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Marriage Equality: Media Coverage and Public Opinion

By Amanda Studley

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Introduction

A Brief History of Same Sex Marriage

The struggle for equality is nothing new in this country. Many minority groups have faced hardships advocating for the equal treatment of their group. One of the most recent struggles has involved the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community and their pursuit of marriage equality. Under federal law, specifically the Defense of Marriage Act signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 1996, marriage is defined as between one man and one woman. However state-by-state laws regarding the definition of marriage vary and recently the trend is toward legalizing same-sex marriage. This began in 2004 when the Massachusetts Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage. Since then the campaign for marriage equality has had success in nine states and the District of Columbia, each of which now grant marriage licenses to same-sex couples. However, over the last few decades, thirty states enacted constitutional bans on same-sex marriage (NCLS 2013). Most recently North Carolina passed an amendment making it the 30th state to ban same-sex marriage (Pew Research Center 2012). There has also been movement on the issue of same-sex marriage on the federal level. In 2013, the Supreme Court heard two cases regarding same-sex marriage. While the court has yet to rule on either of these cases, the issue of same-sex marriage has certainly come into the full view of the public.

Opinions regarding same-sex marriage have changed over the last several years. Today, 49% of the population endorses full and equal marriage rights for same sex

couples while only 44% oppose it (Pew Research Center, 2013). This is a change of 16% in ten years: in 2003 only 33% of the population supported full legalization of same-sex marriage and 58% were opposed (Pew Research Center, 2013). Millennial generation shows the greatest support for marriage equality with 70% of the generation approving of same-sex marriage (Pew Research Center, 2013). The campaign for same-sex marriage rights has gained supporters from influential politicians, celebrities, and advocates nationwide. This kind of public support was unheard of just 30 years ago as people were afraid of being “black listed” due to public support (Adams 2012). Today supporters of marriage equality include President Barack Obama who in his inaugural speech talked about equality for the LGBT community.

But why has there been a change in public opinion regarding same-sex marriage? One theory is that the media has influenced the public’s view on same-sex marriage and LGBT individuals. The media can influence individuals using several well-studied tools: Framing, agenda setting, priming, and tone. This paper will discuss each of these tools in depth in order to understand how the media influences the public.

Media Framing of Issues

Framing is a tool the media utilizes to tell audiences how to interpret a story and to promote a specific evaluation of a person, event, object, or issue (Adams 2012). Several researchers including Tony Adams (2012) have looked at the changing media frames that describe the LGBT community over the past several years. In Adams’ (2012) work, it was shown that the media coverage of California Proposition 6, the 1978 referendum that would ban homosexuals from teaching in schools, the media used very negative frames to describe the events surrounding the vote. These frames included portraying LGBT individuals as predators and pedophiles, framing sexual orientation as a

life style choice, and reporting that homosexuality could be “taught” to students (Adams 2012). Adams noted additionally that few individuals came out openly to advocate against proposition 6 (2012). Just 30 years later in California Proposition 8 was put to a vote. Proposition 8 was a ballot initiative that sought to define marriage as between one man and one women under the California constitution. During the coverage of Proposition 8 that media frames included that homosexuality was a sexual orientation not a lifestyle, and that voting for Proposition 8 was discriminatory, anti-gay, and politically incorrect (Adams 2012). News coverage at this time also focused on the proponents and opponents of Proposition 8. There were negative frames associated with proposition 8 such as the criticism against same-sex relationships, however this time the focus was not on individuals, and the idea that same-sex marriage violated religious freedoms, but overall there was a major switch in the framing of same-sex individuals by the media (2012).

Agenda Setting Abilities of the Media

In addition to framing, discussed above, the media also controls agenda setting for the public. Agenda setting is the process in which the media influence which issues are seen as most pressing by the public and politicians alike. This is completed by exposing the public to large quantities of coverage regarding a specific issue, as the public is exposed to more coverage regarding an issue over a longer period of time they tend to find the issue more important (Shehata and Stromback, 2013). This theory of agenda setting is called accessibility theory and assumes that just seeing the issue enough times makes it important to the public (Miller 2007). Relevance theory also argues that the public takes stories from the news and decides based on the coverage how relevant the issue is to the individual as well as local/state/federal policy (Miller 2007). There are

many theories on how individuals decide relevance including personal connection and affect. Miller found that emotional connections in the news, particularly negative emotions within the media have been found to influence the judgment of the public. Particularly when an issue is viewed as frightening or sad the public tends to place more value on the issue (Miller 2007).

Media Priming

Agenda setting primes individuals for future judgments. Priming is the theory that individuals have a limited amount of space in their memory and that they use parts of their memory that has been activated most recently (Brug, Semetko, Valkenburg 2006). This relates to media because the attention the media gives to a story can help prime individuals for later judgments on an issue. Rimmerman and Wilcox (2007) argue that the media attention that anti-gay ballot initiatives receive has a priming effect on individuals. Individuals, they find, were more likely than not during these times to indicate same-sex marriage as a very important factor in their decision on who to elect for president (Rimmerman and Wilcox 2007).

