

INTEREST GROUP CITIZENSHIP: LGBT POLITICS FROM THE CLOSET TO K
STREET

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Dedication

For my friends, family, and future

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Chapter I

Or Did It Explode? A Critical Reframing of the American Advocacy System

In early 1988, the Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF) received an audit from the Third Sector Management Group (TSMG), an organization funded by private companies including Exxon, the Ford Foundation, and the Washington Post Company and designed to confront the challenges facing non-profit organizations. With a membership of roughly 10,000, the HRCF—already one of the largest independent political action committees in the country and the largest of those serving LGBT Americans—sought guidance about how to become more effective in the context of a political climate completely hostile to LGBT-friendly policies.¹ In the face of what TSMG described as “a less active and more cost-conscious government, increasing competition for foundation and corporate funding, and growing service needs and delivery costs,” the non-profit advisement company asserted that political advocates like the HRCF would need to meet certain industry standards.² Central among these tasks, they explained, were four basic imperatives: constituency services, public presentation, marketing, and fundraising. In short, if the HRCF wanted to provide the strongest advocacy possible for LGBT Americans, it would need to take on more conventionally “corporate” functions.

Nationally-active political advocates had long understood the value of good public relations, strong fundraising, and robust channels of communication with the communities

¹ A note on language: I use the term “LGBT,” referring of course to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender coalition, in accord with the most accepted contemporary parlance. Recognizing that different movements, organizations, and authors may use different terms, I use the term “LGBT” when referring generically to contemporary efforts to represent those bearing non-normative sexual identities. However, I will also use more historically- and movement-specific terms such as “homosexual,” “homophile,” “lesbian and gay,” or “queer” throughout this dissertation whenever merited.

² Accessed at Cornell University Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, HRC Archived Materials, Box 1 (accessed 4-16-12).

that they served. However, several challenges stood in the way of groups that, like the HRCF, assisted historically-disadvantaged communities. Enduring patterns of poverty made fundraising difficult. The media—and therefore the public—often ignored these groups or, worse still, cast them as undeserving, dangerous, or deranged. Disadvantaged communities often faced harsh social stigmas, leading some individuals to shun identification with other group members or remain politically apathetic. Another, perhaps less obvious, obstacle confronted organizations like the HRCF: the antagonistic rhetoric and transgressive vision of a number of (typically local-level) groups that rejected the interest group model of political action in favor of alternative paths to social and political change.³ These groups not only siphoned potential supporters from non-profit advocates, but they often projected a public image that made the task of attaining favorable policy and widespread public support more difficult as well.

Scholars and activists alike have noted the longstanding tensions between the pragmatism of interest group advocacy and the liberationist verve of radical or transgressive groups that arose in the post-Cold War-era.⁴ Seemingly, the former model has slowly replaced the latter as the central strategy of political dissent. According to a widely accepted narrative, the middle-class, suit-wearing legal advocate has largely become the driving force

³ What I am referring to here as the “interest group model” encompasses political action committees (PACs) and other groups that engage in political activity centered in Washington, DC, as well as non-profit 501(c)3 groups, which operate primarily as charities or service-providers. (The latter category must operate within legally circumscribed limitations on lobbying activities.) Importantly, the “interest group model” of political organization employs a framework of political activity that is sanctioned and regulated by the state in a manner that allows for specialization and professionalization; moreover, it privileges *inclusion* in the policy-making process.

⁴ Nancy Fraser’s distinction between *affirmative* and a *transgressive* political action is particularly insightful for my purposes, here. See Fraser 1995. For further discussion on distinctions between transgressive or queer political action and affirmative or mainstream lesbian and gay political action, see, among many examples, Abelow 1995; Gamson 1995; Seidman 1993. For accounts by activists who have noted the withering of transformative energies in the years after Stonewall, see the various essay contained within Mecca 2009; Sycamore 2004.

of political advocacy. Many scholars have taken note of this trend, alluding to a “minority rights revolution,”⁵ a “new liberalism,”⁶ or an “advocacy explosion,”⁷ among other labels. Importantly, these terms each gesture toward roughly the same historical phenomenon: representatives from historically disadvantaged groups have increasingly gained access to, or have themselves become, policy insiders working to secure governmental protections. Groups like the HRCF—and the non-profit, interest group model of which they are part—have emerged as the primary representatives of historically-disadvantaged communities. Indeed, within ten years of the audit, membership at the HRCF—now known as the HRC—grew twenty-five-fold, to 250,000. Years later, it has not stopped growing.

This dissertation explores the emergence of the interest group model of political advocacy, asking: What roles have nationally-active advocacy organizations played in shaping *how* (not just how *much*) citizens engage politically? And how has contemporary advocacy impacted prevailing standards of democratic citizenship? Whereas much ink has been devoted to exploring advocacy organizations’ efficacy in lobbying government, flourishing in competitive policy markets, or responding to constituent demands, my project explores how political advocates have *communicated with their target constituencies* to structure the nature of political action for historically-disadvantaged communities.⁸ In what follows, then, I argue that an *interest group citizenship* has emerged in the United States. This interest group citizenship is characterized not only by the emergence of strengthened political identities for

⁵ Skrentny 2002.

⁶ Berry 1999.

⁷ Berry 1997.

⁸ By “advocacy organization” (which I use interchangeably with the term “interest group”), I refer quite broadly to policy-active organizations that seek to influence government and mobilize members according to a specific vocation, profession, or identity. McCarthy and Zald, among others, distinguish these organizations from social movement organizations, which lack the same level of institutionalization and routinization as seen in today’s advocacy organizations. See McCarthy & Zald 1977; Minkoff 1995; Strolovitch 2007.

historically-marginalized groups, but also by the constraints upon American citizenship that have developed in the age of neoliberalism. These constraints include circumscribed forms of political participation, and a renewed focus on the conduct of those demanding inclusion into the American political system. Interest group citizenship, in short, has become the primary mechanism of political engagement on the part of historically-disadvantaged and minority groups, and it stands in marked contrast to those forms of political dissent that imagine alternative potentialities and utopian visions *beyond* those rights and protections that are workable within the limits of contemporary pluralist politics. I build upon this term, interest group citizenship, throughout this dissertation by documenting the development of the contemporary advocacy system, exploring how nationally-active organizations have mobilized citizens, and explaining the impact of this mobilization upon the political *identities, participation, and conduct* of historically-marginalized constituencies.

In particular, I focus upon the emergence and trajectory of what was first known as the “homophile” movement, then “lesbian and gay” advocacy, and eventually LGBT advocacy as it developed between 1950 and 1990. Dating back at least to Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality*, scholars have noted how historically-specific social and sexual practices, and not simply preexisting and biologically-determined libidos, have shaped and conditioned sexual desires and identities.⁹ As Gayle Rubin put it, “human sexuality is not comprehensible in purely biological terms,” but is rather “constituted in society and history.”¹⁰ The product of social taboos and stigmas, moral repression, economic development, public and quasi-public spaces, political cruelty, and an array of contingencies, contemporary LGBT advocacy has charted a unique historical path from the closet to K

⁹ Foucault 1990(1976).

¹⁰ Rubin 2011, 146-147.

Street. This path, I argue, best exemplifies how political advocacy has adapted to changing economic and political conditions, and in turn how these adaptations in political advocacy have resonated among the social groups that serve as the recipients of this advocacy.

Using this movement as an exemplar of broader trends taking place within the American advocacy system, then, I chronicle the role that nationally-active advocates played in creating an LGBT political constituency out of what had once been widely considered “deviant,” “immoral,” or “neurotic” sexual behaviors. Chosen in part because it is often considered “the quintessential identity movement”—and one, moreover, that has remained surprisingly underexplored within the discipline of political science—the LGBT community has largely emerged together with the development of the contemporary interest group era.¹¹ Once a group lacking both a social identity and political representation, it has blossomed into a movement that asserts itself as an empowered bloc of policy-active constituents. In many ways, its story is the story of the advocacy era; its successes are the successes of American inclusion; its limitations are the limitations of the American advocacy system.

Overview of Argument

This dissertation examines the broad changes to American politics that occurred with the sharp rise in the number, influence, and visibility of advocacy organizations representing historically-marginalized groups. The diversification of the United States’ advocacy system is well established, with scholarship frequently referring to an “explosion” of interest group activity since the 1960s. Many have noted—with varying levels of approval—that these groups have sharpened our nation’s focus on political rights and protections, often at the

¹¹ See, for example, Bernstein 1997.

expense of redistributive goals and participatory ideals. Where some see progress due to the proliferation of new voices, others see the breakdown of broad-based mass movements aiming for new and inventive forms of political praxis. Moreover, these developments have brought increased partnerships with political and economic power brokers, leading some critics to warn of a “non-profit industrial complex” in which corporate interests and state power converge to co-opt political movements.¹² Indeed, this dissertation generally accepts the premise, stated succinctly by Adolph Reed, that “1960s radicalism dissolved into pluralist politics,” accepting, too, his qualification that this dissolution was neither natural nor inevitable.¹³ It *was*, however, deeply structured by the ideas, institutions, and processes central to neoliberalism. Building upon this widely-shared lamentation, I examine the extent to which this shift toward professionalized political organizing has reverberated amongst the pluralist arena’s newly-included constituents. Focusing on the *formative* element of political representation, then, I inquire about the degree to which political advocacy has helped *mobilize neoliberal subjects of the pressure system*—a form of political subjectivity that I strive to define throughout this dissertation.

Importantly, then, the story of American advocacy is not merely that of professional advocates succumbing to the interests of the upper-middle class. Rather, it is also a story of “making citizens.”¹⁴ Following emergent trends in both democratic theory and empirical political science, I begin from the assumption that interest groups are, in fact, democratically representative organizations, despite the fact that they lack both formal legitimacy and

¹² Smith 2007, 8-9.

¹³ Reed 1986, 7.

¹⁴ See Campbell 2003; Mettler 2005; Mettler & Soss 2004.

electoral accountability in a traditional sense.¹⁵ Their representation serves a *constitutive* purpose—that is, they actively shape identities, establish modes of participation, and regulate the political conduct of their constituents.¹⁶

Drawing upon insights from both normative theory and empirical political science, I argue that contemporary political advocates serve a particular representative function: to mediate between the state (broadly defined) and their members or constituents.¹⁷ Advocacy organizations, I suggest, mobilize historically marginalized individuals *into* the political order; in doing so, they help to stultify mobilization *against* it. Certainly, we should not overlook the degree to which democratic inclusivity—e.g. the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell or the expansion of same-sex marriage rights—may significantly reshape our previously exclusionary institutions. But this reshaping is reciprocal, as the struggle for inclusion necessarily privileges those who stand ready to take advantage of its potential, whether by serving in the military, professing monogamous love at the altar, or enacting any other form of state-sanctioned and state-regulated activity.

This text, then, reframes the growing pessimism surrounding the post-1960s advocacy era by examining the representative role that interest groups play not merely in *co-opting* leaders to fulfill the interests of the state or the wealthy, but in *mobilizing* broad constituencies into supporting tangible policy initiatives rather than transgressive (and often unattainable) demands for systematic reform. I argue that the historical role that interest groups have played has *not* been to measure the latent mood among their constituents and then translate this sentiment into policy initiatives, as optimists might hope, *nor* to coercively

¹⁵ See Strolovitch 2007; Urbinati & Warren 2008; Warren 2001.

¹⁶ See Disch 2011; Mansbridge 2003.

¹⁷ See Williams 1998; Strolovitch 2007.

assimilate their constituents to the more narrow interests of economic elites, as critics assert. Rather, they have, for better and for worse, worked to *produce* citizens that appear desirable and industrious from the standpoint of the hegemonic logics governing the American political system. This dissertation, then, both re-evaluates the role of professional advocacy within American political life and reframes the emerging narrative of the “interest group explosion” and the subsequent age of the “new liberalism.”

In doing so, I not only understand interest groups as democratic representatives, but I also aim to move empirical political science towards an understanding of democratic representation as a mobilizing and generative force. In taking this position, I situate my research within what Mettler and Soss have called the “political tradition” of research on mass political behavior.¹⁸ Characterized by its departure from standard, individual-centered approaches to political behavior, this diverse tradition emphasizes the multi-directional flow of political communication, the ways by which opportunity structures facilitate or deter specific types of citizen demands, and institutions’ and organizations’ ability to *cultivate* and *mobilize* particular beliefs and demands. In line with this tradition, I argue that interest groups and advocacy organizations have emerged as the primary sites of political action for the disadvantaged; in this regard, the methods, aims, and tactics of contemporary interest groups like the HRC (noted above) cannot be fully understood apart from the broader cultural and political trajectories of which they are part. The argument, here, is *not* that formerly viable tactics of dissent such as demonstrations, counter-institutions, or other politically subversive actions faded away after successful and concerted efforts by elites to control the masses. Rather, interest group leaders and identifiers alike are increasingly

¹⁸ Mettler & Soss 2004.

conditioned by structured parameters of possibility under contemporary neoliberal governing procedures. The result is the production of more order-affirming forms of political dissent—and, in turn, more order-affirming citizens—than those that characterized the mass movements of the “New Left” of the 1960s.

My project advances this argument in two distinct but related ways. First, I challenge the assumption that determining how accurately political advocates reflect constituent preferences is key to understanding advocacy organizations’ representative role. Rather, I follow recent scholarship blending normative and pluralist theory by emphasizing their *mediating* role. Defined by Melissa S. Williams as the process by which institutions or representatives translate “individual citizens’ political concerns and interests into governmental decisions and policies,” the concept of mediation “requires that we recognize the agency of the represented” and understand “citizen preferences for the purposes of responsiveness.”¹⁹ I build upon this theory of *representation-as-mediation* by revealing the processes by which interest groups not only represent disadvantaged groups to the state, but represent state institutions, logics, and processes to disadvantaged citizens. In doing so, I follow Dara Z. Strolovitch’s elaboration of representation-as-mediation by exploring ways in which the actions of representatives may *problematize* the responsiveness imperative.²⁰ Building upon Williams’ term, Strolovitch argues that interest group representatives “act as emissaries” between a social group and the policy process; in doing so, she states, advocates must often mediate *between* and *among* various internal constituencies, as disadvantaged

¹⁹ Williams 1998, 23-25.

²⁰ According to Strolovitch, “advocacy groups are uniquely positioned to mediate among members of what an intersectional approach helps us recognize are internally diverse constituencies composed of differently situated subgroups.” Because of this internal diversity, advocacy groups must often *persuade* constituents of their linked fate with other members of the broader group. See Strolovitch 2007, 71-74.

groups are by no means internally homogenous.²¹ I draw upon these dynamics of interest group mediation, further exploring interest groups' inward focus. This project argues that a primary impact of interest group advocacy lies in how these organizations not only "speak for" constituents, but work *with* them to challenge dominant stereotypes, foster enhanced participation, and connect them to the institutions of the policy world more broadly. Furthermore, I argue that these efforts to intercede between disaffected social groups and a seemingly unfavorable political environment necessitate the mobilization of political grievances that *affirm* fundamental tenets of the established political order.

Second, as advocacy organizations portray their constituents as upright and deserving claimants, such portrayals often resonate with movement identifiers. In other words, decisions about how to depict disaffected groups are not based purely upon fixed policy preferences or political strategy; rather, political advocacy conditions group identification, participation, and conduct in politically consequential ways. In this regard, as many scholars have argued, political interests and preferences are endogenous to processes of political representation. Interest group representation, then, is part and parcel of the process of constituting a constituency and defining its interests and demands. It does not merely influence policy; it also helps to generate citizens in compliance with a certain ideal-type.

There are tangible political reasons to reassess and reevaluate the role of interest groups as political representatives. While I do not intend to decry inclusionary or affirmative goals, I argue that order-affirming standards of political representation—like that advocated by the TSMG in the opening vignette of this chapter—largely overshadow alternative paths forward that might expose new horizons of self-understanding, participation, and action.

²¹ Strolovitch 2007, 64.

The story of the national advocacy system’s expansion, then, is also a story of lost possibilities and marginal political programs that prevailing structures of political representation tend to suppress. I hope not only to evaluate the interest group model of political representation, but also to turn our scholarly gaze to the fringes of the political landscape—those areas that are often shielded from the best intentions of professional advocates.

Bridging Pluralist Empiricism and Democratic Theory

This dissertation will address and integrate several literatures, including most notably: (1) the “pluralist” research tradition and the subsequent “post-pluralist” empirical scholarship of the American interest group system, and (2) democratic theories of representation and social control. The former tradition is perhaps the most immediately relevant. The scholarly literature pertaining to the interest group system’s growth does not follow a singular narrative, nor do particular years or events serve as firm bookends to demarcate when the “explosion” began and leveled off.²² The consensus, though, typically connects the rise in professionally run advocacy organizations with the social movements of the 1960s and the ensuing reconfiguration and liberalization of the civic landscape. In the wake of these great movements, protest gave way to (or, rather, began to supplement) professionally led campaigns to lobby government and galvanize public opinion.²³ As the

²² In fact, scholars in the early 20th century were just as likely to discuss the spike in “special interests” as were their intellectual descendants decades later. See Baumgartner & Leech 1998, 100-101.

²³ Skocpol 2003.

national advocacy realm grew both in size and diversity, protest was largely tamed and adopted as part of the middle class's advocacy repertoire.²⁴

In addition to their connection to the social movements of the 1960s, scholars have linked the ascent of the interest group era to ideological polarization, post-Watergate electoral reforms, resource mobilization, and the development of political opportunity structures.²⁵ Whatever the reason, the US witnessed a nearly fourfold rise in national associations from 1959 to 1999, leveling off between 22,000 and 23,000 groups in the 1990s.²⁶ It is widely recognized that since the 1970s, a large majority of Americans have held membership in at least one such organization, though “members” are typically supporters who remain only loosely attached rather than actively engaged as participants.²⁷ Although organizations representing historically disadvantaged constituencies remain in the minority of the interest group universe, the newfound inclusion of groups representing African-Americans, women, LGBT people, and many others has been particularly momentous, infusing new voices into the policy culture of Washington in ways never before seen. All of these trends have led to a revitalization of scholarly interest in group politics—and group-centered theories of political behavior—since the 1980s after a decade in which such studies had disappeared from political science “like an exiled monarch.”²⁸

Though the literature documenting the interest group system's evolution has grown quite voluminous, it is hardly celebratory. A great deal of this research remains skeptical that the contemporary interest group system provides anything more than a band-aid on a

²⁴ Meyer 2007, 160.

²⁵ Knoke 1986, 1-21; Meyer & Imig 1993; Tarrow 1998.

²⁶ Figure determined by total number of organizations listed in the *Encyclopedia of Associations*. See Baumgartner & Leech 1998, 102; Skocpol 2003, 139.

²⁷ Baumgartner & Leech 1998; Baumgartner & Walker 1988.

²⁸ Tichenor & Harris 2005, 252.

broken system of distributive justice. Schematically, we may divide these diverse “post-pluralist” critiques into two broad categories. The first such tradition focuses primarily on the *proportionality* and *efficacy* of disadvantaged groups within the interest group system, taking as a starting point Schattschneider’s statement that “the flaw in the pluralist heaven is that the heavenly chorus sings with a strong upper class accent”—an obligatory quotation in almost any commentary on group politics.²⁹ This camp contends that inequalities within the interest group system have persisted despite the growing number and visibility of organizations representing the disadvantaged. In other words, these critics assert, though the *scope* of the system may have expanded, the *bias* remains the same. Kay Schlozman, for example, noted that the expanding number of advocacy groups representing disadvantaged constituencies masks the fact that they remain disproportionately outmatched, with comparatively few organizations and scant resources available to effectively represent minority groups vis-à-vis business and professional lobbies.³⁰ Others have followed suit in using this straightforward strategy of counting organizations to support, undermine, or update the claim that business organizations still dominate Washington.³¹ Still others have noted that although narrative case studies often depict interest groups as influential to the policy process, these groups nevertheless tend to have only low to moderate levels of success in influencing policy.³²

The second (and oftentimes more critical) camp focuses on the role of organization itself. Largely echoing Robert Michels’ “iron law of oligarchy,” Piven and Cloward have

²⁹ Schattschneider 1960(1975), 34-35.

³⁰ Schlozman 1984.

³¹ See, e.g., Baumgartner & Leech 1998; Hrebendar 1997; Schlozman & Tierney 1986. It is worth noting that some have critiqued the use of sheer numbers of organizations as a measure of bias, echoing Schlozman and Tierney’s claim that it is difficult to know what a truly unbiased pressure system might look like. See Schlozman & Tierney 1983; Lowery & Gray 2004.

³² Fowler & Shaiko 1987; Smith 1995.

become the standard-bearers of this organization-centered critique.³³ In *Poor People's Movements*, these authors argued that mass defiance, civil disobedience, and political disruption—*not* advocacy organizations—played the star role in achieving political victories for disadvantaged communities in the 1930s and 1960s.³⁴ Rather than advance the interests of the marginalized masses, Piven and Cloward asserted, formal organizations tend to stifle mobilization by abandoning an oppositional politics in favor of largely symbolic attention from elites. Others have echoed this critique in the post-mortems of the Black Power movement. In his now-classic book *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, for example, Robert L. Allen described how wealthy philanthropists—particularly the Ford Foundation—co-opted black militants in the 1960s precisely by funding militant organizations, exerting outside influence and control, and de-radicalizing them by using them to promote capitalist economic principles and mainstream electoral channels.³⁵ Such a growing symbiosis between non-profit liberal foundations and indigenous organizations has, as Dylan Rodriguez notes, “helped collapse various sites of potential political radicalism into nonantagonistic social service and pro-state reformist initiatives.”³⁶

With such an emphasis on securing funding, of course, it is not surprising that advocacy organizations exude “an abiding conservatism” relative to the social movements and indigenous organizations from which they sprung.³⁷ As the title of a recent book on nonprofits concisely states: “The revolution will not be funded.”³⁸ Rather, interest groups’ critics allege a top-down model of political organization in which interest groups rely too

³³ Michels 1911.

³⁴ Piven & Cloward 1977.

³⁵ Allen 1990(1969).

³⁶ Rodriguez 2007, 26.

³⁷ McAdam 1982; Strolovitch 2007.

³⁸ Incite! 2007.

heavily upon the financial support of a small handful of political entrepreneurs and wealthy financiers. Consequently, advocacy organizations must satisfy donors in order to ensure continued funding.³⁹ Often, these organizations incite little-to-no meaningful participation. Theda Skocpol has referred to such organizations, which often have no local chapters and few participating members, as “bodyless heads”—a contemporary substitute for the democratically managed and politically influential (if often racially homogenous) membership associations of generations past.⁴⁰ While professional advocates and experts have often led the charge to advance social rights, “optimists have failed to notice that more voices and not the same thing as increased democratic capacity,” as today’s inequalities have increasingly come to be seen as administrative problems for experts to remedy.⁴¹ Taken together, these works suggest that if the inclusion of formerly marginalized groups into Beltway politics has made pluralism lose its upper-class accent, the new drawl appears to be bureaucratic rather than blue-collar, studious rather than rebellious. The effect, these scholars suggest, is the demobilization of much of the American public.

Interestingly, this contemporary age of American advocacy emerged at roughly the same time that the (predominantly European) “new social movements” (NSMs) began to surface.⁴² Not unlike the conditions said to have spawned America’s “new liberalism,” NSMs are typically described as a byproduct of the “postindustrial” conditions of “late” or “advanced” capitalism, and of the fragmentation of political dissent that occurred with the

³⁹ See Walker 1983. As Andrea Smith and others have noted, a number of advocacy organizations operate within a 501(c)(3) non-profit model, in which donations are tax-deductible and the organization’s primary role is not political, but charitable. Incorporating as a 501(c)(3) organization, then, allows easier access to funding and imposes constraints on the types of activities in which these groups can engage. See Smith 2007.

⁴⁰ Skocpol 2003, 163.

⁴¹ Skocpol 2003, 222.

⁴² For discussions of NSMs, see, for example, Cohen 1985; Melucci 1980; Offe 1985; Touraine 1981; 1985. For critiques of scholarship relating to NSMs, see Gamson 1989; Pichardo 1997; Day 2004.

demise of class identity as the definitive basis for political grievances. These conditions were said to liberate a “middle class radicalism” with respect to issues like environmental protection, anti-war activism, or opposition to nuclear power, in addition to the racial, ethnic, and sexual identities that emerged as well. Some scholars optimistically asserted that the NSMs would precipitate a new era of loosely federated and democratically managed organizations, disruptive tactics, anti-statist sentiment, and recourse to unconventional political channels to galvanize public opinion.⁴³ Just as European thinkers began to consider the rise of anti-institutional, anti-bureaucratic political movements in the wake of a breaking down of Marxist economic determinism, though, American identity movements—less wedded to and not arising from an anti-statist Marxist tradition—increasingly began to organize and bureaucratize.

Over the course of a generation or so of scholarship, then, American scholars in the post-pluralist tradition (particularly on the Left) have been skeptical of the proliferation of advocacy groups representing historically disadvantaged constituencies.⁴⁴ These critiques of the modern advocacy era dovetail, to some extent, with broader critiques about how our political institutions—including ostensibly empowering institutions such as elections and welfare agencies—may demobilize mass publics and habituate citizens to formal political channels, often with the effect of pacifying rather than enabling and engaging the disadvantaged.⁴⁵ This “social control” literature typically centers upon the use of formal powers by elites to ensure mass quiescence. While my understanding of the interest group

⁴³ Pichardo 1997; Tarrow 1994; West 2004.

⁴⁴ Baumgartner and Leech, for example, note the “paradox” of the group system: “the group system is seen simultaneously to be a route for popular representation and a threat to good government because of the biases that it allows.” See Baumgartner & Leech 1998, 83.

⁴⁵ See, e.g., Gaventa 1980; Ginsberg 1982; Piven & Cloward 1971.

universe owes a great deal to these analyses, I do not view political power as a principally agent-driven or strategic mechanism of social control. Rather, my understanding of political power is indebted to the varied interdisciplinary works—arising through both post-Marxist and Foucaultian lineages—concerned with the macro-structural historical forces of administrative or managerial authority, and the corresponding emergence of governing logics and forms of knowledge that help to reproduce it. These processes, taken together, are often associated with the perhaps overburdened term *hegemony*—a term understood, roughly, as the set of logics constituting the political world and conditioning the possibilities that emerge from its institutions and structures of authority.⁴⁶

Key to understanding how hegemony operates in and through the interest group system is an understanding of how *political representation* functions. Whereas most of the empirical literature discussing political representation in the United States focuses on particular institutional actors, methods of accountability or authorization, or other features of a formalized political arena, I view representation as imbued with sets of practices that establish constituencies, identify relevant political actors and groups, designate relationships of expertise and authority, establish systems of knowledge and conditions of possibility, etc.⁴⁷ In other words, political representation does not entail objects of analysis—i.e. “the

⁴⁶ It is important to acknowledge that, even after being shed of the term’s class-based essentialist baggage, this term is still most often linked to the dominance of neo-liberal institutions and practices. I use the term a bit more loosely in referencing those configurations of social practices that have sedimented as the “common sense” activities that produce subjects and inculcate desires and norms. See Butler, Laclau, & Žižek 2000; Laclau & Mouffe 2001; Purcell 2009.

⁴⁷ My understanding of “representation” owes much to how James Ferguson and Timothy Mitchell discuss the concepts of “development” and “economy,” respectively. According to Ferguson, whereas most conceptions of development take the people to be “developed” as a primary object of analysis, his conception examines the apparatus and practices at the heart of the process of development. Likewise, Mitchell departed from contemporary understandings of economy as “the totality of monetarized exchanges within a defined space,” positing instead an understanding that examines the apparatuses and practices that “puts in place a new politics of calculation.” Following their lead, I would like to displace notions of “representation” as involving an object/agent relationship and instead posit an understanding that privileges the apparatuses and practices of

represented”—situated as naturally existing entities; rather, these constituencies are produced historically through discursive and institutional mechanisms. Stated differently still, many deeply ingrained structures of political life—e.g. relations of production, the family unit, electoral channels, opportunity structures, and, most relevant to my purposes, outlets for political organization—help to establish the conditions under which groups may arise and impact the political world. Within this representational framework, advocacy organizations provide state-sanctioned channels for political mobilization—typically though not exclusively following the non-profit model—that accord with prevailing structures of political authority and introduce modest demands capable of achieving limited forms of governmental responsiveness.

Research Design, “Case” Selection, and Chapter Outlines

Utilizing various movement documents housed at various archives across the country, this dissertation blends historical and critical methodologies in the tradition of American political development, or the historically minded research paradigm capturing the temporal dynamics and (dis)continuities of political phenomena.⁴⁸ I chart the rise of interest group organizations’ role in American political life not only as policy insiders, but as mobilizers of nationwide political constituencies. A longitudinal analysis of the advocacy realm is necessary in order to grasp the formative effects of political claims-making upon the politicization of historically-disadvantaged citizens. Stated differently, democratic

representation as being, in part, constitutive or generative of that which is represented. See Ferguson 1994, 17; Mitchell 2002, 4-8.

⁴⁸ See Orren & Skowronek 2004. As Engel has recently pointed out, “APD’s focus on durable shifts in governing institutions presents an incongruous perspective” to political movements (rather than institutions) like the LGBT movement. For this reason, I have taken liberty (fairly or unfairly) to shift the focus on the governing authority of *institutions* to that of political *structures*, a tentative definition of which I have provided in fn 4. See Engel 2010.

representation—for my purposes, representation provided by advocacy organizations—entails a process of calling forth constituencies by naming them, drawing boundaries of group inclusion and identity, asserting group interests, and shaping the parameters of proper conduct and participation. Importantly, the narrative that I advance here is *not* a linear story detailing the slow and steady emergence of an all-inclusive interest group era that encompasses all political dissent and that suppresses all alternative forms of political action. It is not my claim, for example, that the emancipatory energy of the post-Stonewall, gay liberation era has seamlessly given way to an oligarchy of Washington-based organizations. Rather, I suggest that the post-1960s era witnessed a shift in prevailing modes of representation for marginalized groups; subversive political action has become increasingly susceptible to a redirection towards order-affirming political goals with the liberalization of the advocacy realm. While the de-radicalizing tendencies of modern political organizations have led to schisms between liberationists and pragmatists (to the extent that these groups are distinguishable and mutually-exclusive), these organizations help to *cultivate* rights-bearing and rights-claiming citizens. This dissertation details that development.

I tease out the role of political power in the United States in two theoretical chapters. The first of these chapters revisits E.E. Schattschneider's pathbreaking text *The Semisovereign People*. This book serves as a critical starting point for most post-pluralist research, and is most often used to demonstrate the business-class biases of group politics in the United States. However, Schattschneider's text also offers a rich account of political resistance. His discussion of the scale of political conflict demonstrates how localized conditions may translate into a nationwide political project representing, to some level of abstraction, the experiences and grievances of group members across the country. Without this larger

project, “repression may assume the guise of a false unanimity.”⁴⁹ I link this unanimity (false or otherwise) to the post-Marxist concept of *hegemony*—a somewhat abstract concept not typically acknowledged by empirical political scientists. This concept helps us view interest group activity as part of an unbalanced dyadic process: the dominant governing paradigm can incorporate particularized claims that do not radically disrupt existing institutions, political practices, or citizens’ relationship to the broader political order. In other words, hegemony is described as the process whereby demands and identities are shaped and modified to fit the parameters of possibility for existing social relations. Perhaps most simply put, this chapter explains why nationally-active interest groups typically fail to confront prevalent hegemonic logics due in part to an inability to contest the legitimacy of their institutions and structures. Instead, they revert to engaging in a “politics of the possible.”

In the next theoretical chapter, I build upon this argument, turning more directly to the primary theme of this dissertation, *interest group citizenship*. In doing so, I explore two burgeoning trajectories of contemporary political science: (1) research on neoliberalism and inequality, and (2) research on the concept of political representation. While the former helps to clarify the broader context of the post-pluralists dissatisfaction with the modern advocacy outcomes, the latter introduces “fourth face,” “de-faced,” or “productive” conceptions of political power, helping to describe how citizens have been acclimated to (and, perhaps, have been hurt by) the neoliberalization of democratic procedures.⁵⁰ I extend this conversation by describing interest groups as part of the process of constituting

⁴⁹ Schattschneider 1975(1960), 8.

⁵⁰ For an extended discussion of these forms of political power, see, respectively, Digeser 1992; Hayward 1998; Barnett & Duvall 2005.

particular types of social actors. This chapter, then, will further spell out how citizens are “made” through the advocacy realm. Finally, I introduce the figure of the “neoliberal gay subject” that, for some critical scholars, has served as a point of derision among scholars on the Left who have come to view the quintessential gay subject as privatized, demobilized, and depoliticized. By contrast, I argue, contra widespread claims that neoliberalism provides a *depoliticizing* force, that processes of (neo)liberalization have *politicized* LGBT identities—to cite one among a number of historically-marginalized identities—in a manner that fosters increased democratic inclusion even while it also draws problematic boundaries around the proper limits of democratic citizenship.

The empirical component of my dissertation explores the dynamics of interest group citizenship through an examination of LGBT advocacy between roughly 1950 and 1990—and underexplored era before the widespread emergence of issues like same-sex marriage or “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” Of course, LGBT advocacy organizations are today numerous and, in some cases, influential to both public policy and mass opinion. Perhaps surprisingly to some, modern LGBT advocacy organizations have existed for only a short time, and for much of their histories they were largely underfunded and ineffectual. However, they planted the seeds of contemporary advocacy during a rapidly changing political environment for LGBT people and other new entrants to the United States political system. Chapters 4, 5, and 6, then, chart the rise of nationally-active LGBT advocacy organizations and their impact upon prevailing conceptions of democratic citizenship. Using data collected at various archives across the country, including the Tretter Collection at the University of Minnesota, the Kinsey Institute for Sex Research at the University of Indiana, and the Human Sexuality Collection at Cornell University, among others, these three chapters each

explore one of these themes central to my primary thesis about the development of neoliberal subjects of the pressure system.

Chapter 4 develops the theme of *identity formation* by exploring the development of “homophile” advocacy during the 1950s and 1960s. These organizations provided the first efforts to alter citizens’ perceptions of same-sex eroticism from that of a medical or psychiatric model to that of a positive and fulfilling aspect of their lives. Formed in the early 1950s amid the breakdown of longstanding public silence over homosexuality and the proliferation of new voices demanding inclusion into the political arena, organizations like the Mattachine Society, Daughters of Bilitis, and One, Inc. provided the first sustained efforts to mobilize a homophile political identity. Though small in size and without much direct policy influence, the homophile organizations fostered partnerships with sympathetic authorities who were willing and able to shift the widely-shared discourse of “the homosexual” from one who is criminal or deviant to one who varies from others only in her/his desired sexual partners. Perhaps just as importantly, these organizations spawned the first sustained efforts to communicate with a lesbian and gay constituency; their publications “became a laboratory for experimenting with a novel kind of dialogue” about what it meant to be lesbian or gay in America.⁵¹ While recent scholarship has revived the homophile legacy after years in which these groups appeared as mere footnotes in LGBT history, most historical narratives focus on the personalities and events that characterized the homophile era. Lost amid this re-telling of homophile history, however, is the degree to which homophile representation successfully began to cultivate a broader homophile *citizenship*. This identity called for inclusion within dominant cultural mores, which

⁵¹ D’Emilio 1998, 114.

necessitated maintaining “respectability,” a buzzword for the strategic upholding of heterosexual cultural values that has come to characterize the homophile era. This process of identity-building was critical to building a uniquely homophile political self-understanding that would allow lesbians and gay men to participate politically within a system that had theretofore refused to acknowledge their legitimacy as a political constituency.

Chapter 5 focuses on the theme of *participation*—a broad theme that takes on a very specific, if veiled, meaning within modern advocacy efforts. In other words, in the world of political advocacy, a participating citizen is a *financial contributor*. To demonstrate this point, this chapter details the financialization of political advocacy that occurred with the post-Stonewall development of national lesbian and gay advocacy organizations during the 1970s. Though the 1970s are most commonly remembered for the widespread “liberationist” sentiment immediately following the Stonewall riots, it is perhaps just as significant for the establishment of the first nationally-active contemporary advocacy organizations that worked to rein in and supplant the emancipatory energy of groups like the Gay Liberation Front (GLF). Together with the *Advocate*, groups like the National Gay Task Force and the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund encouraged citizens to place their trust in professional gay leaders and lobbyists who would ideally work closely with policymakers, administrators, and other officials. In order to grant them this access, however, these groups called upon lesbian and gay constituents—with minimal success, at first—to generously donate to fund their efforts. Characterizing alternative forms of participation as destructive, unproductive, and juvenile, these organizations laid the groundwork for what would quietly become a major event in LGBT history: the creation (and expansion) of the HRCF, which

quickly emerged as the most influential voice—with perhaps the most narrowly defined manner of membership—of the LGBT movement.

