

Findings from the Hunter College Poll:
New Discoveries about the
Political Attitudes of Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals

Patrick J. Egan
Assistant Professor of Politics
New York University
patrick.egan@nyu.edu

Murray S. Edelman
Distinguished Scholar
Eagleton Institute, Rutgers University
murraye@rci.rutgers.edu

Kenneth Sherrill
Professor of Political Science
Hunter College-CUNY
ken@kensherrill.com

Prepared for delivery at the American Political Science Association meetings,
Boston, MA, August 2008

The authors acknowledge the Human Rights Campaign Foundation for a grant to Hunter College that funded this project. We thank Ellen Anderson, Kathleen M. Frankovic, Charles W. Gossett, Gregory Herek, D. Sunshine Hillygus, Tali Mendelberg, Ellen D. B. Riggle, and Barry Tadlock, as well as many friends and colleagues who completed pilot versions of our survey questionnaire for their comments and suggestions.

ABSTRACT

This paper reports findings from the Hunter College Poll, the first-ever academic survey of LGB adults regarding politics and public affairs using a truly representative national sample, which we conducted in November 2007. The study includes path breaking findings about this population with important lessons for the study of group political cohesion in American politics. We confirm that LGBs are distinctively liberal on a wide range of issues, including those that many would expect to be orthogonal to gay rights, such as opposition to the war in Iraq and preferring raising taxes to cutting social programs. We also find that LGBs are more interested in politics and more engaged in civic affairs than the general population. We then explore four mechanisms by which these distinctive attitudes and behaviors become established. We demonstrate that LGBs are raised by parents who are less morally traditional and better educated than the general population. We show that the “coming out” period—the process of recognizing that one is lesbian, gay, or bisexual—is a profoundly transformative experience that leads to political change on several dimensions. Finally, we provide analyses indicating that close friendship with other LGBs, and the amount of time that has passed in one’s life since coming out, is associated with a greater probability of adopting the distinctive views of the LGB community.

The “gay vote” long has been a subject of speculation by movement activists, journalists, and scholars. This level of interest, however, has not been matched by a comparable level of systematic data collection. Since 1990, the best source of data on this subject has been the exit polls conducted by Voter News Service and its successor organizations. While limited by a small sample size of LGBs (usually under 200 cases per election), analysis of the exit polls have shown that these voters are a distinctively Democratic group that takes liberal positions on a wide range of issues that on their face have nothing to do with gay rights—even after controlling for potential confounding variables such as age, education, and income (Hertzog 1996; Egan 2008). Typically, LGBs vote for Democratic presidential and Congressional candidates at rates of 75 to 80 percent, and take positions well to the left of most voters on many issues.

Placed in context with theory on the origins of group political distinctiveness (a line of literature that begins with Berelson et al 1954; for a review see Huddy 2003), these findings raise a tantalizing academic puzzle. Scholarship has long held that groups vote alike either because political values are transmitted from generation to generation between a group’s members (as in the cases of political cohesiveness along the lines of race or religion) or that these values are learned through intra-group contact (as in the case of group affiliations such as union membership or gun ownership). Since gay people are rarely the children of gay parents, extant theory points toward this sort of contact as the explanation for LGB political distinctiveness.

Until now, explorations of these theories have by necessity been performed with data not ideally suited for this purpose. Very few surveys on politics and public affairs—whether commercial or academic—include questions that permit lesbians, gays and bisexuals to identify themselves. The surveys that do include an LGB identifier rarely field items that allow for the full examination of the questions raised here. And surveys that are limited to LGBs and can therefore cover a broader range of topics of interest have relied on convenience samples and post-

stratification weighting adjustments, leading to concerns about their representativeness.

The Hunter College Poll, which we designed and conducted in November 2007, addresses these shortcomings with a dataset of 768 LGBs drawn from a nationally representative sample of respondents empanelled by Knowledge Networks, Inc (KN).¹ We fielded a 25-minute survey, administered via the Internet, which covered respondents' sexual identity and behavior; political attitudes and participation; their policy priorities for the LGB community; and their backgrounds and upbringing. This survey produced a unique dataset that allows us to further demarcate the nature of LGB political distinctiveness and to explore in greater detail than ever before possible the reasons for this distinctiveness.

What follows is a preliminary report on our findings from this study. We begin with a discussion of the sources of survey data available for the study of LGBs' political attitudes and behavior. We describe in detail the design of the Hunter College Poll, and tell why we believe the survey addresses many of the shortcomings of earlier work. We then discuss the survey results, beginning with descriptive statistics about the relationship between LGB identity and same-sex sexual behavior. We provide additional documentation regarding the nature of LGB political distinctiveness, and show—for the first time—that LGBs exhibit higher levels of political interest and civic engagement than the general population. We then explore four mechanisms by which these distinctive attitudes and behaviors become established. We demonstrate that LGBs are raised by parents who are less morally traditional and better educated than the general population. We show that the “coming out” period—the process of recognizing that one is lesbian, gay, or bisexual—is a profoundly transformative experience that leads to political change

¹ Activists often group lesbians, gays and bisexuals with transgendered persons into one “LGBT movement.” But because transgendered people make up such a small proportion of the national population (estimates range between 1 in 250 to 1 in 500 Americans are transgendered), obtaining a nationally representative sample of this population was prohibitively costly. Our analysis reported here, therefore, is limited to lesbians, bisexuals, and gay men.

on several dimensions. Finally, we provide analyses indicating that close friendship with other LGBs, and the amount of time that has passed in one's life since coming out, is associated with a greater probability of adopting the distinctive views of the LGB community.

Previous empirical work on LGB political behavior

While we believe that our study is the first university-based study of the political beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of a nationally representative sample of lesbians, bisexuals, and gay men, we do not claim that our work is totally without precedent. Here we review some of the prior work in this field, indicating some of the major contributions and some of its shortcomings.

Research on LGB political behavior is handicapped by the fact that none of the major survey organizations and media outlets that regularly poll Americans on politics and public affairs collects information on the sexual orientation of its respondents. This means that very few sources of data exist that provide over-time measures of LGB political preferences and behavior derived from representative samples of the American population. (See Table 1 for a list of these sources.) The best source of data regarding LGBs' political attitudes and behavior are exit polls conducted in presidential and congressional elections by the Voter News Service (VNS) from 1990 through 2002 and its successor, the National Election Pool (NEP) in 2004 and 2006. These exit polls collect information from voters from a nationally representative sample of precincts as they leave the polling place on Election Day

**Table 1. Sources of Survey Data
on the Political Attitudes of Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexuals**

Study	When Conducted, Relevant Survey Sample Size	Population Sampled, Sampling Method, Mode of Interview	Advantages and Disadvantages
General Social Survey, conducted by National Opinion Research Center	Biennially, 1988-present, N ≈ 900-2,000 (3 to 5% report same-sex sexual behavior)	- All U.S. adults - multistage cluster sample - in-person interviews with self-administered component	<u>advantages:</u> - nationally representative sample - measures sexual behavior - measures of respondents' upbringings - permits comparison with general population <u>disadvantages:</u> - does not measure sexual identity
Voter News Service/National Election Pool exit polls	Biennially, 1990-present (except 2002) N ≈ 15,000 (3 to 5% identify as LGB)	- All U.S. voters - multistage cluster sample - self-administered paper questionnaire	<u>advantages:</u> - nationally representative sample - measures sexual identity - permits comparison with general population <u>disadvantages:</u> - does not measure sexual behavior - measure of sexual identity does not appear on every form of survey in a given year
<i>Newsweek</i> /PSRA polls of gays and lesbians	1993, 1994, 1998, 2000 N ≈ 500 (all are LGB)	- LGBs on mailing lists of LGB organizations, periodicals, and marketing companies - simple random sample - telephone interview	<u>advantages:</u> - detailed questions about LGB policy priorities and identity <u>disadvantages:</u> - overrepresents politically active LGBs - no enumeration of LGBs is available for weighting purposes - does not permit comparison with general population
Harris Interactive GLBT Panel	ongoing since at least 2002; N varies (all are LGBT)	- All LGB adults - Convenience sample recruited via Internet - Internet questionnaire	<u>advantages:</u> - detailed questions about LGB policy priorities and identity <u>disadvantages:</u> - no enumeration of LGBs is available for weighting purposes - data are not publicly available
Hunter College Poll, conducted by Knowledge Networks Inc.	November 2007, N=768 (all are LGB)	- All LGB adults - RDD sample recruited via telephone - Internet questionnaire	<u>advantages:</u> - representative national sample - detailed questions about LGB policy priorities and identity - permits comparison with general population (on some measures) <u>disadvantages:</u> - those engaging in homosexual sex but not identifying as LGB do not fall into sample

