

Dr. Anja Hennig

ahennig@europa-uni.de

(currently visiting assistant professor at UT Austin/TX)

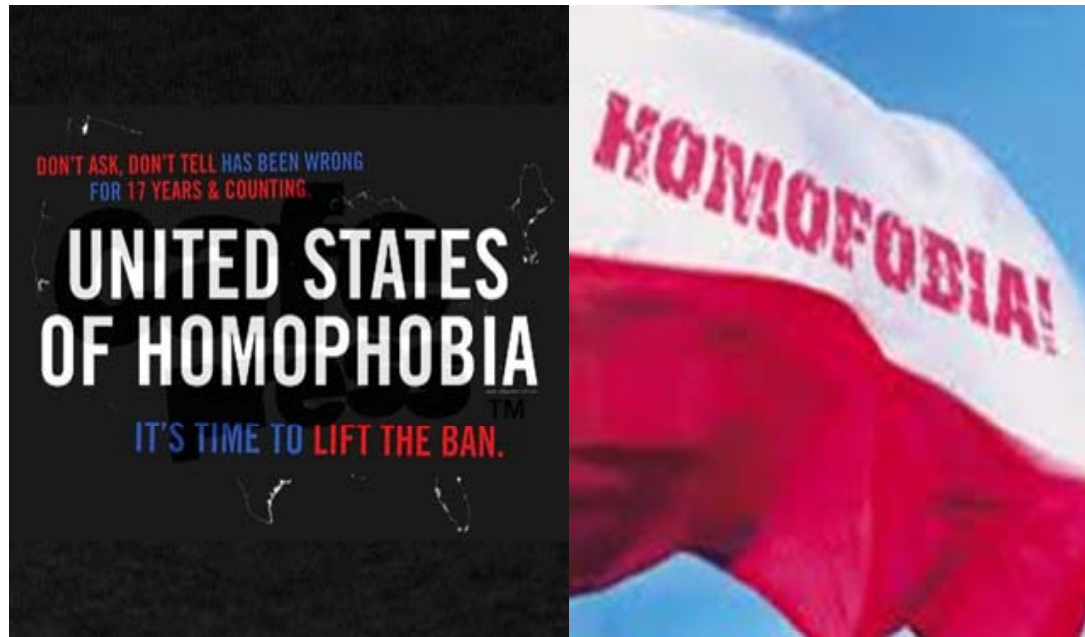
Religion, Nationalism, and Homophobia. Poland and the United States in Comparison

FIU, March 9 2012





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Towards LGBT-Rights Liberalization:



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“Whether by supporting LGBT advocates marching in Belgrade, (...), or
condemning a vile law under consideration in Uganda,

we are committed to our friends and allies in every region of the world who are
fighting for equality and justice.

These are not Western concepts; these are universal human rights.

(...) If you are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, know that the United States
stands with you and we are unwavering in our commitment to ending this
cycle of hate.”

Hillary Clinton on the “International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, May 17 2011

http://www.goodasyou.org/good_as_you/2011/05/madam-secretary-to-world-turn-the-tide-of-inequality-and-discrimination-against-the-lgbt-community.html



Homophobia + Anti-Gay Right Politics

1. Cultural embedded homophobia:

=> Public opinion

2. Institutional Homophobia:

- Political / societal action against equal rights for LGBT
- **Focus “Same-Sex-Partnerships”** (Civil Unions + Gay Marriage)

Explanation 1

Conservative / Fundamentalist Religion



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- High religious belief + **practice**
- **Conservative + fundamentalist currents** promote homophobia
 - ⇒ Source for *cultural homophobia*
 - ⇒ Religious ideology, not denomination matters!

Explanation 2

Nationalism



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- **Moderate Nationalism:** Strong but not necessarily exclusive sense of belonging to a nation
- **Radical Nationalism:** Part of right-wing ideology: exclusive understanding of belonging and of the nation
 - **Patriarchal order** = traditional gender-roles and family pattern
=> Homophobia
 - Homosexuality = „threat to national values“, „+ demography“



Explanation 3

Value Change + Threat Perception

Ongoing Liberalization...

