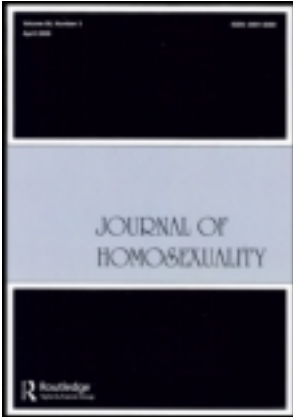


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Eric Swank PhD^a & Breanne Fahs PhD^b

^a Department of Sociology, Social Work & Criminology, Morehead State University, Morehead, Kentucky, USA

^b Women and Gender Studies Program, Arizona State University, Glendale, Arizona, USA

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Resources, Social Networks, and Collective Action Frames of College Students Who Join the Gay and Lesbian Rights Movement

ERIC SWANK, PhD

*Department of Sociology, Social Work & Criminology, Morehead State University,
Morehead, Kentucky, USA*

BREANNE FAHS, PhD

Women and Gender Studies Program, Arizona State University, Glendale, Arizona, USA

This article explores the reasons why some college students join the gay and lesbian rights movements. After addressing the frequency of students joining this social movement, the article then considers the contexts and motivations behind such actions. To explore the catalysts to gay and lesbian rights activism, this study utilizes variables from resource, mobilizing, and framing theories of political participation. Using data from 820 heterosexual, lesbian, gay, and bisexual students, we found that economic and educational resources failed to explain participation in gay and lesbian politics. Instead, predictors of gay and lesbian activism were more closely aligned to four key variables: the political orientations of trusted peers, knowing full-fledged activists, an ability to recognize heterosexism, and participants' maintenance of activist identities.

KEYWORDS activism, collective behavior, homosexuality, gay rights, political participation, social movements, social identity

Social movements are collective efforts that use both insider and outsider tactics to force change in reluctant opponents. Insider tactics focus on the electoral approaches of voting, campaign contributions, or petition drives while outsider tactics include the direct action means of protesting as well as various kinds of civil disobedience. New social movements, such as the lesbian, gay, and bisexual movement (LGB), use both types of tactics

Address correspondence to Eric Swank, Department of Sociology, Social Work & Criminology, Morehead State University, 325 Rader Hall, Morehead, KY 40351, USA. E-mail: e.swank@morehead-st.edu

when they focus on the “politics of recognition” and “politics of redistribution” (Bernstein, 1997; Fraser, 1995; Taylor & Whittier, 1992). By prioritizing the politics of recognition, segments of the LGB rights movement want to challenge and eliminate detrimental social customs. When confronting heteronormative thoughts and actions, segments of the LGB rights movement want to break the veil of silence, normalize same-sex relationships, and deconstruct the justifications of heterosexism and compulsory heterosexuality, among other things. The instrumental and redistribution wings of the LGB rights movement center on improving governmental laws, policies, and regulations. This state-centered approach emphasizes the expansion of rights, statutory protections, and proper governmental spending through the use of insider and outsider political tactics.

Social movements often consist of temporary coalitions between different social constituencies. The LGB rights movement has always had a presence of student activists within its ranks (D’Emilio, 2000; Rimmerman, 2007; Taylor & Whittier, 1992). While essays have chronicled a history of student involvement in LGB rights movements (Meyer, 2004), there are virtually no systematic studies on why either heterosexual or LGB students join this movement (Wilkinson & Sagarin, 2010). This study addresses this research gap by concentrating on the factors that may or may not inspire college undergraduates to engage in electoral or protest activities on the behalf of gay and lesbian rights.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a well-established literature on political participation in the United States. When selecting potential predictors of gay rights activism, this study incorporates the general resource, mobilization, and collective action theories of political science, psychology and sociology (Brady, Verba, & Scholzman, 1995; McAdam & Paulsen, 1993; Klandermans, 1997; Snow & Benford, 1992). Moreover, the study also relies on the early empirical studies that examine who typically protests for LGB or transgender rights (Lombardi, 1999; Simon, Lowry, Sturmer, Weber, & Freitag, 1998; Swank & Fahs, 2011; Taylor, Kimport, Van Dyke, & Andersen, 2009; Waldner, 2001; Wilkinson & Sagarin, 2010) and improved AIDS policies (Elbaz, 1996; Jennings & Andersen, 2003; Rollins & Hirsch, 2003).

We began our theorizing with the much-cited resource-model of political participation (Brady et al., 1995). Offering a succinct answer to why people refrain from politics, the resource-model asserts: “because they can’t, because they don’t want to, or because nobody asked” (Brady et al., 1995, p. 271). With regard to “they can’t,” many people refrain from politics because of a supposed dearth of necessary resources to be political. While crucial resources may come in many forms, we emphasize the importance

of financial conditions, free time, and civic skills. The predicament of “they don’t want to” deals with a lack of psychological interest in politics. An indifference to politics and policy is sometimes belied as stupidity or indolence, but the resource model assumes that blasé attitudes are a reaction to a lower sense of political efficacy or greater levels of individualism. Finally, the “nobody asked” factor implies that people are isolated from the recruitment networks that promote activism; that is, political bystanders are often excluded from the social networks that convey the values and information that makes activism probable.

