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Denying Queer Realities: Scripting the Normative Homo.

Porscha Rae Yount
East Tennessee State University

Denying Queer Realities: Scripting the Normative Homo

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Porscha Yount

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Martha Copp, Chair

Scott Beck

Keith Green

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ABSTRACT

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Queer theorists and sociologists have argued that the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) movement further marginalizes some queer individuals in the pursuit of legitimacy from the dominant heterosexist culture. This study uses qualitative content analysis to examine the Web sites of four social movement organizations that claim to work for the LGBT community (Human Rights Campaign, Lambda Legal Defense Fund, National Center for Lesbian Rights, and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force). In this thesis, I argue that these organizations participate in scripting the normative homo ideal while distancing themselves from problematic identities that challenge normative, natural frameworks for understanding identity. In doing so, they further marginalize bisexuals, transgender individuals, and other queers whose identities challenge the idea that core identities are authentic and immutable—denying the existence of some queer realities, reinforcing normative ideas about sex, gender, and sexuality, and reproducing the system of inequality that privileges heterosexuality.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the human social world, we construct boundaries that allow us to locate self and other on the social landscape. We make distinctions between women and men, black and white, old and young, poor and rich, disabled and able-bodied, and gay and straight—the boundaries most central to our social identities (Goffman 1973; Kerchis and Young 2006). We categorize ourselves and other people in a process that seems quite natural to most of us because we begin sorting early in our lives and use this process to learn about the world in which we are going to live (Langer 1990). The human social world is not as simple as our sorting process allows us to believe, though. Each of these divisions is arbitrary at best. Take the division between young and old, for example. Where do we draw the line? At 18 when we can legally smoke cigarettes and exercise our voting rights? At 21, when we can legally drink alcohol? At 40 when we all fear our lives will end – at least until we get there and realize they're just beginning? At 65, when we're facing retirement? Or at 80, when we're making our own funeral arrangements? Social boundaries, like the one between youth and old age, are rarely based on anything other than socially constructed notions—culturally arbitrary decisions we make and reinforce – such as what age we think someone is mentally capable of understanding the risks associated with smoking or the responsibility of casting a ballot.

Our arbitrary boundary constructions become problematic when we attach value to one side of the line and stigma to the other. In the United States, we attach value to whiteness and allow those with white skin to exercise forms of privilege (Wise 2007; Wise 2008); we simultaneously attach stigma to blackness (which we broadly define as anything other than whiteness) and deny people of color access to privilege and sometimes, basic human dignity. A significant part of the privilege the dominant group has is the power to define itself and define its norms as society's norms (Johnson 2005; Warner 1991). The value and privilege given to a dominant group creates conflict between dominant and subordinate groups and can create further divisions among subordinate group members. This thesis explores this divisive process within the homo side of the hetero/homo divide. Specifically, it explores claims made by queer theorists that the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community is divided between those who are closely aligned with dominant heterosexist norms and those who dissent from heteronormativity's control over their lives.

Queer theorists have long claimed that the LGBT movement is based on identity politics that exclude some individuals (Ahmed 2006; D'Emilio 1999; Epstein 1996; Gamson 1999; Jagose 1996; Seidman 2002; Vaid 1995; Warner 1991). Whether excluded because of race (Valentine 2006; Ward 2008; Warner 1999), class (Chasin 2000; Meyerowitz 2006), or because transgender identities are problematic for a movement based on sexual identity (Boyd 2006; Hausman 2006; Nataf 2006; Spade 2006; Stryker 2006a; Stryker 2006b), some people are not fully included under the LGBT umbrella (Agathangelou, Bassichis, and Spira 2008; Belkin 2008; Brandzel 2008; Hale 2006; McCreery 2008; Prosser 2006). Because the movement is based on a narrowly defined gay identity politics, transgender people, working class and poor queers, bisexuals, and others who do not ascribe to the movement's dominant narrative are excluded from the group. The most well-defined boundary is between lesbians and gays (who see themselves as mostly "normal") and bisexuals and trans people (who challenge dominant ideas about normality).

Like many social movements, the LGBT movement is led nationally by social movement organizations (SMOs). SMOs often take the lead in justifying the need for social change to the dominant culture. The SMOs that claim leadership of the LGBT movement claim to include all LGBT and queer people and to represent all of our interests. However, the rhetorical strategies they use to seek change construct and reinforce the boundary between "normal" and its other.

To research the assertions made by critics of the major SMOs, I used qualitative content analysis to examine the Web sites and publications of four national organizations that have claimed leadership of the LGBT movement: Human Rights Campaign (HRC), Lambda Legal Defense Fund (henceforth Lambda Legal), the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF). These organizations claim to work for the entire LGBT community (which they also claim is unified) and to promote change that will have a positive impact on the lives of all LGBT people. This thesis explores how these organizations frame their requests for social change and in the process produce the normative homo[1]. I argue that the normative homo is produced through the process of scripting individuals' behaviors and words. By actively participating in the scripting process, these organizations deny some queer realities while reinforcing heterosexism and heteronormativity. Scripting the normative homo is one mechanism by which some queers are further marginalized by an LGBT movement that reproduces inequality by privileging heterosexuality and demonizing queerness.

[1] I use "homo" here for two reasons: (1) the normative identities supported by these organizations are homo identities – they are same-sex loving, gay and lesbian identities; and (2) the normative homo is about more than sexual identity, it is also about class, race, gender, age, and ability.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the human social world, we construct a boundary between men and women based on what are viewed as essential characteristics. This is a social boundary, an objectified form of social difference. Social boundaries often manifest in “unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and non-material) and social opportunities. They are also revealed in stable behavioral patterns of association” (Lamont and Molnar 2002:168). The division of society based on gender produces both gender norms and normative relations between genders. Normative gender roles and gender relations allow gender to act as a “regulatory construct” that privileges certain forms of association, most notably heterosexuality (Jagose 1996). Social boundaries are often seen as the natural order of things, or “just the way things are” (Lamont and Molnar 2002), as is heterosexuality (Atkinson and DePalma 2008). It is, perhaps, this essentializing of heterosexuality that leads to its privileged status. If we view something as natural, essential, and immutable, it is difficult to challenge the way it works in our lives. Rather than challenge the assumption of the natural order, we accept it and govern others and ourselves accordingly. Indeed, we do not often engage the nature/nurture debate in conversations about heterosexuality (Katz 1996).

Every decision an individual makes is linked to wider cultural beliefs and values (Weeks 2003), including decisions about with whom the individual associates. In phenomenological terms, behaviors, decisions, and associations lead to the creation of a line, which is maintained by following. Lines depend on repeating and re-enacting norms and patterns of behavior (Ahmed 2006). The line, in this sense, might also signify a path, a well-worn path, to which Warner alludes when he calls heterosexuality “the bedrock on which every other value in the world rests” (1999:47). Heterosexuality is so central to the dominant culture that ideas about appropriate sexuality are organized around an image of appropriate performances of heterosexuality. In the dominant culture, heterosexuality is viewed as “normal,” and the appropriate forms of this “normal” sexuality include “sex that is exclusively between adults, that conforms to dichotomous gender norms, that is private, tender, caring, genitally centered, and linked to love, marriage, and monogamy” (Seidman 2002:17). Heterosexuality is only privileged when it is found in socially appropriate forms or when appropriate performances are displayed – such as when an appropriately gendered man takes an appropriately gendered woman as his wife and she bears his children.

We may conceive of the line created by the enactment and re-enactment of heterosexual norms and conventions as a “straight” line that requires work to be accomplished (Ahmed 2006:79). This work includes re-evaluating deviance and failure to perform as either appropriate or inappropriate and incorporating this judgment into the dominant ideal of heterosexuality. In this way, heterosexuality becomes a process rather than a static and stable concept. The ideal performance of heterosexuality is the straight married couple with children, and the privileging of this ideal is a systemic characteristic of American society (Fields 2001). Heterosexuality does not just exist in a privileged place; it also functions as a privileged status, that is, work is done to maintain the privilege. It is more appropriate, however, to say that individuals living within the construct of heterosexuality do work to maintain its privileged status. Part of this work is the presumption of heterosexuality without a mark or announcement of non-heterosexual identity. The presumption of heterosexuality protects patriarchy and patriarchal institutions from non-appropriate sexualities and sexual expression (Bernstein, Kostelac, and Gaarder 2003) and creates an imperative to perform appropriate forms of heterosexuality or a compulsory heterosexuality (Rich 1994; Miriam 2007).

Heteronormativity refers to how the human social world is organized around heterosexuality, the heterosexual assumption, and compulsory heterosexuality (Ahmed 2006; Miriam 2007; Rich 1994; Seidman 2002; Warner 1991; Warner 1999; Weeks 2003). Implicit in each of these facets of heteronormativity is the hegemonic influence of traditional notions of gender and the patriarchal rules that govern gender expression and gender relations. But the human social world does not include only heterosexual people who adhere to traditional sexual and gender roles: A significant proportion of the world's population engages in non-normative sexual and/or gendered behaviors. Depending on methodology and theoretical constructs, estimates range from 2 to 20 percent of the world's population (Seidman 2002; Weeks 2003). In the western world, we call ourselves lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT), dyke, trans, boi, metro, homo, queer, and queerdyke. Recently even fag has become a popular self-identifying term. In the United States, Canada, and western Europe, the LGBT abbreviation has solidified from a gay movement that eventually united with lesbians (though some argue that lesbians are still second to a gay-male-dominated patriarchy within the movement), came to make token room for bisexuals, and, not knowing what to do with trans people, tacked a T onto the end (though many trans and cisgender[2] people still argue over whether trans and LGB concerns belong together, at least in part because gender and sexuality are often conceptualized as discrete sectors of identity and social relations). This process of attempting to include multiple diverse identities has resulted in a polarizing split between LG and BT. This is done on behalf of the dominant heterosexist culture.

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[2] "cisgender" is used to refer to the opposite of transgender on the gender spectrum. The term refers to a match between individuals' socially assigned appropriate gender role and their gender identities.

Even in a nation built on ideals of freedom and liberty, non-normative sexualities are organized around heterosexist beliefs and practices. Heterosexism is a system of inequality that privileges heterosexuality and heterosexuals while disadvantaging and denying power to those who are not heterosexual or not appropriately heterosexual. Heterosexism is reflected in the way gay or lesbian couples are often asked “who’s the man?” or “who’s the girl[3]?” as if hetero gender roles must be replicated in non-hetero relationships. In short, LGBT identities exist within and are shaped by heteronormative beliefs about gender and sexuality and by heterosexual practices that maintain privilege and power for the heterosexual majority. Heteronormativity does not just refer to sexual acts between people, however. It also refers to normative beliefs about gender roles and social status.

Because most individuals see heterosexual sexual relations and heteronormative gender roles as natural, heterosexuality can be classified as what Goffman calls a “natural framework” (1974:22). Natural frameworks allow people to identify occurrences within the human social world as somehow determined by essential human nature. Identifying heterosexuality as biologically determined gives it (and people’s commitment to it as essential) power in three important ways: (1) it allows heterosexuality, heterosexual behaviors, and heterosexual social arrangements to go unquestioned; (2) it leads to the expectation that all humans are heterosexual (compulsory heterosexuality); and (3) it allows heterosexuals to feel confident enough in their sexual expressions/identities to show prejudice toward and discriminate against those who are not heterosexual (promoting heterosexism). Thus, the classification of heterosexuality as essential leads to both heterosexism and heteronormativity. Heterosexism and heteronormativity are present in the lives of everyone in the western world—whether or not they are heterosexual.

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[3] I use “girl” purposefully here, because the question is often phrased this way. Use of the diminutive “girl” rather than “woman” reflects sexist and heterosexist notions of the appropriate social place of women.

When people privilege and idealize heterosexuality, they replicate this privilege while rendering alternatives invisible. Thus, heterosexism becomes a regulating force, much like gender. Indeed, heterosexuality is a site of intersection of gender and sexuality and, as such, regulates sexuality and non-sexual gendered behaviors such as the division of labor within and outside the domestic sphere. It regulates the lives of individuals within the boundaries of heterosexuality as well as the lives of those outside its borders (Jackson 2006). Heteronormativity not only shapes how people do heterosexuality but also the rules of becoming and being heterosexual. By drawing a boundary around heterosexuality, heteronormativity also shapes the doing and being of alternative sexualities.

American society is also imagined as divided into heterosexuals and homosexuals (Weeks 2003). Carr (1999) describes the "essentialist monosexual worldview," which can be used to describe the mindset of those who tend to divide the world simply into homos and heteros. For essentialist monosexuals, sexual identity does not change, and the most important identifying characteristic is the biological sex of one's sexual partner. Any exceptions to these two options are not to be taken seriously—they are considered pathological or unnatural. No one can actually move from one to the other, and everyone must be classified. The division between heteros and homos is seen as natural as is membership in one category or the other (Carr 1999). The essentialist monosexual sees bisexuality as an unnatural deviance from the two acceptable sexual identities and often assumes those who identify as bisexual will eventually become either completely hetero or totally homo. The sharp distinction between hetero and homo also acts as a framework that compels bisexuals to behave in normative ways and erases bisexuals in the context of intimate relationships. So, a bisexual person in a same-sex relationship is seen as either lesbian or gay. Similarly, a bisexual person in a hetero-appearing relationship is seen as straight. Essentialist monosexuals may or may not harbor negative feelings toward homosexuals (in fact, some gays and lesbians ascribe to this worldview); the important part of this cognitive script is that the division between the two is seen as completely natural—arising from human biology—and thus immutable, much like eye or hair color.