The younger – urban – educated, the less homophobic

... can provoke anti-liberal reactions:

Eroding family-models + gender-roles as a “threat” parts of society in crisis

=> Open to religious fundamentalism, nationalism

Poland – United States 1



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Cultural Homophobia

- (Still) divided nations: **PL ca. 65%** / **USA ca. 45%** ⇔ Gay marriage
- Trend towards **more liberal** stances, different velocities
- **Highly religious societies**, high church-going frequency correlates with homophobic attitudes
- **Radical religious (Catholic + Christian) nationalism** as source

Poland overwhelmingly against gay-marriage



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- 40% fully against
 - 15% rather against
 - 16 % rather yes
 - 9 % definitely yes
- (6/2011, CBOS)



United States

CNN 2010: first national poll on Gay Marriage:

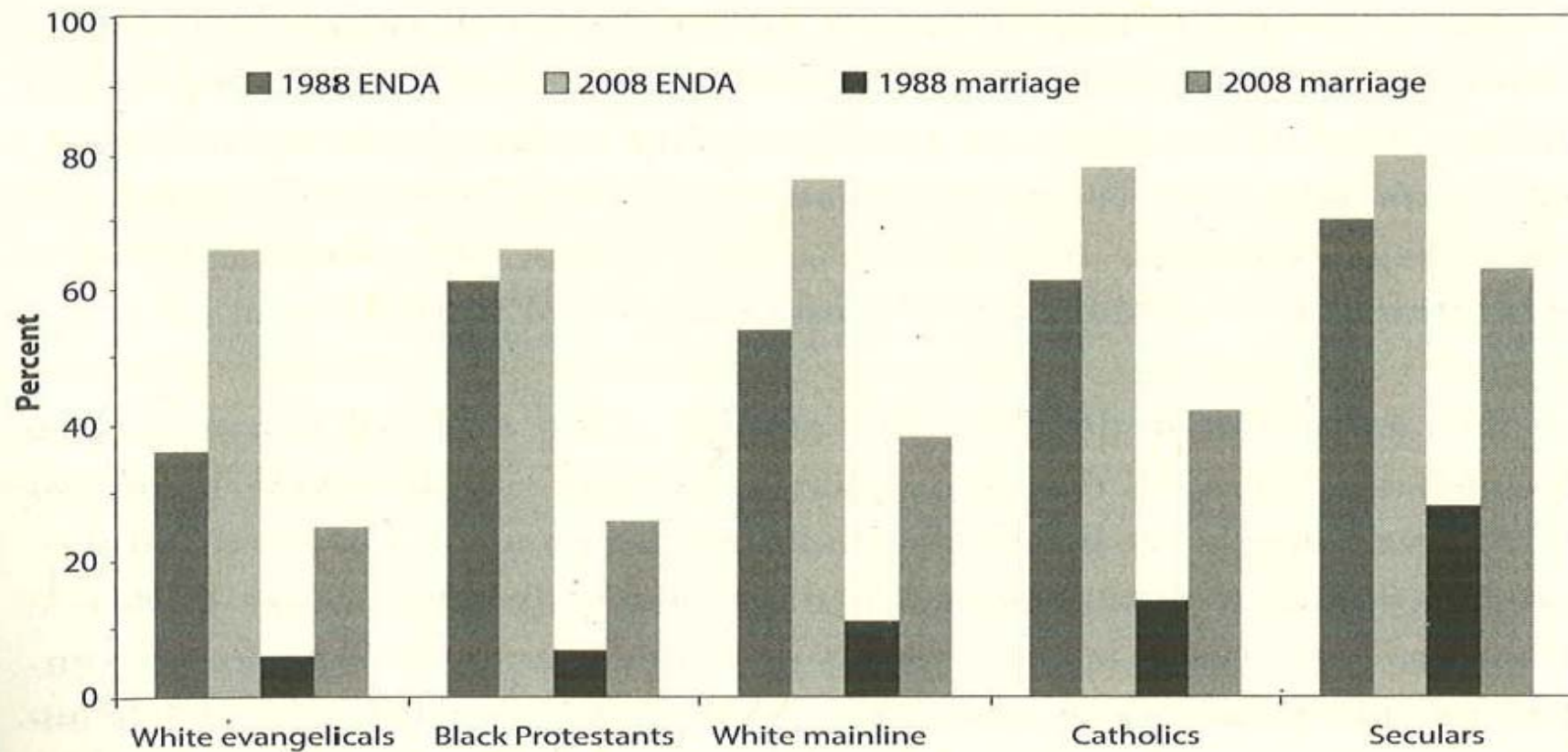
"Do you think gays and lesbians should have a constitutional right to get married and have their marriage recognized by law as valid?"

