January 2009

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Recommended Citation
Githens, R. P., & Aragon, S. (2009). LGBT Employee Groups: Goals and Organizational Structures. *Advances in Developing Human Resources, 11*(1), 121–135. DOI: 10.1177/1523422308329200
https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/ed-facarticles/95

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An edited version of this paper was published as:
Githens, R. P. & Aragon, S. R. (2009). LGBT employee groups: Goals and organizational structures. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, *11*(1), 121-135.

Abstract

The problem and the solution. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) employees oftentimes face isolation, difficult workplace climates, and inequitable benefits and policies. LGBT employee groups offer a space for social support and provide an organized platform from which employees can advocate for changes within their workplaces. We provide a social and historical background on LGBT employee groups and provide a framework/continuum for understanding different approaches to operating these groups. These groups vary in their organizational structures and in their goals. Groups can adopt emergent organizational styles or take more orderly and structured approaches to organizing. Goals for these groups include bringing broader social change and improving organizational effectiveness. These groups provide human resource development that benefits individuals, organizations, communities, and societies.

Keywords: Employee Resource Groups, Workplace Diversity, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Workplace Activism

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) employee groups (sometimes referred to as "employee resource groups," "employee networks," or "affinity groups") exist in a variety of organizational sectors, are organized in a variety of ways, and serve multiple purposes. In this article, we provide a brief history of the emergence of LGBT employee groups and a framework/continuum for understanding how LGBT employee groups organize and the approaches they take to foster organization change efforts. Through this discussion, we hope to provide readers with a better understanding of how LGBT employee groups contribute to the development of organizations and human resources.

To illustrate the kind of opportunities and challenges faced by these groups, we begin with a case study about "Metropolitan Healthcare," based loosely on actual events in two organizations.

Metropolitan Healthcare: A Case Study

At Metropolitan Healthcare, a group of gay and lesbian employees first gathered informally in 1985. Four friends got together for dinner and this informal gathering evolved into a monthly outing with an "underground network" of employees. By 1989, the group had become less concealed, grew to about 15 regular attendees, and was somewhat known within the

organization. In 1993, the group decided that two of its informal leaders would approach the management about several pressing issues. First, the sometimes-hostile climate toward lesbian, gay, and bisexual workers was a major concern. Second, they sought expansion of the nondiscrimination statement to include sexual orientation. Third, they asked that unmarried partners be included in benefits programs. Expansion of the nondiscrimination statement came within two years of the request and the climate issue is still being addressed. The domestic partner benefits issue proved to be a long-term issue that was eventually resolved. It provides an interesting case study on employee groups facilitating change in an organization.

Regarding the domestic partner benefits issue, the group met with Metro's vice president of human resources on numerous occasions over the years. They even secured a meeting with the president of Metropolitan Health, who was cautious about domestic partner benefits because of potential backlash from customers, employees, and the board of directors. Although the president personally thought the issue was legitimate, he believed it would be difficult to justify these benefits, considering the harsh economic conditions facing the organization. Among customers, he feared engagement in "culture war" debates. With downsizing occurring and employee benefits being cut each year, he feared backlash among the unions and rank-and-file workers for giving additional benefits to a "special interest group." Eventually, the group secured the support of one of the unions in the organization. The union did not know of any members in same-sex partnerships, but they had many members with unmarried opposite-sex partners. Both parties agreed to advocate for same-sex and opposite-sex domestic partner benefits. However, the union was never able to get domestic partner benefits into its contract. The LGBT group became frustrated over the lack of progress.

In 2000, the diversity manager asked whether the group would become a recognized "employee network." Prior to that point, this informal group had operated without any sort of official recognition. Deciding that this official recognition would help in advancing their cause, members agreed and became the "LGBT and Allies Network." By this point, the group included transgender people within its scope. With this employer recognition, one member of the group was provided a seat on the president's "Diversity Council." The president expected the Diversity Council to provide him with information on the workplace diversity climate and for council members to serve as organizational ambassadors to their respective communities. The Diversity Council and the employee networks could advocate for their issues and hold social/networking events, but needed to contribute to organizational effectiveness through the promotion of diversity and related organization development (OD) initiatives. During this time period, domestic partner benefits became more common among large U.S. employers. The LGBT and Allies Network continued to lobby HR and the president. They used their seat on the Diversity Council to educate members of the importance of these benefits. Members of the network worked with the benefits director in compiling a benefits benchmark analysis to support their case. The union was also increasing its pressure due to support from members with unmarried partners. All of these factors, along with a request from a member of the board of directors, convinced the president that Metro Health should institute domestic partner benefits in 2004. Worried about the cost and difficulty in managing opposite-sex benefits and because "straight people could get married," he advocated only offering same-sex partner benefits. Today, the LGBT and Allies Network continues working with the Women's Network and the union in advocating for opposite-sex partner benefits.