The broader division people make is not simply a division based on essential characteristics but rather a moral distinction between the normal, good heterosexual subject and its abnormal, bad other—the homosexual (Hennessy 2000; Seidman 2002; Weeks 2003). The construction of a good sexual citizen is oppressive to all people, especially when it is codified into laws and governmental policies (Seidman 2002). While it seems antithetical to most people that an institution that confers privilege to some can be oppressive to all, the creation of a specific form of heterosexuality that is privileged limits even those performances of heterosexuality most closely resembling the ideal type. The good sexual citizen is necessarily heterosexual, which leads to the oppression of LGBT people. The good sexual citizen is also monogamous, loving, caring, tender, and adheres to traditional notions of gender. Anyone else who does not fit this demand is oppressed, as well. Because men retain power within the dominant heterosexist culture, women are necessarily oppressed by notions of the good sexual citizen. Because these notions are based on white, middle-class assumptions about gendered relations, they lead to the oppression of people of color. We are left with a small number of heterosexual, white men who are monogamous and dominating. However, the rules for joining this group of men are so rigid that the privilege conferred by being a part of this group is not outweighed by the pressures to conform to its rules. In this way, constructing a good sexual citizen oppresses all within society – even those who attempt to attain this status.

For example, married heterosexual couples are privileged because their marital status provides tax benefits—a privilege encoded in the policies of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Same-sex couples are denied this privilege because they are not allowed to enter a governmentally recognized marriage contract. But heterosexual couples that choose not to marry (for a variety of potential reasons) are also denied marital tax benefits. By granting tax benefits (with real monetary consequences) only to married heterosexual couples, the United States government (through the IRS) confers privilege to married heterosexual couples (and the individuals involved in these contracts) and reinforces the hegemonic notion of an ideal and appropriate performance of heterosexuality, and oppresses those who do not perform appropriately. Yet, those within this group of married heterosexual couples are also limited in their ability to express themselves, which can be considered a form of oppression.

The moral division between the good hetero and the bad homo also creates a stigmatized category comprised of those labeled "bad" in order to maintain the privilege of heterosexuality and reinforce the border surrounding the rest of "pure" society (Epstein 1996:149). Because the specter of the stigmatized group (and any allusions to it) incites fear of social breakdown in members of the privileged majority, people feel compelled to defend the boundary between good and bad and maintain their privileged status (Seidman 2002). Heterosexism and homo-hatred[4] "reflect well-insulated positions of social dominance and embedded privilege"—dominance and privilege that translate into power for some and not others (Feigenbaum 2007:5). The power possessed by those in privileged positions allows them to claim an identity without challenge. Identifying with such power allows heterosexuals (who are socially privileged) to protect themselves from scrutiny (Feigenbaum 2007). Boyd argues that inhabiting a "naturalized" state

[4] Because the term "homophobia" is often used as a cop-out or excuse for hatred of LGBT and queer people, and because the term itself points to an "irrational fear" of LGBT and queer people, which does not exist, I use homo-hatred to more accurately describe the phenomenon in question.

of being allows members of dominant groups to remain “culturally intelligible, socially valuable, and as a result, gain and retain the privilege of citizenship and its associated rights and protections” (2006:421).

Repetition of behaviors consistent with this privileged status creates a line for heteros to follow that continues to accumulate privilege (Ahmed 2006). Those who do not follow the “straight” line are encouraged to see their situation as a personal problem rather than a public, shared concern (a situation of pluralistic ignorance). After all, if they were not deviating from the normal, natural mode of being (heterosexuality), then they would not be subjected to stigma and oppression. This also encourages individuals not to act against their oppressors to change the situation but rather to deal with the problem through individualized efforts to better themselves and follow the straight line as closely as possible (D’Emilio 1999). Consequently, LGBT identities are created by a process of reacting to and internalizing stigmatization, what Epstein calls “secondary deviance” (1996:149).

Because heterosexual norms are assumed to be universal, heteronormativity (through heterosexist behaviors, beliefs, and values) actively oppresses those who do not fulfill expectations of ideal heterosexuality and renders invisible those who claim dissident sexual identities. The privilege heterosexuals enjoy allows them to engage in heterosexist behavior, hold fast to heterosexist beliefs, and value heterosexuality as the natural way of being in the human social world. Warner (1991) argues that much of the privilege heterosexuals enjoy lies in the ability of heterosexual culture to define itself *as* society. Heterosexuals have the power to think of themselves as normal because heterosexual culture is presented “as the elemental form of human association, as the very model of intergender relations, as the indivisible basis of all community, and as the means of reproduction without which society wouldn’t exist” (Warner

1991: *xxi*). LGBT identities are constructed and claimed within this heteronormative context, as is the LGBT subculture.

An LGBT Subculture

Humans interact based on constructed categories of good and bad; we also interact based on anticipations we have of others' behavior depending on the categories in which we have placed them. Goffman argues that we rely on these anticipations, "transforming them into normative expectations," and then into demands for conformity (1963:2). In creating categories, we impute expected characteristics onto all the individuals within a category—we stereotype them. This characterization of individuals constitutes a person's "virtual social identity," while the characteristics a person actually demonstrates (those the person can be proven to possess) constitute that person's "actual social identity" (Goffman 1963:2). When we are presented with someone who deviates from the norm demanded by our stereotype, we reduce that person to a tainted, discredited position—creating and applying stigma to that person. Stigma is not, however, an essential attribute of a person's identity but rather a manifestation of power in the relationship between the individual and the social world. More precisely, stigma is the manifestation of power in the relationship between an individual and the dominant cultural group.

Because stigmatized individuals have been socialized in the same world as those deemed "normal," society's dominant values and normative structures are internalized within each individual. Internalizing a virtual social identity can lead to feelings of shame and outsider status. According to Goffman, stigmatized individuals have several options for responding to stigma: they can attempt to assert dissident understandings of their identities and social statuses—

claiming pride (rather than shame) in outsider status; they can assert normality by claiming universal humanity, denying that their stigmatized characteristics are actually different; they can avoid interacting with those deemed normal; they may become defensive; they may approach social situations with “hostile bravado”; or they may find “sympathetic others” (including tolerant or accepting normals and those sharing their stigma) (1963:19).

For non-normative sexual subjects, managing stigmatized identities has led to the development of a subculture based on non-normative sexualities and sexual identities, while still organized around heterosexuality and subject to heteronormativity. Responding to stigma by seeking similar others, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, trans people, and other queers have coalesced into and constructed a subculture. Networking with similar others can lead to the creation of a group or collective identity. Collective identity can be defined as “an individual’s cognitive, moral, emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution. It is a perception of shared status or relation” (Polletta and Jasper 2001:285). Collective identity provides a support structure people can call on for behavioral cues and provides a community of shared meaning (Haenfler 2004).

Achieving and maintaining a group identity requires work by members of the group. Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock define “identity work” as “anything people do, individually or collectively, to give meaning to themselves or others” (1996:115). Because “collective identity” is a term most often used by social movement theorists, Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock use “subcultural identity work” to describe work done by any group of people (who may or may not be part of an SMO) who lay claim to an identity (1996:121). While Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock make this distinction, Haenfler (2004) argues that a social movement encompasses a subculture (or that a subculture is a form of social movement) so collective identity is still an appropriate term for describing group identities of subcultures. The fact that a process of identity work is taking place is more important than whether the work is done within an SMO or a subculture. Identity work within subcultures is a process comprised of four parts: (1) “defining,” or creating a social representation; (2) “coding,” or creating a “set of rules for signifying an identity;” (3) “affirming,” or creating “opportunities for enacting and validating claims to an identity;” and (4) “policing,” or protecting the meaning of an identity and enforcing its code (Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock 1996:123).

We engage in identity work because identities provide us with feelings of belonging and worth along with a way of locating self in relation to other. While dominant groups engage in “oppressive identity work” by “creating an identity code that makes others identifiable as flawed” or stigmatizing and denying people the power to “signify their own character,” subcultures often engage in “oppositional identity work” (Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock 1996:140). Members of subcultures do this to resist the stigma imposed by the dominant group. They attempt to transform their stigmatized identities into identities that can be seen as noble rather than flawed. In order to be successful, a subculture must take on this project as a whole. Members of subcultures attempt to counter the oppressive identity work done by the more powerful group in order to claim a group identity on their terms. Because dominant groups possess definitional power while subcultures lack power, subcultures are often unsuccessful.

In the context of social movements, “collective identity work” is appropriate to describe the process of creating and naming a group that engages in collective action and behavior. Within a social movement, a social movement organization (SMO) can take the lead in defining the subculture to which it is tied (Crowley 2008; Polletta and Jasper 2001; Saunders 2008; Simon, Trotschel, and Dahne 2008). SMOs may define collective identities that members of a subculture do not claim. While SMOs often claim normalized identities when seeking legitimacy from the dominant cultural group, these normalized identities may be at odds with the realities of subculture members. For example, by arguing that *all* LGBT people want same-sex marriage to be legal, the LGBT movement claims a normalized identity for LGBT people as a whole. However, this assertion also denies the existence of those LGBT people who problematize the institution of marriage as an instrument of patriarchy and those who simply do not care.

Heteronormativity Within the LGBT Subculture

Heteronormativity and heterosexism are known to work *against* the LGBT subculture. The LGBT subculture was, in fact, shaped by the hostile culture that surrounds it (D'Emilio 1999). Because the dominant culture maintains "disciplinary, productive power" over the LGBT subculture, it remains responsible for defining and describing the LGBT subculture on its terms (Spade 2006:318). The denial of full citizenship rights to LGBT people—such as legal relationship recognition (marriage, civil unions, or domestic partnership registries) or the lack of LGBT-specific employment nondiscrimination legislation – is an example of how the dominant culture retains definitional power over the concept of "citizenship" that disallows membership by LGBT people. Because so much energy is spent dealing with heteronormativity's work against the subculture, less attention is paid to how heteronormativity and heterosexism operate *within* the LGBT subculture. Within the subculture, a division exists between those who seek assimilation into the mainstream culture and those who seek liberation from dominant social and cultural norms and expectations. Heterosexist and heteronormative practices within the subculture further marginalize drag queens, the BDSM[5] community, butch dykes, genderqueers, and others who do not fit hegemonic gender and sexual ideals.

Perhaps the best recent example of heteronormativity in action within the LGBT subculture is the movement's mobilization around the issue of same-sex marriage. This political action—led by large national political and legal organizations—also illustrates how heteronormativity works against the LGBT subculture. McCreery (2008) posits three factors that have produced a heteronormative culture of same-sex marriage supporters: (1) a shift in the focus of the institutionalized LGBT movement from protecting human rights to acquiring material benefits; (2) the LGBT movement's use of the symbolic child in danger as a strategy to acquire benefits; and (3) the centrality of the figurative child in any normative conceptualization of culture. McCreery and others argue that the culture of same-sex marriage supporters is built on the acceptance of heteronormative family patterns by lesbians and gay men. This requires that lesbians and gay men accept, celebrate, and perpetuate heterosexual norms of sex within loving, monogamous relationships meant to nurture and legitimate offspring. Here, lesbians and gay men are pointed toward what Weber (1953, 1978) calls an "ideal type" or constructed ideal of human action and interaction. The ideal type that lesbians and gay men are being pointed toward is that of a heterosexual nuclear family. Weber also points out that an ideal type is unattainable because human reality often gets in the way.

Focusing on the symbolic child and acquiring material benefits weaken the movement's former emphasis on individual human rights. The couple and its production of legitimate offspring have become more important than the adult individuals who comprise the couple; in short, the couple is more important than its components. This reinforces dominant notions of

[5] BDSM is an acronym deriving from the terms "bondage," "discipline," "dominance," "submission," "sadism," and "masochism," or "sadomasochism." Because sex involving what can be seen as non-loving and non-gentle behaviors is non-normative, BDSM is marginalized by the dominant heterosexist culture.

parenting and the perceived need for children to have two parents who are legally recognized as parents of the child—and legally connected to each other. Because marriage is a site of citizenship production (exemplified by the fact that marriage can create naturalized citizens and grant access to citizenship rights and privileges), marriage produces only heteronormative citizens who are recognizable to the state as a "properly gendered, properly racialized, properly heterosexual America" (Brandzel 2008:172).

Naturalizing sexuality has also led to the production of heteronormativity within the LGBT subculture. Naturalizing sexuality solidifies the perceived naturalness of sex and gender, but also of heterosexuality (Prosser 2006). Representing heterosexuality as part of society's foundations unifies sex, gender, and desire in the collective mind. "Female, femininity, and woman appear as stable and conjoined terms through their opposition to male, masculinity, and man," producing gender that appears as identity (Prosser 2006:263). Epstein (1996) argues that sexuality was naturalized in two senses: First, by the assumption that human sexuality can be understood as biologically controlled (this assumption was worked into cultural norms and social institutions); and second, by the acceptance of certain expressions of sexuality (heterosexuality) as "natural" and others (queerness) as "unnatural" (Epstein 1996:147). But this is not a simple division. Heteronormativity and heterosexism create a kind of continuum in which natural is good and unnatural is bad, but there are spaces in between. This leaves room for some within the LGBT subculture to argue that they are "just like everyone else" in order to gain access to the privilege heterosexuals enjoy, while others assert their difference from the dominant culture. Because we rarely (if ever) question whether normative behaviors we view as natural should govern our actions, we also rarely (if ever) question whether our "natural" behaviors are right or even appropriate.

Gamson (1999) focused his analysis on representations of queers on televised talk shows. Before some talk shows shifted their demographic targets to focus on a younger audience, middle class, activist gays and lesbians had a monopoly on the talk show guest list. When the demographic shifted, queer representations on talk shows shifted toward an emphasis on difference from mainstream culture—and the representation was not particularly appealing to mainstream viewers or the middle-class gays and lesbians who were booted off the air. This new, "in-your-face" version of the talk show exhibited everything associated with "ugliness," conflating everything queer with everything lower class. These representations worked against what middle class activists had been working toward—the demonstration that gay and lesbian people were normal and civilized and thus deserving of tolerance and rights (Gamson 1999:185). The LGBT movement also lost some liberal hetero sympathizers and supporters because they tend to acquire sympathy for the movement through class-based identification with middle class, professional gays and lesbians (Gamson 1999).