Chapter 6 focuses on the role of *personal conduct* within national advocacy, connecting advocacy efforts with a role that the state has long held, i.e. creating “deserving” citizens. I tell this story through the lens of the era leading up to and during AIDS crisis of the 1980s. Though financial contribution came to be viewed as the most significant act of political action, lesbian and gay citizenship also came to entail a “private” element that was closely linked to the imperative for organizations—and the social groups with which they were associated—to project a positive public image. While local activists and power brokers were prone to celebrate the emerging “new masculinity” of the gay movement (or at least capitalize on it financially), the national organizations linked the failures of the movement to the licentious lifestyle that had developed in those urban areas where AIDS hit hardest. Certainly, concerns over the health of the community drove these appeals. However, a subtle political message also pervaded national advocates’ calls for responsible conduct. That is, if the lesbian and gay community wanted to make inroads into attaining political legitimacy and cultural acceptance, they would need to exude appropriate conduct both politically (in terms of voting, contributing to campaigns and organizations, etc.) and personally (appropriate dress, sexual responsibility, etc.). Together—identification, monetarized participation, and “responsible” personal conduct—helped propel the movement into the 1990s, and into familiar debates about inclusion, marriage, the military, and matters of personal integrity.

Chapter II

Scaling the Advocacy System: Some Theoretical Questions About Hegemony and Interest Group Strategy

Rivaling the bureaucracy for the title of the United States' fourth branch of government, the American interest group system is comprised of thousands of organizations that lobby government, stage public protests, and conduct targeted media campaigns.⁵² Advocacy organizations collectively contribute over a billion dollars per year to members of Congress, and they “subsidize” the policymaking process by writing bills, providing information, and contributing legislative labor to congressional allies.⁵³ Despite widespread sentiment that “special interests” have contaminated politics—a concern bolstered by the 2010 *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* ruling and the subsequent influence of “super PACS”—the rise of the interest group era merits at least a modicum of approval. A number of historically disadvantaged groups, including African-Americans, women, LGBT persons, and senior citizens, to name a few, have emerged as increasingly important voting blocs and, at the very least, have gained a nominally decipherable voice amid a cacophony of bellows from wealthier interests.⁵⁴ Moreover, these organizations are seen to have filled the void left by political parties as vehicles for mass participation.⁵⁵

⁵² Accurate measures of the number of advocacy organizations are difficult to measure. Many scholars rely on the estimates provided by the *Encyclopedia of Associations*, which has existed since 1959. Importantly, Tichenor and Harris note that this drive toward the quantification of advocacy has caused scholars to underestimate advocacy groups' clout in past eras, including notably the Progressive Era. See Tichenor & Harris 2005.

⁵³ See Baumgartner & Leech 1998; Hall & Deardorff 2006.

⁵⁴ As Strolovitch notes, the period between 1960 and 1999 witnessed the formation of about 56 percent of civil rights and racial minority organizations, 79 percent of economic justice organizations, and 65 percent of women's organizations in existence at the turn of the century. There are now more than 700 such groups. See Strolovitch 2007, 16-17.

⁵⁵ While much of the literature of the 1980s and 1990s suggested that parties had declined in importance, Aldrich argued that parties have increasingly become service providers for individual candidates rather than the mobilizing force that they had been in previous generations. See Aldrich 1995; Jordan & Maloney 2007.

Most contemporary scholars agree, however, that the American advocacy system remains far from equitable, citing continued power imbalances favoring the wealthy and a lack of accountability on the part of professionally-managed organizations speaking for the disadvantaged. Simply put, particularly disadvantaged citizens do not typically have much impact upon the organizations that claim to speak for them; as a result, they have little impact, if any, upon the trajectory of collective governance.

Despite this emerging consensus about the systemic inequalities plaguing political advocacy, questions remain about how nationally-active interest groups construct political demands and generate democratic participation. Although we have a fairly clear sense of what interest groups *do*—e.g., lobby, persuade, raise money, aid campaigns, etc.—as well as a clear sense about what they *do not do*—e.g., respond to the needs of their most marginalized constituents—no clear consensus has emerged to explain how the American political system structures interest group activity and, in turn, how interest groups structure individuals' connections with their government. Asked more directly: How has the relationship between citizens and their political advocates—and therefore citizens and their government—changed as the national advocacy system has expanded?

This chapter weighs in on this question, first by charting the recent emergence of what I call “post-pluralist” analyses of the American interest group system. Largely following the lead of E.E. Schattschneider, this literature details the simultaneous and contradictory growth of (1) the number of advocacy organizations representing historically disadvantaged social groups and (2) these organizations' insufficient ability to equally distribute political influence and resources across the American electorate. Though this scholarship has largely maintained a narrow empirical focus on political advocacy in the

United States, this chapter brings this growing literature into conversation with the post-Marxist, “radical pluralist” perspective concerned with capitalist hegemony and the transformation of oppressive and exploitative social relations.⁵⁶ Though in many ways these literatures make strange bedfellows, their confrontations with issues of political identity, democratic plurality, and entrenched patterns of inequality—the former through empirical analyses of Washington’s interest group system and the latter within the theoretical debates of the international Left—render them suitable and perhaps indispensable interlocutors.

In bridging these two trajectories of political research, I am particularly interested, of course, in understanding how organizations representing historically-marginalized groups help to construct interest group citizens. As politics writ large have been impacted by economic forces and as the most prominent and visible political advocates largely operate in abstraction from the local struggles that characterize the lived experiences of those at the margins, how has this national focus altered standards of democratic citizenship? In short, I suggest that interest groups *structure the nature of political engagement* by emphasizing not only money—important though it may be—but also by fostering the types of identities, demands, and forms of participation that drive the American political system. Thus, I draw upon these two traditions of pluralist scholarship to present advocacy groups’ demands as potentially strong in their political impact, but limited in their transformative potential.

I make this case by arguing that as the scale of conflict increases for those groups struggling to overcome historical patterns of disadvantage or marginality, this broadening of political conflict tends to be accompanied by a deepening of a given group’s investment in a

⁵⁶ The phrase “radical pluralism” is credited, I believe, to Wenman. Others, like Anna Marie Smith, have referred to this framework as “radical democracy,” or “radical democratic pluralism.” See Wenman 2003; Smith 1998.

liberal paradigm of political power.⁵⁷ Such a paradigm is often met with successes, though not without sacrifices. I suggest that the advocacy explosion of recent decades has altered the nature of political representation for marginalized groups in ways that privilege a *politics of affirmation*, i.e. order-affirming, hegemonic expressions of political citizenship. In other words, even as political advocacy organizations (often successfully) struggle to unsettle prevailing social attitudes, laws, or stereotypes, political progress often entails partnerships with established loci of political power, be they “experts,” financiers, or even dominant patterns or practices of political action. And, as I will argue in this chapter and those that follow, these opportunities invite a rather limited view of political action for a movement’s rank and file. In sum, then, this chapter will build upon contemporary accounts—from both within and beyond the confines of American pluralism—of how groups affect the political system, arguing that the discursive constraints imposed by American capitalism impose important limitations upon the nature and trajectory of group progress.

Pluralist Thought and the Trajectory of “Post-Pluralism”

Dating back to James Madison’s “Federalist 10,” in which Madison discussed the destructive-yet-inevitable role of factions within free societies, scholars and politicians alike have periodically argued for the analytical supremacy of groups within American political life. In the modern academy, this tradition largely stems from Arthur Bentley’s *The Process of Government*. Individuals, Bentley claimed, are “of trifling importance in interpreting

⁵⁷ It is important to clarify that I do not refer to “scale” of conflict as geography, nor as distinctions between national, state, or local forms of government. Rather, I understand the term to be an effect of “socialized” conflict in which particular claims are overlain upon a national political project.

society.”⁵⁸ Rather, Bentley argued that “special interests” and group activity provided “the raw materials of politics,” with perpetual changes in the political environment leading to endless competition as groups rise, fall, merge, split, dissolve, and reinvent themselves *ad infinitum*.⁵⁹ For Bentley, all politics was social, and group interests were inseparable from the social activity that comprised them.⁶⁰

Considered unspectacular in its day, Bentley’s “group theory” would not reach its peak until almost a half century later when it blossomed into a diverse research tradition under the stewardship of Dahl, Truman, Latham, and Polsby, among others.⁶¹ These authors, who came to be known as the “pluralists,” argued that dispersed groups, rather than grand majorities or secretive cabals, govern. Most concisely summarized in Dahl’s *A Preface to Democratic Theory*, the pluralists viewed the process of government not as “the majestic march of great majorities,” but rather as “the steady appeasement of relatively small groups.”⁶² Whereas Madison argued for the necessity of constitutional protections to safeguard against majority tyranny, the mid-century pluralists largely sought to expose these majorities as fictions. Dahl, for example, argued that Madison had exaggerated the importance of constitutional defenses against majority tyranny. Rather, he suggested, “inherent social checks and balances” naturally keep majorities from tyrannizing minorities; in fact these inherent social forces, or “extra-constitutional factors,” kept majorities from ever forming at all.⁶³ Constitutional rules, then, are significant *not* because of their ability to

⁵⁸ Bentley 1908, 215.

⁵⁹ Odegard 1967, xvii.

⁶⁰ For a contemporary perspective on Bentley’s understanding of groups, see LaVaque-Manty 2006.

⁶¹ See Dahl 1956; Dahl 1961; Truman 1962; Latham 1952; Polsby 1963.

⁶² Dahl 1956, 146.

⁶³ Dahl 1956, 22, 134.

keep majorities in check, but rather because they may privilege or handicap particular groups engaged in political struggle.

Though the pluralist approach made no claims to a mechanistic or deterministic account of political phenomena, the midcentury pluralists did treat the social forces of group politics as an organic process, with latent groups organizing naturally to fend off potential threats when political circumstances demanded it. Bentley's revival, then, inspired a generation of "*laissez-faire*" pluralists who presented the American political system as self-regulating and self-correcting due to the natural tendency of groups to defend their interests when threatened.⁶⁴ This approach viewed power and authority as dispersed among various actors in a system of controlled competition. Assuming a liberal framework of individual rights and liberties—and in contrast with C. Wright Mills' view that a "power elite" dominated politics—the pluralists described an open political system whereby a diverse marketplace of interests prohibits the rise of a tyrannical monopoly over political power and policy influence.⁶⁵ Social groups, Dahl and his contemporaries claimed, stand ready to protect their interests when threatened, with interest groups and advocacy organizations serving as the contemporary manifestation of that logic.

After a brief period of preeminence within political science, pluralism—at least in its *laissez-faire* form—came under attack from nearly all traditions of political research.⁶⁶ Mancur Olson's *The Logic of Collective Action* leveled perhaps the most prominent and damning of the early rational choice critiques, asserting that a vast number of potential groups never form

⁶⁴ Kelso 1978, 13-19.

⁶⁵ See Mills 1956.

⁶⁶ It is worth noting that Dahl later pointed out, perhaps quite fairly, that "pluralist theory," as it came to be known, was really the bizarre invention of avowed critics of pluralism who had strung together "a pastiche of ideas" characterizing (and perhaps caricaturing) a diverse array of scholarship on group politics. See Dahl 1980.

due to conflicts between one's *individual* interests and her/his interests as members of a *group*.⁶⁷ More recent scholarship has questioned the participatory capacity of contemporary political groups, arguing that the rise of tertiary organizations (or business-like political groups) has been accompanied by a decline in "social capital" and civic engagement.⁶⁸ Other critiques have appealed to inequalities in the distribution of political power, often citing one or another "face" or "dimension" of power as a means to keep the poor, racial and ethnic minorities, and other disadvantaged groups complacent, unorganized, and perhaps even complicit in their own subordination.⁶⁹ Taken together, these works contended that the dynamics of group politics are heavily influenced by structural forces that prohibit various groups from self-realizing, coordinating, or advancing their interests.

Just as scholars began to expose the mismatch between pluralist ideals and the realities of group representation in the United States, however, social movements advocating for African-Americans, women, lesbian and gay citizens, and other historically-marginalized groups emerged. Subsequent lobbying efforts led to the infusion of new voices into the policymaking arena amid an "advocacy explosion," characterized by a nearly fourfold rise in national associations from 1959 to 1999.⁷⁰ But, as Theda Skocpol pointed out, "optimists have failed to notice that more voices are not the same thing as increased democratic

⁶⁷ This work, worth mentioning here for its removal of "the group" from a position of theoretical privilege, asserted that people will often "free ride," as most individuals will not find it worth their time or effort to advocate for his/her interest as a member of a group. See Olson 1960.

⁶⁸ Putnam 2000; Skocpol 2003.

⁶⁹ Within these debates, scholars often view pluralism as providing only the "first face" of power. That is, 'A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do.' Under this approach, the decision-making is assumed to be equally open to all grievances. See Dahl 1957, 80. For an elaboration of power's other "faces," see, for example, Schattschneider 1960; Bachrach & Baratz 1962; Lukes 1972; Gaventa 1980.

⁷⁰ Baumgartner & Leech 1998, 102; Berry 1997; Skocpol 2003, 139.

capacity.”⁷¹ Concerned with how changes in the interest group system encourage a fragmentation of social identities and civic withdrawal, Skocpol harkened back to an era of “vibrant voluntary membership federations” that ultimately “went the way of the once-popular television program *Leave It to Beaver*. There may still be reruns,” Skocpol claimed, “but they seem rather quaint.”⁷² In their wake, of course, these membership federations left policy-active, professionally-managed advocacy groups which, according to Skocpol, have remained remarkably detached from the groups for whom they claim to speak. Ultimately, Skocpol’s account argues that grassroots participation has largely faded away as civic associations declined; moreover, these opportunities never opened up for those groups who had historically been excluded from them.

Many others have also noted the interest group system’s substantial growth and cautioned against holding an overly optimistic view of the new interest group era. Often, these works cite not only the continued imbalances that favor business interests within the Washington-based lobbying community, but they also note that existing advocacy groups are often spurred by wealthy donors and tend to remain largely unrepresentative of, and unresponsive to, particularly disadvantaged constituencies.⁷³ More skeptically, others viewed organizations themselves as following an “iron law of oligarchy” in that they are demobilizing, conservative, and elite-driven.⁷⁴ In sum, even as pluralist *procedures* and *inclusion* have arguably become more pervasive, its *outcomes* have largely remained the same, as social and economic inequalities have persisted and, in some respects, deepened.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Skocpol 2003, 222.

⁷² Skocpol 2003, 127.

⁷³ See, for example, Schlozman 1984; Strolovitch 2007; Walker 1983.

⁷⁴ Michels 1911; Piven & Cloward 1977.

⁷⁵ Bartels 2008; Hacker & Pierson 2010.

Clearly, debates initiated by pluralists over the role of groups within American political life have remained not only relevant, but also vibrant and contentious despite pluralism's slaying at the hands of numerous assailants. After a decade or so in which studies of group politics in the United States had been driven from political science "like an exiled monarch," contemporary scholarship has re-inserted groups at the center of political analysis. Often, this renewed focus upon group activity has been accompanied by healthy doses of skepticism as to interest groups' ability to ameliorate historically entrenched inequalities.⁷⁶

E.E. Schattschneider penned the *locus classicus* of this scholarly tradition, famously claiming that "the flaw in the pluralist heaven is that the heavenly chorus sings with a strong upper class accent."⁷⁷ Schattschneider's intellectual descendants include scholars studying the agenda-setting function of political power,⁷⁸ scholars demonstrating the continued inequalities of the interest group system,⁷⁹ and scholars directly interrogating the quality of representation provided by advocacy organizations.⁸⁰ Taken as a whole, the post-pluralist tradition since Schattschneider has blended questions of whether or not the "pluralist heaven" provides an *accurate* description of politics with questions about whether the ideals of pluralism provide a normatively *desirable* framework.⁸¹ While this work has been analytically fruitful, empirically sound, and politically significant, Schattschneider's *The Semisovereign People* invites still further discussion beyond advocacy inputs and policy outcomes. In particular, his work provides a key point of departure from empirical critiques

⁷⁶ Tichenor & Harris 2005, 252.

⁷⁷ Schattschneider 1975(1960), 34-35.

⁷⁸ Bachrach & Baratz 1962; Baumgartner & Jones 2009; Cobb & Elder 1972; Kingdon 2003.

⁷⁹ Baumgartner & Leech 1998; Hrebener & Scott 1982; Scholzman 1984; Scholzman & Tierney 1986.

⁸⁰ Miller 2008; Strolovitch 2007.

⁸¹ For a sampling of these debates, see Harrington 1970; Kelso 1978; Lowi 1969; Scholzman 1984.

of American pluralism to a broader set of theoretical approaches to collective identity, group formation, and political resistance. In other words, in ways that subsequent scholarship of the contemporary interest group system has not fully teased out, Schattschneider appropriately places interest group politics within a broader social and political context that may need further scrutiny if we are to more fully understand how interest groups function as democratic representatives.

Intervening In the Pluralist Heaven

Though occasionally criticized for its lack of empirical rigor,⁸² Schattschneider's *The Semi-Sovereign People* has remained relevant to a variety of debates within American politics research. Like many texts that take on a path dependent manner of citation, however, *The Semisovereign People* is frequently condensed down to one pithy (if poetic) phrase about pluralism's classist accent. Often overlooked amid his discussion of the relative dominance of the business lobby is the potential for political *resistance* and *change* that figures prominently throughout the book. Under Schattschneider's understanding of political conflict, the "diet on which the American leviathan feeds" consists of more than "a jungle of disparate special interests," whether upper-class or otherwise. Rather, group activity occurs against the backdrop of a "body of common agreement" or a "consensus" that forces political players to link their interests to a larger conception of the public good. In other words, "there must be something that holds people together," often manifest through a shared belief in a common public interest.⁸³ In this regard, Schattschneider flippantly remarked that despite

⁸² Stated one critic, Schattschneider's work is "chatty rather than data-driven"; stated another, he lacks "actual evidence." See, respectively, Mayhew 2002, 9; Kelso 1978, 105.

⁸³ Schattschneider 1975(1960), 23.

the “heroic attempt” by pluralist scholars to “explain everything in terms of group activity,” groups do not communicate, mobilize, or bargain exclusively in terms of their own private interests.⁸⁴ Rather, lines between *group* interests and *public* interests often blur, with success often tied to a group’s ability to superimpose the former upon the latter. Whereas pluralist theory has “found no place in the political system for the majority,” Schattschneider argued that we can assume the existence of majorities (or something like them) by virtue of the frequent appeals to a common interest upon which broad political coalitions are built.⁸⁵ It is not *purely* for strategic reasons, after all, that evangelical Christians and secular businesspersons share the same political party; rather, they are united by appeals to common principles, even if abstract, tenuously held together, and subject to fracture and fissure as new forms of conflict develop.

Schattschneider, then, did not base his claim about the biases of the political system purely upon the business community’s dominance, strong though it may be. Rather, what we might call “business interests” have emerged within a framework of possibility established within and through the Republican Party, the government’s institutions and structure (i.e. liberal democracy), extant economic and political institutions, etc. The “upper-class accent” at the pluralist bargaining table, then, matters little compared to the *larger constellation of interests and objectives* that dominates party politics. In this way, “coalitions of inferior interests [are] held together by a dominant interest.”⁸⁶ Schattschneider’s lesson, then, was not merely that we should fixate upon the uneven distribution of political resources within the interest group system, though many pages of subsequent scholarship

⁸⁴ Schattschneider 1975(1960), 21.

⁸⁵ Schattschneider 1975(1960), 38.

⁸⁶ Schattschneider 1975(1960), 67.

have quite effectively been devoted to sharpening this important message. In fact, Schattschneider *criticized* the limited way in which the scholars of his time appeared engrossed with the organized groups of the interest group community. Rather, he challenged us to look *beyond* the Washington-based pressure system to examine, too, the ways in which our understandings of the common good are shaped as any given conflict mutates in scale or scope, i.e. as different particular conflicts emerge using recourse to party labels, national symbols, constellations of governing ideas, and so on.

For Schattschneider, then, a great deal of political activity takes place *prior to and apart from* the realm of membership, bylaws, lobbyists, and PACs. Important, too, are matters of how groups come into existence prior to their insertion into (and transformation by) party politics and the interest group system. We cannot explain group politics, then, merely in terms of *procedures* and *outcomes*, as have the midcentury pluralists and present day post-pluralists, respectively. For Schattschneider, politics fundamentally has less to do with the realm of bargaining or lobbying than with the “socialization of conflict,” which is based upon a schematic distinction between “private” and “socialized” forms of political struggle.⁸⁷ Politics, under this view, largely involves the formation of groups that appeal to some conception of the public good; particular interests, under this framework, must appeal to an abstract “public interest,” which tends to change as different actors successfully attach themselves to established coalitions. It is in the nature of party politics, he asserted, that as lines of cleavage shift to accommodate or subordinate new groups or new demands, new

⁸⁷ Under this view, “private” conflict involves altercations between a limited number of political players (such as a worker and his/her boss), whereas “socialized” conflict involves the wider participation and intervention on the part of democratic government (such as when “workers” recognize themselves as having a linked fate or common disposition, organizing and building coalitions accordingly). In any conflict, importantly, it is the stronger side that has every incentive to keep the conflict private, whereas those in a position of relatively weakness need to socialize conflict and appeal to a wider audience in hopes of governmental intervention.

alignments and coalitions form. Each new alignment alters (and is altered by) prevailing public symbols, institutions, etc., and each alters (and is altered by) the ideals holding a particular coalition together. The struggle to consolidate around a majority platform is perpetual, as those “diehard minorities” wishing to “continue the old fights” risk becoming permanently isolated.⁸⁸

Schattschneider viewed politics as a perpetual process in which coalitions rise and fall, both transforming and constituting social and political identities as the scale of political conflict changes. Importantly, Schattschneider did not clearly define this vital concept, “scale of conflict”; it is not merely a geographic term referring to a fight moving from local to national attention, though it is also not only about whether federal, state, or local officials ultimately determine a conflict’s fate, either. Rather, “scale of conflict,” it would seem, refers to the complex dynamic by which particular groups or conflicts are overlain upon broader matters of national consideration, with important effects upon both the geography of a conflict and the nature of federal, state, and local involvement. Stated differently, it entails a shift from the face-to-face relations of a local struggle to relations that are mediated by broader institutions, constellations of meaning, and political coalitions.

Schattschneider, a party scholar, largely viewed the two major parties as the primary vehicles used to shape these institutions, constellations of meaning, and political coalitions; resistance, then, takes place through shifts in partisan cleavages that both reposition the parties vis-à-vis one another *and* transform the identities and ideologies of the groups within those coalitions. Theoretically, however, Schattschneider’s work does not provide the conceptual framework that we need to understand the nature of group transformation and

⁸⁸ Schattschneider 1975(1960), 73.

identification, even as his work justifies and initiates a shift in our understanding of group activity as mediated by broader structural and, seemingly, ethereal forces. Schattschneider's description of the political world fits within the larger intellectual (and international) project on the Left that seeks to expose the limits of institutional and organizational political projects by exploring the relationship between particular groups and universalizing political principles. This relationship between the particular and the universal, or between grouphood and social consensus, however, has been much more richly explored and explained outside of the empirical literature(s) with which Schattschneider has traditionally been associated.

Hegemony, Power, and Group Politics

Writing 25 years after the publication of Schattschneider's *The Semisovereign People* and operating within a different intellectual milieu, self-labeled "post-Marxist" political theorists Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe recognized the impasse that Marxist theory had reached due to the multiform nature of political oppression. With the emergence of the "new social movements" (NSMs) during the tumultuous 1960s, Marxist notions of class centrality broke down in the face of unique patterns of marginalization that differentiated various groups; in turn, political dissent fragmented into a number of distinct grievances that did not readily lend themselves to a common coalition opposing capitalist social relations.⁸⁹ Rather than lament these trends and attempt to re-assert the centrality of economic class to the socialist project, Laclau and Mouffe embarked on a project for a new "radical and plural

⁸⁹ Mark Purcell has linked this reassessment of Marxist theory to Foucault's statement in *The History of Sexuality* that there remains no "locus of great refusal, no soul of Revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary." See Purcell 2009, 293; Foucault 1990, 96.

democracy.”⁹⁰ Whereas a number of prominent activists and scholars on the Left were seen, fairly or unfairly, to have abandoned Marxism, Laclau and Mouffe’s *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* retained from the Marxist ethos a critique of capitalist social relations and the liberal-democratic framework that allowed for their reproduction. Central to this critique is the concept of *hegemony*, defined most basically as a particular social force or set of processes (i.e. “capitalism” or “neoliberal market logic”) that stand in for an absent totality (i.e. “society”). As Mouffe would later clarify, the term implies that social objectivity (what we might call “consensus”) is infused with relationships of power that make it so; or, rather, hegemony is “the point of convergence between objectivity and power.”⁹¹ By providing a universalizing lens through which to view day-to-day social relations, hegemonic conditions formulate a ‘commonsense’ understanding of the political world and establish parameters of possibility therein.⁹² The actions of political actors, then, cannot be properly understood without reference to those ethereal social forces that structure their actions and interests.⁹³

In defining and explaining the concept, Laclau and Mouffe drew upon Russian revolutionary V.I. Lenin and, perhaps more importantly, Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci.

⁹⁰ Laclau & Mouffe 2001, xv. For a sampling of work on NSMs published around the same time as *HESS*, see, e.g., Cohen 1985; Melucci 1980; Offe 1985; Touraine 1981; Touraine 1985.

⁹¹ Mouffe 2004, 44.

⁹² Laclau and Mouffe offer various definitions of hegemony throughout *HESS*. In the text’s opening chapter, they described hegemony as “an absent totality, and...those diverse attempts at recomposition and rearticulation” that give meaning to the various identities within a given social formation. Similarly, in the preface to the book’s 2nd edition, they claimed that hegemonic conditions emerge when “a *particular* social force assumes the representation of a *totality* that is radically incommensurable with it”—in other words, hegemony maintains a universalizing function that structures the conditions of possibility for political actors to identify with particular movements, divide themselves from political adversaries, make demands upon the state, etc. The primary task of *HESS*, they claim, is to advance a Leftist project that can confront and re-assert a *new* hegemonic project along new frontiers, offering new theoretical and political horizons. See Laclau & Mouffe 2001, 7, x.

⁹³ It is here that the radical pluralist traditions—like the Marxist tradition—breaks with the basic assumptions of liberal democracy. The latter tradition views the individuals as a more or less rational, self-determining agent who conducts her/his private and political life on the basis of consensual contracts. The former traditions critique this view of the fully-formed autonomous subject for reasons that should become clear throughout this chapter.

Each thinker had used the concept to better understand the unity of the social formations that they struggled against in their struggle to build working-class unity.⁹⁴ In his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci confronted the question of why the exploitative capitalist social order remained stable, answering that the economic laws of capitalism were not self-reproducing but required leadership, consent, and consensus *beyond* juridical power or state coercion. To Gramsci, capitalism exercised power not only via the “direct domination” of the state, but also through a more hidden form of power within “civil society,” or “the ensemble of organisms commonly called ‘private.’”⁹⁵ Gramsci’s notion of hegemony, then, encompasses the mundane and seemingly commonsense practices that we as subjects carry out, reproduce, and metabolize in our “private” lives. These practices, moreover, are externally structured to fulfill the interests of dominant groups. Hegemony, in sum, involves a dynamic, historically manufactured process whereby economic domination is bolstered by bourgeois ideals and values which masquerade as unquestioned, objective reality.

Building on Gramsci’s use of the term and injecting a poststructuralist method, Laclau and Mouffe asserted that hegemony “has a performative character.” That is, each social group or class is “not a datum” and should therefore not be understood as an empirical referent or immutable entity. Rather, the unification of a social class or category “is a project to be built politically”—a project that transforms the nature of political identification as the result of attempts to re-imagine social relations, create new alliances, or rethink a collectivity’s placement in society.⁹⁶ Whereas Lenin and Gramsci were seen to have

⁹⁴ Stated Laclau and Mouffe: “[W]e are no doubt radicalizing the Gramscian intuition.” Laclau & Mouffe 2001, xiii.

⁹⁵ Gramsci 1971, 12.

⁹⁶ Laclau & Mouffe 2001, 64. Certainly, Lenin and Gramsci realized the necessity of building a hegemonic class. However, for these thinkers, Laclau and Mouffe claimed, “Class hegemony is not a wholly practical

granted the working class an ontologically privileged status, Laclau and Mouffe asserted that political coalitions and antagonisms can develop around an infinite number of “nodal points,” or sites of resistance. In other words, many groups assert many different grievances, all of which arise from historically contingent circumstances rather than from a subject-position subordinate to the ontologically superior category of “class.” For example, the subject-position of “worker” reflects a coherent position only in relation to the discursive terrain that constitutes it.⁹⁷ Such a subject-position is not simply “out there” waiting to be mobilized; it has no ontological foundation apart from its development within existing social practices, rules, conventions, and so on. These social forces, moreover, are diverse, distinctive, and subject to reinterpretation, reformulation, and redirection during day-to-day activity.⁹⁸ “Worker” can evoke images of a wage-laborer; it can stand in for one’s identity from the hours of 9am-5pm; or, in the context of Marxist revolutions, it can even stand in for the broader social order. Ultimately, though, it is not, in and of itself, a universal site of resistance or a universal interest to which all other groups must necessarily attach.

While this shedding of Marxism’s perceived essentialist baggage is important in its own right, Laclau and Mouffe used this framework of group politics to develop a counter-hegemonic project of *articulation*, that is, a transgressive, antagonistic, and radically democratic process whereby different nodal points (or identities) unite to transform and democratize prevailing social relations without any particular group being tokenized or co-

result of struggle, but has an ultimate ontological foundation.” That is, they have an “inner essentialist core.” Laclau & Mouffe 2001, 69.

⁹⁷ Stated Laclau and Mouffe in their defense of “post-Marxism” in the *New Left Review*: “To construct an ‘interest’ is a slow historical process, which takes place through complex ideological, discursive and institutional practices.” See Laclau & Mouffe 1987, 96.

⁹⁸ As Purcell has stated on this point: “Observed differences are not merely superficial deviations from an underlying, primary, and constitutive unity. Diversity is, rather, constitutive of political life.” Purcell 2009, 295.

opted.⁹⁹ This process would necessitate disparate groups uniting under a common, transformative movement to actively reshape the array of cultural meanings that the Right has successfully used to impose a neoliberal, anti-democratic hegemony. This prevailing hegemony, they argue, has created a “definition of reality” that unifies “multiple subject positions around an individualist definition of rights and a negative conception of liberty” which justifies and gives rise to the supremacy of market forces, persisting inequalities, and entrenched patterns of social and political marginalization.¹⁰⁰ A primary task of *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy*, then, is to draw up the blueprints for a counter-hegemonic bloc to redefine and fundamentally transform the institutions and logics that give rise to marginalized subject positions within contemporary capitalist social relations.¹⁰¹ *Without* such an antagonistic confrontation with this hegemonic order—one that calls for new social relations and establishes “chains of equivalence” between various social groups—an isolated fight on the part of any *singular* nodal point remains fundamentally constrained. The paramount struggle to overcome patterns of marginalization, then, lies in the uniting of disparate groups to transgress, rather than succumb to, those forms of consensus that underlie the hegemonic order.

To this end, Laclau and Mouffe’s radical pluralism importantly “transforms into social logics what were previously foundations” of liberal democracy—whether foundational

⁹⁹ As with their concept of *hegemony*—and perhaps to the frustration of the reader—Laclau and Mouffe define the concept of *articulation* in various ways throughout the text; it is perhaps best to read “articulation” (in some key points in their text) as “counter-hegemony,” or, rather, as an effort to transgress prevailing unifying logics or common sense principles in order to institute a new regime guided not merely by more acceptable political representatives, but by a new set of social values, governing principles, guiding logics, etc. (The authors also make clear that *any* hegemonic bloc must engage in articulation—it is not the sole prerogative of the egalitarian Left.)

¹⁰⁰ Laclau & Mouffe 2001, 176.

¹⁰¹ State the authors: “Of course, every project for radical democracy implies a socialist dimension, as it is necessary to put an end to capitalist relations of production, which are at the root of numerous relations of subordination.” Laclau & Mouffe 2001, 178.

principles of a free society, of the boundaries of grouphood, or any other foundational principle of contemporary democratic life.¹⁰² For scholars of interest group politics in the United States, this position implies that acts of representation help to delineate the interests and identities of marginalized communities, as *political practice* rather than ontologically prior standpoint delimits a group's interests and, for that matter, parameters of membership or inclusion. Though this unmasking of "foundations" lays bare the reality (now widely accepted) that neither the groups (e.g. "workers") nor concepts (e.g. "civil society" or "the private sphere") central to capitalist functioning are pre-political or ontologically fixed, recasting them as "logics" does not dismiss the stability of these categories or render them illusory. Acts of representation are themselves highly conditioned and constrained by prevailing cultural symbols and discourses (Laclau and Mouffe's "logics"), which include but are not limited to the legal rules, institutions, and cultural meanings through which social and political life is conducted. In other words, the stability of social logics renders group interests coherent and achievable, though only through the prevailing paradigms of political thought intelligible to the hegemonic order.

Laclau clarified and expanded on this framework twenty years later in *On Populist Reason*, a work that responded more directly to empirical theories of group politics than did his earlier work with Mouffe.¹⁰³ Central to Laclau's analysis is the concept of the *demand*, which provides the basic building block uniting any political group. Laclau's distinction

¹⁰² Laclau & Mouffe 2001, 183. Laclau clarified his use of the term "logic" in his 2000 compilation with Judith Butler and Slavoj Zizek, characterizing the term as "a 'grammar' or cluster of rules" that (though not in a formal sense) establish the terrain upon which social practices and combinations of practices take place. Laclau 2000, 76.

¹⁰³ Stated Laclau on the first page of the preface: "My whole approach has grown out of a basic dissatisfaction with sociological perspectives which either considered the group as the basic unit of social analysis, or tried to transcend that unit by locating it within wider functionalist or structuralist paradigms." Laclau 2005, ix.

between what he termed “democratic demands,”¹⁰⁴ or particular groups’ isolated claims upon the state, and “popular demands,” which link isolated demands together into a broader, antagonistic frontier, is of particular value to contemporary scholars of American democracy.¹⁰⁵ According to Laclau, “The first can be accommodated within an expanding hegemonic formation; the second presents a challenge to the hegemonic formation as such.”¹⁰⁶ The partial surrender of democratic demands to a larger, transformative project—what Laclau calls the establishment of an “equivalential logic”—fosters the possibility for a reconstituted range of identities and a *new* hegemony, a new consensus that, if widely observed, would dramatically reconfigure the day-to-day social relations that give rise to marginalized group identities. Absent this surrender to a transformative political paradigm, groups risk intensifying the terms through which they struggle, even as they gain legitimacy as semi-autonomous political actors.

By understanding the interest group realm in this light, that is, as a forum for the assertion of democratic demands—one, moreover, that helps to keep claims *particular* rather than *universal*—we can better contextualize the skepticism pervading the post-pluralist literature. Modern interest groups advance particularized, democratic demands, establishing no antagonism and representing “the absorption of each of the individual demands...within the dominant system.”¹⁰⁷ They “are formulated *to* the system *by* an underdog of sorts,” in

¹⁰⁴ Laclau chose the term “democratic demands” rather than “specific” or “isolated” demands not due to a normative judgment concerning their legitimacy, but rather because these demands are formulated “*to* the system *by* an underdog of sorts” and because their exclusion reflects an exclusion or deprivation within liberal-democratic regimes. See Laclau 2005, 125-127.

¹⁰⁵ It is perhaps worth bearing in mind that a “popular demand”—or the larger, antagonistic demand a populist movement—need not be the only type of transgressive demand; Laclau also briefly mentioned “socialist demands,” which might stand in for “popular demands” within this schematic in the context of radical socialist movements.

¹⁰⁶ Laclau 2005, 82.

¹⁰⁷ Laclau 2005, 89.

terms familiar to the state's established institutions and actors.¹⁰⁸ Contemporary political advocacy has the potential for tangible gains, though acting towards them may hinder an emancipatory project intended to reinvent the terms by which we carry out our functions as social and political beings. Further, the interest group system privileges those demands that are most closely in line with prevailing cultural logics and discourses, further marginalizing those demands that fall outside the purview of acceptability.¹⁰⁹

A primary distinction between Schattschneider's critique of group theory and Laclau and Mouffe's "radical pluralism," then, hinges on the fundamental ability of an established consensus (or, rather, hegemony) to constrain and shape group interests and facilitate democratic demands. Schattschneider leaves readers with the impression that groups succeed or fail depending on whether or not they can successfully "socialize" their interests into an existing party coalition under the banner of broad, majoritarian consensus. By contrast, the radical pluralists' concept of hegemony serves to show that such "successes" are not merely the successes of previously excluded groups; they can also be partial successes for dominant groups as well. That is, the consensus through which groups socialize conflict can *limit* a group's efforts perhaps as much as it can *aid* them.