The Affect of Tone on Public Opinion

The last tool at the media's disposal is its ability to manipulate and control the tone of a story. Tone is described as the attitude of the media within a story. Using words and imagery to create a desired emotion creates tone; usually tone is described in the terms of positive and negative. The theory of tone is that articles in the media are written to be either positive or negative in nature. If an article is positive in nature then individuals exposed to it will respond more favorably to the subject. If an article is negative in nature then individuals exposed to it will respond less favorably to the subject. A prime example of the affects of tone on public attitude is the media coverage

involving welfare. In the book “Why Americans Hate Welfare” author Martin Gilens (2000) explores the change in media coverage of welfare over time. Ruth Hamill performed one of the studies Gilens relies on in his work, in her experiment Hamill subjected individuals to a negative article featuring 3 mothers on welfare, Hamill emphasizes these individuals are not typical cases of women on welfare and provided the subjects with statistics on the typical welfare recipient. After participants finished reading the article and were exposed to the statistics regarding typical welfare recipients, participants were then asked about their support for welfare in general (1980). What Hamill found was that individuals responded more negatively to welfare after reading this article than participants who filled out the same questionnaire and received the same statistics but had no prior exposure to the negatively toned article (1980). What Hamill found was that even when the participant knew that the article was an atypical case they still showed less support for welfare because they were affected by the tone of the article (1980). Gilens goes on in his book to explain that the public generally supports the idea of welfare but when they believe that most welfare recipients are black their support diminishes. This is because the tone of media coverage featuring black individuals and welfare is on average more negative in tone, supporting the idea that tone influences individual’s opinions (2000).

Building Off Previous Works

James Avery and Mark Peffley (2003) studied the affects of media tone and framing on public support for welfare. In their experiment Avery and Peffley exposed a sample of college students to one of four articles, these articles were either positively or negatively toned and featured either a black or a white mother as the frame. Positively toned articles talked about the success of welfare on moving the mother in the article off

of welfare and into the working world. The negatively toned article included information on the failure of welfare and the struggles of the mother featured in the article to support her family without the assistance of welfare. Participants were asked to read the article and then fill out a survey afterwards, which evaluated their attitudes towards welfare in general. Participants were asked questions such as if they believed the time individuals were allowed to stay on welfare was too long, whether the mother in the story was likely to go back on welfare, and whether welfare reform was a success or failure. Their findings indicated that when individuals were exposed to the story featuring the black mother their evaluations were much more critical of the mother and the welfare system. When participants were exposed to the article featuring white mothers they responded more positively. In addition they also observed differences in participants evaluations depending on the tone of the article, however, the effect was mostly additive in nature (Avery and Peffley 2003).

Based on the information above and the findings of Avery and Peffley, Gillens, and Hamill on the topic of welfare one can see that media does affect the opinions of the public. The media utilizes tone, framing, priming, and agenda setting to manipulate and alter the opinions of the public. Media influence could be the reason for the change in public opinion on the topic of marriage equality. There has been a change in the way that the media frames the issue of marriage equality within the United States. Frames regarding LGBT issues such as marriage equality have fundamentally changed. Individuals are no longer portrayed in the mainstream media as being pedophiles or predators; in fact, according to Adam's (2012) research, the media now frames the issue of marriage equality as a fundamental right for all individuals and that opposing same-sex marriage is discriminatory. Adams also argues that LGBT individuals are no longer

portrayed as predators and a danger to society. As we can see from the studies of welfare mentioned above this change could cause individuals to feel more positively to the LGBT community and raise support for policies such as marriage equality.

The rise in media attention given to marriage equality and the struggle of the LGBT community due to recent events at the state, local, and federal level have also created a sense of saliency for the public. Agenda setting as described above is created by an increase in media exposure on a subject. The increase in media coverage on LGBT rights and marriage equality is likely to have caused the public to perceive the issue as a pressing. It also has a priming affect on individuals. Since news coverage has increase same-sex marriage is in the forefront of the public's mind. This allows the public to evaluate their feelings on same-sex marriage and form an opinion on the subject, an opinion that is likely influenced by media exposure.