Heteronormativity is thus not just about gender and sexuality, it is also about class. Appropriate forms of heterosexual behavior and performance are related to middle-class values. The dominant narrative of heterosexual gendered relations includes meeting, falling in love, and deciding to get married. But for some, the stress of financial instability denies them the luxury of seeing a potential partner as just a romantic interest. Members of the working class and working poor must often consider whether a potential partner will earn enough to contribute to the household (Newman and Chen 2007). Because the traditional notion that love requires no financial considerations is linked to middle-class values, heteronormativity is classed.

Heteronormativity has influenced divisions within the LGBT subculture, as well as the forging of a gay and lesbian identity that seeks to appear unified. Dominant heterosexist constructions of masculine and feminine gender roles identify good women as women who are not lesbians. Lesbians cannot be good women because they do not behave in relation to men according to heteronormative assumptions about gender relations (Hale 2006). Heterosexism and heteronormativity also identify a continuum of good versus bad men. While men, as a group, have power within society, some men are allowed to access and use this power, while others are denied full power. Homoerotic desire becomes feminine desire within heteronormativity, and thus gay men are denied the same power as straight men (Kimmel 1994).

Heteronormativity produced an environment in which fewer female-to-male (FTM) than male-to-female (MTF) transsexuals were identified during the 1950s and 1960s. Meyerowitz (2006) argues that FTMs who had lived as women were not socialized to have the same sense of entitlement to medical treatment as men; they may not have had the same insistence and demanding presence with doctors and other medical professionals; and, if they had been working as women, they would not have had access to the same financial resources as men due to heteronormativity’s control over gendered labor divisions. However, male privilege is a tricky thing in a transgender context. As unlikely as it is that FTMs raised as women felt entitled to medical care, it is also unlikely that MTFs lived a life of entitlement before transition. Because pre-transition MTFs likely did not exhibit hegemonic masculinity—falling somewhere on the bad side of Kimmel’s (1994) continuum, they were probably denied full access to male privilege, and may not have felt fully entitled to medical care.

Heteronormativity is still reflected in the transsexual community today. Transsexuals are a well-read population because they must perfect a story of discrete gender categories that convinces psychiatric and medical professionals that they are indeed good candidates for sexual reassignment surgery (SRS). This narrative must include an assertion that male and female are indeed discrete, distinct categories and a feeling that one is in the “wrong” physical body (Hausman 2006:337). The requirement that transsexuals seeking SRS must assert the wrongness of their physical bodies reflects the way heteronormativity constructs gender as a natural reflection of biological sex. Transsexuals seeking SRS also have a hard time convincing doctors that they are good candidates for surgery if they are not seeking reassignment as a heterosexual person. MTFs seeking reassignment to become lesbian women are often denied surgery because they have male bodies, which are “supposed” to be attracted to women according to dominant constructions (Hausman 2006).

Transsexuals and transgender people are often left out of the gay and lesbian subcultural identity. Some are purged from the ranks while others are never invited. During the lesbian separatist movement (which still exists to some extent), some queers were pushed out of the community for different reasons. First, lower class women who expressed their class difference through female masculinity and butch/femme roles were cast out because of a perceived desire to achieve male privilege. Then, black lesbians who refused to stop associating with black men in their collective struggle against racism were essentially excommunicated. Then MTF lesbian feminists were cast out for being male infiltrators—reflecting the heteronormative idea that biological sex determines “actual gender.” Then, BDSM practitioners, queers, FTM transsexuals, and transgenderists were virtually thrown out, resulting in what some saw as a “pure” lesbian community (Nataf 2006:443). While lesbian separatist feminists threw those exhibiting female masculinity out of the group for reflecting dominant sexist constructions of gender, the expulsion of this group also reflected lesbian feminist connections to heteronormativity. Many lesbian feminists held onto essentialist beliefs about biological sex and gender that are constructed by sexist, heterosexist, and heteronormative ideals. Nataf (2006) goes on to argue that lesbian feminists express fear and anxiety about the ease of transforming the physical body. They fear "gender and sexuality categories blurring or breaking down, impacting upon their sense of lesbian community" (Nataf 2006:439). These are the same fears often expressed by the heterosexual majority in regards to non-normative, alternative sexualities deconstructing the organization of mainstream culture.

Organization of a social movement around the LGBT subculture has led to the forging of a unified gay and lesbian identity. Bisexuals and trans people are still marginalized within the movement, at least in part because the idea of a unified lesbian and gay identity is similar to ethnic identity—it is believed to be an essential, immutable characteristic of human beings. Because bisexual people are attracted to a range of genders and gender expressions and trans people often challenge or transcend gender norms, they represent some fluidity in sexual and gender expression and are not as easy to assimilate into an ethnic-like identity for political purposes (Devor and Matte 2006).

Even though multiple SMOs exist within the LGBT movement, political change is often sought by asserting that the interests of gay men and lesbians are the same (Chasin 2000). Bernstein (2002) studied gay and lesbian mobilization in Vermont around the issue of adoption rights. She argues that ethnic-like gay and lesbian identity is forged not because individuals adhere to essentialist notions of gender and sexuality, but rather because essentialist, ethnic-like language is more accessible to those who hold political power. However, she goes on to discuss how supporters of gay and lesbian adoption showed up to hearings "nicely dressed in clothes many probably had not worn since their first job interviews" in response to their perception that the religious opposition's credibility was harmed by its lack of "decorum" (Bernstein 2002:101). Challenges to dominant gender perceptions were not present during any of the public hearings.

While Bernstein argues that this was a response to the movement's religious opposition, it still asserted a "we are just like you" mentality of those involved in the movement. In order to be "just like" heterosexuals within the power structure, individuals must perform heteronormative ideals of gender and sexuality. Individual difference and queer realities are lost in the process of asserting normality. In this case, class differences are also erased because ideas about appropriate mannerisms and clothing styles are often linked to middle-class sensibilities.

Valentine argues that accommodationist gay and lesbian politics has "increasingly worked with a model of 'gay' which implicitly foregrounds the similarity of gay and lesbian people to heterosexual people (and, implicitly, an adherence to white, middle-class Americanness) while at the same time highlighting its difference from gender variance" (2006:415). Gender variance is displayed often by transgender people who prefer to transgress and transcend gender norms rather than cross from one heterosexist gender norm to another. Boswell argues that "the word 'transgender' describes much more than crossing between the poles of masculinity and femininity. It more aptly refers to the transgressing of gender norms, of being freely gendered, or transcending gender altogether in order to become more fully human" (1997:121). Transgression of gender norms highlights gender variance and challenges the lesbian and gay identity politics of assimilation as an accommodation.

Gender normativity among men is exemplified in the United States armed services, and the forging of an accommodationist gay identity is evident in the fight for the ability of gays to serve openly in the military. However, Belkin (2008) argues that a choice is made by LGBT movement organizers to ignore high numbers of instances of male-on-male rape (where the victim is more often gay than straight) within the military and to depict the military as an unproblematic institution instead. This reflects movement leaders' convictions that "the best strategy for convincing legislators, the military, and the public to repeal DADT [Don't Ask, Don't Tell] is to demonstrate that gay men and lesbians are equally capable of conforming to the military's expectations of discipline, honor, and self-sacrifice" (Belkin 2008:183). Here, adherence to heterosexist assumptions about appropriate masculine behavior denies the existence and occurrence of male-on-male rape within the armed services—requiring men to sacrifice their autonomy (even over their own bodies) in return for normality and military service.

An Institutionalized LGBT Movement

Stewart, Smith, and Denton (2007) argue that a social movement is always a society's out-group and that they remain uninstitutionalized. Morris (1981) argues that most social movements begin spontaneously and s unstructured groups, they move toward more formal structures as the movement solidifies. While Staggenborg identifies and defines some social movement organizations as professionalized or "formalized," some SMOs may go beyond formalization (1988:585). A professional SMO relies mostly on paid leaders and members who do little more than contribute money. This is arguably true of the four large national organizations this study investigates. The Human Rights Campaign (HRC), Lambda Legal Defense Fund, the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) all have paid staffs, structure, routine, bureaucratic procedures, and rules for membership—key characteristics of formalized SMOs (Staggenborg 1988). Formalized SMOs are also the most common beneficiaries of funding from corporations and foundations (Staggenborg 1988) and many SMOs are economically dependent upon these beneficiaries (Ward 2008). These beneficiaries may play some part in dictating (or, more subtly, guiding) the goals and rhetoric of a movement. Staggenborg goes on to argue that formalization influences the strategies and tactics SMOs use to pursue their goals. Most formalized SMOs engage in institutionalized tactics (like lobbying legislatures and pursuing court cases through the legal system) while avoiding direct-action tactics and strategies involving interpersonal conflict.

While social movements have little power, institutions possess and maintain power to reward individuals and organizations for appropriate actions while punishing those who fail at appropriateness. Institutions (such as the government, education, and Judeo-Christian religion) are always society's in-groups and they are generally viewed as legitimate sources of power. While Stewart et al. (2007) argue that multiple organizations are necessary in an uninstitutionalized movement, I argue that some organizations go beyond the point of formalization and become "institutionalized" SMOs. The organizations that lead the LGBT movement on a national level (HRC, Lambda Legal, NCLR, and NGLTF) work solely through institutional channels. They lobby Congress and state legislatures for legislative change, they take up court cases to effect change through the legal system, they work within schools (when allowed), they use college students to do work through universities, and they work with religious groups to effect change within religious communities and in church policies. The work of these organizations remains largely within the context of the nation's most influential institutions: the government, education, and religion.

Social movements are not supposed to hold any power according to most scholars (Polletta and Jasper 2001; Staggenborg 1988; Stewart et al. 2007; Ward 2008), but because these organizations are led by professionals who are part of powerful identity groups (they are primarily white and upper middle class), they are able to use some of this power to guide the "privatized, corporatized, and sanitized 'gay agenda'" and define the goals of the organizations (Agathangelou et al. 2008:123). Members of privileged groups, even when also members of a stigmatized LGBT identity group, “shape the culture of activist projects by asserting their own gendered, racial/ethnic, religious, or class-based traditions. . ., which in turn define the look and feel of the movement” (Ward 2008:36). In this way, the four SMOs that lead the LGBT movement encompass an institutionalized portion of the broader LGBT and queer movements.

Collective Identity

Collective identity has been a popular topic among scholars of social movements, typically as a way of understanding the gaps in traditional theories of social movements. For Polletta and Jasper (2001), collective identity is people’s perception of the relationships or status they share with others and carries with it positive feelings for other members of the group. They recognize that collective identities can be defined by external groups and then accepted and even claimed by those sharing the identity. These external groups can include groups in opposition to a social movement, or countermovements (Reger 2002).

For Kebede, Shriver, and Knottnerus, collective identity “involves a dynamic political/cultural consensus of a group” (2000:314). They lay out how this identity is formed by studying the Rastafari in Jamaica. A social movement first creates its own version of reality and provides its members with the motivation to change existing reality into that vision. As a social movement strengthens, a movement culture is created as an alternative to existing reality. This creates a boundary between existing reality and the alternative reality of the social movement. This boundary has to be constantly reconstructed and defended. A collective identity offers members a way of distinguishing between “us” and “them” and the motivation to maintain that boundary.

While some scholars regard individual identity, and thus collective identity, as a process, Saunders argues that conceptualizing collective identity as a "thing" allows for a more thorough investigation of it (2008:232). Rather than disregard process models, Saunders suggests viewing collective identity as the outcome of an ongoing group process—thereby recognizing the inherent shifting of identity while allowing for a proper analysis of collective identity as a tool used both strategically and instrumentally by social movements. Crowley argues that the "fundamental task of any social movement is to encourage all participants to identify with a group of like-minded individuals and a mission that is larger than themselves" (2008:707). While a collective identity can be conceptualized simply as the culture emerging from a movement in its beginnings, she argues that it also "plays a critical functional role in mobilizing members, promoting loyalty to the cause, and aggregating grievances for presentation to those in power"—in short, collective identity is a strategy social movements use to connect individuals' emotional identification processes with the movement and its goals (Crowley 2008:707).

Frames and Framing

Goffman defined a "frame" as a definition of a situation that is built up "in accordance with principles of organization which govern events—at least social ones—and our subjective involvement in them" (1974:11). In short, a frame, in Goffman's sense of the term, is the expression of the organization of human social experience. Frames make events meaningful by functioning as organizers and guiders of experience and action —whether actions are experienced by individuals or groups of individuals (Snow et al. 1986). Frames may also be conceptualized as organizing ideas or stories people use to decide and define what a controversy is all about (Brewer 2003).

"Frame analysis" refers to the examination of frames (Goffman 1974:11). Goffman distinguishes three fundamental types of frameworks: (1) primary frameworks, (2) natural frameworks, and (3) social frameworks. A primary framework renders meaningless aspects of social scenes meaningful, allowing the frame's user to "locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined in its terms" (Goffman 1974:21). A natural framework is understood as being due to "natural" forces and determinants—nothing an actor does can alter a natural framework. Social frameworks provide a background understanding of events and "incorporate the will, aim, and controlling effort of an intelligence, a live agency, the chief one being the human being" (Goffman 1974:22).

