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The Malleability of Community Sentiment: Contextual Explanations for Shifts in Attitudes toward Gay Rights

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Social Psychology

by

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ABSTRACT

Researchers (e.g., Castro-Convers, 2005; Herek, 2002; Hicks & Lee, 2006) have investigated demographic (e.g., gender and political affiliation) and experiential (e.g., contact) predictors of attitudes towards gays and lesbians and gay rights. However, little attention has been paid to understanding how attitudes are influenced by the context in which they occur. The current research furthered this line of work by determining if and how attitudes toward gay rights (and gays and lesbians) can be shaped by specific contextual factors. Two social cognitive theories guided the focus of this research: Terror Management Theory (TMT) was employed to determine how reminders of violence and death can impact attitudes toward gay rights and Construal Level Theory (CLT) was used to determine how social and spatial distance from a target or event can impact judgments. Study 1 tested the impact of mortality salience (MS) and psychological distance, and Study 2 tested the impact of reminders of terrorist attacks, on participant judgments about gay rights issues. Results revealed that individuals are susceptible to contextual influences when making judgments. Specifically, Study 1 revealed that MS led to positive judgments about a gay marriage initiative (among ambivalent participants) and Study 2 revealed that written reminders of the Madrid Train bombing led to negative judgments about gay rights issues. Given that community sentiment does play a role in lawmaking, the findings from this research provide a way to better understand previous legal decisions and predict future laws regarding the rights of gays and lesbians.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Although founded on egalitarian ideals, the United States government has been accused of numerous human rights violations throughout its history. Nascent stages of American government were marked by policies that reinforced or condoned violence and cruelty against Native-Americans, African-Americans, and other racial and ethnic minorities (Whittaker, 1996). The American government has also perpetuated discrimination based on class, gender, race, and ethnicity over the past few centuries. It took nearly 100 years of lawmaking and one civil war before the United States government recognized the equal protection and voting rights of all (male) citizens with the passage of the 14th and 15th Amendments in 1868 and 1870 (respectively; U.S Constitution Online). Remarkably, lawmakers did not recognize a woman's right to vote until 1920 (with the 19th Amendment; U.S Constitution Online). In short, a brief history review exposes a contradiction between the principles and practices of the American government and its people.

In the past 60 years, lawmakers have made great (albeit delayed) strides in ensuring civil rights for most American citizens. The rise of the civil rights movement in the early 1950s marked the beginning of several laws and rulings aimed at abating discrimination. In *Brown* v. *Board of Education* (1954), the United States Supreme Court used the 14th Amendment to end the legal segregation of African-American and Caucasian students in public schools. In 1964, President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act which prohibited discrimination based on race, religion, or national origin, and also gave the

government desegregation powers. Finally, the Civil Rights Act of 1991 bolstered existing discrimination laws and provided for damages in cases of intentional employment discrimination (Infoplease.com, 2007).

The civil rights movement was successful in gaining equal legal rights for women and racial minorities; however, the rights of gay and lesbian citizens were overlooked by lawmakers during that time. In fact, anti-gay policies and laws are promoted and accepted by some lawmakers today (see CNN.com, 2004). Among the many examples of legal discrimination is President George Bush's endorsement of a 2004 Amendment to the Constitution that was proposed to ban gay marriage nationally (CNN.com, 2004). Although the Amendment was blocked by the Senate in 2006 (Bash, 2006), most gay and lesbian citizens still do not have the right to marry. Massachusetts (see *Goodridge v. Mass. Department of Public Health*, 2003) and Connecticut (see *Kerrigan* v. *the state Commissioner of Public Health*) are presently the only states to allow gay marriage. Gay marriage was briefly legal in California before it was struck down by proposition in November of 2008 (Garrison, DiMassa, & Paddock, 2008). Gay Americans also face legal discrimination in parenting issues. Some states (e.g., Wisconsin; see *Angel Lace M. v. Terry M.*, 1994) prevent gay couples from jointly adopting a child and other states (e.g., Florida; see *Cox. v. Florida Dept. of Health and Rehabilitative Services,* 1995) prohibit all gays and lesbians from adopting. In addition to not ensuring the same rights for homosexual and heterosexual citizens, the U.S. government has failed to protect gay and lesbians citizens from discrimination. For instance, the aforementioned Civil Rights Act of 1964

prohibited discrimination based on race, national origin, and gender; but, discrimination based on sexual orientation was not enumerated in that Act. In sum, legal discrimination based on sexual orientation appears to be alive today, decades after the American government addressed problems of racism and sexism in society. Given this disparity, it seems appropriate to examine how lawmakers have failed to grant rights for gay and lesbian citizens for so many years.

In answering questions about how and why lawmakers have dealt with gay rights issues in the way that they have, it is important to examine community sentiment (i.e., collective attitudes) about gay rights issues and gays and lesbians generally. In principle, lawmakers are elected to act according to their constituency and therefore the failure of the government to grant rights to gay Americans should reflect a broader societal sentiment toward gays and lesbians (Finkel, 1995). Thus, it is necessary to examine how individuals in society form attitudes in order to understand the legal landscape. If one assumes a close nexus between how the law treats gays and lesbians and community sentiment, it is critical to understand the origin of attitudes toward this group, as well as the social contexts in which they occur.

Researchers (e.g., Castro-Convers, 2005; Herek, 2002; Hicks & Lee, 2006) have investigated demographic (e.g., gender and political affiliation) and experiential (e.g., contact) predictors of attitudes toward gays and lesbians and gay rights. As discussed in Chapter 3, results of past studies have provided a basis for understanding how individuals form and change attitudes toward gays and lesbians. However, little attention has been paid to the influence of contextual

factors on these attitudes. The purpose of the current research is to further this line of work by determining if and how attitudes toward gay rights (and gays and lesbians) can be shaped by specific contextual factors. Contextual factors are important to account for given the malleable nature of attitudes. For instance, research (Brewer, 2003) suggests that context created by the media can prime different modes of thinking (see Chapter 5).

Two social cognitive theories will guide the focus of this research. First, Terror Management Theory (TMT) will be employed to determine how reminders of violence and death can impact attitudes toward gay rights. Results will elucidate the potential effects of the September 11, 2001 (9/11) terrorist attacks and other acts of violence that have been prominent in the American media. Construal Level Theory (CLT) will be used to determine how social and spatial distance from an event and/or person can impact judgments. Results will clarify how distance can impact the way people (i.e., gays and lesbians) and policies (i.e., gay rights legislation) are cognitively represented and subsequently judged. Given that judges and lawmakers sometimes do listen to community sentiment (see Chapter 4), it is expected that the findings from this research will provide a way to better understand previous legal decisions and predict future laws regarding the rights of gays and lesbians.

The current work will proceed in the following way. Chapter 2 will outline the social and legal history of gay rights in the United States. This will include a discussion of psychological and social psychological research and developments. In Chapter 3, the history of public opinion surrounding gays and lesbians will be

discussed, with a particular focus on how and why attitudes have changed in recent decades. Chapter 4 will discuss the legal importance of attitudes toward gay rights using the concept of community sentiment. This will include a review of research that suggests that judges and legislators do adhere to the thoughts and opinions of community members.

Chapter 5 will introduce some of the problems with the traditional conception of attitudes. Also discussed will be the notion that attitudes are highly variable and contextually dependent. This is an important aspect to highlight, as the proposed work will investigate specific contextual cues that potentially change judgments about gays and lesbians and gay rights. In Chapter 6, TMT will be outlined and applied to attitudes toward gay rights issues, with a focus on how 9/11 could impact judgments of gays and lesbians and gay rights. Chapter 7 will outline CLT and discuss how attitudes can be changed according to spatial and social distance from a target person. Chapter 8 will provide an overview of, and rationale for, the two proposed studies. Chapters 9 and 10 will provide a detailed methodology and results for Study 1 and Study 2 (respectively). Finally, Chapter 11 will provide a general discussion, limitations, and a conclusion.

Chapter 2 – Gay Rights in the United States: Social, Legal, and Psychological Perspectives

Similar to other human rights movements in American history, the gay rights movement was motivated by cases of severe discrimination and violence (see generally Williams & Retter, 2003 for a history and overview). Over the past century, activists have seemingly brought about some changes in the treatment of gays and lesbians. For instance, the Gay Liberation Front, a group of radicalized young gay protestors, challenged various laws and policies in New York and other major cities in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Williams & Retter, 2003). However, social and legal discrimination of gays and lesbians still exists today. The following chapter will examine the social and legal backdrops on which gay rights issues are positioned today in order to provide a broader historical understanding of gay rights in the 20th century. This will include a discussion of psychological and social psychological conceptions that were potentially influential in bringing change in social and legal contexts.

Societal Struggles

Historical incidents provide a good illustration of the societal struggles that gays and lesbians have faced over the past 100 years. At the turn of the 19th century, Anthony Comstock, founder and director of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, led efforts to persecute homosexuals and other "sexual deviants." Comstock referred to homosexuals as "inverts" and openly proclaimed that all gays and lesbians should be imprisoned for life (Williams & Retter, 2003). In 1919, the United States Navy attempted to entrap gay navy officers after

reports of homosexuality had emerged. In total, seven sailors and one civilian were arrested and tried in court (Williams & Retter, 2003). Amidst the McCarthy era, government employees who were gay were fired from their jobs. In addition, a Senate report revealed that a total of 1,700 applicants for federal jobs were denied based on their sexual orientation (Williams & Retter, 2003).

Throughout the 19th century several incidents of violence and aggression toward gays and lesbians were reported in the U.S.: in 1952, a lesbian bar was raided by the police; in 1956, gay bashing was reported in Massachusetts; in 1983, police abuse against gay activism was reported in Washington, D.C.; in 1996 Teena Brandon was murdered because he was transgendered; and in 1999, Matthew Shepard was murdered because he was gay (Williams & Retter, 2003). These events represent only a fraction of the societal discrimination and violence that gays and lesbians faced in the United States during the 20th century.

The struggles of gays and lesbians were not without some triumphs, as gay and lesbian activists fought against a primarily anti-gay society. In 1919 Henry Gerber, a gay American soldier, founded the Society for Human Rights, which was the earliest documented gay rights organization in the United States. In 1947, *Vice Versa*, America's first lesbian magazine was published. The year 1950 marked the emergence of the gay rights movement, which gained support from the sexual revolution, the civil rights movement, the women's liberation movement, and the fact that a number of gay people were publicly revealing their sexual orientation (Williams & Retter, 2003). The evolution of the movement in the 1960s was highlighted by two major events. First, ONE Institute, an

organization founded to foster and promote acceptance of gender and sexual diversity, held a national conference calling for "A Homosexual Bill of Rights." Second, in 1961, Jose Sarria became the first openly gay person to run for public office. Although he did not win the San Francisco city council election, he did receive 7,000 votes – a large number given that many people held overtly homophobic attitudes at the time. The 1969 Stonewall Riots in New York City were also important historical events, as gays and lesbians began to assert themselves in the face of discriminatory violence (Williams & Retter, 2003). These few examples (of many) illustrate that bigotry against gays and lesbians has been met with considerable resistance from opponents. However, this resistance has led to limited legal support for gay rights (e.g., gay marriage rights in Massachusetts and Connecticut).

Legal Ambivalence

Struggles at the community level seem to correspond with legal struggles experienced by gays and lesbians over the past century. Although numerous legal examples are relevant here (see Williams & Retter, 2003), this discussion will include a selection of the most influential cases and legislation.

Sexual and Marital Rights

Several cases over the past 20 years have determined the fate of gay and lesbian citizens in terms of sexual and marital freedoms. In *Bowers* v. *Hardwick* (1986), the United States Supreme Court upheld Georgia's sodomy law, essentially making it acceptable for states to prohibit gay sexual acts (Cantor, 2006; Ronner, 2005). In 1993, the Hawaii Supreme Court (in *Baehr* v. *Anderson*)

became the first to recognize same-sex marriage rights, asserting that it was a violation of equal protection rights to ban same-sex marriage. In response to the *Baehr* decision, the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) was enacted by the United States Congress in 1996 (Barrett, 2006). This legislation was important in that it defined marriage as existing between a man and a women and provided that individual states did not have to honor same-sex marriages from other states. Following the passage of the DOMA, 41 states enacted similar legislation.

Around the turn of the century, cases and laws began to favor the rights of gay and lesbians. For instance, Vermont established civil unions in 1999 (in *Baker* v. *Vermont*), and Massachusetts established same-sex marriage (in *Goodridge* v. *Dept of Public Health*) in 2003 and Connecticut in 2008 (*Kerrigan* v. *the state Commissioner of Public Health*). Finally, in a decision with major implications for gay rights, the United States Supreme Court reversed the *Bowers* decision, asserting that anti-sodomy laws were unconstitutional (*Lawrence* v. *Texas*, 2003; see Barrett, 2006; Cantor, 2006). However, it is important to note that propositions banning gay marriage in California, Florida, and Arizona were passed in November of 2008 (Archibold & Goodnough, 2008).

Parental Rights

There have also been several cases that have impacted the parental rights of gays and lesbians (see generally Barrett, 2006). From the period of 1980 to 1990, courts around the country began to rule on the parental rights of gays and lesbians. In 1981, a Virginia Court (in *Doe* v. *Doe*) ruled that a biological mother's parental rights should be terminated because she was a lesbian. Citing a

lack of scientific evidence that would suggest that lesbians are bad parents, the Virginia Supreme Court reversed the decision. Other courts (e.g., *Nadler* v. *Superior Court* in California; *People* v. *Brown* in Michigan; *SNE* v. *RLB* in Alaska) also found it impermissible to revoke parental rights based on sexual orientation. Conversely, several courts determined that sexual orientation was directly relevant to parenting ability. For instance, in *Roe* v. *Roe* (in Virginia ironically; 1995) it was found that a man's homosexuality would have adverse effects on his children. This logic was also embraced at the legislative level. For example, New Hampshire enacted a 1987 statute prohibiting gays from adopting, reasoning that a father's sexual orientation was relevant to the health of his child (Barrett, 2006).

In recent years, lawmakers have continued to be inconsistent in their application of law, resulting in disparate decisions on the rights of gay parents. In 1990, Ohio became the first state to recognize gay and lesbian citizens' rights to adopt (in *re Adoption of Charles*), asserting that the decision was in the best interests of children. In *re BLV* (1993), the Vermont Supreme Court took gay parental rights one step further, establishing second-parent adoption rights for gays and lesbians. In the decision, the court declared that the petitioner (i.e., the parent's partner) was a part of the "family unit" and it was thus in the best interest of the child to affirm parental rights. In 2004, the Indiana Court of Appeals (in *Adoption of KSP*) held that second-parent adoptions included cases in which individuals wanted to adopt their partners' biological children. The judge in that case stated that "when social mores change statutes must be interpreted to allow

for these changes" (Barrett, 2006, p. 109). Other judges have been less accepting of parental rights for gays and lesbians. For instance, courts in Wisconsin (in *Angel Lace M*, 1994) and Colorado (in *Adoption of TKJ*, 1996) denied second-parent adoption for gays, without mention of the constitutional implications (i.e., violation of 14th Amendment equal protection rights) of their decisions.

State legislators have also been mixed in regard to their decisions about the rights of same-sex parents. The Connecticut legislature enacted a law expressly permitting second-parent adoption after the state Supreme Court (in *re Baby Z*) ruled that there was no right to same-sex second-parent adoption under statute. On the other hand, Mississippi and Utah have laws preventing *gay couples* (but not gay individuals) from adopting. Finally, a 1977 statute prohibiting gay and lesbian individuals from adopting was upheld by the Florida Supreme Court (see *Lofton v. Secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services,* 1999), despite the trial court previously ruling in favor of gay parenting (Barrett, 2006).

Psychological and Social Psychological Perspectives

Developments in the fields of psychology and social psychology have mirrored (or possibly influenced) the progression of gay rights in the social and legal realms. Early psychological and psychiatric conceptions defined homosexuality as a disorder that was caused by social influences (Cantor, 2006). For instance, Freud believed that homosexuality resulted from an unresolved Oedipus complex (Cantor, 2006; Williams & Retter, 2003). The major focus of

early psychological research and work was to apply treatments (e.g., aversion therapy) in order to reduce homosexual behavior.

Researchers Evelyn Hooker and Alfred Kinsey questioned the traditional notion of homosexuality, providing overwhelming evidence for the idea that homosexuality is not a disorder (Cantor, 2006; Williams & Retter, 2003). As a result of this research, the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality as a disorder from the DSM-II in 1973 (Cantor, 2006), and has been supportive (although not unanimously) of the rights of same-sex partners and parents ever since. More recently, the American Psychological Association (APA) Council of Representatives publicly supported same-sex marriages and opposed discrimination against same-sex parents (Winerman, 2005). In the last three decades, psychologists and social psychologists have contributed vast amounts of research to understanding how individuals form opinions about gays and lesbians. This research will be discussed in the following chapter.

The gay rights movement in the United States has advanced much like other movements of the 20th century. Gays and lesbians have faced extreme violence and discrimination, as illustrated by numerous historical events and occurrences. Throughout the past 100 years, the momentum of an anti-gay society has been slowed by the gay rights movements and gay rights activists. Psychological and social psychological research has also helped change the notion that homosexuality is a disorder. Conceptions of homosexuality have undoubtedly shifted in recent years; yet gays and lesbians still face overt discrimination and hostility. Further, most gay and lesbian citizens do not enjoy the freedoms (e.g.,

parenting, marriage) that are granted to non-gay citizens. Although some judges and legislators have become more supportive of the rights of gay Americans, there has been opposition against the cause (e.g., the recently proposed "Federal Marriage Amendment;" see Snyder, 2006). Because legislators represent the views of the public, it is important to study the public response to gay rights issues (and gays and lesbians generally) for an explanation of the differing legal responses to gay rights issues. The next chapter will examine public opinion surrounding gays and lesbians with a specific focus on the recent positive shift in support for gay rights. This will include a review of research that has investigated predictors of individuals' attitudes toward gay rights, as well as antecedents of attitude change.

Chapter 3 - Public Opinion Surrounding Gay Rights

The following chapter will focus on the community response to gay rights by examining changes in public opinion over the last 60 years. Social psychological perspectives and research will be used to explain the shifts in community sentiment toward gays and lesbians. The research presented herein provides a basis for understanding how attitudes toward gays and lesbians are formed and changed.

Public Opinion about Gays and Lesbians

Public opinion polls from as early as 1965 suggest that the majority of American citizens held negative beliefs towards gays and lesbians (Harris, 1965; see Herek, 2002). Specifically, 70% of respondents believed that homosexuals were more harmful than helpful, while 29% believed that homosexuals were neither helpful nor harmful. Polls in subsequent years showed a noticeable decrease in negative beliefs. For instance, a similar poll conducted in 1973 revealed that 50% of respondents believed that homosexuality was more harmful than helpful (see Yang, 1997). Thus, beliefs became more positive in the late sixties and early seventies, at least in terms of the perceived harm of homosexuality.

Public opinion polls have also revealed changes in individuals' affective responses to homosexuality. Using a feeling thermometer (where 50-100 represented favorable feelings and 0-50 represented unfavorable feelings) to gauge responses, a 1984 survey revealed that 35% of respondents gave the least favorable rating ("0") to gays and lesbians. The same type of survey used in a

1986 poll revealed that 20% assigned the least favorable rating to gays and lesbians. Another set of surveys revealed similar changes in sentiment. In a series of four surveys spanning from 1983 to 1994, respondents were asked to rate their level of sympathy for the homosexual community. Results from a 1983 poll revealed that 6% of respondents were very sympathetic, while 46% were very unsympathetic. Results from the 1994 survey showed a significant increase in positive attitudes over the 11-year period, as 17% of respondents were very sympathetic to the homosexual community and only 16% reported being very unsympathetic (see Yang, 1997). In sum, affective responses to gays and lesbians have become more positive over time.

Other polls have revealed more stagnant attitudes about gays and lesbians. A total of 17 polls conducted from 1973 to 1996 asked respondents about sexual relations between two adults of the same sex (see Yang, 1997). Over the 23-year period, poll results were consistently negative. From 1973 to 1979, the majority (between 67% and 70%, depending on the year) of respondents reported that sexual relations between individuals of the same-sex were always wrong. Throughout the eighties, attitudes became slightly more negative: In each year, at least 70% of respondents thought that gay sexual relations were always wrong, with the peak at 75% in 1987. Negative attitudes began to decrease slightly starting in 1993 (63% believed gay sexual relations were always wrong), with the most positive attitudes reported in 1996 (56% believed gay sexual relations were always wrong; see Yang, 1997). Thus, negative attitudes toward the sexual behavior of gays and lesbians seem to have endured over time.

In general, attitudes toward gays and lesbians have become more positive in recent decades. However, this trend does not apply to every type of attitude as illustrated above. Although somewhat beyond the scope of this research, it is worth mentioning that societal factors may have influenced responses to particular questions. For instance, attitudes about the sexual behavior of gays and lesbians were presumably more negative in the early and mid eighties given the emergence of the HIV virus and the myth that it was a "gay disease" (Andriote, 1999). Thus, it seems that attitudes toward gays and lesbians are at least partly influenced by the cultural zeitgeist.

Public Opinion about Gay Rights

The following section will focus on gay rights issues most germane to the focus of this research – namely, marriage and parental rights of gays and lesbians. Some of the earliest public opinion polls on gay marriage suggest that most Americans did not favor the legal recognition of gay unions: Polls taken in 1992, 1993, and 1994 revealed that 67%, 65%, and 64% of respondents (respectively) opposed gay unions (see Yang, 1997). A series of polls taken from 1996 to 1998 revealed attitudes that were consistent with these earlier views, as the majority of American citizens reported that they were against same-sex marriage (see religioustolerance.org, 2007). For instance, a 1996 Gallup poll revealed that 68% of respondents opposed gay marriage. More recent polls suggest that sentiment has begun to shift: A nationwide poll conducted in 2004 revealed that the majority of respondents (57%) believed gays and lesbians should have the right to marry or join through civil union (see pollingreport.com, 2007). Further, 64% of

respondents reported being in favor of gay marriage or civil unions in a 2006 poll (see religioustolerance.org, 2007).

To date, only a handful of polls have examined public opinion about the rights of gay parents. Polls taken from 1992 to 1994 suggest that public opinion did not support legislation allowing gay couples to adopt. Two polls taken in 1992 both revealed that only 29% of respondents believed that gays and lesbians should have the right to adopt children (Yang, 1997). Opinion polls from 1993 and 1994 revealed similar support – in both polls 28% of respondents supported gay adoption (see Yang, 1997). A poll conducted in 1998 revealed a slight increase in support for gay adoption, with 36% support for gay adoption rights. Finally, a public opinion poll conducted in 2007 revealed that 46% of respondents believed that same-sex couples should be legally permitted to adopt children (see pollingreport.com, 2007).

A review of public opinion polls in recent decades has revealed a shift toward more positive beliefs about the rights of gay and lesbian citizens. Nonetheless, it is clear that American society is divided on issues of gay marriage and gay parenting. Many Americans oppose gay civil unions of any kind. In fact, a 2007 poll revealed that 51% of Americans would support a law banning all gay marriage (see pollingreport.com, 2007). Further, the majority of Americans oppose the parental rights of gays and lesbians. Thus, it is important not to overstate changes in public opinion, given that many still hold unfavorable attitudes towards gay rights (and gays and lesbians). It is also worthy of note that many Americans may have ambivalent feelings and attitudes toward gays and

lesbians and gay rights issues. It is likely that some individuals experience both positive and negative attitudes about gay rights because values of human rights and homophobia are both seemingly prevalent in society today. This issue will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

Explaining Attitude Formation and Change: A Social Psychological Perspective

Several research studies have examined demographic, experiential, contextual, and attitudinal predictors of community sentiment toward gays and lesbians on the individual level. This line of research can help to explain the change in community sentiment in recent years.