For this experiment we decided to replicate Avery and Peffley's original experiment. Just as seen in Avery and Peffley's article we believe that the tone and frame of the news article will affect an individual's support for same-sex marriage and other policies involving the LGBT community. The theory of this experiment is the one laid out by Avery and Peffley. The tone of the article the individual receives will affect how they respond to policies involving LGBT individuals. Those exposed to negative articles will be more negative towards these policies because they will be primed with information that says same-sex marriage creates legal complications and negatively affects children. Those exposed to positive articles will respond more positively to these policies because they will receive information on celebrations of same-sex marriage, support from the president for same-sex marriage, and information on legislative victories involving same-sex marriage. This information will cause them to think about same-sex

marriage in either a positive or negative way depending on the tone of the article they read. We also manipulated the frame of the article to see if exposure to males or females influences individuals' feelings about same-sex marriage and other policies affecting LGBT individuals. We saw a difference in Avery and Peffley's experiment when race was manipulated so to create a similar situation we decided to investigate the affects of gender (2003). It may be true that individuals respond more favorable to policies involving LGBT individuals if the frame features a lesbian couple than a male couple. We could see this difference when looking at policies involving children and parenting as women are seen as maternal and nurturing. The hypotheses for this experiment are as followed:

Hypothesis 1: If an individual is exposed to a negative stimulus their support for same-sex marriage and other policies involving LGBT individuals will decrease.

Hypothesis 2: If an individual is exposed to a female frame their support for same-sex marriage and other policies involving LGBT individuals will increase.

To test this theory I will replicate the experiment done by Avery and Peffley (2003). In their experiment Avery and Peffley gave participants negative or positive articles about welfare featuring either black or white mothers. Immediately after reading the articles individuals were asked to fill out a survey measuring their levels of support for welfare policies. Following this same procedure I applied Avery and Peffley's work to same-sex marriage policy.

The participants in this survey were college students at the University of Rhode Island. The sample size for the experiment was $N= 324$. The age range of these students was 18 to over 27 years of age; 48.8% percent of the students were female and 51.2% of the students were male. The participants were 84% white, 6.7% black, 1.6% Asian, and

1.5% other. 9.9% of the participants identified as Hispanic/ Latino and 3.2% identified as LGBT. Participants were recruited from multiple disciplines including: political science, psychology, pharmacy, nursing, and philosophy.

For this experiment participants were asked to read one of five articles. The first is a neutral article unrelated to the experiment, focusing on rumors regarding the latest I-phone. This article served as the control group for the study. The other articles were the experimental manipulations. The four experimental articles were either toned positively or negatively and framed around a gay or lesbian couple. The tones were created with the subject matter and wording of the articles. The negative article featured information about same sex divorce rates, infidelity, and legal complications in regards to same-sex marriage. The positively toned articles focused on same-sex marriage ceremonies, celebrations, and families. Within those two articles the couple names were manipulated to change the frame of the article, one frame featured male names and the other article feature female names. All articles can be found in the appendix of this paper. Students were randomly assigned one of the five articles to read. Upon completion of the article students were asked to complete a survey examining their attitudes on several issues including marriage equality, same-sex families and child rearing, LGBT individuals adopting children, and same-sex divorce. The exact wording of all questions contained on the survey can be found in the appendix. Participants were also asked about their attitudes towards the couples featured in the article. The survey was two pages in length and took students approximately ten minutes to complete.

Findings

In table one we investigate the affects of tone on the listed dependent variables without consideration of the gender of the couple featured in the frame. The results of the

experiment show a general difference between those who received the positively toned article and those who received the negatively toned article. In general those who were exposed to the negative stimuli showed lowered support for all dependent variables. However only one variable showed a statistically significant difference and that was on support for civil unions over marriage. For this question individuals were asked to rate their agreement on the statement “Same-sex couples should be allowed to legally enter into civil unions but not marriages” from strongly disagree to strongly agree. When just tone is investigated we see that individuals were more like to agree with that statement when they were exposed to the negative stimuli, regardless of gender. When individuals were primed with a positive stimuli they were more likely to disagree with the statement (indicating that they believed same-sex couples should be allowed to enter into legal marriage not just civil unions). The difference in means between the positive and the negative tone is this variable was -0.439. This means that participants were influenced by the tone when they were asked whether they thought same-sex couples should be able to enter into civil union but not marriage. Tone influenced participants’ support of marriage.

Table 2 describes the differences between the frames (i.e. if a participant read a story involving a gay male couple or a lesbian female couple). The results for this analysis showed virtually no difference. No variables showed statistically significant differences when just frame was examined. This means that participants were not influenced solely by the gender of the subject in the article. This table does not account for the tone of the article and just looked at the effect of the frame on individual’s support for the dependent variables.

Table 3 shows the differences between participants’ responses when tone is held constant (positive) and frame varied (male vs. female). It also compares the variables,

positive male and positive female to the neutral article. This table generally shows greater support for same sex marriage when the positively toned article featured females. However, in only one case was the difference significant. Again, this was support for the statement “Same-sex couples should be allowed to legally enter into civil unions but not marriages”. When positive male was compared to neutral there is a statistically significant difference between the positive male article and the neutral article. The difference in the means between the independent variables was -0.47. When individuals were exposed to the positive male article their support for same-sex marriage over civil unions increased. When individuals received no priming whatsoever on the topic of same-sex marriage, they were more likely to support civil unions over same-sex marriage. This means that the positively toned article increased support for same-sex marriage.