Working from Goffman's initial definition of frames and framing, Benford and Snow (2000) apply the concept of framing to the context of social movements, outlining framing processes in social movements. They further connect framing processes to collective identity work – or the making of identity meanings of groups by members of those groups. Framing, for them, is a verb that

> denotes an active, processual phenomenon that implies agency and contention at the level of reality construction. It is active in the sense that something is being done, and processual in the sense of a dynamic, evolving process. It entails agency in the sense that what is evolving is the work of social movement organizations or movement activists. And it is contentious in the sense that it involves the generation of interpretive frames that not only differ from existing ones but that may also challenge them (Benford and Snow 2000:614).

The result is what they call "collective action frames," or "action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization" (Benford and Snow 2000:614). Collective action frames are constructed in part by movement adherents as they negotiate a shared understanding of a situation defined as needing change. Included in collective action frames are the placement of blame for the problematic situation, the articulation of an alternative to the current arrangement, and a call to action aimed at those who may also work to effect change. Collective action frames often include an injustice component, or a defining of the problematic situation as unfair or unjust.

Frames provide social movement adherents with a "template" by which to understand events within the movement's domain (Haines 2006:232). Internally, frames also motivate people to take action toward social change. Externally, frames are critical to movement success because they aid in gaining support from the public, bringing outsiders into the movement, and convincing politicians to take up the cause and policymakers to effect change consistent with the movement's goals.

Framing Processes in the Social Movement Context

Framing processes do not happen within an alternate dimension where social and cultural factors play no role. Rather, they are embedded in the social, cultural, and political climate in which they take place. Benford and Snow (2000) identify three factors within the sociopolitical climate that are important to collective action frames: political opportunity structure, cultural opportunities and constraints, and the movement's targeted audience(s). Political structures and cultural patterns can both constrain and facilitate movement frames and framing activities. Movement members find it necessary to appeal to multiple audiences who may vary in many ways (interests, values, beliefs, knowledge, etc.). The audience(s) targeted by a movement necessarily impacts framing processes because movements require adherents and activists who believe in frames to meet their desired goals and objectives. A collective frame must reach the targeted audience in order to complete the core task of motivating participation in the movement. The SMOs included in this study must reach an LGBT audience and a politically powerful straight audience. Whatever frames they create must resonate on some level with as many people as possible in order to be successful. Because there are more straight people that LGBT people in the United States, the frames used by these organizations are likely to focus on gaining the support of straight allies while assuming LGBT people will provide support.

* * * * *

In this review of the literature, I have explored heteronormativity outside and within the LGBT subculture, the institutionalization of a portion of the LGBT movement, collective identity, frames, and framing in the context of social movements. The purpose of this study is to explore and potentially explain one mechanism by which the institutionalized LGBT movement constructs a collective identity defined by the normative homo through framing processes.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

I hypothesized that the institutionalized LGBT movement frames and presents a normative identity that excludes some queers from representation under the LGBT umbrella. I further hypothesized that in claiming to speak for and represent *all* LGBT people, the institutionalized LGBT movement creates and maintains a compulsory normative sexuality. This also creates a boundary between the good normative LGBT citizen and the bad (demonized) queer (non)citizen. This boundary must be policed in order to maintain the position of normative LGBT individuals (and the group) as dominant in relation to othered queers (the othered Other)—particularly on the level of national discourse. The final effect is the creation of an acceptable deviant—the normative homo. The normative homo is a full participant in hegemonic heterosexist institutions and becomes an important reinforcer and reproducer of the dominant position of heterosexuals. Further, constructing the normative homo requires denying queer realities that challenge normative frameworks and the dominant culture's heterosexist norms.

In order to interrogate this hypothesis, I investigated the largest and most well known social movement organizations within the institutionalized LGBT movement that work on a national level. I have chosen four national organizations: (1) Human Rights Campaign (HRC), (2) National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), (3) National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), and (4) Lambda Legal Defense Fund. Each of these organizations is widely recognized as serving the LGBT subculture and they comprise the leadership of the institutionalized LGBT movement. Other national organizations were not included in this study because their missions were limited. For example, Gay and Lesbian Advocates Against Defamation (GLAAD) has a mission of “promoting and ensuring fair, accurate and inclusive representation of people and events in the media” (GLAAD 2008). This mission is too narrow to be a defining force in the institutionalized LGBT movement. Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) was excluded because its mission is to “assure that each member of every school community is valued and respected regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression” (GLSEN 2008). Because GLSEN focuses specifically on youth in schools, its scope of representation is too narrow for them to be considered representative of the whole LGBT community.

The Key Players

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) claims to be “America’s largest civil rights organization” that works to achieve LGBT equality. It claims to do so by “inspiring and engaging all Americans. . . to end discrimination against LGBT citizens and realize a nation that achieves fundamental fairness and equality for all.” HRC “seeks to improve the lives of LGBT Americans by advocating for equal rights and benefits in the workplace, ensuring families are treated equally under the law and increasing public support among all Americans through innovative advocacy, education and outreach programs.” Key to their strategy is lobbying elected officials, mobilizing grassroots supporters, establishing educational programs, supporting the election of “fair-minded” officials, and partnering with other LGBT organizations (HRC 2008).

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) claims a mission of building the grassroots power of the LGBT community by “training activists, equipping state and local organizations with the skills needed to organize broad-based campaigns to defeat anti-LGBT referenda and advance pro-LGBT legislation, and building the organizational capacity of our movement.” Its Policy Institute is hailed as “the movement’s premier think tank,” providing research and policy analysis “to support the struggle for complete equality and to counter right-wing lies. As part of the broader social justice movement, we work to create a nation that respects the diversity of human expression and identity and creates opportunity for all” (NGLTF 2008).

While it sounds as if it only works for lesbians, the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) is “committed to advancing the civil and human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and their families through litigation, public policy advocacy, and public education.” NCLR is a public interest law firm “which litigates precedent-setting cases at the trial and appellate court levels; advocates for equitable public policies affecting the LGBT community; provides free legal assistance to LGBT people and their legal advocates; and conducts community education on LGBT legal issues” (NCLR 2008).

Lambda Legal Defense Fund is “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.” They work to win legal victories for clients who seek an end to workplace discrimination, protection for parenting or relationship rights, access to healthcare, or protection against discrimination because of HIV status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. They also represent clients in cases involving immigration, military service, and students’ rights. They engage in educational campaigns in an attempt to cause an attitudinal shift. Lambda Legal’s work “ultimately benefits all people, for it helps to fashion a society that is truly diverse and tolerant. Our mission to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and HIV status in this country has become an intrinsic part of the struggle for civil rights” (Lambda Legal 2008).

Qualitative Content Analysis

In order to interrogate my working hypotheses relating to heternormative framing within the LGBT subculture, I used qualitative content analysis. Content analysis, broadly, is "any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics of messages" (Holsti 1968:601). Content analysis is often used to describe the characteristics of messages and the effects of communicating particular messages. Content analysis has also been used to infer elements of culture and cultural change (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 2007). I used a grounded theory approach to analyze the content of messages sent by these organizations to constituents, potential constituents, the general public, and the institutions they seek to change. A grounded theory approach makes several assumptions. Among those are: (1) that diverse materials can provide good data for research; (2) that there is a need for theory based on qualitative data analysis; and (3) that social phenomena are complex and require a complex analysis and theoretical constructs (Strauss 1987). Strauss (1987) gives some general guidelines for coding within grounded theory. I used the approach he calls "open coding" which allows for the production of concepts that fit the data, rather than attempting to fit the data to pre-existing concepts (Strauss 1987:28). Open coding requires looking for terms used by the organizations being studied, asking specific questions about those terms based on the data, asking the data a set of questions (as if they were people being interviewed), and instead of making assumptions about relevance based on face value, waiting for relevance to emerge.

I analyzed the content of messages sent by these organizations—about their identities, the identities of their constituents, and the goals of their organizations (which are the goals of the institutionalized LGBT movement). I analyzed these data for signs of the production of normative discourse, looking particularly at how these organizations frame the LGBT movement in both normative and non-normative terms, specifically in the messages they send to their constituents and mainstream observers. While I believed it likely that I would find more instances of heteronormative framing, it was important to also look for discursive moments that counter heteronormative framing so as not to manipulate the data to fit my hypotheses. Seale (1999) argues that deviant cases are useful in three ways: (1) some deviant cases provide additional support for conclusions about the data; (2) some deviant cases point to modifications in a researcher's hypothesis; and (3) some deviant cases can be considered exceptional, and these cases point to the reasons why they are exceptional. Because discourse is a social process – and difficult to quantify, its products are also difficult to quantify. Following this logic, it made sense to begin with a qualitative analysis of the data and move toward an attempt to quantify emergent themes when that was appropriate.

The dataset included all information available from the Web sites of the four organizations—www.hrc.org, www.ngltf.org, www.nclrights.org, and www.lambdalegal.org. Because most organizations network with constituents through their Web sites, the Web seemed an appropriate place from which to gather data. I received printed publications from HRC and Lambda Legal, but NCLR and NGLTF did not respond to my requests for their printed publications. However, publications not sent in print form were available for download in PDF format from each Web site. I downloaded these publications and included them in the dataset. While these organizations do print some of their publications, most of these publications must be requested through their Web sites, making it important to use the Web site as the site of discourse production and movement framing.

Each Web site includes several common features: (1) an "About Us" section that relates information about the organization, its mission, and its work; (2) a "Take Action," "Join Us," or

"Get Involved" section that has information about membership and opportunities to engage in collective action; and (3) resources about issues the organizations claim are *the* issues of the LGBT movement. Each issue has its own page that provides more information about that issue and solutions the organization is working toward. Each organization's Web site also includes an employment section that provides information about paid employment and paid and unpaid internship opportunities with the organization. This information provided insight into who the organizations are looking for in terms of employees. Each Web site also includes a staff listing of senior staff (and in some cases, lower-level staff), which provided information about who they have already hired to direct the organization's actions toward its goals. Each organization also has a section on its Web site that allows visitors to make donations—often donations are required in order to become members of the organization.

In order to simplify the coding process, I downloaded the entire Web sites of each organization—758 pages from HRC, 191 pages from NGLTF, 120 pages from NCLR, and 133 pages from Lambda Legal. I saved them as PDF files with the dates and URLs stamped on the pages. I then printed the Web sites onto paper and proceeded to code the information.

The qualitative part of this analysis attempted to answer several questions: Who are these organizations? What identity do they claim for themselves? How do they frame their organizational identities? Who is/are their target audience(s)? Who are they attempting to recruit? What issues do they claim are important? What issues do they ignore or just not mention? Who do they claim their members are? Who do they claim to represent? What is their strategy for social change? What social movement activities, collective actions, and collective behaviors are they involved in? How inclusive do they claim to be? Who is included in their movement for social justice and social change? Who is excluded?

Quantifying Normative and Non-Normative Discourse

After examining the data for emergent qualitative themes, I counted instances of normative and non-normative discourse. First, I counted references to and claims of “normality.” Second, I counted references to and claims of “non-normality.” A reference to normality included statements in the general form: “some people participate in (something normative),” while a claim of normality was in the general form: “we (or LGBT people) are (something normative).” References to and claims of non-normality were in similar form, where (something normative) is replaced with (something non-normative). Within the dataset, 1.10 percent of codes were non-normative, while 80.91 percent of codes were normative. An additional 17.98 percent of codes were instances of scripting. A full breakdown of normative, non-normative, and scripting codes is available in Table 5 (see Appendix E).

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The human social world is organized around heterosexuality. Because they are embedded in the human social world, the organizations examined in this study (Human Rights Campaign, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, National Center for Lesbian Rights, and Lambda Legal) are also organized around heterosexuality. The influence of heteronormativity was evident in my examination of each organization's Web site and publications. While social movements arise to challenge the current reality, these social movement organizations (SMOs) often chose not to challenge the *status quo*. In making their arguments for social change, they proposed working through existing institutions so that change would trickle down into the hearts and minds of the populace. These proposals included the claim that legalizing same-sex marriage would fix more than the problem of unequal access to the rights and material benefits of government-sanctioned marriage contracts. Rather, marriage was held up as a panacea for social ills, including discrimination against and stigmatization of LGBT individuals and families.

I also found that, like many other social movements and SMOs, these organizations often invoked higher causes such as *justice, fairness,* and *patriotism*. However, each higher cause was invoked only within a particular context. For example, *patriotism* was only invoked in a military context. These organizations also invoked ideas of authentic and consistent selves. Claiming authenticity and consistency of LGBT identities made bisexual and transgender identities problematic for these organizations. Because of the complications associated with including bisexual and transgender identities in the LGBT movement, the organizations drew two sets of identity boundaries—one around LGBT identities that positioned them in opposition to the heterosexual majority and a second boundary between a unified lesbian and gay identity and bisexual and trans identities. Part of the work to create and maintain the boundary internal to the movement is done through the process of scripting behaviors and words.

[Not] Challenging the *Status Quo*

In many instances, these organizations had the opportunity to challenge the *status quo*. In almost all of these instances, the organizations chose not to make the challenge but rather reinforced hegemonic ideas and ideals. In discussions of transgender and bisexual identities, there is an opportunity to challenge the gender binary. However, these organizations defined bisexuality as an attraction to both men and women and often referred to all transgender people as him or her, he or she. Using transgender identity to reinforce the gender binary is particularly contradictory. While discussing how transgender people should be treated in the workplace, these organizations asserted that a transgender employee should be allowed to use the restroom that corresponds to “his or her full-time” gender presentation (HRC 2008; Lambda Legal 2008; NCLR 2008; NGLTF 2008). The NGLTF offered a challenge to the idea of the gender binary when it addressed restroom facilities in its annual conference guide. In the conference guide, NGLTF suggests that adults are capable of choosing the restroom in which they feel comfortable and that people should be allowed to pee in peace (NGLTF 2008).