about their demographic characteristics (including sexual identity²), their voting decisions, and their opinions on political issues. A second excellent source of data is the cumulative file of the General Social Survey (GSS), which since 1988 has asked its nationally representative sample of American adults about the sex of their sexual partners. GSS respondents are not asked whether they consider themselves lesbian, gay or bisexual. Like the VNS/NEP, the GSS asks its respondents about their voting decisions and political views. Although quite valuable, these data are not ideal. The GSS is a nationally representative sample of adults, but it asks only about sexual behavior and not sexual orientation. This not only constrains what can be learned about gay identity from the GSS, but it also requires that any analysis of the effects of sexual orientation be limited to those who report being sexually active. The VNS/NEP asks about sexual orientation, but it only surveys voters.

Only two other sources of survey data exist on the political attitudes of LGBs, and neither allows for the examination of the questions posed here using a truly representative national sample. The first of these datasets is composed of the responses of self-identified gays, lesbians, and bisexuals drawn from LGB mailing lists conducted for *Newsweek* magazine by Princeton Survey Research Associates four times between 1993 and 2000. The second dataset is composed of responses from LGBs recruited via the Internet by Harris Interactive since at least 2002. Selection into these samples is non-random by design, and is therefore correlated with important aspects of LGB identity that make it hard to justify claims of true representativeness. Because the U.S. Census does not identify LGBs, there is no population enumeration that can be used to construct post-stratification weights for LGBs in convenience sample surveys.³ Since VNS/NEP data indicate that LGBs have

² In 1990, voters were asked if they were gay or lesbian. From 1992 and onwards, voters were asked if they were gay, lesbian or bisexual. Because not every form of the exit poll questionnaire includes a sexual orientation question, typically only one-half of respondents are asked their sexual orientation in any given year.

³ Harris Interactive says it weights its data using targets based on a combination of U.S. Census data and data obtained from previous Harris Interactive research, in addition to using proprietary propensity weighting techniques. Weights are provided with some of the *Newsweek* survey datasets, but no information is provided about how they were constructed.

demographic characteristics that vary from the general population (particularly in regards to age, education, and urbanicity), post-stratification weights constructed on the basis of the distribution of demographic variables in the general population are likely to poorly represent the LGB population.

Working with the limited survey data available, scholars have made important discoveries about the political attitudes and behavior of LGBs. Using VNS data, Edelman (1993) was the first to document LGBs' distinct liberalism and their support for Democrat Bill Clinton in the 1992 election. In his pioneering study of LGB voting behavior, Hertzog (1996) found that these patterns held after controlling for variables such as age, education, and urbanicity. Sherrill (1996) uses exit poll data to explore how LGB political distinctiveness persists in the face of being "born into a diaspora"—that is, generally being brought up in non-LGB environments. Bailey (1999) also relies on VNS data to articulate his argument that traditional economic approaches to the study of urban politics have been displaced somewhat by the identity politics of the LGB movement and other calls for group-based rights. Using Harris Interactive data, Lewis, Rogers and Sherrill (2003) find that LGBs who say they are socially active in the gay community are more likely to identify as Democrats and liberals. Egan and Sherrill (2005) use Harris Interactive data to explore LGBs' surprising mix of attitudes regarding same-sex marriage, and show that this goal is a more important priority for younger lesbians and gays than for older members of the community. Schaffner and Senic (2006) use VNS/NEP and *Newsweek* data to show that LGBs' preferences for the Democratic Party and its candidates are heightened to the extent that they are concerned about obtaining employee benefits for same-sex partners. Egan (2008) uses VNS/NEP and GSS data to consider the consequences of the acquisition of a lesbian, gay or bisexual identity for individuals' political affiliations and attitudes.

Design of our study

We believe the Hunter College Poll addresses many of the shortcomings of its predecessors. The survey was conducted by Knowledge Networks, Inc. (KN), which

uses a national online panel to provide survey data to a broad range of commercial, academic, and policy researchers. Unlike other Internet surveys, KN recruits its respondents via a random-digit dial (RDD) process over the telephone. Internet access and hardware are provided to households that do not already have it. This ensures that KN's panel is truly representative of the entire U.S. population. KN data has quickly gained legitimacy in academic social science communities, and research using data from the KN online panel has been published in highly regarded political science journals. Herek (2009) is the first academic researcher to use LGB respondents from KN's panel in this fashion, in his investigation of LGBs' experience with discrimination, hate crimes, and other acts of prejudice. An additional advantage of KN's Internet-based survey is that because it does not involve interaction with an interviewer, KN is more likely than a telephone survey to elicit candid answers to questions on sensitive topics such as those regarding sexual orientation.

Because KN asks members of its panel their sexual orientation (with the question, "Are you yourself lesbian, gay or bisexual?") in its standard battery of demographic questions administered via the Internet, the firm was able to instantly identify enough eligible respondents to produce 768 completed surveys by a representative sample of LGB Americans. (Identification of this many GLB respondents through a traditional telephone-based survey would have required tens of thousands of phone calls and thus become prohibitively expensive.) Using KN gave us one additional advantage: because KN has demographic information regarding every one of its LGB panelists, the firm was able to provide us with post-stratification weights for our survey participants to adjust for non-response among its LGB panelists.

Our survey was conducted over a two-week period in November 2007, a point as close as possible to the presidential primary season without being caught in the middle of it. This allowed us to assess the opinions of LGB Americans as many Americans prepared to participate in the presidential caucuses and primaries that took place in early 2008, and as media coverage of the campaign was ramping up.

Sexual identity and sexual behavior

Scholars of sexuality have found important distinctions among the concepts of sexual attraction, sexual behavior, and self-professed sexual orientation or sexual identity (Laumann et al 1994). Our study allows for some new explorations of the relationship between sexual identity and sexual behavior. As described earlier, our sample consisted entirely of KN panelists who in a previous survey had responded “yes” to the question “Are you yourself gay, lesbian, or bisexual?” To measure sexual identity, we asked each of these respondents “Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?” The response set included the choices “lesbian, gay, or homosexual” (for women); “gay or homosexual” (for men); “bisexual, mostly attracted to men;” “bisexual, equally attracted to men and women”; and “bisexual, mostly attracted to women.”⁴ The distribution of responses to this question is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Self-Described Sexual Orientation of Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals, by Gender

source: 2007 Hunter College Poll

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
Lesbian, gay or homosexual	68.4	34.7	51.1
Bisexual, mostly attracted to the same sex	10.1	13.3	11.7
Bisexual, equally attracted to men and women	11.1	23.9	17.7
Bisexual, mostly attracted to the opposite sex	10.3	28.1	19.4
Totals	100	100	100

The table shows a marked difference in self-described sexual identity by gender of respondent. More than two-thirds of LGB men identify as gay or homosexual; only

⁴ As a validity check, the response set also included the choice “straight, or heterosexual.” Respondents who selected this option were asked the follow up question, “In a previous survey, you told us that you yourself are lesbian, gay or bisexual. Was this an error?” If the respondent replied “yes,” then the survey was stopped. If the respondent replied “no,” the question in Table 1 was asked again.

about one-third of LGB women do. Of all those identifying as LGB, nearly one in five says they are more attracted to people of the opposite sex than they are to those of their own sex. These results suggest that many who identify as LGB do not have significant amounts of sexual experience with those of the same sex, and indeed this is the case. Every respondent in our survey was asked, “During the past 12 months, have you had sex with only males, only females, or both?”⁵

Table 3 reports the distributions of responses to this question by sexual orientation and gender. Those who identified as lesbian, gay, or homosexual reported having almost exclusively same-sex sexual relations in the past 12 months. But 22 percent of self-identified bisexual men and 55 percent of self-identified bisexual women reported having sex with only those of their own sex over the year prior to being surveyed. Our calculations (not shown here) found that one in five sexually active LGBs did not have a same-sex sex partner in the past year, and 40 percent had at least one opposite-sex partner in the past year. (For purposes of comparison, Table 2 also includes the distribution of responses from an identical question asked of a representative sample of American adults by the 2006 General Social Survey (GSS). These figures show that, as we would expect, bisexuals report much higher rates of same-sex sexual activity over the past year than the typical sexually active American adult.)