Table 4 shows the differences between frames (male vs. female) when the tone was negative. This table also compares responses to the negative male and the negative female article to the neutral article. In this category we saw no statistically significant differences on any variable. This means that whether the article the participant received featured a gay couple, lesbian couple or was completely unrelated to same-sex marriage there was no large differences in support for any of the dependent variables.

Table 5 compares the responses of those who received positive and negative articles that featured male names. The same general trend is evident here: there is less support for policies benefiting gay men when recipients have read a negatively toned article. Two of the variables show statistical significance. The first variable is once more support for civil unions over marriage. As mentioned before, individuals were asked to rate how much they agreed with the statement “Same-sex couples should be allowed to

legally enter into civil unions but not marriages” on a scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree. Our results show that individuals were more likely to respond that gay couples should be allowed to enter a civil union but not a marriage when they received the negative stimuli involving male names. The difference in means was -0.402. This means that the negative toned articles were able to diminish support for same-sex marriage when we looked at just the articles involving male names. The second statically significant variable was on the influence of divorce on children. On this question individuals were asked “If a gay or lesbian couple with a child were to seek a divorce how do you think their child would be influenced compared to a child of a straight couple in the same situation?” participants were able to choose from the following answers Influenced much more, Influenced more, Influenced about the Same, Influenced less, or Influenced much less. On this variable we see that when we only look at the male frame and compare the two different tones, positive and negative, there was a statically significant difference in the responses of participants with the difference in means being 0.22. Individuals who received the negative article featuring male names were more likely to respond that the child of the gay couple seeking a divorce would be influenced more than a child of different sex parents who were also seeking a divorce.

Table 6 compares negative vs. positive articles featuring female names. In this table we see similar results to those found in table 5. In general we see a decrease in support for same-sex marriage and other policies involving gay and lesbian couples. The statistically significant variables were the same as the variables in table 5. We see a significant change in increased support for civil unions over marriage when individuals were given negatively toned articles featuring females’ names. The difference in means was -0.477 suggesting that when an article features a female name but covered the issue

in a negative tone, support for civil unions over marriage increased. The other important change we see is that when participants were exposed to a negative-tone, female-framed article, participants responded that children of same-sex couples would be influenced more than children of straight couples if the couple were to seek a divorce. The difference of means in this variable was 0.187.

Conclusion

As we can see from these results there was a change in the participants attitudes when they were exposed to the negative stimuli. Individuals were less likely to support things like same-sex couples being parents and they were more likely to support civil unions over marriage. These results show us that the media does influence individual's feelings on same-sex marriage and policies involving LGBT individuals in a similar way to how it affected individual's feelings on welfare policies in Avery and Peffley's article. The interesting part of these results was the fact that people were more likely to support civil unions over marriage when exposed to the negatively toned article. Further research needs to be done on this particular question. I predict that this may be a result of the individual wanting to support same-sex couples but the negative article influenced them so their support was diminished. Confounding variables in this experiment may be the fact that all my participants were college age students. Millennials have been shown to overwhelmingly approve of same-sex marriage (Pew Research Center, 2013). The fact that we saw some change in belief despite the group's overwhelming support of same-sex marriage is something to be noted. This means that the media affects even our most liberal open-minded generation. Variations of this experiment should include individuals outside the millennial generation and those who have varying levels of education. This

would make the study more representative of how the media affects the public as a whole. I predict that if these additional groups were studied we would see more statically significant results within the dependent variables.

Overall what one can see from this experimental design is that the media can and does influence individual's opinions regarding same-sex marriage and policies involving LGBT individuals. We saw that one hypothesis was supported in this experiment, as those exposed to negative stimuli were less supportive of same-sex marriage and other policies regarding LGBT individuals. We could not show that the female frame received any more support than the male frame as in both categories we saw statically significant results on the same dependent variables.

The real world implications of these results are far reaching. If the media is responsible for changes in public opinion regarding same-sex marriage then the next step is to discover why the media has changed in the first place. These results also mean that individuals if they had the resources and power could manipulate the public's opinion by strategically altering the frame and tone of their stories. Further study is required on this topic to examine how strong this relationship between media influence and public opinion is, especially in topics like social policy. However these results do support the idea that the media affects the public's opinion on same-sex marriage and show that it could be responsible for the change in attitudes observed in the past several years.

