A PLACE AT THE TABLE:
THE PROCESS OF PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY LGBT ENGAGEMENT IN THE
GAY MOVEMENT

Dean E. Mundy

A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Chapel Hill
2006

Approved by
Advisor: Lois Boynton
Reader: Rhonda Gibson
Reader: Patricia Parker

ABSTRACT

Social movements are, by their very nature, public relations initiatives which exact change at the societal level. The modern American gay movement is no exception. Its leap onto America's front page is often marked by the Stonewall Riots of 1969. Indicative of most social movements, the gay experience has witnessed social unrest, community mobilization, and certainly push-back from a mainstream, heterocentric dominant culture. But as more critical battles are waged, and as more milestones are achieved, it is critical to analyze the current state of the gay movement "from within."

Through a qualitative content-analysis and a series of in-depth interviews, this study attempts to define today's gay movement, analyze whose voices within the movement are being heard, and investigate the assumption of the "gay movement" as a traditional social movement. Ultimately, the research aims to determine how LGBT persons perceive the community's path to achieving a place at society's table.

To those who refuse to have their voice silenced.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

Watershed events create awareness. They serve as unifying moments when social issues become social movements and are placed in the forefront of mainstream society. The movement for American independence is often symbolized by the Boston Tea Party. The Civil Rights movement achieved its identity through Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. Public awareness of an AIDS epidemic began with Rock Hudson's personal acknowledgement. Certainly the issues surrounding American independence, Civil Rights, and AIDS did not begin with these watershed events, but they represent a single point in a common evolution experienced by social movements.

The gay movement[1] is no exception. Following a millennia of living in the margins, the LGBT community[2] has begun demanding its place at society's table. Heralded by its own watershed event, the Stonewall Riots of 1969, the modern American "gay movement" is now very much a public debate engaging the mainstream's political and cultural agendas. Although discrimination still prevails in governments such as the U.S. and Australia, the movement is working. Hate crime laws are slowly being enacted. Many major corporations

---

[1] The study will continuously refer to the "gay movement." The gay movement is defined, for this study's purposes, as the public activist/political face of the gay community.

[2] Individuals self-identifying as Lesbians, Gay men, Bi-Sexuals, and Transgendered comprise the LGBT community. Although many have extended LGBT to include "Q" and "A," those persons who are "Questioning" or "Affirming," this study will use the base construction. In addition, throughout the study, the term LGBT Community will be interchanged with Gay Community. This is not done to exclude any particular group within the community- but used to facilitate discussion. It also is used understanding that within the community, "gay" refers to men attracted to other men, and does not stand for those who identify as lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, queer, etc.

now provide domestic partner benefits. The movement is growing and continues to work toward its overarching agenda of equal inclusion and legal protection by mainstream society. But as the movement solidifies, it is imperative to outline its operational context. While there has been ample research investigating the intersection of gay and mainstream culture, the purpose of this thesis is to understand the multiplicity of voices and objectives competing within the movement.

Social movements are, by their very nature, public relations initiatives which exact change at the societal level. Public relations focuses on creating and fostering a favorable relationship between an organization and its publics (Guth & Marsh, 2003). The fundamental process involves informing, educating, shifting opinions, and simply creating awareness. The purpose of social movements is no different. Going further, good public relations requires an organization to constantly evaluate the process, and the messages it is sending and receiving. Messages must be continually adjusted for maximum effectiveness. In a sense, contextualizing the gay movement from within represents this internal analysis. It is first necessary to understand the messages and priorities internal to the gay movement. Ultimately, by grounding the study in traditional social movement theory, the results will hope to show the current state of the gay movement's own public relations campaign seeking a place at society's table. The following literature begins by defining social movement theory followed by a discussion of the evolution of the gay movement.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Research has well documented the various stages through which social causes coalesce into full-fledged social movements. Although each study uses different terminology, the literature presents a consistent structure regarding the process as a whole. Stewart, Smith,

and Denton (2001), provide an overview of the theory's framework, and warn that to interpret all social movements within the strict constructs of specific life-stages is problematic, for each movement experiences its own challenges, aspirations, experiences, and operational contexts. Chasteen (1969) echoes this consideration. He argues that to understand the life of a social movement, one must first understand the movement's opposition. The demands, expectations, and changing-but-constant threats presented by the opposition dictate the needs, objectives, and life stage of the social movement itself. As a result, movements rarely fit neatly into specific development stages, but rather move between them as needed. As Chasteen contends, "If social movements are characterized by a flexibility which enables them to reconnoiter, regroup, and reorient in response to sudden changes in the opposition, then to think only in terms of evolutionary processes is to miss the mark" (p. 364). For example, recent challenges by conservatives have forced the American gay movement to shift its mission from fighting for partner benefits in the workplace (regional) to fighting for constitutional marriage rights (national). It is thus being forced to respond to and act on a conservative political tactic rather than defining, preparing, and acting on a specific, long-term objective determined from within.

Considering these limitations, Stewart et al. (2001) present the generally accepted life stages of a social movement, beginning with the "Genesis." This is what public relations professionals would consider the "latent" stage, or a point at which the mainstream is unaware of the issue, or considers the situation a low social priority prior to a watershed event (Guth & Marsh, 2003, p. 96). At this point, the embryonic movements' leaders work with the dominant culture's system and established institutions to affect change on behalf of the social cause.

> The social movement's initial leaders believe, often with remarkable naiveté, that appropriate institutions will act if the movement can make institutional leaders and followers aware of the urgent problem and its solution. The early leader is more of an educator than a rabble rouser, agitator, or fanatic. (Stewart et al., 2001, p. 131)

The gay movement's genesis, for example, is evidenced through the "Mattachine Society," founded in 1950. The organization's influence is rarely associated with the modern gay movement, and represents a time in which the need for gay rights was not a widespread social concern. The Mattachines encouraged peaceful action "from within" and downplayed the gay distinction (otherness) in an effort to assimilate into the mainstream.

Inevitably, though, traditional social movements begin to rock the proverbial boat in an effort to organize disparate factions pursuing the same issue, purposely bringing attention to that issue. Consequently, the movement is catapulted into the second and third stages, as outlined by Stewart et al. (2001), involving "Social Unrest" and "Enthusiastic Mobilization" (p. 139). While the social unrest stage adds salience to the issue and begins to organize issue stakeholders, the enthusiastic mobilization stage demonstrates the realization that working within formal power structures is ineffective. Conversely, the mainstream begins to acknowledge the movement's threat to "traditional" institutions. Finally, fundamental to this transition, charismatic leaders begin to replace the intellectual teachers as the new public champions of the social cause.

Movements eventually settle into a more peaceful, focused initiative. These stages involve "Maintenance" and ultimately, "Termination" (Stewart et al., 2001, 142-147). Movement out of the enthusiastic mobilization stage often begins with the loss of a charismatic leader who initially forced the issue into a larger societal debate. The Civil Rights Movement, for example, moved into its maintenance stage with the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. At this point, movements must find ways to maintain their mission,

membership, and motivation. Ultimately, a movement terminates by achieving its goals, transforming its mission, or disbanding because of a changing internal/external context. Although the name indicates finality or completion, Stewart et al. emphasize that most movements rarely achieve all of their goals.

Finally, Blumer (1995) extends the notion of a social movement's life cycle by distinguishing between a general social movement and a specific social movement. He suggests general movements are largely unorganized, propose a widespread societal objective, and push forward without the needed focus of specific issues. "They have only a general direction, toward which they move in a slow, halting, yet persistent fashion. As movements they are unorganized, with neither established leadership nor recognized membership, and little guidance and control" (p. 61). Because of this disorganization, general social movements are unable to appropriately move through the stages or accomplish many tangible objectives. Specific social movements, however, do have this ability. "Indeed, a specific social movement can be regarded as the crystallization of much of the motivation of dissatisfaction, hope, and desire awakened by the general social movement and the focusing of this motivation on some specific objective" (p. 63). For example, one could argue that the Women's Movement of the 1970s is representative of this argument. In the movement's early days, minority women were excluded from the larger agenda. The movement felt that involving lesbians, for example, would deter the mission, and hinder women's acceptance by the masculine dominated mainstream society. Accordingly, many minorities shunned by the women's movement splintered off and sought change specific to their experience.

When attempting to place the gay movement in the appropriate context, Blumer's (1995) argument provides a good alternative to Stewart et al.'s (2001) framework, as it is

difficult to determine the gay movement's exact life cycle stage. The gay movement moved from latent Genesis into Social Unrest with the Stonewall riots in 1969, which will be explained in detail below. Given today's continuing protests, Pride Parades, legislative battles, and ongoing public debate, it could be argued the movement is now in the process of Enthusiastic Mobilization. At the same time, however, the movement does not have an overarching, influential, charismatic leader, thus precluding it from fitting neatly into this third phase. Accordingly, many critics might argue the movement skipped the mobilization stage and moved from Social Unrest during the Stonewall era directly into a Maintenance mode. Blumer's distinction between general and specific social movements, thus offers an interesting possibility. In pinpointing the life stage of the gay movement, perhaps it is necessary to first determine if the gay movement, as a singular notion, is a general or specific social movement. According to his argument:

> A general social movement is usually characterized by a literature, but the literature is as varied and ill-defined as the movement itself. It is likely to be an expression of protest, with a general depiction of a kind of utopian existence. As such, it vaguely outlines a philosophy based on new values and self-conceptions. (p. 62)

EVOLUTION OF THE GAY MOVEMENT

By understanding the life cycle of social movements, and considering the various arguments regarding how to explicate the process, the gay movement must now be placed in its appropriate context. To do this, it is important to understand its historic foundations and the internal questions/dilemmas which have emerged. The first section of literature outlines the Stonewall Riots as the gay movement's watershed event, representing the social unrest life stage. The subsequent literature then dissects several of the emerging debates regarding where the movement is and/or needs to go. These debates include the benefits vs. risks of assimilation, the generational impact on the movement's focus, and the various socialization

realities challenging the gay movement's progression. The final section of literature, directly leading to the current study, examines the internal strife facing the gay movement.

Stonewall – A Watershed

Carter (2004), in his book "Stonewall: The Riots That Sparked the Gay Revolution," examines the modern gay movement's foundation - the June 1969 Stonewall Riots in New York City. The Stonewall Inn, representative of many gay-owned establishments at the time, was a popular, mafia-owned gay bar. The bar was frequently raided, certainly because it was mafia-owned, but also because it catered to the gay community. On Friday, June 28, 1969, the police raided Stonewall. The expectation was that, as always, the raid would close the bar and patrons would quickly disperse.

This night, however, the crowd remained. As innocent customers were loaded into police cars, and as the crowd witnessed growing police force and brutality, the throng grew in both size and anger. This night, the patrons, the gay community, began to fight back. The community was tired of being picked as the easy target, the ones who would go quietly. Carter relays the thoughts of one observer, Michael Fader:

> We all had a collective feeling like we'd had enough… It wasn't anything tangible anything anybody said to anyone else, it was just kind of like everything over the years had come to a head on that one particular night in the one particular place. Everyone in the crowd felt that we were never going to go back. It was like the last straw. It was time to reclaim something that had always been taken from us… it's like standing your ground for the first time and in a really strong way… the bottom line was, we weren't going to go away. And we didn't. (p. 160)

It is critical to note, however, that the community wasn't just tired of being picked on by the police. Mainstream society in general felt it was acceptable to discount LGBT persons. For example, media coverage of the Riots demonstrated the acceptable terminology used in

reporting gay-community news. As the New York Daily News headline read, "Homo Nest Raided, Queen Bees Stinging Mad" (Gross, 2001, p. 41).

The riots, which began that Friday, coalesced into a demonstration that carried through until the following Wednesday. Within two days, bumper stickers, posters, and flyers emerged demanding equal rights (Carter, 2004). The crowd transformed its retaliation of the Stonewall raid into a larger societal debate. The raid became symbolic, and a watershed event. Using Stewart et al.'s (2001) life cycle framework, the gay movement had coalesced, and moved from its genesis into social unrest.

In examining the riots almost 40 years later, it is critical to note the individuals who launched the movement. Stonewall did not cater to a single type of gay individual. The raid, the riots, and the first days of the unified movement included gay men, lesbians, transvestites, straight supporters, etc. (Carter, 2004). Everyone fought out of the same frustration, seeking the same acknowledgement and the same rights. There was no distinction of color, sex, or even sexual orientation. Certainly, this cohesion waned as different voices sought different agendas. But it is important to demonstrate the historic context in order to understand where the movement is today.

The movement has evolved since the days of Stonewall. Different voices and priorities have emerged. The following literature examines the dialog within the gay movement, including debate regarding gay pop-cultural media representation, assimilation, and the very construction of gay identity.

Gay Representation in the Media

The October 2005 issue of *Details*[3] magazine summarizes current trends from a mainstream pop cultural perspective. In stating, "Homosexuality has never been more mainstream" (Dumenco, 2005, p. 118), the issue is dedicated to defining the "new American male." It examines major media events between 2000 and 2005 to prove a new American pop culture. Reminiscent of the early "metrosexual"[4] persona, the article, "The Pussification of the American Man," argues, "In the past five years, the chest-thumping alpha male has given way to a softer, gentler, and better-groomed beta boy. America should be grateful." (Gordinier, 2005, p. 97).

Ironically, the May 2005 issue of one popular gay and lesbian magazine, *The Advocate*, makes the opposite argument. Titled, "The Disappearing Queer," the article examines the shrinking presence of gay characters/influence on mainstream TV (Goldstein, 2005, p. 80). In addition to this decline, the article argues that the types of gay representation remain marginalized. "We can be secretaries at the precinct house, but not cops… And don't tell me it's progressive to show gay decorators or body-groomers. Even fundamentalists are willing to trust sodomites with their hair" (p. 80). The article argues the need for gay characters to appear as "fully drawn human beings" (p. 80). As opposed to the *Details* perspective, *The Advocate*, representative of the gay perspective, sees the decline as a sign of mainstream media growing hesitant to overtly portray gay culture. Stating that "Representation is reality," Goldstein concludes that if gays are omitted from American entertainment, "It will be even harder to have a frank discussion of issues that involve our

---

[3] *Details* is a popular mainstream magazine targeting heterosexual males, with issues focused on the straight male experience as related to sex, fashion, trends, etc.

[4] One good definition provided by "religioustolerance.com": An urban heterosexual male who rejects many macho attributes often linked to masculinity. He adopts many traits often associated with heterosexual females and gay males

sexuality. Plenty of straight people would like us to amuse and fuss over them while we keep our lives to ourselves. That's service, not liberation" (p. 80). These examples do not intend to directly comment on the initiatives of the movement itself. Rather, they are used to present the external debate potentially affecting the movement's initiatives and success. *The Advocate* perspective provides a perfect example of the move from Social Unrest to Enthusiastic Mobilization. As Stewart et al. (2001) argued, transition to the latter represents an acknowledgement that working within the formal/traditional power structures and processes is ineffective. *The Advocate*, in a sense, urges the gay movement to "retaliate" against symbolic annihilation (coined by Gross, 2001), and mobilize to force a more valid discussion within the media.

The Gay Dilemma

The *Details* and *Advocate* opinions represent two sides of two different (gay and straight) coins. Many mainstream groups are hesitant to fully accept the gay cultural influence. Much research, however, asks a much larger question: What are the implications of actually being included in mainstream society? Researchers constantly debate whether the gay movement should be grateful for or concerned with the changing standard (whatever that standard may be or be perceived as).[5] In his article, "Will success spoil gay culture?" Michael Hattersley (2004) addresses this debate. He begins by emphasizing the AIDS epidemic of the early 1980s as a galvanizing moment within gay culture. "AIDS caused American gay culture as a whole, and not just gay men as individuals, to come out of the closet and enter mainstream society" (p. 33). Hattersley contends that, as gay individuals become an increasingly accepted entity in the traditional American family, media, and

---

[5] As will be shown, most of the following research is predominantly from the male perspective. It is used because of the limited type of available research, and not presented to diminish the female voice.

political agenda, the results "pose a serious challenge to the perpetuation of 'gay politics,' to say the least: less clear is what would happen to gay and lesbian literature, art, and popular culture" (p. 34). In short, he is concerned that the risk of inclusion and acceptance could sacrifice the unique character, experience, and needs of traditional gay culture. He echoes (almost verbatim) the *Details* argument. "The blurring of hetero- and homosexuality, and of gender itself, calls to mind a related trend: the gradual extinction of the traditional heterosexual male" (p. 34). As opposed to *Details* (representative of the mainstream voice), however, Hattersley questions whether the reality is necessarily a good thing.

Author Daniel Harris (1996) contributes to this perspective in "The Rise and Fall of Gay Culture," arguing that the modern gay movement, in the process of seeking assimilation, has compromised its Stonewall foundations that taught the gay community to be proud of its difference. He contends that both the recent mainstream commercialization of gay men as well as the gay liberation movement itself are to blame for the loss of a distinct identity and culture, explaining:

> It is not just economic forces that are to blame for the decline of the subculture, but the gay liberationists themselves… anxious to tone down or eliminate all together our idiosyncrasies as a minority, which some activists treat as… the price we must pay for social acceptance…. The gay movement is bent on disseminating images of happy, healthy homosexuals who have abandoned their compulsive cruising and their bitchy, self-loathing sarcasm and become instead unthreatening replicas of mild mannered heterosexuals. (p. 269)

Harris concludes by addressing the same considerations as Hattersley (2004). He argues that the homogenization of American culture requires an "inevitable tragedy" in the demise of a distinct gay culture and sensibility. He suggests that it is a difficult, perhaps impossible, debate to settle – assimilation is a necessity, but causes an inevitable "ruinous impact on us as a minority" (p. 271). From this perspective, it could be argued that the gay movement, by

11

not acknowledging the limitations of working within traditional power structures, skipped the enthusiastic mobilization stage and moved directly into a maintenance mode, giving into mainstream expectations as the solution.

Harris (1996) extends this argument in his comparison of the "original" gay glossy magazine, *After Dark* (first published in 1957)*,* to today's popular *OUT* magazine.[6] The content and style of the two publications are representative of the changes within the gay movement during the last three decades. *After Dark* never claimed itself a "gay" magazine. It covered the arts, theater, and show business, but was popular for risqué photography and sexual (gay-marketed) advertisements. "Despite its huge gay following, it never officially came out, but played an endless game of hide-and-seek, cloaking its quite obvious sympathies for the burgeoning gay rights movement behind seemingly impartial coverage of homoerotic dance and theater" (p. 174). Comparing *After Dark* with today's gay-run media outlets provides a sharp contrast to and ironic statement of the gay movement. Although *After Dark* was necessarily ambiguously gay while promoting uniquely gay symbols, *OUT*'s success, as indicated by the name, hinges on being identified as distinctly gay while blending gay culture with that of straight society and pop culture.[7] Continuing his earlier argument, Harris argues that publications like *OUT* have trivialized gay culture by removing its traditional edge and uniqueness. In answering the new mainstream demand for gay consumers, the movement has lost something. "Pacifying the fears of large corporations involves the annihilation of the gay identity, the eradication of every vestige of difference between ourselves and the heterosexual markets the advertiser is accustomed to addressing"

---

[6] Again, the following comparison is not used to present the gay movement's voice, rather to understand the surrounding pop cultural debate.

[7] These "symbols" extend to the types of ads themselves. While After Dark incorporated specifically gay advertisements, OUT includes a large number of ads made for "mainstream" publications.

(p. 182). Harris's main concern, however, is not necessarily the blurring of gay culture, but the "whitewashing" and avoidance of the negative realities still facing the gay movement. Thus, the argument goes beyond simply the right vs. wrong of cultural homogeneity. If the mainstream ultimately perceives itself as similar to gay culture, there could be a lack of external attention to or understanding of the very real issues still facing the gay movement.

Clark (1997) addresses the notion of mainstream culture affecting the gay movement by focusing on the specific issues gay men continue to battle. In a sense, he argues for much-needed maintenance among LGBT persons. Specifically, Clark is concerned with mainstream societal norms that constrain the development of many gay males. He contends that straight culture itself is based on a traditionally masculine standard. As a result:

> Many of the problems and challenges facing gay men, particularly those of us isolated in the urban gay ghettos[8] that are invariably connected to a bar-based sexual delivery system and a sexually-laden subculture, result not solely because we are gay, but because we are socialized as men in a heterosexist and patriarchal culture. (p. 315)

Fundamental to traditional masculine society, Clark (1997) posits, are the male characteristics of sexual reductionism and domination (and consequently, objectification). In addition, "virtually everything in our culture that speaks to relationships at all speaks exclusively to heterosexual relationships" (p. 316). This, coupled with the inability to participate in legal institutions such as marriage, denies gay males the opportunity to learn, develop, and implement relationship skills applicable to their experience. Accordingly, gay men often retreat into gay ghettos and succumb to their mainstream socialization, unable to create or maintain long-term, meaningful relationships.

---

[8] Gay Ghettos refer to consolidated urban areas in which predominantly gay men reside (i.e. Midtown, Atlanta; Castro, San Francisco; West Hollywood, LA; East Village, NYC). These communities develop out of needs to be around "like" people. Often, residents of these "ghettos" remain the area for long periods of time, insulated from mainstream culture.

Clark (1997) argues the need for gay men to engage in an active reconstruction, re-socialization of masculinity within the uniquely gay context; a context that should embrace a pro-feminist/liberation theology framework. He urges a focus toward "egalitarian, gender role-free, mutual and reciprocal, deeply loving and intimate, long-term, monogamously coupled relationships…. Such relationships also represent an important alternative to the dominative patterns of masculine socialization" (p. 322).