Schattschneider's assertion of the indeterminacy and instability of governing coalitions—and the "dominant interests" around which they form—reflects a seldom-acknowledged optimism within his condemnation of the American pressure system. That is, while scholars typically build upon his ruthless critique of pluralism's upper-class bias, Schattschneider's discussion of the "contagion" or "socialization" of conflict—noted in my discussion above—invites us to view politics as a fluid process by which dominant groups

¹⁰⁸ Laclau 2005, 125.

¹⁰⁹ For an elaboration of this point, see Hindman 2011.

are always under threat of losing control over the terms of their dominance or authority. In particular, Schattschneider argues that oppressed groups can spread their seemingly local grievances not only geographically and to higher levels of government (i.e. from local to state, state to national), but also *conceptually* by attaching isolated instances of oppression to a broader political project or a widespread conception of fairness. From this perspective, then, socialized conflict is a mechanism for *breaking* pluralism's structured biases, difficult though it may be.

Importantly, Schattschneider acknowledged that such advancements do not come about by virtue of the inherent persuasiveness of disadvantaged groups' grievances. Rather, he clarified that these groups must attach their claims to a pre-existing-yet-malleable consensus. By incorporating Laclau and Mouffe's concept of hegemony, however, we can better understand the "consensus" through which this group activity operates. In other words, Schattschneider offers a conceptual framework that treats the overarching moral frameworks of the party coalitions as tools to initiate a political struggle on behalf of those who had previously been excluded by them. Politics, though, is not just about the political act of establishing a group consciousness and attaching a group's interest to established coalitions; what Schattschneider referred to as "consensus" also *impacts political subjects and helps to establish the identities to which they attach*. In other words, recourse to an established consensus or coalition has more than merely instrumental effects; such consensus—or what Laclau and Mouffe theorize as hegemony—operates through discursive mechanisms that constitute political subjects according to the terms of the consensus itself. Stated perhaps most concisely, disadvantaged groups are never able to socialize conflict purely on their own terms and according to their most utopian of ideals. Rather, they operate according to

processes (described below) that bring marginalized groups into relationship with those dominant discourses that had excluded, often for generations, those at the margins of partisan or political disputes. Recourse to these dominant modes of thought, then, often remakes and reimagines the practices, traits, or categories that comprise a marginalized political group. Though this conceptual framework perhaps disabuses us of the notion that the “socialization of conflict” is part of a tool-kit of political resistance, this insight advances Schattschneider’s linkage between particular and universal by offering an understanding of advocacy groups’ demands as quite strong in their political impact, but perhaps limited in their transformative potential.¹¹⁰

Democratic Demands and Group Discourse

Placing these empirical and theoretical approaches to group politics side-by-side, we arrive at an explanation of interest group politics in which hegemony, democratic demands, and group identity intersect to clarify and perhaps contextualize the recent emergence of historically-disadvantaged groups within the American interest group system. As Laclau asserts, the “very emergence” of democratic demands “presupposes some kind of exclusion or deprivation.”¹¹¹ Acting within the liberal-democratic process to overcome this exclusion, interest groups often strategically project images and interests that depict group members as

¹¹⁰ As Judith Butler has noted, without an attachment to a larger antagonistic project, “the universal is wielded precisely by those who signify its contamination,” e.g. when LGBT interest groups struggle for marriage equality rather than the destruction of sexualized social structures or when workers fight for investment in “human capital” rather than an end to logics of capital as a driving social force. Butler also made this point about resistance that does not free a new universal through a brief discussion of slavery, stating that “the emancipated slave may be liberated into a new mode of subjection that the doctrine of citizenship has in store, and that doctrine may find itself rendered conceptually riven precisely by the emancipatory claims it has made possible” (p. 40). In other words, seeking recourse to an established discourse—like liberal-democratic citizenship—runs the risk of re-instantiating the very mechanisms of subjection against which the claimant fought. See Butler 2000, 40-41.

¹¹¹ Laclau 2005, 125.

compatible with prevailing conceptions of the public interest. With their voices added to Schattschneider's "heavenly chorus," marginalized groups are transfigured into angels rather than the devilish subversives that the radical pluralists suggest are needed to bring about fundamental democratic reforms. As the radical pluralists point out—bolstered, perhaps, by the findings of an emerging "constructionist" tradition within public opinion research—these democratic demands arise *not* from the autonomous and exogenous preferences of dispersed groups; rather, they have been constituted through hegemonic relations of power that provide the basic terms of their potential inclusion, progress, and triumphs.¹¹² As a result—and as some scholarship on political marginality helps to demonstrate—radical or transformative political movements may become even further marginalized; likewise, in Cathy Cohen's words, "those thought to be morally wanting by both dominant society and other indigenous group members" may fall outside the scope of representation.¹¹³ In short, advocacy has the tendency to overshadow "counter normative behaviors" and dismiss them as moral failings rather than affirm them as resistance or even as an outgrowth of detrimental power relations.¹¹⁴

The name of the game, then, is not *only* money, though as Loomis and Struempf point out, "The 'Politics Industry' reacts to market forces."¹¹⁵ Interest groups respond to these market forces, I suggest, not only with money, but also with the types of identities, demands, and forms of participation that circulate as the acceptable currency of hegemonic politics. In other words, advocacy organizations must supply a product acceptable to their

¹¹² For a review of the "constructionist" or "constructivist" tradition within public opinion and political psychology research, see Disch 2011.

¹¹³ Cohen 2004, 29. See also Cohen 2001; Strolovitch 2007.

¹¹⁴ Cohen 2004, 30. See also Kelley 1994.

¹¹⁵ Loomis & Struempf 2009, 10.

constituents *and* to the policy-makers, government institutions, and liberal-democratic processes with which they must work. Ultimately, Schattschneider’s conceptual framework may not account for this important claim—that as the “scale” of conflict changes, so, too, do the participants. It is here that the poststructuralist tradition helps to build upon the conceptual advancements made by those who have subsequently explored the processes of “normalization” at work in the advocacy system. As Laclau notes, a truly national movement must necessarily establish a relationship or “chain” of equivalence amongst many different forms of experience, oppression, or desire, consolidating these experiences around a singular identity or label. The very imposition of this identity—and its relationship to other, similarly situated identities and struggles—presupposes a *constitutive* function of this representative relationship. By gesturing toward this process, then, in which political representatives and entrepreneurs focus not only *outward* toward policy-makers or the public, but also *inward* toward constituents themselves, we can better conceptualize interest group representation as a *mediating* relationship rather than a unidirectional one.¹¹⁶

In engaging in this process of mediation, interest groups encourage constituents to present a positive public face—one that presents a given group’s citizens as worthy claimants. It is important to note, here, that this process is not one of deception, nor one of unmasking harmful stereotypes in an effort to let the “real” group shine through.

Importantly, the view of social delineation that I am drawing upon rejects a latent reality or

¹¹⁶ It is useful, here, to once again differentiate my use of the term “mediation” from Melissa S. Williams’ use of the term. Whereas Williams views representatives as an intermediary between the state or legislature and citizens or groups, her discussion of representation-as-mediation largely centers on ways in which representatives respond to group demands. While Williams claims that the relationship between representative and represented is, indeed, an interactive and dynamic one, she primarily focuses her discussion on ways in which both represented constituencies and the deliberative process should shape representatives. My use of mediation, by contrast, focuses on ways in which representatives—and the broader political processes of which they are part—ultimately shape standards of democratic citizenship for historically-marginalized groups. See Williams 1998, 23-56, 227-233.

essential nature of any particular group, though it does not describe groups or identities merely as “socially constructed.” As Timothy Mitchell points out, “such an approach always implies that the object in question is a representation, a set of meanings, a particular way of seeing the world.”¹¹⁷ Such a portrayal of groups as illusory constructions often implies a firm distinction between the imagined social construction and the material reality it is said to construct; as a result, we risk overlooking the complex ways by materiality and ideality shape one another.

Instead of viewing groups as “social constructions,” I use the term “discourse,” a term that has slowly made its way into “mainstream” political science publications after decades as a vital—if vague—component of various traditions within critical theory, from deliberative democratic theory to Foucaultian poststructuralism.¹¹⁸ By exploring the discursive mechanisms that shape the nature of grouphood, we can account for the ways that material circumstances, legal codes, social conventions, administrative and technical expertise, historical contingencies, and political leadership interact to bring coherence to the political identities, interests, and expressions of citizenship that are positioned at the pluralist bargaining table. Though perhaps viewed as a complex and immeasurable concept by many scholars of American politics, discourse is essential to the “de-faced,” “fourth-faced,” or “productive” conceptions of power upon which the group theory I am expounding relies.¹¹⁹ Once again taking the lead of Laclau and Mouffe, I view discourse as the sum of those processes, practices, and rituals that constitute social agents and their understanding of themselves and the social order in which they live by putting into place a malleable-yet-

¹¹⁷ Mitchell 2002, 4.

¹¹⁸ See Dryzek & Niemeyer 2008.

¹¹⁹ For a sampling of this literature, see Digeser 1992; Duval and Barnett 2005; Foucault 2000; Cruikshank 1999; Hayward 2000.

enduring system of rules, relations, and meanings.¹²⁰ A discourse does not have a specific or determinate location, nor does it act as a “cause” or “variable” as a frame or construction might within conventional social science praxis. Rather, it is the complex set of factors “that turns the stuff of reality out there into objects,” bringing concepts, categories, or phenomena under a single signifier.¹²¹ Moreover, it is not “a passive medium which merely reflects ‘pre-discursive experiences’ or ‘objective interests,’” but is infused with power in ways that are often reproduced but never without resistance or contestation.¹²²

Discourses circulate in a number of different ways—again, through legal codes, social conventions, etc.—and they are not independent entities that can be easily manipulated, avoided, or deployed to the exclusion of other discursive practices; that is to say, they are not readily subject to the intentions of those who circulate them, be they movement leaders, participants, or government officials. Nevertheless, advocacy organizations operate through discourses (and therefore put discourses to use) in many different senses. To cite one common example among many, organizations may advance a “rights” discourse, privileging the court as the terrain of struggle and placing equality of opportunity and litigation at the fore of a group’s strategy or repertoire of demands. The choice of rights is never simply instrumental. As advocates “use” rights, rights “work” in turn as conventions of political practice that are constitutive of one’s understanding of her/his relationship to the state’s juridical realm, her/his assumptions about the primary sites of domination and the redress thereof, etc.¹²³ A rights discourse may sediment and become a fundamental lens through which we understand how political claims become

¹²⁰ See Laclau & Mouffe 1987.

¹²¹ Teubert 2010, 3.

¹²² Norval 1996, 3.

¹²³ See McCann 1994.

institutionalized within a political system. In other words, the use of a rights discourse has consequences that reverberate throughout a political movement, or even a political system. This focus on establishing rights has become a fundamental tenet of liberal democracy, and one that has shaped the nature of democratic claims-making in liberal-democratic societies, for better and for worse.¹²⁴

My primary concern, though, resides with how organizations act upon and within discourses pertaining to subject-position or grouphood—e.g. “African-American,” “lesbian,” “Latina,” etc.—and the political interests and identities that become associated with them. Discourses operate prior to the formation of political identities, as identities are situated entirely within discursive processes. As radical pluralist scholar Anna Marie Smith stated, “It is only through political discourses that we experience the ways in which we are positioned within social structures.”¹²⁵ Moreover, “political discourses are constitutive rather than epiphenomenal”; they provide movements with a “mélange of interpretations” to explain their collective experiences and translate them into collective action.¹²⁶ They mediate our relationship to our structural position within social relations, just as political representation or advocacy mediates our relationship to the larger political system of which groups are part. We only understand our relationship to our sexuality, our race, or our gender, for example, with respect to the (always unstable) discursive terrain that separates “homosexual” from “heterosexual,” “male” from “female,” etc. In this way, discourses are at once empowering and prohibitive, open for novel iterations but ultimately constraining due to their linkage to the established social landscape. In sum, as Smith states, “although the discursive fields in

¹²⁴ For an explanation of the tradeoffs of a rights-based approach to political organizing, see Brown 2002.

¹²⁵ Smith 1998, 57.

¹²⁶ Smith 1998, 62.

contemporary societies are largely structured by capitalist, sexist, racist, and homophobic forces, there always remains some limited and context-specific possibility for subversive resistance,” as hegemonic structures and discourses are never fully fixed, never reducible to a singular logic, and never achieve total legitimacy.¹²⁷

Without necessarily being deployed intentionally by organizational leaders, discourses often strengthen hegemonic structures by serving as “horizons of intelligibility” that demarcate what can be said or done, what actions can legitimately be taken, or what outcomes fall within the realm of possibility.¹²⁸ In doing so, discourses provide content and coherence to the complex array of desires, self-understandings, individual and collective expectations, and all of the other bundles of emotion, activity, and practices that comprise groups. In facilitating a developmental understanding of how interest organizations act upon and within the inherited discourses of grouphood, it should become clearer how contemporary advocacy fosters a politics of affirmation, bolstering the strength of the state and its logics of governance.

Conclusions: Pluralist Purgatory?

Though contemporary scholars descending from the pluralist tradition champion a diverse array of political commitments and methodological approaches to the study of political groups, they tend to agree on one thing: inequalities that have long plagued American politics persist despite the emergence of many new advocates in Washington. The post-pluralists’ empirical findings are robust, and recent developments, whether at the nation’s Supreme Court or in the Republican Party’s sharp rightward shift, have given little

¹²⁷ Smith 1998, 71.

¹²⁸ Norval 1996, 4.

cause for optimism that a brighter and more egalitarian future awaits, at least in the immediate future. The consensus remains, then, that on the path toward the fabled “pluralist heaven,” we largely remain stuck in pluralist purgatory despite a number of tangible, rights-based victories for historically-disadvantaged groups.

In this chapter, however, I have attempted to reframe this narrative, suggesting that in the contemporary era of political advocacy, historically-marginalized groups and their representatives have engaged in a *politics of affirmation* whereby political advocates comply with and utilize some of the very antidemocratic processes that have historically served as sites of subordination or marginalization. Indeed, because of this politics of affirmation—not in spite of it—a number of groups have secured pivotal legal victories and, in many cases at least, significant strides toward greater public approval.

The progenitor of the post-pluralists’ skepticism, E.E. Schattschneider, also serves as a primary thinker of how the downtrodden can *succeed* in linking their own political claims to a larger ideological framework within a prevailing party coalition. Schattschneider’s conceptual framework of political resistance—central to which is his notion of the “socialization of conflict”—helps to uncover ways in which marginalized groups can appeal to an existing consensus in order to frame their demands in persuasive terms to outside actors and party coalitions. Ultimately, however, Schattschneider’s framework remains a bit unreflective about the transformative power of this consensus upon those groups attempting to “socialize” conflict. Just as group leaders may appeal to a consensus for strategic purposes, those leaders must also appeal to their constituents in a manner that may legitimize those governing logics that had previously served as sites of exclusion. In other words, inclusion in the interest group system does not come without adopting the prevailing

assumptions and logics of the political system. Largely, adopting these terms require operating with some degree of abstraction from the specific, localized, and unique battles taking place by marginalized communities across the country.

Schattschneider's notion of the socialization of conflict sends us in the right direction, then, particularly by thinking of groups as entities that must play by the rules of a symbolic, not just experiential, political landscape. Whereas Schattschneider invites us to think about how broader symbolic forces can be used to the strategic advantage of the politically oppressed, his notion of the *socialization of conflict* is—surprisingly for Schattschneider—curiously uninflected by an analysis of power. It is for this reason that I have proposed to rethink it in terms of *hegemony*. Hegemony, I argue, is a concept that establishes parameters according to which a given conflict is likely to succeed. What are the features that comprise the term “hegemony” as we move forward through the 21st century? And how have they impacted the terms by which interest group citizens engage in politics? The following chapter explores these question and further elucidates the pivotal role of interest group representation within our contemporary political landscape.

Chapter III

The Constitutive Impact of Political Advocacy Upon Democratic Citizenship

In the past decade, political scientists have unsettled long-held assumptions about two features of American democracy. First, scholars from across the discipline have challenged the idea that representative democracy turns on “responsiveness” to the relatively independent preferences of represented constituencies by their elected representatives.¹²⁹ Whereas citizens’ preferences were once viewed as the basis for all legitimate democratic action, many scholars—including political theorists, psychologists, and public opinion researchers—have recognized the multi-directional flow of political communications and information, gesturing toward a *constitutive* role of political representation. Abound in this research, which Lisa Disch has termed the “mobilization conception of democratic representation,” is the straightforward yet methodologically challenging notion that “political representation neither simply reflects nor transmits demands; it creates them as it actively recruits constituencies.”¹³⁰

A second line of scholarship—as methodologically and politically diverse as the first—seeks to challenge the widespread belief that the United States has upheld and expanded basic democratic principles since the fall of Jim Crow. Largely, scholars cite rising economic inequalities since the 1970s and the infusion of neoliberal market principles into democratic procedures as evidence of a crisis plaguing American democracy. Several recent titles concisely tell this story by affixing damning descriptors to the term “democracy”: Crenson and Ginsberg assert that American politicians are “downsizing democracy” by

¹²⁹ Jacobs & Shapiro 2000; Pitkin 1967; Stimson, et. al. 1995.

¹³⁰ Disch 2011, 102.

demoting *citizens* into political *consumers*.¹³¹ Theda Skocpol claims that we live in a “diminished democracy,” with professional management replacing a tradition of civic voluntarism.¹³² Larry Bartels cautions that the United States has become an “unequal democracy,” with policies favoring the wealthy serving as both cause and effect of rising political and economic inequalities.¹³³ Sheldon Wolin laments that democracy has “incorporated,” giving rise to a “managed democracy.”¹³⁴ These anxieties about the fate of American democracy reflect more than the hyperbole of a small group of radical scholars; concerns that were once the domain of a cottage industry have crept into mainstream scholarship, spurring a discipline-wide conversation about democracy’s incompatibility with increasingly plutocratic trends.

These literatures pose important challenges to those who study—and those who engage in—political advocacy, questioning as they do citizens’ ability to exert control over their collective fate independently of external manipulation and on an equal footing with their fellow citizens. How are we to evaluate political advocacy when citizens’ interests and preferences are largely contingent, constructed, and partially the *result* of representative action? And how can we expect disadvantaged groups to flourish when their advocates must square off against entrenched principles of governance that perpetuate inequality and perhaps even beget hidden, antidemocratic tendencies? To sketch an answer to these questions, I confront the influence that neoliberalism has exerted within the United States’ advocacy system in recent decades. I argue that the broad constraints of neoliberalism have helped to spur practices of interest group representation that mobilize historically-

¹³¹ Crenson & Ginsberg 2002.

¹³² Skocpol 2003.

¹³³ Bartels 2008.

¹³⁴ Wolin 2008.

marginalized subjects in ways that imagine and engender constituencies capable of thriving in accordance with the emerging principles of neoliberalism.¹³⁵ In today's age of political advocacy, advocates do not operate wholly *against* the constraints of neoliberal governance, but largely *through* neoliberalism by upholding its basic tenets and, quite rationally, pursuing the opportunities available within its limits. In fact, I argue, advocacy organizations have been central rather than peripheral to the expansion of the neoliberal ethos. Indeed, interest groups draw upon the practices of neoliberal citizenship in ways that shape how interest group citizens come to participate in American political life.

This chapter begins with a brief review of the emerging “mobilization” conception of democratic representation, emphasizing this approach’s relevance to the study of political advocacy. Currently, a great deal of post-pluralist literature describes the contemporary advocacy universe as oligarchical, co-optative, or reflective of bourgeois, upper-class, or relatively advantaged interests. Following recent breakthroughs both within and outside of scholarship on American pluralism, I supplement and reframe these discussions of interest group representation, presenting interest group representation as a critical component of the process of interest-, subject-, and constituency-formation within liberal-democratic life.

Building on a line of inquiry initiated in Chapter 2, I then bring American democracy’s recent critics to bear on this discussion. Keeping in mind the “radical pluralist” lessons about hegemonic social relations, I note that the American advocacy explosion has

¹³⁵ I refer throughout this chapter—and indeed, throughout this dissertation—to the figure of the “neoliberal subject” or the “neoliberal citizen.” While I will expound upon how I use these terms throughout this chapter, it is worth noting, here, that I do not use them in a strictly economic sense, as some political thinkers or commentators might. Rather, I view contemporary neoliberal citizenship—at least as it has emerged in the American context—as anchored in the principles of liberal democracy. That is, though economic power has become a “placeholder of power” of sorts, neoliberalism also “seeks to organize social, cultural, and political formations according to its imperatives.” At the same time, however, we cannot understand neoliberal citizenship apart from or independently of the liberal-democratic values that nurtured it. See Vazquez-Arroyo 2008, 129.

not mitigated the hegemony of neoliberalism or its corresponding conception of American citizenship. Rather, I argue that neoliberal governance has largely *facilitated* the interest group system's expansion by providing a necessary language and rhetorical framework to confront minority groups' most hostile aggressors. Interest groups, in turn, have provided a bridge to contemporary neoliberal citizenship by mobilizing marginalized constituencies according to prevailing processes of neoliberal governance and encouraging recourse to neoliberal methods of political participation. In contrast with those who view these trends as *depoliticizing* or *demobilizing*, I argue that these developments are generative of a politics of efficacy and affirmation as different groups struggle to take advantage of the new opportunities afforded by neoliberal discourse. In other words, rather than *stifle* political action, interest groups do indeed *mobilize* action in the form of individualized rights-claims, appeals to individual purchasing and contributing power, and other features of neoliberal citizenship that link citizens' *political* subjectivity primarily with *economic* and *juridical* rights and responsibilities.

The final portion of this chapter sketches a primary result of contemporary political advocacy's entry into neoliberal political life—an "interest group citizenship" that mobilizes these forms of political subjectivity through their engagement in the pluralist system. Importantly, this interest group citizenship reaffirms a conception of democratic citizenship that marginalizes alternative or transgressive political projects that operate *outside* of neoliberalism's internal logic. At the same time, however, this interest group citizenship has in many ways created new possibilities for historically-excluded groups, as the historical nature of their marginalization both contributed to the making of their political identity and pushed them outside of prevailing conceptions of the public sphere. By supplanting

conceptions of a strong public sphere with a philosophy of governmental non-interference, I argue, neoliberalism has helped to *strengthen* pluralism's emphases on private association and juridical rights. As a result, neoliberalism's model of state non-interference has provided an effective lens through which new groups can *justify their entry into the pluralist system* by positioning themselves as private actors seeking state protections and privacy rights. In this way, interest group citizenship allows marginalized groups to affirm their commitment to the American political system by strengthening ideals of democratic inclusion, personal rights, and private-sector solutions.

In sketching this modern interest group citizen, I also preview the narrative that subsequent chapters will follow. That is, I briefly introduce the figure of the LGBT political constituent—an ideal-typical political actor who will largely provide the analytical leverage for the remainder of this dissertation. I argue that this subject, akin to what others have referred to in passing as the “neoliberal gay subject,” the “gay moralist,” or the “stigmaphobe,” is not merely a natural and inevitable product of a neoliberalizing political landscape; rather, her/his political participation has been generated through the neoliberalization and nationalization of political advocacy.¹³⁶ In other words, advocates have worked through the constraints of neoliberalism to generate engaged and active citizens, albeit citizens who operate within parameters that ultimately prove unsatisfactory to neoliberalism's harshest critics.

New Directions in the Concept of Representation

¹³⁶ See, respectively, Bryant 2008; Warner 1999.

According to conventional democratic thought, representative government functions best when representatives respond to the demands of their constituents or, in Robert Dahl's words, when "ordinary citizens exert a relatively high degree of control over leaders."¹³⁷ This now-commonsense idea that democratic legitimacy derives from "the people"—or some unit thereof like a district or a group—originated with the democratic revolutions in the United States and France and has long endured as the "bedrock norm" in thinking about representative democracy.¹³⁸

In the United States, both the Federalists and Anti-Federalists largely accepted the view that legislative legitimacy was rooted in popular sovereignty. Debate between these two parties centered upon the crucial question of whether a strong central government, spread across a vast territory, would sufficiently adhere to the interests of its citizens. Prominent among Anti-Federalist objections to ratification of the Constitution was the argument that a large and extended republic would distance citizens from the decisions governing their lives. According to Brutus, for example, representatives "are supposed to know the minds of their constituents" and have the "integrity to declare this mind" in the legislature; in a large republic, he argued, this connection would assuredly become more tenuous.¹³⁹ Refuting these claims, the Federalists argued that the Constitution would ensure governmental responsiveness to the public, though representatives would also stand at a critical distance from their constituents. In "Federalist 39," Madison asserted that the new government

¹³⁷ Dahl 1956, 3. Scholars often cite another phrase of Dahl's to characterize the responsiveness hypothesis. Dahl claimed that "a key characteristic of a democracy is the continued responsiveness of the government to the preferences of its citizens, considered as political equals." See Dahl 1971, 1.

¹³⁸ See Disch 2011, 100. Similar to Disch's terminology of a "bedrock norm", Urbinati and Warren describe a "standard account" of political representation defined by four main features: a principal-agent relationship between constituents within a territory and their elected agents; state power as a vehicle for popular sovereignty; electoral mechanisms to ensure responsiveness; and the universal franchise. See Urbinati & Warren 2008, 389.

¹³⁹ Brutus 2001, 369.

would derive its powers “from the great body of the people,” administered in part by elected officeholders “during good behavior.”¹⁴⁰ (Elections, of course, provided the opportunity to determine whether or not representatives had “behaved.”) Anti-Federalists countered that the distance between “the people” and their representatives would be so great as to ensure something resembling an aristocracy, with “superiority conferred on the basis of wealth, status, or even talent.”¹⁴¹ While these two factions disagreed on whether representative government, by its very nature, must “secure likeness or closeness between representatives and represented,” both parties maintained some measure of the bedrock norm, and even the Federalists argued vehemently that elections would ensure *some* measure of responsiveness.¹⁴²

Political science scholarship has long accepted this bedrock conception of political representation as the standard of sound democratic politics. Hanna Pitkin’s *The Concept of Representation* serves as a prominent theoretical point of reference. Though Pitkin ultimately offered a complex definition of the concept, in a commonly-referenced line she defined representation as “acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them.”¹⁴³ Empirical political science scholarship has largely, if sometimes only implicitly, followed this definition, evaluating the relationship between elected officials and their constituents by tracking, for example, how well elected officials have responded to changes in citizens’ preferences over time.¹⁴⁴ Post-pluralists and other empirical scholars concerned about issues of inequality have largely—though by no means uniformly—followed this

¹⁴⁰ Madison 1987, 255.

¹⁴¹ Manin 1997, 112-113.

¹⁴² Manin 1997, 116.

¹⁴³ Pitkin 1967, 209.

¹⁴⁴ See, e.g., Stimson, et. al. 1995.

responsiveness paradigm, demonstrating that not only does government remain largely unresponsive to the poor and minorities, but even the groups that represent them often fail to respond to the needs or demands of those at the margins.¹⁴⁵ At times, questions of proportionality in the group system seem to translate into the assumption that public officials, if not following the median voter, are following the median dollar.¹⁴⁶

Though much of this research has provided a great deal of insight into Dahl's fundamental question of "who governs," the responsiveness imperative is nevertheless fraught with complications. Indeed, many of those researching group politics have pointed to the inherent difficulties and biases in defining, locating, or identifying groups and, by extension, which interests or demands deserve responsive action on the part of representatives. Blending insights from queer theory and feminist legal studies, for example, Cathy Cohen argued that all social groups contain "multiple sites of power" that stand in as centering or normalizing forces capable of constructing prevailing images of "normal" and "abnormal" group identities.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, as Cohen and many others have pointed out, these categories are themselves not only internally diverse, but they are "multiple and intersecting" in ways that cast some voices to the periphery of any given struggle for justice.¹⁴⁸ Social scientists hoping to understand practices of representation are thus met with the challenge of understanding how in-group majority opinion and norms of behavior are made and unmade.

Building upon this theoretical framework, now widely known by the term "intersectionality," Strolovitch also critiqued the stability of grouphood and, by extension,

¹⁴⁵ See, e.g., Bartels 2008; Piven & Cloward 1977; Strolovitch 2007; Walker 1988.

¹⁴⁶ Schlozman 1984.

¹⁴⁷ Cohen 2001, 202.

¹⁴⁸ Cohen 2001, 203.

the responsiveness imperative upon which much research on representation is built.¹⁴⁹ Drawing attention to the socially- and politically-constructed nature of grouphood—and building upon Michael Dawson’s concept of “linked fate”—Strolovitch noted various ways by which advocacy can itself shape individuals’ and groups’ perceptions of their own identities and interests, as the somewhat narrow responsiveness to relatively-advantaged group members may often serve to shape the preferences and perceived interests of the intersectionally-disadvantaged as well.¹⁵⁰ Given the problematic ways in which both political activists and pluralist scholars have often treated grouphood, then, scholars in the group politics tradition have, without dispensing with the ideal entirely, begun a concerted shift *away* from responsiveness as the primary and essential element of interest group representation.

Scholars writing outside of the group politics tradition have attacked the responsiveness imperative from a several different angles, claiming that representatives may act in a manner that actively *manipulates* constituents’ preferences. In such a scenario, “responsiveness” derives not from the authentic voice of the people, but from the distorting impact of representatives’ conduct. Jacobs and Shapiro, for example, explored representatives’ use of “crafted talk” as a means to “simulate” responsiveness by changing the public’s perceptions, understandings, and evaluations of representatives’ policy positions. The potential result is the *appearance* of responsiveness, generated through the art of shrewd communications techniques.¹⁵¹ Amid a large body of research claiming that, in the aggregate

¹⁴⁹ For an assortment of perspectives on the concept of intersectionality, see, for example, Berger & Guidroz 2009; Crenshaw 1991; Grabham, et. al. 2009; Hancock 2007; Hindman 2011; McCall 2005.

¹⁵⁰ Dawson 1994; Strolovitch 2007, 43.

¹⁵¹ Jacobs & Shapiro 2000; Jacobs & Shapiro 2002.

at least, citizens do not have stable and long-lasting preferences¹⁵², tend to rely on elites to help them form political opinions¹⁵³, and do not particularly want to be actively involved in political decision making¹⁵⁴, the recognition that representatives' strategic actions may actually *shape* the opinions of their constituents has spurred considerable scholarly trepidation.

Largely in response to these mounting concerns, political theorists have reexamined the concept of representation. At least two primary conceptual shifts are particularly notable for purposes of understanding and evaluating political advocacy. First, many have scrutinized the view that responsiveness serves as the primary basis of assessing representation. In a particularly well-received article, for example, Jane Mansbridge suggested several different criteria beyond responsiveness that we can use to evaluate or understand representative relationships.¹⁵⁵ Others have couched this conceptual move within poststructuralist theory, which has long held that seemingly foundational, essential, or centering forces are not exogenous to broader systems of power.¹⁵⁶ Directly or indirectly drawing upon this approach, a growing number of scholars have rejected “the people” as a category that serves as the locus of its own action; rather, preference-formation, interest-formation, and identity-formation are processes “necessarily endogenous to politics.”¹⁵⁷ Moreover, as Nadia Urbinati claims, representation “facilitates the formation of political

¹⁵² See, for example, Converse 1964.

¹⁵³ See, for example, Zaller 1992.

¹⁵⁴ Hibbing & Theiss-Morse 2002.

¹⁵⁵ Notably, Mansbridge distinguished the “promissory” model of political representation, built upon legislators making promises during campaigns and citizens evaluating whether they have kept them come election time, from “anticipatory,” “gyroscopic,” and “surrogate” forms of representation. Each of these additional criteria challenge the responsiveness imperative in one significant way or another. See Mansbridge 2003.

¹⁵⁶ For a sampling of this literature, see, for example, Peter Digeser, “The Fourth Face of Power,” *The Journal of Politics* 54:4 (1992), pp. 977-1007; Duvall & Barnett 2005; Foucault 2000.

¹⁵⁷ Disch 2011, 101.

groups and identities” by calling them forth as concrete historical agents with intelligible demands.¹⁵⁸ Similarly, Ernesto Laclau describes representation as “a two-way process: a movement from represented to representative, and...from representative to represented.”¹⁵⁹ Stated perhaps most succinctly by Anne Norton, “representation alters the represented.”¹⁶⁰

Key to this move is the view that representation entails more than the unidirectional *transmission* of demands, but the *transformation* of them as well.¹⁶¹ Coherent social groups or political constituencies do not exist as such in the absence of representation. Rather, representative actions—whether by elected officials, scholars, the media, legal codes, etc.—largely condition the very intelligibility of grouphood. As Disch points out, “It is only *through* representation that a people comes to be as a political agent, one capable of putting forward a demand.”¹⁶²

The second conceptual shift scrutinizes the very idea that legitimate representation entails a formalized, electoral relationship between a representative and a clearly-bounded constituency. To a large degree, pluralist research initiated this shift decades ago, albeit with little critical regard for social and economic inequalities.¹⁶³ Confronting Madisonian theory, for example, Dahl observed that whereas “only a quite tiny proportion of the electorate is actively bringing its influence to bear upon politicians” on any given issue, constellations of organized lobbies representing diffuse groups often play significant roles in drafting legislation, informing legislators, and performing many key democratic functions despite

¹⁵⁸ Urbinati 2006, 37.

¹⁵⁹ Laclau 2005, 158.

¹⁶⁰ Norton 2004a, 94.

¹⁶¹ It is worth noting, here, that political scientists referenced these tendencies even in the 1960s. For example, Jack Walker’s critique of elitist models of democracy noted that “obviously leaders sometimes create opinions as well as respond to them.” However, it was arguably not until decades later that political theorists began to clarify and expand upon this observation in a conceptually satisfactory manner. See Walker 1966, 286.

¹⁶² Disch 2011, 104.

¹⁶³ See Urbinati & Warren 2008, 402.

having no electoral connection with constituents.¹⁶⁴ In this regard, the pluralists initiated a shift toward disaggregation (from a concern about majorities to a concern about their constituent minorities), pointing to ways that non-electoral representatives may augment electoral representation.¹⁶⁵ In some instances, of course, interest groups—as unelected and perhaps “unofficial” representatives—provide the primary point of access for groups seeking a voice within the governing process.

Political theorists have deepened this insight, emphasizing that non-electoral representation can also operate through *discursive* mechanisms both within and outside political institutions. In other words, locating, dislocating, defining, and redefining (often geographically dispersed) constituencies are key functions of representation within liberal democracies. According to Dryzek and Niemeyer, representation is “especially appropriate when a well-bounded demos is hard to locate” or in the inevitable scenario where a “whole person cannot be represented.”¹⁶⁶ For example, sometimes people may need representation in their capacity as a worker, yet on other occasions they may seek it as a consumer or as part of a racial or ethnic group. Representation, in this sense, operates at the level of meaning; it is used to evoke shared understandings or delineate boundaries of grouphood. Similarly, Michael Saward argues that political representation is not merely the “factual product of elections” or an informal component of policymaking; rather, “it is better understood as a circular relation” between a claims-maker and an audience or constituency.¹⁶⁷ For Saward, representation “is an ongoing process of making and receiving, accepting and rejecting

¹⁶⁴ Dahl 1956, 130.

¹⁶⁵ In recent years, normative theorists have even gestured to ways in which electoral representation has fallen behind contemporary conceptions of “constituencies.” Andrew Rehfeld, for example, argues that a territorial approach to the creation of electoral districts rests upon an outdated notion of a constituency that reflects a time when interests were understood as local. See Rehfeld 2005.

¹⁶⁶ Dryzek & Niemeyer 2008, 482-483.

¹⁶⁷ Saward 2010, 34-36.

claims—in, between, and outside electoral cycles.”¹⁶⁸ In other words, political representation derives from any activity that facilitates an understanding or proffers a claim about the interests or nature of a particular group or constituency. Anyone appealing to a broader audience on behalf of a constituency is a representative, then, as “the world of political representation is a world of claim-making rather than the operation of formal institutions.”¹⁶⁹ In this regard, representation is a process rather than a static state of affairs, an invocation rather than a *de jure* (or, for that matter, *de facto*) relationship.

In sum, despite the various normative concerns that have accompanied the recognition of political representation’s constitutive nature, scholars from various traditions within political science have acknowledged and accepted various theoretical updates to the concept of representation; these advancements include, but are not limited to, acknowledgements that representative behavior shapes constituent demands as well as the acknowledgement that self-authorized representatives may serve as “legitimate” representatives through their “surrogate” role.¹⁷⁰ Moreover, this literature has revealed that through targeted communications, such representation may have *formative* effects, calling forth rather than merely reflecting constituencies by gesturing toward shared dispositions and potential avenues for collective action.¹⁷¹

These insights invite us to forego long-held distinctions between the “private” realm of civil society and the “public” forum to which we private citizens can bring our grievances, as public action impacts how we interpret our seemingly “private” actions, identities, and dispositions. Building upon ongoing efforts to import these insights—again, that democratic

¹⁶⁸ Saward 2010, 36.