In Lambda Legal’s publication *Bending the Mold: An Action kit for Transgender Students*, transphobia is defined as an “irrational fear” (Lambda Legal 2008:25). However, transphobia is not a recognized mental disorder or an irrational fear. Here, Lambda Legal had the opportunity to challenge the idea that hatred toward transgender people is based on “irrational fear” and thus rooted in the individual psyche; they had the opportunity to assert that transphobia is actually a social issue born of hatred and discrimination. Instead, the organization fell back on a heteronormative understanding of transphobia and left open the option of a “trans panic” argument for defense attorneys and in the court of public opinion. The “gay panic” defense has long been used to lighten sentences of individuals who commit violent crimes against gay men. The argument is that perpetrators’ homophobia, or “irrational fear of gays,” caused them such mental anguish that they became unable to distinguish right from wrong when the crime occurred. By allowing the idea that transphobia is actually a legitimate, irrational fear of trans people to go unchallenged, Lambda Legal encourages those who commit violent acts against transgender people to use a “trans panic” defense to obtain lighter sentences. They have also reinforced the moral division between the good normal and its bad other, holding up dominant notions that cisgender people are “good” and “normal” while transgender people are “bad” and “abnormal.” The normal status of trans-haters is upheld by allowing them to claim an irrational fear rooted in their psyche rather than a hatred of trans people that is reinforced by social pressures to conform.

<u>Reinforcing Normativity</u>

While coding these data, I was particularly looking for cases where the organizations asserted or even referred to non-normativity. I found a few instances of non-normativity; most of them were references rather than assertions. HRC produced 72 instances of non-normative framing, Lambda Legal produced 22 instances of non-normative framing, NCLR produced 7, and NGLTF produced 58. Out of 4,596 total pages of data, and 14,353 discursive moments, non-normative framing instances made up only 1.1 percent of the dataset. More common than instances of non-normativity were instances where potentially non-normative frames were immediately followed by reinforcing normative constructions or narratives.

NGLTF offered repeated examples of following non-normative statements with reinforcements of normativity. A section of NGLTF's publication *From* Fair (v. Rumsfeld) *to Equal: The "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" Law Student Repeal Kit* is titled "Start a Revolution: Sponsor a Resolution!" Revolutions are non-normative; they seek to change the world into something entirely different in one fell swoop. Though the rhyme and alliteration are quite catchy, resolutions are instruments of institutions. In this case, the "resolution" referenced is a document (basically a position paper) supporting the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." Repealing this policy will not change the world; it will only make a slight change to a small part of society. Changing the military's policy is far from a revolution—and sponsoring a resolution calling for its repeal is simply working within the current framework to make a small change. While a small change is not necessarily a "bad" thing (in fact, small changes are often necessary steps toward larger changes), a small change to military policy is far from revolutionary, at least in part because it reinforces normative ideas about patriotism and military service, a topic I return to later.

During a discussion of transgender people who choose not to follow the medical transition model, HRC provided an example of following potential non-normative framing with a reinforcement of normativity. "Transgender people also employ non-medical methods to live and express themselves consistently with their gender identity, such as wearing preferred-gender clothing and body-shaping garments, adjusting mannerisms and speech patterns, and asking friends and family to call them by their preferred name and pronouns" (HRC 2008). Here, HRC recognizes that some transgender people do not follow the medical model of hormone therapy and sexual reassignment surgery. However, HRC follows its recognition of non-medical trans identities with the assertion that transition of some sort is still necessary. This reinforces the gender binary. In particular, the assertion that people use body-shapers (chest binders, hip pads, bra pads, etc.) and changes their speech patterns and mannerisms requires a binary notion of gender. Chest binders (often large ace bandages) are really only used to make female bodies appear more masculine. Bra and hip pads are primarily used to make male bodies appear more feminine. Either way, a person is using body shapers to go from one gender appearance to the other—one of two options. Because mannerisms and speech patterns are associated with either one gender *or* the other, changing either requires going from one gender or the other to its opposite. Either way, the gender binary is reinforced in this context.

HRC also publishes interviews with celebrities on its Web site. One of its interviews was with actor Alan Cumming. When asked about his current perfume/cologne, Cumming said, “It’s beyond gender. Girls like it, too, girls wear it” (HRC 2008). Here, Cumming invokes the transcendence of gender (going beyond gender) but returns to the gender binary (and reinforces it) by asserting that “girls” wear his perfume, too.

By reinforcing the gender binary (and thus hegemonic gender roles), these organizations also marginalize butch lesbians and gay men. This is particularly obvious in these organizations’ discussions of family and children. HRC includes the following in its section about donor insemination:

> When a woman thinks about having a child, she naturally expects that she will be the one bearing the child. But if she has fallen in love with another woman, she may have to think twice. If one woman has always longed to become pregnant and the other has not, the choice between them may be obvious. But if both have dreamt of bearing a child, it can be far more complicated. After all, there are no guarantees that both of you could become pregnant, even if that is what you wish for. Ultimately, therefore, you have to decide: Which one of you will try to become pregnant first? (HRC 2008).

This excerpt makes several assumptions: (1) that women's desire to have children is natural; (2) that women want to bear children rather than adopt or foster; (3) that the only reason a woman would not want to bear a child is if she is not physically capable; and (4) that the hardest decision to make for lesbians is who will get pregnant first. Because bearing children is assumed to be a feminine desire, butch women are cast out of the assumptions HRC is making in this excerpt. Some butch women do want to have children. Some butch women, some femme women, and some women who do not identify as butch or femme do not want to have children at all. For example, my friend Nikki identifies as butch, is often misread as a man, but wants to have children who come from her womb.

Making Change

The goal of all social movements is to make some sort of change to the current reality. Whether the change sought is an amendment to an obscure policy or a complete and revolutionary overhaul, someone or some organization usually takes the lead in defining the change a movement seeks and how to affect that change. The SMOs included in this study proposed changes to existing institutions rather than a complete overhaul of society and culture. Among the changes proposed are implementing corporate nondiscrimination policies, instituting domestic partner benefits, passing the Employment Non-Discrimination act, and legalizing same-sex marriage. Each of these proposals (and all other solutions offered) requires working through established institutions (corporations, federal and state governments, etc.). Two major themes emerged from these organizations' framings of social change and how to achieve it: (1) social change should start by changing existing institutions and will then filter down to the general population and (2) legalizing same-sex marriage will fix a broad range of social problems.

Trickle-Down Social Change

Each of these organizations argued that making change through existing institutions would change the hearts and minds of individuals. HRC argues that "judges' decisions have the ability to change laws, policies, and minds" and that "legislation… will improve the lives of LGBT families" (HRC 2008). Lambda Legal makes a similar argument: "Legal victories that secure legal ties between parents and children have a profound impact on the emotional and economic stability of LGBT and HIV-affected families" (Lambda Legal 2008). While legal protections may provide some sense of security, there are problems legal solutions cannot fix. A legal parenting relationship with a child is not going to change the fact that LGBT people with children will face disgusted looks from people on the sidewalk or in the grocery store; legal arrangements will not stop others from using hurtful language and taking harmful actions against LGBT parents and their children.

Lambda Legal goes farther than the other organizations to argue that "the most significant advances—and indeed, a few setbacks—that impact people's daily lives have come from rulings in state and federal courts around the country" (Lambda Legal 2008). While it is true that making change through legal and governmental institutions can have an impact on people's lives, it is also true that the primary impact of institutional change is that people can use these same institutions to seek recourse when their rights are violated. It has been a long time since *Loving v. Virginia* 388 U.S. 1 (1967) (the Supreme Court Case that struck down remaining state anti-miscegenation laws in 1967), but there are still places in the United States (especially in the rural South) where interracial couples are harassed and biracial children are taunted and teased—sometimes even violently attacked—because of their parents' relationship. This legal change did not make a significant difference in the way racist people may actually feel about interracial marriages, it only changed policies and gave people legal recourse for seeking a particular kind of justice when they have been wronged.

The National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) along with several other organizations (including the other three included in this study) collaborated to publish a four-page report entitled *Make Change, Not Lawsuits*. This report argues that individuals who get married (legally) in California, Canada, or Massachusetts should go back to their home states and ask for their rights as legally married couples (unless, of course, they live and marry in one of these states). However, the report also argues that individuals should not file lawsuits within their home states to attain these rights. Rather, the report claims that these organizations have a better understanding of the "path to full equality" and should therefore be involved in any legal challenge to state marriage laws (NCLR 2008). Not only are they claiming leadership of "the movement," but they are also making the promise that if they are allowed to lead us down the path, then the change they make will eventually work its way down to us. By claiming a leadership role and mapping the "appropriate" path to social change, these organizations are making a promise to LGBT individuals that their leadership and their idea of trickle-down social change will change the way of the world. The promise may not always be explicit, but it is most likely more than these organizations can actually deliver.

Marriage Will Fix It

The most commonly proposed solution to the problems facing LGBT individuals and communities was legalizing same-sex marriage. Marriage, in this context, is narrowly defined as a federally recognized contract between two individuals who are "just like" straight couples in every way except with whom they have sex. However, they still only have sex with their spouse. Sometimes, the assertion that marriage will fix the problem is explicit. For example, HRC states: "Unfortunately, this [discrimination and stigma] happens to many gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people today. The reason: Due to the lack of access to marriage and other equal rights, the law routinely fails to recognize us as families" (HRC 2008). Here, marriage is proposed as a solution not only to discrimination by the legal and justice systems but also to discrimination in the workplace and the attachment of stigma to LGBT individuals and families. However, I doubt any legal marriage contract is going to remove social stigma from LGBT individuals or families. While some argue that legalizing same-sex marriage will significantly alter the institution of marriage, Polikoff (1993) argues that it will actually cause no change to the institution because achieving same-sex marriage requires a rhetoric that poses no threat.

Another explicit example comes from Lambda Legal's section on immigration. "Because the U.S. federal government does not recognize marriage for LGBT people, immigration opportunities based on marriage are not available to same-sex couples" (Lambda Legal 2008). Another excerpt from Lambda Legal provides a more implicit example: "If you are unable to make medical decisions for yourself, your partner may have no say in your care unless he or she has medical power of attorney. For different-sex married couples, the spouse automatically assumes responsibility for medical decisions" (Lambda Legal 2008).

The argument is not that marriage will fix the problems of LGBT individuals, couples, and families, but that *only* marriage will do. By arguing that only marriage will fix the problems of LGBT people, these organizations reinforce the heteronormative ideal of marriage—that everyone must be partnered—and reproduce a system of inequality that privileges married heterosexuals. While this is implicitly evident in the examples above, NCLR makes it explicit in this example: “Most of the protections provided through marriage simply cannot be replicated in any other way” (NCLR 2008). Another example from NCLR also illustrates this point: “Continued attacks on domestic partner protections illustrate [the] need for marriage to secure equal benefits for same-sex couples” (NCLR 2008). Marriage is not proposed as *a* solution to LGBT problems but, rather, as *the* solution.

Invoking a Higher Cause

It is not uncommon for social movements to invoke higher causes in the pursuit of social change. Because the social problems movements seek to repair are often framed as injustices (Benford and Snow 2000), invoking the concept of *justice* is a fairly standard practice among social movement members and SMOs. Each organization in this study invoked higher causes to make the case for attaining its proposed vision of the future. The most commonly claimed causes were *justice, fairness*, and *patriotism*. Each of the four organizations used all of these. While many social movements invoke these same concepts to justify their requests from the dominant culture, how these concepts are used by these organizations is particularly interesting. Appeals to *justice* were relegated to proposed court system fixes; calls for *fairness* were limited to discussions of corporate and institutional policies; and *patriotism* was only invoked in a military context.

Justice is an abstract concept that can mean any number of things. However, only one meaning was evident from these organizations’ Web sites and publications. To these organizations, justice is something that can only be attained through the legal system. Justice is something for the courts to decide. By tying justice to courts, these organizations erase and deny any forms of justice that may be interpersonal or community-based; these forms of justice do not require a court system. Justice can be achieved through a discussion between two individuals – requiring no mediator trained in matters of the law. However, these organizations make it clear that justice is a court-sanctioned matter by calling upon justice only in the context of the court system.

Like justice, *fairness* has many meanings. For teachers in the United States, using a more lenient grading scale to evaluate students for whom English is a second language may be fair. For parents, punishing 11-year-olds for pulling their pants down in public while not punishing two-year-olds for the same behavior may be fair. The context of fairness is crucial. However, these organizations only invoke fairness in the context of policy. Fairness is when policies cover everyone equally, period. This means that teachers must count off the same number of points for grammar mistakes for an ESL student as they do for students whose native language is English; it also means that parents who do not punish two-year-olds cannot punish 11-year-olds.

These organizations argue many times that policies will provide safety, security, or protection for individuals. Policies are presented as a solution to problematic situations these organizations define as unfair, reflecting their naïve understandings of how fairness is achieved. For example, they argue that corporations should institute domestic partner benefits for employees with same-sex partners. Three of the organizations argue that corporations should also institute domestic partner benefits for straight couples, while HRC makes no argument for straight domestic partner benefits. After all, straight couples can get married—so they should. Neither of the organizations phrase this as “any couples” should be allowed access to domestic partner benefits; instead, they reinforce the boundary between hetero and homo by making a distinction between “same-sex couples” and “opposite-sex couples.” All four organizations argue that any requirements made of same-sex partners for proving their relationship statuses should be the same as (or equivalent/similar to) requirements made of married heterosexual couples. This is fairness. However, one instance on the HRC's Web site stood out from the rest. HRC defines domestic partners in a way that encourages corporations to discriminate against employees with same-sex partners. HRC defines "domestic partners" for the purpose of domestic partner benefits as "in an intimate, committed relationship of at least six months' duration" (HRC 2008). This is discriminatory because married couples do not have to live together or be intimate or committed to one another—they simply have to sign a contract—in order to acquire the material benefits of that contract.