- **52% replied "Yes"**
- **46% replied "No"**
- **2% had "No Opinion"**

Source: <http://www.freedtomarry.org/resources/entry/cnn-poll-finds-majority-support-for-the-freedom-to-marry-nationwide>,
accessed: 2/17 2012

FIGURE 6.1

Changing support levels of religious groups on GLBT issues, 1988 and 2008



Source: American National Election Studies (1988, 2008); General Social Surveys (1988, 2008).

Poland – United States 2



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Institutional Homophobia on Civil Society Level

- Open or hidden religious “pro-family” organizations
- Christian nationalist groups

⇒ mobilizing against gay-marriage: “marriage as union between man and woman”, “liberalist threat”



Poland: Institutional Homophobia – Civil Society:

Nationalist Catholic *Radio Maryja*

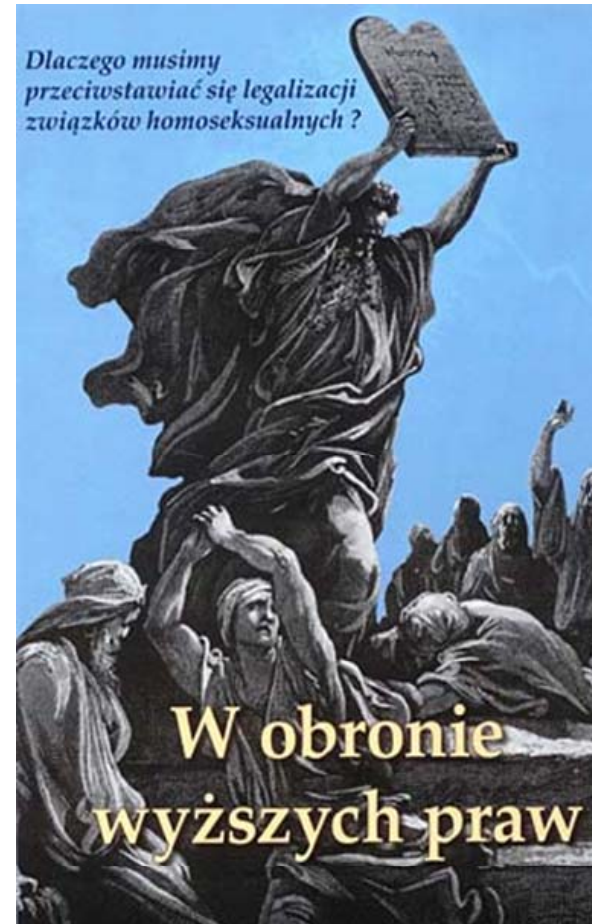


Poland: Institutional Homophobia Civil Society



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Nationalist “All Polish Youth”



“Why do we have to oppose the legalization of homosexual partnerships?”

“In defence of higher Law”

United States: Institutional Homophobia + Christian Nationalism



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American Association for the Defense of
Tradition, Family, and Property
(Radical Catholic, Brazilian origin)

2011



<http://www.tfp.org/current-campaigns/2011/thousands-march-to-save-marriage-in-new-york-city.html>

Poland – United States 3

Institutional Homophobia in Politics



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Morality policy seeking agendas:

- **Morally “limited” liberal Centre-Left (Civil Union)**
 - Defending human rights
- **Morally restrictive Centre-Right + Radical Right**
 - Successful mobilization for “defense of marriage”

Values



MARRIAGE, FAMILY, LIFE.