“They Can’t”: The Role of Income, Education, and Status Hierarchies

Every society has an unequal distribution of wealth, prestige, and power. This unequal allocation of resources creates aggregates of people—social classes—who share similar amounts of income and life opportunities. The resource-model assumes these class and status hierarchies are fundamental to political inclinations and activism (Brady et al., 1995; Leighley & Vedlitz, 1999; Lim, 2008). Socioeconomic standing is a universal variable that drives political participation tendencies for members of every social group in society (i.e., socioeconomic status works across race, gender, religious, or sexual orientation boundaries). In the simplest of terms, a person’s class location grants or impedes access to opportunities and financial resources that facilitate activism. Consequently, people in higher socioeconomic levels amass and retain the structural elicitors of activism, be it more money, wider educational opportunities, greater amounts of free time, or more chances to lead people in day-to-day scenarios.

Studies of the general population often find greater affluence linked to greater activism (Barkan, Cohn, & Whitaker, 1995; Brady et al., 1995; Dey, 1997; Leighley & Vedlitz, 1999; Oliver, 1984). However, measures of educational attainment provide less consistent results in studies of LGB activism. One study found that transsexuals who were employed in professional occupations were more involved in political campaigns than their blue-collar counterparts (Lombardi, 1999) while other studies suggested that higher-income gays and lesbians belonged to more gay organizations (Barrett & Pollack, 2005) and attended more demonstrations for the recognition of same-sex marriages (Taylor et al., 2009) or AIDS funding (Jennings & Andersen, 2003). Conversely, several studies argued that income did not predict the amount of involvement in gay and AIDS rights groups (Elbaz, 1996; Sturmer & Simon, 2004; Swank & Fahs, 2011) or voting for LGB rights (Barth, Overby, & Huffmon, 2009). Finally, one study revealed an inverse relationship as it contended that it was poorer gays and lesbians who joined Queer Nation and ACT UP (Rollins & Hirsch, 2003).

Research is also unclear as to whether education fosters greater activism among sexual minorities. One study suggested that gays and lesbians who attended protests were more educated than sexual minorities who did not do such actions (Swank & Fahs, 2011) while similar educational associations were present for heterosexuals who voted for LGBT rights (Barth et al., 2009) and become LGBT allies (Fingerhut, 2011). Similarly, two studies have suggested that ACT UP members were highly educated (Elbaz, 1996; Rollins & Hirsch, 2003). Conversely, several studies claimed that educational attainment did not differentiate the amount of political activism among gays and lesbians (Barrett & Pollack, 2005; Lombardi, 1999; Sturmer & Simon, 2004; Waldner, 2001).

The role of gender hierarchies for political participation is far from certain in studies of the U.S. populace. Older studies suggested that heterosexual women, from the beginning of enfranchisement to the 1950s, have been slightly less politically active (Barkan et al., 1995). In contrast, newer studies have suggested that this gender gap disappeared or had even reversed in the years that followed the second wave of the women's movement (Dey, 1997; Hritzuk & Park, 2000; Lieghey & Nagler, 1992; Schussman, & Soule, 2005).

Most studies of gay and lesbian political engagement also echo this lack of gender effects. Multiple studies suggest that the frequency of political activism was roughly the same with gays and lesbians (Jennings & Andersen, 2003; Rollins & Hirsch, 2003; Swank & Fahs, 2011; Taylor et al., 2009; Waldner, 2001). However, gay men go to more protests than lesbian women (Herek, Norton, Allen, & Sims, 2010) and males significantly outnumbered females in ACT UP New York (Elbaz, 1996). Conversely, another study found that heterosexual women were more likely to become LGBT allies than heterosexual men (Fingerhut, 2011).

While race has often been studied in issues of political participation, empirical studies on LGB activism have totally ignored this factor. This omission could be crucial since some studies find that African Americans are more likely to join protests than European Americans (Bobo & Gilliam, 1990; Hritzuk & Park, 2000; Martinez, 2005) but European Americans are less likely to be homophobic than people of color (Herek & Capitano, 1995; Lewis, 2003; Loftus, 2001; Schulte, 2002).

“They Don’t Want To”: Framing Grievances, Efficacy, and Collective Identities

Frames are generally conceived as cultural tools or schemas that provide “tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters” (Gitlin, 1980, p. 6). While conservative frames prioritize conformity and deference to conventional standards, progressive collective action frames do the exact opposite. By offering cultural justifications of dissent, collective action frames identify common interests among the “oppressed” and provide a rationale

to protest against unjust social arrangements. Or, as Gamson (1992) wrote, “collective action frames are ‘sets of action oriented beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate [collective action]’ ” (p. 7).

Movement theorists have identified several dimensions of collective action frames (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLuaglin-Volpe, 2004; Gamson, 1992; Ghaziani, 2011; Klandermans, 1996; Taylor & Whittier, 1992). First, collective action frames initially render some societal norms as wrong, unacceptable, and unjust. In naming the injustice, Snow and Benford (1992) suggested that these frames serve as “accenting devices that either underscore or embellish the seriousness and injustice of a social condition or redefines it as unjust immoral” (p.137). These injustice frames can highlight many sorts of maltreatments but they often elicit greater salience when they focus on violations of fairness or equity norms. Injustices seem worse or more vile when dominant groups seem to benefit at the expense of innocent victims. Second, frames identify the causes of the injustice. By providing a diagnostic function, frames are etiologies that explain why problems exist and assign levels of blame or capability to different entities. In making these attributions, frames highlight the sorts of practices that should be modified, transformed, or eliminated. Third, frames also convince bystanders that they should use political tactics to stop these violations. These prognostic aspects of frames usually emphasize the urgency of political action and a sense that challenges from less powerful constituencies can force concessions from a reluctant, dominant target (this confidence in movement tactics is sometimes called “agency” or a “sense of collective efficacy”). In short, collective action frames must assure potential challengers that electoral or protest movements are an appropriate and viable response to their grievances.

