Culture war counter-mobilization:
Gay rights and religious right groups in the states

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Abstract
The counter-mobilization hypothesis long ago fell on hard times. Despite its inherent plausibility, the notion has suffered from the lack of solid empirical testing and use in a wide variety of contexts. Nevertheless, counter-mobilization merits attention since it remains at the heart of pluralist theory. Without a clear response to competing interests, organizational representation of interests is a problematic concept. In this paper we revisit the counter-mobilization hypothesis in the context of two groups often said to be key players in the culture wars – religious right and LGBT organizations – in a time period, 2001-2010, where we expect there to be responses to the other's actions. Examining group counts in the states, we find evidence of counter-mobilization in the classic sense Truman intended. Moreover, we find a link between legislative polarization and the mutual presence of these groups that reinforces the relevance of this concept.

The counter-mobilization hypothesis (CMH) long ago fell on hard times. CMH is the expectation that opposing groups will form in response to actions by existing interest groups in order to support a policy change or defend the status quo (Truman 1951). Despite its inherent plausibility, the CMH has suffered from the lack of solid empirical testing and use in a wide variety of contexts, which makes it difficult to establish validity and scope conditions. Moreover, other explanations that focused on the role of individual mobilization in group formation became ascendant (e.g., Olson 1965). Nevertheless, counter-mobilization merits attention since it remains at the heart of pluralist theory. Without a clear response to competing interests in a political context, organizational representation is a problematic concept in a democratic system that relies on debate over competing alternatives. In this paper we revisit the CMH in the context of two group types often said to be key players in the culture wars – religious right and gay rights organizations. We examine their interplay in a time period, 2001-2010, when we would expect responses to the other's actions, especially after 2004. Do groups counter-mobilize?

If there ever was a set of groups that *should* show evidence of counter-mobilization, it is this. The religious right (RR) and LGBT movements have been at odds from their inceptions. The founding stories of each movement plausibly cite the other as one impetus for early organization (Fetner 2008). Their continued competition over a range of issues suggests that these parallel movements are responding in a backlash to the successes of the other (e.g., Haider-Markel 2007, 2010; Mansbridge and Shames 2008; Mucciaroni 2009), which is suggestive that they counter-mobilize citizens and elites in a variety of venues. Our research is focused on one component of that more encompassing set of phenomena in order to address a core concern in the interest group literature.

Establishing a sound empirical basis for the CMH allows for further theorizing about the scope and limits of counter-mobilization, which helps make sense of the disparate findings in the

2

admittedly small quantitative literature. In this article, we argue that CMH is a viable theory of group

formation and provide evidence of its presence in situations where zero-sum policy conflict exists.

These situations, while narrowly defined in this study, suggest the applicability of CMH beyond our

data. We further investigate whether counter-mobilization has an impact on politics beyond the

simple increase in organized interests vying for policy. We find evidence that counter-mobilizing

groups are linked to the ideological polarization of state legislatures, a finding which helps pave the

way for a more comprehensive conversation about the role of counter-mobilization in American

politics and policy making.

Theories of Interest Organization Mobilization

The classic approach to the organization of interests is elaborated by David Truman (1951),

who set out to develop a dynamic, responsive mechanism underpinning a pluralist theory of

democracy. In it, organizations closely tied to community interests change in waves in response to

shocks to the system produced by a variety of factors, including policy, technology, and other

environmental conditions. One important environmental condition is the counter-mobilization of

competing interests. Truman's theory was quickly superseded by Olson's (1965) critique, which

focused attention on the micro-mechanisms of group formation. In the last twenty years, however, a

neo-pluralist perspective has made a comeback fueled by research at the system level and embodied

in ecological models of organizations (e.g., Gray and Lowery 1996a). Most scholars now recognize a

more complex, multi-level set of forces shaping the mobilization of interest groups (Berry 1978;

Nownes 2000; Nownes and Neeley 1996; Pralle 2010), incorporating the insights of both Truman

and Olson and leaving room for a new examination of the CMH. In this more complicated picture

of group formation, the CMH should help us better understand the interplay of political and policy

considerations that surround organizational decisions to mobilize. Yet, little empirical work has attempted to assess whether counter-mobilization is occurring.

To be sure, a considerable amount of research has examined the responsiveness of organized interests to other groups. This is expressed in terms of spending (Austen-Smith and Wright 1994; Hansen and Mitchell 2000), coalition formation (Gray and Lowery 1998; Hojnacki 1997; Holyoke 2009; Nownes 2000; Salisbury et al. 1987), legislative targeting (Holyoke 2003, 2008), group survival (Gray and Lowery 1997; Nownes and Lipinski 2005), and group membership levels (Haider-Markel 1997). However, only three studies have examined the role of competing interests on group *formation*. Conover and Gray (1983) found a link between the number of feminist and anti-ERA groups in the states, and Hansford (2011) finds evidence of the formation of new groups in his examination of the temporal sequencing of advocacy behavior before the Supreme Court. Lowery et al. (2005), however, failed to find evidence for counter-mobilization in the health care sector during a period of intense lobbying.

There are a number of features of the interest group system that would undermine clear counter-mobilization effects. Perhaps the most important is the resource dependency of groups – the number of groups has been found to respond more closely to density-dependent resource and membership threats than to external policy threats in the population ecology approach to interest group systems (e.g., Gray and Lowery 1995). Groups seem to face far greater competition from isomorphic groups than they do from policy opponents. The primary importance of a dependable resource base drives organizations to partition and occupy a secure policy niche (Gray and Lowery 1996b).

On this basis, it is not at all clear that a new interest would mobilize on the basis of policy threat without the availability of a niche. In fact, it might be more likely that existing organizations would ramp up operations to meet the threat, form coalitions to face a larger predator (Lowery and

Gray 1998), or simply not react at all in their niches (Gray and Lowery 1996b). However, counter-mobilization behavior embodies a response to groups whose goals are in direct opposition – a case of specific policy conflict – not a response to groups in competition for similar material and ideological resources. This is a situation not fully addressed by systemic, ecological perspectives on interest group formation since it requires a narrower band of analysis in particular policy communities. We might also find this type of relationship in conflicts over individual and group civil rights, business and environmental regulation, or other conflicts that are perceived to be zero-sum by their participants.

Moreover, the type and target of interest group reaction probably depends on the level of stability in the policy area as "we are unlikely to observe patterns of mobilization and counter-mobilization in the presence of really dominant policy images" (Lowery et al. 2005). That is, counter-mobilization may be harder to demonstrate in policy areas where there is significant agreement about the direction in which policy should evolve. The conflict over gay rights and same-sex marriage in the United States does not exhibit this type of consensus and so presents an excellent opportunity to observe CMH.