Tables

Table 1

Dependent Variable	Positive (1)	Negative (2)	Neutral (0)	Positive vs. Negative	Positive vs. Neutral	Negative vs. Neutral
Adopt	4.217	4.054	4.203	0.163	0.014	-0.149
Civil Union Only	2.163	2.602	2.631	-0.439*	-0.468	-0.029
Support Same Sex Marriage	4.125	4.016	3.953	0.109	0.172	0.063
Divorce Rate	2.093	2.242	2.109	-0.149	-0.016	0.133
Parenting	4.125	3.914	3.908	0.211	0.217	0.006
Divorce effect on children	2.867	2.664	2.887	0.203	-0.02	-0.223
Favoring same sex marriage laws	1.32	1.417	1.323	-0.097	-0.003	0.094

* Significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 2

Dependent Variable	Male (1)	Female (2)	Neutral (0)	Male vs. Female	Male vs. Neutral	Female vs. Neutral
Adopt	4.135	4.136	4.203	-0.001	-0.068	-0.067
Civil Union Only	2.365	2.397	2.631	-0.032	-0.266	-0.234
Support Same Sex Marriage	4.089	4.054	3.953	0.035	0.136	0.101
Divorce Rate	2.136	2.197	2.109	-0.061	0.027	0.088
Parenting	4	4.038	3.908	-0.038	0.092	0.13
Divorce effect on children	2.744	2.786	2.887	-0.042	-0.143	-0.101
Favoring same sex marriage laws	1.371	1.366	1.323	0.005	0.048	0.043

* Significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 3

Dependent Variable	Positive Male (1,1)	Positive Female (1,2)	Neutral (0)	Positive Male vs. Positive Female	Positive Male vs. Neutral	Positive Female vs. Neutral
Adopt	4.145	4.284	4.203	-0.139	-0.058	0.081
Civil Union Only	2.161	2.164	2.631	-0.003	-0.47*	-0.467
Support Same Sex Marriage	4.032	4.212	3.953	-0.18	0.079	0.259
Divorce Rate	2.048	2.134	2.109	-0.086	-0.061	0.025
Parenting	4.082	4.164	3.908	-0.082	0.174	0.256
Divorce effect on children	2.855	2.879	2.887	-0.024	-0.032	-0.008
Favoring same sex marriage laws	1.307	1.333	1.323	-0.026	-0.016	0.01

* Significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 4

Dependent Variable	Negative Male (2,1)	Negative Female (2,2)	Neutral (0)	Negative Male vs. Negative Female	Negative Male vs. Neutral	Negative Female vs. Neutral
Adopt	4.125	3.985	4.203	0.14	-0.078	-0.218
Civil Union Only	2.563	2.641	2.631	-0.078	-0.068	0.01
Support Same Sex Marriage	4.145	3.891	3.953	0.254	0.192	-0.062
Divorce Rate	2.222	2.262	2.109	-0.04	0.113	0.153
Parenting	3.921	3.908	3.908	0.013	0.013	0
Divorce effect on children	2.635	2.692	2.887	-0.057	-0.252	-0.195
Favoring same sex marriage laws	1.436	1.4	1.323	0.036	0.113	0.077

* Significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 5

Dependent Variable	Positive Male (1,1)	Negative Male (2,1)	Positive Male vs. Negative Male
Adopt	4.145	4.125	0.02
Civil Union Only	2.161	2.563	-0.402*
Support Same Sex Marriage	4.032	4.145	-0.113
Divorce Rate	2.048	2.222	-0.174
Parenting	4.082	3.921	0.161
Divorce effect on children	2.855	2.635	0.22*
Favoring same sex marriage laws	1.307	1.436	-0.129

* Significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 6

Dependent Variable	Positive Female (1,2)	Negative Female (2,2)	Positive Female vs. Negative Female
Adopt	4.284	3.985	0.299
Civil Union Only	2.164	2.641	-0.477*
Support Same Sex Marriage	4.212	3.891	0.321
Divorce Rate	2.134	2.262	-0.128
Parenting	4.164	3.908	0.256
Divorce effect on children	2.879	2.692	0.187*
Favoring same sex marriage laws	1.333	1.4	-0.067

* Significant at $p < 0.05$

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Appendix

Positive Articles

Based on: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2012/11/30/west-point-same-sex-marriage/1738665/>

Female Frame

First Same Sex Marriage Held at West Point Chapel

By Jeff Shang

December 1, 2012

The U.S. Military Academy's Cadet Chapel at West Point hosted its first same-sex marriage Saturday. Sarah Donovan and Jennifer Fulton, a West Point graduate, exchanged vows in the regal church in a ceremony conducted by a senior Army chaplain.

The couple has been together for 12 years and had a civil union ceremony in 1999 but desired to tie the knot officially. Unfortunately the couple's wedding ceremony could not be held in their home state of New Jersey, as same-sex marriage has yet to be recognized in the state.

"We just couldn't wait any longer" said Jennifer Fulton "We've been together and in love for 17 years. We would have loved to have the ceremony in New Jersey but it just seemed like we had been waiting long enough."