Finally, frames must provide a collective or shared identity among the aggrieved. Collective identities always draw boundaries between oppressors and the oppressed and often contest and refute societal claims that members of their group are inferior, worthless, sick, or maladjusted. Instead, collective action frames offer narratives about the virtues of similar people by claiming that their group is illegitimately threatened, deprived, or treated badly. These collective identities enhance a sense of solidarity and loyalty for the people who share the same problems while also fostering some distrust or contempt for the people or institutions that maintain these problems. Collective identities can also enhance self-esteem and assuage the distress of having a spoiled identity (members of stigmatized groups can gain confidence and pleasure when they no longer feel compelled to follow the harsh judgments of others).

There is often great variance in how individual citizens respond to collective action frames. Full-fledged activists and movement sympathizers are often receptive to movement narratives but bored bystanders and movement opponents generally find these frames irrelevant, false, or morally reprehensible. It is the goal of this article to ascertain the sort of injustice, attributional, prognostic, and collective identity frames are internalized by LGB activists.

Earlier studies of gay and lesbian activism have mostly failed to incorporate issues of perceived societal injustices into their models. This means that LGB activism studies often ignore possible grievances with the hostile, covert, and blatant sides of heterosexism that “denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any nonheterosexual form of behavior, identity, relationship, or community” (Herek, 1992, p. 89). The acceptance of “old-fashioned” heterosexism may be important since recent studies note that sexual minorities who criticized homosexuality, or were opposed to same sex marriages, were less inclined to join political protests (Swank & Fabs, 2011; Taylor et al., 2009). Further, most studies have not incorporated any measures of new or modern forms of heterosexism into their analysis. Modern heterosexism can be crucial since it focuses on the recognition or denial of societal discrimination against gays and lesbians (Morrison & Morrison, 2003; Walls, 2008). Without an awareness of systematic and exploitative power imbalances between straights and gays and lesbians, any calls for liberation might seem unnecessary, nonsensical, or outlandish. This study avoids this omission by including measures of older and modern heterosexist perceptions in our multivariate analysis.

Instead of focusing on perceptions of societal discrimination, most gay and lesbian activism studies have measured the concept of injustice frames through the more intimate avenue of experienced discrimination. In many cases, gays and lesbians may become aware of heterosexism by observing or hearing about the mistreatment of other LGB people (Evans & Herriott, 2004; Russell & McGuire, 2008). Personally enduring first-hand experiences of heterosexism can lead to detrimental coping mechanisms among sexual minorities. The anguish of circumscribed, face-to-face experiences of discrimination, combined with the homophobic precepts that sexual minorities should be accommodating, silent, or self-hating, can lead to psychological disengagement (Wilson & Yoshikawa, 2004), social withdrawal or avoidance (Thompson, 2006), greater suicide and drug risk (Mays & Cochran, 2001), dangerous sexual practices (Wilson & Yoshikawa, 2004), and stigmatization of other sexual minorities (Swim & Thomas, 2006).

Although surviving discrimination can inspire self-destructive responses, cases of first-hand discrimination can also delegitimize conventional norms and create the oppositional consciousness that eventually leads to LGB activism (Friedman & Leaper, 2010; Jennings & Andersen, 2003; Hyers, 2007; Waldner, 2001). Two studies on AIDS activism found that gay men were more likely to protest governmental policies when they were demeaned by medical professionals (Jennings & Andersen, 2003; Tester, 2004). Other studies have found that gays and lesbians who dealt with sexual and verbal harassment, or discrimination in housing and employment, were more likely to accept the sort of queer identity that leads to joining radical gay rights groups (Rollins & Hirsch, 2003; Simon et al., 1998; Waldner, 2001). Moreover, the act of surviving deliberate and overt forms of homophobia

remains statistically significant even when researchers control for contextual and framing influences (Simon et al., 1998; Waldner, 2001).

Some of the gay movement literature suggests that efficacy perceptions are related to the protesting inclinations of gays and lesbians (Jennings & Andersen, 2003; Jones, 2002; Swank & Fahs, 2011). In addressing issues of personal efficacy, Jennings and Andersen (2003) suggested that gay men were more likely to join AIDS advocacy groups when they thought they had a good understanding of political issues. However, other studies suggest that perceptions of collective efficacy was irrelevant to college student activism on the behalf of a lesbian and gay student center (Wilkinson & Sagarin, 2010) or how often married gays and lesbians joined gay right groups or attended a political demonstration (Taylor et al., 2009). Moreover, the largest quantitative study of gay and lesbian activism noted that “power expectancies” worked in the exact opposite ways as predicted (Waldner, 2001); that is, homosexuals were more likely to join a gay–lesbian political campaign when they thought the government was unresponsive to gay or lesbian demands.

The concept of collective identity has been measured several ways in studies of LGB activism. The most common approach has explored the effects of publicly embracing one’s sexual orientation, but other studies have explored the impacts of what it means to be a member of LGB communities. Several studies have found that out or fully queer sexual minorities are more politically active than their counterparts who routinely hide their sexual orientation (Gortmaker & Brown, 2006; Konik & Stewart, 2004; Rollins & Hirsch, 2003, Waldner 2001). Moreover, gays who like and respect other gays join more protests (Gould, 2002; Simon et al., 1998), and lesbians challenge homophobic comments more often when they embraced the activists norms of standing up for what’s right and defending the rights of subordinated groups (Hyers, 2007; Swank & Fahs, 2011).