Domestic partner benefits are not the sole focus of the group. After becoming officially recognized, the group was instrumental, along with other employee networks, in facilitating

diversity education sessions throughout the organization. Individual members of the Diversity Council also met with each department manager to plan how departments might foster more inclusive environments. The director of organizational effectiveness coordinated this OD effort, which resulted in a diversity plan being instituted for each department. The plans were meaningful and purposeful, requiring semi-annual individual meetings with each department manager, the diversity manager, and a member of the Diversity Council. Over the years, the LGBT and Allies Network has continued organizing social/networking events, which is important for many members. Although much work still remains, members of the LGBT and Allies Network maintain a visible and active presence throughout the Metropolitan Health organization.

This case study provides an example of the type of work that occurs in LGBT employee groups. These groups constitute a form of human resource development (HRD) because of the development and learning: for individuals within the groups, by individuals outside the groups, and by organizations and societies. These HRD efforts occur through formal and informal education, awareness efforts, and organization change efforts that result from the employee groups. Workers often join these groups for reasons related to personal growth and development (e.g., to live more integrated lives). These groups also help to increase managers' and workers' awareness of LGBT issues. Employers benefit due to an enhanced diversity climate, improved public relations, and an ultimate increase in organizational performance. The employee groups also help to develop societies by expanding the notions of sexuality and inclusiveness in workplaces.

Social and Historical Background of LGBT Employee Groups

Raeburn (2004) analyzed the significant growth of formal, organized LGB employee networks in the U.S. from 1978 to 1998. The number of networks in Fortune 1000 companies (i.e., the top 1000 publicly-traded U.S. companies, based on revenue) grew from two in 1980 to 69 in 1998. As of July 2008, the Human Rights Campaign database (www.hrc.org) lists 160 officially recognized groups in Fortune 1000 companies. This growth came in spurts, instead of being gradual. Raeburn explained that the fluctuating growth of these groups corresponds to the larger political environments of each period and to the grassroots and national mobilization efforts in the larger LGBT community. For example, with the rise of the New Right in the early 1980s, no new employee networks were started from 1981 to 1985. In the years that saw Bill Clinton come into the presidency, the number of networks went from 10 in 1989 to 50 in 1994.

As employee groups were formed, many needed to justify their existence if they sought official organizational recognition. Employer-recognized groups are usually expected to help create competitive advantage or improve organizational effectiveness. Therefore, these groups must balance their activist agendas with the need to contribute to the organization. This balancing act can be understood through Fenwick's (2004) call for seeking small wins within organizations and through Meyerson and Scully's (1995) idea of *tempered radicalism*. These ideas help us to understand how activists sustain their motivation when making slow progress and how these individuals serve both the needs of their employers and fulfill their drive for social justice. However, other groups exist without employer recognition, either because they are informal and unstructured or because their goals are incompatible with the goals of their employer.

In examining the role of activists in securing partner benefits, Raeburn (2004) found that the corporate executives she spoke with downplayed or ignored the role of employee activists in securing partner benefits, even though the evidence showed otherwise. She found that for-profit companies emphasize making these decisions because they make "good business sense" rather than because it is "the right thing to do." This idea follows the rhetoric of other socially responsible actions by many businesses. But, Raeburn found that as leaders stressed that their decisions were dictated by the market's "invisible hand," current or potential employee activists became less motivated to encourage policy changes because the changes seemed inevitable. Despite leaders' claims about market forces, Raeburn's evidence of a clear linkage between employee activism and policy change illustrates the importance of the groups persisting in their efforts to seek organizational change.