¹⁶⁹ Saward 2010, 43.

¹⁷⁰ See Mansbridge 2003; Urbinati & Warren 2008, 403.

¹⁷¹ See Disch 2011, 108.

representation need not be defined and evaluated by either elections or responsiveness—into scholarship of interest group politics serves as an important point of departure for understanding how interest groups represent historically-marginalized groups. It is important to point out, here, that we cannot merely assert that advocates craft a message according to the preferences or interests of “elites,” financiers, or oligarchs and constitute groups accordingly. Though groups form, in part, through the political process itself, groups are no more sheerly artificial, manipulated phenomena than they are spontaneous natural ones. It remains helpful to think in terms of “grouphood,” a term that scholars working in the pluralist tradition—of which this dissertation is a part—use to flag the social activity, experiences, interests, and demands that may crystalize as prominent features of political life.¹⁷² It is helpful, then, to pursue an explanation of organized advocacy that situates political representation within broader historical forces conditioning the distinctive interests, demands, and political practices that become reified as markers of grouphood.

Inequality and (Neo)Liberal Citizenship

Of course, citizens are not infinitely malleable beings, and political representation is not the only sculptor of democratic citizens.¹⁷³ A primary lesson of the constitutive view of political representation, rather, is that representation acts in conjunction with a number of other factors that contribute to the political education—indeed, to the “making”—of democratic citizens. Indeed, generations of scholars both old and new have described how various governing institutions and policies have shaped the decisions and behaviors of

¹⁷² For a particularly insightful discussion of “grouphood,” and the ways in which social scientists can account for an explain it without reinforcing or reifying its central categories, see Brubaker 2002.

¹⁷³ As Disch proclaims at the outset of her article, recent research has found that citizens are more competent than we once took them to be. See Disch 2011, 100.

political actors and citizen choice through complex, historical processes in which policies, institutions, and citizens mutually shape one another.¹⁷⁴

Recently, however, a number of scholars have claimed that American citizenship is under assault. The most widespread and visible manifestation of this claim takes American democracy to task for succumbing to, and even facilitating, severe economic inequalities of wealth and, resultantly, political influence. A recent deluge of scholarship has paid particular attention to the partisan trends and policy initiatives that have empowered the top 1% of income earners, disempowered “average” citizens, and fostered plutocracy. And many are taking note, as evidenced not only by widespread academic attention, but also by frequent recognition in the popular press, partisan accusation of “class warfare” (from both sides of the aisle), and an “Occupy Wall Street” movement claiming to speak for “the 99%.” After a brief fling with explaining declining “social capital” as a primary culprit of the United States’ democratic shortcomings, a growing number of scholars have confronted *inequality*—of political participation, of opportunities, of influence, and, of course, wealth—as the discipline’s new *cause célèbre*.¹⁷⁵

This scholarship points quite effectively to a number of alarming statistics about the growing economic disparity between the richest of the rich and the rest of us—about Americans’ limited income mobility, about declining union membership in the face of employer-driven efforts to curtail collective bargaining, about taxation policies and loopholes that disproportionately benefit the highest earners, about a racialized criminal justice system that disenfranchises poor and minority voters, and so on. The lessons of this scholarship are by now well-known even if they are largely ignored by policymakers: The wealthy have more

¹⁷⁴ See Campbell 2003; March & Olsen 2007; Mettler 2005; Mettler & Soss 2004; Steinmo & Watts 1995, 336.

¹⁷⁵ See, e.g., Alexander 2010; Bartels 2008; Hacker & Pierson 2010; Stein 2010.

while the rest of us have less; the wealthy have expanded the domain of the private sphere while the rest of us toil in the shrinking public sphere; the wealthy buy political influence while the rest of us merely choose among their candidates; the wealthy steadfastly focus on upward economic redistribution while the rest of us battle the (purportedly) insignificant “culture wars.”

Beneath a mountain of revealing statistics, however, lies a story about more than imbalances of political power driven by the wealthy and the politicians, parties, and lobbyists that they bankroll. It’s also a story about the rest of us—of how *liberalism* and its contemporary manifestation *neoliberalism* have “made” citizens by acclimating them to modes of governance in accord with an individualist ethic (vis-à-vis collective action), private enterprise (vis-à-vis public works), and market-based solutions to collective problems (vis-à-vis government services).¹⁷⁶ Following noted critical geographer David Harvey, I view neoliberalism as a theory of political and economic practices that “proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade.” Within these arrangements, “The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices,” which may ultimately call for the expansion of state power so long as this power is redirected toward legitimizing

¹⁷⁶ I do not wish to imply that liberalism (referring to the philosophy driving liberal democracy rather than its more colloquial usage) and neoliberalism are synonymous. In fact, one of neoliberalism’s earliest experiments took place in Chile during the Pinochet dictatorship, which did not occur under the guise of liberal democracy. However, in the American context the *political* logic of liberal democracy has fostered—and perhaps justified—neoliberal *economic* rationalities. To be a “neoliberal citizen,” then, is to be a liberal political subject who adheres to the separation between “private” economic life and the (constrained) public sphere. While I will henceforth use the term “neoliberal” throughout much of the rest of this dissertation, I use the term mindful of how liberal democratic practices have shaped and fostered a climate that has allowed neoliberalism to flourish. For an extensive account of liberal democracy’s nurturing of neoliberalism, see Vázquez-Arroyo 2008.

entrepreneurial market actors.¹⁷⁷ Neoliberalism—a term to which I do not wish to grant an anthropomorphic agency but which nevertheless has an identifiable, if by no means seamless, political rationality—thus combines classical liberalism’s embrace of public austerity, private enterprise, and entrepreneurship with the demand for government to actively and aggressively *promote* the individualist ethic in part through social services designed to help clients achieve economic independence.

Importantly, neoliberalism also refers to a range of historical practices and circumstances that changed state capacities and functions and transformed the role of “ordinary” citizens within everyday political life. Political scientists have long commented on these shifts in governing authority, beginning perhaps with Theodore Lowi’s account of “interest-group liberalism.” (Incidentally, Lowi viewed this form of government as “a vulgarized version of the pluralist model of modern political science.”)¹⁷⁸ According to Lowi, the expansion of federal authority since the New Deal led to a transfer of lawmaking authority from Congress to the administrative agencies of the executive branch; over time, these agencies largely delegated authority and privilege to private actors (typically corporate powers), leading to powerful private actors taking control over a range of public aims. These processes would later only intensify, gaining steam in the wake of the economic turmoil of the 1970s, eventually finding organizational vehicles in the Republican Party during the presidency of Ronald Reagan and, later, the Democratic Party during the Clinton era.

¹⁷⁷ Harvey 2005, 2.

¹⁷⁸ Lowi claimed that the emerging governmental paradigm of interest-group liberalism “is liberalism because it is optimistic about government, expects to use government in a positive and expansive role, is motivated by the highest sentiments, and possesses a strong faith that what is good for government is good for the society. It is interest-group liberalism because it sees as both necessary and good a policy agenda that is accessible to all organized interests and makes no independent judgment of their claims. It is interest-group liberalism because it defines the public interest as a result of the amalgamation of various claims.” See Lowi 1979, 51.

As critics point out, neoliberal theory follows liberal democracy's positing of the state—that is, the constitutional framework which includes the electoral, administrative, legislative, and judicial apparatuses—as the ultimate arbiter of grievances, the primary protector of rights and liberties, and the principal site of redress. Like conventional accounts of pluralism, neoliberalism constructs the political realm as a field constituted by free and private actors tolerant of others' political rights—which are viewed as anteceding public decision-making—and distrustful of majority rule. The role of the neoliberal state, then, is to protect property, enforce contracts, encourage markets, and, when necessary, subsidize or save industry from market failures. This view of state power creates the illusion that “civil society” remains a separate, natural, and non-political domain that encompasses familial and economic life and arises as the product of free individuals pursuing their private interests independently from the rule of the *demoi*.¹⁷⁹ Outside of these protective functions, the coercive power of the state is highlighted as an assault on individual freedom, while the coercive power of economic forces is disguised and interpreted as personal failure, bad luck, or an otherwise unfortunate byproduct of the pursuit of freedom. Thus, marginalized groups—many of which have a fraught history of reliance upon, exclusion from, and criminalization by the state—are encouraged to use “self-help” mechanisms or the private sector to seek solutions. Nevertheless, as I will argue below, this rights-driven ethos has also provided a lens through which democratic inclusion becomes imaginable and workable, particularly against markedly illiberal political opponents.

¹⁷⁹ As Wendy Brown explains, a liberal conception of governance posits the state as “the domain of ‘real political life,’” with “civil society,” the economy, and the family existing as “natural” sites apart from the domain of politics. See Brown 1995, 146.

Key to this discussion of neoliberal citizenship is the notion that neoliberalism has not only grown out of but has also risen beyond and transformed liberal democracy, altering our collective understandings of political participation. As Antonio Vazquez-Arroyo claims, “Liberal democracy...is by now virtually defunct” as the *democratic* element of liberal democracy has been “ultimately colonized and incorporated in a tamed form.”¹⁸⁰ Disavowing the *political* component of liberal democracy, neoliberalism is marred by managerial precepts of governance, depoliticized institutions, and the unraveling of labor’s ability to counterbalance unbridled corporate influence.¹⁸¹ Wolin’s term “managed democracy” aptly characterizes these perceived trends; in a managed democracy, ostensibly democratic political actions are systematized, regulated, and hierarchicalized. Key, here, is the merger between the political and the economic, the public and the private, the state and civil society. Elites roam freely between corporate and governmental managerial positions; government agencies fall victim to the corporate culture of efficiency, hierarchy, and competition; social services increasingly become the domain of private, for-profit enterprise. Creating “the illusion of a leaner system of governance,” the American system of managed democracy has become “a more extensive, more invasive system than ever before, one removed from democratic influences” and placed into the hands of capitalist architects.¹⁸²

Neoliberalism, then, manifests itself not only in public policies and governing institutions, but it also creeps into the manner in which citizens view themselves, their moral

¹⁸⁰ Vazquez-Arroyo 2008, 155-156.

¹⁸¹ As Vazquez Arroyo states, the “depoliticizing impetus of liberal democracy” has unraveled the democratic element of liberal-democratic life, as liberal democracy “fosters the kind of depoliticization that ultimately curtails the strong sense of political responsibility that comes from a meaningful share in power.” Vazquez-Arroyo 2008, 144.

¹⁸² Wolin 2008, 137.

and civic obligations, and the channels available to them for political empowerment.¹⁸³ In other words, it is much more than an assortment of state policies or, for that matter, a philosophy of governance. It is also, as many in the Foucaultian tradition have pointed out, a way of imagining the world and the importance of individual conduct within it; neoliberalism, in this regard, subordinates public and collective actions to the higher goal of proper personal conduct; its primary objective is to foster a “self capable of self-governance.”¹⁸⁴ In other words, it involves an activist state aiming to *create liberal citizens*, classically defined, who are willing to accept neoliberal social arrangements as “natural, managerial precepts for good government.”¹⁸⁵ These citizens will view economic matters as the domain of technical experts and private entrepreneurs and likewise will view social ills as the aggregation of ill-conceived or impractical individual choices. The burdens of collective life, then, are placed upon people as *individual economic beings* rather than the *demos* as a collective decider of just outcomes. “Economics are the method,” as Margaret Thatcher famously claimed, “but the object is the change the soul.”¹⁸⁶

Having internalized this classically liberal ethos, the role of the neoliberal citizen is primarily that of a free and responsible market actor endowed with a respect for individual rights and a drive to consume and invest according to her/his abilities and training within the marketplace. As Brown notes, “A fully realized neoliberal citizenry would be the opposite of public-minded; indeed, it would barely exist as a public.”¹⁸⁷ As critics like Brown assert, democratic governing procedures have largely given way to individual rights-claims,

¹⁸³ As Wendy Brown notes, “neoliberalism is not simply a set of economic policies,” but also involves “*extending and disseminating market values to all institutions and social action.*” See Brown 2005, 39-40.

¹⁸⁴ Cruikshank 1996, 237. See also Lyon-Callo 2004.

¹⁸⁵ Duggan 2003, xiii.

¹⁸⁶ Quoted in Harvey 225, 23.

¹⁸⁷ Brown 2005, 43.

individualized contributions to desired political causes, and forms of political engagement centered upon individual charity or volunteer efforts. Thus, mass mobilization and collective action have declined in favor of what Crenson and Ginsberg have called a “personal democracy,” characterized by individual recourse to the market and courts, and an increasingly customer service-oriented bureaucracy. Neoliberalism, then, has created a scenario whereby “elites now have fewer incentives to mobilize non-elites, and non-elites have little incentive to join with one another,” as civic engagement now privileges personal service within prescribed channels of governance.¹⁸⁸ Political problem-solving, then, is linked to voting, legal or administrative recourse, enlightened consumption habits, or, for the philanthropically-minded, individual volunteerism. Indeed, in today’s political realm, “Citizens have been demoted to customers; public administration, to customer relations.”¹⁸⁹ This shift is more than a semantic one; democratic *citizens* join together to control the government, whereas neoliberal *customers* merely receive services from government, providing demand according to their (wildly disparate) purchasing powers.¹⁹⁰

For this reason, critics of neoliberalism warn of a hallowing out of the *democratic* elements of liberal democracy, as individual responsibility supersedes collective responsibility, and the notion of shared power is largely curtailed by a disavowal of public forms of power. As Wolin argues, the union of state and corporate power characterizing our contemporary political era has demoted democracy “from a formative principle to a largely

¹⁸⁸ Crenson & Ginsberg 2002, 3.

¹⁸⁹ Crenson & Ginsberg 2002, 9.

¹⁹⁰ It is important to note that some activists and scholars view this consumption-driven role as a positive force of citizen empowerment. For example, as Margaret Scammell states, “We are better-informed shoppers than ever before,” meaning that this new locus of citizen power has allowed public-minded citizens to boycott companies with immoral or destructive business practices, purchase environmentally- or labor-friendly products, etc. See Scammell 2000.

rhetorical function.”¹⁹¹ Even more starkly put by Wendy Brown, with the “hollowing out of a democratic political culture,” neoliberalism has initiated “the production of the undemocratic citizen.”¹⁹² As I argue, however, neoliberalism’s “rhetorical function”—and in particular its focus on private, natural, or “pre-political” rights—ultimately *has* helped to open up a rhetorical space for marginalized groups to struggle for democratic inclusion and cultivate democratic citizenship, albeit of a form that ultimately constrains democracy’s transformative or radical potential.

Interest Group Citizenship and the Neoliberal Gay Subject

Recent lines of scholarly inquiry exploring the constitutive impact of representation and neoliberalism upon contemporary democratic citizenship point to a common conclusion: democratic citizens are not autonomous creatures of their own making. Though democracy’s “bedrock norm” suggests that representatives should respond to constituent demands that are relatively independent, these demands are, themselves, responsive to contextual cues and other forms of influence. The nation’s neoliberal turn has provided rationalities of governance that cast the self-reliant, enterprising subject as the democratic citizen *par excellence*; in large part, our nation’s elected representatives have helped to facilitate this shift not only through friendly relations with corporate leaders, but through crafted talk and recourse to a neoliberal lexicon of individual rights and responsibilities that has largely reverberated across the American public.

We must be cautious, not to overstate the role that elected officials and governmental agencies play in creating neoliberal citizens. As Barbara Cruikshank asserts,

¹⁹¹ Wolin 2008, 131.

¹⁹² Brown 2006, 692.

technologies of citizen self-governance “rarely emerge from the Congress.”¹⁹³ Rather, they emerge from a wide variety of discourses, agencies, and institutions that aid in the functioning of the neoliberal state. By taking an expansive view of political representation, we can better understand how numerous representative institutions have aided in the production of modern democratic citizens by privileging some democratic demands, interests, and practices while marginalizing others. Of particular significance are those organizations that operate not at the *center* of capitalist markets or the pluralist bargaining table, classically understood, but at the *periphery* or the *margins*.

In particular, I argue, the American advocacy system’s expansion to include historically-marginalized groups plays a vital role in this story. Much as social service organizations, welfare agencies, and homeless shelters have adapted to the neoliberal paradigm by providing disciplinary mechanisms designed to regulate individual conduct through processes of “neoliberal paternalism,” the American advocacy system has adapted to America’s rapidly neoliberalizing climate as well.¹⁹⁴ Indeed, the expansion of this system has provided a driving force behind changes to American citizenship and, for that matter, neoliberalism has helped to spur the proliferation of advocacy—a key point latent within many descriptions of neoliberalism’s rise over the past several decades. In short, the changing nature of the American state since the 1960s has largely *not* fostered increased inclusion *within* conventional electoral channels of representation; as a result, marginalized groups are left to compete within an advocacy marketplace operating *apart* from the

¹⁹³ Cruikshank 1996, 247.

¹⁹⁴ Neoliberal paternalism refers to the process whereby government agencies designed to help the poor encourage those “dependent” upon government aid to view their plight in terms of personal choice rather than as part of a collective or systemic problem to be addressed through political action. See Lyon-Callo 2004; Schram 2000; Soss, Fording, & Schram 2011.

legislature. Utilizing these categories of historical exclusion, groups can claim liberal rights as private citizens by asking not for a shared piece of collective rule, but for state promises of non-interference and protection that neoliberalism has privileged as primary collective goods.

Much of the rest of this dissertation will use the history of the LGBT movement to demonstrate how nationally-active advocacy organizations have played an integral role in generating LGBT citizens of the modern pressure system. This archetypal subject typically has a stable, partnered relationship, pays taxes, and stands ready to make good on the liberal-democratic rights to which the group strives, e.g., marriage, inclusion in the military, or protections within the private sphere.¹⁹⁵ Certainly, queer theorists have invoked this ideal-type for well over a decade. Characterizing these subjects as constituents of a “demobilized gay constituency...anchored in domesticity and consumption,” for example, critics often take a dismissive attitude toward the progress narrative of the expansion of LGBT rights.¹⁹⁶ At the same time, however, these critics must acknowledge that the conception of political power upon which neoliberalism is built provides a language and rhetoric that helps to *foster* group identity and subsequent demands for inclusion and equality. That is, neoliberalism has not simply impacted contemporary lesbian and gay identities; these identities were largely *built through neoliberalism*, as neoliberalism has helped to *facilitate* rather than hinder identity-based political claims by enhancing our ability to pursue political action through consumer choice and private association. That is, whereas scholars on the Left often view neoliberal power as merely a producer of marginalization, neoliberal governance also offers a rights-oriented lexicon and a tacit respect for—or at least moral agnosticism toward—

¹⁹⁵ Bryant 2008, 455.

¹⁹⁶ Duggan 2002, 179.

multiculturalism.¹⁹⁷ In effect, then, neoliberalism has offered disadvantaged groups—including, for my purposes here, LGBT people—a moral framework through which to engage in various struggles against their (typically illiberal) aggressors. In the process, this framework often obscures the connections *among* various identities by portraying them as separate and distinctive struggles that can and, perhaps, must be adjudicated *independently of one another* rather than as part of a coalitional overhaul of how citizens interact with and solve problems through their government.

The LGBT case, then, helps to demonstrate that advocacy organizations are both a product of a neoliberalizing political order—one that upholds lobbying, litigation, civil rights claims, and consumer clout as critical elements of “privatized” or “personalized” logics of citizenship—and a driving force behind the creation of the types of citizens who will frame demands that both take advantage of and legitimate this neoliberal ethos. To the extent that these organizations help to foster these forms of public action, advocacy organizations—contra the claims of critics on the left—are not depolicizing. On the contrary, they are *political* and *politicizing* precisely by acknowledging difference, engendering identification, and converting this identification into claims upon the state. (It should come as little surprise, then, that the most successful LGBT organizations incorporated as non-profit organizations in the 1970s and 1980s, as the New Left largely fragmented into a range of democratic demands and balkanized identities.) Arising and persisting as non-state actors, the positioning of organizations like the National Gay Task Force (NGTF) and the Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF) outside of existing democratic channels of government

¹⁹⁷ Neoliberalism’s moralizing variant, *neoconservatism*, was born largely as a response to capitalism’s erosion of traditional morality; it rejects “the vulgarity of mass culture” and encourages “family values” formulated in expressly illiberal terms, marking a divide within neoliberal praxis and something of a paradox for capitalism’s conservative proponents. Norton 2004b, 178. See also Brown 2006.

served to deepen the liberal conviction that civil society—cast as the non-political origin of state power—provides the true engine for social reform.¹⁹⁸

Social movement theory has helped to explain how histories of deprivation, exclusion, and criminalization marginalized various groups from processes of collective governance, thereby forcing unrepresented groups to organize *outside* of the political system, if at all.¹⁹⁹ Doug McAdam, for example, stated that while excluded groups have the latent capacity for political influence, “environmental constraints,” i.e. state repression, usually “inhibit mass action.”²⁰⁰ Within McAdam’s “political process model,” an excluded group’s successful entry into pluralist politics is contingent upon a favorable interplay of political opportunities, group consciousness, and responses from dominant groups that enable some demands to be met, or at least placed on the broader pluralist system’s “agenda.”²⁰¹

Once “professional” advocacy groups have been established, however, the advocacy realm is not merely a source of depoliticization, demobilization, and disconnect, as critics sometimes assert.²⁰² As a result, discussions of organized political advocacy receive short shrift within broader critiques of American neoliberalism, which often briefly reference the demobilizing tendencies and neoliberal rhetoric of contemporary advocacy groups.²⁰³

Adding to this critique, scholars occasionally note in particular the liberal rhetoric of rights

¹⁹⁸ See Harvey 2005, 78.

¹⁹⁹ See Gamson 1975; McAdam 1982.

²⁰⁰ McAdam 1982, 39.

²⁰¹ McAdam 1982, 58-59.

²⁰² Describing the nature of advocacy as a byproduct of today’s “downsized” democracy, Crenson and Ginsberg describe today’s lobbying groups as “increasingly disconnected from the mobilization of citizens.” Rather, they serve as outlets through which individual citizens can seek litigation, or as sites welcoming one’s paid membership. Crenson & Ginsberg 2002, 17.

²⁰³ Even Duggan, a chief proponent of the view (mentioned above) that critics of neoliberalism are often too quick to dismiss identity politics, notes that “lobbying and litigation organizations have nearly all moved away from constituency mobilization” in recent years, “pressed by the exigencies of fundraising for survival.” See Duggan 2003, 45.

that, once conferred, tend to dissolve political *groups* into depoliticized *individuals* and, moreover, have as much of a tendency to reinforce imbalanced power arrangements as attenuate them.²⁰⁴ Stating the matter in clear terms, Wolin asserted that neoliberalism has ensured that political opposition and dissent have “not been liquidated but rendered feckless” by the functioning of managed democracy—a charge that appears to summarize much of the post-pluralist literature on the topic.²⁰⁵ Interest groups, within this framework, simply create a barrier between “the people” and their congressional representatives and are not only “a powerful contributing factor to the depoliticization of the citizenry,” but are also characteristic of “antidemocracy.”²⁰⁶

But these organizations often do much more than provide antidemocratic buffers between marginalized groups and representatives of the administrative state. On the contrary, interest groups have largely *politicized* liberal governance by utilizing the liberal ethos to bolster the power the historically-marginalized groups *within the terms established by liberal democracy*. In this regard, they have helped to facilitate and strengthen several key functions of neoliberal citizenship, standardizing some forms of practice or protest while further silencing, marginalizing, or ignoring those deemed unrealistic or marginal. Professional advocacy, as I argued in Chapter 2, is very much an endeavor of possibilist political activity, with the parameters of political action largely conditioned by broader hegemonic logics of neoliberal governance. But dismissing these functions as *demobilizing*, *apolitical*, or *antidemocratic* not only ignores the pivotal *political* role that interest groups play within

²⁰⁴ As Wendy Brown notes, “The classic example is property rights” which “buttress the power of landlords,” though less obvious examples include the right to free speech, which “some feminists argue fortifies the ‘speech’ of pornographers that in turn ‘silences’ women.” (Of course, in the post-*Citizens United* era, the right to free speech has an even more obvious connection to the preservation of capitalist power relations.) See Brown 1997, 87.

²⁰⁵ Wolin 2008, 141.

²⁰⁶ Wolin 2008, 59.

neoliberal governance, but it gives short shrift to the manner in which citizens experience or interpret political action and democratic praxis within contemporary American politics.

As with elected officials, interest groups shape the contours of democratic citizenship through shrewd communications techniques designed to shape the preferences and demands that their constituents bring to the public sphere. Interest groups communicate and correspond with constituents in several important ways: they send out newsletters and emails, publish periodicals, encourage direct contact with elected officials, endorse candidates for public office, etc. In carrying out these functions, interest groups connect constituents with the administrators and experts presumed to hold authority over their lives. They encourage electoral outlets for reform. They cast fundraising as the highest form of political engagement. They encourage “outside lobbying,” mobilizing citizens outside of the policymaking community to contact or pressure public officials.²⁰⁷ And, not least of all, they define and police proper norms of group behavior and identification appropriate for achieving group interests. Moreover, by carrying out all of these critical functions, they encourage individuals to view themselves as political agents—even if the form of this agency falls short of most standards of participatory or republican democratic traditions. Thus, while not *participatory* in a manner romanticized by those on the Left who yearn for the large-scale (and occasionally antagonistic) social movements of generations past, these groups nevertheless encourage *participation* according to the standards of contemporary liberal politics.

They foster what I call an “interest group citizenship”—a term I introduce to express the most widespread and effective model for political claims-making and participation for

²⁰⁷ Kollman 1998, 1.

historically-disadvantaged groups today. The concept of interest group citizenship is largely built upon a neoliberal discourse that provides a framework for understanding politics as mediated by natural rights and a respect for naturalized difference. This framework both *diminishes* the space for understanding “the public” as a collective enterprise—as critics rightly assert—and *empowers* individuals to counteract the historical injustices that the public, i.e. the state, has historically waged upon marginalized groups. Interest group citizenship makes use of the most inclusive elements of neoliberalism’s framework for understanding politics, but in doing so, it (often unintentionally) affirms and upholds an understanding of American pluralism *not* as groups meaningfully sharing power over the collective direction of the nation, but as private actors *disavowing* public power. Indeed, much of the progress of the late 20th century is attributable largely to efficacy of this strategy; yet, our collective inability to confront inequality, intersectional marginalization, and other problems of contemporary democracy serve as an unfortunate byproduct.

In the historical account that follows, I examine how political advocacy has interacted with hegemonic governing procedures to produce forms of political action that have produced—or perhaps “normalized”—lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) citizens, bringing them in line with established institutions and techniques of neoliberal governance and forming them and mobilizing them as citizens according to the standards of liberal-democratic life. In doing so, I trace the discursive development of what has come to be known as the LGBT community, built largely by the actions of well-meaning advocates and organizers as they have confronted prohibitive policies, debilitating social stigmas, and fierce political opponents. As the following chapter will demonstrate, this community—in the American context, at least—emerged largely out of the conditions of

twentieth-century liberal capitalism, with political interests that quickly came to be shaped by terms of liberal-democratic inclusion, the strengthening of the “private” sphere, the expanding role of “experts” within American political life, and forms of in-group policing and marginalization as a method to demonstrate the community’s compatibility with prevailing standards of liberal-democratic citizenship.

Chapter IV

“Our Sunday Best”: Homophile Citizenship and Identity-Building Before Stonewall

Despite the widely shared narrative that the Stonewall riots of 1969 ignited a long-overdue political awakening, the emergence of lesbian and gay identities and, later, the establishment of a national LGBT lobby did not transpire spontaneously. Rather, a confluence of factors contributed to the slow development of a nationwide effort to shed prohibitive sexual laws and mores. Many scholars, for example, note the complex and multifaceted role that World War II played in building lesbian and gay communities.²⁰⁸ Others shed light on the rise of the American bureaucracy and the ways in which its systematized discrimination at once repressed “deviant” sexual lifestyles and fueled the emergence of identities built upon them.²⁰⁹ Some historians also note how Cold War-era public officials linked homosexuality with political deviance, moral depravity, and psychological weakness, generating heightened social awareness—along with amplified suspicion—of same-sex relationships.²¹⁰ By midcentury, each of these factors contributed to the emergence of the “homosexual” as a widely-recognizable discursive category within the American sexual landscape.

Importantly, however, these historical circumstances did not give rise to ready-made political identities; rather, those identities had to be built by lesbians and gay men themselves, particularly as the category of “homosexual” as it emerged midcentury was one that often carried unsupported assumptions of “unnatural” desire and abnormal psychological development. Recent scholarship has noted the particularly novel role of the “homophiles,” or the midcentury activists who recognized the positive value of

²⁰⁸ See, for example, Bérubé 1990; Burg 2002; Jackson 2004.

²⁰⁹ Canaday 2009.

²¹⁰ Johnson 2004.

homosexuality to their personal and sexual fulfillment and, for the first time in American history, organized on that basis.²¹¹ At a time when many individuals accepted the contemptuous interpretations bestowed upon them by medical, psychiatric, military, and political authorities, homophile organizations like the Mattachine Society, the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB), and One, Inc. struggled to break with the indignity and isolation associated with homosexuality.²¹²

Much of the literature that has recovered the homophile legacy has characterized the homophiles either as the conservative and ineffectual forerunners of gay liberation or as effective political subversives who, in Martin Meeker's words, "perfected the politics of irony and even the practice of camp."²¹³ More importantly, however, these historical accounts have unearthed a number of new questions about how issues of sexuality fit within the broader story of American pluralism as they both developed throughout the twentieth century. How did homophile mobilization condition the nature of political citizenship and group identity? What can these organizations—together with the political context in which they operated—tell us about the nature of democratic inclusion and political representation? And upon what *exclusions* was this inclusion built?

²¹¹ "Homophile" was, for these early organizations, a term of pride used in contradistinction with related terms "charged with feelings of derision, aversion, loathing, disgust or even hate." Quotation from March 1955 issue of *One Magazine*.

²¹² It is worth noting, here, George Chauncey's claim that "myths of isolation, invisibility, and internalization" pervade our historical understandings of pre-War homosexuality in America. Chauncey argued that many historians have exaggerated the degree to which those with same-sex erotic desires did *not* see themselves as part of a collective identity, arguing instead that "gay life," particularly in New York, "was less tolerated, less visible to outsiders, and more rigidly segregated in the second third of the century than the first." I must acknowledge, here, that Chauncey's account of the development of lesbian and gay social identities in pre-War New York opens up more questions than this chapter can ultimately answer. However, I will note that the homophiles' *own* language—and much of the evidence found among letters to the editor to homophile journals presented in this chapter—indicates that New York's vibrant gay subculture may have been somewhat unique in its relative openness. See Chauncey 1994, 2-9.

²¹³ See, respectively, D'Emilio 1998, 75-91; Meeker 2001, 81.

This chapter examines the impact of homophile advocacy upon lesbian and gay political identification in the years leading up to the nation's advocacy explosion. During this era, homophile organizations were largely unable to make political claims directly upon the state, as the markedly illiberal era of the 1950s brought not only social scorn, but overt state repression that largely prevented identification, organization, and direct advocacy. In short, lesbians and gay men were excluded from the pluralist system. Nevertheless, the homophile organizations served as significant, and perhaps indispensable, political representatives. I explore the historical record to reconstruct the standards of democratic citizenship that the homophiles elicited in the earliest phases of the American lesbian and gay movement. At face value, the basic narrative is unsurprising: The homophiles mobilized largely in accord with conventional authoritative understandings of American sexuality, refusing to engage in antagonistic rhetorical battles with those most responsible for the state's repressive sex laws. To frame the issue purely in strategic terms, however, masks the homophiles' role of *making*, rather than merely channeling, not only political claims, but political *claimants*,

Understanding interest group representation as a process of *mediation*—a concept that I have borrowed from scholars of group politics and built upon in preceding chapters—I argue that homophile representation involved a two-way relationship of communication, projecting an image of lesbians and gay men designed to act *both* upon outsiders' interpretations of the group *and* upon the group itself. As mediators, the homophiles advocated on behalf of lesbians and gay men to those who held influential positions of authority. In the complete absence of outwardly sympathetic *state* authorities at nearly every level of government, early targets included psychiatrists, researchers, and medical authorities.

Most Americans of the era viewed these authorities as better equipped than lesbians and gay men to speak to the “realities” of homosexuality, and in the midst of this era, the homophiles themselves typically sought to maintain a low profile. But, organizers also focused quite intently upon using these connections to *create* a homophile citizenship, that is, a nationwide constituency capable of, and willing to, project themselves as political claimants with unique interests deserving of inclusion within the American political system. In mobilizing this homophile citizenship, organizers sought to impart notions of American citizenship and political normality amongst burgeoning lesbian and gay communities in the decades leading up to the interest group “explosion.” While the neoliberal ethos would only later empower post-homophile groups within an emerging advocacy marketplace, it was the homophiles who laid much of the discursive groundwork regarding how homosexuality could fit into prevailing conceptions of American citizenship.

To make this case, I look to homophile publications including the *Mattachine Review*, *ONE Magazine*, *ONE Confidential*, and *The Ladder*. These publications served as the primary channels through which the homophile organizations communicated to a national audience, and they are of particular interest because of the innovative-yet-constrained ways that these organizations introduced positive attitudes about homosexuality amid a culture in which such activity was considered politically subversive, neurotic, and criminal. At least three primary aspects of the homophile mobilization stand out in the pages of these publications. First, this era witnessed the early phases of partnerships with scientific and professional authorities—connections that were likely as helpful to the movement’s growing public persona as they were behind the policymaking scenes. Second, homophile publications used this “expert” testimony to bolster the notion that lesbians and gay men were largely well-

adjusted and worthy citizens deserving of the same rights to sexual privacy awarded to heterosexual women and men. Third, in representing lesbians and gay men in such a manner, the homophiles expected their emerging constituency to metabolize the positive lifestyle that the homophile discourse projected.

American Sexuality and Development

Relative to other sexual practices that Americans have considered deviant, immoral, or criminal, homosexuality elicited relatively little public attention until the 20th century. This lack of widespread public scrutiny was not, of course, due to an absence of same-sex erotic practices, nor due to public indifference or tolerance of them. Rather, public anxieties over female chastity, adultery, illegitimacy, miscegenation, birth control, and prostitution were long viewed as more central to the preservation of sexual order. Dating back to the colonial period, American moralists placed homosexuality alongside most other “unnatural” or unacceptable sexual behaviors occurring outside of wedlock. They did not consider it as part of a personal condition or sexual identity, largely because opportunities for long-lasting homosexual relationships had not yet been widely established.

In broad terms, such opportunities would emerge concurrently with the changing nature of economic relations in the United States. Linking changes in sexualized social structures to the growth of American capitalism, sexual historians John D’Emilio and Estelle Freedman identified two primary ways in which the role of sex within American life changed as the country industrialized.²¹⁴ First, the very meaning of sex changed. Most simply put,

²¹⁴ It is useful to include D’Emilio and Freedman’s caveat, here: Though these trends have emerged since the colonial period of American history, “it is important to keep in mind that we are not trying to draw strict chronological boundaries, nor do we wish to suggest that a new sexual system replaces an older one at a given

the social significance of sex transformed from an act of reproduction and family-building within the strict confines of marriage to an expression of emotional intimacy and physical pleasure. This trend largely materialized alongside the rise of commercial growth—and with it, a middle class—in the 18th century. Whereas the family unit once followed “the patriarchal model of the ‘little commonwealth,’” the emerging market economy gave rise to separate economic spheres for men and women—the former in the public sphere structured around a paid labor force and the latter in the unpaid, domestic sphere.²¹⁵ Smaller family sizes accompanied these economic changes, aided by rising access to contraception and abortion. Furthermore, opportunities for sexual expression expanded, particularly as familial constraints gave way to a heightened individualist ethic that emphasized, among other things, marital choice and expectations of romantic love prior to marriage. Fueled by these changing economic conditions, urbanization altered social networks in a manner that allowed some individuals to “organize a personal life around their erotic/emotional attraction to [her/his] own sex.”²¹⁶ Though the restrictive labor market continued to tether women’s economic well-being to the institution of marriage, these changes nevertheless expanded sexual opportunities for women as well as men.²¹⁷ These new opportunities, of course, developed unevenly and in ways that produced profoundly different effects across race, class, and location.²¹⁸

moment. Rather, the process is one of layering, in which certain motifs dominate sexual discourse in a given era; later they remain influential but are joined and gradually overwhelmed when another set of concerns takes precedence.” See D’Emilio & Freedman 1997, xix.

²¹⁵ D’Emilio & Freedman 1997, 57.

²¹⁶ D’Emilio 1993, 470.

²¹⁷ Adam 1995, 9-11.