The variable of collective identities might work slightly different for heterosexual college students. Because heterosexuals are fighting against the privileging on their own sexual identity, Myers (2008) argued that heterosexual allies probably rely more on a “commitment-based rather experienced-based activist identity” (p. 169) than do gay and lesbian activists. At an organizational level, student groups that work against homophobia generally define real commitment as the active, concrete involvement in leading efforts for social change (Meyer, 2004). At a personal level, heterosexual students who distrust heterosexism may feel guilty, disingenuous, or complicit with wrongdoing if they never rebel against it. By being a LGB activist, heterosexuals can publicly defy their undeserved advantages, show empathy toward oppressed sexual minorities, and symbolically remove the shame of being an oppressor (Fingerhut, 2011). In turn, a break from heterosexist precepts can offer moments of pleasure, pride, or relief because it can be emotionally gratifying to fight for injustice in potentially risky situations (Kelly & Breilinger, 1995; Opp, 1990; Polleta & Jasper, 2001). Consequently,

gay and lesbian activism can be seen by as an important opportunity to express key values of self-identified gay allies (Myers, 2008; Wilkinson & Sagarin, 2010). As Turner (1981) writes: “expressing support for a cause, regardless of whether it produces desired visible consequences . . . advocates may simply want to ‘do something,’ to ‘go on the record,’ to ‘strike a blow for the cause’” (p. 11).

“Nobody Asked”: Recruitment Networks and Belonging to Civic Groups

Theories about mobilizing structures suggest that residing in certain social environments fosters greater political activism (Lim, 2008; McAdam & Paulsen, 1993; McCarthy, 1996; Passy, 2001; Polleta & Jasper, 2001, Taylor 1989). Social networks, which represent webs of recurring interactions between people and groups, always convey some sort of beliefs, values, norms, and identities. While the content of networks is filtered through a complicated interpretive process, most people derive their worldviews and identities from their immersion in contexts that praise prevailing social orders and dismiss the worth of minority groups. However, some networks transmit collective action frames that contest conventional social scripts and suggest that political challenges are necessary, important, and worthwhile. While the communication between network partners can inspire activist inclinations, such exchanges can also draw people into specific political mobilizations. Political parties, committed partisans, and movement activists often try to motivate activism through different persuasive techniques (e.g., face-to-face conversations, phone calls, e-mail, direct mail, etc.). As such, social networks seem to play the dual purpose of pushing and pulling people into political activism. In effect, social networks boost political engagement since they often convey the attitudes that make people prone or receptive to activism, and they also disseminate the logistical information that makes activism possible.

Family members and friends are often considered the key political socializers of young adults (Chorn-Dunham & Bengston, 1992; Dolan, 1995). When exploring activist tendencies, some studies contend that college students joined antinuclear and civil rights movements faster when they thought their friends and acquaintances approved of such actions (Beyerlein & Andrews, 2008; Opp, 1990), while another study found that college students were more supportive of a gay and lesbian student center when they thought their friends condoned such a plan (Wilkinson & Sagarin, 2010). Moreover, budding activists were more likely to act on their political predispositions when they were encouraged or asked to be active by someone who they personally knew (Finkel & Muller, 1998; Hritzuk & Park, 2000; Lim, 2008; Schussman, & Soule, 2005).

The concept of social network immersion in gay activism research has been measured via network size, network density, and types of group affiliations. Some studies have found that gays and lesbians who routinely talk with other gays and lesbians were more politically active (Lombardi, 1999; Tester, 2004). Other studies suggest that membership in LGB voluntary groups matters even more (Swank & Fahs, 2011). While joining a LGB athletic club or a gay friendly church may sensitize participants about shared grievances and enhance group solidarity, the integration into LGB social service centers seems to translate into greater political activism (Elbaz, 1996; Lombardi, 1999; Waldner, 2001). While the exact mechanism behind this association is not fully known, it is assumed that these centers introduce political rookies to important framing perspectives and explicit recruitment networks (e.g., consciousness-raising groups and national gay rights groups that “block recruit” at their functions).

METHOD

By turning this previous literature into three testable theoretical models, this study examined how resource, framing, and mobilizing variables predicted LGB activism among heterosexual and LGB college students. By trying to identify the factors that distinguished between the more and less active college students, the following analysis considered the associations with the nine independent variables of family income, education, race, gender, modern heterosexism, older heterosexism, perceptions of efficacy, activist identities, political conversations, feminist friends, and recruitment networks.

Sample

This study drew from the impressions of 820 college students—both heterosexual-identified and LGB-identified—in the United States. In searching for sets of activists and nonactivists, this study selected respondents through two means. By seeking a pool of fully engaged student activists, the lead researcher distributed surveys at several college-based protests throughout the Midwest and South (Indiana University, Ohio State University, University of Kentucky). Most of these protests focused on antiwar activism, but one of them highlighted expanding health benefits to gay and lesbian domestic partners (protests occurred from winter 2001 through spring of 2002). To maximize the likelihood of completed surveys, the researcher asked the protesters to complete the survey before they left the event. When asking about the goals behind their all of their political activities in their lifetime, 39 of the 244 respondents at the university-based protests indicated that they engaged in any political behavior on the behalf of LGB rights.