Demographic Predictors

Demographic predictors of attitudes have gained perhaps the most amount of empirical attention in the literature. Religion (Burdette, Ellison, & Hill, 2005; Olson, Cadge, & Harrison, 2006), gender (Herek, 2002; Herek & Capitano, 1999), political affiliation (Hicks & Lee, 2006), and several other factors have all been shown to predict attitudes to varying degrees. Religion has emerged as one of the strongest predictors of support for, or opposition to, gay rights. Affiliation in most religions is associated with a lower level of support for gays and lesbians, with evangelical Protestants the most strongly opposed to gay rights (Olson et al., 2006). Further, Burdette and colleagues (2005) found that increased church attendance and a greater belief in biblical literalism were positively associated with a greater intolerance toward homosexuality among Conservative Protestants.

Gender has also been shown to be a strong predictor of support for gay rights (Herek, 2002; Herek & Capitano, 1999). In general, women are more likely

to hold more favorable attitudes toward gays and lesbians than men (Herek & Capitanio, 1999). As compared to their male counterparts, heterosexual women are more supportive of employment protection and adoption rights for gays and lesbians, and are less likely than men to hold stereotypical beliefs about gays and lesbians (Herek, 2002). In addition, males have more negative affective reactions to gay men, and are more likely to believe that gay men are mentally ill (Herek, 2002). The gender of a target has also been shown to impact judgments (Herek, 2002; Mohipp & Morry, 2004). Across heterosexual male and female participants, gay men were evaluated more negatively than lesbian targets (Mohipp & Morry, 2004). Further, as compared to lesbian targets, participants had more negative personal reactions to gay men and were more likely to think gay men are mentally ill (Herek, 2002).

Political affiliation has also proved a strong predictor of support for gay rights. In terms of political ideology, Democrats are more likely to support gay rights than Republicans (Wood & Bartkowski, 2004). More specifically, individuals with conservative ideologies have the most negative attitudes toward gays and lesbian, whereas individuals with liberal and Libertarian ideologies held the most positive attitudes toward gays and lesbians (Hicks & Lee, 2006).

Several other demographic factors have shown to influence attitudes. There has been some empirical support for the notion that African-Americans have less favorable attitudes toward gays and lesbians than White-Americans (see Lewis, 2003). Although African-American participants held more negative attitudes toward gays and lesbians, they were actually more supportive of some

gay rights as compared to White participants (Lewis, 2003). Age has also shown to impact attitudes, with older individuals embracing more negative attitudes than younger individuals (Lewis, 2003). Importantly, many of these demographic variables may be correlated, such that some values (e.g., conservatism and religiosity) may tend to cluster together.

As discussed, attitudes toward gay rights have become more positive in recent years. Assuming that demographic predictors have not changed in recent years, one possible explanation for this trend is that gay rights issues have been framed differently in recent years. Brewer (2003) suggests that shifts in beliefs about morality have been due to increased information and awareness about gay rights among Americans. For instance, the murder of Matthew Shepard may have activated a different value structure (e.g., egalitarianism) than had been activated previously (e.g., religious beliefs). Contextual effects such as these will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Experiential Predictors

In addition to demographic predictors of attitudes, individuals' experiences and attributions have been shown to impact judgments about gays and lesbians. One factor that has emerged from social psychological theory and research is contact. Several studies (e.g., Castro-Convers, 2005; Herek & Capitanio, 1996; Lemm, 2006) have demonstrated that increased contact, and more meaningful contact, leads to more favorable attitudes towards gays and lesbians in general. This is consistent with the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954), which suggests that forms of prejudice can be reduced by equal-status contact

between groups. With increasing acceptance of homosexuality it is likely that more gay and lesbian individuals feel comfortable "coming out" and thus contact experiences should be increasing. Further, as discussed by Herek and Capitano (1996), homosexuality is a concealed stigma which can allow individuals to be seen as a part of others' ingroups (an integral part of Allport's contact hypothesis). Thus, more favorable community sentiment toward gays and lesbians can be explained by increased contact.

Another factor that has been shown to influence attitudes toward gay rights is genetic causation. As more evidence for the genetic causation of homosexuality emerges (see Cantor, 2006), more people are beginning to believe homosexuality is a genetic predisposition and not caused by social factors. Research (e.g., Tygart, 2000; Wood & Bartkowski, 2004) suggests that beliefs about the genetic causation of homosexuality impact attitudes, such that the more genetics are attributed to being gay, the more support one will have for gay rights. From a social psychological perspective, using internal vs. external attributions has important consequences for judgments of responsibility (where greater responsibility leads to less favorable judgments). Although physically an internal attribute, genetic makeup is not chosen; therefore individuals seem to view it as an external attribute. As supported by the findings, these external attributes lead to weaker attributions of responsibility and more favorable judgments.

Social psychological research has examined and identified several strong predictors of attitudes towards gays and lesbians. Experiential variables such as contact with gay individuals also can help to explain shifts in public opinion in

recent years. However, these demographic and experiential predictors do not fully account for changes in community sentiment surrounding gay rights (and gays and lesbians). A general gap in knowledge about attitudes (or evaluative judgments) toward gay rights concerns how different context effects may impact individual judgments. The purpose of the research presented herein is to determine how social cognitive phenomena (e.g., TMT and psychological distance) can impact judgments about gay rights. This possibility is explored in later chapters. In the next chapter, the connection between community sentiment and lawmaking is established.

Chapter 4 – Community Sentiment and the Law

The central tenet of any democratic society is that individual citizens play an integral role in shaping governmental and legal standards. As a leading advocate for democratic ideals, the U.S. is a country that encourages its citizens to participate in a variety of legal and governmental decisions. Individuals are given the power to vote for the political candidates whom best represent their political, social, and economic values. In addition, citizens are often given the opportunity to vote on legal issues through referenda. Citizens are also picked to serve on juries, where they make legal judgments that have important consequences for those parties involved and, in some cases, the law in general. Finally, judges and policy makers sometimes consider the attitudes and opinions of citizens when making judgments about social and political issues. In sum, there are several ways in which community sentiment (i.e., individuals' opinions) can impact the democratic process. Indeed, the legal impact of the current research is dependent upon this connection.

Does Community Sentiment Impact the Legal System?

There is substantial anecdotal and empirical evidence to suggest community sentiment does impact law. The usage of community sentiment in determining "evolving standards of decency" has a long legal precedent, as the Supreme Court has called upon public opinion to determine the constitutionality of issues in several cases over the past century. For instance, in *Weems v U.S* (1910; Finkel, 1995) the Supreme Court explicitly cited public opinion as a source for determining the appropriate punishment of a man who had been convicted of

falsifying records. The Supreme Court also used community sentiment to determine whether or not revoking citizenship as a punishment was constitutional under the 8th Amendment. More recently, in *Planned Parenthood of Southwestern Pennsylvania v. Casey* (1992), the Supreme Court looked to community sentiment to determine if the right to abortion was unconstitutional. In his book, *Commonsense Justice*, Finkel (1995) provides a historical and constitutional basis for using community sentiment in the law, arguing that judges and legislators should continue to look to public opinion to guide decisions.

In addition to the previously discussed cases (e.g., *Goodridge v. Mass. Department of Public Health*, 2003 and *Lawrence v. Texas*, 2003), there are other legal indicators suggesting that the increasingly positive community sentiment toward gay rights has impacted the legal landscape. The elections held on November 7, 2006 brought several pro-gay candidates into power at state and national levels (Sklar, 2006). Pro-equality measures were also passed in local Michigan and Ohio towns with the specific aim of providing protection for those who are discriminated on the basis of sexual orientation. In addition, Arizona became the first state to reject an anti-same-sex marriage constitutional Amendment (Sklar, 2006). It is worth noting, however, that anti-gay marriage Amendments were passed in seven of the eight states that put them on the ballot in 2006, and all 3 in 2008 (see e.g., Archibold & Goodnough, 2008).

Careful evaluation of the available evidence reveals that judges (Marshall, 1989) and legislators (Oldmixon & Calfano, 2007) do decide issues based on community sentiment. Research conducted by Marshall (1989) suggests that

judges listen to community sentiment, as the majority of Supreme Court decisions (60%) in the analysis were in line with public opinion. The author also found that most justices (individually) were likely to side with public opinion on an issue, and that Supreme Court decisions based on public opinion endured longer. Although Marshall did not find evidence to indicate that Supreme Court decisions impact public opinion, research by Stoutenborough, Haider-Markel, and Allen (2006) suggests that the Supreme Court can impact public opinion in certain circumstances. In examining how the Supreme Court impacted public opinions in its decisions regarding gay rights (e.g., *Bowers* and *Lawrence*), the authors found that in order for the decision to impact public opinion it must have large policy implications. Thus, the connection between community sentiment and law may be bi-directional.

Evidence also indicates that legislators look to the ideological makeup of their constituency when making decisions about gay rights (Oldmixon & Calfano, 2007). Results suggested that legislators are responsive to the political and religious ideologies of their constituency. For instance, Democratic partisanship at the district-level was associated with higher levels of legislative support for gay issues, presumably because legislators were receptive to the progressive ideals of the community. Conversely, district-level Conservative Protestantism and Catholicism partisanship were negatively associated with pro-gay policies, suggesting that legislators were responsive to the conservative ideals of their constituency (Oldmixon & Calfano, 2007).

The use of community sentiment in lawmaking is deeply rooted in United States government, established with the constitution and perpetuated by acting lawmakers and judges (see Finkel, 1995). Although it may seem that individuals have little control over the actions of judges and legislators, empirical evidence suggests that community sentiment at least partially impacts legal decisions. The impact of the current work hinges on this connection, as changes in attitudes (and community sentiment) potentially affect the law. The next section will examine some of the problems in measuring community sentiment through an analysis of the specific gauges that are used.

Gauging Community Sentiment

According to Finkel (1993; 1995), there are four distinct methods of capturing community sentiment: legislative enactments, jury decision data, public opinion polls, and mock jury research. Finkel (1995) outlines the advantages and disadvantages of each approach. Although legislative enactments and jury decision data are the only gauges of community sentiment sanctioned by the Supreme Court, Finkel argues that mock jury data is the most appropriate objective index of community sentiment.

Legislative Enactments

The Court has often relied on existing laws and policies to determine community sentiment. For instance, in *Stanford* v. *Kentucky* (1989), Justice Scalia used state laws to gauge whether or not capital punishment for juveniles was considered cruel and unusual by the public (Finkel, 1995). This perspective assumes that law reflects community sentiment because legislators use the

opinions of their constituency to enact legislation. Tautological concerns aside, scientists argue that this is only an indirect measure of community sentiment and legislators may not know or care about community sentiment (Finkel, 1995). An apparent strength of this approach is that it provides an externally valid measure of community sentiment.

Jury Decisions Data

The Court has also relied on aggregate decisions of juries to determine how the community thinks and feels about particular issues. This method allows for a direct and externally valid measure of community sentiment. Finkel correctly asserts that this "objective index" lacks objectivity for several reasons. First, juries are often not representative due to exclusions based on voir dire processes and death qualification. Second, causal relationships can not be drawn due to a lack of control (over confounding variables) and the fact that different cases are aggregated. Finally, the jury decisions approach does not allow for a complete comparison because the denominator is often difficult (if not impossible) to determine. Thus, for instance, legislators and judges can compare the number of adolescent death penalty verdicts with the number of adult death penalty verdicts, but they can not compare the number of adolescent death penalty verdicts with the total number of capital cases that prosecutors brought to trial because these statistics are difficult to find (Finkel, 1995).

Public Opinion Polls

Another way of determining community sentiment is by public opinion polls. When conducted with representative samples, polls can provide politicians

with a standard way of assessing sentiment. However, polls may lose objectivity to the extent that they are picking up transient and ignorant sentiment (Finkel, 1993, 1995). That is, polls may not be accurate because they are measuring sentiment that is specific to a time or place (i.e., transient sentiment), or because they are polling individuals who are not informed about the particular issue in question. Further, the manner in which the question is worded can dramatically influence poll responses (see Tourangeau, Rips, & Rasinski, 2000).

Mock Jury Studies

Similar to public opinion polls, mock jury research allows for a more objective assessment of community sentiment. Jury research solves the "denominator problem" and allows us to control (to the greatest extent possible) and manipulate contextual variability (i.e., sentiment caused by transient forces). The major problem with mock jury studies is that they usually do not guarantee externally valid results: In many cases mock jurors do not deliberate in groups and case facts and trial details may only approximate those which actual jurors experience (Finkel, 1995).

Determining the most appropriate measure (in terms of gauging community sentiment) is largely dependent on research goals and values. There is obviously no perfect measure, but in terms of objectivity, the mock jury research approach seems to be the best approach. With that said, it is crucial when using this approach that representative samples are used so that the attitudes that are gauged accurately reflect the whole of a given community. In short, the mock jury

research approach seems the most appropriate in the proposed line of research, as it will allow for the manipulation and control of different social cognitive factors.

In this chapter, the legal relevance of the current research was established with the concept of community sentiment (see Finkel, 1995). Case law (e.g., *Weems* v. *U.S.,* 1910) and research (Marshall, 1989; Oldmixon & Calfano, 2007) suggest that individuals' attitudes and opinions can impact the law. Of the several methods used to gauge community sentiment (see Finkel, 1995), the most fitting for the current research is the mock jury study because it allows for the manipulation of contextual variables (e.g., MS and psychological distance). Using this approach, the current research will be able to determine specific factors that lead to transient sentiment. This idea will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5 – The Contextual Variability of Attitudes

According to Krech and Crutchfield (1948), an attitude can be defined as "an enduring organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes with respect to some aspect of the individual's world" (p. 152). This traditional view assumes that attitudes are enduring and closely linked to behavior. These two key assumptions have lost empirical credit over the last 60 years, as attitudes appear to be highly variable and bad predictors of behavior (Schwarz & Bohner, 2001). The concept of evaluative judgments, as described by Schwarz and Bohner (2001), allows for a more flexible and comprehensive understanding of attitudes. By accounting for context, this perspective provides a basis for understanding the variability of individuals' attitudes toward gay rights issues.

As articulated by the constructivist view of judgment, individuals tend to make evaluative judgments with information that is cognitively salient at the time (Clore, 1992). In addition, emotion and mood are important contextual factors that can lead to considerable attitudinal variability (Clore, 1992; Schwarz, 1995; Schwarz & Bohner, 2001). Context effects can impact judgments at every stage of the evaluation process (e.g., interpreting, retrieving, computing, mapping, and editing). The following section will focus on the contextual variability of attitudes as it relates to the shift in community sentiment about gay rights. The limited research in this area will highlight the fact that judgments of gays and lesbians can vary considerably depending on the context in which they are presented. Included

will be a discussion of how and why individuals might demonstrate attitude consistency across time and place.

Evaluative Judgments of Gays and Lesbians

Priming studies provide good demonstrations of the contextual variability of attitudes. Priming an individual with a certain value, feeling, or experience (i.e., varying the context in which judgments occur) can significantly impact subsequent judgments and attitudes. The general approach is to give participants stimuli in order to impact later judgments, either leading to assimilation or contrast effects. Although it was originally thought that primes would necessarily lead to assimilation (Schwarz, 1995), research has shown that individuals will evaluate several aspects (e.g., "aboutness," representativeness) of an unsubtle prime to determine if it should be used in judgment (Schwarz, & Bohner, 2001). Primes were employed by Katz and Hass (1988) in a study investigating racial ambivalence resulting from value conflict. The authors primed either humanitarian-egalitarianism (HE) or Protestant work-ethic value orientations and then assessed attitudes toward African-Americans. Results indicated that the value primes did influence attitudes. Specifically, the priming of HE seemed to create a commitment to racial justice, whereas the priming of Protestant work-ethic seemed to create more criticism of African-Americans. This study illustrates that a change in context (via a priming manipulation) can lead to different attitudes between and within individuals and groups.

Priming techniques such as the one used by Katz and Hass (1998) could potentially offer a better understanding of the dynamics of attitudes toward gays

and lesbians. Inducing a specific value, such as HE, would likely lead to attitudinal variability between participants. Findings (e.g., Tetlock, 1986; Tetlock, Peterson, & Lerner, 1996) correspond with this notion. According to Katz and Hass (1998), Americans have several different (and potentially conflicting) value orientations, such as beliefs about equality, religion, and morality. Building on previous research in this perspective, Brewer (2003) found that changes in public opinion about gay rights could be explained by shifts in the media focus, such that individuals were being primed to utilize beliefs about equality rather than beliefs about religion or morality. This finding has implications for the dynamics of attitudes towards gays and lesbians: namely, individual attitudes can be changed by simple contextual reminders of what they value. As discussed in Chapter 3, conflicting value orientations may lead to ambivalent judgments and attitudes of gays and lesbians and gay rights. For instance, an individual who is primed with both HE and anti-gay values (e.g., homophobia) may report ambivalent judgments about gay rights. This notion will be investigated in the current work.

The importance of context can also be illustrated by the specific ordering of questions in a survey. As a type of priming, the order in which questions are presented can lead individuals to use temporarily accessible information which results in context effects in attitudes (Schwarz & Bohner, 2001). Herek and Capitano (1999) demonstrated that the order of survey questions can impact evaluations of gays and lesbians. Heterosexual males who were asked to express attitudes about lesbians first (as compared to males who were asked attitudes about gay men first) gave more favorable ratings to both lesbian and gay targets.

The authors suggest that lesbians (as compared to gay men) may activate different, more positive associative networks among male participants. Thus, exposure to a lesbian target may lead to assimilation effects when gay men are subsequently evaluated. This finding illustrates the importance of context in understanding the dynamics of attitudes toward gays and lesbians: asking participants to evaluate lesbians before gay men seemingly leads to different evaluations than when the order is reversed.

Attitude Consistency

Thus far the discussion has only focused on how the evaluative judgments approach can explain the contextual variability of judgments. Although the approach argues for a more flexible view of attitudes, it does suggest that some attitudes may not be susceptible to context effects. Schwarz and Bohner (2001) assert that crystallized attitudes - those that are particularly strong and easily recalled – are more stable and thus less susceptible to context effects. The crystallized attitude is certainly an important aspect to understand when considering judgments about gays and lesbians. This dynamic has implications for whether or not judgments can be manipulated. Individuals who do not have crystallized attitudes about gay rights will be more likely to exhibit attitudinal inconsistency across time and place. Conversely, individuals with crystallized attitudes are likely to be unaffected by contextual differences. Thus, individuals with crystallized attitudes toward gays and lesbians (e.g., extreme social conservatives) are unlikely to account for the recent positive shifts in community sentiment toward gay rights. In short, the evaluative judgment perspective does

incorporate the more traditional and constrictive view of attitudes, but is only a small part of the broader conception.

Attitude stability can also be a function of contextual stability across temporal measures. In other words, if a participant evaluates an object in the same context at time one and time two (however unlikely this may be), attitudes should be temporally consistent because contextual differences are eliminated (Schwarz & Bohner, 2001). Thus, the constructivist perspective of judgment suggests that cognitive representations of gays and lesbians (and gay rights issues) may not be particularly stable; even though individuals may report somewhat negative attitudes.

Contrary to traditional views about attitudes, the evaluative judgment approach uses context to account for attitudinal variations. Clore (1992), Schwarz (1995), and Schwarz and Bohner (2001) provide numerous examples of how context can impact evaluative judgments through emotion (both affective and non-affective) and mood. Limited research (e.g., Brewer, 2003; Herek & Capitanio, 1999) has examined how different contextual factors can explain the recent shift in community sentiment about gay rights. The proposed studies will attempt to further this line of research using two stimuli that are particularly salient and relevant in American culture today. In the next chapters, terror management theory and social construal theory will be introduced and discussed in relation to attitudes about gay rights.

Chapter 6 – Terror Management Theory

Sparked by recent terrorist attacks, for many people terrorism has become an important safety concern. Although mankind has dealt with terrorism for hundreds of years, it has only recently become a primary political and social interest in America following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Six years after the attacks, 9/11 is still a prominent fixture in American media. The event continues to have political, economic, and social repercussions for American citizens.

Of particular interest in the proposed studies is the social impact of 9/11. These attacks undoubtedly evoke questions of mortality for many Americans, subsequently heightening anxiety among the general public in the U.S. Using terror management theory (TMT), the following chapter will examine how this anxiety might have manifested into more negative judgments of gay rights in the months and years following the event. The first part of the chapter will outline the important concepts of TMT with a select review of the voluminous literature. In the second part of the chapter, the possible effects of 9/11 – in terms of judgments of gay rights – will be discussed.

Terror Management Theory

Terror management theory is based on Becker's (1962, 1973, 1975) idea that human capacity of intellect leads to an awareness of existence and mortality (see Greenberg et al., 1990). From this perspective, culture provides individuals a manageable way of interpreting mortality by protecting against existential anxieties. Cultures accomplish these interpretations by providing universal order

and a context that engenders self-esteem within individuals. Cultural views help to protect individuals against existential anxieties through two components: One, individuals must believe that the culture conceptions provide legitimate interpretations of meaning and standards of value that, when accomplished, overcome concerns or mortality; Two, individuals must believe that they are fulfilling these value standards.

Using TMT as a foundation, Greenberg et al. (1990) investigated how participants would react to outgroups when their cultural worldviews were challenged. Citing earlier studies (e.g. Becker, 1962; Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Goffman, 1959) the authors established that individuals' cultural worldviews are confronted with two sources of threat: First, individuals are constantly reminded of their own mortality through the media; Second, outgroups provide an array of conflicting worldviews which remind people that their conception of the world may not be correct. Based on the assumptions that people react to others based on their similarity or dissimilarity of worldview, and that people need to defend their own worldview in order to protect against anxiety, the authors hypothesized that a death reminder (i.e., mortality salience) would increase positive responses to those who are similar to us, and negative responses to those who are dissimilar to us. This hypothesis was largely confirmed in the three-experiment study (Greenberg et al., 1990). Overall, the results indicated that mortality salience (MS) influenced participants' evaluations, such that participants who were exposed to MS gave more positive evaluations of ingroup members (Christian targets) and more negative evaluations of outgroup members (Jewish targets) as

compared to participants in non-MS conditions. From a TMT standpoint, this finding suggests that, when individuals are confronted with death reminders, both positive and negative biases are contingent upon the similarities and differences of others. When others are different (i.e., in the outgroup) they threaten the cultural conceptions that protect individuals from existential anxiety and thus we hold negative biases towards them. Conversely, when others are similar (i.e., in the ingroup) they bolster our cultural conceptions thereby reducing anxiety and increasing positive evaluations (Greenberg et al., 1990).

The findings of Greenberg and colleagues (1990) have been confirmed by a wealth of subsequent research (e.g. Castano, Yzerbyt, Paladino, & Sacchi, 2002; Schimel et al., 1999). In a study examining the effects of mortality salience on stereotypes, Schimel et al. (1999) found that Americans were more likely to report increased stereotypes of Germans when mortality was salient, as compared to when it was not. Castano et al. (2002) demonstrated the opposite effect in participants' evaluations of their ingroup, finding that mortality salience led to greater amounts of ingroup identification and positive ingroup bias. The same effects were demonstrated among 11-year-old children in a study conducted by Florian and Mikulincer (1998). Children who were asked to complete the Death Concept Scale before answering questions about an outgroup member (the MS condition) showed more ingroup acceptance and less outgroup acceptance than children who completed the Scale after they rated the target (the control condition).