Clark's (1997) study is important in that it exemplifies the types of questions and considerations the gay movement must still address. In the context of social movements, he embraces the notion of a long-term maintenance mode, and what this stage should represent specifically within the gay community. What he does not address in his argument, though, are the potential positive implications for assimilation. As evidenced earlier, if the traditional American male is influenced by gay culture, and if gay culture itself is increasingly accepted by the mainstream, would opportunities for gay males to develop these relationship skills not emerge at an earlier age? Accordingly, are gay ghettos not merely relics of an age in which gay culture was *not* assimilated? Because of this, could it then be argued that the re-socialization skills proposed by Clark are a coping mechanism responding to the once distinct and distant mainstream? From this perspective, Clark's argument hinges on the answer to Hattersley (2004) and Harris's (1996) questions of exactly how much the gay movement wants/needs to be included in the mainstream. As the context changes, so do the issues and so do the resolutions.

Internal Strife?

Other researchers posit that there are divisions within the gay movement precluding it from moving forward and achieving a "universally gay" agenda. Hogan (2005) begins this

debate by establishing the various conceptualizations of the term queer and the implications of a uniquely queer movement. She outlines four main uses of the term "queer:" usage in popular shows like "Queer as Folk" or "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy," reference to all sexual fringe groups, activist groups using the original definition of "queer" as odd or unusual, and queer when used to denounce and discourage homosexual behavior and culture. Hogan then urges the movement to refute these definitions and "reclaim" the term queer. More specifically, Hogan suggests that the gay movement should adopt a "radical queer" construct, as opposed to a "gay mainstream" ideal. For Hogan, correct usage of the term "queer" should distinguish the movement as one that celebrates difference and creates a true community valued because of that difference. She contends that the gay ideal as seen in pop culture, by focusing on identity-based issues, and blending those identities into mainstream culture, creates "watered-down versions of 'acceptable gayness'" (p. 155). In response, the radical queer movement seeks "to show a more diverse, if not more realistic representation of queer lives and identities" (p. 155). The movement, for Hogan, needs to go beyond labeling, beyond sexual orientation, and must address all concerns and aspects unique to its members. Radical queers seek to move from the limited identity constructs of gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc., and expand what is socially understood and accepted. "The intentional blurring of the lines is an attempt to deconstruct the oversimplification of an identity based on sexual orientation alone, by fighting against homophobia along with racism, trans-activism, poverty issues and so on" (p. 156).

Accordingly, "radical," in this usage, does not denote a fanatical underground extremist mindset. Rather, the queer movement is radical because it refutes the tactics and philosophy driving the mainstream gay movement. In other words, those aspiring to a queer

identity see two distinct movements: one perceived to embrace assimilationist and mainstream ideals, and one that rejects them. Therefore, Hogan (2005) sees the radical queer approach as critical for solidifying a successful, long-term agenda. She acknowledges Hattersley (2004) and Harris's (1996) fears of the current gay movement succumbing to mainstream (straight) standards and expectations. "Mainstream usage of 'queer' is associated not only with male, but also with white and middleclass. 'Queer Eye' is essentially a show that reaffirms capitalist values and encourages heterosexuality by preparing men to find a woman and hold a job through fashion and style" (p. 155). From this perspective, it could be argued that the politics need to be put back into the movement. In the process, the politics must be reconfigured to represent the needs and uniqueness of the movement's members, not just certain members' identities. Ultimately, with respect to the context of social movement life stages, Hogan extends the requirements of the enthusiastic mobilization stage, arguing that not only is working within the mainstream traditional power structure ineffective, but working within the gay mainstream power structure is ineffective as well.

Echoing Hogan's (2005) argument for a movement founded on more than sexual identity, Moon (1995) examines gay men's relationships with straight women, or more specifically, women labeled "fag hags."[9] She does so to demonstrate the various contexts in which the gay movement intersects with heterosexual culture. These contexts refute the traditional rhetoric regarding the politics of identity. More specifically, "gay community is a notion often used to describe a politically mobilizable, clearly defined group formed around members' perceived shared interests. These interests are supposed to emerge from members' common experience of being gay" (p. 490). Moon argues, however, and perhaps rightly so,

---

[9] There are many variations of the term "fag hag." In general, it refers to heterosexual females, who primarily associate with gay men, and subsequently, gay culture. They immerse themselves in a gay social network.

that insisting on a "common experience" is problematic. As evidenced with her "fag hag" example, gay men, depending on their experiences, perceive straight female friends differently. This intersection symbolizes the tenuous and constantly negotiated intersection with straight culture.

Within the gay male identity, subgroups form based on these perspectives. Some remain insular to the gay male community, rejecting the possibility of a positive, straight (in this case, female) influence. Others embrace the opportunity of inclusion, blending their experience with that of straight society. Finally, some heterosexual females (fag hags), immerse themselves within the gay male culture, an instance in which straight society succumbs to gay cultural influence. Although each of these individuals identify as part of the gay community, their actual identity differs in terms of both sex and experience. Ultimately, for Moon (1995), it is these differences that negate the traditional rhetoric of a gay community that is strictly defined by and limited to gay vs. straight sexual orientation categories. "This dominant rhetoric of gay community reaffirms the notion that gay and straight people necessarily oppose each other" (p. 505).

Whether perceived as an idealistic or practical approach to furthering the gay movement, Hogan (2005), and Moon (1995) present underlying challenges that may preclude a unified public agenda. Accordingly, their perspectives support Blumer's (1995) earlier distinction regarding social movement theory. Given Hogan and Moon's argument of the potential inability of a single unified agenda, the "gay movement" as a singular notion becomes operationalized as a general social movement, while the queer, fag hag, etc. experiences represent necessary specific sub-movements. It thus becomes the collective experience of the specific sub-movements that comprise the overall gay agenda.

Acknowledging the Gay Identity(s)

Continuing the notion of Hogan's (2005) queer context and echoing Moon's (1995)

focus on the individual's experience, Larry Gross (2005) acknowledges that the "clarity of

gay identity" (p. 517) is constantly challenged and negotiated. The discussion responds to a

traditional white, male focus that often negates the lesbian, bi-sexual, and ethnic minority

identities. For example, arguing that the gay difference is more than what occurs in the bed,

"Many lesbians insisted on the distinctiveness of their experience-and their oppression" (p.

516). Accordingly, "People of color [also] challenged the dominant model of homosexuality

as the defining attribute of the 'lesbian and gay' community" (p. 516). As mentioned earlier,

though, a unifying (non identity-based) queer movement could be perceived as idealistic.

Gross argues, "For many, queer theory's rejection of [LGBT] identity seems utopian in the

context of this still far from resolved fight for equality in a country that stubbornly

understands politics in minority/bloc civil rights terms" (p. 517).

Gross argues that, in solidifying a movement seeking equality with and respect by a

dominant coalition, a movement must adhere to the cultural norms and expectations of that

coalition. Acceptance by the traditional, masculine-oriented American society exemplifies

such adherence. Gross acknowledges:

> Gay people… did not ascend from the pariah status of criminal, sinner, and pervert to
> the respectable categories of voting bloc and market niche without playing the
> familiar American game of assimilation. The rules of this game require the muting of
> a group's distinctive coloring in order that they might blend into the fabric of the
> mainstream. (p. 520)

To this point, Gross addresses the question presented by Hattersley (2004) and Harris (1996).

In achieving political and cultural assimilation, minority cultures must inevitably (and

continually) negotiate their terms, perhaps sacrificing and compromising certain distinct qualities in the process.

Gross's (2005), echoing the research previously presented by Hattersley (2004), Harris (1996), Clark (1997), Hogan (2005), and Moon (1995), demonstrates the different voices and considerations facing the gay movement. Accordingly, Gross (2001), in his earlier analysis of gays in the media, addresses the challenges facing the emerging (regional) gay-run press, and what that means for the gay movement. On the local level, publications have begun to target individual markets rather than develop blanket news sources. His explanation perhaps provides additional support for the inability of a unified gay movement. In Los Angeles, for example, Gross notes ten publications targeting Hispanics, African Americans, gay males (circuit culture[10]), and lesbians. Other cities target the Asian and aging gay populations. Accommodating such niches creates additional challenges for the gay media. On one hand, gay media have adopted mainstream norms, insisting on objectivity in the pursuit of legitimacy. Yet, by speaking for and to the gay minority, does insistence on strict objectivity quiet the gay movement's voice and compromise its objectives? As Gross (2001) argues, the gay media have become "reluctant to adopt a forthright advocacy role and relinquish the label of objectivity" (p. 248). He contends, however, that the gay media should have a different role compared to that of the mainstream media, and be reflective of the larger gay movement itself. The public does not necessarily expect a purely objective story from a "gay" newspaper. Gross suggests that it is therefore possible to be honest without pretending to be objective. "What this entails is a commitment to telling the truth… but at the same time it permits journalists to seek out the stories that matter to their community, frame

---

[10] Circuit Culture refers to the gay version of mainstream (underground) raves. The culture centers on a party atmosphere, where "party" can be anything from dancing to drugs.

them in a way that reflects the community's reality, and allow people to speak for themselves" (p. 248). Gross concludes that this compromise is critical, because it maintains the gay media's "reason for being" (p. 248).

If the localized, niche markets present one set of challenges for the gay movement, the national stage presents another. The recent years have seen a steady ebb and flow of gay representation on television networks. As *The Advocate* article demonstrated, those portrayals often reside in the margins of storylines. To receive exposure, any message the gay movement wishes to convey must adhere to mainstream media demands. In turn, the constraints and sacrifices of doing so could be extreme. For example, Gross (2001) argues that programming exists which is specifically directed to the African American community and thus, invisible to mainstream America. Conversely, he contends the gay voice, without this same niche programming, must find its representation within mainstream America.[11] Consequently, those available gay options and images usually occur as wealthy white males accompanied periodically by lesbians. These are the LGBT images most assimilated into mainstream pop culture and thus the most accepted by mainstream media. The success of "Will and Grace," "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy," Queer as Folk," "The L Word," and "Ellen," are representative of this trend. Gross outlines this dilemma. "In the end, all the fuss over network minority representation reflects the bind we're caught in; this is a media-dominated society and being left off the media's center stage is a form of symbolic annihilation" (p. 258).

---

[11] With the new gay TV channels "Q-TV" and "LOGO," this argument may be moot. Early success of LOGO suggests that gay specific programming similar to the African-American community may become available and successful within the gay community.

Ultimately (with respect to television representation) one must consider the potential for negative cultivation[12] effects. By adhering to the limited available options and images, what will the mainstream perceive and "accept" as gay culture? If characterizations are limited to the gay white experience, it is arguable that, as Harris (1996) contends, misconceptions of the gay movement's needs will develop. In her essay, "Blacks and Gays: Healing the Great Divide," Smith (1993) acknowledges this inherent bias in mainstream media:

> Thanks in part to the white gay community's own public relations campaigns, Black Americans view the gay community as uniformly wealthy, highly privileged, and politically powerful, a group that has suffered nothing like the centuries of degradation caused by U.S. racism. (p. 650)

Consequently, Smith contends that the Black community often perceives the gay movement as one representing a privileged minority not saddled by the very real challenges of employment discrimination, abuse, and legal inequality.

Smith's (1993) argument, although specific to the lack of African American representation, represents the overall tenuous condition of the gay movement. It is unclear at which life stage the gay movement exists, or if, as Blumer's (1995) argument would contend, it is impossible to even approach the movement as a singular notion. Certainly recent "success" has placed the gay agenda at a crossroads, requiring the movement to walk the proverbial circus wire. To fall to one side and remain resistant to assimilation means "symbolic annihilation" (as coined by Gross) by the mainstream. To fall to the other and accept the currently limited images allowed by the mainstream could result in a movement

---

[12] Cultivation was posited by Gerbner (1967) and suggests that the more one watches television, the more he/she perceives the images to reflect reality. Gross researched with Gerbner – Central to their research is the concept of mainstreaming, arguing that heavy viewers share similar mainstream attitudes and beliefs created and supported by images seen on television.

that does not speak for the entire gay community. The balancing act requires gradually increased inclusion of all persons in the "queer" community while giving a strong nod to mainstream cultural norms. As Smith contends, "I hope… the gay and lesbian movement [will] challenge itself to close this great divide, which it can only do by working toward an unbreakable unity, a bond across races, nationalities and classes that up until now this movement has never had" (p. 652).

SUMMARY

The literature addresses various issues regarding representation within the gay movement, as well as trends regarding gay news and entertainment media. While some research focuses on the re-socialization of the gay male, other research seeks to refashion the movement itself from a gay into a queer construct. On a more fundamental level, other researchers have argued either for or against mainstream pop cultural influence. Gross's research acknowledges the underlying issues with gay representation in the media, and specifically addresses the challenges facing the local, gay-run media, representation on network television, and the resulting cultivation effects.

Certainly the challenges have been well outlined. Researchers, academics, and activists, however, repeatedly argue that the "gay movement" should be inclusive; the "gay movement" should resist mainstream pop culture; the "gay movement" needs mainstream pop culture in its quest for equality. The research does not, however, provide a comprehensive operational definition of the "gay movement." It is important to first explicate this definition from within the gay community before pondering what the movement needs to do. Based on the literature presented, the following research questions emerge.

RQ1: How do the interview participants, as LGBT individuals, and as members of sub-groups within the gay community, engage in today's "gay movement?"

RQ2- A: How do interview participants ascribe meaning to the images and representations in gay-run, pop-cultural magazines such as OUT and The Advocate?

RQ2-B: How do the participants' impressions align with a qualitative content analysis of the images/representations themselves?

Finally, the literature repeatedly focuses on the intersection of gay culture with heterosexual society. But this assumes that the gay movement, as a singular notion, achieves its mission through a single agenda seeking "assimilation into the mainstream." But would a single gay agenda focus on achieving political equality? Becoming a driver of pop culture? Or both? Are the two realms unavoidably dependent upon each other? This leads to one final research question.

RQ3: Grounded in the participants' discussions regarding engagement in today's movement, and their impressions of gay representation in gay-run pop-cultural magazines, what overall "agenda" do they feel is being (and should be) portrayed?

Together, the answers will ultimately determine how to contextualize the gay experience as a social movement based on the views of LGBT persons from within.

CHAPTER II: METHOD

Two research methods were employed. First, a small portion of the research was conducted through a qualitative analysis of *OUT* and *The Advocate* magazines, to provide a glimpse into how the gay movement is conveyed through gay-run national print media. This is done with the understanding that advertisements and editorial content do not reflect the same voice – rather, the advertisements are coded as separate parts of the overall publications. Second, the majority of the research occurred through in-depth interviews. Interviews were conducted to understand how the gay community defines the movement, how (and if) participants feel the community's objectives are being realized, and how the gay community itself is being portrayed.

Content Analysis

A minor portion of the research answered RQ2 through a content analysis of *OUT* and *Advocate* magazines, using the December issue of *OUT* and the Dec. 6 and Jan. 17 issues of *The Advocate*.[13] *OUT* Magazine, which was first published in 1992, primarily targets gay men with a focus on style, culture, entertainment, home design, health, and emerging needs. This was chosen because it is the highest-circulating gay magazine with a total circulation of more than 119,000. Most readers live in the Eastern U.S., with approximately 22,000 each in the Mid-Atlantic and South-Atlantic regions. Circulation includes 5,138 international readers. Although the magazine targets gay males, the analysis was conducted in part to determine the types of individuals represented – given that it reaches the most number of gay persons.

---

[13] *The Advocate* is usually published twice monthly. Only one issue is published in July and December.

OUT is published monthly and also has a bi-monthly *OUT Traveler* magazine. Pricing is $4.99 for a single issue and $24.95 for annual subscription.

The Advocate, which was first published in 1967, is a national newsmagazine targeting both gay men and lesbians. The magazine was chosen because it has the largest circulation for any magazine which targets both men and women (i.e., the LGBT community). Total circulation is 110,903 including 97,895 in subscriptions. Most readers live in the Eastern U.S., with approximately 40,000 between the Mid-Atlantic and South-Atlantic regions. Circulation includes 2,962 international readers. *The Advocate* is published bi-weekly. Pricing is $3.99 per issue, or $44.00 for annual subscription.

Both magazines are published by LPI Media, Inc. in Los Angeles, CA. The similarity in circulation profile could result from overlap in subscriptions as the two magazines, in targeting different audiences, are often advertised together. It is interesting to note that *OUT*'s circulation, in its 13-year existence has surpassed the 38-year-old *The Advocate*.

The qualitative, in-depth content analysis was a small portion of the research aimed at providing a brief glimpse into the messages being conveyed in the gay-run media. Advertisements were coded and evaluated to compare demographics of the images. Images associated with articles were also coded for demographics. Both articles and advertisements were then coded for content regarding issue/topic coverage. Issues included, but are not limited to: Same-sex marriage debate, family life/relationships, AIDS/Health-related, work-place discrimination, new product announcement/discussion, or entertainment-based ads/articles. A secondary coder was recruited to verify inter-coder reliability. The respective issues were chosen because of their "year in review" coverage. With more time, a longitudinal content analysis would provide a more comprehensive understanding of gay-run

media messages. Performing one month of content analysis, however, provides a snapshot of the type of coverage. The categories coded are explained in Appendix D, and the data will be discussed later in the findings chapter.

In-Depth Interviews

The bulk of the research, answering RQ1 and RQ3, was conducted through 13 in-depth interviews. Members of the gay community were recruited through two area listservs. First, an email was sent to a local LGBT listserv of 3,800+ members asking for volunteers (See Appendix B for a copy of the email). The same email was distributed through a local lesbian resource center. Because more than 15 volunteers responded, participants were selected to provide the most diverse sample possible. For the purpose of this research, it was more important to interview a diverse pool of 13 participants rather than a large homogenous pool of 30 participants. Participants were primarily from central North Carolina. For their participation, volunteers received a $5 gift card to a local eatery.

Each interview lasted between an hour and an hour and a half, and held at locations convenient for the participants. Each participant signed a consent form approved by IRB (seen in Appendix C) demonstrating their understanding of the study. Pseudonyms have been used for each respondent to ensure confidentiality. The interviews themselves were taped and then transcribed by a professional typist/transcriber [please see Appendix A for a copy of the interview guide]. Participants will have access to their individual transcript. Other than the participants, the only people allowed access to the data are the transcriber, principal investigator, and the advising faculty member. Once the study is complete, the tapes will be destroyed and discarded and the transcripts will be held in locked storage by the principle

investigator for two years. The tapes will be destroyed and discarded to ensure that once the project is complete, all original participant names will be erased.

In analyzing the transcriptions, it was important to first look for key themes that emerge repeatedly. Analysis followed the general guidelines as proposed by McCracken (1988), moving from repeated utterances of certain words, phrases, or concepts, into a mode of observation supporting those utterances, and then grouping the observations into overarching themes answering the original research questions. It was important to explicate these themes with respect to individual groups (i.e., specific to lesbians, African-American males, etc.) as well as across all respondents (i.e., themes consistent for the entire gay community). Similarity or distinctness of themes helped determine the nature of the gay movement as a singular versus segmented notion.

There were several reasons to ground this research using qualitative methods, specifically using the in-depth interview. McCracken (1988) provides a good explanation for when qualitative methods, as opposed to quantitative, are appropriate. First, it is the quantitative goal to isolate and define categories at the outset of a project and apply the same precision in explicating the relationship between the findings. Conversely, it is the qualitative goal to constantly negotiate (and re-negotiate) the categories of data during the course of research with the expectation that the categories themselves will change throughout the process. Qualitative research "looks for patterns of interrelationship between many categories rather than the sharply delineated relationship between a limited set of them" (p. 16). The very nature of this project was to break down and restructure the assumed definition(s) of "gay movement." It began with no defined or predetermined categories, but asked the respondents for their own individual definitions. It was assumed that there would be as many

conceptualizations of the gay movement as there were respondents, and thus, did not assume the data would fall neatly into specific categories as may be expected with quantitative research.

The types of research questions themselves often dictate the method. For example, closed questions requiring respondents to answer readily and unambiguously warrant a quantitative approach. Accordingly, questions that probe deeper, and allow for more imprecise, broad, and flexible responses call for qualitative research (McCracken, 1988). A third distinction involves the respondents themselves. Quantitative research seeks to generalize certain findings to a larger population. Qualitative research seeks to uncover cultural themes and assumptions. In short, "It is the cultural categories and assumptions, not the people who hold them, that matter" (p. 17). In defining the gay movement, the questions must allow for ambiguous, imprecise answers. In turn, these answers should uncover respondents' specific contexts and perspectives regarding cultural trends within the gay community.

Finally, McCracken (1988) argues that qualitative research requires the investigator to act as an instrument, using his/her own experiences to help understand the cultural themes voiced by the respondents. This reflexivity component was especially true in the proposed study. As a member of the researched community, certain experiences and perspectives resonated with the investigator and allowed him to better understand the overall emerging dialog.

RESEARCH CONSIDERATIONS/CHARACTERISTICS

This research certainly has limitations. Coding only one issue of *OUT* and two issues of *The Advocate* limited the coverage being represented. It could be more fruitful to perform

a longitudinal content analysis of the magazines to understand the comprehensive focus of gay-run media, and if these sources are expanding or narrowing demographic and issue coverage specific to the gay movement. It was still, however, important to have a point of comparison to understand if participants' impressions of media coverage, match the coverage itself. As mentioned, the issues chosen were end-of-year issues, and provided a good overview regarding broader coverage.