²¹⁸ For example, D’Emilio and Freedman note that with the decline of slavery, interracial relationships in the South became a source of taboo. While men who slept with African-American women escaped criticism as “black women...became sexually available to all white men” after emancipation, the sexual lives of Southern

Second, systems of sexual regulation also changed. Over time, the burden of moral enforcement shifted from the church to the state as “legal concerns replaced religious ones.”²¹⁹ Largely in response to the changing mores that moved sexuality outside of the family, various groups including women’s groups, vice crusaders, physicians, and social hygienists politicized American sexual life, demanding more state intervention in one way or another.²²⁰ By the Progressive Era, the United States had witnessed a “full blown sexual politics” where crusaders for sexual order “unabashedly sought state regulation to achieve their goals.”²²¹ Throughout the twentieth century during a time of rapid bureaucratic growth, the state vastly increased its capacity and willingness to respond to these various demands.²²² For example, condemnations of “sodomy”—referring broadly to non-procreative sexual penetration, whether homosexual or heterosexual—continued unabated, though what Americans previously viewed as sinful or immoral conduct (the domain of the church) also increasingly came to be viewed as criminal or deranged behavior (the domain of the state).

Together, these trends—the declining centrality of the family unit and the newfound role of the state in regulating sexuality—vastly expanded opportunities for the development of communities built upon sexual preferences, though *homosexuality*, in particular, remained

black men and white women continued to be policed, while black women faced newfound vulnerabilities to white male predators. See D’Emilio & Freedman 1997, 85-108.

²¹⁹ D’Emilio & Freedman 1997, 122.

²²⁰ It should be noted that various groups—notably the “free love” movement that rejected state involvement in personal matters—also mobilized to *remove* state regulations regarding sexuality. Though free lovers—who advocated not promiscuity, per se, but love, rather than marriage, as a precondition for sexual relationships—would have a profound influence over social mores, their often anarchist views about state non-interference were overwhelmed by the growth of sexuality as a public concern (and thus the state’s domain). See D’Emilio & Freedman 1997, 112-116, 140.

²²¹ D’Emilio & Freedman 1997, 204.

²²² See, in particular, Canaday 2009.

taboo well into the 20th century.²²³ Nevertheless, within the context of what D’Emilio described as the “momentous shift to industrial capitalism,” it became possible for lesbian and gay identities to emerge.²²⁴ Opportunities for long-lasting amorous relationships between members of the same sex grew (particularly among the white middle-class) and friendships resembling marital unions in their personal intensity—though often publicly assumed to be sexually innocent—became an accepted part of middle-class social life.²²⁵ These relationships carried varying degrees of sexual involvement and romantic intimacy, though they would later fall under a common label—“homosexual.” Intimate same-sex relationships (whether sexually involved or otherwise) faced greater scrutiny and spurred greater social curiosity and, oftentimes, scorn. As a result, many discontinued relationships that they feared would face social scorn. For those who *did* view their erotic interest in members of the same sex as a significant personal characteristic, however, subcultures of lesbians and gay men slowly began to emerge in America’s urban areas by the 1930s.²²⁶ In large part, these efforts relied upon a thriving, if underground, public sphere that included “gay bars,” literary societies, and other such gathering spots.

While D’Emilio and Freedman are unique in situating the emergence of homosexual identities within this long timeline of American sexual and economic history, a growing

²²³ In particular, the Shakers, Mormons, free lovers, and Oneidans took advantage of these new opportunities to deviate from dominant sexual norms. See D’Emilio and Freedman 1997, 109-121.

²²⁴ D’Emilio 1998, 11.

²²⁵ Of course, issues of race and class complicated this narrative. For example, D’Emilio and Freedman note that while middle-class women increasingly began to attend college and face new opportunities for romantic same-sex relationships, working-class women often adopted men’s clothing in order to “pass” as men in order to earn wages and pursue relationships with women. Thus, working-class women did not have the same social opportunities as those of the upper and middle classes. D’Emilio & Freedman 1997, 124-126.

²²⁶ D’Emilio 1998, 11-13.

number of historians have documented life in midcentury lesbian and gay subcultures.²²⁷

The Second World War figures prominently into this narrative. Wartime mobilization relaxed the peacetime social convention of committed, lifelong relationships forming in early adulthood—with members of the opposite sex, of course. It also placed thousands of men and women into closer and more intimate relationship with members of the same sex, whether in all-male combat battalions or in industries that, due to wartime labor demands, opened their doors to female workers. Certainly, the war did not dramatically alter the sex lives of many lesbians and gay men who had already “come out.”²²⁸ However, the war undoubtedly created a greater sexual self-awareness for those attracted to members of their own sex and, moreover, it enabled more people to come into contact with others who shared their sexual orientation. As Allan Bérubé explained, prior to the war:

young men and women who grew up feeling homosexual desires...were likely to lead isolated lives, not knowing anyone else like themselves, with no one to talk to about their feelings and often unsure of who or what they were. There were no publicly gay leaders or organizations to act on their behalf, no press to acknowledge their existence or the problems they faced, no discussions on homosexuality on the radio, and only a few tragic novels with characters who were called ‘sexual inverts.’²²⁹

The War, however, fostered a sense of sexual camaraderie that had not developed in peacetime conditions. Continued Bérubé:

²²⁷ See, for example, Adam 1995; Bullough 2002; Burg 2002; Canaday 2009; D’Emilio & Freedman 1997; D’Emilio 1998; Edsall 2003; Jackson 2004; Kunzel 2008; Meeker 2006; Sears 2006.

²²⁸ As Allan Bérubé notes, to “come out” in the 1930s meant to have one’s first homosexual encounter. By 1941, the meaning of “coming out” had changed slightly to mean that one had found gay friends and an accommodating “queer,” rather than “normal,” lifestyle. (These two terms were the most commonly used terms of distinction used both by gay people and the general public during the war years.) See Bérubé 1990.

²²⁹ Bérubé 1990, 6.

Gathered together in military camps, they often came to terms with their sexual desires, fell in love, made friends with other gay people, and began to name and talk about who they were. When they could get away from military bases, they discovered and contributed to the rich gay nightlife—parties, bars, and nightclubs—that flourished in the war-boom cities.²³⁰

Though some American cities already had a vibrant gay underground, the war undoubtedly helped to spread lesbian and gay communities beyond these isolated urban subcultures.²³¹ Of course, World War II was not the first time that war had temporarily rearranged conventional familial arrangements or brought men together in close quarters.²³² The War *did*, though, play an especially prominent role in developing a lesbian identity. The Women's Army Corps became “the almost quintessential lesbian institution,” as popular stereotypes of the era (including the frequent association of homosexuality with reversed gender roles) are credited with motivating a number of lesbians to enlist.²³³

World War II also spurred a massive bureaucratic response to these sexual trends. Bestowed with new authorities, the military's psychiatric establishment shifted attention from the sex act—specifically, the act of sodomy—to the personal condition seen to give rise to it. As the United States mobilized prior to the Second World War, more than 16 million American men registered for the draft, and Selective Service officials felt compelled to set qualifications barring various groups from serving. Psychiatric officials often

²³⁰ Bérubé 1990, 6.

²³¹ For examples of historical works exploring prewar urban gay culture, see Chauncey 1994; Faderman & Timmons 2006.

²³² Neither the Civil War nor the First World War spurred movements to expel or prosecute soldiers who engaged in covert acts of sodomy. It was not until 1919's “Newport Scandal” that the Armed Forces first investigated the issue, and sodomy prosecutions remained quite rare for over a decade thereafter. See Burg 2002, 191-221.

²³³ D'Emilio 1998, 27

interrogated recruits about their sexual inclinations under the assumption that gay men would make poor combat soldiers, threaten morale, and turn the armed forces into a breeding ground for radical social experimentation. (They also, of course, excluded women and, in the Marines and Army Corps, African-Americans, further demonstrating that only certain individuals were suitable for combat and, by extension, the distinctions and privileges awarded to those who engaged in it.) Restrictions on gay men in particular were erratically enforced, as the need for able-bodied soldiers clashed with the military's exclusionary policies. Some known lesbians and gay men served openly, while others were prosecuted, incarcerated, and dishonorably discharged.²³⁴ Upon the war's completion, the U.S. military established peacetime regulations that systematized the hostile treatment that lesbians and gay men faced only sporadically during the war. The bureaucracy's role in interpreting and regulating sexuality did not disappear.

In sum, economic changes, wartime conditions, and a heightened state capacity for social intervention initiated new opportunities for same-sex eroticism, which in turn led to the categorization of "the homosexual" as a particular "type" of individual. Categorization, and the common feelings of marginalization that accompanied it, however, did not in and of themselves establish an *identity*, particularly as feelings of marginality and stigmatization fostered a sense of shame and repudiation of homosexuality as an integral part of one's character. Identification, rather, arose through association and, in turn, the shaping of appropriate labels, decisions, and ideas about collective purpose.

Establishing a Homophile Citizenship

²³⁴ Burg 2002. 203-249.

As social theorist Kwame Appiah states, “Once labels are applied to people, ideas about people who fit the label come to have social and psychological effects. In particular, these ideas shape the ways people conceive of themselves and their projects.” While these labels are often imposed externally and have a profound impact on how individuals make decisions about how to conduct their lives, *identification* typically involves a “process through which individuals intentionally shape their projects” through reference to these labels of grouphood.²³⁵ As the label “homosexual” spread as an *ascriptive* label, though, many, perhaps most, Americans who engaged in same-sex sex or romantic relationships resisted identifying as members of a coherent social group. For those who *did* identify as homosexual, the label often—though not always—referenced an obstacle to one’s personal fulfillment, a source of shame, or a devious pleasure that one fulfilled only in secret. Prior to their insertion into the advocacy system, though, homophile advocates had to construct a discourse of grouphood positing a national constituency capable of making claims upon the state. With policymakers and other state authorities unwilling to accept them as political claimants and with homophile resources remaining scant, homophile leaders needed help from sympathetic, and ostensibly non-political, authorities. In their capacity as mediators, then, the homophiles sought to work upon the boundaries and meanings of grouphood both outwardly, toward external authorities, and inwardly, toward potential identifiers to impart a burgeoning homophile citizenship.

Such modern efforts to spur positive identification among and about lesbians and gay men began at least a generation prior to the American homophiles’ emergence in the

²³⁵ Appiah 2001, 322.

1950s—in Europe in the wake of the First World War.²³⁶ Many young people—including British and Russian students whose parents and siblings had just engaged Germany in combat—migrated to German cities where authorities rarely enforced prohibitions against homosexuality. Berlin, the hub of the world’s most developed homosexual subculture, had upwards of one hundred or more bars, cafes, restaurants, and dance halls catering to lesbian and gay clientele.²³⁷ Weimar Germany accordingly became the center of an international homosexual emancipation movement, which included the first modern homosexual publication, *Der Eigene*, and the world’s first modern homosexual advocacy organization, the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee.²³⁸ The Third Reich, of course, eradicated the movement and destroyed many of its record; significantly, state-sponsored repression of lesbian and gay German citizens continued long after the end of Nazi rule.

Across the Atlantic, Alfred Kinsey would revive the spirit of the German movement, approaching homosexuality (and homosexual advocacy) from a detached, scientific perspective. The release of Kinsey’s findings, homophile activists would later assert,

²³⁶ According to historian Nicholas Edsall, after the First World War many university-aged men engaged in homosexual relationships as part of a conscious revolt against conventional notions of masculinity that were thought to have led Europe to war. In this regard, he asserts, homosexuality in the inter-war era became an instrument of both pleasure and rebellion in much the same way that Vietnam-era college students used marijuana or LSD. Though many of these students would later lead predominantly heterosexual lives, many others viewed homosexuality as a vital part of their long-term sexual fulfillment. See Edsall 2003, 195-196.

²³⁷ Edsall 2003, 198.

²³⁸ Under the stewardship of Magnus Hirschfeld, the medical doctor and Jewish socialist considered the “unrivaled leader” of Germany’s homosexual emancipation movement, the Committee petitioned against the rarely-enforced Paragraph 175—amended and more strictly enforced during Nazi rule—which criminalized sexual relationships between males. Paragraph 175, adopted on May 15, 1871, criminalized sexual relationships between males and also prohibited bestiality. (Efforts to punish lesbian acts under the same code did not materialize, nor did efforts from the Left— notably from Adolf Brand and Magnus Hirschfeld — to end the prohibitions outright.) Notably, Hirschfeld also established the Institut fuer Sexual-Wiessenschaft (Institute of Sex Science) in Berlin in 1919, which offered marriage counseling, treatment for venereal diseases, sex education programs, and psychiatric treatment; he convened the first Congress for Sexual Reform in 1921; he also helped to create the World League for Sexual Reform; and, by 1930, he embarked on a world tour, visiting many European nations, the United States, and several non-Western countries. See Sears 2006, 46; Steakley 1975, 91.

provided “the first crack in the door to the beginning of the sexual freedom movement.”²³⁹ Kinsey—a man who had built his professional reputation by studying the gall wasp—became a household name after publishing two volumes of research compiled from interviews with more than 10,000 subjects. Kinsey’s findings captivated an American public that, nevertheless, remained reticent to talk about sex openly.²⁴⁰ Garnering a great deal of media attention, Kinsey parted with the psychoanalytic and medical authorities of his era by dispassionately presenting same-sex eroticism as natural and widespread. In fact, Kinsey’s wartime surveys revealed that at least 650,000 and as many as 1.6 million servicemen were likely gay—a figure that does not take into account the number of lesbians also serving.²⁴¹ Kinsey became a strong advocate for the easing of prohibitive sex laws, though many observers interpreted his findings to support their view that lesbians and gay men posed a growing threat to American life due to their pervasiveness throughout American society.

Kinsey’s scientific findings, though, also spoke to the many gay Americans who were beginning to feel a sense of grouphood and kinship in the new, postwar era.²⁴² In the United States, though lesbian and gay subcultures existed in most major cities, opportunities for organizing these social networks into political communities were significantly more scant than they had been in Germany, particularly as the Red Scares following both World Wars led to the persecution of those engaging in “subversive” activities. Though wartime conditions briefly spurred new sexual opportunities, efforts to restore prewar social order yielded concerted efforts to police homosexuality, with the McCarthyism-inspired “Lavender

²³⁹ Quotation from former Mattachine leader Hal Call from an interview conducted May 1998-July 1999. Quoted in Sears 2006, 38. It is also worth noting that Mattachine founder Harry Hay claimed that a 1948 group discussion of Kinsey’s studies ultimately give rise to the formation of the Mattachine Foundation. See Timmons 1990, 134.

²⁴⁰ See Kinsey, et. al. 1948; Kinsey, et. al. 1953).

²⁴¹ Burg 2002, 226.

²⁴² D’Emilio 1998, 37.

Scare” providing the most visible manifestation of these efforts.²⁴³ During the postwar era, in fact, lesbians and gay men faced similar—and in many ways greater—social and governmental wrath as did communists. As many as 5,000 suspected lesbians and gay men—labeled “security risks” despite no evidence that *any* homosexuals were blackmailed into revealing state secrets—lost their jobs with the federal government, often leading to a lifetime of joblessness, stigma, and despair.²⁴⁴

The Lavender Scare, though, extended far beyond the reach of the federal government. Law enforcement in major cities began to aggressively police sexual vice.²⁴⁵ Hollywood also placed tighter restrictions upon portrayals of American life and values, including upon depictions of gender and sexuality. Though popular media rarely discussed homosexuality, the topic occasionally arose in reference to psychological weakness and the perceived need to remove “perverts” from government posts.

Against this backdrop of overt state repression, two unsurprising-yet-noteworthy features of postwar homosexual political advocacy stand out: First, attempts to organize were both rare and, typically, unsuccessful. A number of organizations were stillborn in the immediate aftermath of World War II, including the Chicago Society for Human Rights, the Sons of Hamidy, the Veterans Benevolent Association, the Knights of the Clocks, and Bachelors for Wallace. The lesbian underground magazine *Vive Versa*, penned by Edith

²⁴³ As David Johnson quite rightly notes: “To attribute the purges to McCarthy serves to marginalize them historically. It suggests that they were the product of a uniquely unscrupulous demagogue, did not enjoy widespread support, and were not part of mainstream conservatism or the Republican Party... It ignores how the purges predated McCarthy, became institutionalized within the federal loyalty/security system, and continued to be standard government policy until the 1970s.” Johnson 2004, 4.

²⁴⁴ Johnson 2004, 10.

²⁴⁵ As historians Lillian Faderman and Stuart Timmons note, though vice squads often targeted nightspots catering to gay men, “lesbian nightclubs were still relatively safe” in some urban areas, as “the phenomenon of the lesbian was not yet taken very seriously.” After the war, this scenario changed even as gay men continued to face the much harsher wrath of overzealous police forces. See Faderman & Timmons 2006, 89.

Edge under the pseudonym Lisa Ben, debuted in June 1947 and found slightly more success, though it only survived nine issues.²⁴⁶ Second, and relatedly, the most successful efforts advocating for the liberalization of sex laws—those like Kinsey, for example—positioned their advocacy as standing outside of politics. Americans interested in obtaining sympathetic coverage of homosexuality in the immediate post-War years turned to these “official” sources invoking claims of expertise, or to first-hand sociological accounts like Donald Webster Cory’s *The Homosexual in America*.²⁴⁷ Cory’s 1951 book boldly declared the homosexual an “unrecognized minority.”²⁴⁸ Largely anticipating the need for homosexuals to organize in order to impart a sense of group consciousness, Cory stated:

[T]he homosexuals are a minority group, consisting of large numbers of people who belong, participate, and are constantly aware of something that binds them to others and separates them from the larger stream of life; yet a group without a spokesman, without a leader, without a publication, without an organization, without a philosophy of life, without an accepted justification for its own existence.²⁴⁹

In other words, common experiences, feelings, and marginalization were not enough to foster a distinct political identity, nor enough to position the group as an accepted claim-maker at the pluralist bargaining table.

²⁴⁶ Sears 2006, 114-115; Gallo 2006, xxxiii.

²⁴⁷ “Donald Webster Cory” was the pseudonym for Edward Sagarin, a Jewish American of Russian descent. To avoid confusion, I will continue to reference Sagarin by his pen name in the text of this chapter. I should note, as well, that although Sagarin promoted the decriminalization of same-sex sex, he continued to view lesbians and gay men as psychologically disturbed and would criticize the pro-gay research of psychologists and social scientists like Evelyn Hooker (noted below).

²⁴⁸ Cory presented his book as a first-hand narrative intended to promote a greater scientific understanding of deviant sex behavior and the social attitudes that suppress and shame it. Further bolstering its scientific appeal, noted sexologist Albert Ellis penned its introduction.

²⁴⁹ Cory 1951, 6.

Southern California played a particularly significant role in the slow transition toward an interest group model of political action, and, eventually, an interest group citizenship. In particular, it was in Los Angeles that the homophile first began to successfully proclaim same-sex desire as a politically relevant basis for grouphood and, acting strategically within the narrow opportunities made available to them, construct a discourse of the homophile identity that channeled a nationwide constituency adhering to the promises and possibilities of American citizenship.²⁵⁰ This process began, as much of social movement theory would suggest, with establishing a collective identity to use as a vehicle for political inclusion.²⁵¹

As would occur nearly a generation later after Stonewall, however, the nation's first homophile organization emerged from fairly transgressive origins. Communist Party members Harry Hay, Chuck Rowland, and Bob Hull formed the Mattachine Foundation in Los Angeles in 1950.²⁵² (The obscure name "Mattachine" referenced the all-male group of medieval masked jesters who used satire to speak truth to the king when nobody else dared.) The Mattachine Foundation borrowed from the Communists a secretive membership structure; from the Freemasons, they adopted a series of "orders," with the founding

²⁵⁰ Interestingly, California's place within lesbian and gay history also has symbolic roots. Prior to European colonization, several of the region's Native populations recognized their community's gendered and sexual diversity and granted homosexuals and other gender non-conformists an honorable place within their cultures. Same-sex marriage, cross-dressing, and sexual fluidity were all features of American Indian life that shocked their European invaders. Perhaps unrelatedly, Hernán Cortez and his Spanish settlers would later name the territory "California," likely deriving from a now-forgotten fifteenth-century tale about a mythical island inhabited by Queen Calafia and her subjects, all of whom were masculine Amazonian women. See Faderman & Timmons 2006, 10-14.

²⁵¹ As Francesca Polletta and James Jasper note, social movement theorists' focus on collective identity arose from the perceived limitations of the resource mobilization and political process models of social movement theory which, critics claimed, "presumed an already-existing collective actor able to recognize the opening of political opportunities and to mobilize indigenous resources for political purposes." See Polletta & Jasper 2001, 286.

²⁵² Beginning with the publication of D'Emilio's *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities* in 1983, historians have developed a renewed interest in 1950s homophile organizing, with a particularly striking upswing in scholarly attention during the 2000s. For a sampling of this work that follows D'Emilio in discussing or debating issues related to homophile organizing, see, e.g., Charles 2010; Gallo 2006; Hall 2010; Meeker 2001; Sears 2006; Timmons 1990.

members serving as members of the anonymous “Fifth Order.” Ratified in July of 1951, the new organization’s “Missions and Purposes” emphasized three objectives: unification of homosexuals, education about homosexuality, and leading “the whole mass of social deviates” to achieve these aims—seemingly a call to unify the homophile message with a broader Leftist project. (Such a unification did not materialize, but it indicated that leaders were at least thinking beyond the confines of sexuality in their desire for reform.) The document also called for political action and the emergence of “a highly ethical homosexual culture.”²⁵³

Beginning in 1951, the organization began to hold semipublic discussions and same-sex dances, drawing upwards of three hundred men and a significantly smaller number of women.²⁵⁴ By the end of 1952, perhaps as many as 5,000 Californians had participated in Mattachine-sponsored activities.²⁵⁵ In part, scholars attribute this growth to Mattachine’s role in the first gay civil rights victory in which charges of “lewd and dissolute conduct” against Dale Jennings, a Mattachine member and later editor of *ONE*, were dismissed.²⁵⁶ (Mattachine, for its part, raised money for Jennings’ defense and publicized his case—and its own organization—by distributing flyers in popular gay venues around Los Angeles.)

With its covert growth came concerns about the organization’s secretive leadership structure and alleged connection to the Communist Party; with this concern came fears of Red-baiting and the potential for state retaliation. These anxieties culminated in the ousting of Hay and his cofounders at the group’s May 1953 convention. After quarrelsome debate,

²⁵³ Timmons 1990, 154.

²⁵⁴ See McGarry & Wasserman 1998, 144.

²⁵⁵ Hall 2010, 539.

²⁵⁶ As Harry Hay’s biographer Stuart Timmons states, the practice of police entrapment (of which Jennings was a victim) “was a grim standard in the fifties” that amounted to “a financial and emotional lynching” of accused gay men. It would become among the first major issues against which the homophiles mobilized. See Timmons 1990, 164.

the organization transferred control to Hal Call, Don Lucas, and others comprising the organization's "conservative" wing.²⁵⁷ Despite this contentious transfer of power and the contemporary narrative that Call's faction took Mattachine in drastically new directions, the general goals and purposes of Mattachine—again, of education, unification, and leadership—largely remained intact. However, *perceptions* of these objectives changed, as leadership no longer viewed their group as "subversive" or part of a larger, underground, or revolutionary project of the American Left. While these differences were partially ideological, they were also strategic. Rather than work to develop a distinctly homophile minority culture, Call sought to establish connections with the political and cultural power-brokers of the day, including leaders of professional organizations, law enforcement, the psychiatric establishment, and others bearing influence within "mainstream" society. The new Mattachine Society moved its operations to San Francisco. The homophiles' so-called "retreat to respectability" had begun.²⁵⁸

Unaware of these efforts, four female couples—including most notably Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin—formed the Daughters of Bilitis (pronounced "Bill-EE-tis") in October 1955. (The DOB named their organization after the Pierre Louys poem *Songs of Bilitis*, which celebrated lesbian love; DOB members presumed that only those "in the life" would know what "Bilitis" referenced, so the term both signaled to potential members and mitigated the potential retribution from authorities.) Though later mischaracterized as a "ladies auxiliary" of Mattachine by the FBI, the DOB began in San Francisco as a private social club, and an

²⁵⁷ For a detailed account of the proceedings of this contentious meeting, see Sears 2006, 179-190; Timmons 1990, 172-180.

²⁵⁸ The phrase "retreat to respectability" comes originally from D'Emilio, though many scholars have made frequent reference to this phrase to describe the homophiles' shift from rebellious beginnings to a more conservative leadership structure led, most notably, by Hal Call. See D'Emilio 1998, 75-91.

alternative to the city's frequently-raided lesbian and gay nightspots. To protect themselves against potential criminal charges, the DOB (like the Mattachine Society) admitted only members over twenty-one. They also noted that any new member must be a "Gay girl of good moral character."²⁵⁹ As DOB learned more about the Mattachine Society, they grew impressed with Mattachine's careful approach to organizing, though DOB members were initially divided about whether to publicize their own organization; they were also split about whether to work with other groups within the blossoming homophile movement. In June of 1956, core members decided on an "all-out publicity campaign," including the publishing of a newsletter and the issuing of a public Statement of Purpose.²⁶⁰ The Daughters' Statement positioned the new organization—much like Mattachine—as an organization devoted to "education of the variant," education of the public at large, "participation in research projects...directed towards further knowledge of the homosexual," and lobbying to change laws criminalizing homosexuality.²⁶¹

With enthusiasm for these organizations' objectives dispersed literally across the world, both Mattachine and DOB incorporated and expanded, establishing chapters in several major American cities.²⁶² Like the post-Hay Mattachine Society, the DOB embraced an "expert" approach to organizing, emphasizing social science over politics as the proper

²⁵⁹ Gallo 2006, 4.

²⁶⁰ The decision to join the homophile movement was not without controversy, as a number of lesbian women viewed sodomy laws as a problem particular to gay men. Some Daughters feared that aiding the male homophiles would serve to mute the voice of lesbians—a concern that did not recede in future organizing efforts. However, this sentiment also carried the assumption that gay males largely fueled antigay sentiment. Recalled Billye Talmadge, "There was a lot of animosity and resentment over the fact that it was the gay guys who were creating such havoc with the police—the raids, the indiscriminate sex, their bathroom habits, and everything else." Quote taken from Gallo 2006, 16.

²⁶¹ The Daughters' statement of purpose is reprinted in Gallo 2006, 11.

²⁶² Mattachine for a time had chapters in Chicago, Boston, Denver, New York, Philadelphia and Washington, DC. Mattachine would later drop its affiliations with its local chapters in order to divert its scarce resources to publishing and casework in the San Francisco area.

way to delineate homosexuality as a category and as an identity. Prejudice and discrimination, according to this view, were best overcome through sympathetic, scientifically-generated research; this scientific research could then provide a generative force to spur political action. This “strategy of positive representation,” or the tactical portrayal of lesbians as “normal human beings who had families, jobs, went to school, fell in love, suffered heartbreaks, and survived,” was particularly important given the newfound role of research experts within the post-war bureaucracy; if scientific authorities could confirm this sense of social “normality,” this validation could potentially go a long way toward establishing the homophiles as worthy political claimants as well.²⁶³ Though this representational strategy did not proceed with unanimous support, it gained favor by the movement’s most successful organizers.²⁶⁴

The Rise of Homophile Mass Communication

Importantly—and central to the argument that the homophile organizations engaged in a mediating relationship with their desired constituents—the strategy of positive representation did not only serve as an *outward* projection aimed at authorities who had begun to devote a renewed attention to homosexuality; this strategy also pointed *inward*. In contesting the discursive territory established by cultural or political authorities, those who

²⁶³ Phrase borrowed from Gallo 2006, 70.

²⁶⁴ The eagerness with which these organizations engaged in this allegedly “conservative” brand of representation was not, of course, constant across each organization. For example, though One, Inc. and Mattachine frequently stated that their objectives were similar to one another, they were organizationally distinct and exuded slight differences in tone. Distinguishing public perceptions of the three organizations, Hal Call stated in a speech at the 9th Annual Mattachine Society Conference that Mattachine was “viewed as conservative, bearably constructive, but dull in most things,” whereas ONE was “held to be flamboyant, loud, and if anything, dangerous.” (Call did not comment on One, Inc.’s *Quarterly* publication, which reflected a tone quite similar to Mattachine in its scholarly and perhaps bland tone.) Perhaps unfairly, he held that DOB was “taken to be tolerably sufferable” and “relatively harmless” because of their all-female membership. See “A Decade of Progress in the Homophile Movement,” *Mattachine Review* (Oct. 1962), 11-20.

position themselves as advocates may offer new ways of thinking about a group's social positioning, and the sets of political interests or characteristics that come attached to it. In turn, those who are the target of these acts of representation may live out or perform these new interpretations, whether as part of a broader strategy or merely because these new interpretations sediment as "natural." Here again, social movement scholarship helps to explain this dynamic. According to Polletta and Jasper, movements "transform cultural representations, social norms—how groups see themselves and are seen by others."²⁶⁵ The very emergence of such an identity is, at least in part, a success for a movement's organizers. In perhaps no movement is this claim more apparent than in the lesbian and gay movement, where homophile communication gradually grew into an effort to mobilize a homophile citizenry that would affirm homosexuality as a positive—and positively American—trait.

These communications efforts slowly grew in the 1950s, as the homophiles aimed to reach a broader audience than those found in the meeting halls, convention centers, and living rooms where members often convened. After taking part in a discussion group about discreditable police entrapment techniques in October of 1952, several Mattachine attendees decided to form a publication through which they could connect with others sharing their vulnerability to police entrapment schemes.²⁶⁶ Within only a few months, these Mattachine members had created *ONE*, a monthly magazine named for common gay jargon within the military ("He's one"), and the Thomas Carlyle quotation, "The mystic bond of brotherhood makes all men one." With Mattachine still a secret organization under Hay's stewardship,

²⁶⁵ Polletta & Jasper 2001, 284.

²⁶⁶ Most notably, this group included Martin Block, Dale Jennings, Don Slater, W. Dorr Legg, and Guy Rousseau. See Sears 2006, 167.

ONE allowed members to participate openly and democratically.²⁶⁷ (One, Inc. and the Mattachine Society would come to have a rocky relationship throughout the ensuing years, even after Mattachine's transfer of power from Hay to Call.) Dale Jennings, recently cleared of lewd conduct charges in one of the nation's first gay civil rights cases, became the magazine's first editor. In *ONE*'s inaugural issue, published in January of 1953, the new magazine described itself as "a non-profit corporation dedicated to the service of humanity."²⁶⁸ In its next issue a month later, *ONE* clarified its purpose, setting a tone that both the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis would echo in the following years:

ONE is a non-profit corporation formed to publish a magazine dealing primarily with homosexuality from the scientific, historical and critical point of view...to sponsor educational programs, lectures and concerts for the aid and benefit of social variants and to promote among the general public an interest, knowledge and understanding of the problems of variation...to sponsor research and promote the integration into society of such person whose behavior and inclinations vary from the current moral and social standards.²⁶⁹

The new magazine—the first enduring publication of its kind—offered readers pragmatic advice columns (e.g. "Your Rights in Case of Arrest"), opinion columns and editorials, news updates (which would later become the popular "Tangents" column), book reviews, fiction, poetry, and other cultural item of interest. Beginning with a 1954 article titled "The Mystery of Walt Whitman," *ONE* also opened the door for what would become

²⁶⁷ Stated W. Dorr Legg in reference to *ONE*'s connection to Mattachine: "I get furious with people who say that *ONE* was a break from Mattachine, that it was an outgrowth of Mattachine. It was nothing of the kind...*ONE* was totally spontaneous...The original founders of the Mattachine were Marxists and they had the insane concept that they were going to marry Marxism and homosexuality." Quoted in Sears 2006, 150-151.

²⁶⁸ *ONE* (January 1953).

²⁶⁹ *ONE* (February 1953), 13.

another popular topic of interest in homophile publications over the next decade, that is, exposés on influential homosexual cultural and historical figures.²⁷⁰ Within two years, *ONE* had well over a thousand subscribers (and perhaps as many as five thousand according to some accounts), and the magazine was available at newsstands in nearly a dozen major North American cities and several European cities.²⁷¹ Giving voice to a variety of perspectives within the growing homophile community, early editions of *ONE* included controversial articles about homosexuality and bisexuality, critical responses to psychiatric efforts to “cure” homosexuals, and debates about whether homosexuals are naturally “different” or rebellious. *ONE* also secured one of the movement’s most important early legal victories after postal authorities seized the October 1954 issue for being “obscene, lewd, lascivious and filthy.”²⁷²

For the first time, then, lesbians and gay men from diverse locales were explicitly the targets of pro-gay literature aimed at forming in readers’ minds a conception of their group as just that—a *group* with a common past, common experiences, common desires, and a common life. Indeed, this message was an essential part of the process of representation, even if this message was not resonating with outside authorities or policymakers. (That process would come only later.) Thus, while gay communities had long developed in various locales (and in mostly urban areas), *ONE* allowed readers to read and share what many

²⁷⁰ *ONE* Magazine (July 1954). In particular, Whitman, Oscar Wilde, and Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky would be featured prominently in a number of stories printed in homophile journals.

²⁷¹ Sears 2006, 175; McGarry & Wasserman 1998, 145. In an advertisement asking “Where Can You Buy *ONE*?” the group advertised the magazine’s availability in Mexico City, New York City, Buffalo, Chicago, Cleveland, Minneapolis, Berkeley, Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, and Hamburg. See *ONE* (January 1955).

²⁷² Though at no point did the paper publish erotic images, its apparent advocacy of tolerance toward homosexuality was enough for postal authorities to act. After *ONE* lost its cases at the federal district and appellate courts, the Supreme Court overturned the lower courts’ decisions in January of 1958. The landmark ruling—the first Supreme Court case involving homosexuality—ensured that *ONE* and future homosexual publications could freely distribute their product through the mail.

people had already experienced—that lesbians and gay men were spread across the country, and that various legal barriers, state intimidation, and the classification of homosexuality as a sexual perversion forced their community deeply underground. To combat these injustices, ONE would provide the first widespread, published efforts to galvanize a homophile citizenry.

Though publishing remained its primary goal, *ONE* soon began to function as an independent homophile advocacy organization on par with the Mattachine Society.²⁷³ It also served as a slightly more carefree alternative to the Mattachine Society’s more professional character. Viewing *ONE* as something of a competitor, Mattachine quickly began work on publishing a periodical “entirely of a serious nature.”²⁷⁴ To do so, Hal Call and six others created the Pan-Graphic Press in November 1954. In January 1955, more than a year after Mattachine had ousted Hay and two years after *ONE* began its operations, the Mattachine Society published its first edition of the *Mattachine Review*.²⁷⁵ The cover of the first edition displayed an engraving at the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, DC, which quoted a letter Jefferson penned to historian Samuel Kercheval:

I am not an advocate for frequent changes in laws and constitutions. But laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths discovered and manners and opinions change, with the chance of

²⁷³ Operating out of two rented rooms in a deteriorating neighborhood in downtown Los Angeles, *ONE* members often referred to themselves as “the Corporation”—a name that provided “a ‘capitalist’ mask that was calculated to put to rest the putative connections between Communists and the homophiles.” See Faderman & Timmons 2006, 116.

²⁷⁴ Hal Call, quoted in Sears 2006, 297.

²⁷⁵ The *Review* was published bi-monthly during its first year, and monthly beginning in January, 1956. The Mattachine Society ceased publication of the *Review* entirely in the summer of 1966 after approximately two years of only sporadic publication.

circumstances, institutions must advance, also to keep pace with the times. We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy as civilized society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors.

In quoting this seemingly anti-revolutionary Jefferson—the Jefferson of gradual progress rather than revolution—the *Mattachine Review* introduced itself to the world as organizers seeking cautious reform. In this inaugural issue, editors described the publication’s purpose as that of “aiding research, conducting projects of education, and [the] publication of information which will broaden understanding of...[sexual] behavior for the benefit of the American public.”²⁷⁶ Undoubtedly due to fear of legal retaliation and to the perceived need to confront the issue of homosexuality from a position of sympathetic neutrality, the *Review* asserted time and again that the Mattachine Society was *not* an “organization of homosexuals,” nor was it meant to become “a political pressure group of any sort.” Rather, Mattachine sought “the integration of the homosexual as a responsible and acceptable citizen in the Community.” Furthermore, the *Review* asserted, Mattachine refused to “tolerate use of itself or its name for any subversive political activity or reprehensible conduct.”²⁷⁷

Despite *ONE*’s efforts to reflect a broad point of view, then, Mattachine more directly disentangled homosexuality from social deviance, focusing on such topics as employment discrimination, sodomy law reform, and treatment for sex offenders; further, they targeted an educated audience consisting of both homosexuals of a high socioeconomic status and cultural authorities. Previewing the work that advocacy organizations would engage in two decades later, political and cultural constraints made it most workable for the

²⁷⁶ *Mattachine Review* (January-February 1955), 27.

