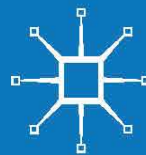


AJCS

American Journal of **Cultural** Sociology

Volume 2 • Number 2 • June 2014

www.palgrave-journals.com/ajcs/



PETER HART-BRINSON

Assistant Professor,
Department of
Sociology
and
Communication and Journalism



Discourse of
Generations: The
Influence of Cohort,
Period, and Ideology
in Americans' Talk
about Same-Sex Marriage

American Journal of Cultural Sociology

This study analyzes how two cohorts of ordinary Americans – college students and their parents – talk about same-sex marriage. I show that discourses are shaped by how their social generational understanding of homosexuality interacts with their political and religious ideologies. Young liberals tend to be unambiguously supportive of same-sex marriage, while older conservatives tend to be unambiguously opposed. Young conservatives and older liberals, however, construct "middle-ground" discourses (immoral inclusivity and libertarian pragmatism, respectively) because of how their understanding of homosexuality conflicts with their political and religious beliefs. I argue that generational theory requires a cultural analysis of social generational processes to thoroughly explain patterns of social change.