Communication and Information Flows

Density-dependent group formation also has ramifications for the communication patterns in interest areas that bear on the CMH. Organized interests appear to communicate with and monitor ideological confederates (Carpenter, Esterling, and Lazer 2003, 2004; Heinz et al. 1993). These communications flow along the lines of existing personal and policy networks. For this reason, they tend to be insular and are unlikely to promote broad scale counter-mobilization against ideological opponents.

There are, however, a number of reasons why we *should* expect counter-mobilization on the basis of communication patterns. For one, the mere presence of communication between isomorphic interests does not indicate why they are communicating. It is likely that they are sharing the costs of monitoring government and opposition groups and discussing coalition strategy (Fligstein and McAdam 2011; Holyoke 2009). Thus, communication among ideological confederates suggests they are closely following events and would be likely to coordinate efforts against the opposition. Second, from a perspective that prizes group resource maintenance, there is no better fundraising material than an active opposition (Miller and Krosnick 2004). Threat of policy defeat drives significant grassroots mobilization; interviews with individual religious right activists suggest that they spend significant time observing and refuting opponents' policies and strategies (Conger 2009). Therefore, there are good reasons why groups would monitor, publicize, and attempt to counter the activities of opposition groups.

While these examples deal with existing organizations, their activities map the impetus that a potential group could draw upon. Their monitoring would also make it clear where a new organization would fit, fighting at a particular level of government or about particular policies. The acknowledged role of policy entrepreneurs in the emergence of new groups would also fit this pattern. Many are serial activists whose existing knowledge of a policy and its opponents spur the formation of new organizations (Carpenter and Moore 2014; Nownes and Neeley 1996).

Morality Policy

For a good test for the presence of counter-mobilization, Lowery et al. argue that a situation must entail new group mobilization, demographic volatility, and change over time within a policy area hosting "real contestation over policy where organized interests on all sides of an issue might plausibly mobilize and interject their ideas into the policy process" (2005: 104). The conflict between

the RR and LGBT movements over morality policy fits the bill. Gay rights and religious right groups operate primarily in the morality policy space, which may entail a different set of dynamics from other policy areas (Mooney 2001; Mooney and Schuldt 2008). The most common definition of morality policy is that it is technically simple, characterized by disagreement over values, and engenders a higher degree of citizen involvement than other issues (Mooney 2001). Morality policy is characterized by "easy" issues – those issues with few alternatives on which many individuals hold firm opinions.

The RR and LGBT movements have sparred over numerous policy issues including the decriminalization of homosexuality, the prosecution of hate crimes based on sexual orientation, the inclusion of information on homosexuality in the teaching of sex education in schools, anti-discrimination statutes, and the portrayal of gays and lesbians in the media. The national debate over same-sex marriage was only the most recent manifestation of a long-standing antagonism. While many of these issues conform to the broad tenets of morality policy, many are technical enough in their implementation that they required sustained involvement by interest groups and movement elites in lobbying state legislatures and petitioning the courts (Haider-Markel and Meier 1996). The RR and LGBT movement are waging a battle among interest groups, not just a battle between mobilized social movements. Based on these characteristics of the relationship between the RR and the LGBT movements and particularly their role as combatants on opposing sides of policy conflicts, we expect to find evidence of the counter-mobilization of RR and LGBT interest groups over time.

Though our analysis of these interest groups takes into account their embeddedness within the larger RR and LGBT social movements, we are testing only the narrow arena of impact of those groups registered to lobby in state legislatures. This helps to relate and distinguish our approach from the larger literature on the "backlash" effect of LGBT activism in the gay rights policy space

(Haider-Markel 2010; Mansbridge and Shames 2008; Mucciaroni 2009). The backlash literature deals more specifically with the role of judicial decisions (Keck 2009), voter opinions and ballot initiatives (Camp 2008), and the impact of LGBT state legislators (Haider-Markel 2007) on the rights of LGBT citizens and the backlash of conservative opinion. This literature places the political process at the center of the larger history of the LGBT movement and rights extensions and document the fundamental (pluralist) democratic problem of advancing inclusion through majoritarian politics.

Our purpose in this paper is related but different. We seek to use the conflict between the RR and the LGBT movement in state legislatures as a way to examine the applicability of the counter-mobilization hypothesis to a context where specific policy conflict exists. Therefore, we concentrate only on the RR and LGBT groups registered to lobby each state's legislature, not on the efforts of other groups, movements, and citizens across other venues. This is not to say that our inquiry is isolated, but it does plug in a substantive mechanism to complete an otherwise full documentation of the advance of this movement.

Counter-mobilization and Political Party Polarization

Finding evidence of counter-mobilization among RR and LGBT will help us better understand the formation of interest groups, but we also seek a clearer picture of the importance of the CMH in the politics of policy making. If counter-mobilization of interest groups occurs, then we should find its presence in the issues and *candidates* these interest groups pursue. Recent scholarship on the role of outside interests in driving political party behavior (Cohen et al. 2009) suggests that party polarization might be a good place to look for the impact of interest group counter-mobilization. This is particularly the case in state politics, where the personnel turnover in legislatures is higher and the role of interest group mobilization in legislative lobbying has grown exponentially over the last four decades (Berry and Wilcox 2009).

The advent of many new competing interest organizations cannot help but have an impact on the people and institutions that are tasked with making policy in a state (Berry 2010). These effects are seen both at the national level, specifically in the Senate, (Theriault 2008) and in state legislatures (Masket 2007, 2009; Masket and Shor 2014). Masket (2007), for instance, finds: "…legislators are heavily influenced by actors outside the legislature who, given the proper set of institutional rules, dominate the nomination processes to select loyal partisans" (483). That selection, then, "profoundly alter[s] the shape of the legislative party by manipulating nominations" (495). While we do not re-test the mechanism of Masket's findings – interest groups' role in the nomination process – we do test a logical extension of his findings. Organized interests seek to control nominations in order to produce both legislators and a legislature that favors their policy positions; thus, when groups are counter-mobilizing over truly contentious issues, then the party that results should be more likely to reflect that through increased polarization. Our use of both state level lobbying registration and partisan polarization in the very bodies that are being lobbied demonstrate this implication most clearly.