Although transgendered persons are considered an important part of the LGB**T** community, they represent a unique set of experiences and realities that are not covered in the presented literature. This research does not intend to discount that experience, but inclusion in this study would not address those experiences adequately or appropriately.

As a member of the gay community, the researcher has his own experiences, thoughts, and perspective regarding the gay movement. It was critical to act as a third-party researcher during the interviews and not "lead" the participants. There were certain assumptions that drove this study, but they should not have influenced the discussion or evaluation. Ultimately, the study asked individuals their perspectives and attempts to extract themes from that discussion. The research does not propose to solve a universal question, but rather hopes to add to an ongoing and ever-changing societal debate, perhaps providing additional context to further that debate.

Finally, as mentioned, the time constraints also limited potential findings. Research was conducted over a three-month period. More time would have allowed the researcher to investigate additional issues and themes. Accordingly, time limitations also required the interviews be transcribed by a third party. Not transcribing the tapes personally may have

limited insight based on participant hesitation, awkwardness, tone, and volume while

responding.

CHAPTER III: FINDINGS

The findings include data from conducting 13 in-depth interviews and performing a qualitative content analysis of *OUT* and *The Advocate.* The results of the 13 interviews with LGBT individuals are presented below. The content analysis follows the interview findings – and is used to compare to participants' responses regarding their perceptions of gay-run media.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Response to the two recruitment emails was greater than anticipated. Of the 27 members of the LGBT community who responded, 13 participants were selected to provide the optimal level of diversity and perspective.[14] Because of the lack of ethnic diversity among respondents, the resulting sample is somewhat limited, but still provides a good balance in terms of age range, gender, and profession. The respondents included six women, seven men, one African American, and one Hispanic, with ages ranging from 21 to 59. Professions represented were also diverse including three students and two ministers.

It was initially expected that all respondents would identify as gay or lesbian. The variations regarding each person's self-sexual identification, however, became fundamental to understanding the state of the gay movement. As will be discussed later, the inclusion of two bisexual respondents as well as those identifying as queer provide an interesting perspective for the study and lend support to certain dynamics existing in today's LGBT

---

[14] Additional participants were available had there been a lack of consistency in themes.

community. The following provides a more specific breakdown of each participant's age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation,[15] and profession.

NAME	AGE	ETHNICITY	GENDER	SEXUALITY	PROFESSION
Nathaniel	21	White	Male	Queer	Student
Julia	22	White	Female	Lesbian	* Administrative Assistant at local private Jewish School. * Pursuing joint law and social work degrees, Fall 2006.
Naomi	22	White	Female	Lesbian	Student
Robin	24	White	Female	Functionally Lesbian	Master's of Library Science Student
Aaron	25	Hispanic	Male	Bisexual	Security Guard
Catherine	25	White	Female	Bisexual - (Queer Construct)	Diversity Communication Associate at a major southern university
Emily	30	White	Female	Lesbian	Coffee Shop Owner and member of Massachusetts Equality[16]
Benjamin	32	White	Male	Queer/Gay	Minister
Michael	35	White	Male	Gay	Massage Therapist
Reverend Fowler	41	African American	Female	Lesbian Member of Queer Community	Minister
Daniel	50	White	Male	Gay	Associate Director of Communication for a major university's athletic department
Craig	55	White	Male	Gay	Retired Computer Programmer
Carl	59	White	Male	Gay	Retired Lawyer (Chief Counsel for one southern state's Employment Security Commission)

Interview length ranged from 45 minutes to one and a half hours. Most interviews were conducted in libraries, with several being conducted at coffee shops and restaurants,

---

[15] The sexual orientation listed is the participant's self-identified sexual orientation.

[16] Member of team that helped win gay marriage rights in Massachusetts.

and one via telephone. One original participant cancelled, and was replaced with an alternate respondent.

MOTIVATION (Engaging in the Movement)

As the research questions suggest, before defining the gay movement and outlining its objectives, it is first necessary to understand the perspectives of the movement's members, both as individuals and as a community. Each person and each "sub" group is driven by different realities. To understand what the gay community as a whole wants out of the movement and what individuals' perspectives are regarding the effectiveness of the movement itself, it is first critical to understand what motivates members to engage in the process.

Individual Motivation

Each respondent brought a unique perspective to the discussion. An individual's age, work experience, personal history, and basic priorities shape their responses. The various contexts present specific factors that shape not only what individuals want out of the movement, but how they feel the movement should progress. One's personal motivation often determines the path chosen within the movement and dictates what that individual realistically expects in the process.

o *Being Active*

An individual's fundamental understanding of what it means to be "active" is one indicator of how he/she exists within the movement. When asked if they considered themselves an active member of the gay community, all but one participant responded yes. The individual definitions of active, however, varied. For example, Daniel offered an interesting perspective on "being active by default." As a high ranking, very public

representative of one of the country's premier collegiate athletic programs, the decision to come out was not only very calculated, it meant being thrust into the gay spotlight. Daniel said he felt fortunate to be immediately accepted, and to have his sexuality embraced by his coworkers and University administration. At the same time, however, he was chartering new waters for LGBT leaders in the traditionally heterosexist, intolerant field of athletics. As Daniel explained, "To my knowledge, there was no one who came out [in major college athletics] before me who was a man, where it was known nationally. I became the Yahoo/Google-search guy." As a result, he has often been called to tell his story around the country. Thus, simply by being out forced him into being an active member and representative of the LGBT community.

Emily discussed begin active in the context of her social and political involvement in the local community. This involvement included operating a gay-centric coffee house, volunteering in community projects, and most importantly, (for her) being involved in Massachusetts Equality's fight to legalize gay marriage. Conversely, for Carl, being active occurs first because he socializes in gay venues, but also because he gives money to various local and national organizations.

Perhaps the most interesting individual perspective suggests "active" is the result of simply "being" – being self-identified as gay, and existing as a social member of the community. For example, Reverend Fowler suggested that being active means "regularly participating in activities that involve other gay people." This could mean living in a predominantly gay neighborhood, socializing with other LGBT persons, or vacationing in gay-oriented cities. Nathaniel echoed this perspective, indicating that being active essentially means publicly identifying as a member of the queer community. Several respondents took

this approach one step further, and equated being active to having subscriptions for gay publications, or having gay roommates.

Aaron countered this perspective. He was the only participant to answer he was not an active member of the community based on the fact that he is not out to all of his friends and family. At the same time he discussed his involvement in local organizations and events. Simply put, although he is involved in the local community, for Aaron, not being out precludes him from considering himself "active."

- o *Age*

An individual's age also has a strong impact on what motivates respondents to engage in the gay movement. For example, most participants aware of, but not alive during (or too young to remember) the Stonewall Riots, mentioned them as "the obligatory starting point" when discussing the modern gay movement. These participants suggested, however, that the Riots are not relevant today. Accordingly, most participants offered alternatives which, for the most part, correlated with their ages. For example, Naomi, 22, immediately noted Matthew Shepard's[17] murder as critical. Benjamin, 32, noted the importance of the AIDS crisis in the 1980s. In both instances these events occurred during the participants' formative years when they were coming to terms with their sexuality. As an adolescent, Benjamin remembers collecting all articles and clippings he could find about gay men. He notes that even though every article in the 1980s was about gay men dying of AIDS, it still made him feel connected to the community before coming out as gay. Before he graduated from high school, Benjamin had resigned himself to the fact that he would probably not live past 30. Conversely, the two respondents in their late teens/early twenties during the 1960s *did*

---

[17] Matthew Shepard was a college student at the University of Wyoming who was killed by two men because of his sexual orientation. His murder created a new push for hate-crime legislation around the country. See www.matthewshephard.org.

mention the Riots as the central, most critical event shaping today's movement. It is interesting to note that they also assumed that all other respondents would answer the same. Finally, Michael spoke of Stonewall as the obligatory event. For him, however, Ellen coming out on TV was more critical, because of his own concurrent struggle with sexuality.

- o *Career, Personal Interests*

The participants' professions, or personal interests, strongly affect their perceptions regarding what and who is important to the gay movement. For example, although most participants were able to specify a watershed event most relevant for them, Reverend Fowler first jokingly responded, "Do we have any [watershed events]?" She then acknowledged it would be Stonewall, primarily due to the fact that her church, the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), began as a result of the Riots. In the context of leadership for the gay movement, Naomi, as a student, discussed gay campus organizations and favorite out musicians she admired. Both members of the clergy mentioned religious leaders who had influenced their experiences such as the mission of Reverend Troy D. Perry (founder of MCC) and Reverend Jimmy Creech (who had his clergy credentials removed from the United Methodist Church for marrying a same sex couple). Catherine, a university diversity administrator, focused on local speakers who brought a wealth of national experience and knowledge into the local schools. Finally, in addressing gay social concerns, Carl, a lawyer, discussed his involvement with a local gay professional/business guild, and Craig and Aaron discussed their local church and church groups.

Community Motivation (and Mobilization)

Despite these individual differences, participants acknowledged broader contexts that also shaped their motivation. How LGBT persons engage with the movement goes beyond

personal preference and experience. Responses indicated that the participants are often

motivated either through events at the national level or as the result of culturally-based

realities within their own social network. In turn, this motivation often results in community

mobilization.

o *Political Realities*

Most respondents, regardless of their individual preferences, acknowledged Stonewall

as critical for the movement's mobilization specific to the 1960s and 70s. For the same

reasons, Nathaniel pointed to the White Night Riots as an example of internal mobilization in

1979. The White Night Riots resulted from the sentence handed to Dan White for murdering

Harvey Milk, the out San Francisco City Supervisor. The sentence was seven years, eight

months in prison, with time off for good behavior. As Nathaniel argues, the sentence was a

mobilizing force, because it sent the message that "it's ok to kill a faggot in the U.S."

Benjamin noted the 1980s AIDS crisis as a mobilizing force. Naomi and Carl both

acknowledged Matthew Shepard's murder in the late nineties, because it drew national

attention to the lack of hate-crime legislation. Daniel argued the public dialog of the 1990s

could also be perceived as a mobilizing force. With increased representation and gay issues

being pushed onto the mainstream legislative stage, the dialog heralded a new age for the gay

movement. Finally, Emily offered the ironic choice of President George W. Bush as a

potential mobilizing force:

> The one reason I appreciate Bush more than Clinton is that Clinton made us feel
> better when he was screwing us. Bush makes you feel bad, and when you feel bad
> you're not so complacent. When he's up there calling you a sinner, and his stupid
> little smirky-assed grin, you're like, 'I can't stand you. I'm going to donate $500 to
> the HRC.'"

In 2004, with many states passing gay marriage bans and President Bush seeking a Constitutional Amendment defining marriage as between a man and a woman, the corresponding national debate was expected to be mentioned as the latest mobilizing force. Most participants acknowledged that a Constitutional Amendment would represent the first time in U.S. history, and one of the first times in the Western world, in which a law was passed banning certain legal rights from its citizens, rather than granting them. Most participants emphasized, however, that the current debate highlights more fundamental issues, and that forcing the marriage question to the national political stage was simply a strategy by the political right to distract Americans from more pressing issues. As a result, many felt the issue was also successful in sidetracking the gay movement itself, and was the source of misspent motivation. As Benjamin conceded, "I think we got distracted. I think it's taken up too much of our energy. There are people, other people, who are willing to fight that fight. I'm thankful for it." Echoed Daniel, "Fundamentally, it's a basic civil right that shouldn't be denied. Should it be as much of a priority? I think we're missing the boat. We shouldn't be making it such a huge issue. There are so many other areas where we need to move forward."

- o *Cultural Necessity*

Finally, many LGBT persons engage in the movement as essentially minorities within a minority. This further marginalized position creates an additional contextual layer that must be considered when discussing motivation within the movement. For example, the Black community is traditionally very insular. Reverend Fowler sees changes among the youth, but acknowledged, "A lot of black queers really do stay within themselves. They stay with who they know. They don't venture out. They live in a vacuum, so to speak, on a lot of different

levels, and don't want to go out." She continued, "I sometimes wonder how many white queer folk are really aware of people of color who are queer. And what I mean by that is, 'How aware are you that I'm different? That my needs are different, that my perspective is different?'"

Several respondents debated how the transgender community fit into the overall movement. Transgendered persons are not technically gay, but are considered part of the gay community because of their status as a sexual minority. As a result, many respondents are challenged in exactly how to incorporate transgendered needs into the overall gay movement. Thus, as existing as communities within communities, these LGBT persons are motivated by a unique set of issues specific to their experience as transgendered and ethnic minorities.

Entering the Movement

It is important to note that entering the gay movement discussion as an individual does not preclude one from simultaneously entering the discussion as a member of a larger group. Different situations require different perspectives, different strategies, and different motivations. Reverend Fowler provides the best example. She enters the discussion as a lesbian, as an African American, as a 41-year-old woman, and as a Minister. Each identity frequently requires a different perspective. Sometimes the needs overlap, but often they must be realized independently. For example, Reverend Fowler's responses demonstrated an understanding of one set of needs representing the gay community as a whole, while acknowledging the unique set of needs for African Americans, and another specific set of needs as a minister for the queer community. Achieving one goal does not necessarily preclude one from achieving another. Each individual, each group, and ultimately the gay

community as a whole, is searching for its "place at the table." The methods used to get there, however, will be unique to the situation.

Thus, equipped with a general understanding of what motivates the gay community to engage in social change, it is critical to next examine the various operational contexts within the gay movement which are used to create that change. The interviews revealed four major themes within the movement representing these different operational contexts. The next section outlines these four operational contexts, and the corresponding benefits and challenges of each.

THE FOUR OPERATIONAL CONTEXTS

1. NOT BEING AFRAID – SELF

The first operational context exacts change by creating a safe space in which individuals can exist as LGBT persons in society without fear. It focuses on the ability to create cultural change in local communities by enabling members to come out (See figure 1), and in the process, eliminate the idea of otherness. These respondents primarily focused on the importance of the gay self and the subsequent, corresponding intersection between the gay self and the external, local community.

Coming Out – "Eliminate the Idea of Otherness"

The notion of coming out argues that the more a community provides a safe environment for persons to deal openly with their sexuality, the quicker that community eliminates the idea of otherness. For example, Nathaniel argued,

> The most important thing is just to come out, just come out, be visible and be as upfront as you can and you're able with your sexuality, whatever that might be…. It's the most important thing because every single study that's ever been done, or poll that's ever been conducted has shown that homophobia is so much more prevalent among people who don't know openly gay people.

Benjamin echoed this sentiment,

> [Being queer] is part of who I am. And that is a powerful space. The most radical thing that I can do is live it out and in the process eliminate the idea of otherness. So I'm never gonna let you forget that this is part of what I'm carrying around, but I don't ever want to be reduced because of it.

Craig furthered this emphasis, but distinguished the specific types of out representations that are most beneficial.

> If you have a float full of drag queens bearing their breasts, that kind of program display is not helpful. I was at the State Fair last October here, and a young, teenage, same-sex male couple was walking through the crowd holding hands, and I thought that was the bravest thing I had ever seen, and I think that does help. I was almost moved to tears. And I think the more of that that's done, the less of an issue it'll become.

Taken further, it could be argued that coming out in a homophobic environment such as the state fair creates discussion within the local (mainstream) community. Michael emphasized the need for that dialog, and the corresponding positive, long-term effects the internal gay community could see from more individuals coming out.

> My assumption is there's probably a critical mass that once a certain percentage of people come out, then there's enough visibility that more people will feel free to come out. I feel like we've reached that critical mass. There's kind of a given-ness about it. It's not like something shocking, it's like we're actually going to discuss this as an issue.

Thus, the critical mass creates a debate which ultimately exacts change. More importantly, it creates a safe space which encourages more people to be vocal about their sexual orientation.

Julia and Robin extended the notion of being safe to the larger community through their experience at an anti-gay rally they attended as part of a silent protest. At one point during the rally, the parents of the Christian group instructed their children to come on stage and sing "Jesus Loves Me." The message was clear, "that Jesus loved the Christians on stage, not the LGBT persons in attendance." Rather than become angry, however, the gay

41

community made an amazing point by singing "Jesus Loves Me" along with the children. As the anti-gay group instructed their children to stop singing, Julia remembers debating to herself whether it would be a good or bad thing if one or more of those children were actually gay. On one hand, it would be incredibly difficult to come out within such an unsafe context. On the other hand, it would be a fantastic opportunity to educate parents who otherwise would never be exposed to the LGBT community (or any minority for that matter).

Finally, Reverend Fowler emphasized the need for ethnic minorities to come out. She mentioned that the Black community is traditionally insular, which makes the creation of safe spaces in which to come out more difficult. Several years ago, Reverend Fowler and her partner volunteered to be represented in a "Pro-Family" HRC campaign. As Reverend Fowler expected, not many African Americans answered the call. She and her partner were not sure if the lack of response was due to concerns regarding media representation, politics, job security, or simple disdain for the HRC. Reverend Fowler explained, "As a couple, it saddened me, because, you know, we exist. It comes down to really being there and letting the world know we exist, and we look normal; it's kind of challenging." Her final decision point was simple, "If not us, then who?"

Overall, responses indicated that the two fundamental prerequisites to individuals coming out were the need to "feel safe," and to exist in a "supportive environment," (See Figure 1). As will be discussed below, participants focused eliminating fear, and providing education as central to feeling safe and creating a supportive environment. Once these components are in place, then individuals can come out, and live as engaged out members in local communities.

Feeling Safe

Fundamental to feeling safe is the notion of personal sanctuary – a safe space into which the person (or persons) can retreat from the mainstream when needed. Certainly, while engaging with the community at large, participants felt it is also paramount for the gay community (as with any minority) to define its own spaces. As Aaron argued, "It's nice to have your own space. Races have their different sanctuaries." Continued Michael, "I want to be able to live life as an openly gay man without it being a big deal. But to also have places to meet."

Catherine acknowledged the delicate balance required in negotiating sanctuary. "You want to experience the world and have life, but you want that kind of home base or just the idea that you can go somewhere and be around people that are like you." She continued, "It's important for the person with the excluded identity to remove themselves from the dominant culture, just for safety and mental health. Sometimes you just gotta get away." From a slightly different perspective, Nathaniel, who understands the need for safety, warned against removing oneself from the dominant culture completely.

> For every kid from Altoona, Pennsylvania, or Boise, Idaho, that flees to a gay ghetto in San Francisco or New York, there's one less queer to challenge the norms of their places, and for every person that leaves, that makes it harder for the people who grow up in that space. But for people who just can't do it, I totally say, "Go, do what you need to do to survive."

Finally, while safe spaces for gay ethnic minorities are limited, the need for safety is more critical. As Reverend Fowler argued for the Black community,

> The difference is that we as a minority, we walk out this door, we take a chance every day, because somebody could just kill us because of the color of our skin, *and* by being a sexual group, by our sexuality. So that sense of survival, I think, is more prevalent in the people of color community than in the white community.

Supportive Environments

The final piece of Not Being Afraid focuses on creating supportive environments in which to come out. For example, individuals are increasingly confronting their sexuality at earlier ages. Accordingly, several participants addressed the needs of today's gay youth, and the lack of focus in schools regarding gay issues. As a result, there is immediate concern regarding the absence of training for coping with peer pressure and the lack of basic sex education. In North Carolina, representative of much of the South, "abstinence only" is taught in lieu of actual sex education. Respondents believe this policy is putting an entire generation of youth, both gay and straight, at incredible risk. As Nathaniel argued, "We're not talking about abstract political debates, we're talking about teenage pregnancies, we're talking about HIV infections, we're talking about ruined lives." In addition, Carl addresses the very nature of teaching abstinence, which is usually accompanied by the phrase "until marriage." With the lack of appropriate education, he noted, "These kids are going to just learn on the streets. That's not a good way to learn about anything. It's also bad when you're teaching that anything except sex in the context of marriage is immoral. It just makes a difficult situation even more difficult." Several respondents noted the more critical need to train school counselors who are approached by youth struggling with their sexuality. Currently, this training is not mandatory in many school districts, and results in subjective counseling, and vulnerable LGBT youth. Finally, Robin discussed the growing body of gay literature that is currently unavailable in school libraries. This includes educational books with gay characters, autobiographies of coming out experiences, and coping materials for specific coming out experiences. Having access to positive gay images could help gay youth where appropriate sex education and counseling currently fail.