Eva Jonas and Jeff Greenberg, in collaboration with other scholars, have also published several studies building upon the initial Greenberg et al. (1990) study. A two-part study conducted by Jonas, Schimel, Greenberg, and Pyszcynski (2002) demonstrated that death reminders influenced the intensity in which participants showed prosocial attitudes and behaviors. Using an MS manipulation previously employed by Pyszczynski and colleagues (1996), the authors interviewed participants close to a funeral home (MS condition) or a few blocks away from a funeral home (control condition). It was found that participants who were interviewed close to the funeral home were more likely to express positive evaluations of two charities than participants who were interviewed several blocks away from the funeral home. Intensification of cultural worldview following mortality salience was also demonstrated in Germans' responses to the implementation of the Euro currency system in Western Europe (Jonas, Fritsche, & Greenberg, 2005). Priming participants with a death reminder lead to a decreased liking of the Euro and a moderate increase in liking of the German Mark. Consistent with TMT, each of these studies suggests that, when reminded of their mortality, individuals favor that which supports their own cultural worldview (e.g., a charity, currency) - and thus protects them from existential anxiety - and discriminate against that which does not support these beliefs (i.e., the outgroup).

Individualized Cultural Worldviews

An important concept in the TMT literature is that cultural worldviews are individualized. According to Arndt and colleagues (2002), "the worldview is

individualized in the sense that, although ultimately derived from the culture and thus sharing many commonalities within particular groups of people, it is tailored to the individual as a result of personal experience" (p. 27). Therefore, an individual may set out to defend a unique set of values and/or groups when mortality is made salient. Research has demonstrated the importance of individualized identifications with particular groups. For instance, Florian, Mikulincer, and Hirschberger (2001) found that sex-roles were important predictors of MS effects in participants' interaction preferences. In addition, Jonas and Greenberg (2004) found that Germans who were supportive of German reunification (as compared to those who had neutral attitudes) were more likely to be impacted by MS when reading positive and negative essays about the fall of the Berlin wall. In short, MS will lead to intergroup biases to the extent that an individual conceptualizes the target group or value within their individualized cultural worldview.

As discussed above, an individual may not show ingroup bias after MS because they do not share the values and ideals of the ingroup. For instance, an American might not show intergroup biases when primed with MS because values in their individualized worldview (e.g., "the President is not smart" or "I fundamentally disagree with capitalism") may be discordant with those in the ingroup (e.g., "citizens should always support the President" or "capitalism is the only way to go"). This idea is consistent with previous work (e.g., Greenberg et al., 1990) which found that the impact of MS was moderated by authoritarianism. Alternatively, individuals may not demonstrate intergroup biases because they

have disidentified with the ingroup. According to social identity theory (SIT), people are motivated to view their ingroup as positive in order to maximize self-esteem. However, when the ingroup is seen negatively, ingroup pride goes down. Social identity theory also posits that people actively pursue social identities that optimize psychological functioning by providing self-esteem (Arndt, Greenberg, & Schimel, 2002). Thus, distancing the self from the in group is another way to protect self-esteem and thus preserve the anxiety buffer. In a three-part study, Arndt and colleagues (2002) provided evidence for disidentification effects among females and Hispanics. This research suggests that the need to fit in with a group takes a back seat to individuals' self-esteem needs. Put another way, groups are used to bolster our existential self-esteem, and they will sometimes be abandoned when they tarnish our worldviews.

Judgments about Gay Rights after 9/11

The preceding discussion can further our understanding of what contextual factors might influence individual judgments regarding gay rights. As one of the most influential, graphically violent, and commonly discussed (and viewed) events in modern American history, 9/11 presumably served as a strong MS reminder for Americans in the months following the tragedy. Given its prominence in the media, it is also likely that it has continued to provoke thoughts about mortality in subsequent years. It is possible that these purported effects may depend on the age at which a person experienced the event, with younger cohorts experiencing less MS from 9/11 as compared to older cohorts.

According to TMT, the presence of 9/11 may lead to increased or decreased support for gay rights depending on one's cultural worldview. If an individual has negative existing attitudes about gays and lesbians, then MS should decrease support for pro-gay rights and increase support for anti-gay rights. Conversely, if gays and lesbians are included in an individual's worldview, MS should lead to increased support for gay rights. Based on the research conducted by Arndt et al. (2002) it is also plausible that individuals who conceptualize gays and lesbians within their worldview may disidentify with the gay rights cause because gays and lesbians are often stigmatized and thus unlikely to bolster worldview esteem. Thus, according to this rationale, judgments about gay rights (and gays and lesbians generally) should have become more negative following 9/11, regardless of worldview.

Given that the variability in individuals' cultural worldviews, there exist several plausible effects of 9/11 on judgments. It is possible that 9/11 had a generally negative effect on attitudes. The fact that a slight majority of Americans hold negative attitudes toward gays and lesbians, coupled with the proven tendency to disidentify with stigmatized groups, suggests that community sentiment has become more negative since the attacks. Although some polls (previously discussed) suggest that this hypothesis is incorrect, others seem to indicate that attitudes have become more negative following 9/11. For instance, Harris/CNN/Time polls taken in 1998 and 2004 show a 5% increase (from 33% to 38%) in the belief that homosexuality is not acceptable over the 6 year period (Bowman & O'Keefe, 2004). A PSRA poll conducted in 2000 and 2003 further

suggests that attitudes have become more negative after 9/11: in 2000, 29% of respondents believed gays and lesbians are a good thing for the country and 23% believed gays and lesbians are a bad thing for the country; in 2003, 23% believed gays and lesbians are a good thing for the country and 31% believed that gays and lesbians are a bad thing for the country (Bowman & O'Keefe, 2004). Polls also suggest that attitudes toward gay rights issues have become more negative after 9/11. In a June 2000 poll, 58% of respondents opposed gay marriage, whereas 66% of respondents opposed gay marriage in a November 2003 poll (Bowman & O'Keefe, 2004).

Alternatively, public opinion toward gay rights may have become more polarized as a result of 9/11. Assuming that the effects of MS are dependent upon specific individualized worldviews, 9/11 should have led to more positive judgments of gay rights for individuals who conceptualized gays and lesbians within their cultural worldview and more negative judgments of gay rights for individuals who conceptualized gays and lesbian outside of their cultural worldview. This notion is supported by some gay rights' polls (See e.g., PSRA/Pew polls taken from 1996 to 2004; Bowman & O'Keefe, 2004, p. 22), and is reflected in the mixed policy decisions that have been seen in recent years.

An individual's cultural worldview may also impact the effectiveness of an MS stimulus. A particular terrorist attack is presumably most salient – in terms of reminding individuals of their mortality – to the citizens directly affected. Thus, terrorism experienced directly by Americans (e.g., 9/11) should provoke more societal anxiety than terrorism experienced by those in another country (e.g.,

the Madrid train bombings). This was clearly demonstrated in the differing responses of Americans following 9/11 and other terrorist acts occurring outside of the U.S. Whereas Americans experienced great amounts of anxiety following 9/11, anxiety responses to other terrorist attacks have presumably been muted in comparison. Similarly, MS should be stronger, and anxiety levels should be higher, for Spanish citizens responding to the Madrid bombings than to the terrorist attacks of September, 11. This idea – that individuals are affected by ingroup violence differently than outgroup violence – will also be examined in the current study.

In sum, the tenets of TMT suggest that Americans' evaluations and judgments of gays and lesbians (and gay rights issues) were impacted by the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Specifically, it is suggested that events acted as a MS stimuli for Americans, leading to more polarized evaluations and judgments of gays and lesbians after the event. Further, the social and spatial distance from an MS stimulus is expected to moderate the impact of MS, such that a socially and spatially proximal event will elicit MS, whereas a distant event will not. The following research will examine how 9/11, and other (more distant in time and space) terrorist attacks, impact individuals' judgments about gays and lesbians. In the next chapter, another potentially salient contextual variable (i.e., psychological distance) will be examined.

Chapter 7 – Construal-Level Theory and Psychological Distance

Another contextual variable that has potentially impacted individual judgments about gays and lesbians is psychological distance. With the increasing acceptance of homosexuality, gay rights issues have presumably become more proximal – in terms of social and spatial distance – for many Americans. From a social networks perspective, different types of ties (e.g., employment, familial) have closed social and spatial gaps between homosexual and heterosexual individuals. For instance, once an established member of a social network discloses that she is gay, some family members, friends, and co-workers might view gay rights issues as more socially and spatially proximal than before. Other members may experience dissonance from imbalanced attitudes (i.e., intransitivity; see Felmlee, 2003) about the member (e.g., "I like Suzie") and their status (e.g., "I don't like gay people"). This may result in the person severing ties, thus maintaining distance from homosexuality. In short, social and spatial ties have potentially led to more proximal distance to individuals (i.e., gays and lesbians) and events (gay rights issues).

While some individuals may have developed proximal ties to gays and lesbians in recent years, others may sustain social and spatial distance from homosexuality and gay rights issues. The concept of homophily (i.e., that similarity leads to connection) suggests that some individuals may only have social ties to those who share similar attitudes, values, and beliefs (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). Although homophily can be based on many factors (e.g., proximity in living arrangement or family ties), some individuals may flock

together with others based solely on political or religious ideals (McPherson et al., 2001). For instance, individuals who choose their social networks based on conservative ideals would likely demonstrate great social and spatial distance from homosexuality.

This discussion highlights that psychological distance (i.e., social or spatial distance) from gays and lesbians and gay rights issues may vary considerably among Americans. While some may have close social and spatial ties to gays and lesbians, others may deliberately or inadvertently isolate themselves from homosexuality. A primary goal of the current work will be to manipulate social and spatial distance in order to determine how they can impact subsequent judgments. In the next section, CLT will be briefly outlined and discussed as it relates to the current work.

Construal-Level Theory

Construal-level theory is based on the premise that individuals will rely on schematic, prototypical information about an event the further removed they are from the event. Scholars (e.g., Bar-Anan, Liberman, & Trope, 2006) suggest that this occurs because greater distance from a target (e.g., a gay person) will force an individual to rely on knowledge about the category of the target (e.g., stereotypes about gays and lesbians) to make judgments rather than basing judgments on concrete, specific information about the target. Thus, increased psychological distance from an event will lead individuals to represent the events by their "central, abstract, and global features (high-level constructs) rather than by their peripheral, concrete, and local features" (low-level constructs; Fujita, Henderson,

Eng, Trope, & Liberman, 2006, p. 278). Psychological distance is used to refer to any type of distance, be it social, spatial, or temporal. Although there is an abundance of research on temporal distance, social and spatial distance are most applicable to the current research.

Research (e.g., Fiedler, Semin, Finkenauer, & Berkel, 1995; Idson & Mischel, 2001; Linville, Fischer, & Yoon, 1996) suggests that social distance from a target leads individuals to organize information about that person in abstract and stereotypic ways. Spatial distance has also been shown to influence construal processes. For example, Fujita et al. (2006) found that individuals preferred to identify actions as ends (e.g., "securing the house") rather than means (i.e., "putting a key in the lock") when actions were distal as opposed to local (p. 279). A series of studies (Henderson, Fujita, Trope, & Liberman, 2006) revealed that individuals structure behavior into simple and general units when the behavior is distant rather than near. Specifically, participants who imagined an event as spatially distal divided a cartoon video (the dependent variable) into fewer units that participants who imagined the event as spatially proximal. In addition, individuals who are spatially distant (as compared to spatially near) to a target attribute behavior to more dispositional, rather than situational, influences (Henderson et al., 2006).

Psychological Distance and Judgments about Gay Rights

Construal-level theory has several implications for community sentiment surrounding gay rights. Psychologically distal conceptions of same-sex marriage (e.g., spatial distance) should lead individuals to represent the issue through

abstract and general features. On the other hand, conceptualizations of same-sex marriage that are psychologically proximal should lead individuals to represent same-sex marriage in more concrete and specific terms. Put differently, psychological distance should predict the level of stereotyping that occurs about same-sex marriage. Further, the use of stereotypes should lead to negative sentiment about gay marriage. This seems plausible given the stigma attached to being gay in the U.S: Although public opinion polls have shown an increase in positive sentiment toward gays and lesbians, societal norms seem to be biased against gay and lesbian individuals. This line of reasoning is confirmed by research (e.g., Herek & Capitano, 1996) suggesting that contact (i.e., more proximal social and spatial relations) leads to less stereotyping and more positive attitudes toward gays and lesbians. Thus, CLT and psychological distance may provide a precise cognitive mechanism for understanding attitude change when meaningful contact is made. In short, psychological distance may influence individual conceptions of gay rights issues.

Psychological distance from a terrorist attack may also impact the way in which the event reminds one of death. If socially and spatially distal events and people are represented by more abstract and global features, it follows that individuals from outside the United States might not be impacted (in terms of MS) by the 9/11 terrorist events. Conversely, Americans might not be reminded of death when they are exposed to media about the Madrid or London bombings because such events are more abstract and less "real." This idea will be examined

in the current study by manipulating the location of a terrorist attack, and then gauging attitudes about gay rights issues (as an indictor of MS).

There is arguably a great amount of variability in individuals' psychological distance from gays and lesbians. The social networks (e.g., through friends or family) of some individuals have presumably led to proximal social and spatial relations with gays and lesbians. Other individuals may maintain distal relations through social networks that have strong anti-gay ideals. Construal-level theory suggests that this variability has implications for the use of stereotypes about gays and lesbians and subsequent judgments about gay rights. In addition, the theory suggests that terrorist attacks may differentially induce MS depending on social and spatial distance from the event.

Chapter 8 – Overview and Hypotheses

As discussed, attitudes and judgments about gays and lesbians (and gay rights) have become significantly more positive in the last decade. The purpose of the proposed studies is to investigate some of the likely explanations for this shift, and determine whether attitudes toward gay rights issues have become more polarized as a result of 9/11. The research discussed in Chapter 3 has established several consistent predictors (e.g., religiosity, contact) of attitudes towards gays and lesbians and, more specifically, attitudes toward gay rights. This line of research has provided a good foundation for understanding community sentiment surrounding gay rights issues and gays and lesbians generally. A reexamination of the traditional conception of attitudes (discussed in Chapter 5) suggests that it is crucial to account for contextual factors when assessing attitudes, as judgments may be highly dependent on contextual cues. The proposed research will expand on the limited research (e.g., Brewer, 2003) in this area through an examination of two relevant and pervasive contextual factors (9/11 and psychological distance). Research (e.g., Greenberg et al., 1990; Henderson et al., 2006) and theory (TMT and CLT) suggest that these contextual cues may influence judgments about gay rights issues.

Overview of Studies

In Study 1, the effects of MS and psychological distance on judgments of gay rights and attitudes about gays and lesbians will be examined. Participants will first complete a measure of pre-attitudes (an evaluation thermometer; see Chapter 9 for description), and then receive the MS manipulation. Participants in

the control condition will think and write about dental work, whereas participants in the experimental condition will think and write about their own death. After completing the experimental task, participants will read about a proposed gay marriage initiative. Participants will be told that the initiative, if passed, will allow gays and lesbians to marry. Participants in the spatially distal condition will read that the initiative is proposed in a distant city, whereas participants in the spatially proximal condition will read that the initiative is proposed in their hometown. After reading about the initiative, participants will read an argument for the initiative from a target person who is gay. In the socially spatial condition, participants will not have any social relationship with the target person; however, in the socially proximal condition, participants will be asked to imagine that the target person is a close acquaintance from high school. After reading the argument, participants will vote for or against the gay marriage initiative and indicate how strongly and confident they feel about the issue. In addition, participants will complete a post-attitude measure (the Attitude toward Lesbians and Gay Men Scale; see Chapter 9 for description). Finally, relevant demographic (e.g., religion, race, gender) and experiential (e.g., contact) questions will be assessed.

A pilot study will be conducted prior to Study 2 in order to test the prediction that 9/11 does prime MS. In the pilot study, participants will be assigned to one of three conditions: a condition with a video clip of the 9/11 attacks; a condition with a brief written description on the 9/11 attacks, and a condition with a video clip about a dental procedure. The purpose of two

experimental conditions (i.e., the video and written description) was to determine the extent of 9/11 priming needed to induce MS.

Study 2 will have a format similar to Study 1. Participants will first be asked to complete the measure of pre-attitudes used in Study 1, followed by the MS manipulation. Participants will receive a 9/11 stimulus, a Madrid bombing stimulus, or a dental work stimulus (the control), depending on MS condition. Further, the format of these stimuli will vary according to condition: half of the participants will receive a written stimulus, and half of the participant will receive a videotaped stimulus. Participants will then be asked to play the part of a judge in three scenarios involving gay rights issues and lawmaker in one scenario involving a Constitutional Amendment that would ban gay marriage. In each of the scenarios, participants will be asked to give a ruling that will determine the outcome of the case/law, which will ostensibly impact the status of laws (e.g., gay marriage and parenting laws) in the United States. In addition to their rulings, participants will be asked to indicate how strongly and confident they feel about their decisions. Finally, participants will complete the same post measures of attitudes and demographic questions included in Study 1.

Hypotheses

Main Effects for MS (Studies 1 & 2)

Terror management theory posits that reminders of death will lead to greater derogation of those who are not conceptualized within our worldview and greater liking for those who are conceptualized in our worldview. This notion, coupled with the generally negative community sentiment toward gays and

lesbians (see Chapter 3), suggests that MS will lead to more negative judgments of gay rights issues, and gays and lesbians generally.

Hypothesis 1. There is a predicted main effect for mortality salience on judgments, such that participants in the control conditions are expected to be more likely to vote for pro-gay measures as compared to participants in the MS conditions. That is, MS is expected to lead to less favorable judgments of laws that allow freedoms such as parenting and marriage for gay citizens and more favorable judgments of laws that restrict such freedoms. It is also expected that participants in the MS conditions, as compared to those in the control conditions, will have more negative judgments of the target (in Study 1) and of gays and lesbians generally (as determined by the ATLG scale). Finally, it is expected that MS will lead to greater ratings of importance, confidence, and strength in regard to the issue of gay marriage.

In Study 1, MS will be induced by having participants think and write about their own deaths. This method had been proven an effective MS stimulus in previous research (see Jonas et al., 2005). In Study 2, it is expected that the 9/11 stimulus will induce MS, while the other stimuli will not. Thus, participants who view the video of 9/11 are expected to give judgments that are less favorable for gay rights, and rate gays and lesbians less favorably, than participants in the Madrid and control conditions. It is predicted that the Madrid bombing will not be sufficient to induce MS because it is socially and spatially distant from American participants. According to the rationale of CLT, participants are expected to represent the Madrid bombings with more abstract, lower-level processing, which

should lead to less impact in terms of MS. Although not a separate manipulation of distance, it is posited that the presentation of different terrorist attacks (i.e., the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the Madrid bombings) will lead to differential representations and judgments.

Main Effects for Psychological Distance (Study 1)

According to CLT, an increase in social and spatial distance from an object should lead to a greater reliance on abstract and global features of the object, as compared to concrete features of the object. It is expected that the way in which objects (and individuals) are represented will have an impact on subsequent judgments of gay rights issues and gays and lesbians.

Hypothesis 2. It is predicted that judgments of gay rights will be more favorable in psychologically proximal conditions as compared to psychologically distal conditions. That is, participants in the psychologically proximal conditions are expected to be more favorable toward the proposed gay marriage initiative than participants in psychologically distal conditions. It is also expected that participants in psychologically proximal conditions will have more positive attitudes about the target (in Study 1) and more positive attitudes generally (as measured by the ATLG scale) than participants in psychologically distal conditions. Finally, it is hypothesized that participants in psychologically proximal conditions will believe the gay marriage initiative is more important, be more confident in their decisions, and feel more strongly about the issue than participants in the psychologically distant conditions. As discussed, these effects are posited because the greater reliance on stereotypes (which is expected to occur

with psychological distance) will lead participants to use general (i.e., negative) societal conceptions of gay rights.

Main Effects for Demographics, Contact, and Attribution (Studies 1 & 2)

Demographic and experiential variables will not need to be controlled for because an experimental design is being used; thus the findings should not be impacted by these factors. However, some demographic factors (e.g., gender) may be controlled for in the analyses in order to increase the sensitivity of the dependent variables on relevant experimental variables. The following demographic and experiential factors are expected to impact judgments on gay rights issues and attitudes about gays and lesbians.

Hypothesis 3: Gender. It is hypothesized that gender will have a significant impact of judgments and attitudes (see Herek, 2002). Specifically, it is expected that females will have more favorable judgments of the gay rights issues, and lower scores (i.e., more positive attitudes) on the ATLG, than their male counterparts.

Hypothesis 4: Religious affiliation. Consistent with previous research (e.g., Olson et al., 2006), it is expected that self-reported Protestants will be least favorable toward the gay rights issues and gays and lesbians generally as compared to other religions.

Hypothesis 5: Political affiliation. Participants who identify with the Republican Party are expected to indicate more negative judgments of gay rights issues and more negative attitudes of gays and lesbians than participants who identify with other political affiliations (see Hicks & Lee, 2006).

Hypothesis 6: Race. It is hypothesized that there will be a main effect for race (see Lewis, 2003). Specifically Black participants are expected to have higher scores on the ATLG scale (i.e., less positive attitudes) than White participants. However, this effect is not expected for judgments of gay rights issues, as previous research (Lewis, 2003) suggests that Black and White Americans do not differ in judgments of civil liberties (e.g., marriage rights).

Hypothesis 7: Age. It is expected that increased age will lead to less favorable judgments of the gay rights issues and less favorable attitudes of gays and lesbians, as measured by the ATLG scale (see Lewis, 2003).

Hypothesis 8: Contact. It is expected that participants who have had contact with gays and lesbians will have more favorable judgments of the gay rights issues and more favorable attitudes than participants who have not had contact with gays and lesbians. Further, it is expected that increased amounts of contact, and more meaningful contact (i.e., having gay friends or relatives), will be positively associated with more favorable judgments and attitudes (see Lemm, 2006; Mohipp & Morry, 2004).

Hypothesis 9: Attribution. Participants who attribute homosexuality to genetic causation are expected to have more positive judgments of gay rights issues and more positive attitudes overall (as measured by the ATLG scale) than participants who view homosexuality as a personal choice (see Tygart, 2000).

Interactions

Hypothesis 10: Interaction between Attitudes and MS (Studies 1 & 2). There is an expected interaction effect between pre-attitudes and MS on

judgments of the gay rights issues and attitudes about gays and lesbians. Following from TMT research and theory, it is predicted that attitudes (as measured by the evaluation thermometer) will moderate the effects of MS on judgments about gay rights issues and attitudes. Participants with more positive pre-attitudes who are given the MS stimulus are expected to have more favorable judgments of the gay rights issues and gays and lesbians generally than participants with more positive pre-attitudes who are in the control condition. Conversely, participants with more negative pre-attitudes who are given the MS stimulus are expected to have less favorable judgments of gay rights issues and gays and lesbians generally than participants with more negative pre-attitudes who are in the control condition. Thus, attitudes are expected to become more polarized in the MS conditions, as compared to the control. Although this hypothesis is aligned with predictions of an individualized worldview (see Chapter 6), there is evidence that supports an alternative outcome. Specifically, Bonanno and Jost (2006) found that "high exposure" survivors of 9/11 shifted toward conservative views, regardless of political affiliation (which is strongly associated with individuals' attitudes toward gays and lesbians). Assuming that general conservatism equates to more negative attitudes toward gay rights issues, this line of reasoning would support the prediction that all participants will become more conservative after the MS manipulation, regardless of previous attitudes. Both studies are expected to clarify this issue.

Hypothesis 11. Interactions between Attitude Strength and Distance (Study 1). The predicted effects of psychological distance (i.e., spatial and social) on

attitudes and judgments are expected to be qualified by participants' pre-attitudes. Specifically, participants who have strong negative attitudes (i.e., those who score in the lower quartile) toward homosexuality are expected to react more negatively when the target person and event are proximal. This is expected because individuals who have strong negative attitudes toward gay rights are more likely to reject an issue (i.e., the gay marriage initiative) that could have a direct impact on their lives. Further, these participants are expected to have a more adverse reaction (as compared to participants with more moderate attitudes) to the socially proximal target, given that individuals tend to be less tolerant toward ingroup members who deviate from the group norm (i.e., the "Black Sheep Effect;" see Marques, Yzerbyt, & Leyens, 1988). Further, participants who have strong positive attitudes toward homosexuality should react more positively when the target person and event are more proximal. This is predicted because more proximal (and thus concrete) social and spatial conceptions of targets should lead to more positive attitudes.