⁵ We note here that we deliberately left the definition of “sex” up to the respondent. The response set also included the option “I have not been sexually active.”

**Table 3. Sex of sex partners in prior 12 months,
by sexual orientation and gender**
(of sexually active adults)
Source: 2007 Hunter College Poll

had sex in past 12 months with...	<u>males</u>			<u>females</u>		
	gay or homo- sexual	bisexual	all sexually active adults (2006 GSS)	lesbian, gay, or homo- sexual	bisexual	all sexually active adults (2006 GSS)
...only those of their own sex	99.2%	37.5%	3.6%	95.5%	12.3%	3.1%
...only those of the opposite sex	0.0%	21.9%	95.3%	0.0%	55.4%	96.2%
...both males and females	0.8%	40.6%	1.0%	4.5%	32.3%	0.7%
totals	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Further investigation determined that while many LGBs do not have recent experiences with same-sex sexual partners, in their lifetimes they have had homosexual sexual experiences at rates much higher than the general population. We asked survey participants to tell us the number of male and female partners they had since turning 18. Table 3 displays data derived from this question. It shows the proportion of LGBs reporting ever had a same-sex sexual partner and ever having had an opposite-sex partner, broken down by sexual orientation and gender. We again include data obtained from an identical question on the 2006 GSS for comparison purposes. The table shows that bisexual men and women report lifetime experience with those of their own sex at rates equivalent to gay men and lesbians (respectively)—and that they report at least one heterosexual experience in their lifetime at rates nearly identical to sexually active adults in the general population.

Table 4. Reported lifetime experience of homosexual sex
 Source: 2007 Hunter College Poll

	<u>males</u>			<u>females</u>		
	gay or homo-sexual	bisexual	all sexually active adults (2006 GSS)	lesbian, gay, or homo-sexual	bisexual	all sexually active adults (2006 GSS)
ever had sex with a...						
...same-sex partner	97.2%	90.0%	5.5%	96.1%	84.5%	7.1%
...opposite-sex partner	39.0%	94.1%	92.2%	67.1%	98.5%	94.4%

One way to summarize these data is that, at any given snapshot in time, the sexual behavior of many self-identified bisexuals is not all that different from sexually active adults in the general population. But over the course of their lifetimes, those who identify as bisexual do have homosexual experiences at rates that make them very different from the typical American adult. By contrast, significant proportions of those identifying as gay or lesbian have never had a heterosexual sexual experience.

A final note here on sexual identity and self-labeling. In another part of the survey, we provided respondents with the opportunity to tell us how they would like the remainder of the survey to refer to their sexual orientation and identity. They were provided with the choices (if female) “lesbian,” “gay woman,” (if male) “gay man,” (all) “bisexual,” “queer,” “homosexual,” or “something else: please fill in: I am a _____” Those who chose “something else” (7.4% of respondents) could provide their own preferred term. The distribution of responses to this question by gender and sexual orientation may be found in **Error! Reference source not found..** The table shows that while many respondents who initially identified as bisexual choose the terms “gay man,” “lesbian,” or “gay woman” as their preferred identity, the opposite is not true for those who initially identified as gay, lesbian, or homosexual.

Furthermore, despite all of the hand-wringing that tends to take place over labels in the LGB movement, a great majority—87.7 percent—of LGBs are comfortable with one of four traditional terms: “bisexual,” “gay man,” “lesbian,” and (perhaps surprisingly, given how infrequently the term is used by the media and advocacy groups) “gay woman.”

Table 5. Preferred Term for Sexual Identity, by Sexual Orientation and Gender

(Terms displayed with number of respondents choosing term.

All terms chosen by two or more respondents shown.)

Source: 2007 Hunter College Poll

	<u>males</u>		<u>females</u>	
	gay or homosexual	bisexual	lesbian, gay, or homosexual	bisexual
“gay man”	273	“bisexual” 81	“lesbian” 120	“bisexual” 131
“homosexual”	15	“gay man” 15	“gay woman” 50	“lesbian” 11
“queer”	3	“human” 2	“queer” 5	“gay woman” 6
“American”	2	“human being” 2		“human being” 3
“man”	2	“man” 2		“queer” 3
		“queer” 2		

The data here allow us to gain a representative picture of the sexual behavior of self-identified lesbians, gays and bisexuals—but not a representative picture of the sexual identities of everyone who has same-sex sexual partners. In further work, we plan to survey a representative sample of American adults about their sexual behavior and sexual orientation in order to better answer these questions.

The political distinctiveness of LGBs

Lesbians, gay men and bisexuals (LGBs) are a politically distinctive group. They vote at higher rates than do heterosexuals for Democratic presidential and Congressional candidates; they are more likely to identify as Democrats and liberals; and they hold distinctive views on the legal recognition of same-sex relationships (Edelman 1993; Hertzog 1996; Sherrill 1996; Bailey 1999; Smith and Haider-Markel 2002; Lewis, Rogers and Sherrill 2003; Egan and Sherrill 2005; Shaffner and Senic

2006). Given America's partisan polarization on the issue of gay rights, these differences might be attributed to self-interest on the part of LGB voters. But distinctions along the lines of sexual identity also persist on issues that have little or nothing to do with gay rights, including the proper role of government, environmental concerns, and the Iraq war (Egan and Sherrill 2006; Egan 2008).