Coming
Out

**FIGURE 1:
Engaging as Out
Individual**

Not Being
Afraid
(Self)

Feeling
Safe

Supportive
Environment

Providing
Internal
Sanctuary

Eliminate
Fear

Focus on Youth
(Sex education,
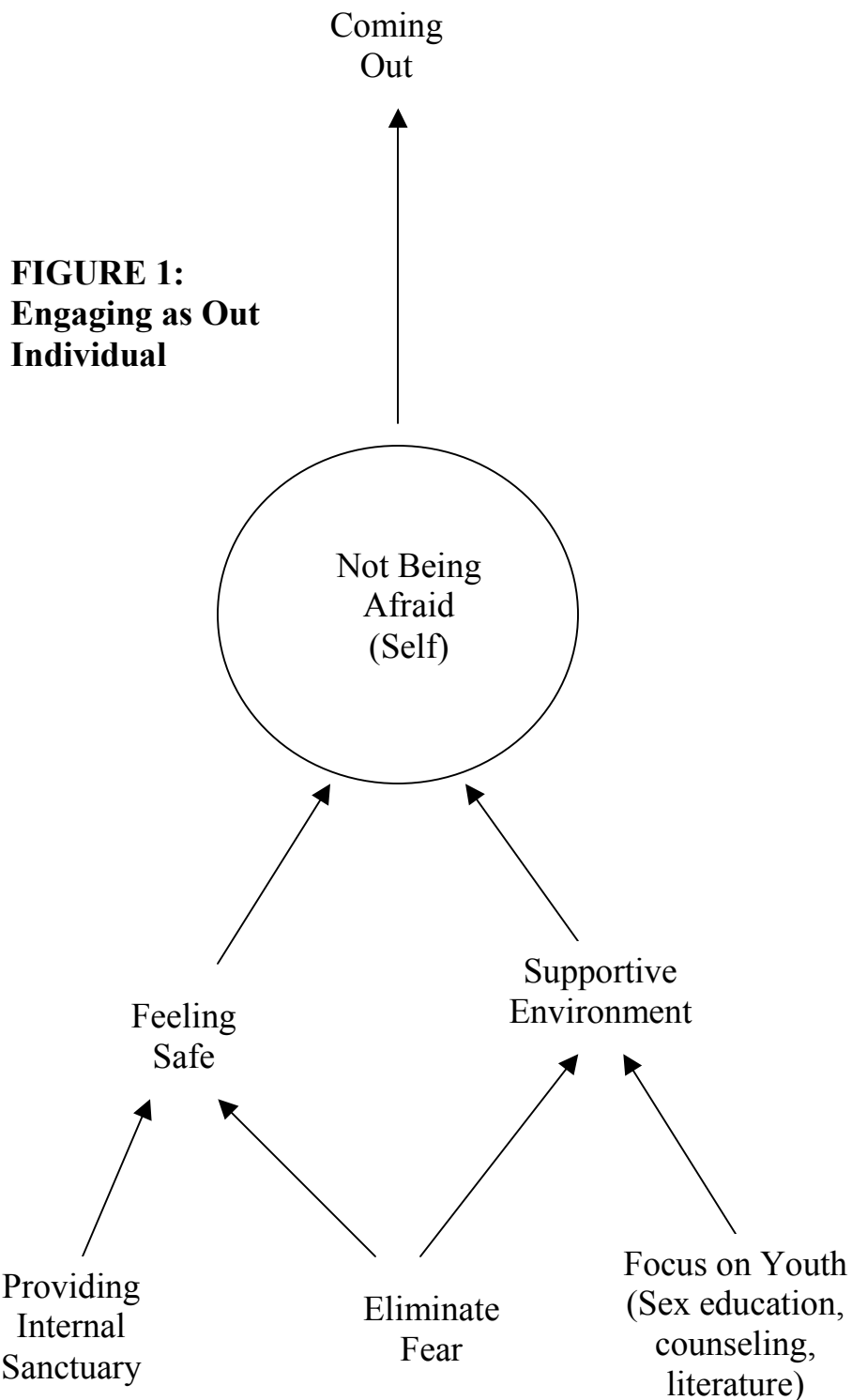counseling,
literature)

Figure 1 presents the first operational context with which to engage the gay movement. This shows the need for oneself to feel supported and safe in the process of coming out. This is the truly fundamental personal and individual level of engaging the movement – seeking a place at society's table by existing as an out member of the local community: Acceptance of Self.

Certainly perceptions among youth are changing. As many have acknowledged, "Time is on our side!" – meaning that those most homophobic in society are getting older, while younger generations are becoming increasingly accepting. But without sex education, appropriate counseling, and access to educational literature, today's youth still do not have a supportive environment in which to come out and live without fear or uncertainty regarding their sexual orientation. Creating this infrastructure will only help a trend among the next generations that is inevitable. As Aaron emphasized, "Youth are eventually going to be our leaders. Education right now can help later."

Julia summarized this operational context, arguing, "I think all of these things would fall under the umbrella of 'Not Being Afraid.'" She explained that essentially each of these issues deals with the basic concepts of fear and freedom, arguing, "Even if you're not scared, you should be free to say/be who you are." Figure 1 outlines this process. The need for personal sanctuary, eliminating fear, and creating appropriate educational resources feed into the notions of feeling safe and having a supportive environment. In turn these feed into the umbrella of not being afraid. Ultimately, with the foundation in place, individuals are able to come out.

2. TOOLS OF THE SYSTEM

Perhaps the most publicly engaged operational context tries to create change by working within traditional power structures. These participants first focused on working with the *accepted institutions* of power as dictated by the heterocentric mainstream. As will be demonstrated through participants' comments, working with those institutions also requires the gay community to follow the *accepted methods* of achieving specific legislative goals. More specifically, the tools used to achieve legal equality, as identified by participants,

include "playing the game," knowing when to "cut one's losses" and maintaining "a long-term focus" (See Figure 2).

Legal Equality

The primary goal for these respondents is to achieve legislative victories – to break down legal barriers for the gay community. Many participants emphasized the specific needs of hate crime legislation, gender expression protection,[18] workplace discrimination laws, and not necessarily marriage, but the accompanying basic civil rights. Grouping a legislative agenda under the overarching need for basic legal equality was the consistent emphasis by most participants. As Craig argued:

> The simple answer is I would like to have exactly the same rights as my married brothers and sisters and mothers and fathers and aunts and uncles and everybody else. I don't like the idea that I can be treated differently just because I'm not married. That is in healthcare, employment, in just general civil rights of all kinds; even simple things like if I and my partner go on vacation and rent a car, we can't both drive the car.[19]

Aaron and Craig each mentioned the importance of the current marriage debate, not necessarily because of the specific legal need of gay people to marry,[20] but because of the public dialog it created, as well as the public attention to the civil rights provided under the umbrella of marriage. As Michael suggested, "I don't mind too much if the marriage is called a civil union if it gets the legislation passed, just as long as the rights are equal."

---

[18] Celeste offered a good distinction between sexual orientation and gender expression. "Sexuality, in my mind is who you find yourself attracted to, what you find sexually attractive, whether it's a person or a thing. Gender expression, I think, is completely separate. Gender expression has to do with how you feel, if you feel male or female, or both, or neither, and just how you express yourself through your clothing or your name, or pronouns."

[19] Married couples are able to rent a car in one person's name, and both have the right to drive it. Without marriage, gay couples must pay the same extra fee for an additional driver as if they were two friends or business travelers trying to rent a car together.

[20] Although Aaron and Chris place some priority on marriage, several respondents do not want it. They see it as a negative, unnecessary assimilationist ideal. This will be discussed later.

Playing the Game

Most respondents acknowledged the frequent ineffectiveness of institutions in "the system." Many, for example, are frustrated with the Human Rights Campaign[21] (HRC). For example, Craig argued, "The HRC spends as much time pissing off people as they do accomplishing things." Continued Carl, "I'm beginning to wonder what they are doing now other than changing leaders all the time." At the same time, however, many of these same participants still remain members and feel it is important to contribute to the organization. Craig added, "I don't know anybody at HRC, and I've never talked to anybody at HRC. They're not accomplishing much… But I think that [they are] poised now to accomplish a lot of things, and I think that it's important that I stay a member because of that." Carl echoed this sentiment, "I don't necessarily agree with all of the groups I give money to." Finally, Michael argued that although the organization has had difficulties, "The HRC is at least visible, if not unifying."

Discussion ultimately focused on the "processes of power," specifically, how to further the gay movement while acknowledging the community's less-privileged voices. Respondents were asked if the movement should mirror the early strategy of the women's movement. Lesbians were excluded from the early days of the women's movement, often being referred to as the Lavender Menace.[22] Only once the movement became established were lesbians included in the "agenda." Similarly, many in the gay community debate if inclusion of gay minorities hinders the overall movement. Interestingly, those focusing on

---

[21] HRC stands for the Human Rights Campaign, a Lobby for LGBT rights – This organization has achieved national prominence, a pretty new building, and a lot of very contentious relationships with its constituency.

[22] This term was coined by National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1969. The organization originally felt that including lesbians was a public relations threat to the emerging women's movement. (As described in women's U.S. history site, college.hmco.com/history/.)

using "the tools of the system" argued that although unfortunate, it is important to first achieve acceptance of the gay mainstream, and then include minority issues. Carl discussed the problems an all-inclusive approach creates for the internal community.

> I hope there's a chance [to amend] the Civil Rights laws to include gays and lesbians, if not transgender people. One of the big problems I know was some of the sponsors didn't want to include transgender. [Transgender issues] are just killing it. There are so many people that can mainly accept gays and lesbians that have real problems with transgender people.

Michael continued, "Sometimes I think concessions are necessary [because] I don't think change happens any other way. There are very few situations where one portion of the population is able to force their will on the entire population, and have it go well." He suggests that as long as the concessions are temporary, done ethically, and are accompanied by education regarding minority issues, then the model could work.

Cutting One's Losses

Ultimately, most participants acknowledged, "It's difficult to legislate acceptance." Continuing the HRC debate, Daniel, a longtime member, discussed what the movement has lost by using the tools of the system. "[I'm] leaving part of my estate to the HRC, but no longer give on a year-by-year basis. Put them in my will ten years ago, when I was sort of high on them. But trust me, they're getting written out. They have become far too assimilationist." Benjamin also expressed disenchantment with the HRC:

> I actually don't like the HRC anymore. I think that it's partly because HRC is too owned by politics and privilege. I understand the $200 plate dinners, and of course fundraising kind of stuff. But, you know, you're not going to dismantle the system using the tools of the system. It feels to me too much party politics as usual and it privileges the voice of upper-middle-class white folks. I'm not interested in doing work around gay/lesbian issues at the expense of doing work around race or class.

Legislative
Change

FIGURE 2:
Legal
Engagement

TOOLS
OF THE
SYSTEM

Playing the
Game

Long-term
Focus

Cutting One's
Losses

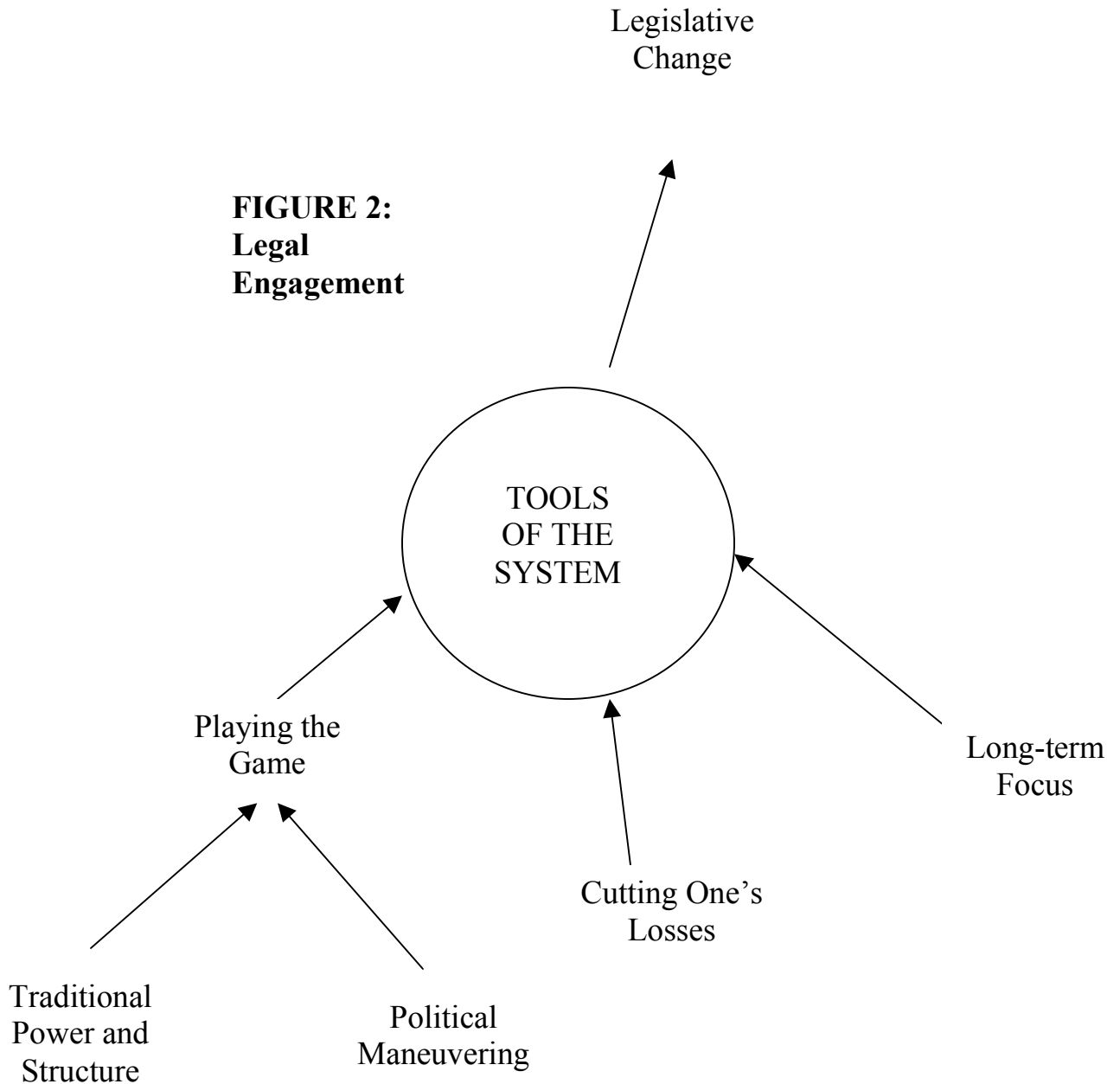Traditional
Power and
Structure

Political
Maneuvering

Figure 2 presents the second operational context with which to engage the gay movement.
Where the first context emphasized local change through individuals coming out in their
communities, this approach focuses on widespread change through legal and formal power
structures – Seeking a legal place at society's table: Legal Acceptance.

Emily, through her participation in winning gay marriage for Massachusetts, has seen how using the tools of the system can work. But she acknowledges the community's often-marginalized position within the political spectrum. In discussing President Bill Clinton's legacy, she argued, "Clinton came into office in 1992 as the 'great gay hope,'" and, "Then he just fucked with us." Among other things, she discussed Clinton's "Don't Ask Don't Tell," a watered-down policy regarding gays in the military. In addition, she explained that although George W. Bush has cornered the market on bigotry toward gays and marriage, (As she said "It's sad when you find yourself saying 'You know, Reagan… he wasn't so bad.'"), Clinton was the first to eventually support a Defense of Marriage Act. As she cautioned, "It represented a moment of 'Be careful who your friends are.'"

Playing for the Long-term

Finally, reminiscent of those operating within the context of Not Being Afraid, participants utilizing the tools of the system also acknowledge that time favors the gay movement. Because of this, most respondents are confident that all current anti-gay legislation will be overturned within the next one-to-two decades. As Emily explained, "The thing is, 20 years from now when these old shits start dying off it will change, because the next generation is already changing in so many ways. Even the nuts that come later will be different from the nuts and the Republicans right now."

Ultimately, using the tools of the system requires a constant negotiation between the gay community and the formal power structures and processes. As shown in Figure 2, this often requires playing the political game, and maintaining a long-term focus. Just as important, however, is for the community to know when to cut its losses and refocus. Most

respondents believe that regardless of the political situation, favorable legislative change for the gay community is inevitable.

3. NOT BEING AFRAID - CULTURE

Similar to the importance placed by many on coming out to oneself and one's family and friends, most respondents believed it is also critical for the gay community *as a whole* to come out culturally, and be perceived as an integral part of the mainstream. In other words, the cultural level of not being afraid focuses on the need for the gay community to seek exposure through traditional social means, such as mass media. In understanding these findings, it is important to remember the distinction between media such as *OUT* magazine and the TV show *Will & Grace*. *OUT* represents gay-run media, while *Will & Grace* represents the gay voice as expressed by the external mainstream. Neither should be directly interpreted as representing the gay movement, or its "agenda." Rather, they are simply pop-cultural depictions of the gay experience from various perspectives. Respondents' comments are critical, however, because they indicate the implications these depictions have *for* the gay movement.

More specifically, as many respondents mentioned, media representation often results in the creation of a "gay myth," the fabricated ideal of a unified, singular community, represented through a very narrow stereotype of the gay experience. As seen in Figure 3, achieving widespread cultural exposure requires an understanding of the gay myth presented externally, of the gay myth presented internally, and how the community can engage in changing the myth. Respondents framed this discussion through the importance of public symbols such as national v. local media representation and Pride Parades.

Gay Myth to Others

In discussing stereotypical gay representation in the mainstream as depicted by the media, most participants argued, "It serves its purpose." For example, Naomi echoed many participants by explaining that TV began by portraying acceptable, that it – stereotypical – images of "gayness" and is now slowly introducing more realistic images. Most admitted the stereotypes were frustrating, but acknowledged that no population is accurately represented on TV. To further the gay movement, however, participants believed these portrayals are important. As Carl argued,

> Just having shows on and having people see them, whether they like them or not. The more you get to be seen, the more important it is and there are going to be negative images and negative impacts, but there's negative images and negative impacts [for] everything. Actually I almost think there's not any realistic portrayal of anything, to tell you the truth.

Most respondents used the TV sitcom *Will & Grace* to further the debate. Everyone acknowledged the characters present a mainstreamed, acceptable version of gayness, but most also perceived a value in terms of exposure. As Benjamin said, "My Dad watches *Will & Grace*. My grandparents watch *Will & Grace*." Thus, he believes the show is more important for the dominant culture than for the marginalized one. Ironically, many within the community refuse to watch the show, simply because it's not funny. As Craig argues, "*Will & Grace* is a show about gay people that's written by straight people. You have to watch 30 minutes to get one good gag." Continued Carl, "I'm not wild about *Will & Grace*, and I'm not wild about any comedy. I rarely watch any regular, ongoing TV." Finally, Daniel expressed the thoughts of others by admitting, "I still like *Will & Grace*. I know if you're gay, you're not supposed to like it." Emily refuted the suggestion that representations such as *Will & Grace* are not "ok," and that many people place too much emphasis on the lack of

accurate representation in the media. She explained, "In a way, the depictions normalize gay life in the context of the Hollywood media of plastic people having plastic dramas… and we get lost in it for an hour. That's all it is." Emily extends this notion to the national print media, reminding readers to place the national media in context. As she explained, "It's the media. It's not where I go for my food for thought."

Several participants commented on the surprise mainstream success of *Brokeback Mountain*, a movie set in the Midwest depicting two cowboys struggling with their sexual identity while dealing with the pressures of both family and mainstream society. Rather than discussing whether they liked (or didn't like) the movie, participants commented on either the mainstream exposure itself or the specific gay issues that were being addressed. Building on this point, Aaron contextualized the film as an introduction to the mainstream of the gay experience. He argued,

> First, they have sex with their clothes on. It's very introductory. Just like the two characters are exploring their sexuality, the straight community is exploring the whole gay thing itself. That makes it easy to swallow. It's great for the straight community. Sort of like, "Let's get your feet wet."

Benjamin added that he is encouraged by recent gay images in the cinema, arguing, "Our self portrayals are shifting. I do think what seems to be emerging are places that are challenging more and more the rigid categories." Emily summarized, "At least we're not like freak shows anymore, or we kill ourselves. Look at all the old movies when gay people always kill themselves. At least now we're having sex."

Conversely, Catherine warns against the possible long-term effects of misrepresentation. Speaking directly to the idea of a gay myth, she argues, "I think it's making more of a mess that we're going to have to clean up later as far as like, 'Well, I like

gay people, but I thought gay people were like this, and you're not like that.'" Reverend

Fowler, speaking within the context of race, is also concerned with inaccurate representation:

> The reality is, when you look around, there are not very many African-American gay role models on TV that are positive. All have issues. I'm thinking, 'Not all black people have issues. Help me out here.' It feeds into what people think… that overall, gay folks are not happy, that we are dysfunctional because we're queer. And then when you base it on an ethnic group, whether it's African-American or Hispanic, it also gives a bad portrayal.

> Finally, Nathaniel extended the notion of a gay myth, arguing that it feeds a

marginalized "gay agenda," an agenda that does not serve the gay community. He joked,

> There's the homosexual agenda posited by Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell who think you're evil. Then there's the "respectable" Gay Agenda, a series of legislative bills that's agreed upon by the Board of Directors of the HRC at the Waldorf-Astoria. Unfortunately, that's what the media, both gay and straight, pick up.

Thus, as Catherine argued, the needs and objectives of the gay community itself could be

misunderstood because of the presence of the gay myth.

Gay Myth to Ourselves

Many argued that the gay community's self-promotion and resulting ideal of a "gay

myth" begins with our own mass media representations. Simply put, those mainstream

representations as seen on *Will & Grace* reflect images emanating from gay-centric

magazines such as *OUT* and *The Advocate*. Certainly the debate regarding the images and

issues presented on network television and movie screens is also valid here. Benjamin

argued, "It's a myth… portraying this sort of mainstream, urban gay idea. Part of what I

really dislike about *The Advocate* is kind of 'This is who we are and this is what we look like

and this is what we want to be.' It's very consumer driven." Craig echoed this perspective,

acknowledging that *OUT* has become very New York-centric, thus losing relevance for his

own experience. Nathaniel continued the idea of a gay myth based around consumerism,

arguing. "I have no illusions that the 'gay media' is a single, unified force with a single, unified agenda, which, in a word, is money." Finally, Reverend Fowler added, "The times I've seen [*OUT* and *The Advocate*], even when I had a subscription to them, I didn't see a lot of me present. There just weren't a lot of stereotypical black folks."