²⁷⁷ *Mattachine Review* (January-February 1955), 27.

Mattachine Society to grow its organization by appealing to available channels of American citizenship. Still in an age just prior to the explosion of the advocacy system, this brand of mobilization did not include a politicizing call for social action; it called for reinterpretations of homosexuality outside and apart from the political process. It also, however, privileged those citizens, namely, middle- and high-income white American men, who were best positioned to work with those authorities.²⁷⁸

This state of affairs did not mean that lesbian women were not engaging in a struggle for representation of their own. This battle did, however, largely develop separately from *ONE* and the Mattachine Society. About a year after the first edition of the *Mattachine Review* and 5 ½ years after the formation of the Daughters of Bilitis, the DOB would launch the third homophile publication, *The Ladder*. In the first edition of the new publication, Del Martin declared the periodical part of a “nationwide movement to bring understanding to and about homosexual minority,” emphasizing the need to add a feminine voice to a “mutual problem.”²⁷⁹ Much like the other two homophile publications already in circulation, *The Ladder* featured commentary from a relatively small number of regular, committed contributors. Conveying a strikingly similar tone and parallel objectives with the *Mattachine Review*, *The Ladder* emphasized education and understanding first and foremost; the

²⁷⁸ Historians have noted similar dynamics involved in African-American advocacy in the early decades of the 20th century. For example, Touré Reed notes that the National Urban League (NUL) faced charges that it was “out of touch” because of the group’s “emphasis on respectability and moderation” and its deference to scholars in the social sciences (and particularly the “Chicago School”). However, Reed argues, the Urban league was in “no position to challenge the political economic structures of inequality.” Thus, their perceived failures as advocates should be viewed in context, and they should be credited for using “the intellectual and institutional tools at their disposal both to understand their world and to try to create a more democratic society.” See Reed 2008, 191-196.

²⁷⁹ *The Ladder* (Oct. 1956), 6.

Daughters viewed *The Ladder* as a vehicle through which to define lesbianism and replace negative stereotypes demonizing them as sexual predators with a positive public image.²⁸⁰

Importantly, the process of representation-as-mediation does not entail two mutually-exclusive functions—one directed outward and the other directed inward. Rather, these two functions shape one another in often dynamic ways. In the homophile case, homophile appeals to cultural authorities—which minimized the organizations’ appearance of a political or partisan bent—were designed in part to legitimize and bolster the organizations’ positioning with respect to their own constituents. In other words, in a severely prohibitive era for political advocates speaking out on issues of sexuality, the homophiles used external authorities as part of a more comprehensive effort to reach out to their own constituents and position themselves as authorities in their own right.

Contemporary portrayals of the homophiles as cautious communicators of a conservative political message, then, do not provide a complete picture of the nuanced ways by which homophile leaders followed the opportunity structures available to them to enact a new, more hospitable *outward* representation of their constituency. At least three aspects of the homophile movement’s allegedly conservative brand of political representation stand out in the pages of its publications. First, this era witnessed the early phases of partnerships with scientific and professional authorities—connections that were likely as helpful to the movement’s self-image as they were behind the policymaking scenes. Second, the publications used this “expert” testimony to bolster the notion that lesbians and gay men

²⁸⁰ Some have noted that *The Ladder* often used the inherited, self-defeating lexicon that many used to demonized lesbians. As Kay Lahusen, a New York DOB member, recalled: “The magazine was called *The Ladder* because you were supposed to climb up the ladder and into the human race on an OK basis...As if there weren’t [already] thousands of lesbians who were great contributors to society.” Quoted in Markus 1992, 119.

were no different than heterosexuals save for the sex of their preferred romantic partner; that is, they downplayed rather than accentuated difference. To this end, *Mattachine Review*, *The Ladder*, and, to a slightly lesser extent, *ONE*, endeavored to represent the “variant,” as they commonly termed lesbians and gay men, as well-adjusted and worthy citizens deserving of the same rights to sexual privacy awarded to heterosexual women and men.²⁸¹ Third, and perhaps most importantly, homophile readership—i.e. the new homophile constituency—was expected to metabolize this positive-minded homophile identity.

Enlisting the Experts

Expertise has become an indispensable part of the contemporary advocacy system. In order to claim authority over a particular issue, as Richard Skinner claimed, interest groups must cultivate “issue credibility” not only to raise the salience of the group’s issues and interests, but to gain a broader public trust and establish the organization as a voice of authority.²⁸² Before this public trust could be established, however, the homophiles needed to connect with scientific and psychiatric authorities, who could serve as surrogates to communicate the message that was still too dangerous for lesbians and gay men to communicate to a mass audience themselves: that same-sex sex should not be feared, nor should it be criminalized or pathologized. In working with outside, non-political authorities,

²⁸¹ The eagerness with which these organizations sought this hospitable representation for homosexuals was not, of course, constant across each organization. Though One, Inc. and Mattachine frequently stated that their objectives were similar to one another, they were organizationally distinct and exuded slight differences in tone. Distinguishing public perceptions of the three organizations, Hal Call stated in a speech at the 9th Annual Mattachine Society Conference that Mattachine was “viewed as conservative, bearably constructive, but dull in most things,” whereas ONE was “held to be flamboyant, loud, and if anything, dangerous.” (Call did not comment on One, Inc.’s *Quarterly* publication, which reflected a tone quite similar to Mattachine in its scholarly, perhaps bland tone.) Perhaps unfairly, he held that DOB was “taken to be tolerably sufferable” and “relatively harmless” because of their all-female membership. See “A Decade of Progress in the Homophile Movement,” *Mattachine Review* (Oct. 1962), 11-20.

²⁸² See Skinner 2007, 124-126.

the homophiles worked to bolster their own status so that they could connect to the emerging homophile citizenry, if not a broader national audience.

In 1955, Hal Call predicted that the newly-created *Mattachine Review* would “become a voice of no little authority” on homosexuality, “because it will be the medium through which many experts and others of influence and knowledge can speak.”²⁸³ One-time *Mattachine* president Ken Burns would echo this sentiment, stating at the organization’s 3rd annual convention: “If you want to build a bridge, go to an engineer”; if you want information about homosexuality, ask the experts at *Mattachine*, or the authorities with whom they connect.²⁸⁴ Though Call would initially hold the *Review* in contradistinction to *ONE*, *One*, Inc. would soon follow *Mattachine*’s lead. As *DOB* founders Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon would recall many years later: “We needed support from the establishment, from heterosexuals,” as publicly asserting one’s *own* voice as a lesbian or gay man involved too much fear and risk; moreover, the claims of lesbians and gay men were thought to be tinged with bias.²⁸⁵

Unsurprisingly, references to Kinsey and his legacy initially drove this strategy. The *Mattachine Review* printed excerpts of his work, and authors in each of the homophile publications regularly cited him. For his part, Kinsey took interest in the emergent homophile movement and gave blanket permission to republish excerpts of his writings.²⁸⁶ After his death in 1956, however, the homophiles had to look elsewhere for compassionate professional allies. The homophile periodicals each reprinted excerpts from scientific

²⁸³ Quoted in Sears 2006, 303.

²⁸⁴ Ken Burns, “The Homosexual Faces a Challenge,” *Mattachine Review* (Aug. 1956), 19.

²⁸⁵ Quoted in D’Emilio 1998, 124-125.

²⁸⁶ Interestingly, Kinsey viewed the homophile movement as mistaken in its “foolhardy effort” to undertake many tasks at once rather than choosing a single task that the movement could do well “without running off on to side issues.” See Lyn Pederson, “A Tribute to Kinsey,” *ONE* (Aug. 1956), 7-12.

publications, and they sought original contributions from noted authors, psychiatrists, medical doctors, lawyers, and Ph.D.s. (Authors' professional titles were prominently included in the homophile publications to assure readers of each column's veracity and validity.) Additionally, published articles often carried titles highlighting the socio-scientific, authoritative nature of the author or article—e.g. “Scientific Approach is Needed,”²⁸⁷ “A Psychoanalyst Looks at Homosexuality,”²⁸⁸ or “The Psychodynamics of the Homosexual.”²⁸⁹

Among the academic and professional classes, the mainstream of the psychiatric community—newly bolstered by the prominent role that military psychologists played in the war—commanded the most attention. Media accounts of homosexuality typically referenced the “condition” in neurotic or sociopathic terms—a move set in motion by wartime bureaucracy and validated by McCarthyist witch hunting. The homophiles countered this message by publicizing the few psychiatrists bold enough to speak out (often in jargon-laden terms) in support of non-normative sexual lifestyles or behaviors. In the mid-1950s, *Mattachine Review* and *ONE* both frequently featured articles by Albert Ellis, a noted psychologist and contemporary of Albert Kinsey. Ellis, who penned the introduction to Donald Webster Cory's *The Homosexual in America*, was one of few in the psychiatric establishment espousing a message of tolerance toward homosexuality. Tolerance, however, did not imply complete mental health. In Ellis' view, “homosexuals, like all other neurotics, are able to live as happily as possible” in a society full of neurotics.²⁹⁰ This happiness, however, often came about under the neuroticizing influence of mainstream, heterosexual culture, which instills the unjust and purportedly unnatural feelings of guilt, “monogamic

²⁸⁷ Walter C. Alvarez, M.D. “Scientific Approach is Needed,” *Mattachine Review* (Sept. 1959), 10-11.

²⁸⁸ Mary Dorn, “A Psychoanalyst Looks at Homosexuality,” *Mattachine Review* (June 1960), 4-7.

²⁸⁹ Kenneth Fink, “The Psychodynamics of the Homosexual,” *Mattachine Review* (July 1960), 6-10.

²⁹⁰ Albert Ellis, “Are Homosexuals Necessarily Neurotic?” *ONE* (April 1955), 12.

fidelity,” and other emotions spurred by heterosexual society.²⁹¹ (Ellis viewed human nature as innately bisexual, and he viewed exclusive homosexual *or* heterosexual behavior as neurotic.)

In addition to Ellis, two women emerged as key psychiatric allies by the decade’s end. *ONE* featured a monthly column titled “Toward Understanding,” written by psychiatrist Blanche M. Baker from January 1959 until her death two years later. Baker’s popular column aimed to “create a better understanding of homosexual problems through the psychiatric viewpoint.”²⁹² Evelyn Hooker, a psychologist at UCLA who would later play a key role in the removal of homosexuality from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Mental Disorders* (DSM), also became a prominently-featured ally. The presentation of individuals like Kinsey, Ellis, Baker, and Hooker as authoritative figures on the topic of homosexuality ultimately had a dual purpose with respect to homophile representation. First, the validation of these experts helped to draw in those viewed as potentially influential on the topic of sexuality; though these scientists did not lobby or engage in overtly political action, they were nevertheless part of a subtle political strategy designed to change the attitudes and biases of scientific professionals and, eventually, members of the political and cultural establishment who were willing to accept the judgment of researchers and specialists. Second, reprinting these scientific accounts from established scholarly journals signaled to nascent lesbian and gay communities that their desires and, ultimately, their voices were neither “deviant” nor invalid. Moreover, at a time when overt lobbying would inevitably prove dangerous and even, perhaps, criminal, this strategy was part of a broader, gradual process of laying the

²⁹¹ Albert Ellis, “The Influence of Heterosexual Culture on Homosexual Attitudes,” *Mattachine Review* (Sept.-Oct. 1955), 13.

²⁹² This clause was featured as part of the subheading of each “Toward Understanding” article.

discursive groundwork needed to validate “the homophile” and, later, “lesbian” or “gay” individuals as claimants deserving of the rights and respect of political inclusion.

Building on this “expert model” of representation, One, Inc. had, by the end of the 1950s, introduced the new field of “homophile studies.” They launched *One Institute Quarterly*—arguably a precursor to the wide array of contemporary scholarly journals within the field of sexuality studies—and established a series of annual conferences known as ONE’s Mid-Winter Institute. The *Quarterly*, like the *Mattachine Review*, published original scholarship as well as reprinted materials from other professional journals. The new publication was specifically “designed to give parents, ministers, doctors, lawyers, psychologists, sociologists, as well as the general public an understanding of homosexuality and homosexuals.” Much as Kinsey had popularized the study of human sexuality while maintaining his legitimacy as a scientist, the One Institute aimed to achieve much the same for studies focused specifically on homosexuality. This expert-driven homophile organizing model, then, strove not only to speak to, or on behalf of, those who identified, or *potentially* identified, as homosexual; they also strove to *intervene* between this group and those viewed as legitimate producers of scientific knowledge. Ultimately, though these periodicals were at least in part geared toward persuading sympathetic experts, this goal may have proved less significant than the mere fact that many lesbians and gay men could see, in some cases for the very first time, that their erotic and romantic feelings validated by at least some within the “scientific” community.

Establishing the Homophile Discourse

The construction of a positive discourse surrounding homosexuality, rich with difference and diversity but devoid of rebelliousness, provided a strategically useful measure to distance the homophiles from the Communist Party and other culturally-shunned groups. Moreover, homophile activists also demonstrated to the public and to others sharing their sexual orientation that homosexuals could live productive, happy, and well-adjusted lifestyles. It is important, however, not to overstate the organizations' *ideological* conservatism. Rather, this conservatism was largely tactical and, in turn, order-affirming. Most leaders favored holding conventions over marching in demonstrations, panel discussions over political action. Of course, demonstrations and other overtly “political” actions held great risks. Instead, homophile activists made use of many opportunities that they had successfully opened up for themselves. For example, they sat alongside psychiatrists, law enforcement officials, and social counselors on local radio and television talk shows devoted to the issue. Typically, the format included one or two “healthy” homosexuals to counterbalance “expert” opinion portraying the group as unhealthy and deviant. For the first time, the public—including untold numbers of individuals harboring intense-yet-confusing same-sex passions—began to hear perspectives on homosexuality coming from seemingly healthy gay men. (That these gay men were *men*, and overwhelmingly middle-class *white* men merits note, here. In the fight for the full rights of American citizenship, it may not have been strategically wise to link the homophile community with other excluded groups, particularly as the broader homophile strategy made clear that drastic social action was *not* an overarching goal.)

To bolster this positive public image within their own ranks, the homophile publications often sought to dispel stereotypes and confront the perceived minority-within-

a-minority who projected the “wrong” type of public image. Amid the Lavender Scare of the 1950s, declaring homosexuality at odds with communism proved one way to project such an image. For his part, Hal Call reiterated *Mattachine*’s unalterable opposition to communism and the Communist Party throughout his tenure as editor of the *Mattachine Review*. Others echoed this view. Stated Harold Sylvester in only the 2nd edition of the *Mattachine Review*, the *Mattachine Society* respects the “sanctity of home, church and state,” working to achieve these goals via the assimilation of the homosexual into the community.²⁹³ In the very next issue (the *Review*’s third overall), the publication endorsed the American Jewish Committee’s stand against allowing communists to infiltrate their organization.²⁹⁴ Invoking patriotic tropes in a 1955 article titled “An Open Letter to Mr. and Mrs. America,” *Mattachine* assured readers that their organization posed “no revolutionary abandonment of social, moral, legal or ethical codes.”²⁹⁵ Significantly, *Mattachine* was not alone in its ostracization of communists, as *ONE*—known as the most progressive of the homophile publications—also distance themselves from political subversives. Claimed a *ONE* editorial by Don Slater, “Communism and homosexuality are contradictory and inimical.”²⁹⁶ While these individuals have have—and, in all likelihood, did—harbor intense anti-communist personal sentiment, many, perhaps most, organizations on the Left purged Communists due to the Right’s success in invoking the specter of communism in debates over civil rights and other such causes.

“Objectionable” behavior was not only manifest in *politically*-questionable behavior, however. It also took place through flamboyant or “swishy” expressions of one’s

²⁹³ *Mattachine Review* (March-April 1955), 29-30.

²⁹⁴ “Unsolicited Propoganda,” *Mattachine Review* (May-June 1955).

²⁹⁵ *Mattachine Review* (July-August 1955), 44.

²⁹⁶ *ONE* (Oct. 1960), 4.

sexuality—a point that, as I will underscore in Chapter 6, has endured throughout the movement’s history. Mattachine, in particular, prided itself in fighting for sexual freedom “within responsible limits.”²⁹⁷ Effete and effeminate gay men were seen to intensify already destructive stereotypes about homosexuality. Those seen as not respecting the *privacy* of sexual activity—i.e. those driven to partake in sex in public, often because they had a spouse of the opposite sex at home—posed an even larger threat to the homophile identity. Mattachine, for example, frequently affirmed their support for law enforcement “aimed at preventing sexual indecencies in public, forbidding sex relationship between adults and minors,” etc., advocating instead for those who cause “no real harm to our social order.”²⁹⁸

Such advocacy not only demonstrates that the homophiles knew that public acceptance required at least some level of sexual suppression; it also signaled to readers that the homophile identity could be “healthy” only if it respected certain boundaries, including boundaries of tact and decorum about disclosing one’s sexual proclivities. The *Mattachine Review*, for example, advised that “experts” agreed it to be “wise to keep one’s sex interest as deeply submerged as possible on the job,” and that “bachelors” should be prepared to answer questions about why they have not married.²⁹⁹ *The Ladder* largely echoed this advice. An article published in 1957 titled “Job Hunting Doesn’t Need To Be a Problem” instructed readers not to admit their homosexuality—pragmatic (if obvious) advice for those looking to avoid homophobia at a potential workplace.³⁰⁰ Mattachine president Ken Burns went so far as to claim that “we must blame ourselves for much of our plight,” as the quest for social

²⁹⁷ Hal Call, “A Decade of Progress in the Homophile Movement,” *Mattachine Review* (Oct. 1962), 14-15.

²⁹⁸ *Mattachine Review* (May-June 1955), 48.

²⁹⁹ *Mattachine Review* (May-June 1955), 15.

³⁰⁰ Article written to report on a panel discussion held by DOB of the same title. *The Ladder* (March 1957), 5-7.

reform necessitated personal reform as a prerequisite.³⁰¹ Though Burns's comments were rather extreme, homophile leaders and authors recurrently stressed the need to look and act the role of a well-adjusted contributor to American society.

In delineating the boundaries of the homophile identity, the homophile publications offered no small amount of advice on how to act the role of the homophile. A 1957 *Mattachine Review* editorial, for example, asserted that in the quest for recognition, homophiles must place themselves “before the eyes of the public in a positive and constructive way” in order to dispel rumors or misguided perceptions.³⁰² Responding to a particularly unfavorable psychoanalytic study about homosexuality that did not accurately distinguish between “the well behaved and stable, and the exhibitionist and unstable” homosexuals, *The Ladder* printed an article encouraging readership to “accept the challenge” of well-mannered public behavior.³⁰³ In the very next issue, another article, titled “A Plea for Integration,” called upon lesbians to replace their “male garb” with more suitable clothing; though it provided a “pseudo-armor” to protect against feelings of vulnerability, male clothing, the author argued, acts as a “red flag in front of a bull,” inflaming already-held social scorn.³⁰⁴ Such statements abound in the homophile publications throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s.

These attempts by homophile writers and organizers to draw boundaries around the group's identity—efforts that were directed both to professional experts and potential homophile identifiers—help us understand how this mediating role of political representation functioned. Because of the long history of intense legal and moral policing of

³⁰¹ Ken Burns, “The Homosexual Faces a Challenge,” *Mattachine Review* (Aug. 1956), 27.

³⁰² *Mattachine Review* (March 1957).

³⁰³ *The Ladder* (April 1957), 12-13.

³⁰⁴ *The Ladder* (May 1957), 17-18.

American sexuality, most could not have imagined prior to the advent of homophile organizations that they shared not only a sexual preference, but that a political vehicle could be available to them to protect and legitimize basic sexual rights. Moreover, a public language of self-respect necessary in order to make political claims had not yet emerged on a national—and in many places, even a local—level. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the homophile journals was that the burgeoning homophile community could share their thoughts and struggles regarding how they viewed their sexual identity. Today, these letters serve as a rich source of information about how this identity developed.

“Rabble in the Ranks”: Evidence of an Emerging Homophile Citizenship

As Hal Call saw it, in order to establish a favorable image of homosexuality, the movement needed to “aim its sights toward the homophile and the general public alike.”³⁰⁵ It is difficult to determine the extent to which the homophile organizations succeeded in fostering this homophile political identity. Despite recent strides to recapture the social history of sexuality within American life, no historical work on the topic is complete without acknowledging that much of the historical record of same-sex relationships has been forever lost. Many lesbians and gay men took great care to conceal their sexuality and escape suspicion, whether by repressing their desires entirely or by marrying partners of the opposite sex and fulfilling their same-sex desires clandestinely. Oftentimes, those engaged in same-sex relationships destroyed their personal letters, journals, or other evidence of a non-normative sexual lifestyle. For many of those who left such articles behind, family members often destroyed this evidence after their lesbian and gay relatives had passed. While it is

³⁰⁵ Quoted in Sears 2006, 336.

important not to overstate the degree to which the state, psychiatric, and religious authorities suppressed same-sex behavior and effectively shamed those engaging in it, it nevertheless bears mentioning that most lesbian and gay Americans could not and did not affirm their sexuality publicly.

The homophile publications serve as rich sources of data through which we can begin to chart this slow path from the closet to K Street. Correspondences between readers and homophile leaders found in the “Letters” and “Readers Write” section of *ONE* and *Mattachine Review*, respectively, allow us to gauge how homophile organizing influenced the political expectations, actions, and interests of lesbians and gay men.³⁰⁶ (*The Ladder* did not contain a column for letters to the editor.) They also served as forums for readers to communicate with one another anonymously, sharing thoughts about the proper decorum of the homophile lifestyle (e.g. how much “swish” was appropriate)³⁰⁷, arguments about the boundaries of the group’s identity (often by distancing homosexuality from pederasty or transvestism), advice about gay-friendly vacation spots, and how to avoid police entrapment, among other topics of frequent discussion.

Letters poured in from every state and many nations, indicating that *ONE* and the *Mattachine Review* had truly international readerships. The letters also indicate a much larger readership than circulation numbers would suggest, as no small number of readers indicated that they shared their copies widely. Letter writers were overwhelmingly male—about 90%

³⁰⁶ These sections were often noted for being among the most popular sections of these publications by both readers and editors. See, for example, *Mattachine Review* (June 1960), 31.

³⁰⁷ “Swish” was a common (and usually derogatory) term commonly used in the 1950s and 1960s to refer to a particularly effeminate or flamboyant gay man, activity, or trait. Like the term “queer” years later, it was occasionally appropriated as a form of camp.

of all letters came from men, in fact—and they were typically well-educated.³⁰⁸ An overwhelming number of these published letters consisted of appeals for contact information of others sharing their disposition; many readers felt lonely and isolated, and they wanted pen pals to communicate with about their sexuality. *ONE*'s editors claimed to receive *hundreds* of such requests each month, though they repeatedly maintained that their organizations could not and would not act as a liaison service. *Mattachine Review* editors also repeatedly refused such requests. These magazines' refusal to do so became a source of some controversy amongst readership over the ensuing decade, as these requests continued issue after issue.³⁰⁹ Similarly, many readers wrote merely to request more information about homosexuality; by 1957, editors of the *Mattachine Review* noted that they received about fifteen such requests per week, as sympathetic materials proved difficult to find elsewhere.³¹⁰

Still, many readers wrote to these publications because they viewed the advocacy and actions of the homophile organizations as reflective of their own views about sexuality, politics, and the homosexual identity. Others wrote in to dispute the journals' take on what the homophile identity should look like. Oftentimes, however, letter writers merely expressed their gratification. Typically, this category of writers felt that they had been

³⁰⁸ Soon after it began to publish letters, *ONE* complied with a request from a reader that the magazine should indicate whether each letter came from a male or female. Out of almost 1500 total letters in which the sex of the reader had been indicated, only 140 came from women. (It is worth noting that a larger proportion of women wrote to *ONE* in the early years, but published letters came overwhelmingly from men in later years, perhaps after more women in the movement became aware of *The Ladder*.)

³⁰⁹ Beginning with the January 1959 issue and extending throughout most of the publications history, the "Letters" section of *ONE* included the disclaimer: "Under no circumstances do the editors forward letters from readers to other persons nor do they answer correspondence making such requests." Nevertheless, such requests continued in great numbers, and editors continued to justify their stance against this policy. However, historian Martin Meeker has identified some individuals who were put in contact with other homosexuals by the Mattachine Society. In an interview with a Louisiana man who came of age in the 1960s, for example, Meeker uncovered that the Mattachine Society not only sent him copies of its publication and provided him the names of gay bars in his area, but also put him in contact with about six or eight gay men who were also looking for pen pals. Presumably, then, the Mattachine Society eased its restrictions in the mid-1960s. See Meeker 2006, 182.

³¹⁰ *Mattachine Review* (July 1957), 20.

awoken from their ignorance of the reality that others shared their sexual desires. Claimed one subscriber, *Mattachine* provided “the best treatment available for psychiatric help”—likely a reference to common efforts to “treat” homosexuality through therapy.³¹¹ In other words, adjusting to a homosexual life with the help of homophile advocacy and education became a welcome alternative to therapists’ efforts to adjust homosexuals to a life of *heterosexuality*.

Homophile communications clearly activated for the first time a nationwide sense of grouphood. Evidence of this impact came as quickly as the third issue of *ONE* magazine, where a reader—a father of four in a heterosexual marriage—stated that until he came across his first copy of *ONE*, “I thought I had a problem”—a sentiment echoed by many others issue after issue.³¹² Dozens of published letters described a crippling sense of shame, confusion, and isolation that the homophile publications had slowly helped to ease. Through homophile advocacy, however, readers not only discovered that there were millions of people with similar sexual interests spread across the globe, but that, unlike popular stereotypes of the era, “they were intelligent, sincere, worthwhile human beings,” as one reader of *ONE* claimed in 1957.³¹³ Describing the magazine’s role in his own personal transformation, another reader in 1962 claimed the *ONE* helped him eliminate his fears that he was “one of a small criminal minority.”³¹⁴ Indeed, this message of gratitude toward the homophile organizations emerged as a prevalent theme throughout the era, with a number of readers declaring this role more important than the organizations’ role of reaching out to the public or the experts. In a social context in which taboos against same-sex eroticism had

³¹¹ *Mattachine Review* (Sept. 1962), 26.

³¹² *ONE* (March 1953), 21.

³¹³ *ONE* (Feb. 1957), 35.

³¹⁴ *ONE* (Nov. 1962), 31.

intensified, the homophiles provided readers with “one of the few rocks upon which to rely.”³¹⁵

Many letter-writers echoed sentiments about the need to separate sexual difference and social or political deviance, eagerly policing the boundaries of the homophile identity. Often, readers reinforced the homophiles’ view that the minority of “swishes” hurt the larger community’s chance at social acceptance. Summarizing the frustration of a number of lesbians and gay men, one *Mattachine Review* reader in 1955 wrote that “too many homophiles live the life of lechery and libertinism—a good dose of self-discipline might go a long way” toward advancing the homophile agenda of social acceptance.³¹⁶ Many readers of each of the homophile publications shared this view, arguing that homosexuality would become less of a stigma or burden if it were no longer associated with shameless hedonism. In this regard, gay men who “cruised” public parks, gay bars, or other areas that had become part of an underground sexual subculture became scapegoats for the frustrations of many who aimed for the respectability toward which the homophiles strived.

While editors always took great care to avoid a blame-the-victim message, letters were occasionally more pointed. As a reader of *ONE Confidential* wrote in 1965, “Too many of us busy ourselves with being defensive when we should busy ourselves with a full and profitable life...So your church doesn’t understand you, but it never will if you don’t participate in its work. So your family doesn’t understand you, but are you contributing love or hate to your family?”³¹⁷ These types of letters were frequent, as many among the homophile readership began to take the view that homosexuals were far too often “their

³¹⁵ *ONE* (Jan. 1963), 31.

³¹⁶ Anonymous letter-writer, *Mattachine Review* (Nov.-Dec. 1955), 38.

³¹⁷ *ONE Confidential* x:4 (March 1965), 6.

own worst enemies” by presenting themselves in a manner that heterosexuals could not sympathize with or understand.³¹⁸ Identity-building thus became an exercise not just of assimilation, but the presentation of a happy and productive life, no matter how challenging the obstacles.

One such obstacle, of course, was to “pass” as straight when the presentation of any form of sexuality would not be viewed as beneficial. While some readers expressed outright agitation toward those seen as flamboyant, withdrawn, or otherwise maladjusted, others understood the *strategic* need for “normalcy” in one’s day-to-day activities. A letter published in the *Mattachine Review* in 1956 perhaps best exemplified the blend of strategic and personal frustration with those lesbians and gay men who escaped or rejected social normality. This letter, printed as an article titled “Toward a Higher Standard of Individual Behavior and Ethics,” expressed the frustration that homosexuals were “dominated in the majority by emotionally unstable and disorganized individuals whose inner and social conflicts” prevented the larger group from organizing successfully. With “rabble in the ranks,” the objective of gaining social and legal acceptance can easily be derailed by those at the margins (or, according to the writer’s observations, the majority). Accepting his homosexuality “without shame,” he called on others to apply “inherent standards of good taste at all times in public and disdain those who shock and flaunt conventional tastes in public by dress, grooming, manners, speech and general flagrant conduct.” The writer closed his comments by suggesting to the editors of *Mattachine Review* that they “never accept anything for publication which would not be acceptable and meet with understanding of any religious,

³¹⁸ *Mattachine Review* (June 1957), 34.

medical or psychiatric group or organization.”³¹⁹ Concisely stated by a *ONE* magazine reader that same month, “We must look our Sunday best”—an act that involved rejecting the “gay bar or drag ball” in favor of partnerships with sociologists, psychiatrists, ministers, teachers, etc.³²⁰ This sentiment was widespread throughout the pages of homophile publications; projecting a positive public image—even if by suppressing or ostracizing personal desire or sexual fulfillment—resonated with a large number of the homophile readership who desperately wanted other lesbians and gay men to aid in the cause by viewing themselves as normal, well-adjusted citizens rather than as outcasts and miscreants.

Mobilization towards “normalcy” did not occur without resistance, however. Many readers disliked that these publications seemed to evacuate homosexuality of sexuality almost entirely. Though in *ONE*’s early years it occasionally faced criticism for painting too radical a picture of homosexuals, others viewed it as a high-minded space for “diplomats, artists and scientists,” ignoring those who “drive trucks, sweep streets, and carry garbage for a living, and can’t appreciate classics like Plato and such.”³²¹ Another reader asked for “a little more fiction and a little less esoteric hogwash.”³²² Such charges that the magazine was “too damn literary” continued to follow *ONE*.³²³ *Mattachine Review*, of course, also faced these criticisms. Claimed one reader, “what is homosexuality all about if it is not the way people feel?” (Toeing the line of strategy, the editors responded by inquiring what “vigilant eyes,” i.e. law enforcement, would think about such careless presentations of homosexuality.)³²⁴

Another reader disagreed with the “stilted and puritan way” by which *Mattachine* dealt with

³¹⁹ *Mattachine Review* (March 1956), 14-15.

³²⁰ *ONE* (March 1956), 30.

³²¹ *ONE* (July 1955), 21.

³²² *ONE* (Aug. 1955), 21.

³²³ See *ONE* (March 1956), p. 28; *ONE* (Nov. 1955), 28.

³²⁴ *Mattachine Review* (Feb. 1957), 27.

the issue of sex.³²⁵ Others were simply slow to come around to the idea that homosexual women and men needed heightened political awareness, activism, and group unity, even if the softening of rampant homophobia would clearly be in their best interest. As one letter-writer near the end of 1960 stated: “I’m afraid my own grand passion is not for social reform (though I ardently desire it) but for homosexuals themselves...I’m the sort of prurient clod...that your frequent statements of high ideals tend to exclude from your readership.”³²⁶

Conclusions: Introductions to a Larger Gay World

In June of 1964, *Life* magazine printed a breakthrough article titled “Homosexuality in America.”³²⁷ On the heels of similar articles published in 1963 in *Harper’s* and the *New York Times*, *Life* introduced its readers to the idea that homosexuality was more than an individual affliction or social problem; rather, the magazine boldly presented homosexuality as a basis for community and camaraderie in locales throughout the country. For the homophiles, this shift in mainstream media coverage marked a tremendous success. In fact, according to historian Martin Meeker, Mattachine’s own Hal Call worked closely with *Life*’s reporter and photographer, acting as an intermediary between the media and the gay community in hopes of achieving two goals. First, Call wanted to present homosexuals as “middle-class as opposed to elite or impoverished; law-abiding rather than criminal; well-adjusted instead of insane; integrated rather than isolated; and, most especially, masculine and not effeminate.” Such a presentation would be essential to the strategy of forming a

³²⁵ *Mattachine Review* (Dec. 1959), 28.

³²⁶ *Mattachine Review* (Nov./Dec. 1960), 28.

³²⁷ Actually, the famous *Life* article consisted of *two* articles: Paul Welch, “Homosexuality in America,” *Life* (June 26, 1964), 66-74; Ernest Havemann, “Scientists Search for Answers to a Touchy and Puzzling Question: Why?” *Life* (June 26, 1964), 76-80.

national homophile citizenry able to submit political demands within the broader pluralist universe. Second, Call wanted to “introduce more homosexuals to the larger gay world and bring them into the extensive networks his organization was engaged in building.”³²⁸ In other words, he wanted to represent gay Americans in a way that impacted the general public and policymakers on one hand, and gay Americans themselves on the other. In the former case, Call and the homophiles wanted the nation to accept that lesbian and gay individuals should have a meaningful and respected voice as a community within the pluralist system; in the latter case, they wanted to unify this constituency by broadening its base of support. In striving to complete these two very difficult and risky tasks, the homophiles were laying the groundwork for the brand of interest group representation that would emerge a decade later.

The article proved to be a wild success. *Life* printed numerous photographs of gay social life, including a prominent image at The Tool Box, a San Francisco motorcycle bar catering primarily to masculine gay men. The Mattachine Society, for its part, received long-awaited mainstream press, including a small photograph of Call. The issue sold out in less than two days in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and other large cities, and the article played no small role in introducing San Francisco, in particular, as a hub of gay social life. It was probably no coincidence that the city’s gay scene expanded in the years immediately following publication of “Homosexuality in America.” More importantly still, *Life* introduced isolated lesbians and gay men nationwide to “the ideas that same-sex desire had a name—‘homosexuality.’”³²⁹ The *Life* article, now seemingly a footnote in LGBT history, was at the time a watershed event in homophile organizing, as *Time* and *Look* soon followed suit

³²⁸ Meeker 2006, 157.

³²⁹ Meeker 2006, 178.

in introducing the idea of gay community to a national audience. Taboos against discussing homosexuality “in polite company” were falling by the wayside.

Ironically, however, the publicity generated by the *Life* article would also prove critical to the demise of the Mattachine Society. With the organization already stretched thin in terms of resources and staffing, the Society’s newfound public profile inundated the organization with new outreach requests. But, the article generated few new members, and therefore few new sources of revenue. Mattachine devoted most of its scant resources to aiding troubled homosexuals and reaching out to sympathetic professionals, and the *Mattachine Review* began printing with less regularity. Soon, it ceased publication altogether, temporarily leaving a gap in nationwide organizing, but giving way to an assortment of local gay groups that arose in no small part because of the doors of communication opened up by the homophiles. In a span of just over ten years, though, the homophiles transformed from being at the mercy of sympathetic authorities to speaking authoritatively about homosexuality in ways that made others listen. During a time of rapid liberalization in other areas of life like race and gender, the homophiles were at the forefront of the struggle to add sexuality to the list of sites of democratic inclusion.

It is important to remember that the homophile organizations of the 1950s bore minimal resemblance to contemporary LGBT advocacy organizations, raised few funds, and were largely managed by a small coterie of leaders. As D’Emilio stated, “The silence surrounding homosexuality was certainly ending, but the loudest voices were not yet those of gay men and women.”³³⁰ By the middle of the following decade, however, the homophiles were on the verge of establishing a nationwide social identity comprised of

³³⁰ D’Emilio 1998, 147.

individuals who were beginning to assert themselves as political claimants. In doing so, they shaped the parameters of that identity in ways that both helped society adjust to the homosexual *and* helped homosexuals conform to America's socio-sexual landscape. Organizational leaders largely responded to the meanings and lexicon in use by psychiatric, political, medical, and other authorities. To better ensure the efficacy of this strategy, homophile leaders and writers occasionally policed the boundaries of this burgeoning citizenry, differentiating the public behavior of the homophiles from the perceived anti-social, perverse, or indecent behavior of child predators, trans people, and others deviating from sexual mores or norms of conduct. Over the following decade, they would translate this burgeoning identity into political participation. The task of determining the trajectory of that participation—and indeed, the trajectory of interest group citizenship—depended largely on the trajectory of the interest group system itself.