Hypothesis 12: Interaction between Contact and Distance (Study 1). It is expected that contact variables will qualify the effects of psychological distance on judgments and attitudes. As discussed in Chapter 7, CLT provides a specific cognitive explanation for why attitudes might change after contact. The manipulation of psychological distance should not impact individuals who have already had meaningful contact because gays and lesbians are already psychologically proximal for these participants. Thus, among participants who have had meaningful contact with gays and lesbians, it is hypothesized that there

will be no differences in judgments about the gay marriage initiative and attitudes about gays and lesbians (i.e., the ATLG scale) across distance manipulations. Conversely, attitudes of participants who have not had meaningful contact with gays and lesbians are expected to become more favorable with the distance manipulations, given that proximal representations of targets and events are expected to lead to more positive attitudes.

Hypothesis 13: Interaction between Distance Manipulations (Study 1). It is predicted that effects of social and spatial distance on judgments will be the most significant when paired together. That is, the number of psychologically proximal manipulations is expected to increase low-level representations and subsequently lead to more positive ratings of gay rights. Thus, it is hypothesized that participants in the condition with two proximal manipulations (i.e., spatially and socially proximal) will have more support for the gay rights issues and lower scores on the ATLG scale than participants in cells with only one proximal manipulation. The opposite effect (i.e., less support for gay rights) is expected for participants who have two psychologically distal manipulations. These effects are also expected for ratings of the target and issue, with paired proximal conditions leading to more positive evaluations of the target and greater ratings of strength, confidence, and importance of the issues (as compared to other pairings).

Hypothesis 14: *Interaction between MS and Distance (Study 1)*. It is hypothesized that MS and distance will interact, such that participants in the MS and psychologically distal conditions will be least favorable toward the gay marriage initiative (and gays and lesbians), while participants in the control and

psychologically proximal conditions will be most favorable toward the gay marriage initiative (and gays and lesbians). These effects are also expected with ratings of the target (in Study 1) and ratings about the gay rights issues.

Hypothesis 15: Interaction between MS and Method of Transmission (Study 2). It is hypothesized that participants who *read* about the 9/11 terrorist attacks will be more favorable in their judgments about the gay rights issues and gays and lesbians generally (as measured by the ATLG) than participants who are asked to *view video clips* of 9/11. It is expected that the video of 9/11 will prove a more effective MS stimulus (as reflected in attitudes toward gay rights) than the written summary of 9/11. The influence of the written stimulus is expected to be significantly smaller than that of the video because the video will convey more graphic and violent images, thus leading to a more salient death reminder.

Chapter 9

Study 1: The Contextual Variability of Attitudes toward Gay Rights: Influences of Mortality Salience and Distance on Judgments

In Study 1, both MS and psychological distance were manipulated. Mortality salience was induced in half of the participants by asking participants to think about their own deaths. Psychological distance from a target and event were manipulated in Study 1 by varying social distance from an event (i.e., a gay marriage initiative) and person (i.e., a proponent of the initiative). Participants were recruited from the University of Nevada, Reno and from online solicitations. Recruiting community members from online postings was beneficial because it provided a more diverse sample of respondents. Because University students share many similarities, it was hoped that using multiple samples would increase the range of demographics and attitudes. Given that the stimuli were dependent on pre-existing attitudes, it was important that there was variability in this regard.

Participants first completed a baseline measure of attitudes toward gays and lesbians (i.e. "pre-attitudes"), and were then asked to both think and write about their own death (MS, experimental condition) or dental work (no-MS control condition). Immediately after the MS manipulation, participants completed a distracter task. Participants then read about a political meeting in which a city council was ruling on an initiative that would legalize gay marriage. In the spatially distant condition, participants read about an initiative proposed in a distant city and in the spatially proximal condition participants read about an initiative proposed in a city that they live in (or are from). Participants also read

an argument for the initiative from a gay individual (the target). In the socially distant condition, participants read an argument from a stranger, and in the socially proximal condition, participants read an argument from a close acquaintance. Participants were then asked to rate the target and vote on the initiative to legalize gay marriage. Finally, participants completed a questionnaire that included a measure of attitudes about gays and lesbians and demographic questions.

Method

Participants

A total of 252 participants completed Study 1. Undergraduate students from the University of Nevada, Reno were given class credit for completing this study and community members were entered into a raffle to win one of 10 $50 gift cards. Twenty-four participants were excluded because they indicated that they were either gay or bi-sexual or non-citizens.[1] There were no participants who were eliminated due to manipulation check questions. There were no participants who correctly indicated that they knew about the purpose of the study. However, 28 participants indicated that they did not remember what they were asked to write about (i.e., dental work or death) and one participant did not correctly recall what he was asked to write about. Analyses were run without these participants but results did not differ. Thus, these participants were included in the final analysis in order to gain statistical power. With all exclusions considered, a total

[1] These exclusions were made because it was outside the scope of the current study to examine how the MS stimuli impacted judgments of gays, lesbians, bi-sexuals, and non-US citizens.

of 228 (77% female; 78% student) participants were included in the analyses. Using a power analysis (Cohen, 1983), it was determined that 26 participants were needed per cell, assuming a medium effect size (.50), power at .80, and the two-tailed alpha level at .05. The average cell size was 28.5 and cell sizes ranged from 23 to 31.

Design

A 2 (Mortality Salience: present or absent) X 2 (Spatial Distance: proximal or distal) X 2 (Social Distance: proximal or distant) between subjects factorial design was used.

Procedure

Student participants were recruited from sociology, criminal justice, and health and human development classes at the University of Nevada, Reno. Student participants were either given class or extra credit for participating. Community members were recruited through online email lists, blogs, and listservs. Participants were first given the cover story that they were participating in a study investigating how knowledge about current events effects attitude formation. Participants were told that they would be given a few preliminary questions about their feelings toward others, and were then given the evaluation thermometers (i.e., the pre-attitude measure), which were used to establish baseline attitudes about gays and lesbians. Developed by Haddock, Zanna, and Esses (1993; see Davis, Yarber, Bauserman, Schreer, & Davis, 1999), the evaluation thermometer measure for assessing attitudes toward gay men is a single-item instrument that gauges participant evaluations of gay men.

Evaluations are indicated on a 100-point degree scale, where 0 degrees equals extremely unfavorable judgments and 100 degrees equals extremely favorable judgments. In general, one-item scales have proven to be reliable (Jaccard, Weber, & Lundmark, 1975) and test-retest reliability of the evaluation thermometer of gay men was relatively high (r = .77) after a two-week period (Haddock et al., 1993). The thermometer evaluation of homosexuality was intermixed with other thermometers (e.g., age and race) so that it did not appear as though gays and lesbians were the focus of the survey. This was expected to reduce the effects that the question might have on later measures, such as the ATLG scale (described in detail below). For the purpose of this study, the evaluation thermometer was modified slightly in order to measure attitudes toward homosexuals in general (see Appendix A).[2]

After completing the scale, participants were given the MS or control stimulus which was entitled: "The Projective Life Attitudes Assessment." This manipulation has been successfully employed in past TMT research (see e.g., Greenberg et al., 1997; Jonas et al., 2005). In the MS condition, participants responded to the following questions: "Please briefly describe the emotions that the thought of your own death arouses in you;" and "Jot down, as specifically as you can, what you think will happen to you as you physically die and once you are physically dead" (Jonas et al., 2005, p. 135). In the control condition, the same questions were asked except "dental pain" replaced "death" as the focus of the

[2] The evaluation thermometers did not specifically ask about attitudes toward gays and lesbians in order to avoid order effects.

question. Thus, participants in the control condition were asked to: "Please briefly describe the emotions that the thought of dental pain arouses in you;" and "Jot down, as specifically as you can, what you think will happen to you as you experience dental pain" (see Appendix B). Participants were randomly assigned to these two conditions. A distracter task was then introduced to diminish the salience of the MS manipulation and create a delay between the MS manipulation and key dependent measures (see Florian et al., 2001; Greenberg et al., 1990). In this distracter task, which was included in light of the result of Study 2's pilot study (see Study 2), asked participants to name all of the states that started with the letters "A," "M," and "N."

Subsequently, participants read a fictitious summary about a political meeting in which a city council was preparing to rule on a resolution that would permit gay marriage (see Appendix B). The location (spatial distance) was manipulated, such that participants in the spatially distal conditions read about a city council meeting that occurred in a distal location, whereas participants in the spatially proximal conditions read about a city council meeting in a proximal location. Participants then read the arguments of a gay individual who was advocating marriage rights for gay and lesbian individuals. Participants' relationships to the target (i.e., social distance) was manipulated so that participants in socially proximal conditions were told that the target (i.e., the person arguing) was a high school acquaintance, whereas participants in the socially distal conditions were told that they did not have any social relationship

with the target (see Appendix B). Participants were randomly assigned to one of the eight conditions created by the three experimental manipulations.

After reading the argument, participants were asked to rate the target and also determine whether or not they thought gay marriage should be legalized (see Appendix B). Participants also were asked to indicate how strongly they felt about rejecting and endorsing the gay marriage initiative in order to determine levels of ambivalence about the issue. Further, participants were asked to indicate how strongly they felt about the issue, how important the issue was to them, and how confident they were in their decision.

Participants were then asked to complete the post-attitude measure, which consisted of the 10-item short-version of the Attitudes toward Lesbians and Gay Men Scale (ATLG). The ATLG scale, which was developed by Herek (1984; see Davis et al., 1999), is designed to measure heterosexuals' affective responses toward lesbians and gay men. In completing the scale, participants were asked to rate statements about lesbians and gay men on a seven-point, Likert-format scale (ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree). The scale has been proven to have high levels of internal consistency (alpha levels greater than .80; Herek, 1987a, 1987b, 1988) and high levels of test-retest reliability (correlations as high as $r = .90$; Herek, 1988, 1994). As discussed in Chapter 8, the ATLG scale served as the post-attitude measure.

Finally, participants answered several demographic and experiential questions about: 1) age; 2) sex; 3) race; 4) SES; 5) political ideology; 6) religious affiliation; 7) prior contact with gays and lesbians; and 8) attributions of

homosexuality (i.e., whether or not it is genetically caused). Finally, participants were asked manipulation-check questions about the stimuli to ensure that the manipulations were effective. Participants were also asked if they knew what the purpose of the study was in order eliminate potential biases from those who might have been aware of the purpose of the study. See Appendix D for the entire questionnaire.

Results

There were two primary dependent variables used in the analyses of Study 1: dichotomous responses on the gay marriage initiative (either for or against) and participants' combined scores on the ATLG scale. Participants' ratings of strength, confidence, and importance for the gay marriage initiative, and their evaluations of the target (i.e., how likeable, credible, and intelligent they thought the target was), also served as dependent variables. Each of these secondary variables was rated on a seven point Likert-type scale (e.g., 1 = very strongly; 4 = neutral; 7 = very strongly). Several independent variables (e.g., gender, political affiliation, contact) were used in the analyses; however mortality salience, social distance, and spatial distance were of particular interest in addressing the hypotheses.

Logistic regressions were used on participant responses on the gay marriage initiative. MANOVAs were conducted for the analyses of participant ratings of strength, confidence, importance of the gay rights issues, and on ratings of the target. Finally, multiple linear regressions were conducted for analyses of the ATLG scale. Where appropriate, assumptions of normality and homogeneity

of variance were examined and, if necessary, remedied via data transformations and elimination of outliers. Prior to addressing any hypotheses, preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure that there were no inherent flaws in the data.

Preliminary Analyses

Frequencies. Frequencies of all parametric variables were first conducted to determine if there were any outliers due to errors in the method of data collection. Results revealed that there were no outliers.

Descriptive statistics revealed that the majority of participants had positive attitudes about gay rights issues: 154 of 227 (67.8%) believed that the gay marriage initiative should be passed. Thus, the sample of participants in Study 1 appeared to be largely in favor of gay rights and well above the national average in this regard (see Bowman & O'Keefe, 2004).

Differences between conditions. To ascertain that there were no a priori differences between participants assigned to different experimental conditions, a between-groups MANOVA was conducted on evaluation thermometers. There were no differences based on the MS and psychological distance conditions, indicating that participants had similar pre-existing attitudes toward the four target groups (all Fs < 2.86, all ps > .09).

Differences between Participants. A between-groups MANOVA was conducted to determine if student and non-student participants had significantly different pre-attitudes toward gays and lesbians. Results suggest that students and non-students did not differ in their evaluations of African Americans, senior-citizens, gays and lesbians, and Hispanic-Americans (all Fs < 1.66; all ps > .19),

nor did they differ in their judgments about the gay marriage initiative or attitudes about gays and lesbians (as measured by the ATLG scale; all *p*s > .17). Thus, for the remainder of the analyses, students and non-students were combined into one sample.

Gay Marriage Initiative

Logistic regressions were conducted to determine if MS, social distance, spatial distance, demographic, and experiential factors significantly predicted judgments about the gay marriage initiative in four different models.

In the first model, the three experimental variables (MS, social distance, spatial distance) were entered into a hierarchical logistic regression, with the main effects entered in the first step, and the interactive terms entered into the second and third steps. Gender was also controlled for in this model because further analyses revealed that it was a strong predictor of judgments. Gender was included in the model because it was believed that it would improve the sensitivity of the dependent measure on the MS manipulation. Analysis revealed that the first model was not an overall good fit at any level (all -2 Log Likelihoods > 262.60) and not statistically reliable in predicting judgments about gay marriage (all χ^2s < 6.92; *p* > .14). The model correctly classified at least 67.9% of the cases. There were no main effects for MS, social distance, or spatial distance in the first model (all *Wald*s < 2.4; all *p*s > .11; all *OR*s < 1.34). Thus, hypotheses 1 and 2 were not confirmed for the gay marriage variable.

Analyses revealed a significant interaction between social and spatial distance on judgments (*Wald* = 5.90; p = .02; *OR* = 4.42). Among those in the

spatially proximal conditions, participants in the socially proximal condition were less favorable toward the initiative (58% voted for the initiative) than those in the socially distant condition (77.9% voted for the initiative). Among those in the spatially distant conditions, participants in the socially proximal condition were more favorable (71.4%) toward the initiative than participants in the socially distant condition (63.5%; see Figure 1). Thus, when paired together, socially and spatially proximal conditions did not lead to more positive judgments. Instead, pairing one distant and one proximal condition appeared to lead to the most favorable judgments of the gay marriage initiative. This finding does not support Hypothesis 13, but does lend some support to the notion that psychological distance does impact judgments. No interactions were found between MS and distance manipulations (all *p*s > .56), indicating that Hypothesis 14 was not supported.

The first model was also tested with participants into three pre attitudinal categories: negative (i.e., those who indicated 1 through 5 on the evaluation thermometer), ambivalent (i.e. those who indicated 6 on the evaluation thermometer), and positive (those who indicated 7 through 11 on the evaluation thermometer). These divisions were created to determine if prior attitudes about homosexuality (as measured by the evaluation thermometer) moderated the impact of MS and distance on judgments about the gay marriage initiative. Results revealed that the model was an overall good fit for each group (all -2 Log Likelihoods < 103.92), but was only reliable in predicting judgments of gay marriage for those categorized as ambivalent (χ^2 (4, 50) = 10.41; p = .03). Models

for each group predicted at least 66% of cases. Analyses suggested that MS did impact judgments, but only for participants who had ambivalent attitudes about homosexuality (*Wald* = 4.56; *p* = .03; *OR* = 4.63). Among participants who were ambivalent about gays and lesbians (i.e., those who marked the mid-point of the scale), those in the MS condition were more favorable toward the gay marriage initiative (72% voted for the initiative) than participants in the control condition (45.9% voted for the initiative; see Figure 2). Thus, contrary to Hypothesis 1, MS actually led to more positive attitudes. This finding will be addressed in the discussion sections.

Prior attitudes also moderated the impact of distance on participant judgments. Participants who were ambivalent and read about a spatially proximal initiative were more likely to vote for the initiative (70%) than ambivalent participants who read about a distant initiative (42.1%; *Wald* = 5.34; *p* = .02; *OR* = 5.7). Social distance also impacted participant judgments among those with positive and negative attitudes. Among those who had positive attitudes, participants who read about a socially proximal target were less likely to vote for the initiative (80.1%) than participants who read about a socially distant target (91.2%; *Wald* = 4.1; *p* = .05; *OR* = .32). Among those with negative attitudes, participants who read about the socially proximal target were marginally less likely to vote for the initiative (5.3%) than participants who read about a socially distant target (21.1%; *Wald* = 2.87; p = .09; *OR* = .12). These findings provide partial support for Hypotheses 2, which predicted that judgments would be more positive when the target and/or event were psychologically proximal. However,

these findings are contrary to Hypothesis 13, which predicted that paired proximal conditions would lead to the most favorable judgments.

In the second model, responses to the four yes/no questions about contact were separately entered into logistic regressions on the gay marriage initiative variable with spatial distance and the interaction between the two variables as predictors. Analyses revealed no interactions between contact and social distance, indicating that contact did not moderate the effects of social distance on participants' judgments of the gay marriage initiative (all *Wald*s < 2.04; all *p*s > .15). The same analyses were conducted on the spatial distance variable and similar null results were found (all *Wald*s < 1.14; all *p*s > .61). Thus, contact with gays and lesbians did not moderate the impact of spatial distance on participant judgments and Hypothesis 12 could not be supported.

In the third model, responses to the gay marriage initiative measure were regressed on gender, religious affiliation, political affiliation, race, and age.[3] In each of the analyses, religious categories were collapsed in order to gain statistical power for those variables that lacked participants in specific categories. Four viable religious categories were created: Catholic, Protestant, Atheist/Agnostic, and those who believed in God but did not affiliate with a particular religion.

Results from the logistic regression revealed that gender, religious affiliation, and political affiliation were all strong predictors of judgments on the gay marriage initiative. However, age and race were not significant predictors of

[3] Diagnostic analyses revealed that age was positively skewed. Several transformations were unable to remedy problems of normality.

judgments so these variables were removed from the analysis. The revised model was an overall good fit (-2 Log Likelihoods = 140.75), statistically reliable (χ^2 (5, 142) = 33.41; $p < .01$), and a good predictor of cases (77.5%). Consistent with previous research, gender, political affiliation, and religious affiliation were all strong predictors of judgments about the gay marriage initiative (all *Walds* > 7.69; all *p*s < .01). As predicted, females were more likely to vote for the gay marriage initiative (69.9%) than males (54.8%); Democrats were significantly more likely to vote for the gay marriage initiative (78%) than Independents (65.6%) and Republicans (50%); and Protestants were significantly less likely to vote for the gay marriage initiative (45.5%) than Catholics (68.3%), Agnostics/Atheists (93.3%) and those who did not affiliate with a specific religion (82.1%). Regression coefficients are presented in Table 1.

In the fourth model, participants' responses on the gay marriage initiative were regressed on the contact and attribution variables (i.e., the experiential variables). Initial analyses revealed that, of the four contact variables, only having a gay friend predicted judgments on the gay marriage initiative. Thus, the final model included the attribution variable and the one contact variable. This model was a marginally good fit (-2 Log Likelihood = 131.41), statistically reliable (χ^2 (2, 128) = 31.99; $p < .01$), and a good predictor of cases (75%). As predicted, participants who had gay friends were more likely to vote for the initiative (74.7%) than participants who did not have gay friends (51.6%; *Wald* = 6.62; $p = .01$; *OR* = .31). Further, participants who indicated that homosexuality was not a choice were more likely to vote for the initiative (86.3%) than participants who

believed that homosexuality was a choice (55.7%; *Wald* = 23.52; $p < .01$; *OR* = 5.53).

Attitudes toward Lesbians and Gays Scale.

Scores on the ATLG were computed to form a composite measure of attitudes ranging from 10 (positive attitudes) to 70 (negative attitudes). Diagnostic analyses revealed that the scores were slightly positively skewed. A log-10 transformation was performed, resulting in a more normal distribution. ANOVA was conducted on the transformed ATLG scale, with MS, social and spatial distance, and gender as independent variables. Analysis revealed no main effects for MS, social distance, or spatial distance on the ATLG scale (all *F*s < .04; all *p*s > .85). A marginally significant interaction was found between distance manipulations (F (1, 209) = 3.22; $p = .07$); however pairwise comparisons revealed no significant differences between cells. All other interactions were not significant (all *p*s > .16). Thus, Hypotheses 1, 2, 13, and 14 were not confirmed for the ATLG variable.

As with the gay marriage initiative variable, participants were divided into three groups (negative, ambivalent, positive) to determine how prior attitudes moderated the effects of the experimental variables on the transformed ATLG scale. Due to small sample sizes within the negative and ambivalent groups, testing for interaction effects was not viable. Thus, independent sample t-tests were run with each of the individual experimental variables. Analyses revealed no effects for social or spatial distance (all *p*s > .35); however, a significant effect for MS emerged for ambivalent participants (t (1, 40) = 1.97; $p = .056$; $\eta_p^2 = .09$).

Among those who expressed ambivalent attitudes on the evaluation thermometer, participants in the MS condition were significant more positive toward gays and lesbians (M = 1.45; SD = .19) than participants in the control condition (M = 1.56; SD = .17). Thus, Hypothesis 10 was partially confirmed and Hypothesis 11 was not confirmed for the ATLG scale.

ANOVAs were conducted to determine if there were any interactions between contact and social or spatial distance. Responses to the questions about contact were separately entered into ANOVAs with social and spatial distance as accompanying independent variables and the ATLG as the dependent variable. Analyses revealed no interactions between contact and distance manipulation, indicating that contact did not moderate the effects of social distance on participant responses on the ATLG scale (all ps > .44). Thus, Hypothesis 12 was not confirmed with the ATLG scale.

Linear regressions were conducted to determine which demographic and experiential factors predicted attitudes (as indicated by the ATLG scale). In the model of demographic predictors, age and political affiliation did not predict scores; thus, these two variables were not included in the final model. Results indicated that gender, religious affiliation, and race significantly predicted ATLG scores (R^2 = .4; β = .16; F (3, 144) = 8.96; p = .001). Consistent with judgments on the gay marriage initiative, males (M = 1.49; SD = .20) were more negative than females (M = 1.39; SD = .22) on the ATLG measure (F = 3.47; p = .001). Protestants were the most negative toward gays and lesbians (M = 1.53; SD = .23), followed by Catholics (M = 1.42; SD = .21), participants who believe in God

but did not have a particular faith (M = 1.36; SD = .20), and Atheists/Agnostics (M = 1.32; SD = .18; F = 4.26; p < .001). African Americans were the most unfavorable toward gays and lesbians (M = 1.54; SD = .16), followed by Hispanic Americans (M = 1.47; SD = .19), Asian Americans (M = 1.42; SD = .20), and Whites (M = 1.39; SD = .23; F = 1.93; p = .056). Thus, Hypotheses 3, 4, and 6 were confirmed and Hypotheses 5 and 7 were not confirmed.

A second model regressed scores on the ATLG scale on contact and attribution variables. Contact (specifically having gay friends) and attribution were both significant predictors in the model (R^2 = .68; β = .46; F (2, 118) = 50.42; p < .001). Participants who did not have gay friends (M = 1.58; SD = .23) were more negative than participants who did have gay friends (M = 1.37; SD = .23; F (1, 118) = 2.42; p = .017). Further, participants who believed that being gay was a choice were more negative (M = 1.59; SD = .17) than participants who believed that being gay was genetically caused (M = 1.29; SD = .18; F (1, 118) = 8.14; p < .01). These findings provide support for Hypotheses 8 and 9.