To create a comparison group of nonactivists, this study also distributed surveys to students who belonged to 12 colleges through the entire United States (fall of 2000). To create this comparative group, we initially separated all public campuses into research, doctoral, masters, or baccalaureate clusters (using the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education). This creation of four clusters enabled access to students from many sorts of colleges, including large research campuses and smaller, state-run commuter colleges. Next, three schools were randomly selected from each of the four strata.¹

After selecting these 12 colleges, the lead author contacted faculty from each institution via email. Professors in the natural sciences, humanities, social sciences, and business were asked to administer surveys in their classrooms since student social attitudes have previously differed by such majors (Astin, 1993). With participation of faculty being voluntary, 28 of the 338 contacted professors decided to distribute and collect the surveys during one of their class sessions (8.2%).² In total, 575 students completed the survey through these means and only five said that they had done any political activism for LGB rights.

The sample characteristics had some unique qualities. The total sample had a strong female presence, as 512 of the 820 respondents were women (62%). The educational attainment was also slightly skewed toward upper-division students (39% were seniors, 29% juniors, 14% sophomores, and 17% first year). The sample contained a high percentage of rural residents because several of the commuter schools were located far from any major cities (i.e., only 29% of the students claimed to be from large metropolitan areas, while 34% came from small towns or rural backgrounds). However, the racial breakdown seemed to mirror that of many public institutions, as 86% of the sample were European American, 7% African American, 3% Latino or Latina, and 2% Asian American. Likewise, the age pyramid conformed to familiar trends of college students in that the mean age was 23.2 years old and 70% of the students were between 18 and 22 years old ($SD = 6.6$, mode was 20 years old). Finally, this sample presented a very middle-class profile since only 8% of students came from families with incomes under \$15,000, 22% of the students came from families with incomes of \$50,000 to 80,000, and 14% of student belonged to families with incomes of \$81,000 to 100,000.

Measures

The survey collected information on general political attitudes. Almost every item recorded responses through a 5-point Likert scale (*strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*). In the standard fashion, these responses were coded with scores of 1 to 5 (*strongly agree* generally equaled 5). The more idiosyncratic coding procedures are described in the ensuing passages.

Participation in the gay and lesbian rights movement was based on a political activities approach. Respondents were given a checklist of 17 ways to be politically active. Eleven of the behaviors dealt with electoral means of influencing governmental policies (e.g., voting, making financial contributions to elected officials, writing a letter to a politician, signing a petition) while six items dealt with more unconventional and protesting tactics (going to a legal demonstration, engaging in civil disobedience, boycotting products, protesting another group). Students were also asked about the political causes that motivated such actions. If the student indicated that they engaged in any of these political actions for gay or lesbian rights, they were deemed LGB rights activists. In the end, 44 of the 820 students were considered LGB rights activists through this approach.

Most of the demographic variables were measured through dichotomous dummy variables. For gender, respondents were asked "What is your sex?" (female = 1, male = 0). Race was determined by their response to the question: "How would you classify your race/ethnicity?" Although it is better to identify variance by all races, the small number of African-American, Asian, Latino and Latina, and Native-American students led to the binary coding of White = 1 and others = 0.

Some of the other demographic factors were measured through closed-ended scales. Social class was determined through a family income scale (there were 10 categories that started at under \$10,000 and ended with above \$151,000). For educational attainment, students were asked "Please indicate your highest level of education." Undergraduates who said they were first-year students received a 1 while seniors were given a 4.

Activist studies typically choose to operationalize mobilization networks in many different ways. Most often, the studies have explored the value expressed by other people, the way a person was recruited to activism, and types of group affiliations (Lim, 2008; McAdam & Paulsen, 1993). Our variable, political conversations, addressed participants' access to people who speak about political topics. By making a composite scale of "talking about politics with family members and others," respondents were asked about how often they talked about politics with their mother, father, siblings, best friends, college acquaintances, and college professors ($\alpha = .780$). Another variable, feminist friends, traced the extent to which peers criticized conventional gender roles and approved of women's rights activism among peer referents (see Opp, 1990). The prompt explored access to friends who have feminist identities: "Many of my friends are feminists" (*strongly agree* = 5). The variable, recruitment networks, dealt with issues of access to peers who shared relevant information about ongoing or future political campaigns. To address cases of explicit face-to-face requests for participation, we asked: "Have any friends ever asked you to go to a political event?" (similar to Eckberg, 1988). To code the dichotomous responses, yes was coded as 1 and no coded as 0.

All of the collective action frames were measured through Likert scales. We had two variables that addressed heterosexist perceptions. The first variable emphasized old-fashioned versions of heterosexism that condemn contemporary family structures as wrong, harmful, and deviant: "Family values are breaking down in America" (*strongly agree* = 5) This is important since gay rights messages have to often reframe or counter conventional messages on families (Dugan, 2004; Ghaziani, 2011). The second injustice frame dealt with issues of modern heterosexism (Morrison & Morrison, 2003), a kind of sexual prejudice that does not castigate and subjugate gays and lesbians along moral grounds but instead perpetuates heterosexual privilege by denying, ignoring, and failing to recognize the ways that compulsory heterosexuality disadvantages sexual minorities: "Too often heterosexuals are unfairly accused of being homophobic" (*strongly agree* = 5).

The concept of collective efficacy was assessed through interpretation of the potential efficacy of different movement tactics (Finkel & Mueller, 1998). Four items asked about how much signature drives, demonstrations, and sit-ins helped the social movement achieve its goals ($\alpha = .650$) (*helped a lot* = 5; *hurt a lot* = 1). Total scores in this additive scale ranged from 4 to 20.

