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Title: Homosexuality, Gay Rights, and the Clinton Coalition: Report to the National Election Studies on Results from the 1993 NES Pilot Study

Date: March 16, 1994

Dataset(s): 1992 National Election Study, 1993 Pilot Study

Abstract

This paper examines the 1993 Pilot Study items relating to gay rights. Strand finds that all the Pilot Study items show good criterion validity and, at least under certain circumstances, have substantive power in predicting more general attitudes regarding gay rights, morality, Aids, and gender issues. Strand also finds that the items seem to measure across a broad spectrum of bases of support and opposition to gay rights, as was intended in their design. Because the measures are so divergent, scaling of the Pilot Study items into a general "gay rights" support measure is unjustified. Scaling should, instead, be limited to one or two items. Strand then discusses the political importance of the gay rights measures. Specifically, he finds that a respondent's position on the "gays in the military" issue plays an important role in the developments of views of President Clinton. Finally, Strand examines the determinants of positions on the gay rights issues and finds that the important factors are: perceptions of what is natural or unnatural sexually, judgements whether "deviancy" is avoidable, and "gut reaction." Surprisingly, however, Strand finds little direct effect of theological beliefs -- independent of the other determinants examined -- in determining positions on gay rights issues.