In addition to working explicitly for changes within the organizations, employee groups serve less activist-oriented goals by providing social support and networking opportunities for LGBT employees and allies. These less political needs are a key factor in why employees become involved in the groups. When Scully and Segal (2002) pushed the employee group members in their study for information about what the groups actually do or what they accomplish, members told stories of the groups' founding or talked about the groups' existence as the major accomplishment. Their existence was their "doing." The groups provide a place for activists and non-activists to meet others who have similar identities, which help them persist in struggling for LGBT causes and helps them in their quest to openly exist as LGBT people at work and in society. In that sense, the groups can bring about organization change less explicitly by providing visibility and comfort for an oftentimes-invisible segment of the workforce.

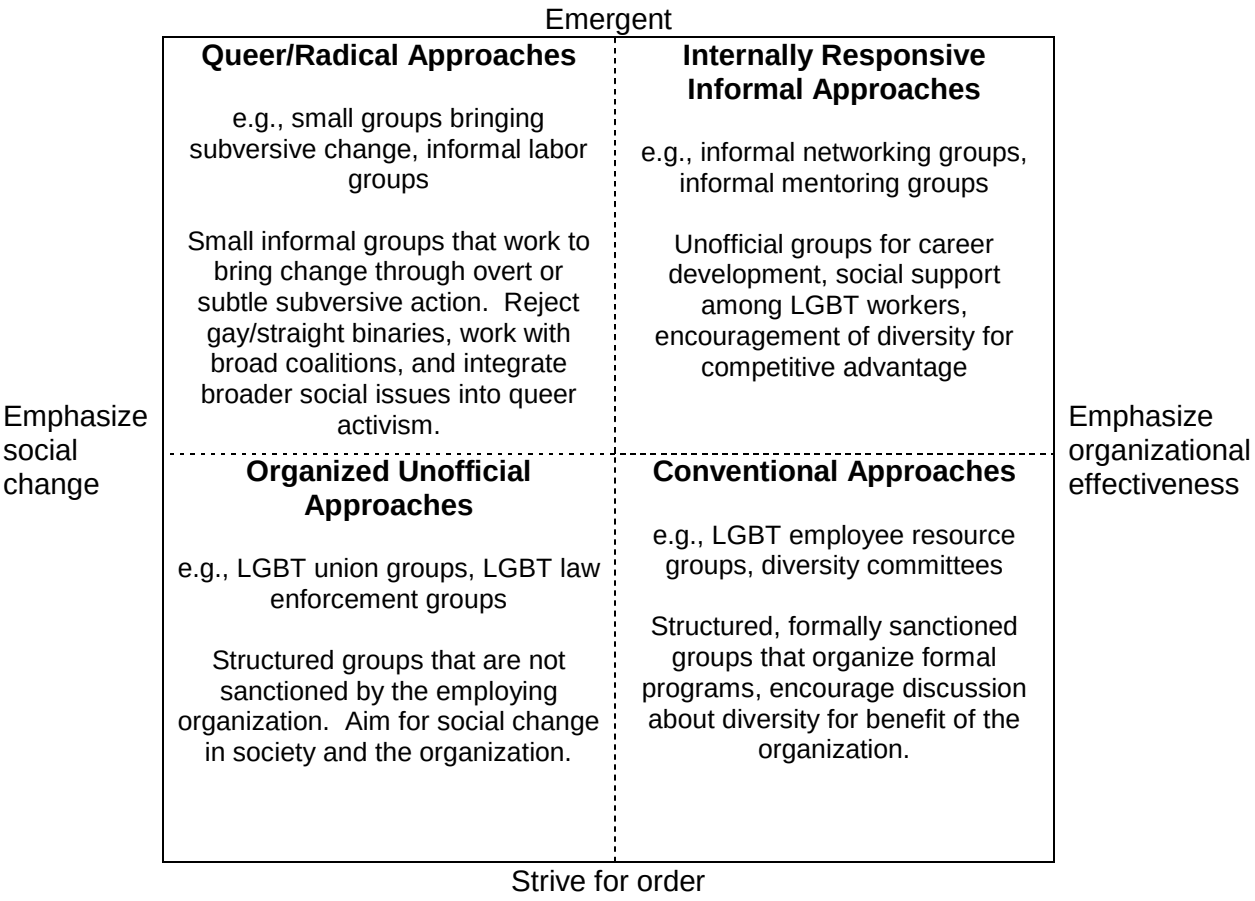
Regardless of the nature of the group, the individual decision to join or organize a group, like the decision to reveal one's sexuality at work, is often related to multiple factors. Personal reasons can include improving self-esteem and seeking integrity, honesty, and openness in one's work life (Clair, Beatty, & MacLean, 2005; Gedro, Cervero, & Johnson-Bailey, 2004; Humphrey, 1999). Professional reasons can include building or enhancing work relationships with colleagues (Clair et al., 2005; Humphrey, 1999). A drive toward larger political or social change can also be a motivating factor (Colgan & Ledwith, 2000; Humphrey, 1999). All of these factors are intertwined and can represent multiple layers of motivation (Gedro et al., 2004; Humphrey, 1999). Additionally, *individual* reasons for being active in an employee group could vary from the *group's* perspective. For example, an individual could take one approach (e.g., focusing on social change) while the larger employee group takes another (e.g., focusing on organizational performance).