Other work helps to suggest the interstitial links of counter-mobilization to polarization. For one, the intensity of RR activity boosts citizen involvement in politics at the state level (Djupe and Conger 2012). Higher densities of RR groups boost citizen engagement across the political spectrum, not just among the movement's supporters. Higher rates of citizen participation should reflect in the constitution of the parties. Boehmke and Bowen (2010) also find that the density of groups in an interest groups system (along with direct democracy powers) boosts the amount of citizen engagement in state politics. Thus, interest group density is an important factor in the public policy process because of its impact on both citizen mobilization and interest representation.

Given that Republicans are strongly identified with Religious Right interest groups, and Democrats with LGBT interest groups, we look for the practical implications of counter-

mobilization of interest groups in the polarization of the parties in each state's legislature. We expect to find that the activity of these groups together will increase the level of partisan polarization in state legislatures. The interplay of these interest groups can together pull their respective parties apart. While interest group conflict over morality policy obviously cannot explain all observed partisan polarization in state legislatures, at least their interactions will be a contributing factor to the polarization we see in contemporary state legislatures.

Data and Methods

To study the CMH in the context of morality policy interest groups, we collected new data on the density of RR and LGBT groups in every state. We combine these with secondary data on state political and social context and characteristics relevant to supporting interest group systems (Gray and Lowery 1996a). While we would like to have a full count of groups engaged in any kind of politics, the best resource for identifying state-level groups remains legislative and executive lobbying registration. To be sure, this source of data is handicapped by its limitation to those interest groups that pursue an elite rather than (or in addition to) a grassroots influence strategy. However, because we are concerned primarily about the density of RR and LGBT groups, the number of groups registered to lobby in the state should give us a good approximation of the proportion of such groups and focus our attention on those groups that have the most direct impact on policy outcomes.

We collected data on the number of RR and LGBT groups registered to lobby in each state for the years 2001-2010. Nine undergraduate coders, using an extensive set of identification criteria (see Appendix A), recorded registered RR and LGBT groups from the "Lobbying Clients" listing

provided on the followthemoney.org website for the 2006-2010 time period.[1] Followthemoney.org is

a project of the National Institute on Money and State politics, an organization that compiles all of

the publically available data on money and lobbying from each state's ethics agency. Specifically, they

report all the organizations registered to lobby in each state for each year. This archive is complete

for 2006 onward and is a widely used source for data on state lobbying behavior. For the 2001-2005

time period, we use the lobbyist registration information available from the states themselves. In

some cases, states have electronically accessible archives that contain registration information back

through this time period. In others, document destruction laws had already taken effect and the

information is simply inaccessible. In 5 states (ND, PA, SC, UT, and VA), information was

unavailable for the earlier time period. In 9 more (DE, HI, KS, MA, NH, NM, NY, RI, and WV),

we were able to access only some of the years' lobbying registration data. Using the same criteria to

identify RR and LGBT groups in the earlier time period, the individual groups registered for each

year were compiled into an aggregate dataset that contains the counts for RR, LGBT, and the total

number of registered lobbying groups for each state for each year.[2]

Figure 1 plots the number of both LGBT groups (black) and RR (grey) groups per state as

well as the 10 year trend (lowess smoothed). For the LGBT movement, there are equilibria

punctuated by 2004. From 2001-2004 the average number of groups per state bounces around .4

(30-34 groups overall in the states), which shifts after 2004 to a persistent .7 groups per state

through 2010 (there are 50 groups from 2006-2010). The number of religious right groups changes

too, but with a one year lag to the gay rights groups. The average number of groups hovers around 2

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[1] The authors recoded approximately 10 states in each time period in order to check for coder reliability. All other states were extensively checked before inclusion in the dataset; discrepancies were resolved by the authors through a rigorous application of the coding criteria and deeper research into groups whose identity or goals were not immediately obvious.
[2] Due to concerns about missing data driving the findings, we re-estimated the 2006-2010 results using only states with available information from 2002 (when the fewest states were available). That test, available in an online appendix, shows the same results (estimates within .01 and with the same significance pattern) as those found using the full dataset and reported in the tables.

per state through 2005, after which it jumps up to 2.7 in 2006, then jumps over three for the next few years, before settling back to 2.5 for 2009-2010.

[Figure 1 about here]

The group concentrations do not change evenly across the states over time. Figure 2 maps the densities of RR and LGBT groups for 2001, 2006, and 2010 (darker indicates the highest concentration of groups – 5 or more). The RR has far more groups than does the LGBT movement, but in a few states the LGBT movement is particularly dense. Figure 1 described the stability of LGBT groups over time and the rise and decline in RR groups; these maps bear this out. For many states, there are no LGBT groups registered to lobby in any year 2001-2010 and there are only a few states with sizable counts of LGBT groups. New York consistently has a high density of LGBT groups (5 in 2005, missing data for 2001). Iowa is the interesting outlier with a high number of LGBT groups in 2006, which then recedes to one group by 2010.

[Figure 2 about here]

For the religious right, there are more RR groups registered to lobby in 2006 than in either 2001 or 2010, and no state retained a high number of groups across all three time periods. Only Missouri and South Dakota continued to have 5 or more groups between 2006 and 2010. The RR has been strongly opposed to the legalization of same sex marriage and the movement's variation may therefore be linked to 1) meeting most of their goals through successful ballot measure campaigns, and 2) increasing public support for some form of same sex marriage or domestic partnerships across all the states.

These plots give us a picture of the density of RR and LGBT groups across the states, but another important aspect of group density is the entry and exit of groups. This volatility in group density can tell us about the political environment these groups faced and, more importantly, reflect the importance of morality policy issues over the time period. Figure 3 illustrates the volatility of

LGBT and RR group densities over the entire 2001-2010 timeframe. Volatility is measured as the standard deviation in the number of groups registered in the state for these ten years. For LGBT groups, with few groups overall, there is little volatility. Combining the information from Figures 2 and 3, we see that there was zero or only one group over the entire period for most states and New York remains the most volatile with the highest number of groups (4-8) over the period. This is not to say that it was the same group over the entire timeframe. The implications of the entry and exit of different groups within the realm of morality policy are an important future research area (though see Nownes and Lipinski 2005).

[Figure 3 about here]

For the RR, 2001-2010 proved to be a much more volatile time. Only in South Dakota and Arizona was there no change over time in the density of their religious right groups and otherwise nearly every state experienced significant changes in density. While these graphical representations are not, on their own, evidence of counter-mobilization between RR and LGBT groups, they do add depth and detail to our understanding of the degree to which there is variation to study and that these processes are linked to individual states' political dynamics.