Activist identities were detected through a five-item composite scale on politicized self-concepts ($\alpha = .700$). The first two questions dealt with the internalization of protest norms, or the extent that people feel obliged to protest: "I see myself as someone who is involved in promoting social justice" and "I feel guilty when I am politically active" (Opp, 1990; Kelly & Breilinger, 1995). Another item dealt with support for collective efforts to assuage injustice: "If we leave well enough alone, eventually men and women will be treated equally" (*strongly agree* = 1). Finally, activist identities included rejoinders to the free-rider dilemma of people benefitting from activism even if they remain politically disengaged (Oliver, 1984). To address the belief that the respondent must remain active in order to compensate for the political apathy of others, we posed: "I must be politically active since most people are politically inactive" (*strongly agree* = 5).

Analytical Strategy

The following section displays multivariate results derived from several binary logistic regression analyses. Logistic regressions were well suited at analyzing dichotomous dependent variables as they calculate a likelihood estimation of a certain event occurring (Hosmer & Lemeshow, 1989). In our case, there were two categories in the dependent or outcome variable: respondents either participated or did not participate in the LGB rights movement (nonparticipation is the reference). Logistic regressions are also well suited for our data since their use is not confined to many of the strict requirements other sorts of regressions (i.e., a normal distribution in the dependent variable or no problems of homoscedasticity). As expected,

the data met all the conditions for a logistic regression in that the outcome variable was coded in categorical binary fashion, linear relationships were assumed between the independent variable and the logit of the dependence and there is an absence of high multicollinearity or outliers).

Like any regression, logistic analyses reveal the sorts of characteristics that are associated with activist outcomes. The calculations for specific independent variables report relative odds ratios. An odds ratio of 1.00 indicates there is no relationship; odds ratios below 1.00 indicate a negative relationship, and odds ratios above 1.00 indicate a positive relationship. Chi squares from the Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness of fit indicate the statistical significance of entire theoretical models while a Nagelkerke's r squared offers a rough approximation of the ordinary least squares (OLS) r squared (percentage of variance explained).

RESULTS

Our first objective was to determine, using a logistic regression approach, the effects of resource, mobilizing, and collective action frames on participation in the LGB rights movement. To assess the relative strength of resource, mobilization, and framing variables, Table 1 displays the effects of different variable types through a series of nested logistic regressions. Model 1 evaluates the effects of the resource variables on the log-odds that a college student will join the gay and lesbian rights movement. The ensuing steps add the framing and the mobilization variables as blocks in Model 2 and Model 3.

Model 1 suggests that the resource variables were inept predictors of LGB activism among college students. The cumulative effects of the resource variables generated an insufficient chi square of 3.92 that was not close to significant ($p = .416$). As specific independent variables, the odds-ratios for all of the social statuses were equally insignificant. While educational attainment, being White and being a male slightly increased the likelihood of engaging in gay rights activism, their significance was minimal (p ranged from .090 to .747). In contrast to resource theory expectations, family income was unimportant as a predictor of activism (odds-ratio .973, $p < .683$).

The framing variables in Model 2 provided better predictors of activist outcomes. When adding the four framing variables, the chi squared jumped by 93.741 ($p < .000$): and the pseudo r squared increased to .112 (model $\chi^2 = 97.666$, $p < .000$). Three of the four framing factors also attained significance. Net of other factors, having activist identities increased chances of activism by 1.317 ($p < .000$), while those who were oblivious to heterosexism and embraced traditional definitions of families were much less inclined to partake in LGB activism (.421, $p < .000$ and .701, $p < .05$). Finally, a sense of efficacy seemed unconnected to respondent's political actions.

TABLE 1 Logistic Regression Estimates (Log odds) of Resource, Mobilizing, and Framing Variables on Gay Rights Activism ($n = 820$)

Independent variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Resource Factors			
Family Income	.973 (.068)	1.003 (.077)	1.005 (.078)
Educational attainment	1.304 (.157)	1.363 (.181)	1.323 (.182)
Race (White=1)	1.394 (.489)	1.024 (.548)	1.237 (.555)
Gender (male=1)	1.112 (.330)	.788 (.378)	.850 (.399)
Collective action frames			
Modern heterosexism (deny discrimination)		.421*** (.218)	.496** (.222)
Older heterosexism (endorse family values)		.701* (.144)	.767 (.145)
Collective efficacy		.778 (.209)	.787 (.217)
Activist identity		1.317*** (.056)	1.417* (.066)
Mobilizing structures			
Political conversations			1.061 (.051)
Feminist friends			1.435* (.174)
Recruitment network			7.764** (.769)
Intercept	-3.86	-4.39	-6.14
Pseudo R square	.005	.112	.137
Model Chi square	3.92	97.66***	120.96***
df	4	8	11
block Chi square		93.741***	23.31***
df		4	3

Note. Figures include the Nagelkerke's pseudo R-squared and the Hosmer and Lemeshow chi square test of goodness of fit.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Last, the mobilization factors also provided greater explanatory power. When inserting the three contextual factors into the mix, the chi square grew by 23.301 ($p < .000$) and the pseudo r square expanded to .137. Two of the situational settings achieved significance, as recruiting networks increasing activism by 7.76 times ($p < .01$) and retaining feminist friends increased such behaviors by 1.435 ($p < .05$). Simply having any sort of political conversations failed to be important. After controlling for the mobilization factors, seeing heterosexist discrimination and embracing activist identities remained significant but lost of their unique predictive capabilities (the odds for activist identities shrank to 1.417, $p < .05$ and modern heterosexism decreased to .496, $p < .01$).