Approaches to LGBT Employee Groups

In order to understand the diversity of organizational structures among LGBT employee groups, we have developed a framework and continuum for viewing these groups (depicted in Figure 1), using concepts from the organization theory literature. The framework was influenced by theoretical models of individual, group, and organizational orientations (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Fisher, 2005; Pfeffer, 1982; Whittington, 2001), in addition to being influenced by empirical studies about LGBT and other types of employee interest groups (e.g., Bierema, 2005a, Bierema, 2005b; Colgan & Ledwith, 2000; Jones, 2001; Raeburn, 2004; Ross, 2001). The main objective of this framework is to acknowledge that these various types of groups all work in

some way to advance LGBT issues within workplaces. Because they take different approaches and are organized in various ways, past literature has not presented them as related.

Figure 1
Approaches to Organizing LGBT Employee Groups



LGBT employee groups, like all organizations or small groups, differ in their ultimate goals for existence. These groups typically exist to bring about some type of organization change. Change can be aimed toward improving organizational effectiveness or toward broader social goals, which can include the betterment of society (Whittington, 2001). Although social goals (e.g., social equality) and the goals of organizational effectiveness (e.g., profit) are often seen as opposing, organizational change can be aimed at some combination of those two extremes. In some cases, these goals can even complement each other (e.g., see Githens, 2008a).

Like other groups, LGBT employee groups also vary in their orientation toward the nature of organizations and the structure (or lack of structure) required to successfully meet their goals, regardless of their reasons for seeking those goals. When considering the nature of organizational change, individuals and organizations differ on the degree to which they are influenced by the view that organizations tend toward order or toward chaos (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). If organizations tend toward order, systematization is sought. If they tend toward chaos, emergent thinking is embraced. In other words, leaders' and workers' attitudes toward

organizational change varies depending on their perspectives regarding the "holistic or fragmentary nature" (Fisher, 2005, p. 240) of organizations and whether organizational change occurs through methodical action or emerges through the informal or bottom-up efforts by individuals (Whittington, 2001).

The framework for LGBT employee groups shows two continuums that help to add perspective to the varying orientations under which the groups operate. The left and right sectors depict the level of focus on (a) an orientation toward social change or (b) a focus on improving organizational effectiveness. LGBT employee groups exist on multiple locations on the continuum, rather than being solely in one camp or the other. Regarding their organizational structure, the top and bottom sectors depict the degree to which there is (a) an embrace of chaos and emergent thinking or (b) a striving toward order.

This framework consists of four quadrants: c*onventional approaches*, *internally responsive informal approaches*, *organized unofficial approaches*, and *queer/radical approaches.* In the following subsections, we describe these quadrants and provide examples of what these groups look like in organizations, based on examples from the literature. This framework provides one way of presenting the competing emphases dealt with by employee groups. Obviously, there are other factors that affect these groups. Additionally, these approaches are not as neat and defined as they appear in this figure (hence the dashed line, to indicate the permeability of these continuums).

Conventional Approaches

Employee groups are commonly commissioned or approved by the employing organization. *Conventional approaches* have been written about and discussed most frequently, due to their visibility and alignment with the employing organization.