Explaining Morality Interest Group Density

While testing the CMH, we introduce controls for the variation in the density of state level RR and LGBT groups focusing on the Energy-Stability-Area (ESA) model used in population ecology studies of interest group system composition (e.g., Lowery et al. 2005; Nownes 2000). Essentially, the ESA model captures the degree to which an active constituency exists (energy), the longevity of the political system (stability), and the scope of the terrain accessible to a species (area). To gain a measure of the core constituency for a gay rights organization, we used Census reports from 2000, 2005, and 2010 about the number of same-sex households (x 1000 relative to all

households). We interpolated the data for the intervening years.[3] For measures of religious adherence, another source of "energy" on which these groups draw, we used the 2000 and 2010 Religious Congregations & Membership Studies (available from www.thearda.com) and interpolated data for the intervening years.[4] We use the percent Evangelical and the percent unaffiliated with a religious group for each state. These are not the only two constituencies for these two group types, since there are gay religious people and unaffiliated members of the religious right, but they are reasonable approximations (Wilcox and Robinson 2010). The Census, through the American Community Survey, provides estimates for each year about the proportion of the population over 25 that has a bachelor's degree or higher. Gross state product (all industries) is available from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, which is arguably a measure for the "area." We include measures for the years during which states banned gay marriage, which was for most states in 2004 through 2006, and for the few states that have allowed same-sex marriage through 2010. For California, we coded 2008 as allowing same-sex marriage, since it was allowed for part of the year before the passage of Proposition 8 in November temporarily stopped the practice.

The time-series and cross-sectional structure of these data constitute a panel design, for which there are several strategies for estimation. One method involves using a regression model with dummies included for each group unit (minus 1) and a time element. In a dataset with just 250 cases, we are reluctant to use up so many degrees of freedom. A more efficient solution is to implement a method with panel-corrected standard errors. Specifically, we use the "xt" family of estimators in Stata 12. We used the Hausman test to assess whether the random effects estimates are inconsistent

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[3] The census defines same-sex households as those households headed by a married same-sex couple or by a non-married same-sex partnership. Almost all states experienced a percentage growth from 2000-2005 (except Idaho, Mississippi, and Rhode Island). Thirteen states experienced a percentage decline across the 2005-2010 period (CO, KS, MI, MN, MO, NE, NH, OH, SC, VA, WA, WI, and WY). All of these states had a legislative or constitutional ban on same-sex recognition, though New Hampshire left that list late in 2010. None of the states granting same-sex unions/marriages experienced a percentage loss in same-sex households across this time period.

[4] Roger Finke, a sociologist at Penn State, has supplied the estimates of adherents, which is a more inclusive category than members (see Finke and Scheitle 2005).

compared to fixed effects estimates. While the Hausman test was technically statistically insignificant for the estimation of religious right groups (p=.12), it was statistically significant for gay rights groups (p<.01), so we used fixed effects poisson for all estimations of group counts.[5] The fixed effects procedure drops any stationary indicators from the model – the N in the LGBT model is lower for this reason, since it drops states that did not experience a change in LGBT group counts across time. This procedure also drops time invariant independent variables, such as a South dummy, so only variables that change across time are included. This is not a causal silver bullet since there may be time-varying confounds that are not specified. What the combination of panel analysis of data with fixed effects estimates allows us to do is to isolate whether a change over time in an independent variable of interest is linked, on average, to a change in the density of RR or LGBT groups.

Results – Group Count Models

Now we turn to our models of gay rights and religious right group counts in the states from 2001-2010, available in Table 1. Here we test our first hypothesis, that the presence of RR groups will spur the advent of LGBT groups and vice versa over time, above and beyond the mobilization processes linked to the ESA theory – demographic, religious, and interest group system factors in each state.

The results for the RR are presented in the first column. The effect of LGBT group counts is positive and statistically significant. Each increase of one gay rights group over a year is marginally linked to increasing RR groups by .26 groups (going from 1 standard deviation below the mean [0] to 1 standard deviation above the mean [1.66]). Switching to the right columns, the estimates suggest

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[5] We are aware that the fixed effects negative binomial regression procedure in Stata is not actually a fixed effects procedure (which Allison [2009] discusses and provides several strategies). Instead, we utilized the poisson estimator; both the poisson and negative binomial estimators produce similar results.

the number of religious right groups in the state has a marginally greater effect on gay rights groups – a +/- 1 standard deviation change from the mean generates .46 gay rights groups.

[Table 1 about here]

The estimates are stable whether the total number of groups registered to lobby in the state is included in the model or not, though the effects of the system size are marginally statistically significant. When the state has a larger interest group community, it is better able to support more gay rights groups (by about .37 on average), and has a smaller effect on religious right groups (.27); the size of the system indicates its carrying capacity (and is a good proxy for ESA forces in toto) and is not a simple substitute for state size (Lowery et al. 2005). Not surprisingly, the size of the gay population, as measured by same-sex households, is positively linked to number of LGBT groups; it is negative, but not statistically significantly related to religious right groups. The proportions of same-sex households are very, very small (mean=.006), but the average effects are reasonable – yielding an increase of 1.06 gay rights groups, on average, for the model with the total group count and an increase of 1.6 groups in the model without the total number of lobbying groups.

There is some support, then, for the population ecology ESA model in explaining RR and LGBT group density, especially by the importance of the total number of lobbying groups. None of the other variables important to the theory are statistically significant except when the size of the lobbying community is excluded, which makes sense since the size of the community encapsulates those forces. It is surprising that educational attainment and state economic size have no bearing on these group counts. The one exception, clearly, is the size of the gay community.

Few other variables gain statistical purchase in these models, but those that do highlight the force of ideological threat. The proportion of religiously unaffiliated citizens boosts the number of

religious right groups and *drops* the number of gay rights groups.[6] The percentage of evangelicals only boosts the proportion of gay rights groups, but carries a negative sign in the RR models. These results tentatively suggest that in addition to the numbers of opposing interest groups, interest groups may be mobilizing based on the threat they feel from those whose beliefs oppose their own. This mirrors other evidence for the role of religious threat in motivating and mobilizing political beliefs (Campbell 2006) and gives support to our earlier discussion of the attention groups pay to the opposition. That is, the RR seems to have trained its sights on opposition to gay rights in this period of time, which likely reinforced the resolve of LGBT proponents to counter-mobilize, constituting a feedback loop for a limited duration.