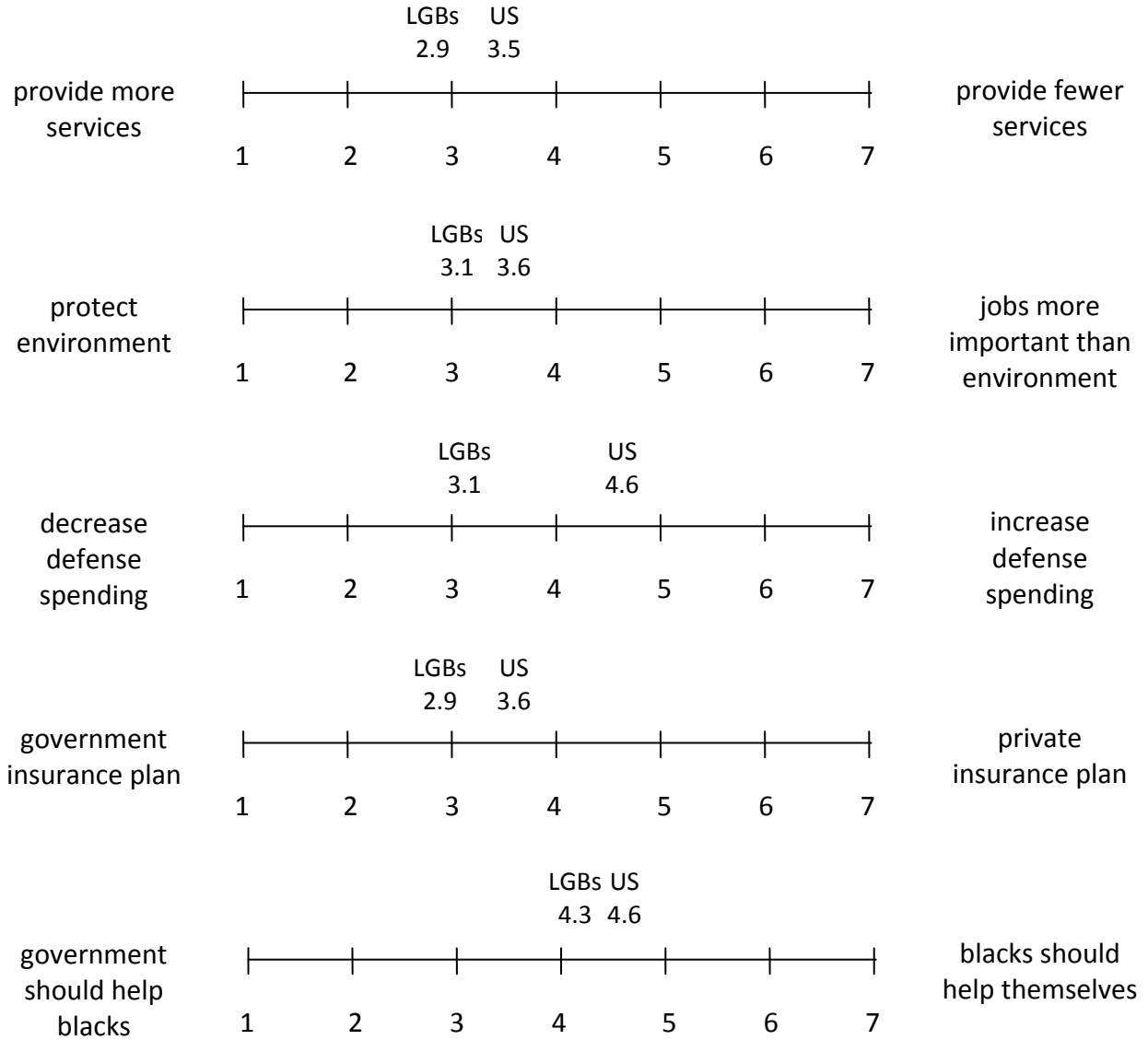
To further explore this distinctiveness, we included several items designed to measure respondents' policy preferences that are identical to those included on surveys conducted with nationally representative samples of American adults. Figure 1 displays how LGBs' policy preferences compare to the general population on five different issues: government services, the environment, defense spending, health insurance, and government aid to blacks. The five items shown are identical to those fielded by the American National Election Studies in Fall 2004. For each issue, survey respondents are presented with a seven-point left-right scale⁶ upon which they are asked to place themselves. (The ANES administers this item in person using printed cards; in our survey, the item was presented on the computer screen.)

The data found in Figure 1 are consistent with earlier findings that LGBs are indeed a distinctively liberal group. On every one of the five items, the mean self-placement of LGBs was to the left of that of the general population. The differences were most pronounced on defense spending (although this is probably partly due to the fact that anti-war sentiment was generally higher when our poll was conducted in 2007 than when the ANES was conducted in 2004). Differences were least pronounced on government aid to blacks, an issue about which LGBs differ from the general population by only .3 points on the seven-point scale.

⁶ In the ANES and in our survey, only some of the scales are ordered left-right (i.e., the liberal position is placed on the left, the conservative position on the right) while others are ordered right-left. For ease of comparison, Figure 1 presents all the scales as left-right, and we have reversed the scores for items originally presented in the right-left order.

Figure 1. Mean Policy Preferences of LGBs and the General Population

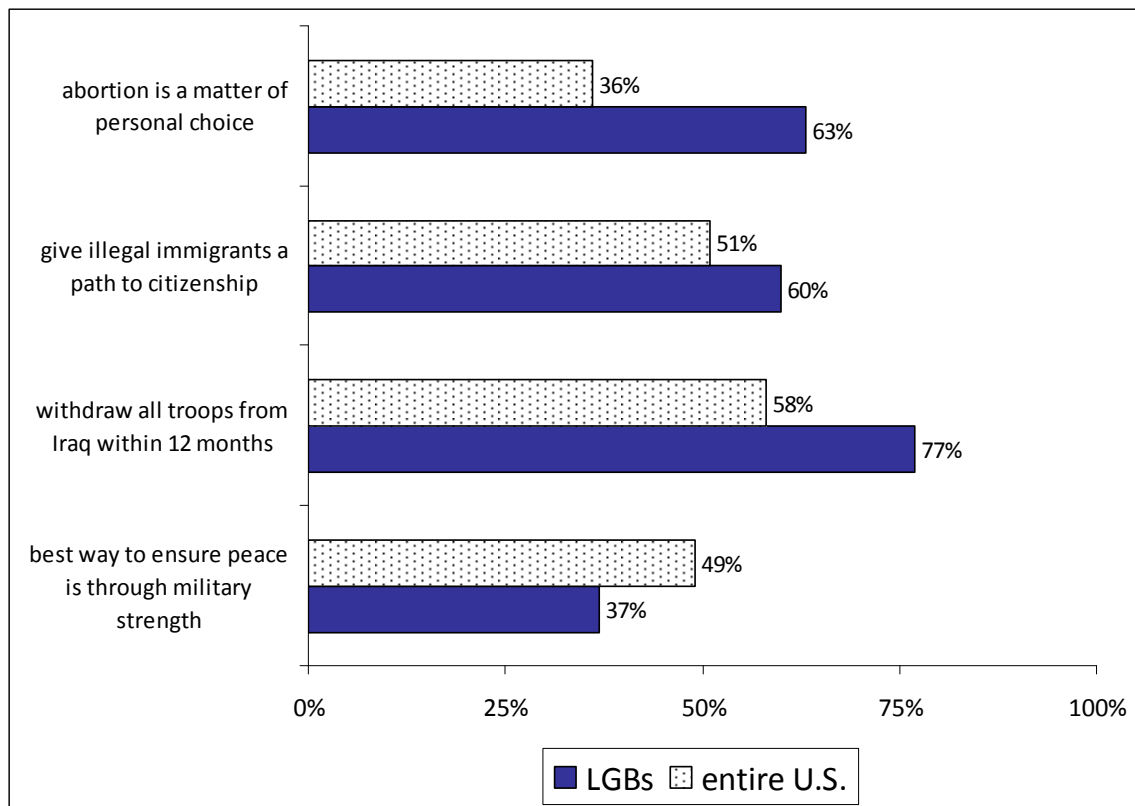
Sources: LGBs: Hunter College Poll (2007);
 U.S: American National Election Studies (2004)



Further evidence of LGB liberalism may be found in Figure 2, which displays results from additional questions that we fielded in our survey that have been posed to nationally representative samples by other polling firms. Here we see that LGBs are more liberal than the adult U.S. population regarding the immigration, the Iraq War, military issues, and (particularly) abortion.

Figure 2. Additional policy preference differences between LGBs and the General Population

Sources: LGBs: Hunter College Poll (November 2007);
 U.S: abortion: American National Election Studies (Fall 2004)
 Immigration: ABC News/Washington Post Poll (March 2007)
 Iraq: Gallup, March 2007
 Military strength: Pew, January 2007



In further work, we will take advantage of the identical construction of these survey items to conduct multivariate analysis that assesses the nature of LGB distinctiveness after controlling for potential confounding factors—in particular, age and education. We will do this by merging our dataset with the datasets derived

from the surveys conducted with nationally representative samples shown here and using multiple imputation techniques (Rubin 1987; Schafer 1997; King et al 2001) to construct a sexual identity variable on these surveys.