The most narrowly defined higher cause was *patriotism*. Patriotism was only invoked in the context of LGBT people serving in the military. According to each of these organizations, about 65,000 LGBT people are currently serving in the armed forces and about 10,000 have been discharged since the implementation of the Clinton administration's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Harass, Don't Pursue" policy for LGBT military service (HRC 2008; Lambda Legal 2008; NCLR 2008; NGLTF 2008). These individuals are considered "patriotic" because they are willing to die for their country. I won't dispute that. However, denied here are other forms of patriotism: challenging government policies, dissenting from mainstream opinions, being a nonviolent activist, or even serving as a conscientious objector. These organizations' framing of patriotism also equates it with violence. Although all of these organizations argue for nonviolent methods of achieving social change (even calling on the figures of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.), these are never defined as patriotic. Instead, patriotism only exists for these organizations in the context of violent military action. In the current political climate, these organizations are unwilling to challenge the legitimacy of military violence; instead, they prefer to be seen as supporting the military – and thus patriotic themselves.

Authenticity and Consistency

All four organizations pointed toward authentic identities of individuals and to a consistency of gender identity and sexual orientation. Some claims that sexual orientation and gender identity are authentic were explicit. Whether the term “authentic” or “authentically” occurred, each of the organizations claimed authenticity as a reason for individuals to accept themselves, for families and friends to accept those who come out as LGBT, and for allies to support the claimed identities of LGBT individuals. There were 231 explicit claims of authenticity in the dataset. A detailed breakdown of claims of authenticity by organization is available in Table 3 (see Appendix C). At other times, authenticity was implied. NGLTF includes an issue section on “The Anti-Gay Industry,” in which it addresses the ex-gay movement and those promoting “reparative therapy” as a means of changing LGBT people into straight members of society. The other three organizations do not include sections specifically addressing the ex-gay movement, but each of them addresses the movement as a site of opposition to LGBT progress. This most commonly occurred in the context of youth issues because the ex-gay movement has been targeting youth specifically in recent years. When challenging the ex-gay movement, these organizations assert that sexual orientation and gender identity are authentic, core, stable parts of the human self that cannot be changed. While this may be a great rhetorical method for challenging the ex-gay movement’s efforts to turn homos into heteros, this strategy also denies the fluidity of sexual and gender identities.

Denying fluidity can be harmful to youth, too. Each of these organizations argues that some youth are “questioning” their identities and need resources to help them figure out how the world works. However, if young people whose identities do not fit one of these organization’s models looks to them for guidance, they could find themselves channeled into a particular identity framework. While this may not be as damaging as conversion therapy, the concept is similar. Conversion therapy attempts to teach individuals to suppress parts of their identities that are seen as “sinful,” and express normative identities instead. While the idea of suppression is subtler in these organizations’ frameworks, the concept is similar. In order to fit into a channel deemed appropriate, youth are encouraged to claim a lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender identity that fits with the models these organizations present. Consequently, youth may learn that some identities are more legitimate (and therefore more valuable, at least politically) than others. This may channel them toward identities seen as more legitimate and encourage them to ignore or suppress less normative parts of their selves. The denial of full expression is a denial of queer realities—and representations of queer realities are not presented by these organizations.

Each of these organizations also includes information for employers and other organizations that may include transgender employees and members. They each provide suggestions for how to handle transgender employees transitioning on the job or how to relate to transgender individuals who may attend organizational functions. The quintessential restroom question is addressed by each organization. “The bathroom question” is often a difficult one for transgender people. When in public settings, transgender people are faced with choosing one of two facilities: the men’s room or the women’s room. For some who have transitioned, this decision may be obvious, but it does not often invoke feelings of comfort and safety. For those who are in the process of transitioning, choose not to transition, or express gender identities inconsistent with gender norms, this decision is never easy and often causes feelings of shame and fear.

Butch lesbians are often met with hostility, even violence, in women's restrooms for presenting traditionally "masculine" gender norms while possessing female bodies. While an undergraduate student, I had a Mohawk and nose ring. One day, I was wearing a tee shirt and overalls. I went to use the bathroom outside one of my classes. A woman in the restroom stared at me as I walked into the stall; I could feel her eyes on my back and see her feet pointed at my stall door as I peed—even though she had been facing the other direction and washing her hands when I walked in. As I came out to wash my hands, she snorted at me and said, "Are you sure you belong here?" The story for transgender individuals is rarely so inconsequential. Each of the organizations included in this study suggests that employers and organizational leaders allow transgender individuals to use the restroom that corresponds to their "full-time" gender presentation (HRC 2008; Lambda Legal 2008; NCLR 2008; NGLTF 2008). This solution may work for some who are transitioning or present consistent genders. For others, who may shift genders or change genders or express fluid gender identities, this may not work. If a person does not present a particular gender (one of the two binary poles) consistently or "full-time," which restroom should they use?

My undergraduate restroom experience was not anomalous. Sometimes I wore overalls and tee shirts and other times I wore dresses and skirts. Sometimes I had a Mohawk, sometimes my head was shaved, and other times I wore a ponytail with ribbons. My gender presentation is rarely consistent because it shifts from day to day, and sometimes from moment to moment. I do not present one of the two acceptable genders on a regular, consistent basis—or even on a regular schedule. So, choosing a bathroom based on my "full-time" gender presentation would be impossible. For others like me, who identify as genderqueer[6], the problem is similar. While NGLTF suggests referring to transgender individuals who use gender-neutral pronouns[7] with those pronouns, this is the only concrete mention of a strategy for relating to genderqueers and others who dissent from binary notions of gender (Mottet and Tanis 2008).

Drawing Identity Boundaries

Most people like to believe that "who they are" is primarily a reflection of their essential, authentic selves. Because we create a natural framework (Goffman 1974) by which we understand our selves (including our genders and sexualities), we often find it difficult to conceptualize identity as fluid – or even subject to small shifts over time. However, gender and sexuality are fluid concepts and individuals often exhibit this fluidity. Because the organizations in this study, like most people, ascribe to an authentic and unchanging conception of identity, fluid identities pose a problem in their attempts at framing issues and goals. Bisexual and transgender identities proved especially problematic and complicated for these organizations.

The Bisexual Problem

Bisexuality was a problematic issue for these organizations. It appeared as if the organizations either did not have an understanding of bisexuality or did not know how to relate an understanding of it to others. In four different contexts, bisexual identity was either erased or ignored. When organizations discussed marriage as an issue for LGBT individuals and communities, there were few instances when the terms "LGBT couples" and "same-sex couples"

[6] Genderqueer is a term used to describe many gender identities that fall outside of the gender binary, in between the poles of binary gender, or encompassing both binary genders. Nestle, Howell, and Wilchins (2002) suggest that genderqueer is a way of seeing gender as a battleground and a playground.
[7] Gender-neutral pronouns include "ze" and "hir" and are used in place of she/he and him/her, respectively (Bornstein 1998).

were used. Rather, the organizations used these phrases once or twice and then switched to using "gay and lesbian couples." The same occurred in explanations of issues tied to family, parenting, the elderly, and the military.

Marriage, family, parenting, joining the military, and aging are all seen primarily as "adult concerns." Erasing bisexuality from discussions of these issues erases bisexuality from consideration as an "adult" phenomenon and further marginalizes bisexuals within the LGBT movement. Moreover, bisexuality was included and mentioned explicitly in almost every discussion of youth issues, further emphasizing that bisexuality is merely an indiscretion of youth—a phase of identity searching that leads to legitimate gay, lesbian, or heterosexual identities.

All four organizations defined bisexuality in terms of the gender binary—men and women with no space between the two for nonconformists. Whether defined as physical, sexual, or emotional attraction, bisexuality was defined in terms of attraction to "both men and women," ignoring the broad range of gender identities and presentations that exist within LGBT communities—especially, but not limited to, genderqueer identities and presentations. In these instances, bisexuality was not just limited to the gender binary but also to some sort of attraction that is usually linked to sex in the collective mind. Though the LGBT movement has largely de-sexualized LGBT individuals in pursuit of legitimacy from the dominant culture (Seidman 2002), these organizations define bisexuality primarily in terms of sexual attraction. By linking bisexuality to sex within a de-sexualized movement, these organizations are making the claim that bisexuals are less worthy of legitimacy than gays and lesbians.

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) includes a story in one of its publications entitled *Living Openly in Your Place of Worship*. The story is about a rabbi who visits an organizational superior to talk about his bisexuality. “He told him what he felt to be true at the time, that he was attracted to both men and women. (He has subsequently come out as a gay man.)” (HRC 2008:8). In this instance, bisexuality is not only defined in terms of the gender binary but is also presented as a phase one goes through on the way to gay or lesbian identity. The story was about a rabbi seeking guidance and affirmation of his identity from an organizational superior. Whether he came out later as gay had no relevance to the story, yet someone thought it was necessary to include this parenthetical statement.

In the glossary provided by HRC, bisexuality is defined as an attraction to both men and women – as a binary. On a page entitled “What Does it Mean to be Bisexual?” HRC further reinforces the idea that bisexuality is constructed in a binary way and may just be a phase. “Some people work through a period of being attracted to both sexes and ultimately wind up being attracted primarily to one sex” (HRC 2008). While this may be true for some people, the idea that bisexuality is “just a phase” has commonly been used as a way of demeaning bisexual people and reinforcing the myth that bisexuals are merely confused and can’t make up their minds. By including the parenthetical statement in the rabbi’s story and the idea that bisexuality can be “worked through” in explaining what it means to be bisexual, HRC reinforces the myth that bisexuality is a phase of confusion, and reaffirms that gay, lesbian, and heterosexual identities are more legitimate and valuable than bisexual identities.

Glossaries and pages about what it means to be bisexual are offered by these organizations as resources for people considering coming out and for those whose friends or family have come out. But using these resources can prove to be more problematic than helpful. My friend Jen came out to her parents as bisexual during her first year at college. She thought it would be easier for her parents to accept her if they could read about bisexuality. So, she compiled a list of links to Web sites (mostly from organizations like the ones in this study) and gave them to her mother. After reading them, the only thing her mother took away from these Web sites was that bisexuality could be "just a phase." Though anecdotal, Jen's story illustrates the way our need to see the world within a natural framework (which constructs sexuality as authentic and immutable) limits our understanding of bisexual identity. Bisexuality challenges our notion that there is such a thing as "sexual orientation"—a natural, enduring sexual desire that arises from human biology and orients us toward either men or women, much like a compass can point us in a particular direction.

<u>Non-Normativity and Bisexuality</u>. In contrast to HRC's construction of bisexuality, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) offered several examples of non-normative constructions of bisexuality and affirming bisexuality as legitimate and not based on the gender binary. Though NGLTF also reverted to using "gay and lesbian couples" in discussions of issues tied to marriage, family, and children, the organization's Web site and publications provided several examples of non-normative ideas of bisexuality.

Rejecting the gender binary, NGLTF asserts, "the bisexual community rejects simple dichotomies that others would use to divide and oppress lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people" (NGLTF 2008). Here, NGLTF actively participates in challenging the gender binary by articulating bisexuality's challenge to binary assumptions. While the other three organizations either tried to normalize or erase bisexuality, NGLTF asserted that bisexuality can be a radical identity. "As those who embrace the radical notion of being able to love one another irrespective of gender, bisexual people challenge and question fundamental assumptions regarding sexuality, gender, and relationships" (NGLTF 2008). While this understanding of bisexuality is non-normative, it is also framed in normative conceptions of love and relationships. By asserting that bisexuals love “irrespective of gender,” NGLTF is not only calling upon normative ideas of relationships based on love but also invoking a “people first” mentality that can be oppressive. Similar to the Christian notion of “love the sinner, hate the sin,” a “people first” mentality allows people to see others as sharing a common humanity while simultaneously ignoring the parts of others that challenge our ideas about the world (McRuer 2006). This mentality is similar to the idea that becoming “colorblind” is an appropriate strategy for ending racism. The “people first” argument is oppressive because it denies full expression of self/selves to some individuals because they do not conform to normative ideas of universal humanity.

Transgender Complications

Transgender identities complicated these organizations’ attempts at framing in ways similar to bisexuality. Because transgender identities challenge normative ideas of gender as authentic and immutable, these organizations often stuck to ideas about transgender people that reinforced the gender binary and authenticity. This is similar to how these organizations dealt with issues tied to bisexuality. However, some complications were unique to transgender identity. Each organization included a section specifically aimed at transgender individuals and marriage. In some instances, transgender people are capable of obtaining legal marriage contracts. Some people enter heterosexual marriages and then transition; they are often able to maintain their legal marriage contracts—at least as long as no one challenges their marriages in court. Others live in states that recognize their new legal sex and are able to attain legal marriage contracts to spouses of the “opposite” sex. Still others live in states where same-sex marriage is legal (Massachusetts and, for a short time, California) and are able to obtain marriage licenses and contracts in those states.

Each organization suggests that transgender people should use discriminatory laws (laws that refuse to recognize the claimed gender identities of transgender people) to maintain their legal marriage contracts (and the material benefits of marriage) and achieve some advantage. In Lambda Legal's case *Roach v. Roach n.k.a*[8]. *Silverwolf*, a heterosexual couple divorced and the ex-husband was ordered to pay alimony. Ten years later, his ex-wife transitioned and became known as Julio Silverwolf. The ex-husband filed suit claiming that Julio's gender transition was the equivalent of his ex-wife's death, so he should no longer be obligated to pay alimony. Lambda Legal supported Julio in this case, using Florida's refusal to recognize his gender status to argue that he was still owed alimony, rather than arguing that the relationship the former couple had while married was valid regardless of Julio's gender transition. The court ruled that Julio was legally female and thus the ex-husband was still obligated to pay alimony. While Lambda Legal recognized that this was "a blow for the transgender community in the state," the organization reinforced the normative assumption that gender is defined by biological sex at birth (rather than social cues and presentations) by using anti-transgender laws to win the case (Lambda Legal 2008).