Results - Legislative Polarization Models

Interest group density is important in its own right through interest representation, but we believe it has a larger impact on politics and policy making in the states through the party polarization evident in state legislatures. To assess this possibility, we turned to legislative ideological mapping data (Shor, Berry, and McCarty 2011).[7] We use two measures – the differences in the party ideological medians and the average difference between members in the state house. These measures give us a picture of the party polarization in each state legislature that we then seek to explain through the presence of counter-mobilization and other state level controls. Data were not available for all states in all years, mostly due to session activity. The estimates using essentially the same fixed effects models as the previous table (though OLS this time) are reported in Table 2.

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[6] One alternate possibility is that these results are driven by multicollinearity in the model. The correlation between the percent unaffiliated and percent evangelical is only r=-.29, though the correlation between the unaffiliated and the gay population is higher: r=.52. No correlations among included variables are in the range that suggests multicollinearity in problematic dimensions. We did reestimate the model of LGBT groups without the size of the gay community – the proportion of unaffiliated was still negative but insignificant (p=.27) in the model without the total lobbying groups, and negative and significant (p<.10) in the model with the total lobbying groups included. Thus, the estimate moves a bit depending on model specification, but the sign does not flip. Moreover, the VIF for the two religious measures is less than 2, which multicollinearity is not a problem (all measures had VIF scores of less than 2.5).
[7] The data are available here: http://dvn.iq.harvard.edu/dvn/dv/bshor

[Table 2 about here]

For both polarization measures, the effects depend on the time period. Assessing across the entire time period (first column for each DV), the numbers of gay rights and religious right groups have no or weak effects. Only in the first model – party median differences from 2001-2010 – is there a statistically significant negative effect of the presence of RR groups. However, when we shift consideration to 2006-2010 (second column for each DV), we see a statistically significant interaction between RR and LGBT group counts. The 2nd and 4th columns show polarization from 2006-2010. The positive interaction suggests an increase in polarization when both types of groups increase in numbers together; when either is present in isolation, polarization is lower, suggesting hegemony by one type of group entails overall policy agreement in the state. Figure 4 helps to demonstrate this. The x axis shows the religious right group count, while the y axis records the marginal effect of adding a gay rights group on party median differences in panel A and average member differences in panel B. Adding a gay rights group has a negative effect on polarization when the number of religious right groups is low, but has a steadily increasing effect as the numbers of RR groups grow. The effect only surpasses zero, however, once RR numbers are quite high – more than 5 groups – which only applies in a handful of cases. Panel B shows the same dynamic, though the effects are much more modest and mostly indistinguishable from zero.

[Figure 4 about here]

The other variables are inconsistently related to legislative polarization.[8] For instance, the gross state product is linked to higher polarization in only one model (column 1). States with higher proportions of Evangelicals have more party median polarization across the whole time period (column 1), but not in any other model. The percentage religiously unaffiliated is linked to higher

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[8] More factors are related to polarization in consistent ways across time periods in random effects (RE) model estimates. However, the Hausman test is statistically significant, indicating that the RE estimates are inconsistent, which is why we employ fixed effects models.

polarization in the 2006-2010 time period (columns 2 and 4), but not overall (columns 1 and 3). These results highlight the likely link between RR and LGBT interest group density and legislative polarization contingent on time.

Conclusion

The most important conclusion we draw from these results is the role of counter-mobilization in explaining the density of RR and LGBT groups. It seems that, at least for the time period we study, both the RR and LGBT movement were seeking to keep pace with their opponent's mobilization. The presence of the other group was at least one correlate of the decision to register to lobby at the state level. While this finding is at odds with one set of findings of health care counter-mobilization (Lowery et al. 2005), it is similar to another set (Hansford 2011), and it does conform to more qualitative assessments of the relationship between the RR and LGBT movements (Conover and Gray 1983; Fetner 2008). Religious right and gay rights groups appear to have responded to the presence of the other during the previous decade – a period of intense legislative and electoral activity and considerable flux in the state of gay rights in the United States.

The reach of our dataset back to 2001 allows us to follow the course of this policy area before and after the dramatic electoral politics of 2004 that made the debate over same-sex marriage widespread. It allowed us to see that in the wake of 2004, gay rights groups appear to have mobilized in response, which then drove up the numbers of RR groups in a specific display of wave theory (Truman 1951). This was not a permanent dynamic, but a short lived one as LGBT groups maintained a new plateau and RR groups peaked and began to return toward pre-2004 levels.

These findings delineate where further examinations of the CMH might focus. Intense conflict over policy seems likely to spur counter-mobilization rather than competition for resources among ideological confederates. Thus, any policy area where rights claims are newly disputed should

yield evidence of counter-mobilization. Areas of conflict over civil rights are an obvious next step, but policy conflict over issues like campaign finance may also provide further evidence of the CMH. While it seems likely that examples of CMH might be found in national politics, the fact we found evidence of CMH at the state-level may be instructive. Interest groups may be more likely to counter-mobilize around issues that have many avenues of access to decision-makers. The context of federalism, and in this case, a lack of U.S. Supreme Court action, may also play an important role in interest groups' willingness to counter-mobilize.

There is some evidence that the presence of gay rights groups depends on the growth of the gay community. While not surprising, this bears on the future of gay rights. While the right of same-sex couples to marry is now national, there are many other battles left to fight, including non-discrimination policies in employment and other venues. If the limited evidence of sorting we found after 2005 continues (see footnote 1), then the prospects for the growth of the gay advocacy community and an even broader extension of gay rights appear dimmer. However, data on self-reported LGBT status from extensive public opinion polling suggests surprisingly little variation across the states (Gates and Newport 2013).

The second important conclusion we can draw from these results is that counter-mobilization of interest groups seems to matter beyond the scope of their issues and constituency. The counter-mobilization of these groups – and not simply the high density of one interest or the other – has some bearing on the overall partisan polarization of state legislatures. We can imagine a situation where the causal direction may be reversed, or another state-level variable that may be causing both counter-mobilization of these interest groups and political party mobilization. However, other work demonstrating that party conflict tends to extend from the elite down to the mass level (Layman et al. 2010; Layman and Carsey 2002) suggest that the counter-mobilization of the RR and LGBT interest groups may actually be playing a role in legislative polarization in the

states, albeit a small one. The density of public interests engaged in competing rights claims seem to have effects beyond their issue area and beyond the mere supply of their interests in the population. Counter-mobilization may have political effects in its own right, not simply as an explanation for the advent and density of interest groups.