Organizational approach and goals. These groups typically emphasize their connection to the goals of their employers through discourse surrounding diversity, multiculturalism, and employee satisfaction. In for-profit corporations, this emphasis often means linking these groups to an ultimate increase in profits. In non-profit or governmental sectors, these groups justify their existence by linking their goals to their employers' aims of becoming more effective service providers. Employee activists often frame equity and fairness issues in business terms, although their primary motivations are usually much larger than the goal of increasing corporate profit or improving organizational effectiveness (Meyerson & Scully, 1995; Raeburn, 2004; Scully & Segal, 2002). Insider activists are forced into awkward positions at times. Although they usually identify with their employers and sincerely want their organizations to succeed, they also identify on a deep level with their activist cause (Meyerson & Scully, 1995). This dual identity results in a long-term ambivalence that must be dealt with on a continual basis. Tempered radicals are part of dual (sometimes competing) cultures. Neither of these cultures fully understands the other and the activists can be criticized and called hypocrites by individuals on both sides.

Since conventional groups operate under the auspices of the employing organization, they are organized in some fashion and sometimes have formal officers and committees. These structures can allow for smoother leadership successions and sometimes provide for official representation on employer committees. Additionally, they usually have an official liaison with the organization's HR, HRD, or diversity department. In some organizations, employees in HR have served as allies who support these groups and help to foster environments where they can flourish. However, there is a need for organizations to *encourage* these groups instead of to

control them from the top-down (Scully & Segal, 2002). Some companies explicitly forbid employee groups from engaging in any lobbying of executives. These groups are forced to advocate for changes in very subtle ways, such as very soft education efforts (Out & Equal Workplace Advocates, 2006). This heavy-handed control can lead to resentment by group members and dysfunction in the group, creating an employee relations problem.

Examples. Scully and Segal (2002) found that members wanted the help and support of managers, but wanted to experiment with small-scale local changes rather than being subjected to management or HR initiatives. In their study of nine employee groups (including an LGBT group) in a high-tech company, one of the participants used the metaphor "passion with an umbrella" (p. 127) to explain how these groups operate. Employees felt passionate about the issue because they experience the organizational realities each day. But, they worked under the umbrella of management—with its protection and constraints. Management provided this protection if group members framed their work as good for the organization. But, an umbrella provides flimsy protection. Group members would respond to and challenge management when an issue arose, for example, successfully lobbing executives to move the company's annual meeting out of Colorado after voters passed a referendum denying civil rights protections based on sexual orientation.

In Bierema's (2005a) study of a "failed" women's employee group in a Fortune 500 company, she concluded that conventional groups are less likely to succeed without support from top management. Additionally, she found that members had a fear of being considered activists or feminists in the unsupportive organization she worked with. She suggested the possibility that alternatives to *formal* networks may be more viable in such organizations (Bierema, 2005b).

Internally Responsive Informal Approaches

Perhaps the most common type of LGBT group takes an *internally responsive informal approach*. These groups form organically in response to needs within workplaces.

Organizational approach and goals. Groups that operate under this approach often need no official recognition and are sometimes merely spontaneous and unstructured gatherings of friends and colleagues. Many conventional groups had their origins in these informal groups (Raeburn, 2004). Some groups decide to seek official organizational recognition or are approached by the employing organization to become officially recognized and more formally structured. Alternatively, these groups sometimes form around short-term workplace issues and disband after resolving the issue.

Similar to conventional approaches, employee groups in this category emphasize an improvement of organizational effectiveness. They sometimes emphasize professional enhancement, career development, or social support, which are easily linked to organizational effectiveness. This could mean meeting in informal support groups, providing mentoring, and providing social and networking opportunities for LGBT workers. When these groups become more overtly political, they often advocate for policy changes within organizations, which may require more formal recognition by the employer. However, not all of these groups transition into conventional organization-sponsored groups. In LGBT communities, some individuals prefer the lower profile or anonymity of an unofficial group. Some may seek social support, but do not wish to bring about overt changes in the organization. Others simply wish to operate

outside the official control of the employing organization. In other cases, these groups form spontaneously around a certain issue and dissolve after resolution of the problem.

Examples. In Githens' (2008b) case study about the organizational change process leading to implementing domestic partner benefits at a multi-campus university, an informal group of individuals came together to lobby for changes within the university. This informal group of employees from three campuses convened over 10 years after the first efforts began to attain domestic partner benefits. The university's board of trustees approved health insurance benefits in 2003. Shortly thereafter, this single-issue group morphed into a quasi-official HR advisory committee that has remained active because the university has been slow in expanding domestic partner benefits to include family and medical leave, sick leave, and funeral leave. Githens concluded that the group's shift to a conventional structure help contribute to a loss of assertiveness which delayed policy changes.