Our investigations also uncovered an important additional aspect of gay political distinctiveness: LGBs are more interested in politics and display levels of civic engagement that are higher than that of the general population. All KN panelists periodically answer a battery of questions designed to assess their interest in public and community affairs.

Table 6 displays the responses of Hunter College Poll respondents to two of these questions, with the distribution of responses in the entire KN panel (which is representative of the general population) displayed for comparison purposes. As shown in the table, LGBs are much more likely to declare themselves “very interested” in politics than the general population (33 percent of LGBs vs. 22 percent of the general population); and are more likely to have contacted a government official in the past 12 months (23 percent vs. 16 percent). Similar patterns held for other measures of civic and political engagement.

Table 6. Political interest and civic engagement among LGBs and the General Population

Source: Knowledge Networks

“In general, how interested are you in politics and public affairs?”

	% of LGBs	% of general population
very interested	32.9	22.1
somewhat interested	32.5	37.0
slightly interested	18.8	26.1
not at all interested	15.8	14.5

“People may also be involved in civic and political activities. In the past 12 months, have you... [Contacted a government official]”

	% of LGBs	% of general population
Yes	22.7	15.5
No	75.6	84.5

Explaining distinctiveness: the mechanisms of selection and conversion

These distinctive political views and behaviors—and particularly those that on their face have nothing to do with gay rights—present a puzzle. Unlike those who belong to ethnic or racial minority groups, gays generally do not share their LGB group identity with their parents. This makes it impossible that gay political distinctiveness can be due to the parent-to-child transmission which is the first source of partisanship and attitudes (Niemi and Jennings 1991) and which in theory helps explain similar levels of political cohesion among many racial and ethnic groups. The few published empirical studies that document LGBs’ attitudes and political behavior have followed in this vein by asserting—but not demonstrating—that some sort of group socialization is responsible for gay political distinctiveness (Hertzog 1996; Sherrill 1996; Bailey 1999).

However, two alternate mechanisms also help explain LGB political distinctiveness: *selection* and *conversion* (Egan 2008). These mechanisms rest on the important

difference between sexual orientation (an ascriptive trait that is either impossible or very difficult to change and is most likely fixed at birth) and sexual identity (which is chosen in response to the ascriptive trait of sexual orientation). Many people who are attracted to others of their sex or engage in homosexual activity still consider themselves heterosexual (see, e.g., Pathela et al 2006; Mosher, Chandra and Jones 2005; Laumann et al 1994). Egan (2008) provides analysis indicating that among those engaged in homosexual activity, the determinants of whether one identifies as LGB include characteristics of upbringing such as the degree to which one grew up in a fundamentalist religious tradition, the conservatism of the region in which one was raised, and the education of one's parents. Those raised in a liberal religion, in liberal geographic regions, or raised by highly educated parents are more likely to identify as LGB. Because these background variables are themselves associated with liberal views later in life (regardless of one's sexual orientation), LGB distinctiveness may well be due to a *selection* effect: to some degree, those who are homosexual identify as LGB because they are liberal, rather than vice-versa.

The Hunter College Poll data provide further evidence of this selection effect. If we assume that the ascriptive trait of homosexuality is randomly distributed in the population, the null hypothesis is that the background characteristics of LGBs should be no different from those of the general population. But to the extent that tolerant upbringings lead a non-random proportion of those with the ascriptive trait of homosexuality to identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual, LGBs should come from more tolerant backgrounds than the general population.

Figure 3. Background characteristics of LGBs and the General Population
sources: LGBs: Hunter College Poll (2007); U.S. adults: General Social Survey (2006)

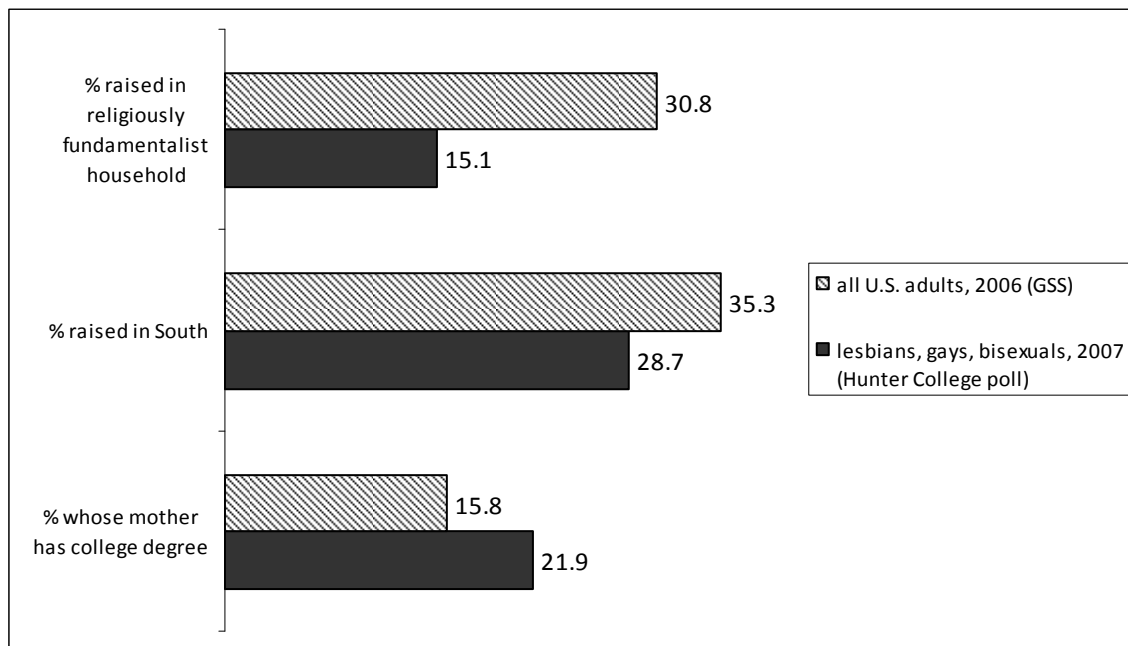


Figure 3 shows this to be the base. It depicts the proportion of LGBs reporting that they were raised in a religiously fundamentalist household, the proportion raised in the South (which surveys indicate is the most conservative area of the U.S.) and the proportion whose mother had a college degree. The bar chart compares these proportions to those in the U.S. adult population, as assessed with questions similar to ours by the General Social Survey in 2006. On all three measures, LGBs do come from backgrounds that are distinctively more tolerant than those of typical adults in the United States. These distinctively tolerant backgrounds help to explain the phenomenon of LGB political distinctiveness.

However, not everyone who is LGB is raised in tolerant households, and additional evidence suggests that the process of coming out is a political *conversion* experience of sorts (Egan 2008). That is, the very process of “coming out” as LGB is a crucible that leads those who do it to reassess a wide range of political beliefs—even if they

have little contact with other LGBs. The conversion hypothesis is supported to the extent that LGBs adopt liberal views upon acquiring an LGB identity.

Our study allows us to examine the conversion hypothesis in two ways—through respondents’ self-recollection of their coming out process and through an examination of how LGBs depart from the party identification of their parents. First, we asked respondents to recall the age at which four different milestones in the coming out process occurred in their lives. These events were the age at which (1) respondents first thought they might be LGB; (2) decided for sure that they were LGB; (3) first told someone they were LGB; and (4) first had sex with someone of the same sex. (For all of these questions, respondents could also reply that the event had not occurred in their lives.) The order in which the events were presented to respondents was randomized.