Where else might we find evidence of the impact of counter-mobilization processes on the wider political arena? Because interest groups form around a particular interest or specific policy issue, counter-mobilization is likely to affect the policy making process at a variety of points. It may affect the content of laws passed in a particular issue area and create a situation where the status quo is a more attractive position as more interest groups become involved in advocacy. This may also affect the ways in which executive agencies issue and enforce regulations as they face closer scrutiny by a growing number of interest groups who are in direct conflict with one another.

The density of morality policy interest groups has proven to be a rich topic for examination. The interests under study, the religious right and gay rights movements, have a complementary relationship, sharing two sides of the same issue. Their mobilization seems to drive both types of group as each tries to represent their interests and arrest the spread of the other's. This parallel and competitive relationship has profound effects for the politics of gay rights policy and the larger state political arena and demonstrates that the counter-mobilization deserves reconsideration. Further research may give us a more generalizable picture of the role of counter-mobilization in state level politics and policy.

Characteristics of Religious Right groups

Definitely religious right:
-   Opposition to abortion (though groups that concentrate ONLY on pro-life issues should not be included)
-   Opposition to homosexuality and gay rights
    o   Definition of marriage as one man and one woman
    o   Support the idea of the "traditional family"
-   Support the introduction of "covenant marriage" option
-   Support the elimination of no-fault divorce
-   Support prayer in schools and the display of the Ten Commandments
-   Support the teaching of scientific creationism in public schools
-   Opposition to the teaching of secular humanism or New Age philosophy in schools
-   Opposition to traditional sexual education in schools
    o   Support abstinence based sex education
    o   Opposed in-school clinics that offer contraceptive or abortion counseling
-   Opposition to the persecution of Christians in foreign countries

Religious right in combination with items from first list
-   Opposition to pornography
-   Opposition to Euthanasia
-   Opposition to embryonic stem-cell research or human cloning
-   Support freedom of religious speech and public religious expression

Maybe religious right
-   Support for faith-based social service organizations
-   Support for Judeo-Christian morality in a variety of spheres

Characteristics of LGBT groups

Definitely LGBT
-   Advocate for same-sex marriage or "marriage equality"
-   Advocate for civil rights/non-discrimination for GLBT individuals
-   Advocate for hate crimes legislation
-   Advocate for adoption/parenting rights for same-sex couples

Maybe LGBT
-   HIV/AIDS advocacy

Not LGBT
-   Civil Rights advocates in general
-   First Amendment rights advocates (the ACLU, etc.)

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Table 1 – Fixed effects poisson estimates of religious right and gay rights group counts in the states, 2001-2010

| | Religious Right Group Count | | | | Gay Rights Group Count[a] | | | |
| | w/ total groups | | wo/ total groups | | w/ total groups | | wo/ total groups | |
	β*	p	β*	p	β*	p	β*	p
Gay rights group count	.16	.01	.17	.00	—		—	
Religious right group ct.	—		—		.13	.01	.14	.01
Total lobbying groups	.02	.08	—		.03	.07	—	
Same-sex households rate	-.04	.59	-.04	.61	.47	.00	.48	.00
Pct. Bachelor's degrees	-.03	.50	-.04	.41	-.10	.27	-.10	.27
Gross state product	-.34	.64	-.24	.73	-1.86	.23	-1.59	.30
Percent evangelical	-.02	.73	-.02	.77	.46	.03	.40	.06
Percent unaffiliated	.03	.07	.03	.03	-.11	.01	-.09	.03
State bans gay marriage	.12	.30	.13	.25	-.05	.86	-.06	.82
Model statistics	N=436 (50), χ^2=25.51, p<.01		N=436 (50), χ^2=22.28, p<.01		N=311 (35), χ^2=24.08, p<.01		N=311 (35), χ^2=21.01, p<.01	

Note: Estimates were generated using Stata 12's xtpoisson command with the fixed effects (fe) option; the xtnbreg results were similar.

[a] These models cut 124 observations (15 states) that had no gay rights organization during the time period or no change in gay rights organizations from year to year.

Table 2 – Fixed effects regression estimates of two measures legislative polarization in state houses, 2001-2010 and 2006-2010

| | Party median differences | | | | Average member differences | | | |
| | 2001-2010 | | 2006-2010 | | 2001-2010 | | 2006-2010 | |
	β*	p	β*	p	β*	p	β*	p
Gay rights group count	-.04	.21	-.15	.01	-.02	.38	-.07	.11
Religious right group count	-.02	.04	-.04	.01	-.01	.18	-.01	.24
Gay rights * religious right	.01	.11	.04	.01	.01	.33	.02	.09
Religious left group count	.02	.04	.00	.78	.00	.64	.00	.73
Prop. Same-sex households	-.01	.53	-.09	.02	.01	.48	-.02	.50
Pct. Bachelor's degrees	-.01	.41	-.02	.37	-.01	.39	-.01	.29
Gross state product	.40	.03	.68	.15	.14	.22	.20	.58
Anti-gay incidents	.00	.88	.00	.37	.00	.61	.00	.68
Pct evangelical	.05	.03	-.02	.76	.02	.16	-.01	.87
Pct unaffiliated	.00	.53	.03	.01	.00	.62	.01	.08
State bans gay marriage	-.03	.26	.00	.99	.00	.98	.00	.97
Constant	.65	.05	1.24	.05	.51	.02	.81	.09
Model statistics	N=268, χ^2=3.11, p<.01 R² (wi)=.14, (bw)=.03, (tot)=.03		N=113, χ^2=2.67, p<.01 R² (wi)=.34, (bw)=.21, (tot)=.27		N=265, χ^2=2.27, p=.01 R² (wi)=.11, (bw)=.01, (tot)=.02		N=111, χ^2=1.03, p=.43 R² (wi)=.17, (bw)=.12, (tot)=.18	

Note: Estimates were generated using Stata 12's xtreg command with the fixed effects (fe) option.