Chapter V

“From the Closet if Necessary”: The Circumscription of Political Participation in the Advocacy Era

In June of 1969, a Los Angeles publication catering to the local lesbian and gay community published an editorial lambasting the city’s homophile leadership, citing inefficacy and excessive “bitchiness.” Though the paper employed a hard-edged tone, it conjured a Mattachine-like drive for respectability, asking: “Are the so-called ‘experts’ right? Are homosexuals by nature bitchy, selfish, immature, destructive?” The editorial further inquired about how to “entice more of the mature, responsible, selfless homosexuals” to enter public life.³³¹ In many ways, this line of criticism had become routine within the still-embryonic gay press, where two targets in particular—gay leadership and law enforcement officials—served as primary scapegoats for the continued injustices suffered by lesbians and gay men.

Though an otherwise quotidian editorial, two features stand out. First was the timing. Later that month, New York City police raided a popular-yet-seedy Greenwich Village gay bar called the Stonewall Inn, vacating the bar of roughly 400 patrons and placing a few customers and employees under arrest. Such raids had become commonplace not only in New York but across the country, especially at establishments that, like the Stonewall Inn, operated without a liquor license. However, the ensuing uprising—which included two nights of rioting, over a dozen arrests, and injury to four police officers—received national publicity, with the “destructive” types receiving particular attention. With this event, now widely celebrated as a defining moment of LGBT history, the “gay liberation era” was born.

Second was the forum. With a circulation of 15,000, the newspaper reached far more readers than all other homophile publications yet in existence. Furthermore, the paper

³³¹ “Join In, But Grow Up,” *Advocate* 3:6 (June 1969), p. 24.

was just beginning to capitalize on its national aspirations. In fact, the June edition of the *Los Angeles Advocate* had for the first time omitted the local modifier “Los Angeles” from its title. The publication now simply called itself the *Advocate*—a familiar name to those familiar with LGBT culture, many of whom may be unfamiliar with the paper’s pivotal role in LGBT history. By the following issue, circulation had grown by more than 50%, to 23,000. With many new subscribers from across the country, the paper proudly began subtling itself the “Newspaper of America’s Homophile Community.” The *Advocate*—resembling a newspaper but mailed in a sealed envelope so as not to “out” its readers—was aptly titled, as it quickly became the nation’s most prominent voice in gay political advocacy despite its ostensible role as a non-political source for gay news, culture, and entertainment.

The frustration expressed in the *Advocate*’s June 1969 editorial typified the divergent trajectories of gay activism that had emerged by the close of the 1960s. On one hand, the homophile leadership of the 1950s seemed to have given way to vocal groups of activists who interpreted their erotic lives as subversive of long-held sexual taboos. Such activists aimed to revolutionize how Americans encountered and experienced sexuality, and they pursued new and inventive paths for American democracy, citizenship, and participation. On the other hand, however, subtle developments had also occurred *within* homophile organizing, where activists typically viewed sexual preference as *non-political* and *private*; in short, they sought inclusion and rights, not revolution. Throughout the 1960s, homophile activists had slowly grown more assertive, visible, and successful. Among their victories: The Supreme Court affirmed the right to publish lesbian and gay publications in 1958.³³²

³³² *One, Inc. v. Olesen* 355 U.S. 371 (1958).

Illinois became the first state to liberalize its sex laws in 1962.³³³ Homosexuality slowly became a more tolerable topic of discussion in popular media. Gay bars flourished in many urban areas despite the constant threat of police harassment.

The divergent trajectories of lesbian and gay activism that emerged after the Stonewall riots offer a point of contrast between two alternative models of democratic participation that clashed openly as the 1960s drew to a close. On one hand, the Stonewall riots exemplified a participatory, if chaotic and experimental, expression of dissent advanced by the New Left and its followers. On the other hand, gay entrepreneurs, professionals, and much of the lesbian and gay middle class often preferred an elite-driven, “low citizenship” model characteristic of modern liberal democracies, which called for professional representation and deference to the “proper” channels of political engagement.³³⁴

The scholarly consensus—detailed in previous chapters—is that the latter model won out, in the process stripping citizens of opportunities for meaningful participation governed by principles of shared rule, mutual decision-making, and a robust public sphere. Scholars often paint the professionalization of contemporary advocacy as an outgrowth or byproduct of the “elite,” “diminished,” or “incorporated” forms of democracy that restrict these opportunities and muffle America’s democratic ethos. Crenson and Ginsberg, for example, assert that, in contrast with the groups of the Progressive Era, today’s interest

³³³ Illinois largely followed the American Law Institute’s Model Penal Code, which provided a model template of criminal law. It proposed to exclude from criminal law all sexual acts that did not involve force, the corruption of minors, or sexual acts committed in public. Significantly, it proposed the decriminalization of sodomy and other forms of consensual homosexual acts between adults. The *Mattachine Review* described and endorsed the Model Penal Code as early as 1955 when it was first proposed. For Mattachine’s description of the Model Penal Code, see “American Law Institute’s Model Penal Code: Sodomy and Related Offenses,” *Mattachine Review* (Sept. 1956), pp. 5-25.

³³⁴ Harkening back to the work of economist Joseph Schumpeter, Jack Walker opined that with the “elite theory of democracy” fast becoming “the conventional wisdom of political science,” democracy was beginning to lose much of its normative content. See Walker 1966, 286. See also Schumpeter 2008(1942).

groups can “get what they want without developing or rousing a grassroots constituency.”³³⁵ According to Skocpol, civic-minded and representatively governed associations “have ceased to proliferate.”³³⁶ More starkly still, Wolin casts interest groups as organizations that displace all meaningful notions of citizenship and sever individuals from the legislative process.³³⁷

Though sympathetic to these claims, this chapter builds upon and modifies existing arguments about the role that interest groups play within American politics. First, many have overlooked the proactive and perhaps central role that political advocates themselves played in forging the atmosphere widely considered to have drawn restrictive boundaries around democratic citizenship for disadvantaged groups. Political entrepreneurs from disadvantaged communities often experimented with new ways to rouse support not only in the face of intransigent public authorities and neoliberalizing economic incentives, but also in the face of pesky dissenters who refused to adapt to the emerging conventions of neoliberal citizenship. In other words, advocacy organizations and their leaders were part and parcel of the changes to American pluralism.

Relatedly, and perhaps more importantly, scholars sometimes understate the degree to which these organizations have relied upon and mobilized support from constituents. However, the *manner* in which disadvantaged groups are expected to express this support has changed. Rather than encouraging citizens to join in as active participants in a collective enterprise, the advocacy organizations of the 1970s cultivated a tamed model of citizenship demanding financial *contribution* rather than civic *collaboration*. To this end, this chapter highlights the central role that fundraising came to play in lesbian and gay advocacy efforts

³³⁵ Crenson & Ginsberg 2002, 111.

³³⁶ Skocpol 2003, 174.

³³⁷ Wolin 2008, 59.

amid a changing democratic landscape in the 1960s and 1970s. Though lesbian and gay individuals were largely slow to respond—exacerbated, of course, by the harsh realities of “the closet”—professional advocates of the era gradually established financial contribution as *the* fundamental expression of one’s status as a member of a broader political community.

As a historical matter, the lesbian and gay interest groups of the 1970s did not attempt to measure the latent mood among their constituents and then translate this sentiment into policy initiatives. Nor, for that matter, did they coercively assimilate their constituents to the more narrow interests of economic elites, as critics of the interest group system sometimes assert. Rather, one of their key tasks was to construct the most effective practices of citizenship feasible within the emerging hegemonic framework of American politics. As the 1970s wore on, this undertaking entailed not only projecting a middle-class image—often to the exclusion of women, the poor, racial minorities, and the intersectionally disadvantaged—but fostering standards of participation designed to position the community as a viable claimant in the emerging financial arms race of American pluralism. While adaptation to neoliberalism’s opportunities and constraints did not occur without resistance, alterations to the concept of “participation” that lie at the heart of interest group citizenship ultimately helped lay the groundwork for many of the movement’s later successes.

Toward Greater Militancy

The roots of the LGBT community’s interfusion of financial contribution into the democratic ethos lie in the emboldened strains of homophile activism that emerged in the years leading up to Stonewall, when lesbian and gay citizens first began to socialize conflict by seeking recourse for their marginalization within mainstream political channels at all levels

of government. Importantly, the recent successes of the African-American civil rights had established a template for this rights-oriented political action.³³⁸ While the homophiles did not yet have the organizational clout, resources, or membership to campaign for federally-recognized rights, the civil rights movement's model for success provided a framework and a lexicon for homophiles to appeal to developing ideals of democratic inclusion and project themselves as political claimants.³³⁹ (In fact, some homophile leaders, and many sympathizers, had a direct personal involvement in the civil rights movement.)

Homophile leaders thus *utilized* the civil rights movement without directly *attaching* their cause to a broader, coalitional project aiming to transform the social relations that gave rise to racialized, sexualized, or gendered paradigms of oppression.³⁴⁰ Rather, they used the civil rights framework to begin to insert their own “democratic demands” (to use Laclau’s terminology) into the pluralist system. Following this model privileging inclusion—or what some social movements scholars prefer to call “incorporation”—homophile activists utilized a framework of *equivalence* to struggle for access to conventional outlets for political redress.³⁴¹ (During the previous decade of homophile activism, the criminalized status of homosexuality all but ensured that any “participation” from members of the lesbian and gay community would occur *outside* of these channels, primarily through appeals to sympathetic

³³⁸ See, for example, Meyer & Whittier 1994; Meyer & Boutcher 2007.

³³⁹ Of course, the Supreme Court decision of *One, Inc. v. Olesen*, noted in this chapter’s introduction, provides one exception to the claim that the homophile movement achieved no major federal gains. Whereas the U.S. Post Office and the FBI had declared the October, 1954 issue of *ONE* magazine obscene under the Comstock laws, the Supreme Court overturned the 9th District Court of Appeals in a rare *per curiam* decision. The ruling was issued before oral arguments were made and, unlike cases like *Brown v. Board of Education*, the decision was not widely publicized.

³⁴⁰ It is important to note that some gay members of African-American civil rights leadership, perhaps most notably Bayard Rustin, were shunned by some of their contemporaries, demonstrating not only the pervasive nature of antigay sentiment, but the challenges of intersectional marginalization and the strong desire for marginalized groups to project a public image of normality and worthiness.

³⁴¹ For a justification of “incorporation” over “inclusion” due to the perceived value-neutrality of the former term, see Alexander 2001, 242.

scientific authorities.) Indeed, the nature of social marginalization and state repression made this rights-oriented approach appealing and, perhaps, a necessary alternative to any potential counter-hegemonic coalition.

In the midst of the civil rights model's legislative victories for African-Americans, a small handful of East Coast homophile activists began to organize with increasing audacity. Perhaps the most notable figure who helped to re-orient the homophile movement away from its stodgier past (while still enhancing its civil rights approach) was Frank Kameny, a Harvard-educated astronomer and one of the thousands of gay Americans who were blacklisted from federal employment during the Lavender Scare. As co-founder and first president of the Mattachine Society of Washington (MSW) in 1961, Kameny propelled the movement into the new decade, promoting direct, though mostly conventional, political action by persons identifying as homosexual. Kameny was one of the first in the homophile movement to actively draw upon the African-American civil rights framework as a blueprint for homophile organizing. He also appropriated civil rights leaders' approach to group empowerment. Inspired by Stokely Carmichael's phrase "Black is Beautiful," for example, Kameny coined the phrase "Gay is Good"—a pithy weapon against claims that homosexuality derived from sickness or immorality.³⁴²

Kameny's civil rights approach helped to broaden the movement, as some who, like Kameny, had already lost their careers in public service felt they had little more to lose. The nation's capital thus provided a fitting setting for this approach to incubate. The MSW benefited from its proximity to the federal government, and not only because it was a center of power and authority. It was also a major employer, and one that ruthlessly policed the

³⁴² Bullough 2002, 209.

employees that it suspected of political or sexual subversiveness. The organization also benefited, for that matter, from Kameny's intricate understanding of the federal bureaucracy. Under his leadership, the MSW announced the formation of their organization in a press release and distributed it to every representative, senator, and Supreme Court justice; they also contacted the President, his cabinet, and various officials across the executive branch.³⁴³ Though all other homophile organizations had strategically remained inconspicuous to public officials deemed unsympathetic (and most politicians fit this description), the MSW's more open manner of advocacy led almost immediately to a greater communication between the homophiles and public officials; the MSW received favorable responses from two members of Congress, William Fitts Ryan of New York City and Robert Nix of Philadelphia, each of whom agreed to meet with representatives from the homophile community.

As the MSW became active in its increasingly public campaign—in other words, as Kameny helped to socialize conflict by invoking notions of rights, inclusion, and the freedoms of expression and association—the organization applied for and obtained a license to fundraise in Washington, DC. Threatened with revocation of the license by incensed members of Congress, Kameny became the first openly gay American to testify before Congress when he was called to defend his organization's right to fundraise. As historian David K. Johnson pointed out, whereas Kameny's interrogators “engaged in a 1950s discourse on homosexuality” by using “the language of criminal acts, blackmail, espionage, and national security,” Kameny spoke of “social action, rights of expression and privacy,

³⁴³ D'Emilio 1998, 154; Johnson 2004, 184.

political protest, and, above all, citizenship” in an effort to bring the homophiles’ message to legislators as well as the broader public.³⁴⁴

In publicizing the homophile agenda in this manner, the MSW won the support of the local affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and, later, the national ACLU.³⁴⁵ With the help of ACLU attorneys, the MSW distributed pamphlets with titles such as “If You Are Arrested” and “How to Handle a Federal Interrogation.” Unlike their predecessors in the homophile movement, the MSW responded to police harassment not with dry editorializing, but by talking to victims, collecting affidavits, filing formal complaints, and, eventually, holding small public demonstrations. In short, under Kameny’s guidance the MSW helped to transform its members and sympathizers into a homophile community, and he began to establish a framework to communicate with lesbians and gay men about how to use one’s rights as a political claimant and American citizen.

Like other homophile organizations of the 1950s and early 1960s, Kameny’s MSW did not have a broad membership despite operating in a city with many highly educated individuals who had experienced—or at least deeply feared—the federal government’s wrath. Nevertheless, the MSW’s open and assertive (albeit legal) tactics, which were focused on publicity and directed at federal officials, would soon supplant the more closeted approach that most homophile groups had taken to that point, as government officials began to tolerate lesbian and gay organizing more so than they had in the decade prior. This

³⁴⁴ Johnson 2004, 190.

³⁴⁵ Though in January of 1957, the ACLU board of directors issued a policy statement supporting the constitutionality of sodomy statutes and the barring of homosexuals from federal employment. In part because of Kameny’s work as a charter member of the National Capital Area Civil Liberties Union (NCA-CLU), the local civil liberties union condemned these policies as discriminatory. Under pressure from the Washington branch as well as other affiliates such as New York and Southern California, in 1964 the ACLU took a stand against the criminalization of sexual behavior between consenting adults. Over the ensuing decades, civil liberties unions would become some of the staunchest supporters of lesbian and gay rights in a variety of state-level efforts to initiate more gay-friendly policies. See D’Emilio 1998, 155-156.

increasing tolerance of lesbian and gay association, it should be noted, did *not* translate into an increased public tolerance of homosexuality at this time. Nevertheless, socializing conflict by asserting equivalence with the civil rights movement was slowly proving successful as groups like the MSW began to reach more Americans.

As activists in other locales also began to consider direct action, local groups began to cooperate and communicate with one another with greater frequency. In January of 1963, the MSW joined with Philadelphia's Janus Society, the New York Mattachine, and the Daughters of Bilitis to form the East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO), which exchanged information and guided the fledgling movement toward slightly more aggressive tactics like those of the MSW. Notably, the most assertive wing of the movement publicly contested the notion that homosexuality was a mental sickness. This stand ruffled the feathers of "old guard" homophile leaders who preferred to continue their strategy of quietly influencing "those whose opinions count" rather than appealing to "the unthinking masses" with allegedly foolhardy public statements.³⁴⁶ As those considered to be more "militant" gained traction, though, the movement gained new adherents. By the summer of 1965, for example, the New York Mattachine had reached a membership total of 445—only a small fraction of the total number of lesbians and gay men living in New York, but nevertheless nearly five times as large as it had been just two years prior.³⁴⁷ ECHO, for its part, initiated greater visibility, culminating in a series of picket lines in front of United Nations

³⁴⁶ See, for example, the exchange between Kameny and Florence Conrad in the *Ladder*. Frank Kameny, "Does Research into Homosexuality Matter?" *Ladder* (May 1965), pp. 14-20; Florence Conrad, "Research Is Here to Stay," *Ladder* (July-Aug. 1965), pp. 15-21; Frank Kameny, "Emphasis on Research Has Had Its Day," *Ladder* (Oct. 1965), pp. 10-14, 23-26.

³⁴⁷ D'Emilio 1998, 173.

headquarters, the State Department, the Pentagon, the Civil Service Commission building, Philadelphia's Independence Hall, and, perhaps most significantly, the White House.³⁴⁸

Meanwhile, across the continent in the emerging “gay capital” of the United States, San Francisco activists, though less *politically* engaged than their East Coast counterparts, worked to establish a more hospitable *social* climate for lesbians and gay men.³⁴⁹ In particular, Bay Area activists reached out to the bar community—once the source of consternation among homophile advocates who believed that such venues projected a depraved image of homosexuality. As in most large cities, gay bars served as the cultural hub of the city's lesbian and gay communities. Yet despite San Francisco's growing reputation as a bohemian city, local law enforcement officials continually harassed bar owners and their patrons. In 1962, bar owners formed the Tavern Guild, an organization designed to counteract the growing threat of bar raids. Two years later, in September of 1964, San Francisco activists formed the Society for Individual Rights (SIR), which would open the nation's first gay community center—a 5,500 square foot complex—in April of 1966.³⁵⁰ SIR also began to issue a monthly magazine, *Vector*, which was sold throughout the city. By the end of the year, SIR had become the largest homophile organizations in the country with a membership nearing 1,000. SIR eschewed not only earlier homophiles' trepidations about the public image of homosexuality, but also counteracted the tendency on the part of groups like the MSW to dismiss social functions as merely tangential to a more intensely political focus.

³⁴⁸ D'Emilio 1998, 164-165.

³⁴⁹ As one might expect, the development of San Francisco's LGBT communities is a complex one. For an exploration of the many facets of San Francisco's emergence as a hub for LGBT social life, see Boyd 2003.

³⁵⁰ See Sears 2006, 522.

At the heart of these localized struggles lie key tensions and conundrums that illustrate the inherent difficulties of representing marginalized groups during this time period. On one hand, many viewed political representation—viewed as an *outward-looking* process targeting the government or the general public—as far too steep an uphill battle during what remained a largely repressive era. Thus, the seemingly impermeable nature of the political system encouraged lesbians and gay men to withdraw into, and actively mobilize and enhance, *social* aspects of lesbian and gay life. In short, many viewed it as most efficacious to continue to mobilize a sense of grouphood and shared identity rather than fight political battles that they seemed destined to lose. On the other hand, however, state repression ensured a constant threat of arrest, prosecution, and job loss, and a civil rights framework seemed to provide a strategically-useful path toward ending this harassment.

Ultimately, these two approaches were compatible, and strategically practicable. The nature of their marginalization—which included not only state repression but ostracism from many other groups—ensured that the homophiles’ struggle would largely develop *independently* of other movements, despite the fact that many individuals were committed to more than one cause and were marginalized according to multiple axes of power. In other words, though the homophiles’ actions were guided by logics of “equivalence” with the civil rights movement, a *coalitional* project of the American Left remained largely unrealized. Issues of sexuality, gender, race, and class may have seemed *equivalent*, but they were not widely viewed—or at least they were not widely mobilized—as part of the *same* struggle against oppression.

So pervasive was that state’s power that throughout much of the 1960s, a truly *national* homophile movement had yet to develop. Due in large part to the barriers posed by

state repression, homophiles on the East and West coasts maintained little coordination despite facing similar police harassment and cultural scorn. In February of 1966, homophile activists from both coasts met in Kansas City hoping to establish a national organizational structure. At that time, only fifteen homophile organizations existed throughout the country, mostly confined to San Francisco and the Northeast. Though this meeting fell short of establishing a full-fledged national advocacy organization, it did lead to more regional meetings and, more importantly, the formation the North American Conference of Homophile Organizations (NACHO). Meanwhile, more local groups had sprung up. By the spring of 1969, the number of homophile organizations scattered throughout the country had grown to fifty.³⁵¹

The increasingly national nature of homophile mobilization brought about by ECHO and NACHO did not immediately give rise to a well-organized, national structure or tangible federal influence. As representatives of the lesbian and gay community, however, they focused inward, mobilizing constituents with increasing efficacy. These groups established networks of communication that allowed local groups to unify their message in abstraction from the various ground-level circumstances that lesbians and gay men experienced in different locales. That is, these groups strove to capture the diverse lived experiences of desire, repression, sexual practices, social marginality, etc. and use them to establish a discourse of the figure of the “homosexual” (or, rather, the signifier “homophile”) to stand in contrast with the labels of sexual deviancy or inversion that had become a prevalent cultural narrative as homosexuality became a topic of public conversation. In short, by the late 1960s the homophiles had grown increasingly successful

³⁵¹ D’Emilio 1998, 199.

at socializing conflict by appealing to the rights of citizenship as a means to redress prevalent discrimination nationwide. But doing so had profound discursive implications that impacted how the community could express and defend themselves as citizens. As noted above, their concrete experiences were situated within broader social structures, and their “repertoire of contention” was largely prefigured by the successes and failures of other, seemingly equivalent, struggles.³⁵² Even more fundamentally, though, leaders still had to continue to demonstrate to potential group members not only that their personal tribulations were part of a collective experience, but that overcoming the hardships of this collective experience necessitated collective action. On this front, homophile leaders proved less successful, as the closet remained a powerful force that continued to thwart the types of political actions that seemed to be effective for other groups.

Organizations like the MSW, ECHO, NACHO, and SIR provided the first efforts to truly politicize sexuality by moving beyond the framework of neutral analysis privileged by the homophiles of the previous decade.³⁵³ In moving their advocacy forward, they confronted a number of strategic concerns about how to most effectively and efficiently instigate change. They largely answered these questions by following the emerging civil rights consensus, asserting that the homophiles were a minority group deserving of inclusion, protection, and privacy. Others, of course, had alternative ideas about how to understand homosexuality and, moreover, how to put it to use against the constraining set of moral codes that for generations had cast homosexuality as a source of sin and shame.

³⁵² Charles Tilly coined the term “repertoire of contention” to describe “the whole set of means [a group] has for making claims.” He also noted that “people generally turn to familiar routines and innovate within them.” See Tilly 1986, 4. See also McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly 2001; Tilly & Tarrow 2007.

³⁵³ D’Emelio 1998, 150.

Gay Liberation and the Legend of Stonewall

Today, LGBT activists often celebrate the Stonewall riots as the watershed event of gay liberation—the moment when lesbians and gay men finally joined black nationalists, radical feminists, anti-war activists, and other dissidents in the spirit of 1960s revolt. Communities across the globe celebrate Gay Pride with parades, marches, and a variety of social events—a tradition that began on the first anniversary of Stonewall. Under President Clinton, the Stonewall Inn became a National Historic Landmark and June became Gay and Lesbian Pride Month (later renamed LGBT Pride Month under President Obama). Moreover, many activists have mythologized the riots as “one of the great renegade moments in American history”—an event that eventually “ended police harassment, broke open notions of what it meant to be a man or a woman, and broadened the sexuality of a whole generation of Americans—queer and straight.”³⁵⁴ Indeed, LGBT history has largely crystalized into two epochs—“before Stonewall” and “after Stonewall.”³⁵⁵

Contrary to popular narrative, however, several scholars have argued that the Stonewall riots did not *cause* the gay liberation movement. Rather, Stonewall’s now-mythical status is at least in part a *reflection* of lesbian and gay activists’ ability to mobilize nationwide attention and support for the event’s commemoration. In fact, several similar—if less extraordinary—events occurred in San Francisco and Los Angeles prior to Stonewall, each of which included quarrelsome events between overzealous police officers and defiant

³⁵⁴ Russell 2010, 327. It is worth noting, here, that although Stonewall and the gay liberation movement had, until recently at least, largely been written out of the broader narrative of 1960s radicalism, this period has received a great deal of attention by scholars of LGBT history. See, for example, D’Emilio 1998, 223-239; Meyer 2006; Duberman 1994; Kissack 1995; Adam 1995, 81-108.

³⁵⁵ In addition to the proliferation of scholarly work about the Stonewall riots themselves, a schema distinguishing “before” and “after” Stonewall has emerged within a number of books, articles, and other works dealing with LGBT history. For example, John Scagliotti produced two documentary films about lesbian and gay history titled *Before Stonewall* (1984) and *After Stonewall* (1999). See also Edsall 2003; Bullough 2002).

bystanders-turned-activists.³⁵⁶ As sociologists Elizabeth Armstrong and Suzanna Cragge note, Stonewall was *not* the first revolt against homosexual repression; rather, “Stonewall activists were the first to claim to be first.”³⁵⁷ The enduring success of this claim, then, is a tribute to those elements of the movement who effectively cast Stonewall as a synecdoche of the then-burgeoning trend of gay liberation and, more importantly, utilized this memorialization to arouse new democratic practices and propel the movement forward in new directions.

These new directions had their roots not just in homophile advocacy, but in the broader activism of the New Left. As historians Lillian Faderman and Stuart Timmons note, many of those who became gay liberationists “cut their teeth on the 1960s Vietnam and civil rights struggles and the counterculture, where they learned to theorize doubts about the infallibility of society’s wisdom pertaining to issues of war, race, and morality.” Following the lead of these struggles, the authors note, “Finally, [lesbians and gay men] asked, ‘What about *our* liberation?’”³⁵⁸ Importantly, activists operating in the New Left tradition did not claim lesbian and gay liberation as being conceptually distinct from that of other struggles;

³⁵⁶ On January 1, 1965 at a New Year’s costume ball organized by the Council on Religion and the Homosexual (CRH), a newly-formed San Francisco homophile organization, local police officers demanded entrance as paddy wagons and police cars waited outside. Law enforcement also snapped photographs of everyone entering and leaving the ball. Three lawyers and a ticket-taker were arrested for obstructing an officer, as they refused entrance without a warrant. Though the events were described by some as a “historic event” that raised the ire of local homophile activists, they chose not to commemorate the event, as they did not want to further antagonize local law enforcement. In August of 1966, police raided Compton’s Cafeteria, an all-hours coffee shop in San Francisco’s Tenderloin district, spurring a small riot. The events were largely ignored within both the mainstream and gay presses. In Los Angeles, during a 1966-1967 New Year’s celebration, police harassed and beat patrons of two gay bars, spurring organized protest of police brutality. These events, too, would pass from memory, as it failed to generate continued awareness of police brutality, which largely continued in Los Angeles unabated.

³⁵⁷ As Armstrong and Cragge note, the Stonewall riots are now celebrated as the watershed movement of the gay liberation movement because it was the first to meet two primary criteria: activists considered the event commemorable and had the mnemonic capacity to mark it as part of a continuing commemorative ritual. See Armstrong & Cragge 2006.

³⁵⁸ Faderman & Timmons 2006, 167.

rather, they asserted them as *nodal points*, or discursively-constituted points of difference, within a broader, antagonistic struggle against hegemonic and oppressive power relations.³⁵⁹

In the aftermath of the Village riots, “Stonewall” became the rallying cry of a countercultural and counter-hegemonic movement. This signifier, “Stonewall,” encapsulated not just a call for the extension of homophile rights, but it also carried with it the spirit of sexual experimentation that had emerged over the previous decade as a younger generation of Americans rejected the anachronistic social and sexual expectations placed upon them by their parents and grandparents. Stonewall-inspired activists also, for that matter, extended their mobilization efforts beyond the realm of sexual politics, expressing solidarity with those who confronted racial, economic, and gendered forms of oppression. Many activists also established connections with those who were incarcerated, as those “on the inside” were themselves part of a fraught social and sexual landscape not only due to the nature of their confinement, but because law enforcement practices ensured that lesbians and gay men were more likely than non-gay individuals to have “at some point run afoul of the law.”³⁶⁰ These various experiences with, and connections to, various facets of social marginality, then, provided fuel—and Stonewall a spark—for gay liberationism.³⁶¹

To some extent, to understand the significance of Stonewall and its ensuing liberationist ethos is to understand its patrons. The Stonewall’s clientele tended to be young and nonwhite; many dressed in drag and a number of them were runaway street kids from the East Village. Few, if any, had any connections to the more stodgy homophile movement, though many who participated in the riots seem to have been aware that the

³⁵⁹ See Laclau & Mouffe 2001, 112.

³⁶⁰ Kunzel 2008, 194.

³⁶¹ For a contextualization of the gay liberation movement within the broader Sexual Revolution, see D’Emilio & Freedman 1997, 301-325.

night's violence was part of a significant political awakening. ("Gay Power" became a slogan that rioters spray painted along Christopher Street, and rioters chanted this mantra during two nights of conflict with over 400 New York City police.) And clearly, many of the estimated 2,000 rioters consisted of the "destructive" or "swishy" types criticized by the gay press. In contrast to the homophiles, the gay liberation movement most frequently drew from a segment of the lesbian and gay population who refused to "pass" as heterosexual in "normal" society.³⁶²

Within a month of the riots, several of New York City's gay activists formed the Gay Liberation Front (GLF), a radical group styled upon the New Left and antiwar movements of the era. Word of gay liberation spread quickly, particularly among the activist communities of New York's New Left. The GLF's message was infused with the New Left's revolutionary spirit; in its Statement of Purpose, the GLF proclaimed:

We are a revolutionary group of men and women formed with the realization that complete sexual liberation for all people cannot come about unless existing social institutions are abolished. We reject society's attempt to impose sexual roles and definitions of our nature. We are stepping outside these roles and simplistic myths. We are going to be who we are. At the same time, we are creating new social forms and relations, that is, relations based upon brotherhood, cooperation, human love, and uninhibited sexuality. Babylon has forced us to commit ourselves to one thing—revolution!

³⁶² I do not argue that the two movements—the homophile movement and the gay liberation movement—had no overlap, competed with one another for support, or did not complement each other. In fact, many activists of the post-liberation lesbian and gay movement (which, as I shall describe in the pages that follow, resembled the homophiles much more so than the liberationists) initially became involved with lesbian and gay organizing through liberationist groups like the Gay Activists Alliance. Nevertheless, it is useful to establish contrasts in organizing models for purposes of elucidating how lesbian and gay leaders of the 1970s departed from the liberationist verve of the post-Stonewall era in favor of the model established by the less-celebrated 1960s homophile movement.

The counter-cultural movement sweeping the era permeated gay liberation as well; in a nod to the mounting resistance to the Vietnam War, for example, radical gays urged resistance to war rather than fight for the inclusion of gays into the military. Likewise, they borrowed from the radical feminists of the day in claiming that homosexual oppression stemmed from the rigidly enforced primacy of the nuclear family unit and its prescribed sex roles. Through confrontational tactics and “flamboyant” behavior, gay liberationists hastened the spread of practices that had been underway only in localized contexts— “coming out” as not only a personal but also a *political* strategy, consciousness-raising and identity-building as strategies of personal self-acceptance, and the breaking down of deeply-ingrained cultural mores surrounding the family, the state, religion, and many other aspects of life that had become ingrained in the social fabric of American life.

This new activism, importantly, emerged *alongside* (rather than wholly *within*) Kameny’s civil rights-oriented approach to homophile advocacy. While many lesbian and gay men may have been involved with both approaches, liberationists and homophiles applied different representational strategies largely by utilizing different logics of “equivalence” with other struggles. The homophile approach utilized the language, the conceptual framework, and in some cases their own personal experiences with the civil rights movement to push for civil rights of their own. But, they held to the uniqueness of the lesbian and gay struggle, attaching their more particularized, “democratic demands” to a liberal consensus model built upon, first, the freedom to association and, second, demands for Constitutionally-protected civil rights and civil liberties for minority groups. By contrast, liberationists utilized a logic of equivalence that affixed the particular struggles of lesbian and gay men to what Laclau termed a “popular demand,” or a “partial surrender of particularity”

in the name of a broad-based and antagonistic political project.³⁶³ Eschewing the idea that homosexuality served as the basis of a fixed identity category, the liberationists sought cultural transformation by reaching out to other oppressed peoples, though this strategy was met with only limited success.³⁶⁴

Of course, the threat of job loss and social ostracism rendered the homophile movement the safer—albeit still quite dangerous—alternative, particularly to older, middle-class lesbians and gay men who remained far removed from the counterculture relative to the often younger cohort of urban gay radicals. Yet, even the gay middle-class could sympathize with the anger that sparked the uprising. For decades, the bar scene had been the hub of gay social life, at least in urban areas. As one activist described it in the documentary *Stonewall Uprising*, “Gay bars were to gay people what churches were to blacks in the South”—they provided a sense of community, a vibrant social atmosphere against a backdrop of cultural oppression, and, indirectly at least, they helped cultivate political awareness. And they were under constant threat, not only in New York City but across the nation. At the time of the uprising, as many as 5,000 New Yorkers were arrested per year on charges of sexual solicitation; in Los Angeles, this figure was close to 4,000.³⁶⁵ Typically, the nature of these arrests differed from those of other sex crimes such as prostitution, which involved exchanging money for sexual favors and may, at least in some cases, have been tied to networks of organized crime. Solicitation charges, on the other hand, were often instigated by casual-yet-sexually suggestive glances or propositions from undercover police

³⁶³ Laclau 2005, 78.

³⁶⁴ Ultimately, these efforts to build a coalition produced mixed results. As social movements scholar Mary Bernstein notes, gay liberationists reached out to the Black Panther Party and radical women’s groups, and were often (though not always) rebuked. Thus, the presumption of heterosexuality across other identity movements—even those stylized on the “new social movements” (NSM) model—“precluded the types of alliances gay liberationists sought.” See Bernstein 2002, 545-546.

³⁶⁵ Clendinen & Nagourney 1999, 34.

agents. Affirmative responses were considered grounds for arrest, typically without clear intention of “illicit” sexual contact. In some cases, the *perception* of a reciprocated sexually-suggestive stare was all it took for an arrest to be made. Whereas gay culture had begun to thrive throughout the decade, then, the enforcement of anti-gay laws did not recede; rather, law enforcement continued to strike fear into nearly all of those who enjoyed the pleasures of gay cultural life.

While homophile activists universally condemned the police for their role in the riots—and, more generally, for their repressive actions against their community—the ensuing political landscape deepened these growing rifts between the civil rights and counterhegemonic wings of the movement. San Francisco’s homophile leaders, for example, largely dismissed the significance of the Stonewall riots and refused to commemorate the events’ first anniversary, largely due to the San Francisco activists’ disapproval of violence as legitimate civil rights tactic.³⁶⁶ (Growing relationships with the city’s power brokers may have also contributed to their reluctance to engage in public demonstration and antagonistic behavior.) Others disliked the GLF’s comprehensive approach to social upheaval and their overtly political connections to the counter-cultural practices of the New Left. Due in part to these reasons, disgruntled GLF activists formed the Gay Activists Alliance (GAA) as a single-issue (though still rather militant) alternative. Striking only a slightly more moderate tone than the GLF, the Preamble to the Constitution of the GAA’s New York chapter (the charter organization) stated:

³⁶⁶ San Francisco homophile activists “held out until 1972,” according to Armstrong and Crago, at which time “the success of the parade elsewhere made it clear that they could not continue to opt out without missing an opportunity to demonstrate the vitality of their local movement.” Armstrong & Crago 2006, 742.

We as liberated homosexual activists demand the freedom for expression of our dignity and value as human beings through confrontations with and disarmament of all mechanisms which unjustly inhibit us: economic, social, and political. Before the public conscience, we demand an immediate end to all oppression of homosexuals and the immediate unconditional recognition of these basic rights: The right to our own feelings... The right to love... The right to our own bodies... The right to be persons... To secure these rights, we hereby institute the Gay Activists Alliance...³⁶⁷

The GAA avowed itself as a “militant, non-violent, activist organization dedicated to the acquisition of civil rights for all homosexuals,” and engaged in direct action “zaps” whereby unsuspecting “establishment” officials would receive public embarrassment or humiliation at the hands of activists. Despite these militant tactics, however, the GAA also encouraged lesbians and gay men to register as members of the Democratic Party, and the organizations encouraged letter-writing campaigns demanding that legislators repeal consensual sodomy laws, institute gay anti-discrimination laws, and put an end to rampant police mistreatment of gays.³⁶⁸ The GAA, in other words, encouraged political participation on all fronts.

