, door-to-door campaigns, etc.). Understanding those processes requires a different mix of qualitative and quantitative research strategies than are available from our data.

Finally, candidates, parties, and interest groups have gotten quite adept at using state constitutional amendments to promote a variety of political agendas. Their success will depend, though, on how well they understand the local settings in which they campaign.

Table 1: OLS Regression of Percent Support for Marriage Amendments

Independent Variables	2004 ^a	2006 ^b
Political Culture		
% college graduates, 2000	-.746* (.061)	-.340* (.089)
% age 18-24, 2000	.227* (.092)	-.181 (.122)
% professional occupations, 2000	.257* (.115)	-.097 (.170)
% female-headed households, 2000	.089 (.069)	.663* (.253)
% same-sex households, 2000	1.994 (1.58)	-2.689 (4.438)
density (population per square mile), 2000	.000003 (.000004)	-.00001 (.000008)
% black, 2000	.151* (.021)	.036 (.051)
% Hispanic, 2000	-.135 (.083)	.114 (.065)
% evangelical, 2000	.133* (.012)	.440* (.058)
% Catholic, 2000	-.078* (.016)	-.204* (.056)
% Mormon, 2000	-.023 (.017)	.152* (.042)
Political Opportunity Structure		
% vote for Bush, 2000/2004	.402* (.024)	.344* (.072)
% pop. with domestic partner coverage, 2000	.006 (.044)	-.006 (.074)
% pop. with nondiscrimination coverage, 2000	.019 (.012)	-.054 (.073)
Mobilization		

megachurches per 100,000 residents, 2005	.004 (.004)	.005* (.002)
gay organizations per 100,000 residents, 2004	-.006* (.001)	-.0005 (.0013)
November election	-.028* (.004)	.002 (.014)
constant	.552* (.022)	.408* (.072)
R ²	.679	.692
Number of counties	973	338

Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

* $p < .05$, two-tailed.

^a2004 states are Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Utah.

^b2006 states are Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

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Notes

1. Our measure of population living in jurisdictions with gay-friendly ordinances is a conservative estimate. We exclude governments offering only no-cost, 'soft' benefits such as hospital visitation, as well as those providing only a domestic partner registry. The measure

includes employment (government or private) or housing discrimination. For counties, it includes that portion of its population living outside city boundaries.

2. To account for differences in statewide campaigns, we also ran the model with errors clustered on the state. However, when using the cluster option, STATA reported a missing F-statistic for the model because the variance-covariance matrix was not of sufficient rank to perform the model test. By using robust standard errors to relax the independence of errors assumption, STATA reports an F-statistic that indicates the model as a whole is significant ($F = 134.49, p < .000$) and produces identical coefficients and standard errors to the model with clustered errors. Therefore, we report the model with robust standard errors.

3. To check for multicollinearity among our variables, we computed the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) after running the models, as well as the matrix of correlations between estimated coefficients, and found that no correlation exceeded .90. Because OLS requires only that no perfect collinearity exists and is relatively robust to minor violations of its assumptions, we do not believe that multicollinearity is affecting our outcomes.

4. The least-squares dummy variable (LSDV) approach, in contrast, is not hampered by the statistical problems of the interactive model, but fails to explain why the regression regimes for various groups are different (Steenbergen and Jones 2002, 220-221). Luke (2004) also cautions that, when there are many groups, LSDV reduces the degrees of freedom in a model and curtails parsimony.