The ceremony comes a little more than a year after President Obama ended the military policy banning openly gay people from serving known as "Don't Ask Don't Tell", also known as DADT. DADT prohibited LGBT service members from openly expressing their sexual orientation. The end of Don't Ask Don't Tell came in September of 2011 when President Obama by executive allowed LGBT military members to open serve in the military without fear of being striped of their ranks. After the repeal of DADT the pentagon also provided new guidelines about

the use of Department of Defense Realty. The guidelines state "determinations regarding the use of DOD real property and facilities for private functions, including religious and other ceremonies, should be made on a sexual-orientation neutral basis, provided such use is not prohibited by applicable state and local laws." These orders, however, do not constitute a federal acceptance of same-sex marriage on a federal level as the Defense of Marriage Act, as known as DOM, still defines a marriage as a union of one man and one woman. Despite the federal government's stance on the issue several states, including Washington and Maryland, have sought to expand the rights of marriage to same sex couples.

"We hope that some day every couple who is committed and in love with each other will be able to be married" says Jennifer.

Male Frame

First Same Sex Marriage Held at West Point Chapel

By Jeff Shang

December 1, 2012

The U.S. Military Academy's Cadet Chapel at West Point hosted its first same-sex marriage Saturday. Erik Donovan and George Fulton, West Point graduates, exchanged vows in the regal church in a ceremony conducted by a senior Army chaplain.

The couple has been together for 12 years and had a civil union ceremony in 1999 but desired to tie the knot officially. Unfortunately the couple's wedding ceremony could not be held in their home state of New Jersey, as same-sex marriage has yet to be recognized in the state.

“We just couldn’t wait any longer” said George Fulton “We’ve been together and in love for 17 years. We would have loved to have the ceremony in New Jersey but it just seemed like we had been waiting long enough.”

The ceremony comes a little more than a year after President Obama ended the military policy banning openly gay people from serving known as “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell”, also known as DADT. DADT prohibited LGBT service members from openly expressing their sexual orientation. The end of Don’t Ask Don’t Tell came in September of 2011 when President Obama by executive allowed LGBT military members to open serve in the military without fear of being striped of their ranks. After the repeal of DADT the pentagon also provided new guidelines about the use of Department of Defense Realty. The guidelines state "determinations regarding the use of DOD real property and facilities for private functions, including religious and other ceremonies, should be made on a sexual-orientation neutral basis, provided such use is not prohibited by applicable state and local laws." These orders, however, do not constitute a federal acceptance of same-sex marriage on a federal level as the Defense of Marriage Act, as known as DOM, still defines a marriage as a union of one man and one woman. Despite the federal government’s stance on the issue several states, including Washington and Maryland, have sought to expand the rights of marriage to same sex couples.

“We hope that some day every couple who is committed and in love with each other will be able to be married” says George.

Negative Articles

Based on: <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/03/24/us/split-gay-couples-face-custody-hurdles.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/03/sunday-review/03divorce.html?pagewanted=all>

Female Frame

Same-Sex Divorce Leads to New Legal Issues

December 2, 2012

By Jeff Shang

If you thought the fight over same-sex marriage has been tumultuous, just wait for the era of same-sex divorce. With many states allowing same-sex marriage, such as New York, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Washington, there will be a major increase in weddings followed, inevitably, by a sizeable number of divorces.

Same-sex divorce provides new difficulties for society. Legal issues over when and where same-sex divorces can occur presents challenges for couples. Danielle Sutter and Kelly Fallon learned this the hard way, after being married in Massachusetts in May of 2004 Danielle and Kelly moved to Texas with Kelly's company. In 2009 the couple separated after Kelly found out that Danielle had been having a long-term affair with a mutual friend. Unfortunately for the couple Texas, who does not recognize same-sex marriage, refused to grant their divorce. "We're stuck in a limbo type state, Massachusetts sees us as married but Texas does not."

This has been the case for many same-sex couples that have moved from states, which allow same-sex marriage to states that do not. Grant Henderson, an attorney in the Texas Attorney

general's office argues "Recognizing same-sex divorce would cause our state to have to recognize same-sex marriage, an idea that their residents have voiced opposition to."

There's no easy solution to this problem, as couples cannot simply move to a state that does allow divorce. This is because many of these states have residency requirements before a couple can seek a divorce. In New York a couple must wait 90 days before they are allowed to file for divorce.

Another major factor that complicates the issue of same-sex divorce is child custody. Laws regarding custody of children were not designed with same-sex couples in mind. This leaves judges in an awkward position where little precedent has been made. Children of these couples end up being caught in the middle of a legal tug of war, which can cause significantly more trauma for the child than children of straight couples would likely not endure.

"The United State's legal system is not advanced enough to deal with the idea of same-sex divorce. Unfortunately with more and more states opting into legalization of same-sex marriage we will have no choice but to learn as we go" says Grant Henderson.

Male Frame

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Same-sex divorce provides new difficulties for society. Legal issues over when and where same-sex divorces can occur presents challenges for couples. David Sutter and Kevin Fallon learned this the hard way, after being married in Massachusetts in May of 2004 David and Kevin moved to Texas with Kevin's company. In 2009 the couple separated after Kevin found out that David had been having a long-term affair with a mutual friend. Unfortunately for the couple Texas, who does not recognize same-sex marriage, refused to grant their divorce. "We're stuck in a limbo type state, Massachusetts sees us as married but Texas does not."