In organizations that have more progressive policies toward LGBT people (e.g., inclusive equal employment opportunity policies, domestic partner benefits), conventional employee groups are moving beyond an emphasis on changing macro policies and engaging in change and education efforts that are better addressed in smaller, local settings within their organizations. For example, the fostering of a friendly culture toward LGBT people is better addressed through small-scale efforts when LGBT-friendly policy changes have already occurred (Out & Equal Workplace Advocates, 2006).

Organized Unofficial Approaches

Organized unofficial groups form outside the employing organization in order to bring about social change within their members' places of employment. These groups often form through unions or other outside groups.

Organizational approach and goals. These groups form structured organizations, but seek social change, as outsider groups, within their employing organizations. Most frequently, these groups exist within labor unions and sometimes have formal leaders and budgets. In other cases, they are independent of unions. As outsider groups, they are not necessarily focused on organizational effectiveness. As illustrated below, the goals of the specific groups vary depending on whether they exist within unions and depending on the type of union they exist within.

Examples. AFL-CIO "Pride at Work" chapters exist as umbrella organizations around the country, in addition to groups within specific unions (e.g., Teamsters GLBT Caucus). These groups emphasize broader social change that includes the specific conditions faced by LGBT workers, the interests of other non-LGBT groups, and the broader economic interests of all workers. Duggan (2003) argued that this multifaceted approach is necessary in order to avoid a weakened focus on LGBT-specific equality that results in the co-option of LGBT interests by larger economic forces. In other words, she bemoaned the assimilationist aims of groups that narrowly focus on LGBT issues, but ignore other types of inequality (e.g., economic inequality). Colgan and Ledwith's (2000) study showed that some activists seek change through union-affiliated *special interest groups*, while other LGBT people choose to work within the *traditional union leadership structures* in order to seek changes in their workplaces.

In some sectors, where union recognition is/was not viable for LGBT groups, workers have organized their own unaffiliated groups. For example, the Gay Officers Action League (GOAL) started in New York in 1982 (Jirak, 2001). In the same year, the head of the police union claimed there were no gay or lesbian police officers in New York. The group formed in order to make members visible to their fellow police officers, the administration, and the union in an environment with a long history of homophobia. Since 1982, LGBT law enforcement groups have slowly spread both inside and outside the U.S. and the groups oftentimes serve as de facto liaisons between police departments and larger LGBT communities, serving the interests of the LGBT officers and the larger LGBT community.

Queer/Radical Approaches

Queer/radical groups emphasize broader social goals (like the organized unofficial groups), but have little desire to be formally organized or to have affiliations with larger institutions. They also utilize a unique approach to social change and sexuality.

Organizational approach and goals. The goal of queer/radical groups is not improvement at the organizational level, but improvement of social conditions. In LGBT circles, some have advocated for universalizing and queer approaches (rather than identity-based approaches) in which sexuality is seen as fluid and existing on a continuum (Sedgwick, 1990). They argue that such approaches are more appropriate because of the opportunity to examine the normalization of heterosexuality (rather than focusing on homophobia as a psychological condition to be cured) (Britzman, 1995). This broader approach has the potential to open up conversations and include a wider range of individuals. Instead of seeking to create an *understanding* of and *recognition* of LGBT persons, queer approaches to change and education efforts by employee activists seek to complicate these issues by dealing with the multifaceted approaches to "performing" gender and sexuality. For example, groups adopting these approaches can question the accepted norms of gender and sexuality by embracing transgender issues. As part of this free-flowing approach, queer/radical groups exist at the grassroots level and embrace emergent organizational forms with few pre-determined boundaries or structures. In addition to being used by informal groups adopting only queer approaches, queer ideas can influence groups falling into the other three categories described above.