Conversely, Craig and Emily see the benefit in this national, gay-centric image, and urged the gay community to place the national exposure within the appropriate contexts. First, both use *The Advocate* to read vignettes of what is occurring socially and politically across the country. In this sense, *The Advocate* serves as a unifying force, connecting the community, and the gay culture. On the other hand, *OUT* is perceived as purely entertainment, representing a very specific consumer-based lifestyle. For example, Carl provided the example of *OUT* selling $300 bathing suits, but justified, "I don't know of an occasion that we have that doesn't go toward the middle or upper economic [groups]."

Going Beyond the Myth

Ultimately, for the gay community to truly come out to the mainstream, many respondents argued that a more accurate representation of gay culture must first be developed internally. Despite the divergent opinions regarding the national print media and broadcast TV, most participants agreed on the importance and role of local print media. These responses indicated that local and/or niche-based publications provide more realistic exposure for the community as a whole. For example, Nathaniel distinguished between gay and queer media, with gay media represented by *OUT* and *The Advocate*, and queer media presenting a more radical alternative to the gay myth. As Nathaniel explained, "There are no radical queer alternatives to a fixed, stable, homosexual identity, highly typed consumerism. Things like queer theory are still pretty much based in the academy and not really relevant to

a wide range of people's experiences. That's frustrating." Continuing, Benjamin argued, "The need for [gay publications] is different. Book stores aren't the cultural centers that they used to be. That was the only place that you had access. That's shifting." He provided the example of one publication directed to "bears"[23] where the gay media do succeed. For Benjamin, the magazine's message presents a new acceptable gay image, arguing against the traditional myth by saying, "Fuck you. I'm not 20 and hairless. And I can still be a sexual being." Although this position represents a push by many within the community to broaden the definition for the mainstream, the distinction also challenges the media's traditional role both in terms of television versus print, and national versus local. Ultimately, as Naomi explains, "I think if we want better representations of ourselves in the broader media, we need to start on our own level in our own magazines."

Outside the realm of media, perhaps the best example of not being afraid culturally comes in the form of Gay Pride Parades. Each participant was asked his/her thoughts regarding these events as public representations of the gay community. The answers suggest that Pride Parades currently succeed where media fail in terms of creating community, and promoting a picture of community to the mainstream culture. As Catherine argued, "It was like getting a drink of water and you didn't even know you were thirsty. It was quenching my spirit to see people holding hands, walking down the street. It gives you a glimpse of what life could be like. It gives you hope, a sense of community."

Benjamin and Craig acknowledged the benefit to such celebrations, but want to capitalize on the community aspect, focusing on the event as a celebration. Benjamin suggested reconceptualizing the parades as cultural festivals. He explained, "A cultural

---

[23] Bears – The name given by those within the gay community, to gay males who do not adhere to the perfect body, Ken doll-type image. They usually have beards and are larger in size. As Benjamin described, "A gay lumberjack."

Pop
Culture
Exposure

FIGURE 3:
Cultural
Engagement

NOT BEING
AFRAID
(CULTURALLY)

New
Presentations

Gay Myth
within
Community

Gay Myth
Presented to
Others

National versus Local
Media

Pride Parades
(Cultural
Celebrations)
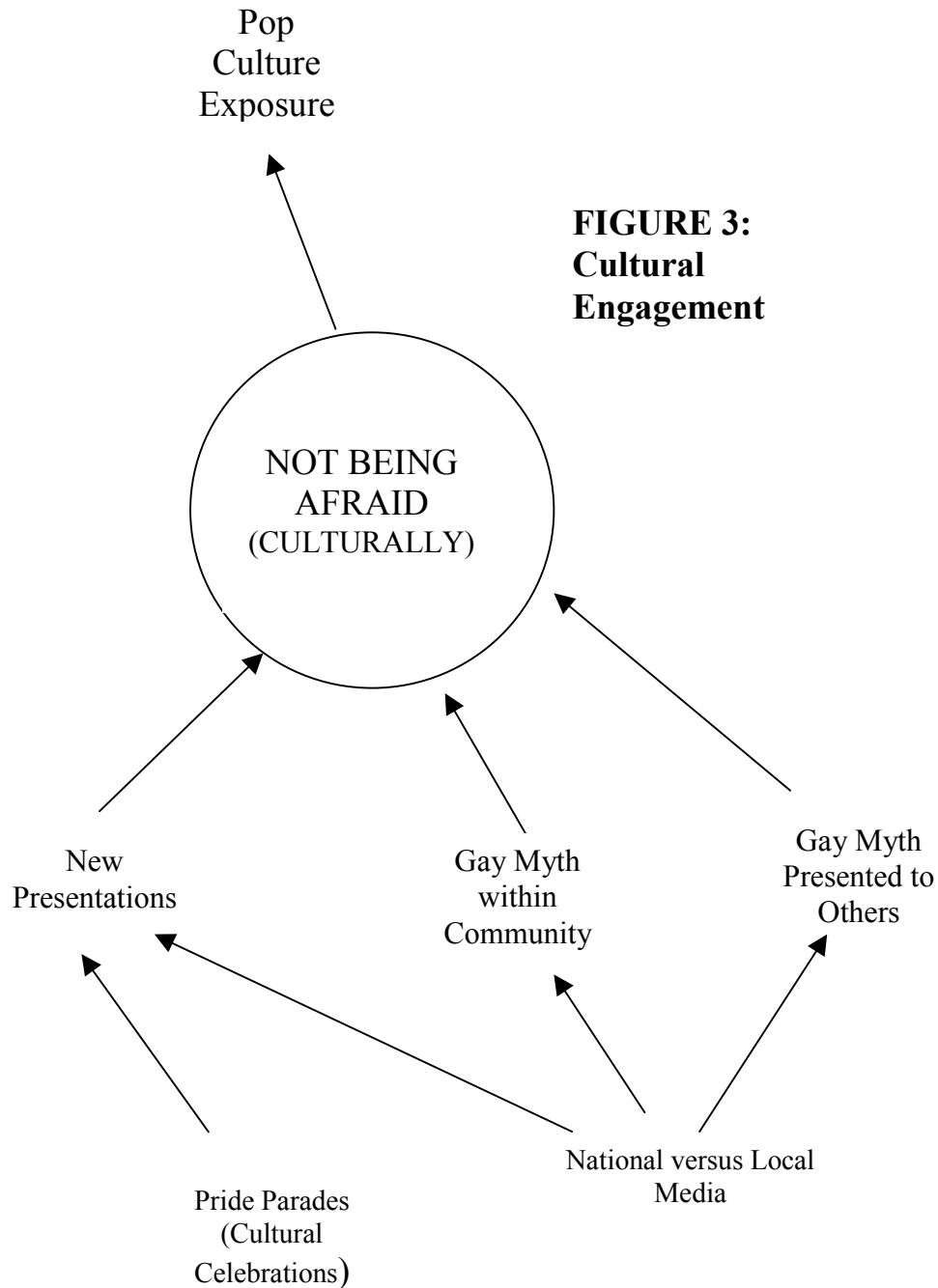
Figure 3 presents the third operational context with which to engage the gay movement. This
approach continues the focus on change through traditional/formal power structures (first
seen in Figure 2), but does so from a pop-cultural perspective. These respondents
emphasized the need for LGBT persons to not be afraid culturally, and demand to be
represented/acknowledged by the mainstream – Seeking a place at society's table culturally:
Social Acceptance.

festival is a time when we bring in spaces, particularly if we can get to a place where we do it

and are really trying to have the internal conversation about a multiplicity of voices. In a lot

of ways, it's starting to look like finally who we are." Thus, as Figure 3 depicts, the notion of

coming out as a community and garnering pop-cultural exposure is the ultimate result of the

self-creation of images within the community itself. As shown, these images often create a

"Myth" that reinforces false stereotypes by the mainstream. Several participants discussed

the identity issues this creates, while others argued that these images, whether accurate or

inaccurate, serve a fundamental

purpose – that of not being afraid culturally, and exposing the mainstream to the gay

experience.

4. WEAPONS AGAINST THE SYSTEM

Those who use "weapons against the system" build on the need for true internal

community, but approach its construction from a more fundamental level. Instead of working

through traditional power and social structures to garner exposure and win legal equality,

these respondents fight the very notion of "the system." This refers to battling both the

external system and internal system. Community, for them, is created from the ground up,

through grassroots connections. In addition, the very definition of the gay community is not

grounded in identities constructed from gender and sex roles. The ultimate goal for these

respondents is to break down barriers within the community transforming the notion of a gay

rights issue, or lesbian issue, or Black issue, into a human rights issue. As Figure 4 outlines,

this notion of community is constructed using nameless leaders, battling internal

discrimination, and reclaiming the queer ideal.

Nameless Leaders

In discussing the Tools of the System, many respondents acknowledged the ineffectiveness of, but argued the need for, a traditional heteronormative organization such as the HRC. Conversely, those participants battling the system suggested that Lambda Legal[24] or the Gay and Lesbian Task Force[25] offer better models for creating national movements. Both organizations fight legal and social battles as dictated by their constituents on the local level, not by the Washington power structure. In the same sense, local groups, such as North Carolina's Equality NC,[26] are seen as more accessible, and more accomplished than national organizations.

Many argued, however, that it would be difficult for a gay organization to truly represent the entire community. Each part of the community looks different places for leadership. As Reverend Fowler argued, "HRC is ok – good as a PR machine. Do they represent me? No. I don't think there's ever going to be any one group that's going to represent the whole. Each represents different segments of the population." Accordingly, for these participants, leadership exists at the grassroots level, and exacts change in local communities. As Nathaniel explained,

> I'm really excited about people who have been grassroots activists in local communities for long periods of time. I think about people who are doing HIV prevention, education, and who are teaching in public schools openly, people who are

---

[24] Lambda Legal's mission, per the Website: "A national organization committed to achieving full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and those with HIV through impact litigation, education and public policy work." (www.lambdalegal.org)

[25] Central to the GLTF's mission, per the Website: "We work to build the grassroots political strength of our community by training state and local activists and leaders, working to strengthen the infrastructure of state and local allies, and organizing broad-based campaigns to build public support for complete equality for LGBT people." (www.thetaskforce.org)

[26] "Equality North Carolina is a statewide advocacy organization that works to secure equal rights and justice for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender North Carolinians. Equality NC employs a strategy that combines strong, professional lobbying with grassroots organizing that empowers LGBT and allied citizens across the state to become powerful advocates for equality." (EqualityNC.org)

speaking out about rape and sexual assault. These are the kind of people, and for the most part they're nameless. These are the people who I personally view as if not my leaders, my mentors, the people I look up to, the people who I want to emulate, the people I think are on the right track. Very rarely do my mentors and the 'gay agenda's' leaders as conceived by the media line up.

Reminiscent of the primary importance of coming out, Reverend Fowler nicely summarized, "It goes back to meeting people where they are, to try to listen to one another. 'Why do you feel this way? Have you ever thought about this?' Not to sway anybody's behavior or mind thought, but just to give more information." Going further, Nathaniel contends that society tends to over-romanticize previous civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr., often forgetting the controversy and compromise underlying the eventual successes. Accordingly, Nathaniel worries that any single person the gay movement puts forward within the traditional power structure would not represent the entire community, rather an image of acceptable gayness as dictated by the mainstream. He argued,

> Any single figurehead that pops up in the gay movement is not going to be useful for any social justice agenda, for any sexual justice agenda. I think that it'll put a face to gay America, and that face is going to be white, the face is going to be male, the face is going to be dignified and well-dressed and conventionally attractive. And that face is not going to be saying anything that is going to be the least bit threatening to economic or racial or sexual injustice.

Ultimately, Nathaniel echoed many respondents by refuting the need for a hierarchical leadership model all together:

> I think that the gay movement is at a crossroads. And until we get a substantial grassroots movement that rejects that more conservative, assimilationist trend and really starts devoting our time, our energy, our resources into creative grassroots, direct-action gay movements, then these problems are going to persist.

Including Excluded Identities (Battling Internal Discrimination)

Many respondents also acknowledged that true community will not be achieved until prejudice within the community is addressed. Respondents surprisingly focused on the lack of attention given to transgendered needs, followed by the lack of ethnic minority awareness.

As Julia argued, "Transgendered people are largely not getting the same voice lesbians and gay men are getting right now. In a sense, they do have issues that overlap, and they have a separate set of issues." Craig continued, "Transgenderites are sometimes getting shoved to the bottom. I don't think their needs are being looked after." Emily argued that the mainstream gay community often sees the transgender community as "not normal" and that, "Gay people say to transgendered people what straight people say to gay people." Emily explained,

> I used to say, "Look, I don't know anything about trans people, but what I do know is that I hear the same language being used of – why can't they be this way, why can't they do this – and you know what, it's the same language as when straight people ask why I can't fuck a man." Well, we're not talking about fucking.

Reverend Fowler echoed this concern.

> There are people who are trans, there are people who are bi, and I think those are two segments of the gay community that we don't talk about, and we don't want to deal with, or deal with on any consistent basis. It's [perceived as] a hindrance to our community. If we're going to be this queer community, we need to be *the* queer community.

> Reminiscent of the issues facing gay ethnic minorities in terms of coming out,

Reverend Fowler discussed the lack of incorporation of the Black gay experience into the overall community. She emphasized that most persons of color must first deal with the issues surrounding being an ethnic minority, and then deal with their sexuality. Emily supported this notion, arguing, "Race is a big issue. You're either gay or Asian, you're either gay or Black. You definitely have people who have had to leave their culture to be gay, and we really don't take that into account. I don't think we have the same kind of understanding." Nathaniel expanded on the dilemma facing ethnic minorities within the gay community:

> People of color, or folks who grew up in a community that has a really strong communal identity are frequently forced to choose between which identity they're

going to put first. Some put their gay identity first [so] they can just leave that old community. Other people get their strength from tight-knit families of origin.

Most respondents admitted, as Benjamin, "that the whole construction of the culture in gay community is predominantly white, predominantly male. White men are on one end and men of color are on the other end, and everybody else is in the middle." Emily added, "A lot of people don't want to be aware. They don't want to know. Who does? Who wants to think how nasty the world is? We all like to be in denial." She summarized, "We'd rather talk about me being a white lesbian, and my little white babies, and my little white partner, and my little white town, and everything's just perfect, and it's normal, and it's blah, blah, blah… It's bullshit."

Going further, Emily argued that the gay movement needs to rid itself of the zero-sum mindset, where, in order for one group to "win" something, another group has to "lose" it. As opposed to the "Tools of the System" mindset, these respondents criticize the Women's Movement model. Catherine argued, "I hate anybody who says, 'You just wait a little bit, and then we'll help you.' That's one of the biggest bullshit parts of any movement, whether it's the civil rights movement, the women's movement with lesbians, or the women's movement with black women." Finally, Julia and Robin perceive the gay movement acting much "cooler" toward transgender persons than the women's movement was toward lesbians. But they warn that inclusion of everyone needs to be an ongoing conscious priority, to prevent the mentality, "Your agenda is not my agenda." Finally, Robin, reminiscent of Reverend Fowler's earlier argument, emphasized, "[We are] the queer community. The one thing we all have in common is that we're queer." As Emily suggested, "Bring everybody to the table. Everybody belongs at the table."

Celebrating Misfit-hood – The Queer "Ideal"

The ultimate question for those battling the system, both internally and externally, is how to incorporate everyone's voice. As mentioned, respondents believe everyone has different needs. For example, central to the transgender dilemma is the notion that transgendered persons do not identify as gay or lesbian. Many within the gay community do not identify within the rigid construct of gender roles. Accordingly, perhaps the most interesting comments were those of the five respondents identifying as queer, or aspiring to a queer (rather than gay) community construct. This included three of the six participants in their twenties, and the two clergy.

Existing as queer is fundamental to the notion of battling the system. For these participants, a grassroots movement can only succeed in a queer construct. Going further, the queer identity brings in all members of the LGBT community, gay lesbian, ethnic minority, transgendered, bi-sexual, etc. Most participants began conceptualizing "queer" by separating the notion of sexuality from strict gender-based definitions. For Nathaniel, being queer is, "A recognition that sexuality is fluid across time, that more goes into sexuality than simply gender of object choice, in terms of public identity, emotional attraction, etc." Expanding that definition, Nathaniel explained, "Part of the reason why I like the word queer is because it has a dual connotation of – on the one hand a dissident sexuality, if you will, but also just sort of a general misfit-hood, a general lack of identification with the dominant culture." Catherine, who identifies as Bi, but within a strictly queer construct, continued the argument of a dominant culture: "Why label? Why is that important? Society says, 'You need to choose. You need to tell us now what you are, and you have to pick from these.' But I think

sexuality is the whole gray area. I don't think it matters. That's why I don't think it's a gay rights issue. It's a human rights issue." Reverend Fowler continued this argument, "Queer to me…It's more than just gay, it's all – everybody together, gay, lesbian, trans, bi, allies, those questioning."

Several participants argued that much of the pressure to fall within strictly defined roles comes from within the gay community itself. Nathaniel acknowledged, "Many of my straight friends affirm more of my eccentricities than [my] gay friends." Catherine, in explaining the stigma the gay community places on those identifying as bisexual, argued, "I think part of who's not being heard is not the bisexuals, it's the people who *do* identify as gay or lesbian, and who maybe wouldn't if the gay/lesbian community wasn't so judgmental." Conversely, Daniel perceives the insistence within the gay community to identify with certain categories as reflective of American society as a whole. He argues that this country itself is sexually repressed, and if everyone, straight and gay, could move beyond their sexual hang-ups, then things would improve.

Participants argued that the queer notion removes the requirement for everyone to fall neatly into certain sexual buckets and expands the concept to include a new culturally based understanding of individual contexts. As Catherine argued, "I just really believe in self-identification. If you tell me you're a tree, I'm going to say, 'You know what, that's fine.'" Continued Benjamin, "Queer identifies me with a larger community than with a gay male experience, challenging the notion of a social identity, [and] the whole concept of homosexuality as time and culture bound." In turn, within the queer space, the need for self-identification goes beyond the community as a whole, and focuses on the individual.

Breaking
Internal
Barriers

**FIGURE 4: Engagement
Celebrating Difference**

WEAPONS
AGAINST THE
SYSTEM

Battling
Internal
Discrimination

Nameless Leaders

Queer
Notion
(Misfit-hood)

Grassroots
Structure

Meeting People
"Where They Are"
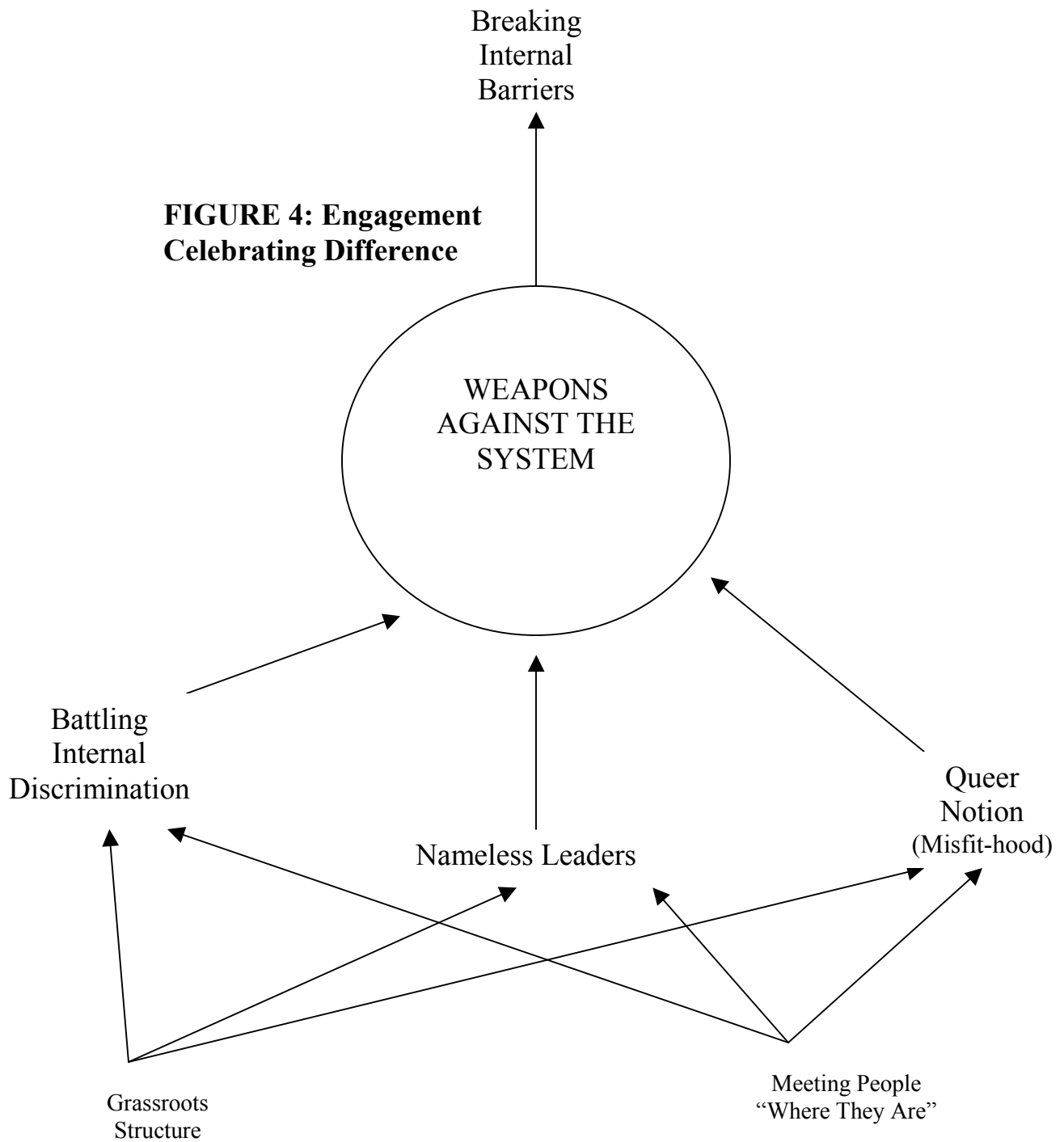
Figure 4 presents the final operational context with which to engage the gay movement. This approach continues the emphasis on culture first demonstrated in Figure 3, but does so from a perspective purely internal to the gay experience. Opposed to Figure 2, this perspective refutes traditional/formal power structures, and seeks a place at society's table through a grassroots movement created from the ground up – reconstructing the movement based on more than sexual/gender roles: Acceptance of Individual Difference.