Ratings of the Initiative and Target

MANOVA analyses were conducted on ratings of strength of one's attitude, confidence in one's attitude, perceived importance of the issues, and on perceptions of the target (e.g., how likeable the target was), with MS and social and spatial distance as independent variables. A preliminary analysis of the normality of the dependent measures indicated that the strength, confidence, and importance scales were all negatively skewed. The appropriate transformations were conducted but none were able to remedy normality problems. In addition,

three outliers were removed and the analysis was run without the outliers; however the results did not change significantly so the outliers were left in the analysis.

Between-groups MANOVAs were conducted to determine if MS, social distance, and spatial distance impacted participant ratings of strength, confidence, and importance on the gay marriage initiative. All dependent variables were scored on a seven-point scale (e.g., 1 = not strong; 4 = neutral; 7 = very strong). For each of the analyses, independent variables was entered individually, along with participant votes (either for or against the initiative), as independent variables and the strength, confidence, and importance measures were used as the dependent variables. MANOVA revealed no significant interactions between participant votes for/against the initiative and MS, social distance, or spatial distance on the dependent variables (all Fs < .50; all ps > .48). These results suggest that MS and psychological distance did not impact participant ratings of importance, confidence, or strength of the issue of gay marriage. Although somewhat beyond the scope of this research question, results revealed a main effect for vote: participants' who voted for the gay marriage initiative felt more strongly about the issue (M = 5.68; SD = 1.43) than participants who voted against the gay marriage initiative (M = 2.24; SD = 1.79; F (1, 222) = 236.18; p < .01; η_p^2 = .52).

MANOVAs were also conducted on participant perceptions of the target (i.e., the person who gave the argument in favor of the initiative), using MS and social and spatial distance as the independent variables. Diagnostic analyses

revealed that scores on the three scales appeared to be normally distributed and no outliers were found. Analysis revealed no main effects for MS or spatial distance on participant judgments about the target (all *Fs* < .83; all *ps* > .47). However, there was a main effect for social distance on judgments about the target (*F* (3, 210) = 5.78; *p* = .001; η_p^2 = .076). As expected, those in the socially proximal conditions thought the target was more likeable (*M* = 5.43; *SD* = 1.49) than those in the socially distant conditions (*M* = 4.79; *SD* = 4.65; *F* = 35.2; *p* < .001; *d* = .074). Results revealed a significant interaction between MS and spatial distance (*F* (3, 210) = 2.59; *p* = .054; *d* = .036) for all three dependent variables (all *p*s < .061). Among participants in the proximal condition, those who received the MS manipulation believed that the target was more credible (*M* = 5.34; *SD* = 1.25) than those who received the control manipulation (*M* = 4.72; *SD* = 1.58). Other pairwise analyses revealed that, among those in the control conditions, participants who read about a socially proximal initiative believed the target was less credible (*M* = 4.72; *SD* = 1.50) than those who read about a socially distant initiative (*M* = 5.40; *SD* = 1.57). Among participants who received the MS manipulation, there were no significant differences between participants who read about a spatially distant event and participants who read about a spatially proximal event.

Finally, a three-way interaction was found between the experimental variables (*F* (3, 210) = 3.11; *p* = .027; *d* = .043) on ratings of intelligence (F = 21.33; p = .006; η_p^2 = .036) and credibility (*F* = 9.63; *p* = .03; η_p^2 = .022). Among those in the socially and spatially proximal conditions, participants in the MS

condition believed the target was more intelligent (*M* = 5.39; *SD* = 1.60) and credible (*M* = 5.54; *SD* = 1.35) than participants in the control condition (*M*s = 4.23; *SD* = 1.93 and 4.65; *SD* = 1.68 respectively). Conversely, among those in the spatially distant and socially proximal conditions, MS led to more negative evaluations of the target on dimensions of intelligence (*M* = 4.47; *SD* = 2.16) and credibility (*M* = 5.17; *SD* = 1.49) compared to those in the control conditions (*M*s = 5.56 and 5.96; *SD*s = 1.45 and 1.21 respectively).

Discussion

In Study 1, MS was expected to influence participant judgments about the gay marriage initiative and attitudes about gays and lesbians generally. Results yielded no direct support for these predictions. Overall, participants who wrote about their own deaths did not have more negative judgments or attitudes compared to those who wrote about dental work. Similarly, evaluations about the initiative and target did not differ according to MS condition. Thus, initial analyses suggested that MS did not have an overall impact on participant judgments or attitudes (see Table 2 for a summary of hypotheses).

A closer examination of the data revealed that MS did influence judgments of the gay marriage initiative and attitudes on the ATLG scale, but only for participants who indicated that they had ambivalent feelings about gays and lesbians (as indicated by the evaluation thermometer). Specifically, among those who were categorized as ambivalent, participants in the MS condition had more positive judgments about the gay marriage initiative, and attitudes on the ATLG scale, than participants in the control condition. Thus, participants with

particularly strong (i.e., crystallized) attitudes were not influenced by the MS manipulation because their attitudes were not susceptible to contextual influences. However, mortality salience did influence those with ambivalent (or neutral) attitudes, presumably because these individual attitudes were not concrete and thus susceptible to contextual influences. This finding provides partial support for Hypothesis 1: Although attitudes did not become more polarized for all participants (as was expected), MS did impact participants with flexible attitudes. Put simply, MS could only operate among those who did not have particularly strong attitudes about gays and lesbians.

The direction of the interaction effects (between pre-attitudes and MS) is important to discuss, given that the direction of these effects differ form that proposed by Bonanno and Jost (2006). These authors suggest that attitudes will become more conservative after an MS prime, regardless of prior beliefs. However, this was not found in Study 1, as ambivalent participants in the MS conditions were more favorable toward the gay marriage initiative than ambivalent participants in the control conditions.[4] This finding is consistent with the premise that MS will lead to a greater reliance on one's cultural worldview (see Arndt et al., 2002). In this case, the dominant worldview (specific to this college campus) appeared to be largely in favor of gay rights issues, as evidenced by the nearly 68% approval rate of the gay marriage initiative. Therefore,

[4] It is important to note that the measures of pre-attitudes used by Bonanno and Jost (i.e., political affiliation) are not the same as the ones used in the current studies (i.e., evaluation thermometer of gays and lesbians). Thus, differences in the measures could have been the cause of these different results. Further, these authors used a different MS stimulus (9/11), which could have led to different outcomes (see Study 2).

ambivalent participants who were asked to write about their own death appeared to cling to the dominant worldview, thus leading to high approval rates on the initiative. However, this trend would not be expected in other contexts in which local worldviews regarding gay rights were more negative (e.g., in a Protestant church community). In short, the context in which individuals are asked about gay rights issues could prime membership in different subgroups, which could subsequently impact judgments.

Psychological distance was also expected to influence participant judgments and attitudes, such that socially proximal targets and spatially proximal events were expected to lead to greater support for gay rights and gays and lesbians generally. There was no direct support for these predictions: Participants in proximal conditions did not differ in their judgments about the gay marriage initiative and attitudes on the ATLG scale, as compared to participants in the distant conditions. However, there was a main effect for social distance on participant judgments about the target, as participants who read about a socially proximal target were more positive toward the target than participants who read about a socially distant target. In sum, results indicated largely null findings for Hypothesis 2.

In-depth analyses of participant pre-attitudes did lend some support to the notion that psychological distance can influence judgments and attitudes. Among ambivalent participants, reading about a spatially proximal initiative led to more positive judgments than reading about a spatially distant initiative. Thus, as predicted, spatial distance did lead to more favorable judgments, but only for

those who had ambivalent attitudes about gays and lesbians. This finding provides further support for the assertion that those with crystallized attitudes about gays and lesbians are not susceptible to contextual influences (psychological distance in this case). However, this contention was not supported by other findings, which suggested that participants with positive and negative pre-attitudes both gave more favorable judgments when the target was socially distant, as compared to socially proximal. These findings provide mixed support for predictions about the effects of psychological distance: spatial proximity did lead to more positive judgments but social proximity led to more negative judgments.

Analyses confirmed several previous findings (e.g., Herek, 2002; Hicks & Lee, 2006) about the impact of demographic and experiential factors on individual judgments and attitudes. Gender, political affiliation, and religious affiliation were all strong predictors of judgments on the gay marriage initiative. As expected, males, Republicans, and Protestants were the least likely to vote for the gay marriage initiative, as compared to their counterparts. Gender, religious affiliation, and race also predicted scores on the ATLG scale: males, Protestants[5], and African Americans all had the most negative scores. These findings provide at least partial support for Hypotheses 3, 4, 5, and 6. Also supported was the prediction that African Americans would have similar judgments on the gay marriage initiative (i.e., a civil rights issue), while expressing more negative overall attitudes toward gays and lesbians (as compared to other races). Age was

[5] Although Protestants were the most negative overall, it is important to note that note that grouping all Protestants together is a potential limitation because some Protestant groups are pro gay rights.

not a significant predictor of judgments and attitudes, presumably because the sample provided little variability in terms of age ranges.

Contact and attribution were also found to significantly predict judgments of gay marriage and attitudes on the ATLG scale. Knowing a gay person, having a gay acquaintance, and having a gay family member did not influence participant judgments or attitudes. However, having a gay friend and attributing homosexuality to genetic causation were both strong predictors of positive judgments and attitudes. These findings provide support for Hypotheses 8 and 9 and bolster previous findings (e.g., Lemm, 2006; Tygart, 2000) about the impact of contact and attribution on attitudes about gays and lesbians.

Several interactions between distance manipulations were also predicted in Study 1. Judgments and attitudes were expected to be particularly positive when proximal conditions were paired together. Analyses provided contradictory findings for these interaction effects. An interaction between social and spatial distance was found on the initiative variable, such that, among those in the spatially proximal conditions, participants in the socially proximal condition were more negative toward the initiative than those in the socially distant condition. Conversely, among those in the spatially distant conditions, those in the socially proximal condition were more favorable than those in the socially distant conditions. Thus, predictions about pairing two psychologically proximal stimuli were not supported. In fact, analyses indicated that judgments were more negative when proximal conditions were paired together.

This finding is difficult to interpret in light of previous literature; however, it does suggest that when a target and issue are psychologically proximal to a person, judgments will become more negative than when one stimulus is proximal and another is distant. It is plausible that individuals need a certain amount of psychological distance in order to support gay marriage. Individuals who are socially close to a target may not support an initiative that is spatially proximal because they do not want to encounter any personal consequences (e.g., scrutiny from others) from supporting the interests of the acquaintance (i.e., the marriage initiative). Thinking about a close acquaintance may also amplify the concrete (and potentially negative) implications of legalizing gay marriage locally, such as what it will cost tax payers and what impact it might have on education (i.e., what children learn in schools). Conversely, individuals who are not socially close to a target may support a spatially proximal initiative because they do not see the concrete implications of the initiative.

Judgments and attitudes were expected to be the most negative when MS was paired with socially and spatially distant conditions. There were no interactions effects found for judgments about the initiative or attitudes on the ATLG scale. However, significant interactions between MS and psychological distance were found on judgments about the target (i.e., the person who made the argument for the initiative). First, a two-way interaction was found between MS and spatial distance. Among those in the spatially proximal conditions, participants who were given the MS stimuli believed the target was more credible than those who were given the control stimuli. Thus, pairing MS and the spatially

proximal initiative led to more positive judgments. A three-way interaction also emerged, such that those in the socially proximal, spatially proximal, and MS condition believed that the target was more intelligent and credible than those in the socially proximal, spatially proximal, and control condition. Further, post-hoc analyses revealed that MS actually had a negative impact on judgments among those in the spatially distant and socially proximal condition. These findings provide mixed support for Hypothesis 14. Pairing social and spatial distance did appear to lead to more positive judgments about the target, but only when MS was present. This also indicates that MS may have led to more positive judgments about the target (as compared to the control).

Analyses in Study 1 exposed a dearth of main effects for the primary variables of interest. Mortality salience and psychological distance did not directly impact judgments about the gay marriage initiative or attitudes on the ATLG. However, several interaction effects emerged, suggesting that these variables did influence participant responses. Most notably, MS did play a role in judgments and attitudes, but only for those with ambivalent attitudes about gays and lesbians. Interactions between MS and distance also provide support for some hypotheses. There were also several unexpected interaction effects, which contradicted some expectations and clouded the understanding of the relationship between these variables. As expected, demographic and experiential variables strongly predicted attitudes and judgments in the expected directions. Finally, it is important to note that judgments and attitudes of this sample of participants were skewed in favor of gay rights and gays and lesbians generally. In addition,

analyses indicated that those who were in favor of the initiative felt more strongly about it than those who were not in favor of the initiative.

Chapter 10

Study 2: The Impact of 9/11 on Attitudes about Gay Rights

Study 2 examined the impact of mortality salience (MS) on judgments about gay rights issues using a reminder of 9/11 as the MS stimuli. As discussed, 9/11 exposed Americans to graphic violence and suffering, which presumably evoked thoughts about mortality. Pyszczynski, Solomon, and Greenberg (2003) expand on this premise, arguing that the post-9/11 world reflected the predictions of TMT. That is, the authors suggested that 9/11 induced MS for individuals. The primary purpose of Study 2 was to test these assumptions with empirical work. Thus, a pilot study was conducted prior to Study 2 in order to determine if 9/11 induces MS. Results from the pilot study revealed that 9/11 did act as an MS prime, but only for males in the written condition. Thus, the hypothesis that 9/11 would lead to more negative evaluations of gay rights issues was partially confirmed. In order to improve the expected effects of the 9/11 stimuli, a distracter task was included to ensure that participants did not know the purpose of the manipulation (and the study in general). In both studies, participants were asked to name all the states that started with the letters "A," "M," and "N" directly after the MS stimuli. Consistent with previous work (e.g.., Greenberg et al., 1990), this task was expected to disguise the purpose of the study by making participants less aware of the MS stimuli.

The effects of psychological distance from the terrorist attacks were also tested in Study 2. Unlike Study 1, the effects of psychological distance on attitudes were tested indirectly, through the MS manipulation. Distance from a

terrorist attack was manipulated by varying the location of the terrorist attack. Participants either read a description or watched a video of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Madrid bombings, or the control stimuli. It was expected that MS would have less impact (in terms of judgments about gay rights) for participants exposed to the Madrid bombings as compared to those exposed to the 9/11 attacks because of the variations in psychological distance from the event. Similar to Study 1, moderator analyses were conducted, in which participants were distinguished based on their a priori attitudes toward gays and lesbians.

Participants were recruited from the University of Nevada, Reno and from online solicitations. As in Study 1, it was expected that recruiting from multiple locations would be beneficial because it would provide a more diverse sample of respondents. Participants completed a measure of pre-attitudes (i.e., the evaluation thermometer) toward gays and lesbians and then completed the experimental task. Video and written descriptions of 9/11 and the Madrid bombing served as the experimental conditions (with a video/written description of dental work serving as the control condition). Participants were then asked to decide on several legal issues concerning the rights of gays and lesbians using the ninth justice paradigm (Finkel & Duff, 1993). In addition, participants completed the post-attitude measure (i.e., the ATLG) and the same demographic questionnaire that was used in the last portion of Study 1.

Method

Participants

A total of 203 participants completed Study 2. Undergraduate students from the University of Nevada, Reno were given class credit for completing this study and community members were entered into a raffle to win one of 10 $50 gift cards. Four participants were excluded because they were not U.S. citizens and 18 participants were excluded because they indicated that they were either gay or bi-sexual.[6] There were no participants excluded based on the manipulation checks.[7] Thus, a total of 181 (71% female; 66% student) participants were included in the analyses. Using a power analysis (Cohen, 1983), it was determined that 26 participants were needed per cell, assuming a medium effect size (.50), power at .80, and the two-tailed alpha level at .05. All cells had at least 26 participants, with an average cell size of 30 participants.

Design

A 3 (Mortality Salience: 9/11 stimulus, Madrid bombing stimulus, or control) X 2 (method of transmission: video or written description) factorial design was used.

Procedure

Participants were told that they were participating in a study that was investigating how individuals decide current legal policies. The pre-attitudes

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[6] These exclusions were made because it was outside the scope of the current study to examine how the MS stimuli impacted judgments of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and non-US citizens.

[7] Similar to Study 1, there were no participants who correctly indicated that they knew about the purpose of the study. However, 36 participants missed the manipulation check questions. Analyses were run without these participants but results did not differ. Thus, these participants were included in the final analysis in order to gain statistical power.

measure (i.e., the evaluation thermometer) was administered to establish baseline attitudes. These attitudes served as important determinants of how MS impacted participants' judgments: MS was expected to lead to more positive attitudes for those who conceptualize homosexuality within their cultural worldview (i.e., have positive attitudes), and more negative attitudes for those who conceptualize homosexuality outside their cultural worldview (i.e., have negative attitudes).

Participants were then randomly assigned to one of the following conditions: a condition with the 9/11 terrorist attacks stimulus, a condition with the Madrid terrorist attacks stimulus, or a condition with the neutral stimulus (control). These stimuli were presented in video or written format, depending on condition. Video clips of the 9/11 terrorist attack and the 2004 Madrid terrorist attack were developed for the experimental conditions. The video clips were approximately two minutes in length and were taken from various news sources. Stimuli for the control condition were about a dental procedure. Written descriptions of the 9/11 and Madrid terrorist attacks are presented in Appendix E.

In order to assess differences between the 9/11 and Madrid videos on mechanisms (e.g., MS) and concepts (e.g., emotional responses) relevant to this study, a pilot study was conducted to determine if and how the videos were different. Results indicated that individuals perceived the videos similarly on many relevant dimensions (e.g., how much it reminded them of death); however, participants did perceive the 9/11 video as more sad, more depressing, and more interesting than participants who watched the Madrid video (see Table 3). These differences are important to understand because these videos could be priming

emotional responses other than MS, such as anger or sadness. This issue is further explored in the discussion section.

After watching the video clip/reading the summary, participants were asked to imagine that they were Supreme Court justices in charge of making deciding votes in three cases involving gay rights issues (e.g., same-sex marriage, parenting rights). In each scenario, which Finkel and Duff (1991) refer to as the "ninth justice" paradigm, the other deciding justices were ostensibly divided on the issue (4 vs. 4) and the participant was asked to provide the deciding vote. Participants were then presented with a fourth scenario in which they were asked to act as a legislator by voting on a Federal Marriage Amendment that would define marriage as the union of one man and one woman. In each of the scenarios, participants were asked to vote, give the strength and confidence of their vote, and provide a rating of the importance of each issue to them personally.

Just as in Study 1, participants completed the ATLG, a set of demographic questions, as well as the suspicion and manipulation checks.

Results

There were five primary dependent variables used in the analyses of Study 2: dichotomous responses on the four gay rights issues (either for or against) and participants' combined scores on the ATLG. Participant ratings of strength, confidence, and importance for each of the gay rights issues also served as dependent variables. Several independent variables (e.g., gender, political affiliation, contact) were used in the analyses; however, mortality salience and method of transmission were of particular interest in addressing the hypotheses.

The same preliminary analyses used in Study 1 were conducted for Study 2. Results revealed that there were no outliers and no differences in attitudes based on condition or type of participant (i.e., community member or student). Descriptive statistics revealed that the majority of participants had positive attitudes about gay rights issues: 126 of 180 (70%) believed that gays and lesbians should have marriage rights; 147 of 178 (82%) believed that gays and lesbians should have adoption rights; 152 of 176 (84%) believed that gays and lesbians' sexual activities should not be regulated by law; and 120 of 172 (67%) believed that there should not be a national ban on gay marriage. Thus, the sample of participants in Study 2 was largely in favor of gay rights.

Gay Rights Issues

Logistic regressions were conducted on the four dichotomous dependent variables to determine if MS, method of transmission, and demographic and experiential factors significantly predicted judgments about gay rights issues. Three models were used to examine the hypotheses.

In the first model, the two experimental variables (MS and method of transmission) were entered into a hierarchical logistic regression, with the main effects entered in the first step, and the interactive term entered in the second step.[8] Pre-existing attitudes (i.e., the evaluation thermometer) were controlled for in each model.[9] Dichotomous responses on the gay rights issues (i.e., gay marriage, gay adoption, regulations of sex, and gay marriage ban) were separately

[8] The second step in the hierarchical regression was guided by theory.
[9] Analyses of demographic variables revealed that gender was not a significant predictor of judgments (see below). Thus, gender was not controlled for in analyses. Instead, participants' prior evaluations were controlled for in the logistic regression models.

regressed on the three variables. Results revealed that the first step in each model was a good fit (all -2 Log Likelihoods < 173.6) and statistically reliable in predicting judgments about gay marriage (all χ^2s > 23.16; all *p*s < .001). Each model correctly classified at least 76.4% of the cases. However, there were no main effects for MS or method of transmission on any of the gay rights issues (all *p*s > .13), suggesting that effects were entirely driven by prior evaluations. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was not confirmed for any of the gay rights issues.

Analyses revealed that the second step (i.e., the addition of the interactive term) in the first model significantly improved the model for all dependent variables. For each dependent variable, the overall model fit was improved (all -2 Log Likelihoods < 166.60) and the additional step was statistically reliable in predicting judgments about the gay rights issues (all χ^2s > 6.91; all *ps* < .03). The model correctly classified at least 85.6% of the cases for the dependent variables. Analyses revealed significant interactions between MS and method of transmission on judgments about each of the gay rights issues (all *Walds* > 5.37; all *ps* < .055). For each of the dependent variables, the Madrid bombing stimulus was a significant predictor of judgments when compared to the control stimulus, but only for those in the written conditions (all *Walds* > 5.36; all *ps* < .021; all *OR*s > 11.54). Specifically, participants who read about the Madrid bombing were significantly less likely to vote for gay marriage (57.58%) and gay adoption (75%), and more likely to vote for the regulation of gay sex (75%) and a ban on gay marriage (46.9%), as compared to participants who read about the dental procedure (86.2%, 96.6%, 93.1%, and 74.1% respectively). Thus, participants

who read about the Madrid bombing were consistently more negative in their judgments about gay rights issues than participants who read about the dental procedure.[10] These findings suggest that the Madrid bombing does prime MS, but only in written form (see Figures 1-4).

As in Study 1, the first model was tested with participants grouped into three pre attitudinal categories (negative, ambivalent, and positive) to determine if prior attitudes about homosexuality (as measured by the evaluation thermometer) moderated the impact of MS and method of transmission on judgments about the gay rights issues. Due to small sample sizes in the negative (n = 28) and ambivalent (n = 31) groups, interactions were not included in the model (i.e., a hierarchical regression was not used). Results revealed that the model was reliable in predicting judgments about the marriage ban variable among those with positive pre-attitudes (χ^2s (4, 50) = 7.96; p = .09). Specifically, MS was a significant predictor of judgments about the ban among those with positive pre-attitudes, such that those who were in Madrid conditions were more likely to vote for the ban (24%) that those who were in the control conditions (7.6%). The model was not reliable in predicting judgments about any of the three other dichotomous dependent variables (all χ^2s < 6.35; all ps > .18).

In the second model participants responses to the gay rights measures were regressed on gender, religious affiliation, political affiliation, race, and

[10] Similar, less pronounced, relationships were found with a model that did not control for prior evaluations.

age.[11] In each of the analyses, religious categories were collapsed in order to gain statistical power for those variables that lacked participants in specific categories. Three viable religious categories were created: Catholic, Protestant, and those who believed in God but did not affiliate with a particular religion. In order to gain adequate statistical power, all non-White participants were grouped together and compared against all White participants. As expected, most demographic variables were strong predictors of judgments on the outcomes measures. However, contrary to prior research, age was not a significant predictor of any of outcome measures so it was removed from the analyses. The models predicting gay marriage, gay adoption, and a ban on gay marriage were of good fit (all -2 Log Likelihoods > 76.75) and statistically reliable (all χ^2s > 25.02; all *ps* < .01). Each of these models predicted at least 81% of cases. Although this model did appear to fit well on the regulation measure (-2 Log Likelihood = 57.22 and 86.9% of cases predicted), it was not significant in the omnibus test of coefficients (χ^2 (6, 84) = 7.99; p = .24). A surface analysis of the means suggests that there may have been ceiling effects for this outcome measure, as the majority of participants were not in favor of regulating sexual acts between gays and lesbians. See Table 4 for all variable coefficients and percentages.