Strengths and Limitations

This study offers some theoretical and methodological rigor. Our list of predictor variables is theory-driven and more comprehensive than early quantitative studies on LGB activism. This breadth of variables lessens the chance of having extraneous or spurious variables and potentially boosts the explanatory capacities of the entire model. Moreover, our research design allows for the comparison of students who did and did not join the LGB rights movement. This juxtaposition of activist and bystander qualities allowed for a greater specification of the motivations behind LGB rights activism. Earlier gay activism studies have only sampled full-fledged activists and failed to include comparison groups of those that are politically apathetic. Also, our sample of students from different colleges throughout the nation lowers problems of representativeness because this study is less inclined to suffer idiosyncratic side effects of studying a single campus.

Research designs can also play havoc with the accuracy and generalizability of findings. Cross-sectional studies often have temporal ordering problems. It is possible that doing LGB activism can alter a person's attitudes and their access to feminist friends and activist networks. Several research decisions could have undermined the external validity of this study. First, the predictive capacities of the independent variables could have been underestimated by the number of LGB activists in the study ($n = 44$). This disproportionate number of activists compared to nonactivists reflects general tendencies of the U.S. populace, but it can lead to errors in hypothesis testing. Second, it would have been better to attend more gay and lesbian rights protests. Third, the sampling procedures were not identical for activist and comparison groups so problems of selection bias can be looming. Fourth, an omission of sexual identity measures can be equally problematic. Even when controlling for other factors, movements often draw a higher proportion of its members from constituencies that might benefit from movement endeavors (laborers from unions, women from feminist movements, etc.). Accordingly, we expect that our somewhat small pseudo r squared would have grown if we had distinguished between people who labeled themselves heterosexual, bisexual, or homosexual (gay and lesbian distinctions are probably not that important since gender was far from significant in this analysis). Fifth, measurement errors regularly haunt survey data. Problems of overdemanding recall could hurt our mobilization measures, in that people may have difficulty remembering when they talked politics with others and whether anybody asked them to join a political event. Questions of social desirability may be especially relevant to our activist identity measures, as participants may want to sound good to themselves by overstating the amount that they fight for social justice. Sixth, our definitions of variables may have ignored key dimensions that would have made the impact of that variable stronger. For our dependent variable, critics might complain that our measures may have missed some crucial types of LGB activism or that the

threshold of what constitutes an activist is too low (e.g., actions that are less centered on changing state policies or measures that have specificity about the frequencies of the actions). For the independent variables, our measure of old-fashioned heterosexism only examined attitudes toward conventional family structures while our peer variable of feminist friends did not cover issues of interpersonal contact with LGB peers. Accordingly, direct measures of hostility toward gays and lesbians probably could have made the associations with old-fashioned heterosexism even stronger. Finally, shortcomings with item wording can undermine the reliability of measures. Perhaps the terms “family values,” “homophobia,” or “political conversations” were a bit vague and might lack shared meaning across populations. Thus, our measure of modern heterosexism only indirectly addresses the issue of denial of heterosexual privilege (“too often heterosexuals are unfairly accused of being homophobic”).

DISCUSSION

When exploring collegiate student involvement in the LGB rights movement, this study offers a unique look into a retrospective sample of activists and nonactivists. The paper aims for theoretical comprehensiveness since its multivariate analysis synthesizes the insights of resource, framing, and mobilization theories of political participation. While researchers have tested similar models of political participation for studies of people in other social movements, this is not true among studies of involvement in the gay and lesbian rights movement (LGB activism studies rarely go beyond a handful of variables at a single time). In taking an integrated approach, we hoped that the final regression model would be especially robust. Likewise, by embracing theoretical breadth and interdisciplinary eclecticism, we wanted to eliminate or minimize the presence of spurious, confounding, or extraneous relationships.

When testing the different theories, both the mobilization and framing variables yielded significant results. Among the mobilization variables, being situated in an activist recruitment network provided the strongest association while having feminist friends also inspired greater LGB activism. This sheds light on the significance of intermovement connectedness, in that feminist friends may inspire people to think about, and act against, many forms of inequalities (Van Dyke, 2003). Similarly, this finding also indicates that pre-existing activist networks matter for future rounds of activism. Accordingly, LGB groups should keep doing their consciousness raising efforts since they serve as abeyance structures that nurture and fortify the next wave of activists who will eventually struggle against conservative countermovements (see Taylor, 1989).

Conversely, simply discussing politics on a regular basis did not inspire greater levels of gay and lesbian activism. This suggests that frequency of

political discussions was less important than the content of such exchanges. Or, stated otherwise, hearing peers talk about politics did not inspire more movement involvement, while encountering peer critiques of conventional gender roles did have such effects. On a brighter note, peer sentiments displayed even stronger effects when these friends made direct recruitment appeals during ongoing political campaigning. To recruit LGB and ally activists, seasoned activists must continue to directly ask sympathetic bystanders to join LGB movements.

While having several recruitment networks and feminist friends were clearly important predictors of activism, different measures of mobilization variables may produce larger effects. Future studies could explore the political ramifications of having gay and lesbian friends (Barth et al., 2009) or being integrated into LGB social groups (Elbaz, 1996; Lombardi, 1999; Waldner, 2001). Urban spaces may also be particularly good facilitators of LGB activism since they often have LGB enclaves with many “out” individuals and institutions. Moreover, early socializing agents in families, schools, or churches can lead to the sort of homophobia that would block LGB activism (Barth et al., 2009; Dolan, 1995; Kulik, 2004; Schulte, 2002; Swank & Raiz, 2007).