Table 7. Mean Ages at which LGBs Report Four “Coming Out” Experiences

age at which...	males		females	
	gay, homosexual	bisexual	lesbian, gay, homosexual	bisexual
first thought I might be LGB	12	17	16	16
had first same-sex sexual experience	16	18	21	21
decided for sure I was LGB	17	20	21	20
first told someone I was LGB	19	23	23	20
% reporting having experienced all four events	94.2	59.5	92.3	76.7

Table 7 displays the mean ages reported for each of these four events broken down by the gender and sexual orientation of respondents, and the percentage of each of the groups who report having experienced all four events. As shown in the table, gay men tend to begin the process of “coming out” much earlier than do women or bisexual men. The typical gay man recalls first thinking he might be gay at age 12. By contrast, other LGBs tend not to first do so until later in adolescence—16 or 17 years old. The other notable difference shown in the table is that while almost all

lesbians and gays have completed the coming out process, many bisexual men and women have not. More than nine in ten lesbians and gays reported having experienced all four coming out milestones. This was true for only three-quarters of bisexual women and 60 percent of bisexual men.

Following these questions, we then asked our respondents:

We are particularly interested in the period between when you said you were between {EARLIEST} years old when you {EARLIEST COMING OUT EXPERIENCE} and {LATEST} years old when you {LATEST COMING OUT EXPERIENCE}. Here are things that some lesbian, gay, and bisexual people say happened to them at this time. Please tell us how well these statements describe you.

Following this introduction, in random order, were five scales on which respondents were asked to assess change along five dimensions that may have happened during their coming out period. These dimensions were political views, relationship with their families, their religiosity, their feelings toward people of other races, and their interest in politics. The scales were designed carefully so as to allow for the entire range of possible responses (see Appendix A).

Table 8. Changes During Coming Out Period as Recalled by LGBs

source: Hunter College Poll (2007)

responses reported here are collapsed from seven-point scales; see Appendix A

In terms of your RELIGION between {EARLIEST AGE} and {LATEST AGE}:

	% of all LGBs	% of LGBs who came out after age 30
I became more religious	15.7	11.3
no change	53.3	63.8
I became less religious	27.4	22.8

In terms of your POLITICAL VIEWS between {EARLIEST AGE} and {LATEST AGE}:

	% of all LGBs	% of LGBs who came out after age 30
I became more conservative	7.3	7.5
no change	56.3	65.2
I became more liberal	33.2	24.5

In terms of your INTEREST IN POLITICS between {EARLIEST AGE} and {LATEST AGE}:

	% of all LGBs	% of LGBs who came out after age 30
I became less interested in politics	4.2	3.2
no change	56.2	62.7
I became more interested in politics	36.2	31.6

In terms of your RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR FAMILY between {EARLIEST AGE} and {LATEST AGE}:

	% of all LGBs	% of LGBs who came out after age 30
I became more distant from my family	34.6	17.4
no change	48.1	69.1
I became closer with my family	14.2	11.5

In terms of your FEELINGS TOWARD PEOPLE OF OTHER RACES between {EARLIEST AGE} and {LATEST AGE}:

	% of all LGBs	% of LGBs who came out after age 30
I felt closer to people of other races	27.9	17.1
no change	63.2	74.5
I felt more distant from people of other races	5.1	6.5

The results for these questions are shown in Table 8, and they support the notion that coming out is experienced as (or at least is recalled to be) a time of tremendous change along political, religious, and familial lines. Roughly one-third of LGBs said they became more liberal during the coming out period; a similar proportion of LGBs became more interested in politics. More than one quarter said they felt closer to people of other races at the end of their coming out process than at its beginning. Substantial proportions of LGBs became less religious (27 percent) and more distant from their families (35 percent). One response to these findings might be that the typical time of coming out for LGBs—between early adolescence and the onset of adulthood—is a time of tremendous change for all Americans, not just LGBs (see, e.g., Niemi and Jennings 1991; Sears and Valentino 1997). Thus it is possible that the changes recalled by LGBs are due to life-cycle effects, rather than the event of identifying as LGB. To address this, we computed the tabulations for only those respondents who completed the coming out process after age 30 ($N = 210$). Data for these respondents are presented in the right-hand column of each of the panels of Table 8, and the results are similar to that of our entire sample, if slightly less marked. These data show that the catalyzing impact of the coming out process is not limited to those who experience it in adolescence and early adulthood.

An additional way in which we examine the conversion hypothesis is by comparing LGBs' party identification with those of their parents to examine the extent to which LGBs "convert" to a party affiliation that is different than that of their upbringing. Scholars of political socialization have shown that the partisanship of one's parents remain very strong determinants of one's own partisanship well into middle age (Jennings and Markus 1984; Green, Palmquist and Schickler 2002). For example, data from the four-wave Political Socialization panel study show that in 1997, nearly half of its participants still shared the party affiliation (Democrat, Independent, or Republican) of their parent (as measured in 1965), and only one-quarter of respondents identified with the party opposite that of their parent's.⁷

⁷ These are our calculations from Green, Palmquist and Schickler 2002, p. 81.

To assess the extent to which LGBs follow or depart from this pattern, we asked our respondents the question, “What best describes the home in which you were raised: mostly Democrats, mostly Republicans, evenly divided between the two parties, or mostly Independents?” Table 9 displays the breakdown of LGBs’ responses to this question, and shows—as the selection hypothesis would predict—that LGBs come from Democratic homes at rates higher than the general population.⁸

Table 9. Partisan Characteristics of LGBs’ Upbringings
source: Hunter College Poll, 2007

home in which R was raised	%
mostly Republicans	22.5
divided/mostly Independents	26.2
mostly Democrats	51.3
Total	100

However, among those LGBs who are raised in non-Democratic homes, the overwhelming majority abandon the party identification of their parents. Table 10 compares the current party affiliations of LGBs to those of the homes in which they were raised. It shows that 70 percent of LGBs raised by Republicans now identify as Democrats, as do 80 percent of those raised by Independents. The defection rate among LGBs raised by Democrats is minimal: only seven percent of these LGBs identify as Republicans.

⁸ For example, only 45 percent of those in the Political Socialization study had a Democratic parent (Green, Palmquist, and Shickler 2002, p. 81), and this figure is boosted due to the fact that every one of the study participants was born in 1948, in the midst of an era when Democrats enjoyed a substantial affiliation advantage. By contrast, the mean year of birth of LGBs in our study was 1966.

Table 10. LGBs' Party Identification, by Partisan Characteristics of Upbringing
 source: Hunter College Poll, 2007

		<u>party affiliations in home in which R was raised</u>			
		mostly Republicans	evenly divided/ mostly Independents	mostly Democrats	totals
<u>R's party</u>	Republican	27.8	16.9	6.7	14.1
<u>identification</u>	Independent	2.5	3.3	0	1.5
<u>today</u>	Democrat	69.7	79.8	93.2	84.4
		100	100	100	100

The conversion hypothesis leads us to be particularly interested in when and how such comprehensive individual political change—which is so rare in the general population--takes place. Does such change become more likely over time, as LGBs become acclimated to their political communities? Is it more likely to happen to LGBs who are in close contact with other lesbians, gays and bisexuals? Or does it happen during the coming out process? We are just beginning to explore these questions, and the following analyses provide intriguing hints to their answers.

Table 11 displays estimates of two models of how LGBs who are raised in Republican households abandon the party identification of their upbringing and come to consider themselves Democrats. In the first model, *age* is assumed to be the determining factor: the idea here is that as LGBs age, they gain more experience with their identity and come to tie it more directly to their political values and affiliations. In the second model, *time since coming out* (which we calculated simply as the age of a respondent minus the age at which she said the last of four coming out events occurred) is considered to be the determining factor. We assumed that both of these factors would have a diminishing marginal effect and therefore included quadratic terms for them in the models.