As Benjamin explained, "The community is a construction of our own stories and our own experiences."[27]

The goal in battling against the system is to break down internal barriers. For these participants, fundamental to the process is the need for a grassroots movement and "meeting people where they are." From this, as shown in Figure 4, local leaders emerge, internal discrimination can be eliminated, and a new queer community created. Thus the goal is to take up arms against traditional power structures, and construct a new identity from within.

Ultimately, regardless of the operational context chosen, all respondents acknowledged the ever-present challenges presented by the dominant culture. These are the mainstream's standards and expectations the gay community must battle as it seeks its place at society's table. The next section outlines several of these challenges as presented by participants.

HETERONORMATIVE TRADITION

As the diverse individual and community contexts motivate the internal gay voices, heteronormative traditions motivate the external culture to challenge those voices. Figure 5 shows this comparison and the negotiation which must occur between the internal and external motivations. Across all political and social structures of power exists an undercurrent of "traditional culture." Accordingly, participants argued that anything challenging the traditional culture is perceived as a threat to balance and stability. Ultimately,

---

[27] The youth factor provides the most credence to the possibility of a queer movement. In addition to the fact that most identifying as queer were in their twenties, Julia and Robin discussed a recent Time magazine article regarding gay youth. While LGBT persons are coming out at younger ages, many adhere to the queer construct and do not want to be identified as gay or lesbian. The bottom line for these youth suggests they love who they love, period, thus negating the need for labels.

participants identified the tenants of traditional culture (seen in Figure 5) as hierarchical

leadership, marriage and faith, masculinity, and the ideal of a homogeneous society.

Leadership Tradition

To begin, the very structure of the gay movement, as suggested by the participants,

challenges traditional structures and processes, specifically the need for hierarchical

leadership. For example, everyone agreed that the gay movement does not have, nor has it

ever had, a single person serve as leader. Several mentioned Harvey Milk as a martyr for the

movement. Others focused on "missed opportunities" in the form of out entertainer Ellen

DeGeneres, Mary Cheney,[28] or out U.S. Congressman Barney Frank. The main consensus,

however, was that the gay movement is incapable of having a single, unifying figurehead.

Benjamin argued that the need for a charismatic leader is an antiquated concept, not relevant

for the gay movement. "I don't think we have sort of iconic figures the same way as we had

in other points in our history. I think that's a very sort of fifties, sixties, and seventies model

of the social justice movement that I think has broken down."

There was debate, however, on whether the inability to have such a leader was good

or bad. Several respondents suggested that agreeing upon a centralized spokesperson for all

national gay organizations would be beneficial. Most, however, considered having a single

leader or spokesperson more of a risk than anything. As Aaron argued, "What are the

consequences of having one [leader]? We could have one, but he starts having these ideas,

---

[28] Several female respondents voiced their disappointment with Mary Cheney. *The Advocate* often discusses
that as the lesbian daughter of Vice President Dick Cheney in one of the most homophobic administration in
U.S. history, Mary Cheney had an opportunity to be a positive voice for the gay community, but choose,
instead, to keep silent and support the administration's policies. This is an example of the gay community often
feeling much more anger toward those within the movement who have a platform and refuse to use it, than
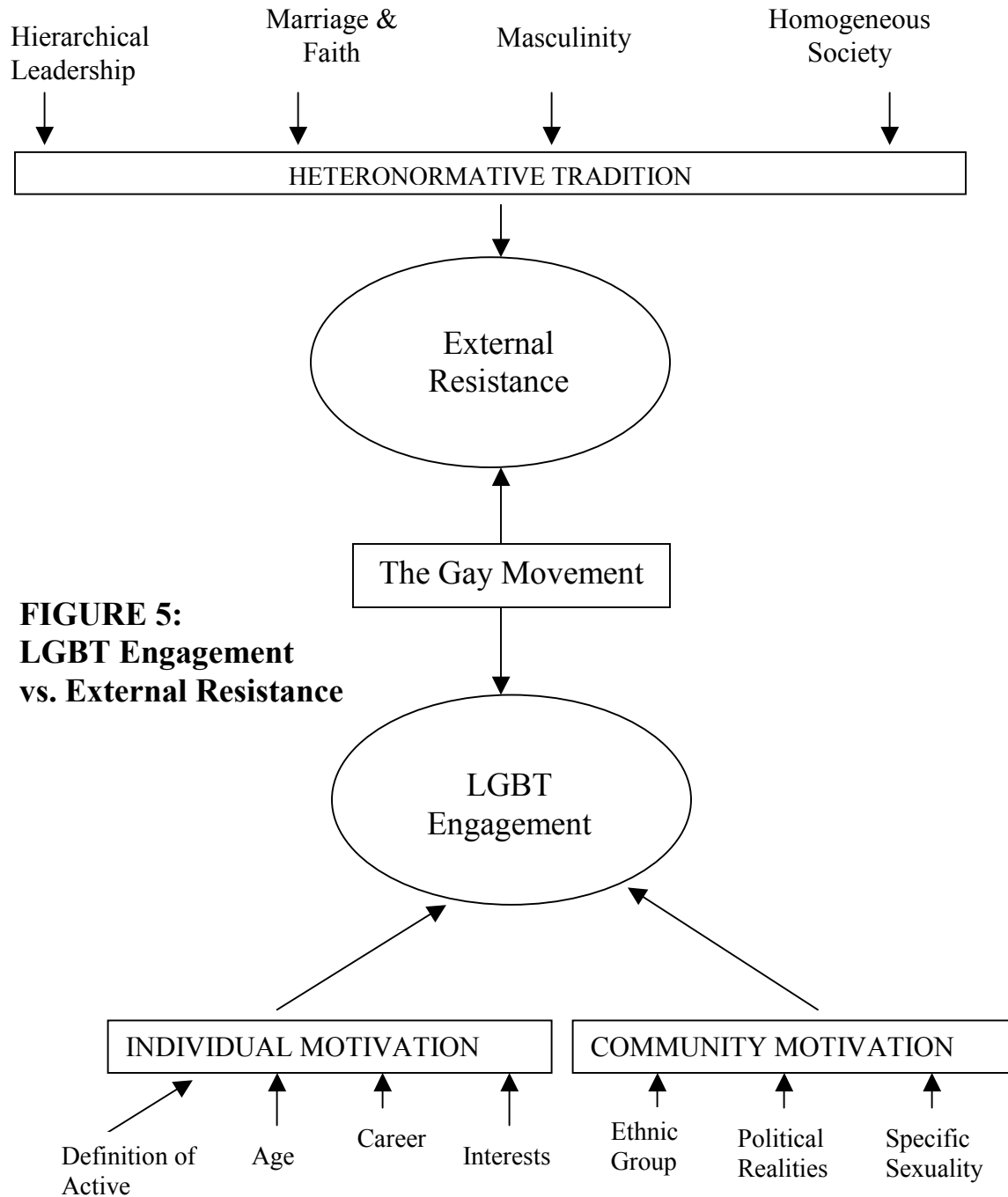toward those homophobes who regularly use their platform to condemn the gay "lifestyle."

and suddenly half the community's divided, then we'll have another leader. Suddenly we'd

have the two gay political parties."

Marriage & Faith Tradition

The debate surrounding marriage, at least from the heterosexist culture's perspective,

is also based on tradition. Central to this debate is the (lack of) separation between church

and state, and the government's attempt to withhold basic civil rights justified by a narrow

definition of "traditional" moral and religious beliefs. As Reverend Fowler said,

> I think what [marriage] hinges on, really is people's faith traditions, and what they
> believe religiously. And for me, I'm challenged in that; I'm very challenged in this
> issue with the church and state. I'm a clergy person, and I'm active in the political
> realm, but I try very hard to separate the two. You have marriage versus civil union;
> you have marriage versus going into the Justice of the Peace. We don't need a church
> and any of that stuff to get married, and I think some people don't realize that.

An individual's idea of marriage is based on "tradition," whatever the "going tradition" is at

the time. For example, Julia and Robin plan to marry in late 2006. As they plan, one of their

most interesting realizations is the inability of their heterosexual relatives to view marriage

outside of specifically defined gender roles. For example, family immediately asked them

"Well, how are you going to make that work? Who's going to wear the dress?" They have

found that it is not the traditional definition of marriage, but the traditional definition of love

that prevents the mainstream from perceiving a same sex union as legitimate. But history has

shown how these traditional definitions can change. Reverend Fowler remembered one

recent ad for gay marriage that showed staunch-conservative Supreme Court Justice Clarence

Thomas, with his white wife. The ad noted that just a few short decades ago, in many parts of

the country, Justice Thomas would have not been allowed to marry a white woman, and asks

what his decision regarding *that* definition of marriage would have been had he been on the

Supreme Court at the time.

Hierarchical Leadership → Marriage & Faith → Masculinity → Homogeneous Society

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

HETERONORMATIVE TRADITION

↓

External Resistance

↑

The Gay Movement

**FIGURE 5:
LGBT Engagement
vs. External Resistance**

↓

LGBT Engagement

↗ ↖

INDIVIDUAL MOTIVATION

Definition of Active — Age — Career — Interests

COMMUNITY MOTIVATION

Ethnic Group — Political Realities — Specific Sexuality

Figure 5 presents the conversation surrounding the gay movement. One side, as first presented in the motivation section, shows LGBT persons' and subgroups' reasons for engaging in the movement. The other side, as presented in the heteronormative-tradition section shows the external pressures facing gay movement. The four operational contexts previously discussed comprise the gay movement, which occurs between these motivations and pressures. Figure 6 will explicate these contexts.

From a slightly different perspective, Michael argued the need for a better

understanding between the church and state domains, emphasizing that many gay people

don't believe in or aspire to marriage.

> I have more than one friend who's very much against gay marriage; they're against marriage – period. They say marriage is something churches can regulate and control. The government has no business interfering with people's relationships. Their solution to equality would be to take the government out of people's relationships altogether.

Catherine continued this argument, summarizing what she believes is the fundamental issue

being lost in the discussion: "The gay marriage issue leaves a lot of people out of the

equation because it's not everyone's goal to get married, and if America doesn't understand

why giving equal rights to everyone is important, just having gay marriage legalized is not

going to make a difference."

Masculine Assumption

Several participants emphasized the importance of understanding the gay

community's unique position as a self-identified minority. As Daniel summarized, "The

bottom line is that you were born gay, you were born different, yet you were socialized in a

society that assumed you were straight." For males, this assumption includes the traditional

notion of masculinity, which is fundamental to most heteronormative traditions. For example,

Julia argued that *Brokeback Mountain* was great pop cultural exposure. She acknowledged,

however, that reminiscent of the "masculine ideal," it was "the first film to have two big

name, young, sexy actors be very explicitly gay on the screen, but yet to do it, they have to

be cowboys. They have to be masculine for it to fly." Each of the six women interviewed

discussed the media's preference for male images. Four of the six women, however, argued

that the imbalance is warranted. Naomi posited, "If you look at just male to female, a female

is going to be more accepted over a male by general society." Robin added, "There's a big distinction in public perception between lesbians and gay men. I think in a lot of ways, gay culture as a whole is still largely taboo. But I think there's more acceptance of lesbians." She explained that in a masculine/heterosexist culture, men who identify as gay are assumed to forego their masculinity, and that is simply not acceptable. Thus, increased media representation is needed to encourage acceptance for gay males. Benjamin, representative of the male respondents, urged equal representation for men and women, but echoed Robin's sentiment: "I think there's a more direct threat to institutional power issues about gay men, particularly white gay men [related] to class and race privilege."

Homogeneity Assumption

Several respondents noted that perhaps the most controversial tradition challenging the gay community is that of an assumed desire to belong to a homogeneous society. Accordingly, these participants fear the consequences of adhering to a cookie-cutter mentality, and assimilating into a culture that is uniform throughout, devoid of substantial difference. As indicated through participants' responses, the gay community, as any minority, struggles with this demand, for while LGBT persons want to be seen as fully drawn members of society, they also want to retain their individuality. Achieving the perfect compromise, however, is challenging. As Daniel said, "When I'm 100, I'm not going to know that balance."

Many suggested that the gay community should not be scared of the term "assimilation." Robin summarized, "I think people assume that this word means a loss of a sense of self or distinction. Black culture still has a strong sense of self. It's more of making 'being gay' a non-issue." Going further, Julia and Robin discussed how the notion of

assimilation for many LGBT members involves more than just sexuality, and crosses into issues of race and class. Nathaniel suggests that using the term "integration" would be more appropriate than "assimilation." He argued, "When I hear assimilation, I think of you as [having] adopted a group's mores and characteristics, versus integration, where you retain your own characteristics and your own uniqueness."

At the same time, Catherine warned against *allowing* the mainstream to force assimilation, arguing that often a mainstream's good intentions can further marginalize a minority. For example, the university where she is employed recently became concerned with self-segregated, racially-divided dorms. The school has considered forced integration of the dorms. Per Catherine, however, "If you start forcing people into the 'white dorms' you begin treating the minority as a commodity, existing to provide the white mainstream a more diverse, well-rounded experience."

As shown in Figure 5, the resulting negotiation, between internal motivation and external motivation is continuous. For participants, the goal is to expand the traditional definitions to include their specific experiences, both as individuals and as members of a larger community. The four operational contexts previously discussed exist between this internal and external dialog. Thus understanding the various motivations provides the potential mindsets with which LGBT persons approach the discussion and the gay movement itself.

OUR PLACE AT THE TABLE

The findings present four possible operational contexts through which LGBT persons try to exact change. They involve (1) eliminating fundamental personal fear, (2) using the tools of the system, (3) engaging in mass cultural promotion, and (4) battling the system.

Respondents focusing on the safety of individuals in their local communities succeed by providing a supportive environment in which to come out. Those using the tools of the system define success through enacted legislation. Those seeking public exposure view success as an increased number of positive gay images in the national media. Finally, those challenging heteronormative traditions and power structures succeed by breaking down internal barriers and redefining the gay idea of community. Regardless of the method used, however, respondents believe LGBT persons are trying to accomplish one main objective: to achieve an equal, recognized place at society's table.

It is critical to note, however, that participants believe fundamental to achieving this objective is the notion of acceptance, not tolerance. Several respondents emphasized the need for both the straight and gay cultures to understand the difference. As Michael argued, "I hate the word tolerant because it implies that something has to be tolerated." Daniel continued,

> We need to give up the bullshit of the use of the word tolerance. It needs to be acceptance. George W. Bush can't get away with saying he's tolerant of gay people. I think that's crap whether he says it, your mother says it, or your coworkers say it. It's like there's this big smell in the room that you somehow find a way to tolerate.

Many respondents argued that LGBT persons will not be accepted until the mainstream sees them as "normal." Each respondent laughed or grimaced when using the term "normal." They noted that it is a well-accepted notion within the gay community that an individual having to prove him/herself as normal is degrading. It reinforces the construct of a heteronormative tradition, and that anything countering that tradition is "not normal." For example, in discussing what was most important to the gay community, Catherine responded "I would say awareness in just knowing that LGBT people are normal, whatever that is…. Just that there's not anything to be afraid of. A lot of times that comes from just knowing someone who is LGBT."

Emily outlined how Massachusetts ultimately protected the right for gays to marry by presenting the LGBT community as normal. She explained, "The biggest thing that the right-wing had going for them was fear of the unknown. When the [gay] marriages started happening, it was like, 'Oh, you know what? Everything kept going. You still have to pay taxes. It still snows. Nothing is different. So whatever we said is pretty dumb.'" Perhaps more critical, however, was the subsequent push by one state senator to repeal the newly granted rights. Within his petition, he originally listed the standard reasons given to ban gay marriage. Ultimately, however, his position changed. As Emily summarized the Senator's words from the day of the vote:

> I put this amendment out because there were a lot of variables that were unknown, etc. etc. The thing is, however, that since gay couples have been getting married, I have come to the conclusion that the only people affected by gay marriage are the 6,500 couples who have gotten married, and I withdraw my support from my amendment.

The state senate was floored, but perplexed. Emily continued:

> [The Senator] said he made his decision because Massachusetts Equality brought family after family to everybody's office. The whole M.O. was to be polite, introduce your family, and talk about your life. Tell them, "This is my family. This is my partner. There are our kids. This is what we've done. We've been together 20 years. etc." The other side sent him death threats, so you tell me who he's going to listen to.

In addition, this story demonstrates an instance in which all four operational contexts can work together. The process: required LGBT persons to come out; involved a legislative initiative; promoted the LGBT community as a singular, unified entity; and battled the traditional method of enacting legislation by meeting people where they are and listening to one another. In turn, the Massachusetts success re-emphasizes the importance of living your life as an out, motivated, and engaged member of the gay community, while eliminating the

idea of otherness. Doing so also eliminates the very need for a debate surrounding marriage, and results in the more permanent "win" of overall acceptance.

Volatile Chemistry

The LGBT community is unique in that it is self-identified. It is perhaps the only minority whose members cross into every demographic. Accordingly, many respondents acknowledged the difficulty this diversity creates in trying to unify the movement. This unity is further challenged when considering the strength and influence of the heteronormative traditions forcing their will from outside. With that said, both Reverend Fowler and Emily discussed how many states are studying North Carolina, and the unique success of local gay leaders in the middle of the homophobic South. In the context of the state's diverse constituency and conservative tradition, local gay allies have, to date, been able to keep anti-gay bills off of the public agenda, becoming the only southern state to do so. For many, the current success represents a situation and opportunity, in which the gay movement, across all demographics can succeed. As Emily explained,

> In North Carolina, there are people from the North, and there are people from the Deep South, and there are people from the mountains, and there are people who are Christian, there are people who are not, and there are a lot of gay people. You add that mix together and you've got this volatile chemistry that I believe will go in the favor of justice.

> Ultimately, this chemistry points to the gay movement as a potential leader itself.

Continued Emily:

> When we have our place at the table, and we're not having to fight the kind of issues that we're fighting, we're going to be uniting a lot of groups. We are the one key that can dip our finger in every single race, and gender, and class, and every issue that is really underlying some of the turmoil in this country.

Putting it all together

Achieving the LGBT community's place at the table is therefore central to each participant's comments. As Figure 6 summarizes, however, what that entails depends on the operational context used. First, for individuals wanting to feel safe, this means eliminating fear, existing in a supportive environment, and coming out to oneself, family and friends. A place at the table in this context means existing as an out, engaged person "where they are." Second, for those seeking to use the tools of the system, a place at society's table is the result of breaking legal barriers and achieving legal equality. Third, for respondents focused on not being afraid as a culture, a place at the table results from the LGBT community's widespread (accurate or inaccurate) pop-cultural exposure. Finally, the priority for those taking a stance against the system is to break internal barriers. For these participants, when the LGBT community does achieve its place at society's table, it will ensure all members are represented based on an identity constructed from the ground up, outside of traditional gender roles.

