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Legalization of Gay Marriage and its Impact on Military Stereotypes of Homosexuals

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ABSTRACT

Homosexuality has become a popular research topic in a variety of professional fields, and over the last decades has become a priority for the military. Since the implementation of the ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ policy, homosexuals in the United States military have been facing challenges. However, this has led to a lack of research examining how marriage equality affects society’s stereotypes about homosexuals serving in the United States military.

It was hypothesized that participants who have personal contact (friends or family members) with bisexual, homosexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals will be less likely to hold negative stereotypes about LGBT serving in the armed forces than those participants who don’t have personal contact (friends or family members) with LGBT individuals. The purpose of this research is to find if subjects report personal contact with the LGBT community, and if they have any homosexual friends or family members serving in the U.S. military. In order to help improve the quality of life for homosexuals serving in the armed forces and to decrease the current negative stereotypes, Current literature does not provide us with a clear and concise picture of how marriage equality impacts military stereotypes of homosexuals. This study utilized survey-sampling methods in an attempt to understand how opinions about marriage equality affects non-military gay and lesbian soldiers. The results supported the main hypothesis. Participants who had personal contact (friends or family members) with bisexual, homosexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals were less likely to hold negative stereotypes about LGBT serving in the armed forces than those participants who did not have personal contact (friends or family members) with LGBT individuals. (One can conclude that marriage equality has helped to reduce society’s negative stereotypes about homosexuals serving in the U.S. military.

OBJECTIVES

1. To determine the effects of the legalization of marriage for gay couples on stereotypes about homosexuals in the military.
2. To examine how many students have had a homosexual friend or family member serving in the U.S. military.
3. To investigate if personal contact with the LGBT community affects stereotypes about them serving in the armed forces.

METHODS

Participants

In August 2017, 207 students at Wright State University volunteered to participate in the study. They were all students at the University who had or had not had personal contact with the LGBT community. The online survey was distributed through Wright State University’s Qualtrics platform.

RESULTS

The fifth hypothesis, H5: People of color will be less likely to hold negative stereotypes about homosexuals serving in the armed forces than those who are not of color.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Most of the hypotheses were supported. Religious identity is particularly one of those who were not. However, those who served showed less support for gays and lesbians serving in the armed forces than those who were not. The hypotheses were supported partly because of the impact of the theoretical framework of intergroup contact theory. It is important to focus on an individual’s personal interaction with the homosexual community, because personal interactions can directly change one’s stereotypes. The correlation among these hypotheses is significant and shows a shift in cultural viewpoints about homosexuals held by younger generations.

REFERENCES


The results of this study show that both the structural influences