The most common form of supporting the use of discriminatory legislation occurred when these organizations argued that transgender people should remain legally married to maintain their access to the material benefits of marriage. Only when they wanted to maintain a long-term relationship were transgender people encouraged to fight challenges to the validity of their marriages, even when this required allowing the court system to disrespect their current gender identities. Individuals were encouraged to allow the courts to continue to define them by

[8] N.k.a. = "now known as."

a gender with which they no longer identify in order to maintain the material benefits and rights of marriage.

In other instances, these organizations praised court systems for recognizing the claimed genders of transgender individuals. The following example is from an NCLR publication entitled *Transgendered Persons and Marriage: The Importance of Legal Planning*:

> . . . in 1997, a trial court in Orange County, California affirmed the validity of a marriage involving a transgender man. The case arose when the wife sought to invalidate the marriage in order to deprive her husband of his parental rights vis-à-vis the couple's child, who was born through alternative insemination. Fortunately, the trial court rejected the wife's argument that the transgender husband should be considered legally female and refused to nullify the marriage. The court held that California law recognizes the post-operative sex of a transsexual person for all legal purposes, including marriage. Notably, however, if the court had ruled differently, or if the transgender spouse had not undergone extensive and expensive sex reassignments [*sic*] surgeries prior to the marriage, it is likely that he would have lost any right to maintain a relationship with his child (Minter 2002:2).

In this example, NCLR notes that only recognizing the claimed gender of post-operative transsexuals is problematic; however, the organization also applauds the court for recognizing the defendant's claimed gender based on his surgical status. By doing this, NCLR reinforces the normative idea that gender is defined by physical bodies (human biology) rather than by "cultural genitals" (social cues and presentations) (Kessler 1998; Fausto-Sterling 2000). The organization also encourages others (including those in the court system and LGBT individuals) to continue to ascribe to this natural framework. Whether these organizations encouraged using discriminatory laws to their advantage or appealing to the courts to recognize a person's claimed gender, they appealed to notions of authentic, consistent gender to do so. This not only reinforces the normative natural framework but also ignores (and erases) those who do not claim consistent or authentic gender identities while upholding a system of inequality based on surgical status within trans communities.

Because bisexual and transgender identities proved problematic for these organizations, they drew a boundary between gay and lesbian identities and bisexual and trans identities. More precisely, the boundary was drawn around identities that are easily conceptualized as authentic, immutable, and consistent, creating a line between identities that are easily legitimated and fluid gender and sexual identities that challenge normative ideas about authenticity. This boundary was particularly evident because the organizations had separate sections of their Web sites that dealt specifically with bisexuality or transgender issues. There were no specific sections devoted to gay or lesbian identities or issues, although lesbians and gay men often face different problems in the social world. For example, lesbians and gay men often face different health issues – cisgender gay men are far more likely to need prostate care than cisgender lesbians (owing to the fact that they actually *have* prostates), while cisgender lesbians are more likely than cisgender men to need gynecological care (because they have female reproductive organs and cisgender men do not). However, the only identities claimed under the LGBT umbrella that were given dedicated Web space by these organizations were bisexual and transgender identities. This is similar to the way whiteness is constructed as needing no definition, while blackness must be described in detail. Boundaries, in this sense, are constructed by defining the other and allowing all else to remain in the "us" category. By assuming a dominant cultural position, these organizations make it clear that gay and lesbian identities need no defining—they are what's left on the homo side of the divide once trans and bisexual identities are excluded. This further marks the boundary between a unified lesbian and gay identity the movement attempts to present to the dominant culture as deserving of legitimacy and bisexual and trans identities that challenge the dominant culture's normative conceptions of identity.

Scripting the Normative Homo

These organizations produced the normative homo through the process of scripting. Throughout the data, there were instances where all four organizations offered scripts for people to use in conversations with each other and when working through institutions; there were instances when the organizations scripted individuals' behaviors —told them what to do and how to do it, and there were instances when the organizations scripted the words and language individuals should use. Scripts were available for institutions (government, education, religion, corporations, etc.), LGBT individuals, and allies. The dataset included 2,581 instances of scripting. Among these were 309 script offers (instances in the dataset when organizations offered a script which could be found in another place on the Web site), 1,454 behavioral scripts, and 818 verbal scripts. A breakdown of scripting is available in Table 5 (see Appendix E).

Scripting Behavior

Each organization offered publications or portions of its Web site where individuals could seek advice/help for dealing with particular issues. Often these sections of their Web sites offer behavioral scripts for dealing with a particular problem. Professionals were directed to display certain symbols (HRC equality stickers, rainbow flags, LGBT posters, etc.) in their offices to show that they are allied with the LGBT community and supportive of a particular client's needs/concerns. LGBT youth dealing with issues in schools were directed to write down every detail of discrimination or harassment, take it to the principal, if principals are unresponsive, go over their heads, and hire an attorney if necessary. LGBT employees are directed to start LGBT resource groups at their workplaces, to request full copies of their personnel files before coming out or transitioning on the job, to ask for domestic partner benefits (for which they are provided a verbal script), and to use workplace policies to protect themselves. Since same-sex marriage has been legalized (and made illegal again) in California, people have been directed to “make change, not lawsuits” when they return home after marrying in the state (HRC 2008; Lambda Legal 2008; NCLR 2008; NGLTF 2008).

Scripting Words

Each organization also offered verbal scripts for individuals to use. HRC recommends that young people facing attempts at religious conversion by their parents simply say, “that is your belief, but I do not share it” (HRC 2008). HRC also directs an employee to address an employer’s concerns about instituting an LGBT-inclusive nondiscrimination policy by saying: “Protections are not about changing people’s beliefs, but rather preventing inappropriate workplace behavior and allowing all employees to do their jobs” (HRC 2008). While these are not necessarily “bad” things to say in response to parents or employers, in both cases individuals are scripted as not seeking changes to the *status quo*. Instead, they are told to say that they are not seeking change to people’s ideas or beliefs, only institutional changes. As discussed earlier, social change may be influenced by changes in institutions, but it is illogical to believe that institutional changes will change all (or even many) people’s beliefs. In contrast to the HRC’s argument, social change *must* be about changing people’s beliefs because the social world and its norms are constructed through people’s beliefs and the actions they take based on these beliefs.

Lambda Legal offers a sample op-ed for individuals to use in their local newspapers to argue for comprehensive sex education in schools; they also offer a sample testimony to a school board on the same subject (Lambda Legal 2008). Individuals are encouraged to use these verbatim for their purposes. Both of these documents argue that youth are in danger of contracting sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, and getting pregnant before they are legally adults if comprehensive sex education is not made available in schools. The sample documents argue that LGBT youth are more at risk if sex education is not inclusive because they are not given the information they need to be safe during sexual encounters. While this is a valid argument, it uses the endangered child to argue for a change in policy. The endangered child argument denies the legitimacy of adult individuals and privileges the risky situation of children who need protection (McCreery 2008). In this context, LGBT youth are not entitled to access information as individuals. Instead, they are at risk of any number of negative outcomes if they are not provided with this information.

NCLR encourages people to respond to those opposed to same-sex marriage with the following: “The word marriage really does matter. We are just trying to raise our children and live our lives quietly and we are entitled to the same rights and responsibilities as other families” (NCLR 2008). Here, individuals are encouraged to use the endangered child argument to address the opposition. Some opposed to marriage equality simply have a problem with LGBT couples’ use of the word “marriage,” but all of these organizations argue that it is easier to change minds by appealing to people’s sense of family and the possible dangers children may face if not protected by legally married parents, rather than the idea that “marriage” is a term with historically shifting definitions. LGBT people are also encouraged to argue that they are “just like” straight people and that their families are “just like” straight families.

In a sample letter to a member of Congress from a constituent concerned with the inclusion of “gender identity/expression” in the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), NGLTF offers the following script: “The LGBT community is one community and the community wants to move forward together with one unified bill” (NGLTF 2008). This example illustrates how these organizations often argue that there is one LGBT community – one that is united – and that all individuals within the community want the same thing. The thing *we* supposedly want is supposedly available through the legislature. In a publication entitled *Start a Conversation About LGBT Equality!*, NGLTF scripts the following about marriage: “Domestic partnerships don’t provide the same security as marriage. They exclude people from marriage and create a 2-tiered system that says some people are entitled to marry but not others” (NGLTF 2008). Here, NGLTF provides a script similar to ones the other organizations offer. Individuals are supposed to assert that domestic partnerships and civil unions are not good enough – even if they offer the same rights, privileges, and benefits of a marriage contract. By scripting this argument, the organizations are encouraging individuals to assert that marriage is their issue, too, whether they want to get married or not.

Who is the Normative Homo?

By scripting the way individuals are supposed to interact with institutions and with each other, these organizations are scripting a normative homo ideal that they hope will be easily granted legitimacy by the dominant culture. The normative homo does not challenge the *status quo*; instead, he or she seeks to be included in mainstream culture regardless of his or her sexual identity. The normative homo believes that social change can be achieved through institutions and that policies provide him or her with security, safety, and protection. The normative homo believes that marriage is the only solution to the problems LGBT people face, and that with the legalization of same-sex marriage will come an end to discrimination against and stigma attached to LGBT people. The normative homo believes that justice is achieved through the court system, that fairness is when policies apply to everyone equally, and that during times of war it is unpatriotic to question the legitimacy of military violence. The normative homo also believes that gender and sexual identities are authentic and consistent.

Because the normative homo ascribes to these beliefs and ideals, he or she is located within the inner boundary drawn between easily legitimated identities and problematic identities. The normative homo is not bisexual or transgender because he or she would never challenge the gender binary or the idea that identity is authentic and immutable. The normative homo is not a butch lesbian or an effeminate gay man because butch lesbians and effeminate gay men break gender stereotypes and present an image of gay and lesbian identity that is unpalatable to mainstream culture unless presented in popular culture as a comedic interlude. The normative homo is the product of multiple exclusions—he or she is what is left when everyone else has been shoved aside. Much like the final construction of the lesbian feminist subculture, the normative homo is part of a purified gay and lesbian community (Nataf 2006). The normative homo is what is left—a gender-conforming gay or lesbian individual who does not seek to challenge normative frames.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

The organizations included in this study repeatedly refused to take opportunities to challenge the *status quo* and often followed potentially non-normative frames by reinforcing normative frameworks. They all argued that their efforts to achieve social change would succeed if they can take the lead in working through existing institutions to make small changes that will trickle down to the masses. They also argued that marriage is not just a solution to problems faced by LGBT individuals, but that only marriage will fix our problems. Like other social movements, they invoke higher causes to justify their visions of the future and consequently reinforce narrowly defined normative ideas about justice, fairness, and patriotism.

By erasing bisexuality in the context of marriage, family, parenting, aging, and the military, these organizations further reinforced the idea that bisexuality is simply an indiscretion of youth. Marriage, parenting, aging, and joining the military are normatively conceptualized as part of a maturation process. If bisexuality does not exist in these contexts—and, indeed, these organizations erased the existence of bisexuality in these contexts—then it is constructed as a youthful indiscretion or lapse in maturity. Although these organizations claimed to represent the LGBT movement and positioned themselves as movement leaders, they did so at the cost of their bisexual members' status as adult citizens. In order to take full advantage of one's citizenship rights, one must be an adult. Because bisexuality is excluded from consideration when these organizations discuss "adult concerns" like marriage and parenting, they participate in denying citizenship to bisexuals and actively produce bisexuals as non-citizens—or just bad queers.

The boundary excluding trans people was more easily constructed by these organizations. They simply asserted that gender identity and sexual identity are unrelated, denying the interplay (and playfulness) of gender and sexuality. Transgender identities can be radical, critical, playful, and even normative. These organizations made the choice to focus on normative (mostly transsexual) identities and thus excluded any trans identities that disturb the gender binary and other normative frameworks. By excluding problematic identities, they defended "authentic" gay and lesbian identities and reinforced heteronormative and heterosexist assumptions about gender and sexuality.

Heteronormativity and heterosexism work outside the LGBT subculture by fostering the hostile environment against which LGBT identities are constructed. Heteronormativity and heterosexism also work within the LGBT subculture to create a boundary between LGBT individuals who ascribe to normative frameworks and those who challenge normative frameworks. These SMOs framed a particular collective LGBT identity that further marginalizes some members of LGBT communities while allowing others to continue accessing and using the power attached to the privileged factions of their identities. The SMOs included in this study are led primarily by individuals who are able to access and use the power of privilege to define the movement and guide its progress. Rather than using this power to challenge normative frameworks, these organizations reinforce heteronormativity and heterosexism (which arise out of heterosexual privilege) by constructing the normative homo.

Producing a normative homo ideal and arguing for its legitimacy results in reinforcing normativity. The normative homo reinforces dominant ideas about marriage, love, relationships, family, work, and gender. The radical potential of LGBT identities to challenge normative ideas about sex, gender, and sexuality is erased by the production of the normative homo. All challenges to the normative homo ideal are denied in the context of national discourse because representations of LGBT individuals in this arena are presented primarily by the organizations that produce the normative homo and then display him or her to institutions and the public as *the* homo—or the homo next door.

Because people generally have some awareness (however small) that dissident identities exist, presenting the normative homo to the public provides them with the opportunity to choose. Individuals, groups, and institutions within the dominant heterosexist culture can choose to recognize and grant legitimacy to dissident identities that challenge the heteronormative belief system, or they can choose the normative homo. Because the organizations that produce the normative homo have positioned themselves within the dominant culture's institutions (as opposed to dissident identities positioned outside the dominant culture), their construction of the normative homo appears more palatable. Part of what makes the normative homo appetizing is his or her adherence to heteronormative ideals and heterosexist beliefs. Another part of this appeal is the normative homo's distance from dissident identities. The way American society is constructed makes this an automatic decision for the dominant culture: the path of least resistance is to grudgingly accept the normative homo and then claim an end to homophobia.