Consistent with previous work, gender, political affiliation, race, and religion were all strong predictor of judgments about gay rights issues (see Table 4). Each of these effects occurred in the expected direction: Males, Republicans,

[11] Diagnostic analyses revealed that age was positively skewed. Several transformations were performed in an attempt to eliminate problems of normality; however, none of the transformations were effective.

African Americans, and Protestants were consistently the most negative toward the gay rights issues, while males, Democrats, Whites, and those who did not affiliate with a particular religion were the most positive in their judgments. These analyses provide support for Hypotheses 3, 4, 5, and 6. No support was found for Hypothesis 7 (i.e., age) on the gay rights measures.

In the third model, responses to the gay rights measures were regressed on the four contact variables (i.e., whether participants knew a gay person, had a gay friend, had a gay acquaintance, and had a gay family member) and the attribution variable. The model was a good fit for all of the outcome measures (all -2 Log Likelihoods < 76.75) and statistically reliable (all χ^2s > 25.02; all *ps* < .01). The model predicted at least 83.7% of cases on the gay rights issues. As predicted, attribution and contact were significant predictors of judgments about the gay rights issues (see Table 5). Participants who attributed homosexuality to a personal choice were less supportive of all gay rights issues than those who did not attribute homosexuality to a personal choice. Contact also significantly predicted judgments, but only on the friend variable. That is, participants who indicated that they had a gay friend were more supportive of gay marriage and gay adoption, and less supportive of a gay marriage ban, than those indicated that they did not have a gay friend. The results provide support for Hypotheses 8 and 9 on the gay rights measures. Table 5 presents all regression coefficients and percentages.

Attitudes toward Lesbians and Gays Scale

Scores on the ATLG were computed to form a composite measure of attitudes ranging from 10 (positive attitudes) to 70 (negative attitudes). Diagnostic analyses revealed that the scores were positively skewed. A log-10 transformation was performed, resulting in a more normal distribution. ANOVAs and linear regressions were conducted on the transformed ATLG scale, with the same independent variables used in the gay rights analyses. In the first ANOVA, MS and method of transmission were entered as independent variables. Analysis revealed no main effects for either variable and there was no interaction between the variables (all Fs < .1.39; all ps > .25; all η_p^2s > .018). In the second ANOVA, MS was used as the independent variable, with the dataset grouped by pre-attitudes. Analysis revealed no effects for MS for any of the groups (all Fs < 1; all ps > .573; all η_p^2s < .059). In sum, analyses revealed that Hypotheses 1 and 10 were not supported on the ATLG scale.

Linear regressions were conducted to determine which demographic and experiential factors predicted attitudes on the ATLG scale. In the model of demographic predictors, age and political affiliation did not predict scores; thus, these two variables were not included in the final model. Results indicated that gender, religious affiliation, and race significantly predicted ATLG scores (b = .5; β = .25; F (3, 80) = 8.65; p < .01). Consistent with previous findings, males (M = 1.56; SD = .24) were more negative than females (M = 1.35; SD = .21) on the ATLG measure (t = 2.88; p < .01). Protestants were the most negative toward gays and lesbians (M = 1.49; SD = .22), followed by Catholics (M = 1.35; SD =

.22), participants who believe in God but do not have a particular faith (M = 1.33; SD = .18) and Atheists/Agnostics (M = 1.19; SD = .16; t = -2.99; p < .01). Finally, those grouped in the other category (i.e., Africans Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans) were less favorable toward gays and lesbians (M = 1.49; SD = .19) than Whites (M = 1.33; SD = .23; t = -2.58; p < .02). Thus, Hypotheses 3, 4, and 6 were confirmed and Hypotheses 5 and 7 were not confirmed on the ATLG scale.

In the second model, ATLG scores were regressed on the contact and attribution variables. Of the contact variables, only having a gay friend was a significant predictor of judgments. Thus, the other contact variables were not included in the final model. Analysis suggested that having a gay friend and attribution significantly predicted attitudes on the ATLG scale (b = .68; β = .46; F (2, 96) = 40.72; p < .01). Specifically, those who believed that being gay was a choice were more negative (M = 1.55; SD = .22) than those who believed being gay was not a choice (M = 1.25; SD = .17t = -6.97; p < .01) and those who did not have gay friends were more negative (M = 1.52; SD = .24) than those who did have gay friends (M = 1.30; SD = .21; t = 3.91; p < .01). Thus, Hypotheses 8 and 9 were supported on the ATLG scale.

Ratings of the Gay Rights Issues

MANOVAs were conducted for the analyses of participants' ratings of strength, confidence, and importance of the gay rights issues. Prior to addressing any hypotheses, preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure there were no pre-

existing flaws in the data. The appropriate transformations were conducted but none were able to remedy normality problems.

A between-groups MANOVA was conducted to determine if MS impacted participant ratings of strength, confidence, and importance on the gay rights issues. For each of the analyses, MS and participant votes (either for or against) were used as independent variables and the strength, confidence, and importance measures were used as the dependent variables. Analysis revealed that there were no significant interactions for the gay marriage, regulation of sex, and marriage ban variables (all Fs < 2.24; all ps > .10), suggesting that MS did not impact importance, confidence, or strength ratings for these variables. However, a significant interaction between participant vote and MS was found on participant ratings of strength for gay adoption (F (2, 173) = 7.28; p < .01). Pairwise analyses suggested that, among participants who voted against gay adoption, those who were in the 9/11 condition felt more strongly about the issue (M = 3.5; SD = 2.39) than participants in the Madrid condition (M = 1.64; SD = 1.45). Similar to Study 1, analyses revealed trends in ratings of these variables based on participant votes on the issues. Specifically, participants who were in favor of gay rights issues were significantly more likely to feel strongly about the issue than participants who were against gay rights issues (all Fs > 5.92; all ps < .01).

Discussion

In Study 2, terrorist attacks were expected to prime MS, subsequently leading to more negative overall evaluations of gay rights issues and gays and lesbians generally. This effect was expected to be particularly strong for the 9/11

stimuli (as compared to the Madrid stimuli), given that this event was proximal for Americans. There was no main effect for MS on any variables and limited evidence that 9/11 impacted judgments and attitudes at all. In fact, judgments of those in the 9/11 conditions were only different from those in the Madrid or control conditions on the measure of how strongly participants felt about the issue among those who voted against gay adoption. Thus, there was no support for Hypothesis 1 and little support for the notion that 9/11 primed MS for participants. These findings, coupled with the pilot study results, suggest that 9/11 does not serve as an effective MS prime for Americans. See Table 6 for a summary of hypotheses for Study 2.

Although there were no main effects for the MS variable, there were several interaction effects (between MS and method of transmission) suggesting that reminders of the Madrid bombing produced MS effects. First, analyses of participants grouped according to pre-attitudes revealed that the Madrid bombing stimuli did lead to more negative judgments among those who had positive pre-attitudes. Specifically, participants in the Madrid conditions were marginally more in favor of the gay marriage ban than those in the control conditions. This finding suggests that participants with crystallized attitudes may actually become more negative toward gay rights issues when reminded of this terrorist attack. Interactions between MS and method of transmission suggested that participants in the Madrid written condition were consistently more negative in their judgments, as compared to those in the control written conditions. This effect was seen for each of the gay rights issues. Contrary to predictions, analyses revealed a

consistent and strong effect for the written Madrid stimuli. These results suggest that written reminders of the Madrid bombing prime MS for individuals, leading to more negative judgments about gay rights. Thus, Hypotheses 10 and 14 were partially supported in Study 2.

Demographic and experiential factors were significant predictors of judgments and attitudes in Study 2. Gender, religion, political affiliation, and race all predicted at least some judgments on the gay rights issues and gender, religious affiliation, and race significantly predicted attitudes on the ATLG scale. These effects were in expected directions, such that males, Protestants, Republicans, and non-Whites were the least supportive of the gay rights issues. Consistent with Study 1, contact and attribution were also strong predictors of judgments and attitudes. Specifically, participants who indicated that they did not have a gay friend, and those who did not believe in genetic causation, were the least supportive of the gay rights issues (and gays and lesbians generally). These findings provide support for Hypotheses 3 through 6 and 8 and 9. However, Hypothesis 7 was not supported in these analyses, which was likely due to the homogeneity of the sample (in terms of age).

Study 2 results suggest that a terrorist attack may indeed trigger MS, but only when the attack is socially and spatially distant and in written format. These findings are somewhat contradictory to the hypothesis that the 9/11 video would be the most powerful MS stimulus. There are several potential explanations for these effects. First, it is possible that differences in the 9/11 and Madrid stimuli could have primed other emotional responses, such as sadness or anger. Though

the pretest revealed that the 9/11 video was more sad, depressing, and interesting for participants, these differences were not found in Study 2. Rather, participants in Study 2 were more sad and angry when shown video of both 9/11 and the Madrid as compared to their written counterparts. Further, written descriptions of 9/11 and the Madrid bombing were consistently given lower scores (as compared to the video stimuli) on measures such as how interesting and graphic the information was. Thus, these analyses do not indicate that qualities about the stimuli primed different emotional responses which could be responsible for the null findings (for the video stimuli).

Analyses of participant perceptions of the stimuli do lend some clues as to why reading about the Madrid bombing might have primed MS, which subsequently led to more negative judgments. As discussed, written descriptions were consistently perceived as less sad, less interesting, and less graphic by participants. Given that MS operates at the edge of consciousness (see Florian et al., 2001), when individuals are not quite aware of its existence, it follows that the video primes might have led to a greater awareness on the part of the participants, as compared to the written primes. [12] Thus, video reminders of terrorist attacks might not prime MS because they are more noticeable to participants than written reminders. Although this explains why the written stimuli primed MS, and the video stimuli did not, it does not explain why written descriptions of 9/11 were not effective MS primes (i.e., they did not lead to more negative judgments and

[12] It is worth noting that proven MS primes (e.g., asking participants to think about their own deaths) also appear to operate at conscious levels.

attitudes). It is plausible that the written 9/11 stimulus was not effective because these terrorist attacks have been so prominent in the American media, which could have resulted in an inert stimulus (due to overexposure to this event). That is, 9/11 might not prime thoughts about mortality because seeing and hearing about the event has become commonplace for American citizens. Alternatively, and more aligned with CLT, is the possibility that 9/11 activated more concrete thinking because it is a psychologically proximal event for Americans, whereas the Madrid bombing activated more abstract and stereotypic thinking because it is a psychologically distant event. Assuming this to be the case, and following the line of logic presented in Study 1, participant judgments of gay rights issues should be more negative in the Madrid conditions. Further research is needed to clarify the mechanisms behind these effects, given that the results found in Study 2 were not expected.

The findings of Study 2 also cloud the relationship between MS and participant judgments about gay marriage. Study 1 revealed that MS led to more positive judgments on the gay marriage initiative for participants who were ambivalent about gays and lesbians. The opposite effect was found in Study 2, as written reminders of the Madrid bombing led to more negative judgments on all of the gay rights measures. In fact, limited evidence suggested that reminders of the Madrid bombing let to more negative judgments about gay rights for participants with positive attitudes toward gays and lesbians. Given that the samples in both studies were similar in regard to their judgments on the gay rights issues and attitudes about gays and lesbians, it follows that participants in both

samples should be impacted by MS similarly. In other words, MS should activate the same cultural worldviews and manifest into similar effects in terms of judgments and attitudes. However, something about the Madrid bombing appeared to prime more negative responses than the traditional MS stimuli (used in Study 1). One plausible explanation for these disparate findings is that the Madrid bombing primed participants to think about issues more abstractly and stereotypically (as compared to 9/11) because it was a psychologically distant event. That is, participants in the Madrid bombing may have been primed to conceptualize issues stereotypically because they were asked to think about an event that was socially and spatially distant. Alternatively, the written 9/11 stimulus might have primed participants to think about the prevailing cultural worldview (at the University in this case) because it was an event that was relevant and proximal to most Americans. Conversely, the written Madrid stimulus might have primed more conservative response because the stimulus was not relevant or proximal for most Americans. However, lacking any direct evidence, it is difficult to determine if the Madrid stimuli led to abstract and stereotypic thinking on other unrelated issues (e.g., gay marriage).

Results of Study 2 suggest that reminders of terrorist attacks do prime MS, but only when the primes are psychologically distant and in written form. The effects of MS were in the opposite direction of the effects found in Study 1, as participants in the written Madrid condition gave the most negative judgments on the gay rights measures. Although purely speculative at this point, it is plausible that these differences were due to the psychologically distant nature of the MS

stimuli in Study 2. Further research is needed to examine the specific cognitive mechanisms that are driving these effects. The findings in Study 2 also confirmed that participants who were in favor of the gay rights issues felt more strongly about the issues than participants who were against the gay rights issues. These findings provide further evidence that the sample was strongly in favor of gay rights.

Chapter 11 - General Discussion

Social psychologists and other scholars have attempted to determine how and why people form attitudes about gays and lesbians and gay rights issues. This line of research has yielded several reliable demographic (e.g., gender, see Herek, 2002) and experiential (e.g., contact; see Castro-Convers, 2005) predictors of attitudes. However, very few studies have explored how context can impact attitudes and judgments. The purpose of the current research was to examine some of the contextual factors that might influence individual judgments about gay rights issues and, more generally, attitudes about gays and lesbians. Results can be used to inform our understanding of why individuals vote for or against gay rights issues.

Analyses suggested that community sentiment can be at least partially shaped by contextual influences. Mortality salience influenced participant judgments in both studies. In Study 1, participants who were ambivalent about gays and lesbians gave more favorable judgments of the gay marriage initiative when in the MS condition, as compared to those in the control condition. Consistent with the principles of TMT, this finding suggests that, when facing thoughts about their own deaths, participants were swayed toward the dominant cultural worldview (which was largely in favor of gay rights). In Study 2, the MS stimulus also impacted participant judgments, but only for those who read about the Madrid bombing. Thus, reminders of the 9/11 terrorist attacks did not appear to prime MS for participants. Further, analyses of other emotional factors suggested that video clips of terrorist attacks may not prime MS because

participants are more aware of the presence of MS. Inconsistencies in the direction of the effects of MS were presumably due to the nature of the MS manipulation. Although it is unclear why the traditional MS stimulus primed more positive responses and the Madrid bombing primed more negative responses, it is plausible that the Madrid bombing primed more abstract and stereotypic thinking, thus leading to more negative responses. Further research is needed to clarify these findings.

The results of both studies also revealed that psychological distance can influence individual judgments about gay rights and attitudes about gays and lesbians. Though the effects were inconsistent, there was some evidence that psychologically proximal targets and events led to more positive judgments as compared to distant events (in Study 1). Specifically, results suggested that a socially proximal target led to more positive judgments about the initiative when participants were asked to think about a distant initiative, and a spatially distant event led to more positive judgments when participants were asked to think about a socially proximal target. Contrary to predictions in Hypothesis 13, judgments did not appear to be more favorable when proximal conditions were paired together. These results suggest that a socially *or* spatially proximal stimulus can lead to concrete thinking about gay rights issues (and subsequently more positive judgments), while a pairing of both might possibly lead to an scenario that is uncomfortable for participants (perhaps because it is too proximal). Study 1 results also revealed an interaction between MS and psychological distance on participant's ratings about the target. Among those in the socially and spatially

proximal conditions, MS was found to positively impact judgments about the target (as compared to the control stimulus). This finding provides additional support for the effects of MS in Study 1.

Distance also appeared to impact judgments in Study 2, although not in the expected direction. Specifically, a written form of the psychologically distant terrorist attack (i.e., the Madrid bombing) appeared to prime MS, whereas a psychologically proximal terrorist attack (i.e., 9/11) did not. It was expected that the Madrid bombing would prime MS; however, this distant stimulus was not expected to be a stronger prime than reminders of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Although purely speculative without further investigation, it is plausible (according to the tenets of CLT) that the Madrid bombing primed thoughts of death that were more distant (than the 9/11 or control stimuli), thus leading to abstract thinking about gay rights issues and subsequently negative judgments. Previous TMT research (summarized in Chapter 6) has not investigated if and how different types of MS primes may lead to different cultural worldviews (and thus different judgments) for participants. Thus, the disparate results found in Study 1 and Study 2 are difficult to reconcile considering that an MS stimulus should lead to the same outcomes in terms of judgments and attitudes. Future research is needed to clarify these results.

In sum, both studies provided support for the notion that contextual factors can influence judgments and attitudes. These findings have important implications for the legal system because community sentiment can and does impact law (see Chapter 4). Therefore, these contextual factors are important to understand and

account for when attempting to understand the legal landscape for gay rights issues.

Implications for the Legal System

The research presented herein suggests that attitudes and judgments about political issues (e.g., gay marriage) are potentially fragile across time and place. Although demographics (e.g., gender, religion) may be the primary predictors of judgments about gay rights issues, there is presumably a large contingent of Americans who are responsive to contextual cues (e.g., mortality salience) when deciding how they think and feel about these issues. Indeed, the results of the studies presented herein suggest that even those with particularly strong attitudes about gays and lesbians were impacted by contextual factors.

These findings have important implications for lawmakers, scholars, and advocates for and against gay rights, both in the analysis of previous jurisprudence and in the prediction of future laws and policies. Results can lend some clues about why California citizens recently voted to ban gay marriage in the State. Specifically, voters primed to think about their own deaths might have been more likely to vote against the initiative (i.e., vote for gay marriage) than those who did not experience such primes. Conversely, voters who were primed with written reminders of terrorism (e.g., through reading a newspaper article) might have been more likely to vote for the initiative than voters who did not experience such primes. Social distance from a gay or lesbian target might have also impacted judgments about the Proposition. Voters who had close (gay) acquaintances might have been more likely to vote for the initiative than those

who did not. In sum, mortality salience and psychological distance are two contextual factors that can be used to explain why California voters did not support the legalization of gay marriage in the State.

Results also can predict how context will impact future legal decisions concerning gay rights. In addition to influencing the decisions of lawmakers and judges (discussed below), mortality salience and psychological distance could impact outcomes in jury trials involving violence or discrimination against gays and lesbians. On the one hand, jurors who read about foreign terrorist attacks before or during a trial may be less likely to convict a defendant accused of discrimination against a gay or lesbian citizen than those who are not exposed to such material. On the other hand, jurors who are primed to think about their own deaths would be more likely side with the plaintiff, as compared to those jurors who are not primed to think about their own deaths. Thus, a trial involving heinous acts of violence against a gay individual (e.g., the case of Matthew Sheppard) would presumably prime thoughts about death for the jurors, and lead to more support for the side of the plaintiff. However, it is important to note that these effects may vary significantly among different types of jurors (i.e., those with negative pre-attitudes toward gays and lesbians), given that MS enhances one's cultural worldview. Social and spatial distance from a target (e.g., the plaintiff) and event (e.g., the trial) might also play a role in a juror's decision in a trial. Results from the two studies indicate that jurors would be more likely to convict a person accused of violence against a gay individual when the trial occurs in the juror's place of residence or hometown, provided that they do not

have any social ties to the plaintiff. Alternatively, jurors might side with the defendant if the trial occurred in proximal location and the juror had some social tie to the plaintiff.[13] In short, the findings presented herein have implications for future decisions concerning gays and lesbians, and gay rights issues.

On a more general level, these studies have implications for the legal system's reliance on community sentiment to inform laws. These findings suggest that community sentiment may be unreliable across different contexts. Further, citizens are susceptible to biases (e.g., use of morality in judgment; see Burdette, Ellison, & Hill, 2005) that hinder the ability to make objective judgments. Another problem is accurately gauging community sentiment, such that legislators and judges are informed with actual, rather than perceived, sentiment. Given what is known about measurement error and the contextual variability of judgments, is it prudent for judges and legislators to listen to the community when making decisions?

Justice Scalia, for one, believes that judges should not adhere to community sentiment when making decisions. His dissenting opinion in *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey* enunciated his position:

> How upsetting is it that that so many of our citizens think that we Justices should properly take into account their views, as though we were engaged not in ascertaining an objective law but in determining some kind of social consensus (Finkel, 1995, p. 18).

[13] However, this is not likely to happen because this juror would likely be eliminated in voir dire proceedings.

According to this view, law should be decided by judges and legislators because the public does not make objective decisions. Indeed, the evidence presented in this work suggests that people do not always make objective decisions: they are sometimes guided by emotion, mood, and biases. However, Justice Scalia's argument is flawed in that it assumes judges and legislators are not susceptible to the same biases and contextual influences. Although elected and appointed officials are presumably more informed about law and policy (as compared to community members), they may nonetheless be impacted by contextual influences and biases. If judges and lawmakers are susceptible to the same biases as individual citizens, it follows that community sentiment should play at least some role in jurisprudence. Increasing the size of a sample is beneficial to research just as it is beneficial to lawmaking: it controls for variability (i.e., standard deviations). In research terms, a sample size of nine yields more variable results than do larger sample sizes (e.g., 300 million or some subset of that) obtained from the community. In short, if both judges/lawmakers and citizens are susceptible to social cognitive phenomena, it would be beneficial - in terms of reducing the impact of malleable attitudes and judgments – for judges and lawmakers to consider community sentiment in their decisions.

Legal precedent provides another reason for using community sentiment in lawmaking. For instance, in *Weems* v. *U.S.* (1910), the Supreme Court embraced public opinion as a source of meaning about appropriate punishment (Finkel, 1995). Similarly, *Trope* v. *Dulles* (1958) established that "an amendment must draw its meaning from the evolving standards of decency that mark the

progress of a maturing society" (p. 101). In addition, feeling that the court is legitimate is less likely to occur when laws are out of tune with sentiment (Finkel, 1995). This is important because beliefs that the law is unjust or illegitimate may lead to a generalized disrespect for the law (Robinson & Darley, 1995) and decreased compliance with the law (Finkel, 1995; see Blumenthal, 2003). In sum, the recognition of community sentiment is backed by legal precedent and has potentially beneficial outcomes for legal compliance.

Limitations and Future Directions

This research was limited in several ways. First, the results from both studies lack generalizability because a convenience sample was used. Thus, it is necessarily difficult to extrapolate the results to greater populations given that a representative sample was not used. Also troubling to the generalizability of the results was the homogenous nature of the sample. University and community members were recruited in order to improve sample diversity; however, there were no significant differences between the University and community samples in terms of age, race, and gender. The majority of participants were under 28 (76.3%), female (74.3%), and White (67.6%; see Table 7) and all participants completed the study online. Given that the sample was dominated by participants in this demographic, it is not particularly surprising that participants were largely in favor of gay rights and gays and lesbians generally (see Herek & Capitanio, 1999; Lewis, 2003**)**. Because the study was conducted online, among those who have favorable attitudes toward gay rights, the results are not generalizable to the

overall population in the United States. It is plausible that the manipulation used in these studies could have impacted a more representative sample differently.

The homogenous nature of the sample (in terms of attitudes toward gays and lesbians) also limited several analyses. First, age was not a significant predictor of attitudes (as predicted by previous work). This null finding was presumably due to the homogenous nature of the sample. Second, interaction analyses between MS and psychological distance were not possible (due to a small sample size) when participants were grouped according to pre-attitudes. Although necessary due to resource constraints, the sampling techniques used in this research limit the generalizability of the results and the analyses that could be conducted. Future research on this topic should utilize more representative and diverse samples.