We assumed that another important factor at work in determining political affiliation was the extent to which one has contact with other LGBs. Therefore in both models, we interact the age and time since coming out variables with respondents' answers to the question, "Of your close friends, how many would you say are lesbian, gay, or bisexual?" The response set to this question was "almost all," "most," "about half-and-half," "some," or "almost none." For purposes of this analysis, we scored this variable (*friends*) from 5 to 1 in one-unit increments in the order specified. Unfortunately, our measure of the effect of contact with LGBs is subject to selection bias: survey respondents were not "randomly assigned" to friendship with other LGBs, as presumably they have a fair amount of say in choosing their close friends. To the extent that selection of LGB friends is correlated with variables not included in the model (such as preexisting strength of LGB identity at the time of choosing friends) that themselves lead to defection to the Democratic Party, estimates of the causal effect of the *friends* variable on the probability of defection will be biased in an upward direction. Therefore, the estimations we present here must be seen as descriptive of the relationship between contact with LGBs and political attitudes, rather than as a causal statement about how contact leads to political attitudes.

**Table 11. Determinants of Identifying as Democratic
Among LGBs Raised in Republican Households**

source: 2007 Hunter College Poll

Variable	Model I	Model II
age	.158 (.117)	
age ²	-.002 (.001)	
% of friends who are LGB (<i>friends</i>)	1.207 (1.082)	.645 (.228)
% of friends who are LGB x age	-.041 (.043)	
% of friends who are LGB x age ²	.000 (.000)	
# years since end of coming out period		.158 (.057)
(# years since end of coming out period) ²		-.003 (.001)
# years since end of coming out period x <i>friends</i>		-.038 (.020)
(# years since end of coming out period) ² x <i>friends</i>		.000 (.000)
constant	-3.233 (2.725)	-1.406 (.531)
<i>N</i>	210	210
log likelihood	-118.268	-112.206
pseudo <i>R</i> -squared	.06	.11

Cells contain probit coefficients and (in parentheses) their estimated standard errors.

The first column of Table 11 displays results from the model in which age is assumed to be the predominant factor in leading those raised by Republicans to defect to the Democratic Party. The coefficient on *age* is positive, while the coefficient on *age*² is negative, indicating that *ceteris paribus*, LGBs are more likely to become Democrats as they grow older—but at rates that diminish toward the end of the life span. The coefficient on *friends* is positive, indicating that those with more LGB close friends are more likely to have acquired a Democratic Party affiliation.

Finally, the interaction term *% of friends who are LGB x age* is negative, indicating that the association between having LGB friends and Democratic Party identification is weaker among those who are older.

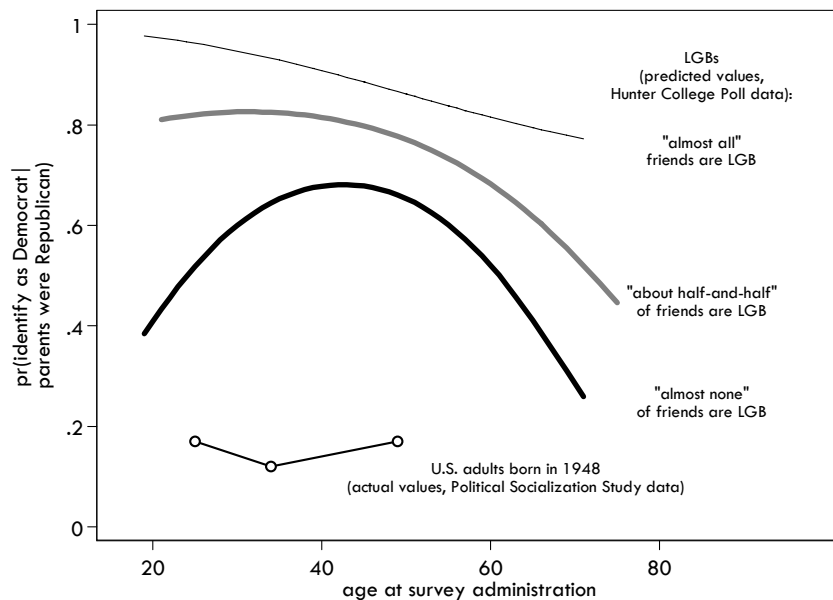
These effects are illustrated in Figure 4, which plots the estimated probability LGBs identifying as a Democrat, conditional upon being raised in a Republican home, over the entire life span. Probabilities are plotted for three different levels of friendship with LGBs: those who say “almost all” of their friends are LGB (7 percent of LGBs); those who say “half-and-half” of their friends are LGB (22 percent of LGBs); and those who say “almost none” of their friends are LGB (20 percent of LGBs). For purposes of comparison with the general population, we plot the actual defection rate calculated from the final three waves of the Political Socialization Study. (This study is the only source of data of which we are aware on the party identification of parents and their offspring in the general population.) The successive waves of the study were conducted when respondents were age 25, 3x, and 49, and we plot the proportion of these respondents whose parent in the study was Republican who identified as Democrat in each of the three waves.⁹

Figure 4 shows that LGBs raised in Republican homes abandon the party identification of their parents at rates higher than the general population at every point in the life span, and regardless of the extent to which they have close friends who are LGB. It also shows (as discussed above) that close friendship with other LGBs is associated with higher rates of Democratic Party identification, but that the strength of this association diminishes with age. It also shows that many older LGBs are actually less likely to have defected to the Democratic Party than younger ones—an association that is almost certainly due to generational effects (LGBs born earlier are less likely to become Republicans than those born later) than life-cycle effects (aging causes LGBs to identify with the Republican Party). For the life-cycle

⁹ Of course, the comparison between respondents in the Hunter College Poll study and those in the Political Socialization Study is imperfect. The sampling frame of the Political Socialization

hypothesis to be true, many lesbian, gay or bisexual people raised in a Republican household would first become a Democrat by midlife and then revert back to Republican identification by the end of the life span. A more plausible story is that earlier cohorts of LGBs came of age in an era when there was little difference between the two major parties on gay issues, and in a period when gay identity was less politicized (see Cohler 2007). These factors would make these generations less likely to see their sexual identity as a cause for political transformation. Due to the cross-sectional nature of our study, we are unable to distinguish generational from life-cycle effects, as age is perfectly collinear with birth cohort.

Figure 4. Predicted identification as Democrat (of those raised in Republican Households) by Age, among LGBs and the General Population
 sources: LGBs: Hunter College Poll, 2007
 U.S. adults: Four-Wave Political Socialization Study



In Table 11's Model II, the number of years since the end of the coming out period (rather than age) is assumed to be determinative of political identification. Here we see estimates broadly similar to those found in Model I: there is a strong association

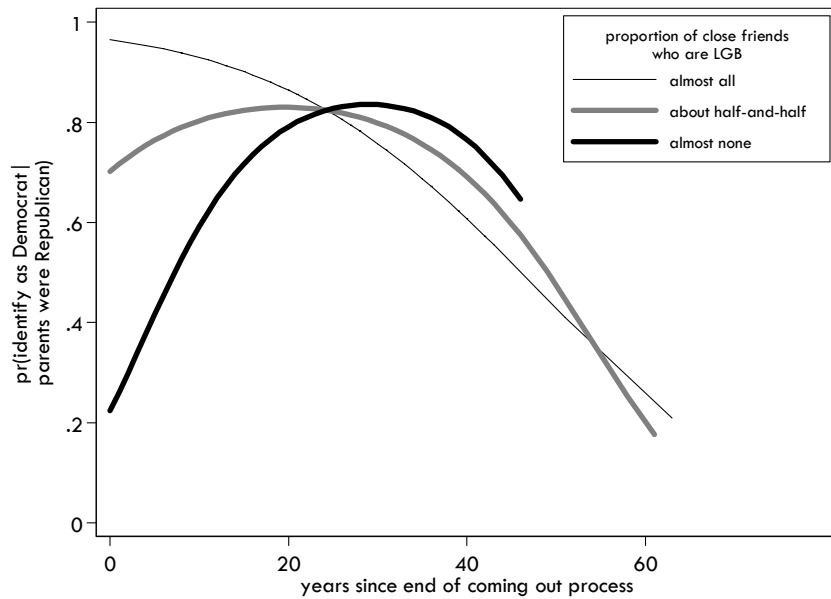
participants were Americans who turned 17 years old in 1965, meaning that all were born in 1948. By contrast, our study's participants' year of birth varied from circa 1928 to circa 1989.