Our data also suggests that framing variables were important as well. In the final regression, it was clear that the recognition of heterosexist discrimination, along with activist identities, were forces behind LGB rights activism. That is, joining the gay and lesbian rights movement relied both upon awareness of systematic subjugation of sexual minorities combined with a person’s sense that she or he has an obligation to do something to end such oppression.

The impact of the other framing variables faded in the final regression. Questions of collective efficacy never reached significance and demonizing of alternative family structures became inconsequential when mobilizing factors were introduced. This finding suggests that LGB activism is not contingent upon some form of expected external results. This means that narratives about anticipated victories failed to drive LGB rights activism, while the recognition of sexual biases and the desire to fight against such injustices actually did inspire activism. While this finding is probably accurate, we wonder if scales that use more inflammatory language as they degrade, vilify, and pathologize homosexuality could better measure motives behind engaging in LGB activism (i.e., Altemeyer, 2002; Herek, 1988; Wright, Adams, & Bernat, 1999).

Although the internalization of protest norms and modern heterosexism were important to LGB activism, other framing factors may matter as well. While our identity variable explored a broad commitment to social justice, it did not address all sorts of pertinent identities. Other studies suggest that gays and lesbians who embraced their sexual orientation and felt closer to other sexual minorities were often more politically active than gays and lesbians who concealed their identity and despised other sexual

minorities (Gortmaker & Brown, 2006; Konik & Stewart, 2004; Waldner, 2001). Likewise, heterosexual allies may also feel greater affinity with sexual minorities (Myers, 2008). Ensuing studies can explore other framing factors that may contribute to activism, such as maintaining fundamentalist beliefs about religion and gender roles and personally seeing or experiencing LGB discrimination or hate crimes (Rollins & Hirsch, 2003; Simon et al., 1998; Waldner, 2001).

Finally, the resource theories supplied no important factors. Neither the amount of income the student had, nor their educational attainment, drove their tendencies to join the LGB rights movement. If these findings are correct, and class backgrounds fail to sway involvement in the gay and lesbian rights movement, then our data leads some credence to the New Social Movement claim that LGB rights activism is more concerned with challenging cultural codes and gaining the acceptance of diverse social identities than with the unequal distribution of financial resources (Bernstein, 1997; Johnston, Larana, & Gusfield, 1994; Taylor & Whittier, 1992; Van Dyke, Soule, & Taylor, 2004). Conversely, proponents of the resource theories of participation could argue that our research methodologies probably underestimated the effects of family income. Accurately recording the real amount of family income for college students can be especially problematic. Both heterosexual and LGB students may have difficulty deciding who fits within their family boundaries and some of the younger students may mix part-time salaries with parental income, scholarships and loans, or other sources. Moreover, some students may have never had a serious discussion with their families about income, resources, and class status.³ Similarly, our sampling method could have lessened the effect of educational attainment by limiting our study to currently enrolled undergraduates (this study ignored people who have not attended college and those who have advanced professional or graduate degrees). Finally, education might have an indirect effect on LGB protesting, as certain feminist, gender, and sexuality courses can lead students into the sorts of perspectives that inspire progressive activism (Stake & Rose, 1994).

Additionally, matters of gender and racial statuses seemed equally inept at forecasting membership in the gay and lesbian rights movement, as there is no gender or race gap in gay rights activism. Because this counters studies that link greater homophobia to men and racial minorities, the forces behind sexual prejudice and LGB activism were not the same. That is, gender and racial status might predispose people toward heteronormative beliefs, but collective action frames and mobilizing networks were the sources of action against heterosexist discrimination.

While this article delineates much of the antecedents to student involvement in the LGB rights movement, there clearly is more work to be done. Researchers may want to apply our theoretical model to LGB rights activism among different populations (i.e., LGB subsamples who get direct benefits from the movement). This could be important since early research

suggests that sexual minorities are more likely than heterosexuals to join LGBT social movements (Egan, Edelman, & Sherill, 2008; Herek et al., 2010; Swank & Fahs, 2011). Scholars may also want to explore the ways that student and community activists choose their tactics and form coalitions, and future studies may explore ways in which their cooperation may or may not alter governmental policies (see Kane, 2003; Soule, 2004). Additionally, the development of better scales to measure radical repudiations of heterosexist ideologies may be of some assistance to studies of the dynamics between sexual minorities and their heterosexual allies. Ultimately, it is essential that sexuality and movement scholars keep refining our understanding of the processes and mechanisms that diminish and possibly alleviate the heterosexist biases that persist in institutions, groups, and individuals.

NOTES

1. Research schools: University of Delaware, University of Oregon, University of Texas; Doctoral: University of North Carolina-Greensboro, University of Mass-Lowell, Rutgers University; Masters: Longwood College, University of Southern Maine, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay; Baccalaureate: Evergreen State College, Mesa State College, Southeast Arkansas College.

2. Clearly, this response rate was not high or random. Professors who never read e-mail automatically removed themselves from the sample and the willingness to distribute the surveys was not constant throughout the different sorts of schools and disciplines. Around 2% of the research professors distributed surveys, while 13% professors at masters granting universities did so. Likewise, less than 1% of chemistry, biology, and physics professors assisted in this project, while professors in political science, sociology, and social work were most receptive to our requests (11%).

3. Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, and Michaels' (1994) study of sexual behavior, attitudes, and practices found that participants were far more willing to discuss intimate matters related to sexuality than they were to openly discuss income, indicating that income may be one of the single greatest taboos in American culture.

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