Similar to other experimental designs, this research was limited in that it used an artificial context to examine relationships between the variables of interest. Participants in both studies were asked to complete the MS task and then provide judgments on gay rights issues *as if* they were really voting. However, it is difficult to determine how realistic these scenarios were for participants, and if participants would have reacted similarly to the stimuli in a real-world context. That is, the external validity of the results is hard to establish given the nature of the research methods. Although the experimental design allows for more control, the elimination of potential confounds, and subsequently greater internal validity, it limits the real world implications of the research. In order to provide additional evidence of the effects found in these studies, future research could examine these

phenomena in more realistic settings. For instance, researchers could examine public opinion data about gay rights following terrorist attacks or survey participants near a funeral home (similar to Pyszczynski et al., 1996).

In discussing the stimuli used in this research, it is important to revisit the limitations of using actual terrorist attacks as the MS primes. These stimuli are appealing in that they are realistic, and thus provide a more accurate picture (as compared to artificial stimuli) of individuals' responses to actual terrorist attacks. However, because these events are inherently different from one another, it is impossible to separate the particular cognitive mechanisms that each may prime, which subsequently impact judgments. Emotional responses (e.g., sadness and anger) to these different terrorist attacks were examined and results indicated responses to video of 9/11 and the Madrid bombing were not different, suggesting that these stimuli may not prime different emotional responses. However, given that the pilot study revealed differences between 9/11 and the Madrid bombing, further research is needed to clarify whether or not there are qualities other than MS that are being primed with these events.

Another potential limitation with this research is the use of the Internet as the sole mode of data collection. In particular, the use of online surveys is presumed to be a contributor to the relatively low response rate (roughly 66% of participants completed the entire study overall). Further, because it was not known who dropped out of the study, it was impossible to determine if there were any meaningful differences - in terms of attitudes toward gay rights and how participants might respond to the independent variables - between those who

completed the study and those who did not. The online method of data collection was certainly more efficient in terms of data collection and entry than traditional in-person experiments. In addition, evidence (see e.g., Kypri, Stephenson, & Langley, 2004) suggests that the online survey method elicits more honest responses from participants, as compared to other methods (e.g., face-to-face interviews). However, there are inherent disadvantages associated with online data collection (e.g., lower response rate) which could potentially impact the findings. As discussed above, future research on the topic should use different modes of data collection.

Three other potential (and related) limitations are related to the context in which participant responding occurred. First, it is possible that the proposition to ban gay marriage in California might have influenced judgments because it was a salient issue at the time the study was being conducted. Individuals might have been thinking and discussing gay marriage frequently during this time period, which could have impacted judgments either for or against gay rights. It is impossible to control for the impact of current events such as these, but it is worth noting that their existence could have influenced responses. Another possible limitation is that the inclusion of the pre-attitudinal measures (i.e., the evaluation thermometer) could have primed participants to be consistent in their subsequent judgments and attitudes. Thus, if a participant was aware that he provided a negative response to the pre-attitudinal measure, he may want to remain consistently negative in future judgments about gay rights. Finally, it is possible that the academic setting in which the experiments occurred primed participants

to think about the University subgroup to which they belonged. This would explain why MS (as compared to the control) led to more positive judgments for individuals with ambivalent attitudes – lacking any strong feelings about the gay rights issues, these participants might have simply adhered to the popular sentiment of the subgroup. Using this logic, it is likely that the same group of participants would have responded differently if asked to complete the experiment in a different setting (e.g., a church).

Conclusion

Acts of discrimination against classes, cultures, races, and sexes are familiar to most civilizations throughout human history. The United States is no exception, as slavery, segregation, and unequal treatment under the law have left a scar in American history books. The civil rights movement of the mid 20th century gained freedoms for many oppressed citizens in the United States; however basic rights of gays and lesbians remain dubious, more than a half century after this movement began. Although some states (e.g., Massachusetts) have affirmed gay rights, others (e.g., Florida) have denied these rights. Perhaps the most telling account of gay rights in 21st century America was the recently passed California proposition to ban gay marriage (Garrison et al., 2008). In arguably the most socially liberal state in the union, gay marriage rights were not affirmed by the general public. This outcome suggests that community sentiment toward gay marriage was more negative than positive in California.

The present research can inform how community sentiment is shaped. Results indicated that attitudes about gay rights issues are susceptible to different

contextual cues, such as thoughts about death and how the target or issue is represented cognitively. It is important that researchers continue to examine other contextual cues in order to better understand the forces behind community sentiment.

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Appendix A

Evaluation Thermometers (Studies 1 and 2)

Please provide a number between 0/degrees and 100/degrees to indicate your overall evaluation of: HOMOSEXUALS

POSITIVE	100/deg	Extremely Favorable
	90/deg	Very Favorable
	80/deg	Quite Favorable
	70/deg	Fairly Favorable
	60/deg	Slightly Favorable
	50/deg	Neither Favorable nor Unfavorable
	40/deg	Slightly Unfavorable
	30/deg	Fairly Unfavorable
	20/deg	Quite Unfavorable
	10/deg	Very Unfavorable
NEGATIVE	0/deg	Extremely Unfavorable

Please provide a number between 0/degrees and 100/degrees to indicate your overall evaluation of: AFRICAN-AMERICANS

POSITIVE	100/deg	Extremely Favorable
	90/deg	Very Favorable
	80/deg	Quite Favorable
	70/deg	Fairly Favorable
	60/deg	Slightly Favorable
	50/deg	Neither Favorable nor Unfavorable
	40/deg	Slightly Unfavorable
	30/deg	Fairly Unfavorable
	20/deg	Quite Unfavorable
	10/deg	Very Unfavorable
NEGATIVE	0/deg	Extremely Unfavorable

Please provide a number between 0/degrees and 100/degrees to indicate your overall evaluation of: HISPANIC-AMERICANS

POSITIVE	100/deg	Extremely Favorable
	90/deg	Very Favorable
	80/deg	Quite Favorable
	70/deg	Fairly Favorable
	60/deg	Slightly Favorable
	50/deg	Neither Favorable nor Unfavorable
	40/deg	Slightly Unfavorable
	30/deg	Fairly Unfavorable
	20/deg	Quite Unfavorable
	10/deg	Very Unfavorable
NEGATIVE	0/deg	Extremely Unfavorable

Please provide a number between 0/degrees and 100/degrees to indicate your overall evaluation of: SENIOR-CITIZENS

POSITIVE	100/deg	Extremely Favorable
	90/deg	Very Favorable
	80/deg	Quite Favorable
	70/deg	Fairly Favorable
	60/deg	Slightly Favorable
	50/deg	Neither Favorable nor Unfavorable
	40/deg	Slightly Unfavorable
	30/deg	Fairly Unfavorable
	20/deg	Quite Unfavorable
	10/deg	Very Unfavorable
NEGATIVE	0/deg	Extremely Unfavorable

Appendix B

Materials (Study 1)

MS and Control Treatments

Experimental Condition: Please briefly describe the emotions that the thought of your own death arouses in you and jot down and, specifically as you can, what you think will happen to you as you physically die and once you are physically dead.

Control Condition: Please briefly describe the emotions that the thought of dental pain arouses in you and jot down and, specifically as you can, what you think will happen to you as you experience dental pain.

Scenario and Argument

First, I would like you to think of a person that you went to high school with. This can be any person that you knew from high school, provided that it is someone you have positive feelings toward and were acquainted with, but were not close friends with. Take as long as you need to think of a specific person. You will need to remember this person in the next activity. Please write down on a piece of paper, and type in the box below, the initials of the person. Once you have thought of this person please continue to the next section.

Please read the following scenario:

Imagine that you are sitting in on a city council meeting that is being held in your hometown/**distant town in spatially distant condition**. Of the many topics discussed, the most heated is a proposed initiative to legalize gay marriage.

If passed, the initiative would effectively give gay men and lesbians the legal right to marry. That is, if more individuals in your community/**distant location** voted for the initiative than against it, the city would legally recognize the marriage of two same-sex partners.

Although there are several people arguing for the initiative, an argument from one person sticks out to you *because the person is a former acquaintance of yours from high school - the one that you were asked to imagine previously*. The person makes the following argument: "Restricting marriage rights on the basis of sexual orientation is a violation of constitutional equal protection rights. Same-sex couples are just as capable of raising kids and having 'normal' families as heterosexual couples. Furthermore, allowing gay marriage will not lead to more loose marriage laws. As a gay individual, this is particularly important to me because I do not have equal rights."

(**Key**: *Italicized* = Socially proximal condition; Underline = Spatially proximal condition; **Bold** = Spatially distant condition).

Now imagine that you are asked to vote on the issue at hand. A vote for the initiative would mean that you believe that gay and lesbian citizens in the area should be able to marry legally, whereas a vote against the initiative would mean that you believe that gay and lesbians citizens should not be able to marry legally. Please answer the following questions:

_____ I vote *for* the initiative (gay marriage should be legalized)

_____ I *do not vote for* the initiative (gays and lesbians should be prohibited from marrying)

How strongly do you feel that the city should be required to recognize gay marriage rights?

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

Not strongly at all Neutral Very Strongly

How confident are you with your decision?

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

(not confident at all) (neither confident nor unconfident) (very confident)

_____ I vote *against* the initiative (gay marriage should not be legalized).

_____ I *do not vote against* the initiative (gays and lesbians should not be prohibited from marrying)

How important is this issue to you?

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

(not important at all) (neither important nor unimportant) (very important)

In the next set of questions, you will be asked to rate the person who argued for the initiative on several dimensions.

How likeable was the person?

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

(not likable) (neither likable nor unlikable) (very likeable)

How intelligent was the person?

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

(not intelligent) (neither intelligent nor unintelligent) (very intelligent)

How credible was the person?

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

(not credible) (neither credible nor uncredible) (very credible)

Appendix C

Short Version of the ATLG Scale (Studies 1 and 2)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement. (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree).

1. Lesbians just can't fit into our society.

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

(strongly disagree) (neither agree nor disagree) (strongly agree)

2. State laws regulating private, consenting lesbian behavior should be loosened.

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

(strongly disagree) (neither agree nor disagree) (strongly agree)

3. Female homosexuality is a sin.

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

(strongly disagree) (neither agree nor disagree) (strongly agree)

4. Female homosexuality in itself is no problem, but what society makes of it can be a problem.

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

(strongly disagree) (neither agree nor disagree) (strongly agree)

5. Lesbians are sick.

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

(strongly disagree) (neither agree nor disagree) (strongly agree)

6. I think male homosexuals are disgusting.

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

(strongly disagree) (neither agree nor disagree) (strongly agree)

7. Male homosexuality is a perversion.

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

(strongly disagree) (neither agree nor disagree) (strongly agree)

8. Just as in other species, male homosexuality is a natural expression of sexuality in human men.

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

(strongly disagree) (neither agree nor disagree) (strongly agree)

9. Homosexual behavior between two men is just plain wrong.

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

(strongly disagree) (neither agree nor disagree) (strongly agree)

10. Male homosexuality is merely a different kind of lifestyle that should not be condemned.

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

(strongly disagree) (neither agree nor disagree) (strongly agree)

Appendix D

Questionnaire (Studies 1 and 2)

Demographic Information:

Instructions: Please answer the following demographic questions. All information will be kept confidential.

Age:_____

Gender: (check one) _____Male _____Female

Are you a student? _____Yes _____No
If yes, what is your major course of
study?_____

What is your racial/ethnic background?

_____African-American _____Native American

_____Asian-American _____White American

_____Hispanic-American _____Other (specify_____)

What is your annual household income from all sources (e.g., parent's income, child support received, personal income) or parent's income (if applicable)?

_____Less than $20,000 _____$60,000 to $69,999

_____$20,000 to $29,999 _____$70,000 to $79,999

_____$30,000 to $39,999 _____$80,000 to $89,999

_____$40,000 to $49,999 _____$90,000 or more

_____$50,000 to $59,999

Please specify the political party you are most closely affiliated with

_____Republican
_____Democrat
_____Independent
_____Other (please specify)

Please specify your sexual orientation.
_____Heterosexual ("Straight")
_____Homosexual (Gay)
_____Bi-Sexual
_____Other (please specify)

What is your religious background?
_____ Catholic
_____ Eastern Orthodox: please specify (e.g., Greek orthodox) _____
_____ Protestant: please specify (e.g. Baptist, Methodist) _____
_____ Jewish: please specify (e.g. orthodox, reformed) _____
_____ Hindu
_____ Buddhist
_____ Muslim
_____ Other (please specify _____)
_____ Atheist
_____ Agnostic
_____ I believe in God, but do not have a particular faith.

Do you know anyone who is openly gay?
_____ Yes
_____ No

Do you have any friends who are openly gay?
_____ Yes
_____ No

Do you have any acquaintances who are openly gay?
_____ Yes
_____ No

Do you have any family members who are openly gay?
_____ Yes
_____ No

Do you believe that gay men and lesbians choose to be gay?
_____ I believe that homosexuality is a choice (i.e., people choose to be gay)
_____ I believe that homosexuality is NOT a choice (i.e., people are born gay)
_____ I am unsure about whether or not homosexuality is a choice

Suspicion and Manipulation Checks

Please answer the following questions about the survey that you just completed (*Study 1):*

1. Do you think you know what the purpose of the current study was?
___Yes (answer question 2) ___No (Skip to question 3) ___Unsure (Skip to question 3)

2. What do you think the purpose of the current study was?

3. What were you asked to write about in this study?
___Dental Work ___Your own death

4. Do you think the writing exercise affected the responses you gave?
___Yes (answer question 5) ___No (Skip to question 6) ___Unsure (Skip to question 6)

5. How do you think the writing exercise affected your responses?

6. In what city was the gay marriage initiative proposed?
Your hometown___ A distant city___

7. What is your relationship with the person who gave the argument for the gay marriage initiative?

___Close acquaintance from high school ___ A stranger

8. Do you think the instruction to bring someone to mind affected your responses *(questions 8-10 experimental condition only)*?
___Yes (answer question 9) ___No (Skip to question 10) ___Unsure (Skip to question 10)

9. How do you think the instruction to bring someone to mind affected your responses?

10. Who were you asked to bring to mind? Please indicate their initials (this was asked to determine if participants could remember the person they were asked to think of).

Please answer the following questions about the survey that you just completed (*Study 2*):

1. Do you think you know what the purpose of the current study was?
___Yes (answer question 2) ___No (Skip to question 3) ___Unsure (Skip to question 3)

2. What do you think the purpose of the current study was?

3. What was the topic of the video/reading that you viewed/read?

___A terrorist attack in the United States ____ A terrorist attack in a foreign country ___A news story about dental work

4. Do you think that watching the video/reading the description affected the responses you gave?
___Yes (answer question 5) ___No ___Unsure

5. How do you think watching the video/reading the description affected your responses?

Appendix E

Written Descriptions of the 9/11 and Madrid terrorist attacks (Study 2)

9/11 Attacks: On the morning of September 11, 2001, two planes crashed into the north and south buildings of the world trade center in New York City. As a result hundreds of Americans were left dead and injured. The events led to a gruesome and horrifying scene. One person involved said: “I saw people with blood pouring from them, people on the ground." Another person said that he “held a girl as she died in his arms.”

Madrid Attacks: On the morning of March 11, 2004, a series of coordinated bombs were detonated on busy commuter trains in Madrid, Spain. As a result, hundreds of Spaniards were left dead and injured. The events led to a gruesome and horrifying scene. One person involved said: “I saw people with blood pouring from them, people on the ground." Another person said that he “held a girl as she died in his arms.”

Descriptions of the video of 9/11 and Madrid terrorist attacks (Study 2)

9/11 Attacks: Video was approximately two minutes in length, showing clips of the 9/11 terrorist attack and its aftermath. Clips were extracted from various news sources and online postings.

Madrid Attacks: Video was approximately two minutes in length, showing clips of the Madrid terrorist attack and its aftermath. Clips were extracted from various news sources and online postings.

Appendix F

Ninth Justice Paradigm Scenario (Study 2)

In the following scenario, you will be asked to play the part of a judge/lawmaker. In the first three scenarios, please imagine that you are a Supreme Court Justice and you are asked to decide a case. In each of the cases, the other justices are split on the decision, such that 4 have voted to reverse the decisions of the lower courts and 4 have voted to affirm the decisions of the lower courts. Thus, the outcome of the case and the law of the nation will hinge on your decision (i.e., you will be given the chance to determine the law). In the forth scenario, you will be asked to act as a legislator by deciding on a particular issue.

Scenario Number 1 – Gay Marriage

In this case, the Supreme Court is hearing an appeal of a gay advocacy group that is challenging current laws which ban gay marriage in the United States. These groups argue that states should be required to recognize marriage between two individuals of the same sex because it is unconstitutional to discriminate against gays and lesbians. After being rejected by a state Supreme Court, the United States Supreme Court decided to hear the advocacy group's appeal. Four of your fellow justices have voted with the gay advocacy group, which would make gay marriage legal in the United States. On the other side are 4 justices who believe that gay marriage should not be legalized and have thus voted to deny the appeal and retain previously held law banning same-sex marriage. It is your duty to decide if the case should be reversed or affirmed. Your

decision will effectively determine whether gay men and lesbians will have the right to marry in the United States. Please indicate how you would vote:

_____ I vote to reverse the state's decision, (I think states should be required to recognize gay marriage).

_____ I vote against reversing the state's decision (I think states should NOT be required to recognize gay marriage).

How strongly do you feel that states should be required to recognize gay marriage?

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

Not strongly at all Neutral Very Strongly

How confident are you with your decision?

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

(not confident at all) (neither confident nor unconfident) (very confident)

How important is this issue to you?

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

(not important at all) (neither important nor unimportant) (very important)

Scenario Number 2 – Gay Adoption

In this case, the Supreme Court is hearing an appeal from a gay person who has been denied the right to adopt children. The person is challenging state law that does not allow any gay individual to adopt. The case was rejected by the

state Supreme Court but the U.S. Supreme Court has decided to hear the appeal. In this case you will need to decide whether or not it is gay and lesbian citizens have the constitutional rights to adopt children. Four of the justices have decided the case should be affirmed, thus supporting a state's right to deny gay and lesbian citizens' rights to adopt children. On the other hand, four Supreme Court justices have decided to reverse the state's decision, making it unconstitutional for a state to prevent gay and lesbian citizens from adopting children. It is you duty to decide if the case should be reversed or affiremd. Your decision will effectively determine whether gay men and lesbians will have the right to adopt in the United States.

Please indicate how you would vote

_____ I vote to reverse the state's decision (I think states should be required to recognize gay and lesbian citizens as legal parents).

_____ I vote against reversing the state's decision (I think states should NOT be required to recognize gay and lesbian citizens as legal parents).

How strongly do you feel that states should be required to recognize gay and lesbian citizens as legal parents?

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

Not strongly at all Neutral Very Strongly

How confident are you with your decision?

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

(not confident at all) (neither confident nor unconfident) (very confident)

How important is this issue to you?

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

(not important at all) (neither important nor unimportant) (very important)

Scenario Number 3 – Sexual Rights of Gays and Lesbians

In this case, the U.S. Supreme Court is hearing an appeal from a man who was tried and convicted for having sex with another man. This offense was punishable with 12 months in jail under the state's law. After the state Supreme Court rejected his appeal, the U.S. Supreme Court decided to hear the case. Four justices have decided to reverse the state's decisions which will make it unconstitutional for a state to ban gay sex. On the other hand, the other four justices decided to affirm the decision, which would allow states to restrict gay sex. It is you duty to decide if the case should be reversed or retained. Your decision will effectively determine gay sex should be banned in the United States. Please indicate how you would vote

_____ I vote to affirm the state's decision (I think states should be allowed to restrict the sexual activities of gays and lesbians).

_____ I vote against affirming the state's decision (I think states should NOT be allowed to restrict the sexual activities of gays and lesbians).

How strongly do you feel that states should be allowed to restrict the sexual activities of gays and lesbians?

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

Not strongly at all Neutral Very Strongly

How confident are you with your decision?

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

(not confident at all) (neither confident nor unconfident) (very confident)

How important is this issue to you?

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

(not important at all) (neither important nor unimportant) (very important)

Scenario Number 4 – Banning Gay Marriage

In the next scenario, please imagine that you are a legislator in the U.S. Congress. You are set to decide on a Federal Marriage Amendment that would define marriage as the union of one man and one woman. As a legislator, it is your duty to decide on this Amendment. Your decision will help to determine whether the definition of marriage should be changed so that gay men and lesbians cannot marry across the United States.

Please indicate how you would vote:

_____ I vote for the Amendment, thus defining marriage as between a man and women (I think that gay marriage should NOT be allowed)

_____ I vote against the Amendment, thus not defining marriage as between a man and women (I think that gay marriage should be allowed).

How strongly do you feel that the Amendment should pass?

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

Not strongly at all Neutral Very Strongly

How confident are you with your decision?

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

(not confident at all) (neither confident nor unconfident) (very confident)

How important is this issue to you?