This has been the case for many same-sex couples that have moved from states, which allow same-sex marriage to states that do not. Grant Henderson, an attorney in the Texas Attorney general's office argues "Recognizing same-sex divorce would cause our state to have to recognize same-sex marriage, an idea that their residents have voiced opposition to."

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Neutral Article

iPhone Users Speculate about Newest Features

January 5, 2013

By Kristen Rogers

Rumors are flying about Apple's newest iPhone release, tentatively known as the iPhone 5s. The company is expected to release the phone by September of 2013 but the Internet is already abuzz with speculation of the newest features that are suspected to be included on the phone.

The phone is expected to include the standard upgrades of most new iPhone generations such as increased processor speed, better pixel quality for the phone's built in cameras, and a retina display. However there are rumors of two major improvements that iPhone users have been waiting for. The first is collaboration between Google and Apple to improve Apple Maps, a new program recently released by Apple. Many users complain that Apple Maps is unusable and often leaves individuals lost. Apple Maps is also known for having issues with geographical placement and slow reaction speeds. Google has engineered a mapping program unlike any other on the web, using real photographs from street view as well as state of the art navigational systems to give drivers the most complete instructions available.

A second major improvement rumored to be included on the new iPhone is the personal assistant app known as Siri. Siri, which can be activated by holding down the home button on the iPhone 4s or 5, allows users to perform tasks by voice control. Users have complained though that Siri is often confused by voices with thicker accents or higher pitches. iPhone fans often take Siri's mistakes to the internet sharing with others the most ridiculous mistakes. The newest iPhone, when released, is expected to feature upgrades to the personal assistant. These will include

upgrades to the microphone that users speak into, allowing Siri to more easily pick up voices and sounds she struggled with in the past.

As usual, Apple is keeping details related to their newest phone private. Whether the features that iPhone users have been anticipating will be included on the newest model is still unknown.

Survey Questions

Q1. What is your gender?

A1. Male OR Female

Q2 Please indicate your employment status.

A2. Unemployed OR Employed Full Time OR Employed Part Time

Q3. What year in school are you?

A3. Freshman OR Sophomore OR Junior OR Senior OR Graduate OR continuing studies OR Other

Q4. Please indicate your age.

A4. Under 18 OR 18-19 OR 20-21 OR 22-23 OR 24-25 OR 25-26 OR Over 26

Q5. Please indicate your race (all that applies).

A5. White AND/OR Black AND/OR Asian AND/OR Native American AND/OR Other

Q6. What is your religion?

A6. Jewish OR Methodist OR Baptist OR Episcopal OR Catholic OR Quaker OR Mormon OR Unitarian OR Muslim OR No Religion OR Other

Q7. How frequently do you attend religion services?

A7. More than once a week OR Once a week OR Several times a month OR Once a month OR Several times a year OR Rarely OR Never

Q8. Are you married?

A8. Yes OR No

Q9. Are you Hispanic or Latino?

A9. Yes OR No

Q10. Are you Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgender?

A10. Yes OR No

Q11. Please rate how much attention you pay to news coverage of the following issues (Gun control, Health Care, Welfare Reform, Women's Health, Social Security, Marriage Equality)

A11. Almost None OR Very Little OR Somewhat attentive OR More than most other issues OR A Great deal

Q12. I have a lot of confidence in the people running the government in Washington.

A12. Strongly Disagree OR Disagree OR Neither Agree/Disagree OR Agree OR Strongly Agree

Q13. I trust most politicians to tell the truth to the public.

A13. Strongly Disagree OR Disagree OR Neither Agree/Disagree OR Agree OR Strongly Agree

Q14. This country would have many fewer problems if there were greater emphasis on traditional family values

A14. Strongly Disagree OR Disagree OR Neither Agree/Disagree OR Agree OR Strongly Agree

Q15. It is best not to get too involved in taking care of other people's needs.

A15. Strongly Disagree OR Disagree OR Neither Agree/Disagree OR Agree OR Strongly Agree

Q16. One of the big problems in this country is that we don't give everyone an equal chance

A16. Strongly Disagree OR Disagree OR Neither Agree/Disagree OR Agree OR Strongly Agree

Q17. You can't trust most people these days

A17. Strongly Disagree OR Disagree OR Neither Agree/Disagree OR Agree OR Strongly Agree

Q18. People tend to pay more attention to the well being of others than they should.

A18. Strongly Disagree OR Disagree OR Neither Agree/Disagree OR Agree OR Strongly Agree

Q19. This country would be better off if we worried less about how equal people are.

A19. Strongly Disagree OR Disagree OR Neither Agree/Disagree OR Agree OR Strongly Agree

Q20. How many hours of news do you watch on an average day?