Figure 1 – The Number of Religious Right and Gay Rights Groups in the States, by Year, lowess fit
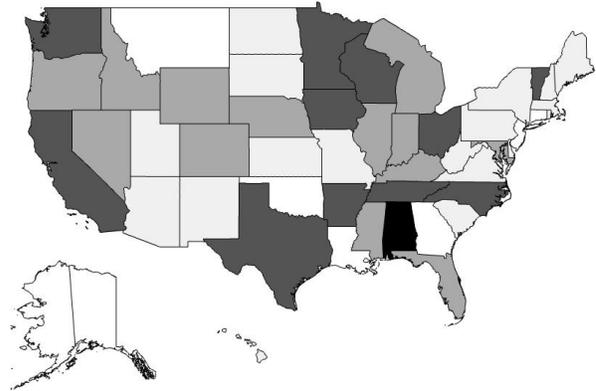line imposed
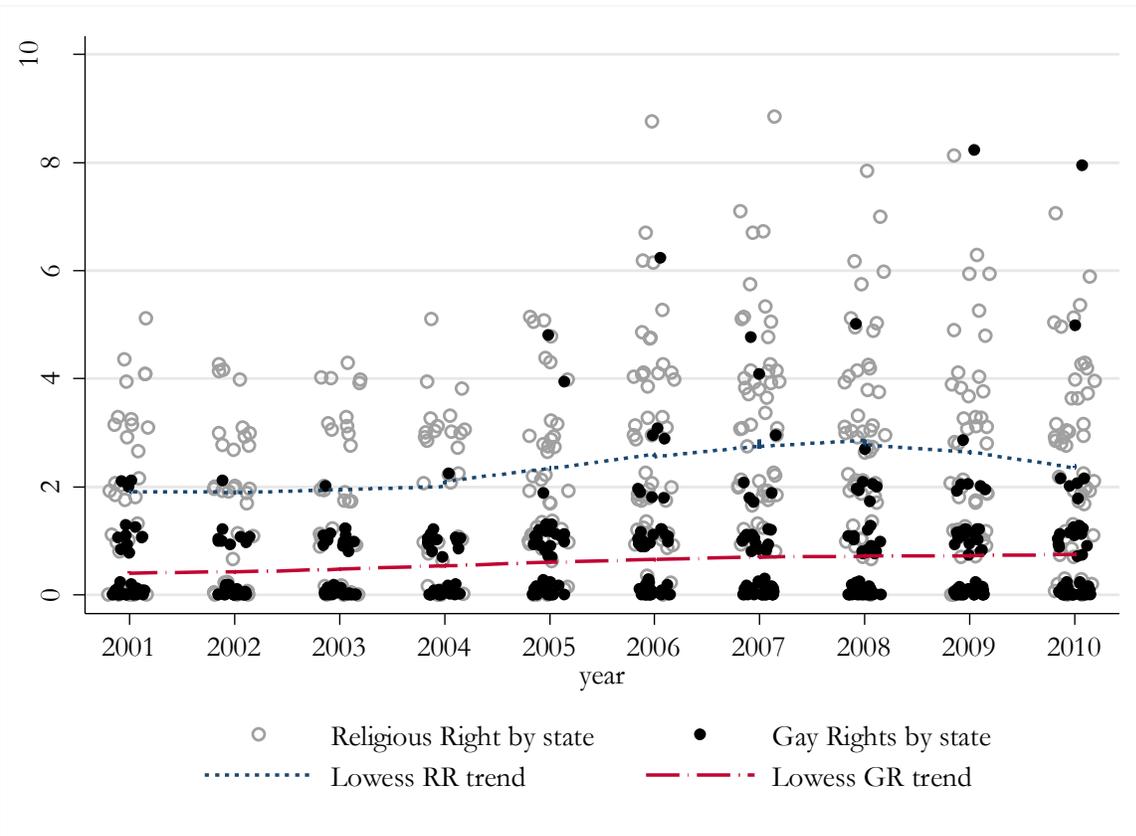
Figure 2 – Density of Lobbying Groups by State
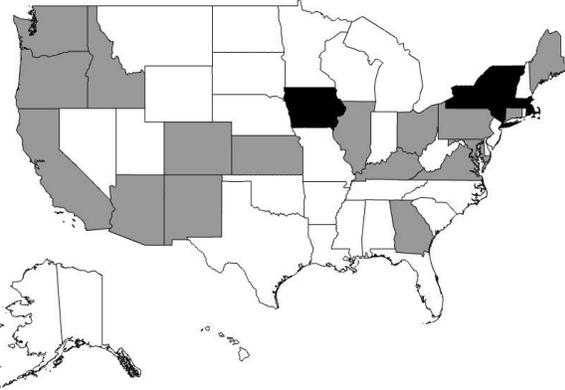
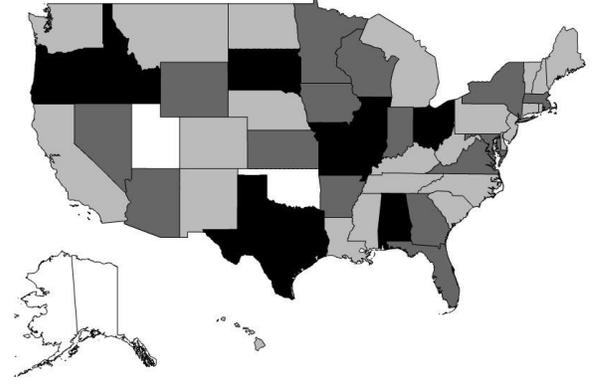Density of LGBT Groups 2001

Density of RR Groups 2001

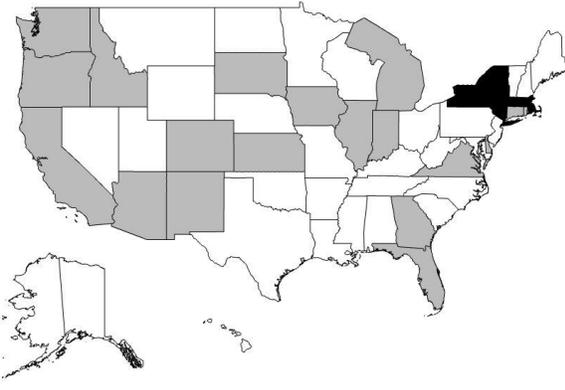*2001 Missing States:* AZ, DE, HI, KS, MA, MO, NH, NM, NY, ND, PA, RI, SD, WV
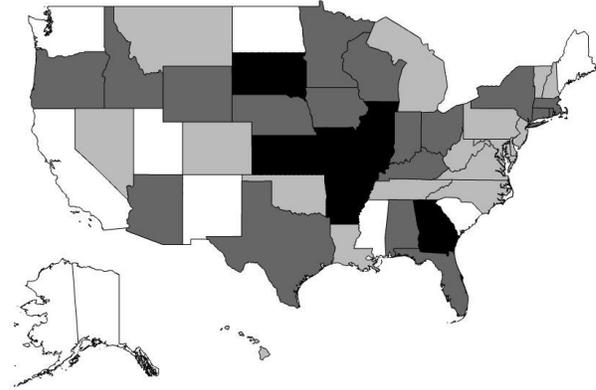
Density of LGBT Groups 2006