United States

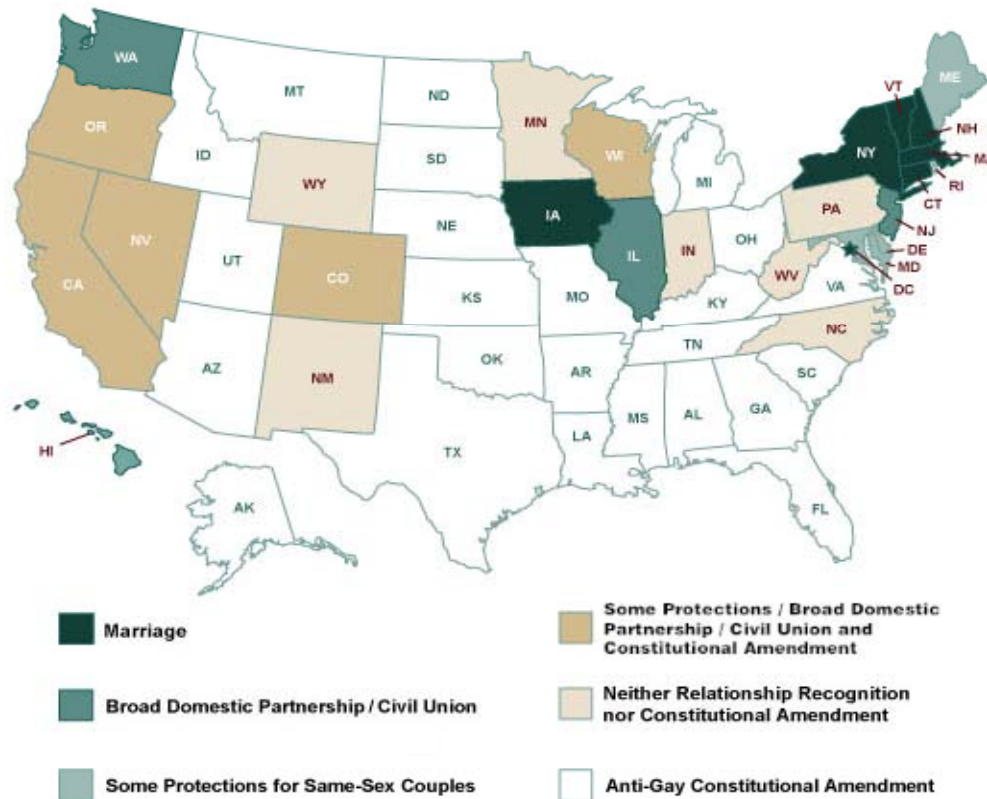
Still overwhelmingly restrictive (11/2011)



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Source: <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/states>

Winning the Freedom to Marry: Progress in the States



Last Updated November 10, 2011



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Constitution to Put America First”

www.americafirstparty.org



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“Homosexuals in the Military

(...)

The United States military service is an honorable vocation for honorable men and women.

Marriage (...)”



National Catholic League of Polish Families



Explaining Institutional Homophobia in PL + US



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= limping liberalization / restrictive legislation:

1. Similar Political Ideologies

2. Similar Patterns/Factors of Cultural Homophobia shaping
Decision making:



USA: Gay Marriage on the Agenda

Restriction

- 1993: Supreme Court of Hawaii: denied marriage license to homosexuals unconstitutional
- 1994: Hawaii Legislature affirmed marriage for “man-women”
- 1996: Defense of Marriage Act (Clinton)
- 1998: Hawaii voters rejected legalization of same-sex-marriages

USA



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Liberalization:

- 2004: Massachusetts under equal-protection clause allowed
- 2009: Iowa and others
- 2011: Obama stopped defending Defense of Marriage Act



Explaining Cultural Homophobia in Poland + USA

- Context of global dialectic “liberalization - anti-liberal reactions”
- Similar **anti-liberal religious ideologies** (vs. “different confessions”)
- Similar degree of **religious practice** (middle-high): PO, voting
- Similar **link between religion and nationalism...**



Conclusion: Twofold Role of Christian Nationalism

1. Radical Christian Nationalism as ideological source for...

- fundamentalist Churches and believers
- (radical) right-wing Parties/political Positions

2. Moderate Christian nationalism => religion in the public

- facilitates religious lobbying on policy output
- constraints liberal policy-making (PO, religious voting)

Open Question:



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1. On political level:

Homophobic rhetoric: “belief” or “strategy”?



Homophobia and Religion

- Religiosity identified as key variable in shaping gay-rights policy outcomes, especially in the US (Rayside, 2008: 299)
- Party homophobia positively correlated with the strength of religious belief in a country
- Party homophobia is negatively correlated with national progress in implementing gay rights (Commerer, 2010: 62)