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7

(not important at all) (neither important nor unimportant) (very important)

Table 1

Study 1: Summary of Logistic Regression Coefficients for Gender, Political Affiliation, Religious Affiliation, Contact, and Attribution

Variable	*B*	*SE*	*Wald*	*p*	OR	%[1]
Model 2: Demographics						
Females	1.36	.49	7.70**	.006	3.89	69.9
Males						54.8
Republican			11.88**	.003		50.0
Democrat	-1.37	.47	8.50**	.004	2.55	78.2
Independent	2.5	.61	.16	.68	1.28	65.6
Model 2: Attribution						
Choice	-1.71	.45	14.43**	.001	5.53	55.7
Not a choice						86.3
No Friends						51.6
Friends	1.18	.46	6.62**	.01	.31	74.7

** Statistically significant
* Marginally significant
[1] Percentage vote for gay marriage initiative

Table 2

Study 1: Table of Hypotheses

	Gay Marriage	ATLG	Initiative Ratings	Target Ratings
Hypothesis 1 MS Main Effects	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported
Hypothesis 2 Distance Main Effects	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported	Partially Supported
Hypothesis 3 Gender	Supported	Supported	N/A	N/A
Hypothesis 4 Religion	Supported	Supported	N/A	N/A
Hypothesis 5 Pol. Affiliation	Supported	Not Supported	N/A	N/A
Hypothesis 6 Race	Not Supported	Supported	N/A	N/A
Hypothesis 7 Age	Not Supported	Not Supported	N/A	N/A
Hypothesis 8 Contact	Supported	Supported	N/A	N/A
Hypothesis 9 Attribution	Supported	Supported	N/A	N/A
Hypothesis 10 Interaction: Attitudes & MS	Partially Supported	Partially Supported	N/A	N/A
Hypothesis 11 Interaction: Attitudes & Distance	Partially Supported	Not Supported	N/A	N/A
Hypothesis 12 Interaction: Contact & Distance	Not Supported	Not Supported	N/A	N/A
Hypothesis 13 Interaction: Social & Spatial Distance	Not Supported	Not Supported	N/A	Partially Supported
Hypothesis 14 Interaction: Distance & MS	Not Supported	Not Supported	N/A	Partially Supported

Table 3

Video Pre-Test Results: Differences between 9/11 and Madrid Videos

Variable	*t*	*p*	*Mean*	η_p^2
Sadness	2.11**	.04	5.84	.09
Anger	-.67	.50	4.11	.01
Depression	1.88*	.07	4.79	.07
Death	.72	.47	5.72	.01
Information	.77	.49	3.61	.01
Interesting	2.78**	.01	6.00	.15
Graphic	1.23	.23	5.00	.03

All responses were on Likert-type scales (e.g., 1 = not sad; 4 = neutral; 7 = very sad)

**Statistically significant
*Marginally significant

Table 4

Study 2: Summary of Logistic Regression Coefficients for Gender, Political Affiliation, Religious Affiliation, Age, and Race on Dichotomous Outcome Measures

Variable	*B*	*SE*	*Wald*	*p*	*OR*	%[a]
Marriage						
Female	2.49	.97	6.63**	.010	12.07	73
Male						44
Republican[1]			16.94**	.001		27
Democrat	-3.95	.92	16.82**	.001	.02	89
Independent	-1.84	.86	4.62**	.032	.16	47.5
Race – Other	-2.09	.81	6.65**	.010	.12	60.6
Race – White	2.09	.81	6.65**	.010	.12	69
Protestant[1]			6.86**	.032		36.8
Catholic	-2.25	.96	5.54**	.019	.11	63.9
No Faith	-2.36	.96	6.08**	.014	.09	77.1
Adoption						
Female	2.14	.75	8.02**	.005	8.46	88.9
Male						59.3
Republican[1]			9.66**	.008		57.4
Democrat	-2.57	.88	8.54**	.003	.08	91.5
Independent	-2.29	.97	5.65**	.017	.10	89.7
Race – Other	-1.45	.79	3.34*	.068	.24	75
Race – White						82.3
Protestant[1]			.04	.98		78.9
Catholic	-.02	.89	.01	.98	.98	75
No Faith	.12	.99	.01	.91	1.12	85.3
Regulation						
Female	-1.34	.77	3.03*	.08	.27	10.7
Male						29.6
Republican[1]			2.27	.32		29.7
Democrat	.58	.83	.49	.49	1.79	9.7
Independent	1.88	1.25	2.26	.13	6.54	6.7
Race – Other	.98	.79	1.54	.22	2.66	21.2
Race – White	-.98	.79	1.54	.22	2.66	11.6
Protestant[1]			.47	.79		15.8
Catholic	.50	.87	.33	.56	1.65	13.9
No Faith	.64	1.0	.21	.65	1.63	8.8
Ban						
Female	-.89	.78	1.30	.25	.41	21.3

Male						48.2
Republican[1]			14.17**	.001		72.9
Democrat	3.46	.92	14.17**	.001	31.92	12.2
Independent	2.04	.85	5.75**	.016	7.65	30
Race – Other	2.14	.80	7.12**	.008	8.49	34.4
Race – White						29.5
Protestant[1]			8.01**	.018		63.2
Catholic	2.48	.93	7.17**	.007	11.98	27.8
No Faith	2.28	.90	6.42**	.011	9.79	20.5

[a] Percentage vote for the issue
[1] Reference category
** Indicates statistically significant result
* Indicates marginally significant result

Table 5

Study 2: Summary of Logistic Regression Coefficients for Contact and Attribution on Dichotomous Outcome Measures

Variable	*B*	*SE*	*Wald*	*p*	Exp(B)	%
Marriage						
Know	-2.26	1.57	2.08	.15	.10	70.5
Don't Know[1]						36.4
Acquaintance	-1.53	1.21	1.60	.21	.22	71.1
No acquaintance[1]						55.5
Family	.24	.84	.08	.78	1.27	72.9
No family[1]						64.3
Friends	3.99	1.32	9.10**	.003	54.06	78.4
No friends[1]						43.2
Choice	-4.56	1.09	17.59**	.001	.01	34.9
Not a choice[1]						93.8
Adoption						
Know	.16	1.11	.02	.88	1.18	84.8
Don't know[1]						45.5
Acquaintance	-.01	.97	.01	.99	.99	85
No acquaintance[1]						62.9
Family	.64	.80	.64	.42	1.90	87.5
No family[1]						80
Friend	1.39	.79	3.06*	.08	4.01	90
No friend[1]						63.6
Choice	-2.77	.83	11.21**	.001	.43	60.5
Not a choice[1]						96.9
Regulation						
Know	.22	1.13	.04	.85	1.24	11
Don't know[1]						36.4
Acquaintance	-.848	1.01	.71	.40	.43	12.4
No acquaintance[1]						19.2
Family	.68	.79	.73	.39	1.96	10.4
No family[1]						14
Friend	-.38	.82	.21	.65	.69	8.1
No friend[1]						23.3
Choice	3.38	1.12	9.19**	.002	29.47	31.8
Not a choice[1]						1.5
Ban						
Know	.22	1.36	.03	.87	1.25	28.5

Don't know[1]						63.6
Acquaintance	.22	1.36	.03	.87	1.25	30.6
No acquaintance[1]						40
Family	-.65	.79	.66	.42	.52	27.1
No family[1]						34.3
Friend	2.08	.92	3.74*	.053	.17	23.4
No friend						50
Choice	3.71	.72	26.32**	.001	40.84	65.1
Not a choice[1]						7.7

** Statistically significant

* Marginally significant

[1] Values in these rows the same as the row above

Table 6

Study 2: Table of Hypotheses

	GM	GA	REG	BAN	ATLG	Ratings
Hypothesis 1 MS Main Effects	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported	Partially Supported
Hypothesis 3 Gender	Supported	Supported	Partially Supported	Not Supported	Supported	N/A
Hypothesis 4 Religion	Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported	Supported	Supported	N/A
Hypothesis 5 Pol. Affiliation	Supported	Supported	Not Supported	Supported	Not Supported	N/A
Hypothesis 6 Race	Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported	Supported	Supported	N/A
Hypothesis 7 Age	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported	N/A
Hypothesis 8 Contact	Supported	Partially Supported	Not Supported	Supported	Supported	N/A
Hypothesis 9 Attribution	Supported	Supported	Supported	Supported	Supported	N/A
Hypothesis 10 Interaction: Attitudes & MS	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported	Partially Supported	Not Supported	N/A
Hypothesis 14 Interaction: MS and Transmission	Partially Supported	Partially Supported	Partially Supported	Partially Supported	Not Supported	N/A

Table 7

Demographics

Study 1	*n*	%
Gender		
Female	169	76.5
Male	52	23.5
Political Affiliation		
Democrat	103	57.8
Republican	60	30.8
Independent	33	16.4
Race		
White	142	70
Hispanic-American	31	15.3
African-American	18	8.9
Asian-American	12	5.9
Religious Affiliation		
Catholic	57	32.3
No affiliation	56	31.6
Protestant	33	18.6
Agnostic	8	4.3
Jewish	7	4.0
Eastern Orthodox	3	1.7
Atheist	7	4.0
Hindu	2	1.1
Buddhist	2	1.1
Muslim	2	1.1

Age Range: 18-70 (M = 25.4)

Study 2	*n*	%
Gender		
Female	130	81.2
Male	29	18.2
Political Affiliation		
Democrat	82	55.0
Republican	37	24.8
Independent	30	20.1
Race		
White	113	76.4
Hispanic-American	13	8.8
Asian-American	10	6.7
African-American	9	6.1
Native-American	3	2.0
Religious Affiliation		
No affiliation	43	30.9
Catholic	39	28.1
Protestant	24	17.3
Agnostic	12	8.6
Jewish	10	7.2
Atheist	8	5.8
Hindu	1	.7
Muslim	1	.7
Eastern Orthodox	1	.7

Age Range: 18-57 (M = 25.38)

Figure 1

Study 1: Interaction between distance manipulations

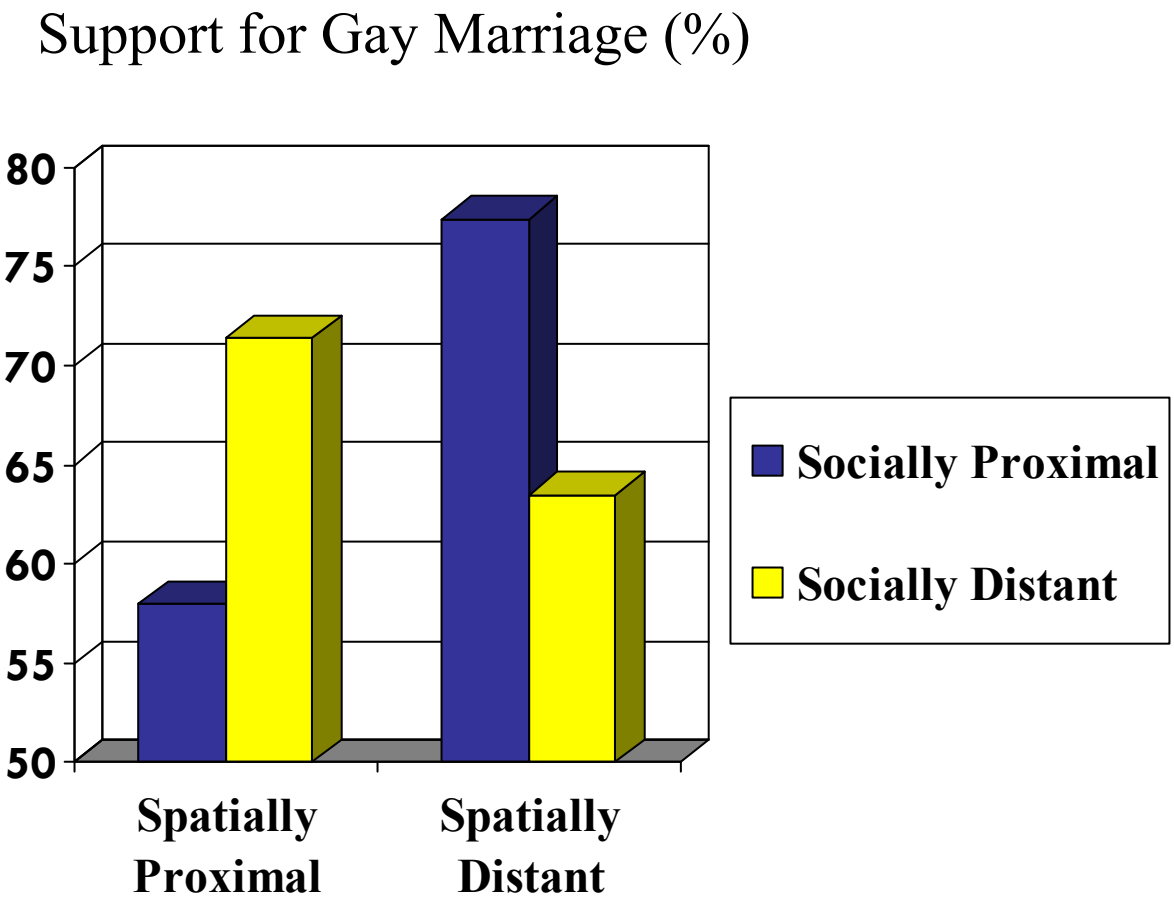

Figure 2

Study 1: Differences between MS conditions (divided by pre-attitudes)

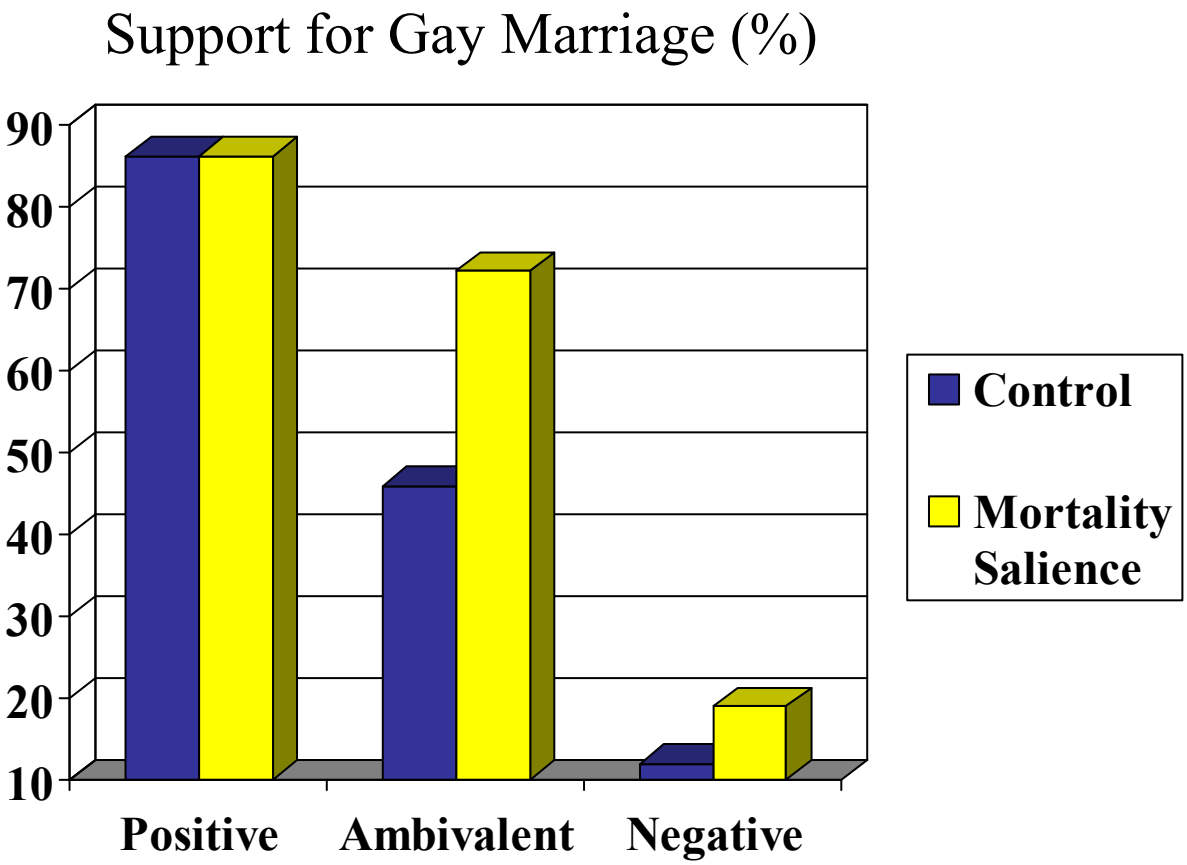

Figure 3

Study 2: Difference between MS conditions

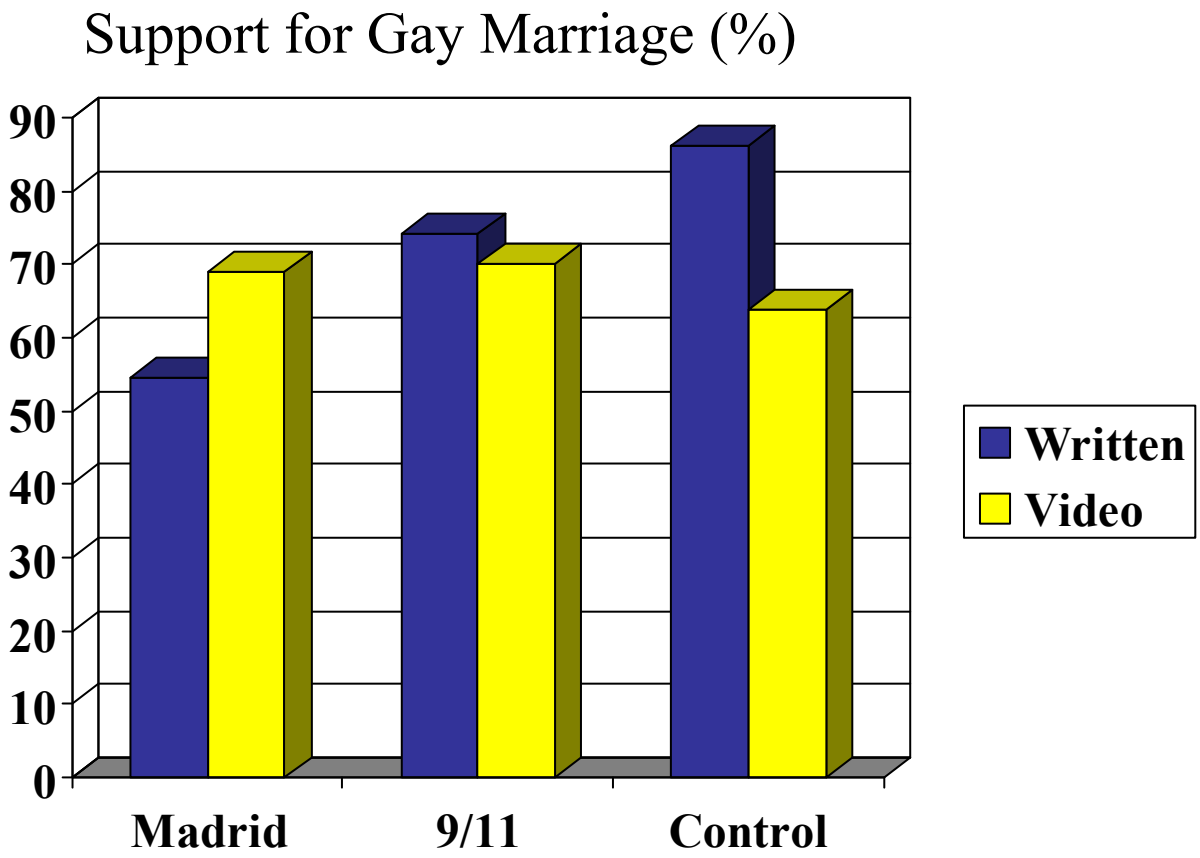

Figure 4

Study 2: Difference between MS conditions

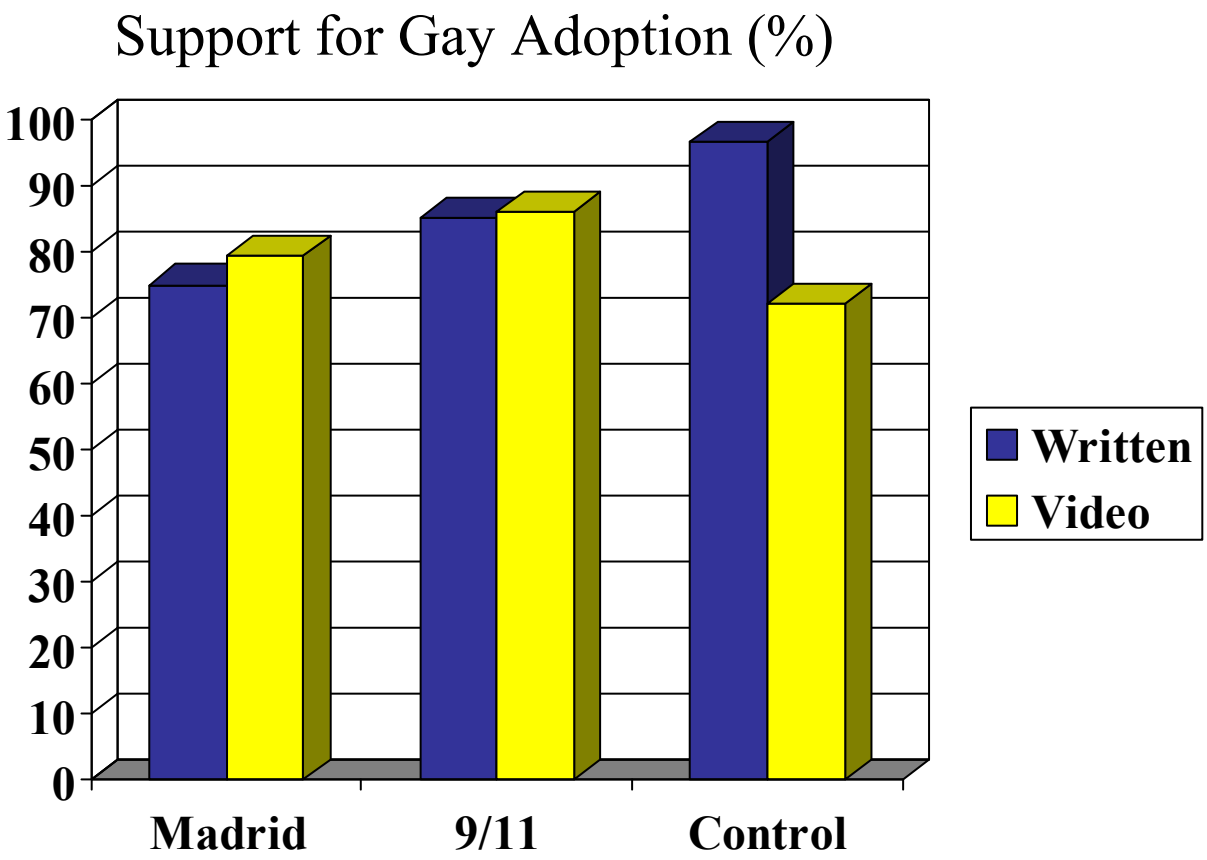

Figure 5

Study 2: Difference between MS conditions

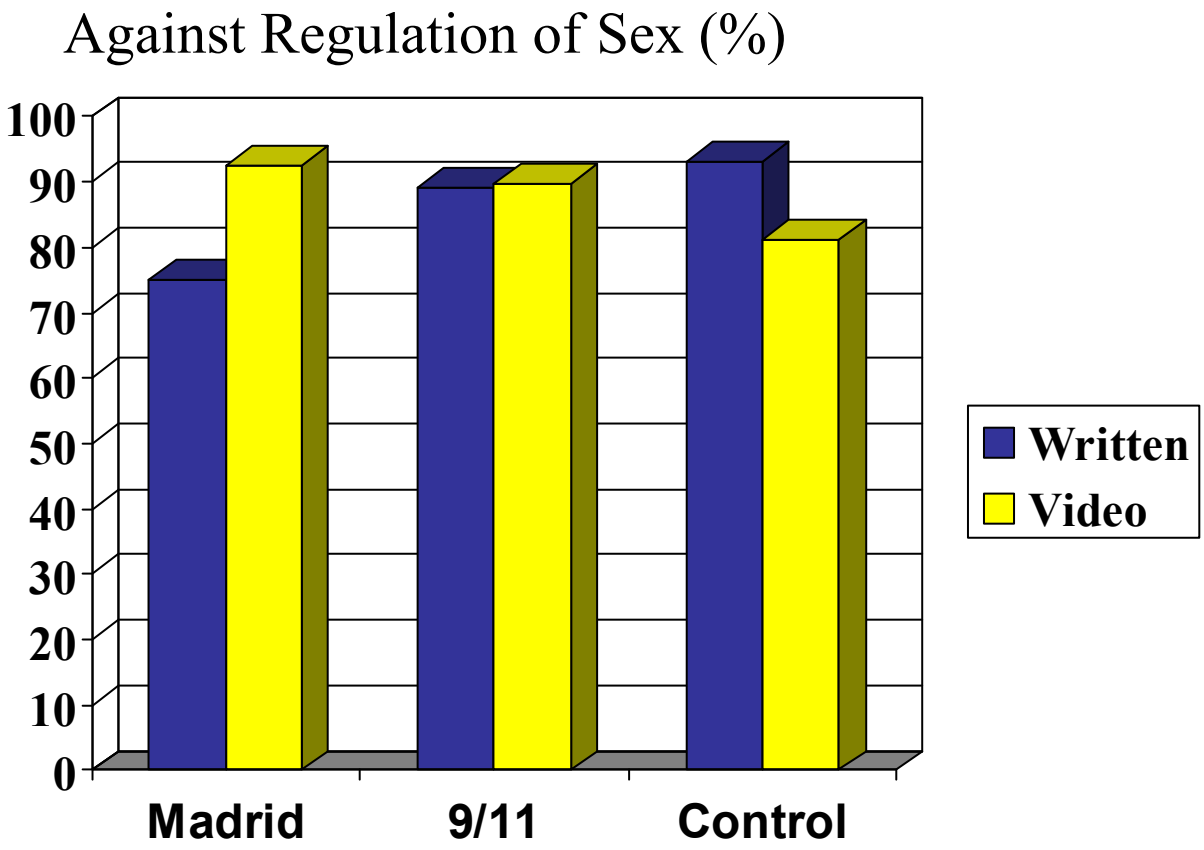

Figure 6

Study 2: Difference between MS conditions