Density of RR Groups 2006
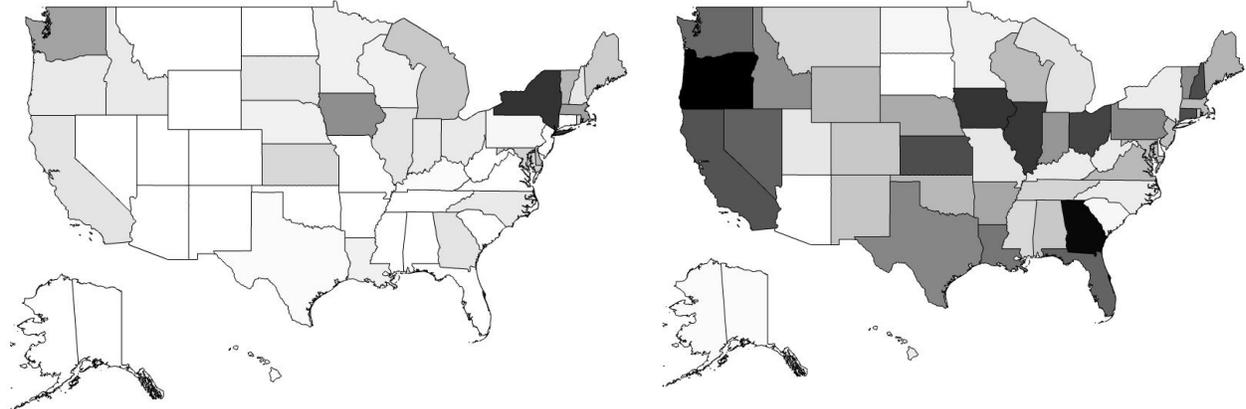
Density of LGBT Groups 2010

Density of RR Groups 2010

Key: Color ranges equalized across all years. White states are 0 groups, Black states are 5 or more groups.

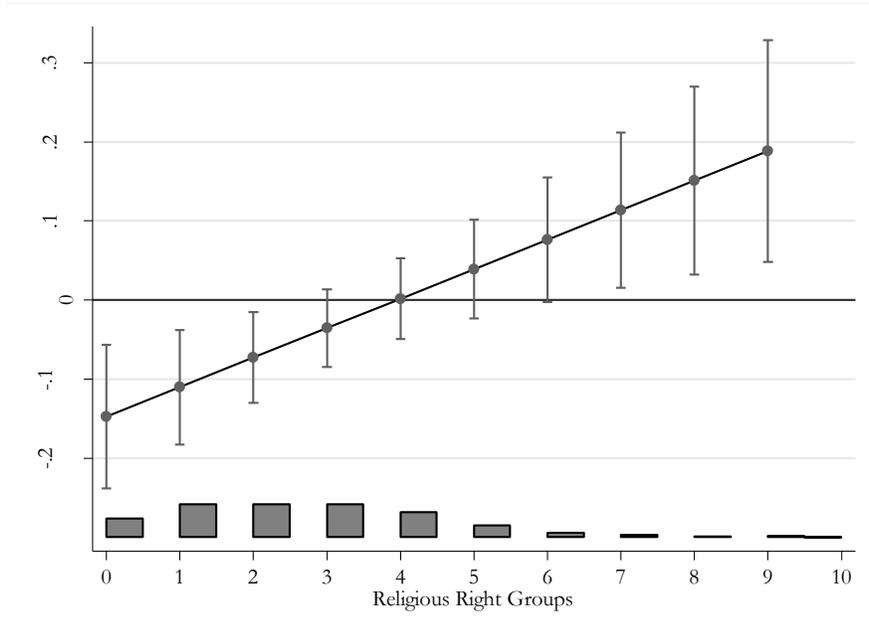**Figure 3** – Group Density Volatility Over Time, 2001-2010

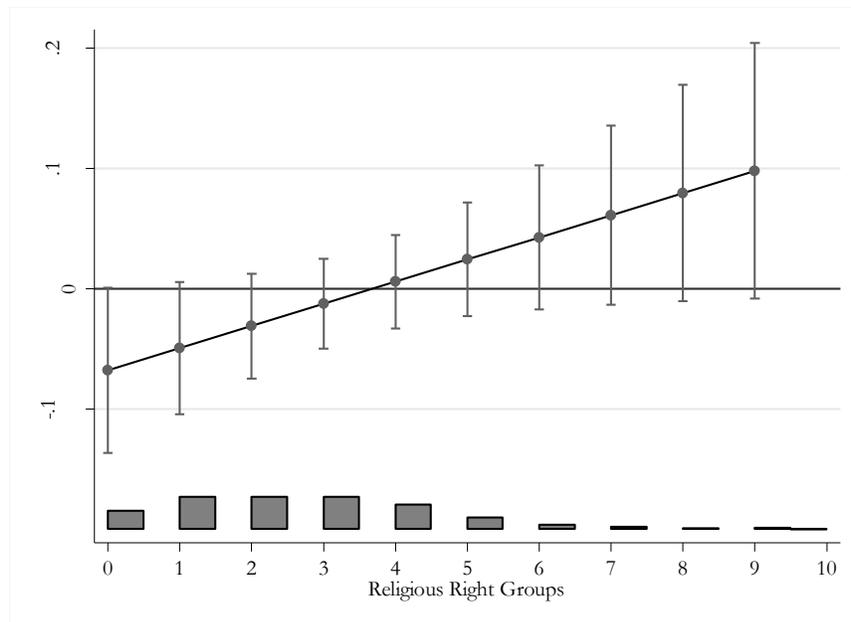LGBT Volatility: SD of Groups 2001-2010   RR Volatility: SD of Groups 2001-2010

Figure 4 – The Marginal Effects of a Gay Rights Group Given the Number of Religious Right Organizations in the State on Party Median Differences in the State Legislature (Estimates from Table 2)

Model 1 – Party Median Differences

Model 2 – Average Member Differences

Table A1 – Model Snippet to Compare Estimates Produced Using Only States Included in the 2002 Sample

| | *Religious Right Group Count* | | | | *Gay Rights Group Count*[a] | | | |
| | w/ total groups | | wo/ total groups | | w/ total groups | | wo/ total groups | |
Total Sample	β*	*p*	β*	*p*	β*	*p*	β*	*p*
Gay rights group count	.16	.01	.17	.00	—		—	
Religious right group ct.	—		—		.13	.01	.14	.01
With Only 2002 States								
Gay rights group count	.16	.04	.17	.03	—		—	
Religious right group ct.	—		—		.12	.06	.12	.05