A20. ½ hr or less OR ½ hr to 1 hr OR 1 hr to 2 hr OR 2 hr to 3 hrs OR more than 3 hrs

Q21. Do you personally know anyone who is gay?

A21. Yes OR No (if no skip to question 23)

Q22. Thinking about the gay person you know best, how would you describe your relationship with this person?

A22. You OR A member of your family OR a friend OR a coworker OR an acquaintance

Q23. I support same-sex marriage **

A23. Strongly Disagree OR Disagree OR Neither Agree/Disagree OR Agree OR Strongly Agree

Q24. Gay and lesbian couples are more likely to seek a divorce than heterosexual couples **

A24. Strongly Disagree OR Disagree OR Neither Agree/Disagree OR Agree OR Strongly Agree

Q25. Homosexual couples are just as capable of parenting children as heterosexual couples **

A25. Strongly Disagree OR Disagree OR Neither Agree/Disagree OR Agree OR Strongly Agree

Q26. Same-sex couples should be allowed to legally enter into civil unions but not marriages **

A26. Strongly Disagree OR Disagree OR Neither Agree/Disagree OR Agree OR Strongly Agree

Q27. Issues like same-sex marriage should be left to individual states not the federal government

A27. Strongly Disagree OR Disagree OR Neither Agree/Disagree OR Agree OR Strongly Agree

Q28. Same-sex couples should be allowed to adopt children. **

A28. Strongly Disagree OR Disagree OR Neither Agree/Disagree OR Agree OR Strongly Agree

Q29. If you found out that the couple mentioned in the article above was seeking a divorce, would you guess that it was due more to a failure of the couple, or a failure of the institute of marriage?

A29. Failure of the couple OR failure of the institute of marriage OR Unsure

Q30. If a gay or lesbian couple with a child were to seek a divorce how do you think their child would be influence compared to a child of a straight couple in the same situation: **

A30. Influenced much more OR Influenced more OR Influenced about the Same OR Influenced less OR Influenced much less

Q31. If a law was passed that allowed gay and lesbian couples to be married in your state would you: **

A31. Favor the law OR Oppose the law OR Unsure

Q32. How likely do you feel that the couple mentioned in the article will end up seeking a divorce?

A32. Very Unlikely OR Unlikely OR Likely OR Very Likely OR Unsure

THESE QUESTIONS WILL BE RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO THE SURVEY (1 PER SURVEY) CREATING A TOTAL OF 9 DIFFERENT SURVEYS.

Q33a. Your state is considering a new program to provide vaccines to state residents. The program will cost \$1 million per year. Scientists say that the vaccine will save 500 lives a year. The state has proposed to pay for the program by eliminating a program that refunds sales taxes paid in the last year. Are you in favor or against this program?

A33A: In Favor OR Opposed

Q34b. Your state is considering a new program to provide vaccines to state residents. The program will cost \$1 million per year. Scientists say that the vaccine will save 500 lives a year. The state has proposed to pay for the program by increasing the sales tax. Are you in favor or against this program?

A34B: In Favor OR Opposed

Q35c. Your state is considering a new program to provide vaccines to undocumented immigrants. The program will cost \$1 million per year. Scientists say that the vaccine will save 500 lives a year. The state has proposed to pay for the program by eliminating a program that refunds sales taxes paid in the last year. Are you in favor or against this program?

A35c: In Favor OR Opposed

Q36d. Your state is considering a new program to provide vaccines to undocumented immigrants. The program will cost \$1 million per year. Scientists say that the vaccine will save 500 lives a year. The state has proposed to pay for the program by increasing the sales tax. Are you in favor or against this program?

A36d: In Favor OR Opposed

Q37e. Your state is considering a new program to provide vaccines to minorities. The program will cost \$1 million per year. Scientists say that the vaccine will save 500 lives a year. The state

has proposed to pay for the program by eliminating a program that refunds sales taxes paid in the last year. Are you in favor or against this program?

A37e: In Favor OR Opposed

Q38f. Your state is considering a new program to provide vaccines to minorities. The program will cost \$1 million per year. Scientists say that the vaccine will save 500 lives a year. The state has proposed to pay for the program by increasing the sales tax. Are you in favor or against this program?

A38f: In Favor OR Opposed

Q39g. Your state is considering a new program to provide vaccines to children. The program will cost \$1 million per year. Scientists say that the vaccine will save 500 lives a year. The state has proposed to pay for the program by eliminating a program that refunds sales taxes paid in the last year. Are you in favor or against this program?

A39f: In Favor OR Opposed

Q40h. Your state is considering a new program to provide vaccines to children. The program will cost \$1 million per year. Scientists say that the vaccine will save 500 lives a year. The state has proposed to pay for the program by increasing the sales tax. Are you in favor or against this program?

A40h: In Favor OR Opposed

Q41i. Experts in the state want to create a new public health program to provide vaccines. Are you in favor or against the program?

A41i: In Favor OR Opposed

** The double star indicates the tested dependent variables in this experiment.