Also shown in Figure 6 is the ongoing notion of the LGBT individual and community contexts. These contexts provide the entry point for LGBT persons and groups into the movement. As evidenced earlier by Reverend Fowler's experience, entry occurs along a continuum, at any single point or at multiple points. Different realities require different contexts. The right half of the model aspires to more formal power structures which communicate directly with the mainstream. The left half of the model focuses on change within the individual and within the gay community. Finally, as LGBT persons enter the discussion, and aspire to certain operational contexts, the constant notion of external, mainstream tradition must be considered. These pressures surround the movement and could
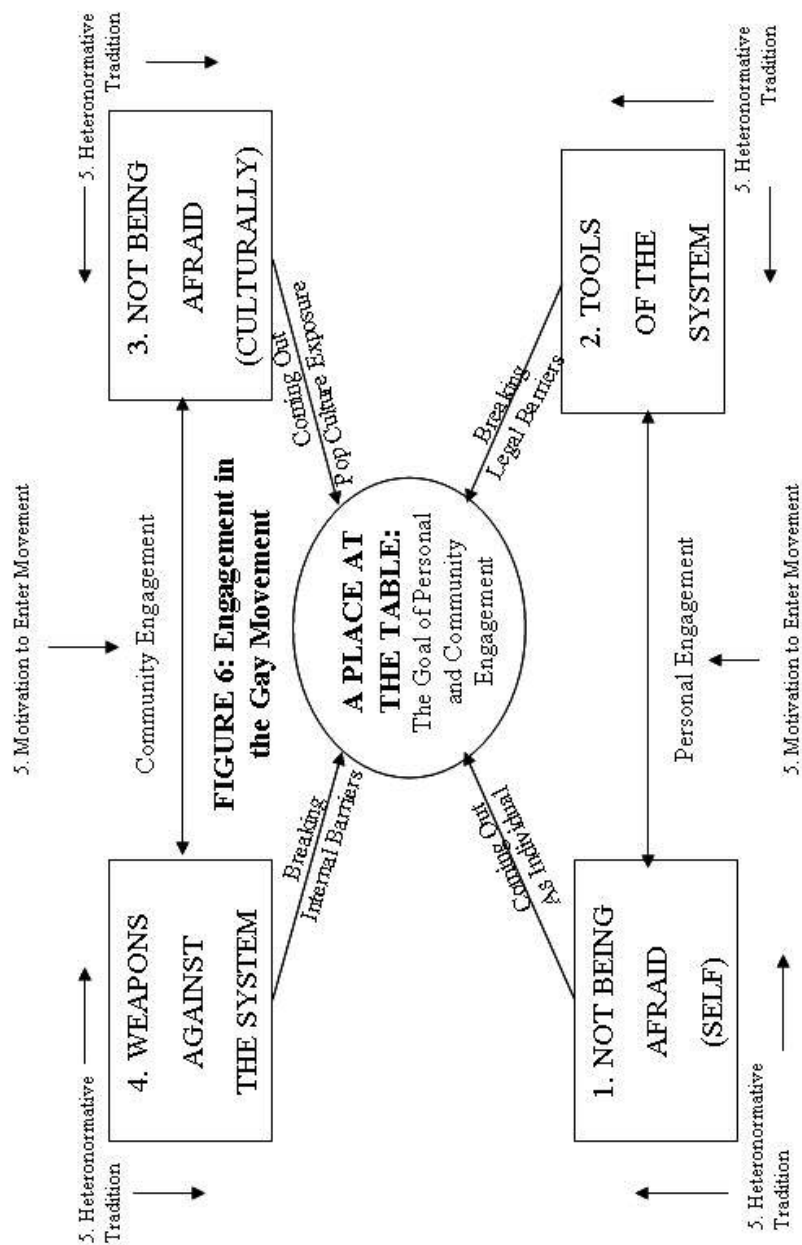
FIGURE 6: Engagement in the Gay Movement

5. Motivation to Enter Movement

5. Heteronormative Tradition

5. Heteronormative Tradition

3. NOT BEING AFRAID (CULTURALLY)

2. TOOLS OF THE SYSTEM

Community Engagement

Personal Engagement

Coming Out Pop Culture Exposure

Breaking Legal Barriers

A PLACE AT THE TABLE: The Goal of Personal and Community Engagement

Breaking Internal Barriers

Coming Out As Individual

4. WEAPONS AGAINST THE SYSTEM

1. NOT BEING AFRAID (SELF)

5. Heteronormative Tradition

5. Motivation to Enter Movement

5. Heteronormative Tradition

Figure 6 combines the first five figures (labeled here as 1-5), outlining the overall process of engagement and the corresponding internal motivations and external pressures affecting that process. It shows where each of the four operational contexts reside in the movement, and how they are juxtaposed with alternative contexts. While contexts can be opposite in terms of approach, each person and sub-group seeks its "place at the table." What this "place" specifically means to everyone is different, but involves the universal, and unifying notion of acceptance.

preclude LGBT individuals, or groups (as discussed with ethnic minorities), from entering

the movement. Certainly there are immense challenges, but the model is encouraging,

because it shows that while LGBT persons can be diametrically opposed in terms of

operational contexts (i.e., Weapons against the System versus using Tools of the System),

achieving a place at society's table can occur a variety of ways. Most respondents, despite

their context, echoed this encouragement and believe that success is inevitable. As Emily

said:

> I expect that I live in a country with a lot of paradoxes, and I live in a country that started out on genocide and slavery. I live in a country where there can be drastic change, and where people can change their minds, and their hearts, and come together about things they never thought they would even 10 years ago. So I think that we can expect to reach the stars if we continue to reach for the stars. And I think when we sell ourselves short we can expect no less from the people around us.

The interview findings presented above demonstrated participants' respective

perceptions, priorities, and objectives regarding the gay movement. Considering those

responses, specifically those concerning media representation of the gay community, the next

section examines examples of internal gay media. The following content analysis was

performed to evaluate the LGBT community's perceptions of gay-run national print media,

and provide a glimpse into the accuracy and breadth of images and issues covered within the

chosen media sources.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

Given the various operational contexts, it is now important to more closely analyze

the specific content of gay-run publications to determine if participants' perceptions are in

line with the community's actual mediated representations. More specifically, the following

content analysis provides a glimpse into the "gay myth" as presented from within the

community. The analysis does not intend to provide a general statement regarding all national gay print media; rather is used more for a comparison point to participants' responses.

Two issues of *The Advocate* and one issue of *OUT* were coded for ethnicity and gender representation, as well as for the range of article topics. (The coding scheme and results are included in Appendix D.) It is first important to note that most respondents referred to both magazines interchangeably when discussing national gay print media. *OUT* and *The Advocate* are considered the most prominent national magazines for the LGBT community and are owned by the same company, LPI Media. As presented in the findings, most respondents argued that the magazines are similar to each other in terms of target audience, article quality, ad type, and breadth/depth of overall coverage. Two participants acknowledged they looked to *The Advocate* for a glimpse into the national LGBT news. Several felt that both magazines cater to a consumerist culture, and the corresponding rich, white, male "ideal." While most participants addressed the disparity in ethnic representation, two felt representation was equal. Finally, most respondents mentioned the lack of transgendered representation before discussing the lack of ethnic diversity.

OUT

Most respondents placed *OUT* in the appropriate context as a consumer-driven magazine, focused on fashion, entertainment, and pop-cultural trends. The magazine does not pretend to be anything other than a *GQ* or *Details* for the wealthy, white, gay male. The length of the coded (December, 2005) issue was 192 pages. Of the 80 ads in the issue, eight addressed HIV/AIDS or LGBT services. As described in Appendix D, "LGBT services" includes ads for rehab clinics, legal services, estate counseling, and LGBT academic

scholarships. Conversely, 24 ads were for travel/entertainment, and 48 were for consumer goods of which 10 were specifically for liquor. It is interesting that eight of the 10 liquor ads were specifically for vodka. Thus, there were as many ads for vodka as for HIV/AIDS and LGBT services combined.

In terms of ethnic representation, the preference for white males was also clear. Of the 39 male depictions, six were minority (15%) with the first minority ad appearing on page 79. Of the 20 female images, four were minority (20%). It is interesting to note that each representation of a minority female was accompanied by a white female. There were no individual ads showing only a minority female. Finally, the cover of the issue showed two gay white men, and one straight white woman, Sharon Stone.

In terms of magazine articles, the first hard-news article began on page 114, with everything prior devoted to entertainment, trends, and consumer goods. While the entertainment portion focused on gay events in major cities, the hard-news articles mimicked mainstream news and applied the gay perspective to issues such as Hurricane Katrina and prostate cancer. For example, in the prostate cancer article discussed an issue regarding urologists being unable to address the gay-specific negative sexual side effects. The treatment and counseling associated with treatment is geared toward straight males. One interesting quote suggested, "Whether we like it or not, gay men define themselves through their sexuality to one degree or another" (p. 129). This statement reinforces the gay myth addressed by many respondents that emphasizes a culture based on sexual identity rather than individual difference.

Perhaps the most interesting finding was the "*OUT* 100" or the top 100 "Most Intriguing Gay Men, Lesbians, & Straight Allies" in 2005. Interviews suggested that coming

out and living as an engaged member of the LGBT community was integral to the gay movement and forwarding any "gay agenda." Accordingly, 20 of *OUT*'s top 100 were chosen for either coming out or being out in a certain industry or position. Those celebrated include: Patty Bouvier (one of Marge's sisters on the animated comedy, "The Simpson's"), Portia DeRossi ("Ally McBeal" star), Sheryl Swoops (WNBA basketball star), Cynthia Nixon ("Sex in the City" star), and Lesley Gore (famous 1960s singer). Conversely, only 14 of the 100 were chosen for political activism. Therefore, this finding reinforces the priorities discussed by interview participants – The suggestion that simply being out, and serving as a symbol of "normalcy" for the mainstream community can have a more powerful effect than specific legislation.

The Advocate

As mentioned, *OUT* and *The Advocate* were discussed simultaneously, and were perceived to target the same audience using the same tactics. The Dec. 6, 2005 and Jan. 17, 2006 issues of The Advocate were coded. The Dec. 6 issue was 88 pages in length, and the Jan. 17 issue was 80 pages long. Although each issue of *The Advocate* coded had less than half the number of ads as seen in *OUT*, they had the same number of HIV/AIDS and LGBT Services ads. Thus, these ads comprised a larger percentage of overall ads than similar ads in *OUT*. Perhaps the most interesting finding was from the Jan. 17 issue, in which 10 of the 35 total ads were for LGBT services (See Appendix D). This is more than triple the number of LGBT Services ads in the Dec. 6 issue, and close to a third of all ads. This finding could, however, be the result of post-holiday depression, related substance abuse concerns, New Year's resolutions, etc.

The Jan. 17 issue also showed an increase in minority representation from the Dec. 6 issue. Seven of 43 ads showed ethnic minorities in the Dec. 6 issue, while 15 of 45 ads showed ethnic minorities in the Jan. 17 issue. Of the 29 ads with males, eight (or 28%) were minority males. There was a strong correlation between HIV/AIDS ads and minority representation. Four of the six HIV/AIDS ads used minority males, while two used no images. Therefore, half of the ethnic minority male representation was strictly related to HIV/AIDS ads compared to no white representation. One of the two HIV/AIDS ads with specifically African-American males (the other two HIV/AIDS ads being Hispanic), showed only the back of the man's head. The other African-American male image was used to advertise an HIV-related alcohol, drugs, and depression treatment facility.

Several of the ad messages were also interesting. For example, in an ad for Queen Latifa's new movie "Last Holiday," the tagline read, "She always thought she was somebody… And she was." This message seems to go beyond the movie plot and speaks directly to empowerment of African Americans as well as the gay minority. From a different perspective, the Jaguar ad's tagline simply read, "Gorgeous Trumps Everything." This reinforces the consumer culture as advertised in *OUT*. The underlying message also speaks to several respondents' comments regarding the gay community's construction of identity and misdirected priorities. Finally, reinforcing a consumer-based, "gorgeous"-aspiring culture, the cover of the Dec. 6 issue showed George Clooney a straight white movie star, while the Jan. 17 issue showed Heath Ledger, another straight white movie star.

Based solely on the types of advertisements and lack of diversity representation, the participants' association between *The Advocate* and *OUT* would certainly be supported. Article content, however, differentiated the two magazines. The first two-thirds of each

83

Advocate included hard news articles about gay-specific issues. For example, article topics included HIV, "Generation Q" (LGBT youth), gay marriage, religious discrimination, gay bashing, legal healthcare rights, adoption, and the importance of coming out. The Dec.6 issue profiling George Clooney focused on his political battle with the political right, and incorporated the discussion with an article titled "Conservatives on the Edge." The need for LGBT persons to come out is repeated in many of the articles. For example, in addressing the political right's discriminatory agenda toward the LGBT community, one article argued,

> As more and more of us come out – still the single most important thing a gay person can do to change the world – the divide between the gay-friendly general population and the increasingly isolated and marginalized fundamentalist right wing of American society becomes sharper and uglier. The scales are tipping our direction. (Vilanch, *The Advocate*, Jan. 17, p. 58)

The final third of each *Advocate* issue was dedicated to entertainment produced either by members of the LGBT community, or by the community's known allies, including movies, TV shows, books, and music. This overall structure speaks to the original lesbian magazine, *Vice Versa*, first published in 1947, which established the format of news articles, editorials, short stories, book/film reviews, letters, and finally columns (Gross, 2001).

These findings suggest that for most respondents, there is a slight disconnect with *The Advocate*. While the covers and advertisements suggest a white, male, consumerist culture, the articles do a relatively good job of addressing those *national* issues important to the LGBT community. In other words, *The Advocate* uses the cover and ads to garner attention, but by doing so, takes away from the substance of the articles themselves. While *OUT* aspires to assimilation, *The Advocate* attempts to address the LGBT community's distinctiveness and specific needs, although admittedly veiled by a consumerist mindset. Certainly, producing a national magazine requires an extensive advertising budget. The

unfortunate result, as evidenced through the interviews, is a blurring of missions between *OUT* and *The Advocate*.

Ultimately, the findings in both *OUT* and *The Advocate* speak to the need for a longitudinal study. As mentioned, this content analysis was performed to provide a glimpse into gay-run print media, and does not suggest that the findings could be generalized to all issues of *OUT* and *The Advocate*. The main purpose was to first understand participants' perspectives regarding national print media, and then compare those perspectives to examples of the issues themselves.

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION

There are several implications for the presented findings. Primarily, participants'
comments reinforced the fundamental importance of the gay community as a self-identified
minority. While membership in most social movements requires individuals to join specific
politicized groups and assume an activist mindset, membership in the gay movement equates
to membership in the gay community. To be an active member in the movement is to live as
an out LGBT person. Accordingly, as evidenced by participant comments, the need to come
out is fundamental to furthering the gay movement. The content analysis echoed this need.
As mentioned, many of OUT magazine's Top 100 individuals of 2005 were chosen simply
because they had come out, or lived as an out LGBT person. It is critical to understand that
the notion of self-identification is unique to the gay social movement, and influences how the
movement itself is grounded and furthered. This process is distinct for each member of the
gay community, and affects how individuals and sub-groups engage in the movement. Thus,
equipped with this understanding, it is important to discuss these findings first in the context
of the research questions, and then as applied to traditional social movement theory.

Defining the Movement

The first research question asked participants how they as individuals, and as
members of various sub-groups within the gay community, engage in today's gay movement.
The participants' discussions went beyond simply providing a definition of the movement.
These respondents find meaning in different ways and in different contexts, suggesting that
the definition can continually change. The findings showed there are four different contexts

with which to ascribe meaning to and engage in the movement; the motivation(s) of various sub-groups determine the context used to engage in the movement. Findings have shown that these sub-groups are formed based on age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, profession, queer versus gay identity, or any combination therein. Participants defined the movement within these individual contexts. They also defined the movement based on the gay community as a unified singular notion. Although the diversity evidenced could suggest the need for separate sub-movements, responses indicated that members still aspire to a central mission: achieving a place at society's table.

Research question two asked, "How do interview participants ascribe meaning to the images and representations in gay-run, pop-cultural magazines such as OUT and The Advocate, and how do those impressions align with the mediated sources themselves?" As evidenced through the comparison between participants' responses and the content analysis, the gay community continually battles the notion of a "gay myth" both internally and externally. The gay-run media heavily favor representations of rich, white, males, and focus much of the ethnic minority images in HIV/AIDS advertising. The results also showed that individuals often base their perceptions of publications on those images rather than the article content. On one hand, *OUT*'s content conveys and perpetuates the gay myth as presented through the stereotypical images. Conversely, *The Advocate*'s articles cover a broader spectrum, reporting on national issues important to the gay community. Because of this finding, what is being conveyed to the mainstream depends on whether the reader focuses on the images, or on the content of the articles themselves. Finally, it is important to note that based on responses, LGBT participants often place a higher emphasis on external perceptions rather than internal perceptions of gay-focused media.

Building on the first research question, the final question asked "What gay 'agenda' is being (and should be) portrayed?" Accordingly, should the gay movement focus on achieving political equality? Becoming a driver of pop culture? Or both? Are the two realms unavoidably dependent upon each other? The findings suggest that the gay cultural and political experiences are intertwined. Many participants, however, laughed at the notion of a rigidly defined gay movement or agenda. For these individuals, the gay community *is* the gay movement, and is defined as a shared experience learned through dialog. This dialog eliminates the idea of otherness, both within the community and in the community's intersection with the mainstream. There are several ways to engage in the movement, and to exist within the community. Ironically, underlying each of these contexts are the foundations first seen during the Stonewall Riots: the notions of not being afraid to be out, and the confidence to break down barriers. Despite the individual differences and experiences, all but one participant emphasized the primary importance of coming out as central to the movement. Whether coming out results in specific legislation or by creating a culturally-based awareness of the community, the elimination of otherness provides the foundation.

Finally, discussion regarding these various contexts of engagement provided another interesting critical finding. Responses indicated that LGBT persons acknowledge that there are divisions and disparate contexts challenging the notion of a truly unified community. At the same time, participants discussed the movement as a singular notion. More specifically, when discussing the specifics internal to the movement, each participant addressed the diverse motivations driving individuals within the community that demand different goals. When discussing the movement's intersection with the mainstream, however, participants' language immediately shifted to a unified, "we versus they," discussion. Therefore, equipped

with the understanding of this dual gay experience – existing as diverse individuals with separate objectives, and existing as part of a larger unified movement – it is now critical to understand what these answers mean in the context of social movement theory.

Social Movement Theory

As stated, the fundamental process of public relations involves informing, educating, shifting opinions, and creating awareness. Social movements are examples of public relations initiatives on a much broader scale. As with any public relations initiative, it is important to regularly evaluate the mission, progress, and challenges facing the initiative. This study attempts to do just that for the gay movement in the context of traditional social movement theory. The literature presented the generally accepted life stages of social movements, including the Genesis, Social Unrest, Enthusiastic Mobilization, Maintenance, and Termination stages (Stewart et al., 2001). The findings suggest, however, that the gay movement, as presented by these respondents, does not fit this traditional structure. As Benjamin argued, perhaps this is because the traditional social movement, as defined in the 1960s and 1970s, is no longer relevant today. Following the social unrest of the 1960s, and the initial enthusiastic mobilization period, the gay movement has followed a divergent construction.

First, there is no single charismatic person leading the gay movement. This refutes traditional social movement theory in which the charismatic leader replaces the original intellectual leaders as the movement grows in prominence and scope (Stewart et al., 2001). Therefore, while traditional social movements often move into a "Maintenance" stage with the loss of that charismatic leader, the gay movement will not have this defining moment. Going further, the notion of being active in the gay movement equates to simply "being"

LGBT, not necessarily engaging with an activist mindset. Thus, initial mobilization in the gay movement, as seen through the emergence of gay organizations, press and political demonstrations, has given way to a new form of mobilization in terms of convincing people to come out, and live as out members of the community. At the same time, it would be difficult to argue that this shift represents the maintenance stage. Although the priorities are shifting, interest in the overall push for acceptance and equality has certainly not waned.

Finally, Blumer (1995), distinguished between a general social movement and a specific social movement. Prior to this research, it was expected that the gay movement exists as several specific social movements, with lesbians, gay men, persons of color, bisexuals, and transgendered persons, each group forwarding its own cause(s) independently. There are issues and needs specific to each group pursued independently of the whole. Accordingly, there are concerns regarding voice and privilege within the community that need addressing. But participants argued that the common factor tying everyone together is the idea that the LGBT community is a singular, self-identified minority, and although conscious of their own distinct experience and priorities, they still aspire to a single community[29] and more importantly, to a single cause: acceptance at society's table.

The findings, however, go beyond basic social movement theory, and are relevant for additional theoretical application. More specifically, the findings related to pop cultural exposure address what is posited by cultivation theory. The findings specific to those battling against the system speak directly to the constructs of post-modern, interpretivist theory and servant leadership.

---

[29] Representative of this was the statement in the introduction explaining the choice not to include transgendered persons because of a separate set of issues and needs. It was assumed that those needs were not in the scope of this paper. Several participants, however, made inclusion of transgender issues a central point and mission of the gay movement.

Cultivation Revisited

The findings related to pop-cultural exposure, specifically through gay media, are interesting in the context of cultivation theory. Mentioned briefly in the introduction, Cultivation Theory, as proposed by Gerbner (1967) states that heavy television viewers (across demographics) will have similar views of the real world compared to light viewers. The notion that TV, as a great storyteller, cultivates a consistent view of the world is called mainstreaming. Larry Gross (2001) argues this cultivation effect can be magnified for minorities already feeling subjugated by the dominant mainstream. The gay community, he argues, has adopted self-loathing behaviors as a result of negative or stereotypical images presented on TV.

The respondents indicated the opposite. Each participant identified gay images on TV as unrealistic, but serving a purpose. There were no illusions of the images representing the gay community. Rather, the representations were viewed in context, as nothing more than exposure for the gay experience. In addition, participants acknowledged how all images are stereotypical, not representative of any population.

Conversely, several participants did allude to the potential for cultivation effects within the mainstream. As Catherine argued, those within the dominant culture who do not have exposure to the LGBT community in everyday life could come to adopt the images on TV as real, accurate representations of the gay culture. The inaccurate stereotypes could create misconceptions and a lack of understanding by the mainstream regarding the needs of the gay community. If true, this finding would support Gerbner's (2001) and Gross's (1967) argument.

Perhaps participants were able to objectively perceive the images on TV because of what is posited by Standpoint Theory. The theory counters Gross's (2001) cultivation assumption as applied to minorities, suggesting that by existing on the margins, one is better able to see the whole. Janet Boles (2004) summarizes, "Those who gain most from positions of power and privilege are least equipped to see this bias, while those most marginalized see it most clearly" (p. 272). Given this assumption, the gay community is therefore better equipped to understand and interpret mediated images than the dominant culture producing them.

Post-Modern and Servant Leader Application

The post-modern, interpretivist construction of truth (Denzin & Lincoln, pp. 166-173) offers another interesting perspective with which to understand today's gay movement. This application speaks directly to those respondents "battling the system." Interpretivists see truth, the construction of reality, as a constant negotiation. Most disciplines within the interpretivist frame argue for more socially responsible research that seeks to create change. Critical theorists, for example, champion justice at the societal level. Constructivists take this one step further and focus on the individual relationships and personal negotiation that not only determine truth, but create change.