between the length of time since the end of the coming out period and Democratic Party identification, but the strength of this association diminishes with time. The extent to which one has LGB friends is again associated with high rates of defection to the Democratic Party, but this variable differentiates older LGBs less than it does younger LGBs. We have plotted predicted probabilities generated by this model in Figure 5. The pattern is similar to that found in Figure 4, except in this case it is clear that friendship with other LGBs is strongly associated with defection to the Democratic Party in the years that closely follow the coming out process, but that friendship with other LGBs barely differentiates those who have been “out” for more than 25 years or so.¹⁰ The figure suggests three broad mechanisms by which LGBs acquire partisanship: *conversion* during the coming out process, regardless of contact with other LGBs (because even those who have just come out and have no LGB friends become Democrats at high rates); *contact* with LGBs (although the size of this effect is probably overestimated given the likelihood of selection bias discussed above); and *learning* to associate one’s sexual identity with Democratic Party affiliation over the course of the life-cycle among those who report having few LGB friends. These three mechanisms join the *selection* process discussed above (LGBs tend to be brought up in more tolerant environments than the general population) as explanations for why LGBs are politically distinctive.

¹⁰ These patterns are broadly similar when we include additional controls for age and age-squared (estimates not shown here).

Figure 5. Predicted identification as Democrat (of those raised in Republican Households) by Number of Years Since End of Coming Out Period and Degree of Friendship with Other LGBs

source: Hunter College Poll, 2007



Conclusion

In this paper, we have presented findings from what we believe to be the most comprehensive survey on the political attitudes and behaviors ever conducted with a truly representative sample of lesbians, gays and bisexuals. Our analysis of Hunter College Poll data has confirmed that LGBs are distinctively liberal on a wide range of issues and has discovered that they exhibit higher levels of civic engagement than the general population. It has also shown that LGBs are liberal partially because they are raised in more tolerant, educated households than the the typical American, and partially because many “convert” to liberal attitudes and Democratic Party affiliation as they go through the coming out process. Further political change appears to take place as time passes from the coming out period, and this change is augmented by close friendships with other LGBs.

Clearly, further investigation of all these hypotheses is necessary. The findings reported here only scratch the surface of the rich trove of information collected in the Hunter College Poll, which includes measures of the strength of LGB identity; LGBs' priorities for the gay rights movement; their experience and fear of discrimination; and LGBs' issue priorities and candidate preferences in the 2008 Presidential election. We look forward to reporting additional findings in later work and using them to augment our knowledge about LGB political distinctiveness.

APPENDIX A.

Scales used to assess political change during coming out period

[RANDOMIZE]

30a. In terms of your POLITICAL VIEWS between age X and age Y:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I BECAME MORE LIBERAL			No change			I BECAME MORE CONSERVATIVE

30b. In terms of your RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR FAMILY between age X and age Y:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I BECAME CLOSER WITH MY FAMILY			No change			I BECAME MORE DISTANT FROM MY FAMILY

30c. In terms of your RELIGION between age X and age Y:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I BECAME LESS RELIGIOUS			No change			I BECAME MORE RELIGIOUS

30d. In terms of your FEELINGS TOWARD PEOPLE OF OTHER RACES between age X and age Y:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I FELT MORE DISTANT FROM PEOPLE OF OTHER RACES			No change			I FELT CLOSER TO PEOPLE OF OTHER RACES

30e. In terms of your INTEREST IN POLITICS between age X and age Y:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I BECAME LESS INTERESTED IN POLITICS			No change			I BECAME MORE INTERESTED IN POLITICS

REFERENCES

- Bailey, Robert W. 1999. *Gay Politics, Urban Politics: Identity and Economics in the Urban Setting*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Bailey, Robert W. 2000. "Out and Voting II: The Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Vote in Congressional Elections, 1990-98." National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. http://thetaskforce.org/reports_and_research/out_and_voting_2 (October 25, 2007)
- Berelson, Bernard R., Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee. 1954. *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Cohler, Bertram. 2007. *Writing Desire: Sixty Years of Gay Autobiography*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Cook, Timothy E. 1999. "The Empirical Study of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Politics: Assessing the First Wave of Research." *American Political Science Review* 93(3): 679-692.
- Edelman, Murray S. 1993. "Understanding the gay and lesbian vote in '92." *Public Perspective* 4: 32-33.
- Egan, Patrick J. 2008. "Explaining the Distinctiveness of Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals in American Politics." Working paper, New York University. March 31. <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1006223> (March 31, 2008)
- Egan, Patrick J. and Kenneth Sherrill. 2005. "Marriage and the Shifting Priorities of a New Generation of Lesbians and Gays." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, April, 229-232.
- Gates, Gary J. and Jason Ost. 2004. *The Gay and Lesbian Atlas*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute Press.
- Herek, Gregory M. 2009. "Hate crimes and stigma-related experiences among sexual minority adults in the United States: Prevalence estimates from a national probability sample." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, forthcoming.
- Hertzog, Mark. 1996. *The Lavender Vote: Lesbians, Gay Men and Bisexuals in American Electoral Politics*. New York: NYU Press.
- Huddy, Leonie. 2003. "Group Identity and Political Cohesion." in David O. Sears, Leonie Huddy and Robert Jervis, eds., *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Jennings, M. Kent, and Gregory B. Markus. 1984. "Partisan Orientations over the Long Haul: Results from the Three-Wave Political Socialization Panel Study." *American Political Science Review* 78: 1000- 18.
- King, Gary, James Honaker, Anne Joseph and Kenneth Scheve. 2001. "Analyzing Incomplete Political Science Data: An Alternative Algorithm for Multiple Imputation," *American Political Science Review* 95(1): 49-69.
- Laumann, Edward O., John H. Gagnon, Robert T. Michael, and Stuart Michaels. 1994. *The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Lewis, Gregory B., Rogers, Marc A. and Kenneth Sherrill. 2003. "Sexual Identity, Sexual Behavior, and Group Socialization: Does Gay Sex Turn People into Liberal Democrats?" Presented at the 2003 American Association for Public Opinion Research annual meeting.
- Mosher, William D., Anjani Chandra, and Jo Jones. 2005. "Sexual behavior and selected health measures: Men and women 15–44 years of age, United States, 2002" *Advance Data From Vital and Health Statistics* 362(September 15). Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.
- Niemi, Richard G. and M. Kent Jennings. 1991. "Issues and Inheritance in the Formation of Party Identification." *American Journal of Political Science* 35(4): 970-988.
- Pathela, Preeti, Anjum Hajat, Julia Schillinger, Susan Blank, Randall Sell, and Farzad Mostashari. 2006. "Discordance between Sexual Behavior and Self-Reported Sexual Identity: A Population-Based Survey of New York City Men." *Annals of Internal Medicine* 145(6): 416-425.
- Rubin, Donald 1987. *Multiple Imputation for Nonresponse in Surveys*. New York: Wiley.
- Schafer, Joseph L. 1997. *Analysis of Incomplete Multivariate Data*. London: Chapman and Hall.
- Schaffner, Brian and Nenad Senic. 2006. "Rights or Benefits? Explaining the Sexual Identity Gap in American Political Behavior." *Political Research Quarterly* 59(1): 123-132.
- Sears, David O., and Valentino, Nicolas A. (1997). Politics matters: Political events as catalysts for preadult socialization. *American Political Science Review*, 91, 45-65.
- Sell, Randall. 2007. "GayData.org: Data Sources." http://gaydata.org/ds001_Index.html (August 5, 2007)
- Sherrill, Kenneth. 1996. "The Political Power of Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 29(3):469-473.
- Smith, Raymond A. and Donald P. Haider-Markel. 2002. *Gay and Lesbian Americans and Political Participation: A Reference Handbook*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO Press.