When the dominant heterosexist culture chooses the normative homo, it simultaneously denies the disruptive potential and existence of dissident queer realities. Because the normative homo is produced by the SMOs leading the LGBT movement, these organizations not only fully participate in the dominant culture's stigmatization of LGBT individuals, but also encourage the dominant culture to deny queer realities by first modeling it themselves. Denying queer realities further marginalizes some LGBT individuals and demonizes dissident sexualities and gender identities by limiting free expression. The denial of queer realities also reproduces the system of inequality that privileges heterosexuality because it erases those who embrace the potential to challenge that very system.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ORGANIZATIONAL WEB PAGE BREAKDOWN

	HRC		Lambda Legal		NCLR		NGLTF	
	Number	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
				Basic Organizational Information				
Basic Information	27	2.61	24	17.65	13	10.40	33	16.84
Job Opportunities	10	0.97	11	8.09	1	0.80	9	4.59
Staff/Board Bios	39	3.76	36	26.47	27	21.60	84	42.86
Donate	92	8.88	7	5.15	17	13.60	11	5.61
				Identities				
Lesbian	2	0.19	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Gay	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Bisexual	9	0.87	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.51
Trans	77	7.43	3	2.21	5	4.00	3	1.53
Family	154	14.86	4	2.94	7	5.60	3	1.53
				Issues				
Children	143	13.80	3	2.21	7	5.60	2	1.02
Relationships	37	3.57	4	2.94	5	4.00	1	0.51
Estate Planning	14	1.35	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Religion	36	3.47	0	0.00	0	0.00	21	10.71
Coming Out	87	8.40	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Allies	8	0.77	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
College	12	1.16	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	1.02
Elders	7	0.68	0	0.00	4	3.20	2	1.02
Work	41	3.96	8	5.88	6	4.80	4	2.04
Politics	20	1.93	2	1.47	4	3.20	5	2.55
Marriage	16	1.54	8	5.88	9	7.20	3	1.53
Youth	20	1.93	8	5.88	5	4.00	3	1.53
Celebrities	32	3.09	0	0.00	2	1.60	0	0.00
POC	15	1.45	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	1.02
Hate Crimes	9	0.87	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	2.04
HIV/AIDS	23	2.22	6	4.41	0	0.00	1	0.51
Immigration	10	0.97	1	0.74	5	4.00	0	0.00
Military	19	1.83	1	0.74	0	0.00	2	1.02
Corporations	77	7.43	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Courts	0	0.00	10	7.35	1	0.80	0	0.00
Sports	0	0.00	0	0.00	7	5.60	0	0.00
TOTALS	**1036**	**100.00**	**136**	**100.00**	**125**	**100.00**	**196**	**100.00**

Table 1. Organizational Web Page Breakdown by Number of Web Pages and Percentage of Total Web Pages.

APPENDIX B

BREAKDOWN OF ISSUES

	HRC		Lambda Legal		NCLR		NGLTF	
	Number	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
				Identity-Specific Issues				
Lesbian	2	0.26	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Gay	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Bisexual	9	1.19	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.69
Trans	77	10.14	3	5.17	5	7.69	3	5.08
People of Color	15	1.98	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	3.39
Youth	20	2.64	8	13.79	5	7.69	3	5.08
				Family-Related Issues				
Family	154	20.29	4	6.90	7	10.77	3	5.08
Children	143	18.84	3	5.17	7	10.77	2	3.39
Relationships	37	4.87	4	6.90	5	7.69	1	1.69
Marriage	16	2.11	8	13.79	9	13.85	3	5.08
Estate Planning	14	1.84	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
				Other Issues				
Religion	36	4.74	0	0.00	0	0.00	21	35.59
Coming Out	87	11.46	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Allies	8	1.05	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
College	12	1.58	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	3.39
Elders	7	0.92	0	0.00	4	6.15	2	3.39
Work	41	5.40	8	13.79	6	9.23	4	6.78
Politics	20	2.64	2	3.45	4	6.15	5	8.47
Hate Crimes	9	1.19	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	6.78
HIV/AIDS	23	3.03	6	10.34	0	0.00	1	1.69
Immigration	10	1.32	1	1.72	5	7.69	0	0.00
Military	19	2.50	1	1.72	0	0.00	2	3.39
Courts	0	0.00	10	17.24	1	1.54	0	0.00
Sports	0	0.00	0	0.00	7	10.77	0	0.00
TOTALS	**759**	**100.00**	**58**	**100.00**	**65**	**100.00**	**59**	**100.00**

Table 2. Breakdown of Issues by Organization, Number of Web Pages, and Percentage of Total Web Pages.

APPENDIX C

DECODING THE CODES

CODE	EXPLANATION
ALLY	A reference to a straight ally in the dataset.
AUTH	Use of the word "authentic" or "authentically" in the dataset.
BI	A reference to bisexual identity in the dataset.
CH	Use of the endangered child argument in the dataset.
E=MB	Instances when equality is equated with material benefits in the dataset.
EBI	Instances in the dataset when bisexual identity is erased.
EPP	Instances in the dataset when poor people are erased.
ESS	Essentialist argument in the dataset.
EUNE	Instances in the dataset when un-educated people are erased.
FF	Instances of family framing in the dataset.
GB	Instances in the dataset when the gender binary is reinforced.
GC	Instances in the dataset when gender consistency is claimed.
GQ	References to genderqueer identities in the dataset.
H/H	Instances in the dataset when the hetero/homo binary is reinforced.
HUM	Instances in the dataset when organizations invoke a narrow idea of universal humanity.
JLY	Instances in the dataset when organizations argue that LGBT people are "just like" straight people.
MMOD	Instances in the dataset when organizations abide by the medical model of transgender identity.
MPOC	References to people of color in the dataset.
MPP	References to poor or working class people in the dataset.
MWFI	Instances in the dataset when organizations argue that legalizing same-sex marriage will fix a problem.
NN	Instances of non-normative discourse in the dataset.
NN-X	Instances in the dataset when non-normative discourse is followed by reinforcing normative frames.
NOCH	Instances in the dataset when organizations are presented with an opportunity to challenge the *status quo*, but do not take it.
P=S	Instances in the dataset when organizations claim that policy will provide safety and/or security.
SB	Behavioral scripts in the dataset.
SOC	Instances in the dataset when sexual orientation consistency is claimed.
SW	Verbal scripts in the dataset.
TRDOWN	Instances in the dataset when organizations argue that social change should start within institutions and then will trickle down into the populace.
UNI	Instances in the dataset when organizations claim a unified LGBT community.
WAE	Instances in the dataset when organizations argue that LGBT people exist everywhere.
WTI	Instances in the dataset when organizations propose solutions to problems that require working through institutions.

Table 3. Codes and their explanations.

APPENDIX D

CODE BREAKDOWN

	HRC		Lambda Legal		NCLR		NGLTF	
	Number	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
ALLY	73	1.17	13	0.36	0	0.00	42	1.99
AUTH	175	2.80	39	1.09	11	0.45	6	0.28
BI	61	0.98	7	0.20	0	0.00	22	1.04
CH	536	8.59	303	8.48	214	8.80	60	2.85
E=MB	269	4.31	133	3.72	91	3.74	46	2.18
EBI	415	6.65	180	5.04	36	1.48	76	3.61
EPP	14	0.22	7	0.20	0	0.00	0	0.00
ESS	52	0.83	1	0.03	2	0.08	0	0.00
EUNE	9	0.14	2	0.06	2	0.08	10	0.47
FF	754	12.08	412	11.53	370	15.21	118	5.60
GB	312	5.00	72	2.02	99	4.07	23	1.09
GC	33	0.53	19	0.53	11	0.45	1	0.05
GQ	7	0.11	6	0.17	5	0.21	4	0.19
H/H	34	0.54	12	0.34	6	0.25	6	0.28
HUM	24	0.38	8	0.22	1	0.04	10	0.47
JLY	112	1.79	97	2.72	28	1.15	17	0.81
M	408	6.54	334	9.35	309	12.71	272	12.90
MMOD	108	1.73	42	1.18	60	2.47	4	0.19
MPOC	200	3.20	43	1.20	37	1.52	141	6.69
MPP	20	0.32	22	0.62	51	2.10	41	1.94
MWFI	129	2.07	108	3.02	94	3.87	27	1.28
NN	4	0.06	9	0.25	2	0.08	32	1.52
NN-X	5	0.08	8	0.22	0	0.00	2	0.09
NOCH	37	0.59	4	0.11	0	0.00	1	0.05
P=S	385	6.17	290	8.12	239	9.83	37	1.76
SB	563	9.02	466	13.05	46	1.89	379	17.98
SO	61	0.98	150	4.20	55	2.26	43	2.04
SOC	12	0.19	3	0.08	9	0.37	1	0.05
SW	405	6.49	194	5.43	28	1.15	191	9.06
TRDOWN	141	2.26	77	2.16	41	1.69	8	0.38
UNI	62	0.99	65	1.82	25	1.03	92	4.36
WAE	10	0.16	6	0.17	5	0.21	1	0.05
WTI	811	12.99	440	12.32	555	22.82	395	18.74
TOTALS	**6241**	**100.00**	**3572**	**100.00**	**2432**	**100.00**	**2108**	**100.00**

Table 4. Code Breakdown by Organization, Number of Codes, and Percentage of Total Codes Per Organization.

APPENDIX E

QUANTIFYING DISCOURSE

	HRC		Lambda Legal		NCLR		NGLTF	
	Number	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
				NORMATIVE CODES				
ALLY	73	1.17	13	0.36	0	0.00	42	1.99
AUTH	175	2.80	39	1.09	11	0.45	6	0.28
CH	536	8.59	303	8.48	214	8.80	60	2.85
E=MB	269	4.31	133	3.72	91	3.74	46	2.18
EBI	415	6.65	180	5.04	36	1.48	76	3.61
EPP	14	0.22	7	0.20	0	0.00	0	0.00
ESS	52	0.83	1	0.03	2	0.08	0	0.00
EUNE	9	0.14	2	0.06	2	0.08	10	0.47
FF	754	12.08	412	11.53	370	15.21	118	5.60
GB	312	5.00	72	2.02	99	4.07	23	1.09
GC	33	0.53	19	0.53	11	0.45	1	0.05
H/H	34	0.54	12	0.34	6	0.25	6	0.28
HUM	24	0.38	8	0.22	1	0.04	10	0.47
JLY	112	1.79	97	2.72	28	1.15	17	0.81
M	408	6.54	334	9.35	309	12.71	272	12.90
MMOD	108	1.73	42	1.18	60	2.47	4	0.19
MPOC	200	3.20	43	1.20	37	1.52	141	6.69
MPP	20	0.32	22	0.62	51	2.10	41	1.94
MWFI	129	2.07	108	3.02	94	3.87	27	1.28
NN-X	5	0.08	8	0.22	0	0.00	2	0.09
NOCH	37	0.59	4	0.11	0	0.00	1	0.05
P=S	385	6.17	290	8.12	239	9.83	37	1.76
SOC	12	0.19	3	0.08	9	0.37	1	0.05
TRDOWN	141	2.26	77	2.16	41	1.69	8	0.38
UNI	62	0.99	65	1.82	25	1.03	92	4.36
WAE	10	0.16	6	0.17	5	0.21	1	0.05
WTI	811	12.99	440	12.32	555	22.82	395	18.74
N TOTALS	**5140**	**82.36**	**2740**	**76.71**	**2296**	**94.41**	**1437**	**68.17**
				NON-NORMATIVE CODES				
BI	61	0.98	7	0.20	0	0.00	22	1.04
GQ	7	0.11	6	0.17	5	0.21	4	0.19
NN	4	0.06	9	0.25	2	0.08	32	1.52
NN TOTALS	**72**	**1.15**	**22**	**0.62**	**7**	**0.29**	**58**	**2.75**
				SCRIPTING CODES				
SB	563	9.02	466	13.05	46	1.89	379	17.98
SO	61	0.98	150	4.20	55	2.26	43	2.04
SW	405	6.49	194	5.43	28	1.15	191	9.06
S TOTALS	**1029**	**16.49**	**810**	**22.68**	**129**	**5.30**	**613**	**29.08**
TOTALS	**6241**	**100.00**	**3572**	**100.00**	**2432**	**100.00**	**2108**	**100.00**

Table 5. Code breakdown by normative codes, non-normative codes, and scripting codes.

VITA

PORSCHA R. YOUNT

Personal Data:	Date of Birth: July 15, 1982 Place of Birth: Hickory, North Carolina
Education:	Fred T. Foard High School, Newton, North Carolina B.S. Environmental Studies. Second Major, Sociology. University of North Carolina – Asheville. 2006. M.A. Sociology, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee 2009
Experience:	Business & Creative Director, Out in the Carolinas Publishing, Inc. Asheville, NC 2008-2009 Graduate Assistant, East Tennessee State University, College of Arts and Sciences, 2008-2009 Associate Publisher, Out In Asheville, Inc. Asheville, NC. 2005-2008 SAT Prep Instructor, Native Minds, LLC, Cherokee, NC. 2004-2005. SGA President, UNC-Asheville. Asheville, NC. 2004-2005.
Publications:	Yount, Porscha. *forthcoming*. "Trailer Park Queer." *South to a Queer Place*, edited by Ugena Whitlock.
Honors and Awards:	Senior Service Award, Department of Sociology, 2006. UNC Asheville. Carolyn Briggs Award for Contributions to Diversity, 2003. UNC Asheville. North Carolina Teaching Fellows Scholarship. 2000. UNC Asheville.