The findings as presented by those "battling the system" reflect the need for a post-modern, interpretivist movement. For example, responses emphasizing the need for a queer rather than gay community construct are grounded in the premise of post-modernity. The goal is to break down internal barriers, and create open and honest dialog at the local levels, between individuals. Reminiscent of the constructivist mindset, those battling the system

seek to achieve social justice from the ground up, creating a culturally-based shift rather than one forced by the dominant culture.

The priority given to "nameless leaders," and grassroots movements, is representative of Servant Leadership theory, in which leaders serve first, lead second. Success through servant leadership, as proposed by Robert Greenleaf (1977), depends on the answers to the following: "Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the affect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?" (p. 27). Considering this leadership model, it is interesting that most participants agreed that the gay movement did not warrant a single individual or national group leader – rather it required a grassroots movement with multiple local leaders focused on change in local communities.

Regardless of theoretical application, certain differences existed between participants that entered each discussion. More specifically, age and ethnicity distinguished many of the responses regardless of one's preferred operational context.

Generation Gap

The difference in responses based on age was evident for each operational context. As discussed in the context of motivation, age and experience shape individual views regarding what is possible, and how to achieve success. First, as mentioned, older participants[30] focused on Stonewall as the defining moment in the modern American gay movement. They also favored a more concession-oriented, mainstream-focused movement (modeled after the women's movement) than did younger participants. In addition, older participants were more

---

[30] By this, I do not mean to suggest that those in their fifties are "old." For the sample interviewed, however, they represented the upper end of the spectrum.

likely to have memberships to the HRC and subscribe to national publications such as *OUT* and *The Advocate*. Finally, each participant in his fifties argued the need for specific legislation more so than many of the other participants. Their responses could indicate several things. First, experiences with careers, society, and personal relationships often reinforce the notion that compromise is necessary to exact change. More importantly, memberships in, and subscriptions to, national gay voices are representative of the Stonewall Riots, and the importance of belonging, feeling a part of something larger, a united mission. In this context, the need to belong to a larger cause often supersedes the effectiveness of the cause itself. It is interesting that although Daniel, 50, echoed these same points, he was more readily acknowledging of potential alternatives. This could result from coming out much later in life than the others. Further, this is not to argue whether these perspectives are right or wrong. Perspective may change as people age. It would be interesting to interview those younger respondents in twenty years to ascertain any changes in their perceptions.

Conversely, younger participants self-identified within a distinctly queer construct, focused on the need for a grassroots movement, did not discuss as much specific legislation, and were more intolerant of a concession-oriented movement. This finding seems to indicate two patterns. First, much of the specific legislation discussed is not yet relevant to their experience because of their ages. For example, Julia and Robin indicated that they were interested in the marriage debate, primarily because they had decided to marry. They discussed all additional legislation under the umbrella of "Not Being Afraid." More importantly, however, is the apparent shift in the construction of the gay identity (or queer identity). This new construction occurs at the individual level as well at the community level. As opposed to the older respondents, the younger respondents and the two clergy view the

movement occurring from the ground up, structured around individual relationships and local connections. They do not aspire to a national organization or hierarchical structure dictating the movement. Thus, the sense of needing to belong to something greater occurs at the grassroots level, not membership in national organizations. This finding is perhaps the most important and distinguishing point, and indicates perhaps a future trend of the movement itself.

Ethnicity, Individual Needs and Priorities

The prior discussion of age echoes, in a sense, the findings related to ethnicity. As mentioned, those within the LGBT community who are also ethnic minorities have very different experiences and needs. As responses indicated, these individuals are forced to choose between their ethnicity and sexuality. Reverend Fowler provided an example in which she surveyed her church congregation, asking what was important to them and what they wanted out of life. White parishioners noted issues related to family and justice. Persons of color responded with the basic need for survival. Thus, persons of color begin to address the gay movement from a very different space than do white individuals. Privilege and position allow most white people to address specific issues that persons of color may never have the luxury of addressing.

These findings are reminiscent of the premise forwarded by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.[31] As Fitzgerald (1977) explains, for each individual, "New and 'higher' motives are born only as more basic and essential motives receive satisfaction, and the individual comes to take their satisfaction for granted" (p. 37). The five categories of motives, from the most basic to most complex, are: Physical needs (air, water, food); Safety needs (promise of survival); Social needs (need for friends and belonging); Esteem needs (self esteem and

[31] See: Maslow, A. H. (1968). Toward a Psychology of Being, 2 ed. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.

esteem placed by others); and Self-actualization (reaching one's full potential seeking, "truth, justice, wisdom, and meaning."[32]). Individuals cannot always move to a higher level within the hierarchy until assurance at one's current need-level is achieved. Once higher levels have been achieved, however, sudden uncertainty at a more basic level does not require one to re-enter the process completely. Finally, the highest level of self-actualization is never fully achieved, as the pursuits of truth, justice, wisdom, and meaning are never-ending processes that continually create new challenges.

The participants' responses, such as Reverend Fowler's example, support this hierarchy. One's position in life creates different needs and priorities. Gay youth, much like straight youth, would argue their number-one desire is to be left alone and be allowed to love who they want. Those in the LGBT community close to retirement, in a 20-year relationship, might cite healthcare benefits or distribution of assets as the most important things. While Craig must contemplate how both he and his partner can rent a car together on vacation, Nathaniel is not yet old enough to rent a car independently. The needs are different because the context is different.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Several possible future studies emerge from the research. First, it would be interesting investigate the notion of race within the gay community, specifically the issue of having to choose between one's ethnicity and one's sexuality. It would also be interesting to extend Reverend Fowler's survey in which she found a different hierarchy of needs between her white and Black parishioners. This study could be based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

---

[32] Explanation of this last level was taken from the following site, http://www.netmba.com/mgmt/ob/motivation/maslow/, which presents a good synopsis of the model.

The findings regarding the role of gay-focused media (national versus local, television versus print) also suggested potential future studies – for example, a comparison between where straight white male consumers get their news, versus those in the gay community identifying as queer. A longitudinal content analysis of gay-run media could show a more comprehensive picture of the types of images and issues being presented on a national versus local scale. In addition, future studies investigating the perception of images on TV, based on the cultivation hypothesis could prove interesting. Finally, specific to public relations, a study testing the Agenda Building premise regarding the "gay agenda" in the media could be performed.

There are several studies that could be conducted related to transgendered persons. This approach may include surveying the mainstream to garner perceptions of the transgendered community, and comparing responses to those of transgendered persons. A similar study could perform an internal investigation, determining thoughts of the gay mainstream toward transgendered persons, and vice versa.

Finally, perhaps the most telling of future studies could be a longitudinal analysis of LGBT persons' perceptions regarding the movement. The same respondents could be interviewed/surveyed at the point they come out, and then every five years for a certain period of time. Such a study presents many logistical problems, but could demonstrate the change from idealistic to realistic objectives in the movement. Findings could either confirm or refute the debate surrounding the ability to construct a "queer," rather than a mainstream "gay" movement.

THE MOVEMENT IN CONTEXT

The purpose of this study was to define the gay movement from within. While there has been much research discussing the intersection of the movement with the mainstream, this inquiry hoped to contextualize the movement based on LGBT individuals' specific experiences and perceptions. There were several surprising findings. Responses suggested that the lack of the transgendered community's voice is considered more of a pressing issue than the lack of ethnic minorities' voices. Accordingly, ethnic minorities have a better understanding of these inequities than the gay mainstream. Responses also suggested that although gay males are more represented than lesbians in pop culture, many feel that the difference is warranted because of the mainstream's higher tolerance for lesbians. Finally, the number of participants identifying as queer, or existing within the queer construct, was also interesting, because the notion re-conceptualizes the "gay" movement's fundamental construction.

Given this diversity, the most interesting finding was the notion that participants engage the movement as individuals, as members of sub-groups, *and* as contributing members of a larger gay community. While each participant brought a unique experience to the discussion, and demonstrated specific needs and objectives, responses indicated they remain committed to a unified movement seeking "Our Place at the Table." What this place means is different for each person, and can be achieved through coming out, enacting legislation, increasing pop cultural exposure, or breaking down barriers internal to the community. But participants believe success is inevitable, regardless of his/her operational context.

APPENDIX A: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

Sexuality

1. What is your sexuality?

2. How long have you identified yourself as _____?

    ⇒ Would you consider yourself an active member of the gay community?

    a. If so: Why? Examples?

    b. If not: Why?

Gay Movement

1. If you had to identify one historical event that stands out to you as important to the gay community, what would it be? Why?

    ⇒ If I mentioned "The Stonewall Riots," what would that mean to you?

2. What's important to you, personally, as a member of the gay community?

    ⇒ Do you feel treated like a minority? If so: In what way?

    ⇒ What legal rights do you want? Feel the gay community deserves?

    ⇒ What do you realistically expect from society?

3. Ok – Step outside of your personal realm: If you had to speak for the gay community as a whole, how would you define today's gay movement?

    ⇒ Be specific: If you had to outline the objectives, strategies, challenges, etc., what would they be?

    ⇒ Is there a leader of the movement? Leaders? Who are they?

4. Do you think your definition of the gay movement speak to the needs of all members of the gay community?

    ⇒ If so? How does it speak to those needs?

$\Rightarrow$ If not? Where does it lack?

$\Rightarrow$ What should the gay community realistically expect from a gay movement?

External Gay Representation

1. From the perspective of someone internal to the gay community, what are our most public displays of gay life to the "outside" world/pop culture?

   $\Rightarrow$ Pride Parades?

   $\Rightarrow$ TV? Other Media?

   $\Rightarrow$ Do you subscribe to any gay publication? If so, which?

2. Are these public displays consistent with the needed objectives of the gay movement? More specifically: Are these gay representations helping or hurting the gay movement?

   $\Rightarrow$ If so, how? Which important messages are being conveyed?

   $\Rightarrow$ If not: What's actually being conveyed?

Summary

1. Given your personal involvement with and feelings toward the gay community, and given your conception of the gay movement, and perspective on the external images being portrayed externally to the straight world, ultimately –

   $\Rightarrow$ What/Whose agenda(s) are being realized? Voices heard?

Basic Information

1. What is your age?

2. What is your ethnicity?

3. What is your profession?

ADDENDUM B: RECRUITMENT EMAIL

The following announcement was submitted via to area listservs in an effort to recruit 10-15 volunteers. The listservs, depending on space requirements, cut only what was absolutely necessary.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: A local graduate student and member of the LGBT community is currently working on a thesis regarding "The Modern Gay Movement." He is looking for volunteers willing to participate in 1 to 1.5 hour interviews.

He is interested in getting different perspectives on the current state of the gay movement, specifically, "whose voices are being heard on the national stage." Topics include: Do the images seen in media represent the true gay movement? What objectives should the movement focus on? What's being lost? What have we gained?

This study has been approved by the UNC Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you would like to volunteer, but have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject you may contact the Behavioral-IRB at (919) 962-7761, or at aa-irb@unc.edu.

Interviews will be one-on-one, and the results held in the strictest confidence. Interviewees will each receive a $5.00 Panera's gift card for their participation. If interested, please contact Dean at dmundy@email.unc.edu. Interviews will begin in late December, so please get in touch soon and let your voice be heard. Thanks for your help!!!

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Adult Participants
Social Behavioral Form

IRB Study #_____
Consent Form Version Date: _____12/8/2005_____

Project Title: Pride or Prejudice: Contextualizing the Gay Movement from Within

Principal Investigator: Dean E. Mundy
UNC-Chapel Hill Department: JOMC
UNC-Chapel Hill Phone number: (678) 613-4802
Email Address: *dmundy@email.unc.edu*
Faculty Advisor: Lois Boynton
Funding Source: JOMC

Participant telephone number:
Participant email:

What are some general things you should know about research studies?
You are being asked to take part in a research study. To join the study is voluntary.
You may refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future.   You may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies.

Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study.
You will be given a copy of this consent form. You should ask the researchers named above, or staff members who may assist them, any questions you have about this study at any time.

What is the purpose of this study?
This project will research how members of the gay community define the notion of a "gay movement." More specifically, the study hopes to answer: How is the gay movement being actualized? What objectives are being met? Who is being represented?

How many people will take part in this study?
If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of approximately 10 to 15 people in this research study.

How long will your part in this study last?
Your participation is required in one interview lasting between one and one-and-a-half hours.

What will happen if you take part in the study?
The process is expected to be more of a dialog. You will be asked to describe your perspective of the gay community, how a "gay movement" should be defined, and what the "gay reality is." The researcher is also gay and will discuss his experiences with you as well.

What are the possible benefits from being in this study?
Gay life and gay rights are at the forefront of the country's political and cultural dialog. Understanding the context in which gay individuals must exist will help to educate society, create sensitivities, and advance gay rights. Responses will help determine if as a social movement, we are approaching the gay experience appropriately.

What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study?
The only risks or discomforts you may experience would involve the discussion material itself. You are free to withhold answering at any point.

How will your privacy be protected?
Participants will not be identified in any report or publication about this study. Although every effort will be made to keep research records private, there may be times when federal or state law requires the disclosure of such records, including personal information. This is very unlikely, but if disclosure is ever required, UNC-Chapel Hill will take steps allowable by law to protect the privacy of personal information. In some cases, your information in this research study could be reviewed by representatives of the University, research sponsors, or government agencies for purposes such as quality control or safety.

The interviews and focus group will be tape recorded and transcribed. Once the project is complete, the tapes will be erased. Participants will have access to the report or their individual transcript at any time. They will not have access to other participants' transcripts. Please note - individuals' names will be replaced at the time of transcription. Thus, once the tapes are destroyed, there will be no tangible record of the actual name of the participant. Each participant will know only his or her pseudonym and not those of other participants.

What if you have questions about this study?
You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions, or concerns, you should contact the researchers listed on the first page of this form.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?
All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Behavioral Institutional Review Board at 919-962-7761 or aa-irb@unc.edu.

Participant's Agreement:

I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time.
I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

_____   _____

Signature of Research Participant   Date

_____

Printed Name of Research Participant

_____   _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

_____

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent

Ads: Gender/Ethnicity Representation*

GENDER	ETHNICITY	ADVOCATE 12/6	ADVOCATE 1/17	OUT – DEC
MALE	WHITE	24	20	30
	MINORITY	5	8	6
	UNSURE	2	1	3
	TOTAL	**31**	**29**	**39**
FEMALE	WHITE	8	9	15
	MINORITY	2	7	4
	UNSURE	2	0	1
	TOTAL	**12**	**16**	**20**

* In ads showing five or fewer people, each person was counted individually. For those ads showing more than five people, the "dominant" image was to be selected. Also for those ads with more than five people, if representation was equal across demographics, then those categories each received one mark.
* Unless the image was very clearly male/female or a certain ethnic minority, the image must have shown the person's face. (for example, those images which were "shadows," or partial images of people were not counted.)

Ads: Type Breakdown

AD TOPIC	ADVOCATE 12/6	ADVOCATE 1/17	OUT – DEC
HIV/AIDS[1]	6	6[3]	5
TRAVEL	4	8	6
ENTERTAINMENT	10	6	18
LGBT SERVICES[2]	3	10	3
FASHION	2	1	21[4]
MISC.	9	4	27[5]
TOTAL ADS	**34**	**35**	**80**

1: Ads included: prescription drugs, HIV-specific support services.
2: Ads included: LGBT support services, rehab clinics, legal services, estate counseling, LGBT scholarships.
3: Four of six HIV/AIDS ads shown with minority males. Therefore, half of minority representation (4 of 8) related to HIV advertising. Given the remaining two ads had no images, no white male representation among HIV/AIDS ads.
4: Fashion ads break down as follows: Wrist Watches = 5; Skin Care = 5; Clothes = 5; Underwear = 3; Other = 3.
5: Misc. ads break down as follows: Liquor = 10 (8 Vodka ads); Cars = 5 (includes Jaguar, Mercedes, Cadillac, Volvo, and Land Rover); Technology = 5; Credit Cards = 3; Other = 4.

Ads: Type as Percentage of Total

AD TOPIC	ADVOCATE 12/6	ADVOCATE 1/17	OUT – DEC
HIV/AIDS	18%	17%	6%
TRAVEL	12%	23%	8%
ENTERTAINMENT	29%	17%	23%
LGBT SERVICES	9%	29%	4%
FASHION	6%	3%	26%
MISC.	26%	11%	34%
TOTAL ADS	**100%**	**100%**	**100%***
LGBT Svcs & HIV/AIDS as % of Total	**27%**	**46%**	**10%**

*Total equals 101 due to rounding

APPENDIX D CONT'D: Article Topics – (In order of appearance)

The Advocate 12/6 Issue
- International Gay Rights: gay bashing in England
- LGBT Retirement Community
- Politics: Methodist minister defrocked because gay, Embattled gay mayor of Spokane, WA, and Hispanic gay marriage
- Regional politics
- Adoption rights
- Transgendered persons
- Healthcare (general legal rights)
- Gen Q
- Cover Story: George Clooney versus the far right
- Cover Story: Conservatives on the edge
- Entertainment: Must see gay movies

The Advocate 1/17 Issue
- Religion: Jimmy's Carter's new book and Republican discrimination of gays.
- HIV
- Gen Q: Discrimination lawsuits by gay teens
- Politics: Adoption, Marriage, domestic violence
- Discrimination: Marriage vote in Maine
- Religion: Christian right blaming gays for Tsunami and Katrina
- Brokeback Mountain: Cover Story
- The effects of "coming out"
- Entertainment: Top 10 of year in films, books, music, and books; Celebrities coming out: ex) Lesley Gore; ABC's cancellation of "The Neighborhood" because of the presence of gay characters
- Religion: Pope Benedict's anti-gay policies

OUT, December Issue
- Character on "Nip/Tuck" outing as Bisexual
- Gay character on "General Hospital"
- Nightlife around the country – Schedule of popular Tea Dances
- Comparing pop culture of the 90s and today.
- Film – TransAmerica
- Musical – Rent
- Film – The Producers
- Actress – Anne Hathaway
- Holiday gift guide
- Satirical predictions for 2006
- First hard news piece, p. 114: Hurricane Katrina - How New Orleans has always supported the gay community
- Prostate cancer and the specific effects, risks, for gay men
- Urology and lack of support for gay-specific issues
- Anal Cancer
- Cover Story: OUT 100

References

Blumer, H. (1951). Social Movements. In Lyman (Ed.), *Social Movements: Critiques, Concepts, Case-Studies* (pp. 60-83). New York: NYU Press.

Boles, J.K., & Long Hoeveler D. (2004). *Historical Dictionary of Feminism* (p. 272). Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc.

Carter, D. (2004). *Stonewall: The Riots That Sparked the Gay Revolution*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Chasteen, E. (1969). Public Accommodations: Social Movements in Conflict. In Evans (Ed.), *Social Movements: A Reader and Source Book* (pp. 363-380). Chicago: Rand McNally.

Clark, J. M. (1997). Men's studies at the margins (Doing the Work of Love, part 1). *The Journal of Men's Studies*, 5 (4), 315-332.

Fitzgerald, R. (1977). Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs – An Exposition and Evaluation. In Fitzgerald (Ed.), *Human Needs and Politics* (pp. 36-51). Rushcutters Bay, NSW Australia: Pergamon Press.

Gerbner, G. (1967). Cultural Indicators Project and Cultivation Theory. In Bryant, J., & Thompson, S. (Eds.), *Fundamentals of Media Effects* (pp. 100-109). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Goldstein, R. (2005, May). The disappearing queer. *The Advocate (The national gay & lesbian newsmagazine),* 80.

Gordinier, J. (2005, October). Death of the Alpha Male, How the American Man Went Limp (And Why We're Better Off For It). *Details*, 97-100.

Greenleaf, R.K. (1977). In Spears (Ed.), *Servant Leadership* (p. 27-41). Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.

Gross, L. (2001). *Up From Invisibility: Lesbians, Gay Men, and the Media in America*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Gross, L. (2005). The Past and the Future of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies. *Journal of Communication*, 55 (3), 508-528.

Gross, L. & Woods, J. D. (1999). *The Columbia Reader on Lesbians and Gay Men in Media, Society, & Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Guth, D.W. & Marsh, C. (2003). The Publics in Public Relations. In *Public Relations: A Values-Driven Approach* (pp. 90-124). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Harris, D. (1996). From After Dark to Out: The invention of the Teflon Magazine. *The Antioch Review*, 54 (2), 174-194.

Harris, D. (1997). Glad-to-Be-Gay Propaganda. In Harris (Ed.), *The Rise and Fall of Gay Culture* (pp. 239-271). New York: Hyperion.

Hattersley, M. (2004). Will success spoil gay culture? *The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide*, 11 (1), 33-35.

Hogan, M. (2005). Radical queers: A pop culture assessment of Montreal's Anti-Capitalist Ass Pirates, the Pantheres roses, and Lesbians on Ecstasy. *Canadian Woman Studies*, 24 (2-3), 154-159.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2000). Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences. In Denzin & Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 163-188). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.

McCracken, G. (1999). *The Long Interview* (pp. 16-20). California: Sage Publications.

Moon, D. (1995). Insult and inclusion: The term 'fag hag' and gay male community. *Social Forces*, 74 (2), 487-511.

Smith, B. (1993). Blacks and Gays: Healing the Great Divide. *Gay Community News*, Fall 1993, 7.

Stewart, C. J., Smith, C. A., & Denton, R. E. (2001). *Persuasion and Social Movements*, 4 ed. (pp. 129-150). Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press.

Vilanch, B. (2006). Evergay People. *The Advocate*, January 17, p. 58.