Queer conceptions of activism can allow for addressing the differences of all workers, not just those who are a sexual minority (Hill, 2004). By their nature, queer groups emphasize common cause and coalition building with other groups. Since queer approaches de-emphasize LGBT identities, they focus on integrating queer issues with broader social problems. For example, a group of queer employee activists could build coalitions with those trying to improve economic conditions (e.g., a union) or with those calling for an employer to be more socially responsible (e.g., environmental groups). Diversity efforts, civil rights laws, and multiculturalism have run into repeated backlash due to their limited scope. Queer approaches encourage calls for exploring individual authenticity by rejecting taken-for-granted binaries and practices. Authenticity can be encouraged so that all people can feel free to express their individual differences (Yoshino, 2006). This type of authenticity cannot be forced through government or organizational mandates, instead it comes from small-scale efforts and interpersonal relationships. Duggan's (2003) ideas (described in the *organized unofficial approaches* section) are relevant here, particularly her call for moving beyond a singular focus on issues of difference and instead integrating these differences (e.g., LGBT status, race, gender)

with economic issues. Due to the global nature of our society and worldwide scope of social, economic, and cultural problems, narrowly focused solutions may be short-sighted and may provide only temporary and partial improvement of conditions (e.g., Lee, 2007; O'Donnell, 2007).

Examples. A queer approach to organizing is seen through the workers at the Chelsea location of Barneys, the New York department store (Ross, 2001). During an impasse over contract negotiations, workers held a festive fashion show in front of the store. Workers dressed in drag for the event, which was designed to air their concerns to customers, management, and local residents. Although most of the store's workers were gay, the non-selling employees included many non-LGBT people, whose concerns were also being addressed in the contract negotiations. The fashion show resulted in a reenergized membership that eventually led to a very good contract. Within that union, a challenging of gender norms was easily integrated into the call for improvement of economic concerns, in a festive environment that allowed workers to win allies.

As mentioned earlier, queer concepts are integrated into the other three types of employee groups. For example, in addressing the repeated controversies over the use of gendered restrooms for transgender people, a conventional employee group could join with an employee group that advocates for individuals with disabilities to request a private, non-gendered restroom during a building renovation project. This restroom could make life easier for a future transgender employee (if that individual was not comfortable using a larger restroom) and could also be beneficial for some people with disabilities who may prefer more privacy and space. This new focus on transgender issues certainly allows queer ideas of sexuality and gender to be integrated into the groups taking more conventional approaches (Out & Equal Workplace Advocates, 2006). Even more so than issues surrounding sexuality, questions of gender identity complicate people's expectation of femininity and masculinity, which often results in very hostile climates (McCreery & Krupat, 2001). Addressing these gender-related issues also helps heterosexual men and women who experience poor climates or harassment. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is receiving an increasing number of complaints regarding heterosexual male-on-male harassment (Gender Public Advocacy Coalition, 2008). These issues create opportunities to build bridges with other groups and create work environments free of harassment.

Using the concepts of queerness within an organization can be troubling to some, since it represents a domestication of the once-radical queer principles that led to direct action and arrests (Hill, 2004). In such case, for those seeking to break out of the confines of both organizational affiliation and structured groups, queer approaches allow workers to explore complicated, multifaceted aspects of sexuality without being bound to the conditional acceptance by the employing organizations. However, in many workplaces, groups adopting a wholly queer/radical approach need to operate "below the radar" due to obvious political issues within the organization.

Conclusions

Our unique contribution to research and practice is in presenting these disparate forms of LGBT employee groups in one cohesive framework that illustrates the similarities and differences among these groups that seek organization change. Githens' (2008b) case study used

this framework as its central organizing scheme for understanding the complex and competing emphases displayed through a nearly 20-year effort to attain domestic partner benefits in one university system. Future empirical research can test and/or apply this framework to other types of groups. Research could also explore how members of employee groups *identify themselves* rather than considering how the groups organize themselves. Conceptual research could expand on or modify the model to reflect the realities of practice or to incorporate other important constructs. Empirical or theoretical research could determine whether the framework holds up in various settings or when applied to other types of employee groups, such as those organized around disability status, race, ethnicity, gender, and other characteristics.

HRD practitioners can benefit from the ideas in this article by considering how to best bring change in particular workplaces. For example, in some workplaces, alignment with organizational effectiveness is essential. In other workplaces, groups aligning with unions provide a more effective way of bringing change. Some groups accomplish more and bring greater creativity when not stifled by a formal group structure, while other groups find that structure brings long-term order and consistency that allows the group to persist in bringing changes over many years. By contemplating these differing orientations, employee activists can consider how best to bring change and employers can consider how best to foster the creative efforts of those seeking to improve the workplace environment.

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