The political victories of the “liberation era”—which, of course, was never fully liberationist but which had competing strategies of representation at work—dwarfed those of the previous decade. By 1973—the date most commonly associated with the “end” of gay liberation and the intensification of neoliberal philosophy—almost 800 lesbian and gay groups had formed across the nation, nearly all of which were local and which varied widely

³⁶⁷ Taken from “20 Questions About Homosexuality: A Political Primer” (Gay Activists Alliance folder, Kinsey Institute, 7-25-2011).

³⁶⁸ Steve Hoglund, “Gay Presidential Politics: The Time to Act Is Now,” (untitled pamphlet, Gay Activists Alliance folder, Kinsey Institute, 7-25-2011).

in their effectiveness, tactics, and focus. Only a year later, this number had grown to approximately 1,100. By the end of the decade, this number had topped 2,000.³⁶⁹

This new era experienced legislative victories as well, as several states eliminated laws that prohibited private homosexual acts. In large part, these legislative efforts occurred *without* much visible pressure from organized lesbian and gay lobbying organizations. Rather, like Illinois, they ostensibly followed the American Law Institute's Model Penal Code, typically with the support of state-level civil liberties organizations. Moreover, these victories occurred in several states *without* strong advocacy groups, whether militant or otherwise. Nine years after Illinois became the first state to rewrite its sexual statutes, Connecticut became the second state to do so in 1971, followed by Idaho (1971 but repealed in 1972), Oregon (1971), Colorado (1971), Hawaii (1972), Delaware (1972), and Ohio (1973). (Sodomy remained criminal in New York and California, the two states with the largest organizational presence.) Local gains had also been made in the area of employment; by 1975, fifteen cities had some form of legal protections in place for lesbians and gay men, covering more than 1.25 million people. At a time when gay activists were beginning to take their cause to the streets, then, state and local legislators were quietly rolling back the legal barriers that had long criminalized basic acts of sexual fulfillment. Despite the inherent difficulties of determining how best to represent the community, the mere presence of liberationists appeared to generate "radical flank effects," or governmental responsiveness to

³⁶⁹ D'Emilio & Freedman 1997, 323; these numbers are confirmed by various reports within *It's Time*, the National Gay Task Force's newsletters from the era.

moderate group demands that result in part due to the presence of vocal and visible radical groups.³⁷⁰

Beyond radical flank effects, however, a fundamental struggle over representational strategies was taking place. As with a number of other identity movements of the era, there was not always a firm, stark contrast between “homophiles” and “liberationists,” even if internecine conflict did frequently fall along these lines. Supporters of one model of organizing often supported the other as well; the divide was not always and exclusively among the individuals or even groups who comprised the nascent lesbian and gay movement. Nevertheless, these schematic distinctions help to characterize the tension at work between two alternative models for socializing conflict. Liberationists reflected a model of political organizing—often carried out chaotically and without the guidance of clear, historical precedent—that sought transgression, rather than affirmation, of state institutions, bureaucratic apparatuses, and managerial authority. They posited expansive views of citizenship and participation, inviting imaginative reinterpretations of the role of sexual relationships within American life—often attached to a revolutionary philosophy in opposition to capitalist functioning. In short, gay liberation fostered *dissent*, and it encouraged a radical interrogation of “commonsense,” hegemonic approaches to political inclusion—the legacy of which can be seen today in more academic strains of political organizing and political thought (e.g. queer theory).

³⁷⁰ As much of the social movement literature indicates, heterogeneity within an identity movement can work to the benefit of the broader movement. Due to what Haines initially termed “radical flank effects,” the presence of radicals can make moderates within a movement appear as attractive negotiating partners; additionally, the presence of radicals often leads to more funding for moderate groups. See Haines 1988; McAdam 1996; Tarrow 1998.

This approach contrasted, of course, with the neoliberalizing trends of interest group politics that would develop throughout much of the ensuing decade. This neoliberal approach fostered inclusion for a number of disadvantaged groups including (eventually) lesbians and gay men. Ultimately, this approach was largely driven by many of same forms of pseudo-democratic practices that the New Left rejected, e.g. managerial authority, a robust and naturalized private sphere, partnerships with state authorities, a privileging of middle- and upper-class actors, an apparent disregard for gendered and racial disparities, etc. Though this direction seemed to carry prohibitive hegemonic concessions, it would be the path that would prove most efficacious as incentive structures rapidly changed in the 1970s.

Nationalizing Lesbian and Gay Advocacy

Though activists and scholars variously characterize the 1960s as a decade of mass movements, social upheaval, and federal action in response to civil rights claims, the 1970s would largely become the “pivotal decade” that gave shape to our present political climate.³⁷¹ Several trends and reforms rooted in the 1970s, I argue, paved the way not only for a new and enhanced role for political advocacy groups, but for new methods of relating to and activating constituents as *interest group citizens*. The new style of interest group representation largely eclipsed the New Left’s liberationist ethos and revolutionary vigor, struggling instead for inclusion into the Washington pressure system; it aimed for recourse to state institutions, and placed greater trust in the wisdom and guidance of professional activists. Just as significantly, this interest group citizenship borrowed from the emerging neoliberal ideology

³⁷¹ Judith Stein’s book, *Pivotal Decade*, details how the “Age of Compression” quickly transformed into the contemporary “Age of Inequality” during the 1970s. Stein focuses largely on the intersection between macroeconomic and presidential politics and, importantly, does not address the role of interest groups in this transformation. See Stein 2010.

the view that constituents are *shareholders* in the collective fate of their movement, and that strong monetary investment in the advocacy marketplace would serve as the best path toward ensuring just outcomes. Most notably, these changes included, first, the unraveling of economic policies that had forged what economists Claudia Goldin and Robert Margo termed “the Great Compression,” i.e. the postwar era of relative economic equality which lasted approximately thirty years, and, second, progressive electoral reforms that dispersed political power away from party bosses and, ultimately and perhaps ironically, toward moneyed interests.³⁷² These trends, together with the slow easing of FBI harassment tactics after J. Edgar Hoover’s death in 1972, helped to enhance the role of nationally-active, Washington-based, and, typically, federally-focused interest groups representing disadvantaged groups.

Of course, these developments created different sorts of opportunities and constraints for different communities, demonstrating the basic but important point that asserting an equivalence with the civil rights movement did not ensure similar policy outcomes. For many lesbian and gay groups—many of which had dropped the label “homophile” as their chosen argot—it became clear by the close of the 1960s that political progress was more likely at the local rather than federal level. Whereas African-Americans benefited from an active federal government throughout the previous decade, federal progress seemed particularly unlikely for lesbians and gay men in the face of a steep uphill battle against public opinion. In his book *Minority Rights Revolution*, John Skrentny notes that lesbians and gay men, unlike African-Americans and other groups, were unable to gain federal protections during the critical era from 1965-1975 not necessarily due to their lack of

³⁷² The Great Compression refers to the post-War era, 1947-1973, in which economic growth soared, taxation rates were progressive, and income and wealth were fairly equitably distributed. See Goldin & Margo 1992.

organized efforts targeting federal officials, but because these federal officials—and much of the general public—continued to associate homosexuality with moral and psychological weakness.³⁷³ Nevertheless—and in contrast with both the civil rights movement and the women’s movement—the lesbian and gay movement still lacked viable, nationally-active advocates. Though ECHO and NACHO established rudimentary levels of coordination amongst various local organizations, these groups were far less organized and effective than even the most feckless of civil rights groups.

The establishment of a gay press capable of reaching—and in the process, creating—a nationwide constituency would prove critical in overcoming this obstacle. The *Los Angeles Advocate* began much like most other gay-themed local papers of its era.³⁷⁴ First published in September of 1967, its inaugural issue was printed secretly in the basement of a Los Angeles television facility.³⁷⁵ It printed only 500 copies and sold only \$24 worth of advertising, two-thirds of which was never actually paid.³⁷⁶ From the beginning, the paper struck a less straitlaced and indigestible tone than the homophile journals of the previous decade. (Unlike the homophile journals, the *Los Angeles Advocate* presented itself as journalism rather than scholarship.) In a break with the more repressive era of the Lavender Scare, the paper allowed advertisers to publish risqué photos, and, in its suggestively-titled “Trader Dicks”

³⁷³ See Skrentny 2002, 314-326.

³⁷⁴ Of these local papers, the *Washington Blade* and the *Bay Area Reporter* are of particular note. The *Blade* was first published in October of 1969, growing largely out of the MSW’s newsletter; editors conceived of the *Blade* as a way to connect gay organizations with the gay community in the Washington, DC area. The *Bay Area Reporter*, known by the initials *B.A.R.*, was first published in April of 1971. Both papers would eventually grow to a circulation of about 30,000. Because they both remained primarily local in scope, I have omitted much discussion of these papers in this chapter.

³⁷⁵ The paper’s full name, including the subtitle, was *The Los Angeles Advocate: A PRIDE Publication*. (PRIDE was a Los Angeles activist groups whose name stood for Personal Rights in Defense and Education.) Interestingly, its first editorial stated (with poor predictive accuracy): “With few staff and even fewer dollars, the *Los Angeles Advocate’s* chances of survival would be rated by experienced journalists as somewhere around zero.” See *Advocate* (Sept. 1967), p. 6.

³⁷⁶ “The Advocate Is Sold,” *Advocate* (Dec. 4, 1974), p. 1.

section, the paper even published personal ads allowing readers to connect with one another.³⁷⁷ The *Advocate* quickly dwarfed ECHO and NACHO—and, for that matter, the defunct Mattachine Society—in its power not only to communicate with and amongst lesbian and gay organizations, but to communicate to lesbian and gay Americans directly. The paper emerged as a leading source of gay news, and it provided free publicity for gay organizations not only in New York or Los Angeles, but also those operating in towns as small as Joplin, MO.

The *Advocate*, though never an advocacy organization in the strictest sense of the term, provided an early point of contrast with the loosely organized liberationist groups of the era. From its inception, the paper opined about the community's need to shed itself of liberationist leaders who, the *Advocate* claimed, made “a lot of noise” and “scared off all support.”³⁷⁸ Foreshadowing the emergence of strategic and pragmatic approaches to political mobilization, the paper continually highlighted the need for organization, efficiency, and lobbying rather than direct action tactics. Indeed, these themes would soon establish the paper not only as the leading voice of gay news, but as a primary alternative to liberationist groups like the GLF or the GAA in the early 1970s.³⁷⁹ Its influence would quickly win out.

The year 1973 marked a particularly significant turning point. In hindsight, it marked the unofficial end of the “Great Compression,” the beginning of rising inequalities from which the United States has yet to recover, and, ultimately, the unofficial beginning of the

³⁷⁷ The homophile-era magazines had refused many requests to put readers in contact with one another, as editors were justifiably concerned that such a liaison service would lead to legal retaliation by federal or state authorities.

³⁷⁸ See “Movement’s New Hope,” *Advocate* (Sept. 29-Oct. 12, 1971), p. 22.

³⁷⁹ Interestingly, the paper occasionally credited quasi-militant groups like New York’s Gay Activist Alliance for exuding a “well-organized” militarism, provided they confined their objectives exclusively “to matters that affect Gays.” By contrast, the *Advocate* expressed displeasure with groups like the GLF, who served as all-purpose revolutionary organizations by taking positions on a number of issues that did not pertain directly to issues of sexual orientation. See “Refreshing Visit,” *Advocate* (Oct. 28-Nov.10, 1970), p. 20.

era of neoliberalism in which we now live.³⁸⁰ In 1973, oil prices rose dramatically. Food prices and inflation soon followed. Workforce productivity declined. Each of these economic indicators would remain volatile throughout the decade. Furthermore, conventional Keynesian adjustments would prove insufficient, as consumers for the first time overwhelmingly spent economic stimuli on imports rather than domestically-produced goods. Keynesianism, once the only economic game in town, would soon see competitors rise to key posts. Meanwhile, the Watergate scandal had created a strong sense of public cynicism about the fate of American democracy.

Oddly, despite the economic and political uncertainty of the decade, a vast consensus had begun to emerge which claimed that the *social* upheavals of the 1960s had ended. Noted conservative commentator Irving Kristol announced in 1973 that “the 1970s will be years of assimilation and adaptation, of ‘cooptation.’” Moreover, he claimed, the forces of civil unrest that had placed so much strain on society during the 1960s were “on their way to being institutionalized, to being rendered conventional, unsubversive, in the end uninteresting.”³⁸¹ Two months later, the editors of the *Wall Street Journal* proclaimed it time to “pity the New Left” rather than fear it or denounce it.³⁸² As it would turn out, these claims were not made prematurely. Amid great economic uncertainty and volatility, dissent was being transformed into tamed and institutionalized forms of political action. As Adolph Reed has explained, by mid-decade the Left showed “no signs of an oppositional political

³⁸⁰ Though neoliberalism is most associated with the Reagan administration (and beyond), scholarly and popular accounts of neoliberalism tend to declare 1973 as an unofficial starting point to the growth of neoliberal ideology in the United States. Antonio Vázquez-Arroyo’s article about neoliberalism’s growth within, and eclipse of, liberal democracy begins by stating that “neoliberal ideology started to hold sway in the West soon after the world-capitalist crises of 1973.” See Vázquez-Arroyo 2008, 127.

³⁸¹ *Wall Street Journal* (Feb. 16, 1973).

³⁸² *Wall Street Journal* (May 24, 1973).

movement.”³⁸³ As the economic and political transitions characterizing neoliberalism were first being set in motion, then, changes were also taking place to undercut the destabilizing and revolutionary elements of New Left democratic praxis.

Ultimately, though, these fundamental changes that led to the growth of interest group representation were not—as thinkers like Kristol on the Right hoped or as radicals on the Left feared—merely assimilationist or cooptative. Such a view implies not only a relatively stable culture into which previously “unassimilated” groups can assimilate, but also stable identity categories whose more radical participants could be tamed, absorbed, and rendered inconsequential. While this interpretation may not be entirely without merit, it is incomplete. The style of interest group representation that emerged over the coming decades may have confronted somewhat narrower opportunities in the new economic era and taken a strategically more conservative path than groups like the GLF; however, the language of “civil rights” and the utilization of a hegemonic framework of political mobilization nevertheless allowed new groups to struggle for inclusion and establish themselves as worthy political claimants in ways that many would find quite empowering.

Fittingly, the year 1973 would mark a critical turning point for lesbian and gay advocacy. In November of 1973, a group of gay professionals established the National Gay Task Force (NGTF, or the “Task Force”). Howard J. Brown, a former New York City public official, served as the organization’s first chairman; Bruce Voeller, an evolutionary biologist and the former president of New York’s GAA, became its first executive

³⁸³ Reed 1986, 8.

director.³⁸⁴ Patterned after the ACLU and various other civil rights groups, the Task Force's formation provided a modicum of national structure where other organizations fell short. Whereas groups with national aspirations like the GAA had "a chaotic style of operation in which every proposal could be debated endlessly," the NGTF, with a small paid staff and without a participatory membership structure, could coordinate and pursue long-term goals without getting bogged down in community-wide debate.³⁸⁵ And, whereas local gay groups—numbering over a thousand by the time of the NGTF's formation—utilized energizing tactics such as street demonstrations or "zaps" of offending public figures, the new advocacy organization could focus on more upright tactics like litigation, lobbying, and insider influence.³⁸⁶ Moreover, as Brown would note, the new organization "provided a way for professionals to participate."³⁸⁷

The new approach appeared to pay immediate dividends. Within months of the Task Force's formation, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders. Though the issue had long been a subject of debate within the psychiatric establishment, NGTF board members played a critical role in the APA's decision, and the association vowed to work closely with the Task Force in applying the APA's new attitude.³⁸⁸ Other advancements quickly followed, including the

³⁸⁴ The NGTF was renamed the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) in 1985. This chapter will continue to refer to the organization as NGTF, as the bulk of this chapter's events occurred well before the organization changed its name.

³⁸⁵ D'Emilio 2000, 473.

³⁸⁶ A "zap" is a term, widely used amongst radical groups in the early 1970s, referring to the public embarrassment, shaming, or rebuking of "establishment" officials who had offended in one way or another.

³⁸⁷ Howard Brown, quoted in "Heavyweight National Gay Group Formed," *Advocate* (Nov. 7, 1973), p. 24.

³⁸⁸ While the actual role that the NGTF (still a very new organization) played in lobbying the psychiatric establishment is unclear, the Task Force's Chairman Howard Brown appeared at the press conference where the APA announced its decision. (The APA's decision became official in April, 1974, when a 58% majority of its members voted to uphold the decision.) See David Aiken, "Gays Leave Psychiatric 'Sick' List," *Advocate* (Jan. 2, 1974), p. 1; "The Earth Is Round," *Its Time: Monthly Newsletter of the National Gay Task Force*, v. 1, n. 1 (May 1974), p. 1.

introduction of a gay rights bill into Congress, a report on “new attitudes” and anti-discrimination policies across the private sector, and the Civil Service Commission’s reversal of its ban on employing lesbians and gay men in federal jobs.³⁸⁹ By the close of the decade, Task Force representatives met with officials from the Bureau of Prisons and the Federal Communications Commission. And, in perhaps its biggest symbolic victory, NGTF co-executives Jean O’Leary and Bruce Voeller (along with a dozen other prominent lesbian and gay public figures) met with officials from the Carter White House in 1977.

Meanwhile, the *Advocate* also hastened its transition into a nationally-active political force. In December of 1974, Richard Mitch and Bill Rau (who used the pseudonyms Dick Michaels and Bill Rand, respectively) sold the paper to Liberation Publications, Inc., a corporation headed by San Francisco homophile activist David Goodstein. In their last issue as editors, the departing Mitch and Rau claimed that “the mood is different” in the gay community, as “political activism is no longer a consuming fire, but rather a practical (and limited) step toward freedom.”³⁹⁰ The new conviction seemed to be that sustained organizing required a blend of capital and initiative, particularly as gay professionals aspired to rise above the local battles that had proven invigorating to many, but ineffective overall.³⁹¹

Perhaps no one in the gay movement embodied this new spirit more than Goodstein, who

³⁸⁹ Though the bill’s Congressional sponsors admitted that it stood no chance of passing, subsequent efforts to re-introduce the bill gained greater Task Force involvement and, by 1975, twenty-four Congressional co-sponsors. The proposed legislation aimed to amend the 1964 and 1968 civil rights acts to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual preference. A federal civil rights bill remained a goal of the Task Force and other leading lesbian and gay organization, though it never materialized despite receiving dozens of new congressional sponsorships well into the 1980s. Nathalie Rockhill and Bruce Voeller, “Campaign Begins for HR 5452,” *Its Time: Monthly Newsletter of the National Gay Task Force*, v. 1, n. 3 (May 1975), p. 1.

³⁹⁰ Williams H. DuBay, “Gay Lib Not Dead: Progress Coming in New Forms,” *Advocate* (Jan. 15, 1975), p. 29.

³⁹¹ In the struggle for African-American civil rights, critical race scholar Adolph Reed claims, the “alliance of corporate liberalism and black protest” were central to these developments. Certainly, these dynamics were at work in the lesbian and gay movement during the 1970s as well, if less thoroughly so. (After all, to the extent that lesbians and gay men were viewed as “threats,” fears of radical organizations comparable to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee or the Black Panther Party would have seemed absurd to most.) See Reed 1986, 69. See also Allen 1990(1969).

took control of the *Advocate* in January of 1975 and remained a significant figurehead until his death in 1985. Goodstein moved the *Advocate* to San Francisco and turned the paper into “the only truly national pipeline” for news and information about the gay movement.³⁹² The paper also turned Elaine Noble, Allan Spear, and Harvey Milk—three of the nation’s first openly gay elected officials—into recognizable names within lesbian and gay communities across the country.³⁹³ And, in its most significant advocacy endeavor, a 1976 *Advocate*-sponsored conference in Chicago birthed the Gay Rights National Lobby (GRNL).

While largely ineffective as governmental “insiders” during the 1970s, NGTF and GRNL—together, of course, with the *Advocate*—provided the main point of entry into the American political system for the nation’s lesbian and gay citizens. With NGTF operating out of New York City and focusing on national media and the executive branch, and GRNL operating out of the nation’s capital and focusing on lobbying Congress, these organizations arose at a time when interest groups were seizing upon new opportunities in the political process. These new opportunities largely eclipsed those offered by the New Left, which favored active engagement, local action, and egalitarianism.³⁹⁴ It would not occur through mere happenstance.

³⁹² “A Farewell...” *Advocate* (Jan. 15, 1975), p. 28.

³⁹³ Though most people familiar with LGBT history know the story of Harvey Milk and even celebrate him as the first openly gay American politician, this distinction actually belongs to Kathy Kozachenko, who won a seat on the Ann Arbor City Council. (Significantly, Kozachenko’s predecessor, Nancy Wechsler, had also come out while in office, though she did not win office as an open lesbian.) Boston’s Elaine Noble, who in 1974 was elected to the Massachusetts State Senate, became the first state-level public official to win a seat as an open lesbian. Soon after Noble won her election, Minnesota State Senator Allan Spear came out, becoming the nation’s second openly gay politician at the statewide level; Spear credited Sen. Noble’s story as inspiration for his own coming out. The tragic circumstances of Milk’s death, though, has contributed to the widespread narrative that he was America’s first openly gay politician.

³⁹⁴ Though editors of the *Advocate* expressed enthusiasm for the newly-formed NGTF in late 1973 and early 1974, readers were often more skeptical. Stated one San Francisco man in the “MailBag” section of the paper, “Gay leaders who accommodate, rather than pressure, the power structure, are welcomed by officialdom,” as unsympathetic officials will merely provide the illusion that they are willing to work with gay leaders. In the

From the Closet if Necessary: Lesbian and Gay Citizenship Goes Financial

To the extent that the New Left's enthusiasm waned despite economic uncertainty and widespread civic cynicism, the taming of American dissent did not occur exclusively as the result of macroeconomic forces and the hard work of political elites. Rather, the road to interest group citizenship was also paved, as the saying goes, with good intentions. Political reforms of the era created new opportunities that, I argue, had the perhaps ironic—if indirect—impact of *stripping* citizens of the ability to engage in collective governance rather than arm them with it. Notably, the McGovern-Fraser Commission—established out of the tumult of the 1968 Democratic Party's nomination process—was created in part to combat the metaphorical “smoke filled rooms” method of choosing candidates. As a result of the commission's recommendations, the Democratic Party established new guidelines designed to broaden participation and enhance minority representation. John Aldrich has argued that these reforms had two key (though perhaps unintended) effects: First, they standardized the rules across states, thereby “nationalizing” the parties by creating a “top-down” flow of resources from the national to state and local levels. Second, they transformed the parties into vehicles for entrepreneurial candidates capable of connecting with voters, attracting support, and, importantly, raising money. In sum, electoral politics became more professionalized, requiring new political operatives capable of expanding the parties' “resource base” by raising money and investing it in the right places, whether in local, state, or federal races.³⁹⁵

same issue, a reader from New York City wrote that although an “umbrella” group like NGTF could be helpful, it is ultimately doomed to elitism. See *Advocate* (Jan. 16, 1974), p. 36.

³⁹⁵ Aldrich 1995, 254-255.

Scholars have largely refrained from detailing how these reforms spurred changes in political advocacy, though it is clear that parties' reforms renewed imperatives to foster connections with the parties' various constituencies. On the flipside, opportunities opened up for these constituencies to exert new control over the parties' candidates and platforms, so long as they could produce funding and votes. Political action committees would soon fill the power vacuum left by state party leaders, if only slowly at first. While the newly nationalized gay movement would not capitalize upon these new rules of engagement until the formation of the Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF) in 1980, groups like the NGTF and GRNL followed the emerging zeitgeist of political entrepreneurship, establishing parameters of gay citizenship and public action that helped to solidify financial contribution and trust in professional leaders as the primary expressions of political participation in the emerging advocacy era.

In the early 1970s, gay editorialists frequently lamented the crisis of leadership that plagued the fledgling gay movement, particularly as many gay professionals remained closeted while a younger, more rebellious cohort of gay radicals served as the movement's public face. With nationally-active organizations like NGTF and the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund—which, like NGTF, had formed in the latter months of 1973—still in their infancy, leadership continued to outpace finances as the movement's primary necessity. The *Advocate*—the one organization with its finger on the pulse of gay advocacy nationwide—served as a primary source to rally and recruit a new generation of gay leaders, seeking in particular those with requisite “experience” in the “real world,” whether in business, finance, or some other white-collar profession. An editorial published in the summer of 1974 noted that although meager funds proved difficult to overcome, “petty

ripoff artists and professional failures...the destructive element and the phonies” had created a dearth of leadership that threatened the long-term health of the movement; what was needed, the editorial claimed, was an atmosphere that would “nurture accomplishment rather than chaos”—a clear jab at the preceding five or so years of liberationist verve, and a call to arms for successful and established individuals to reclaim the movement.³⁹⁶

After Goodstein—himself the entrepreneurial sort—took control of the *Advocate* at mid-decade, however, the tone began to shift, if only slightly at first. For example, a 1975 editorial reversed the order of these two needs, claiming that “Gay groups suffer from a lack of money and a shortage of competent leadership.”³⁹⁷ For only a small amount of money, the article claimed, the movement could achieve a great deal, including solving its leadership problem. With a steady and reliable stream of funds, lesbian and gay groups could *hire* competent, experienced, and professional leaders rather than rely on inexperienced—and often ineffective—volunteers. Implicitly, the article claimed that previous pleas for leadership had placed the cart before the horse. Though many gays had been waiting for strong leaders to emerge, the movement first needed *funding* to ensure that gay professionals could make the most of the already-narrow political opportunities available to lesbians and gay men. Funding, of course, would also ensure that these professionals would spend their time advocating for gay causes *at all* given that their professional skills were (presumably) widely marketable. It was at this time that the idea of a paid staff of gay professionals came to fruition. The paper was quick to point out, however, that it could not happen without the generosity of its readers—the future members of organizations like the NGTF.

³⁹⁶ “Our Crisis: Leadership,” *Advocate* (July 3, 1974), p. A-26.

³⁹⁷ “Opening Space,” *Advocate* (June 18, 1975), p. 3.

As the 1970s wore on, this demand for finances—and, therefore, lesbian and gay donors—intensified as money became a key ingredient to even the most minor of political victories. In contrast with the participatory (and often chaotic) organizing model of local liberationist groups, national lesbian and gay leaders projected an image of gay political participation that emphasized two fundamental outlets for participation—the ballot and the purse (and not necessarily in that order). For the Task Force, participation meant mobilizing as many members—that is, donors—as possible, with donations paying for an office, supplies, and modest salaries for a small staff. While the NGTF did not reach levels of visibility achieved by other prominent minority organizations like NOW or the NAACP, the organization did grow rapidly in its first several years of existence. At the beginning of 1976, the Task Force had approximately 2,500 members; by the close of 1977, membership had grown to over 6,500; a year later, spurred largely by the emerging threat of antigay Christian fundamentalism, membership topped 10,000.³⁹⁸ (By contrast, the NAACP boasted a membership of well over 400,000, and NOW’s more modest membership of 55,000 was still more than five times larger than that of the NGTF.)

Cultivating this base of financial supporters would prove critical to maintaining organizational success within a diversifying—if still heavily business-driven—Washington pressure system. While the direct action tactics of groups like the GLF drew Americans’ attention to the discontent and hardship of many lesbians and gay men, the emerging interest group model of advocacy *minimized* the action-oriented ethos. (What some viewed as publicity and action, others viewed as unnecessary negative publicity.) Instead, the interest group model strove to build an infrastructure for organizational sustainability.

³⁹⁸ These statistics come from numbers reported in the Task Force’s newsletter, *It’s Time*.

Interest group scholars—perhaps most notably Piven and Cloward—have built upon Michels’ “iron law of oligarchy” to characterize this transition towards professionalization and, inexorably, antidemocratic and conservative tendencies.³⁹⁹

Importantly, though, these organizations cannot afford—in the most literal sense—to cut their constituents out of the process entirely; they need broad bases of support. That is, they need *interest group citizens* who will, first, come to recognize the potentially-significant role of their group identity to the democratic process and, second, *participate* as group members by helping to maintain those organizations who are working so hard to transform a shared sense of grouphood into group demands. (In short, they work to transform a group into a political claimant, with specific and practicable policy demands.) This form of participation— participation-as-organizational-maintenance—does not merely bolster the role of professionals in “mainstream” advocacy efforts like lobbying and litigation. It also, importantly, circumscribes boundaries around what “counts” as “helpful” participation by encouraging a shift *away* from forms of unconventional direct action that could potentially harm the group’s struggle for inclusion and *toward* a sustainable framework of financial generosity and professionalism.

To the extent that this interest group citizenship entailed *activism*, then, it did not require much *action*. One 1975 *Advocate* editorial insisted that to “develop our grassroots movement...the gay citizen” can aid the gay cause “not necessarily by taking an activist role...but by using discretion and good sense in deciding which spokespeople in the community and government deserve your support, and then support them. With money.

³⁹⁹ Michels 1911; Piven & Cloward 1977.

With votes. With whatever resources you have at hand.”⁴⁰⁰ An editorial only a few months later spoke of the “two fronts” emerging for the gay movement—one to be undertaken by gay *citizens*, the other to be undertaken by their professional *representatives*. Whereas the task of organizational leaders would be to directly lobby governmental officials, gay citizens could help by “registering voters, raising gay money, and causing campaign headquarters and staffs to be filled with gay volunteers.”⁴⁰¹ Throughout the ensuing years, editorials persistently repeated this theme, linking political participation with the dual imperatives of fundraising and voting. Determining goals, platforms, and the overall direction of the movement would best be left to the professionals.

As neoliberal economic philosophies were beginning to take hold, then, these rationalities were seeping not only into governance, but advocacy as well. Whereas the participatory spirit of the liberationist era emphasized street marches, counter-cultural lifestyles and, at least in theory, democratic operating procedures, the emerging model of interest group citizenship slowly grew to emphasize investment in the advocacy marketplace, with entrepreneurial leaders, i.e. those who had established themselves in the “private sector,” emerging as the strategic architects of future representative endeavors. Thus, tactful management, not action, became the driving feature of interest group representation as opportunity structures began to open up for organizations to exert newfound control over the partisan landscape.

Of course, interest group citizenship became more practicable for some more than others. It is important (if unsurprising) to note that when nationally-active groups like the *Advocate* and NGTF appealed for greater participation, they increasingly directed these

⁴⁰⁰ “Editorial,” *Advocate* (Feb. 28, 1975), p. 30.

⁴⁰¹ “Opening Space,” *Advocate* (Oct. 8, 1975), p. 7.

pleas—whether implicitly or explicitly—toward wealthier (and typically white) individuals or, more obliquely, “the emerging gay middle-class.”⁴⁰² The *Advocate*, for example, frequently noted (often with exasperation or hostility) that although wealthy gays were particularly well-positioned to fund the movement, far too many of them remained “closeted.” To counteract this problem, gay leaders, much like their liberationist counterparts, made frequent appeals to the entire community to come out. Not only was the topic of “coming out” a staple among the articles and editorials undertaken by the *Advocate*, but several organizations featured advertisements utilizing the “closet” metaphor, often as part of a fundraising effort.

Though these efforts almost certainly provided encouragement for many lesbians and gay men as they fled the closet, the harsh reality was that hundreds of thousands more remained deeply closeted, and the national advocates provided little encouragement to the poor or racial minorities to “come out.” In fact, the short-lived National Coalition of Black Gays (NCBG) formed in response to the lack of African-American participation in groups like the NGTF; ultimately, though, the NCBG would, like the NGTF, emphasize “organizational skills and experience” over a more participatory membership structure.⁴⁰³

Despite efforts to mobilize upper- and middle-class individuals to undertake the often terrifying experience of coming out, the national organizations had to create ways for

⁴⁰² See “The Future of Gay Rights? The Emerging Gay Middle-Class,” *Advocate* (Oct. 22, 1975), p. 10.

⁴⁰³ The NCBG (later National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays, or NCBLG) formed in 1979 by Billy Jones and Gil Gerald, Washington, DC activists. As Gerald would later claim, “The visible organizations were mostly White and I knew they didn’t represent the broader Gay community in DC.” However, Jones noted that he was “privately concerned that organizational skills or experience were not always prevalent in the group,” and his “bias for structure and process” prevented the organization from reaching out too widely or expand too quickly. These organizational issues would prevent the organization from developing a strong national presence, and the organization ceased operations in the mid-1980s. See Sydney Brinkley, “The National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays: Making History.” Retrieved Nov. 15, 2012 from http://www.blacklightonline.com/ncblg_1.html.

those who remained closeted to contribute. (To this end, the *Advocate* continued to mail their product in unlabeled manila envelopes so that they would not “out” their readers involuntarily.) Efforts to target closeted lesbians and gay men started very early in the national organizations’ histories, primarily, of course, by targeting those who they perceived to be closeted out of fear of losing their lucrative careers. One 1972 *Advocate* editorial, written at a time when liberationists pitched “coming out” as the ultimate political act of homosexual affirmation, discussed exactly how closeted individuals could contribute: “Money! Money is the name of the game!”⁴⁰⁴ The Task Force also wasted little time in appealing to their closeted members. An editorial titled “An Open Letter to Gay America,” published in the inaugural edition of the Task Force’s newsletter, *It’s Time*, reiterated this theme, arguing that lesbians and gay men were themselves susceptible to the “popular and age-old myths of homosexuality,” leading far too many lesbians and gay men to “shun support of gay causes.” Though coming out remained a long-term goal, the Task Force urged lesbians and gay men to fund the movement “from the closet if necessary.”⁴⁰⁵

These appeals to closeted gays continued, largely under the assumption that a large proportion of wealthy gays remained closeted in order to protect their social status. Of course, *many* different subgroups maintained strong incentives to remain closeted, including low-income women on public assistance, divorcées who feared losing custody of their children, and, for that matter, working-class individuals who had as much reason to fear job loss as their white-collar contemporaries. But, whereas the liberationists had had little use for those who refused to affirm their sexuality and were more likely to, rhetorically at least,

⁴⁰⁴ “...And In Helping,” *Advocate* (July 5, 1972), p. 6.

⁴⁰⁵ “An Open Letter to Gay America,” *It’s Time: Monthly Newsletter of the National Gay Task Force*, v. 1, n. 1 (May 1974), p. 2.

support working-class lesbians and gay men from different racial backgrounds, the closeted-but-wealthy were precisely the demographic that the new national advocates sought to mobilize. GRNL distributed advertisements under the heading: “But I can’t ‘come out’—how could I help?” These advertisements, which featured a picture of a man in a business suit, claimed that those “who must play a low visibility role” can play a critical role, as GRNL’s membership lists remained confidential. After all, if the upper-class was not willing to project a responsible image for gays by coming out themselves, at least they could *fund* the gay movement’s efforts to do so. The Task Force, for its part, ran an advertising campaign imploring readers to “Join the People of NGTF.” These advertisements included profiles of prominent NGTF members including judges, lawyers, executives, and others in white-collar careers. The inclusion of these profiles signaled not only that Task Force contributors were respected professionals, but also that these members were proud of their affiliation and willing to state as much openly—still an incredibly bold move in the 1970s.

Certainly, money had always been a matter of concern to the gay movement. The *Mattachine Review*, for example, continually solicited donations from readers throughout its run, if only to offset printing costs. As the national movement began to take on a more expressly political focus in the 1970s, however, money became an absolute necessity. Nevertheless, even those groups with the most funding struggled to maintain sustainable operating budgets. In 1976, an *Advocate* survey of lesbian and gay organizations revealed that the estimated total revenue of *all* gay organizations nationwide was only about \$869,000, with the wealthiest seven organizations accounting for \$775,000 of this sum.⁴⁰⁶ By the end of its fifth year of existence in 1978, NGTF had a budget of about \$300,000, more than a

⁴⁰⁶ See “A Profile: Gay Organizations, Part III,” *Advocate* (Dec. 1, 1976), p. 7.

fourfold increase from its inaugural year, but not enough to employ more than a few full-time staffers earning modest incomes.⁴⁰⁷ Compared to others in the movement, however, the Task Force appeared flush with cash. Lambda Legal—which years later would become the “ACLU of the gay movement”⁴⁰⁸—had just *one* employee in 1978, almost a full five years after the organization’s founding. That employee, Executive Director Barbara Levy, waited tables by night simply so that the organization could stay afloat.⁴⁰⁹ As well-funded movements emerged on the Right—with Anita Bryant’s Dade County campaign serving as a primary point of emergence for the anti-gay Christian Right—the lesbian and gay community found itself in a seemingly unwinnable financial arms race, and in a particularly precarious position due to the renewed homophobia fomented by the rising threat of antigay Christian radicals.

Rather than continue to solicit contributions on behalf of the major organizations, the *Advocate* participated directly in this arms race. The paper started its own political action fund—the Advocate Political Action Fund (APAF)—in 1978.⁴¹⁰ In doing so, the *Advocate* doubled down on its claims that “well-meaning amateurs” could not win the battles ahead.⁴¹¹ Rather, they claimed that only “the most experienced, expert, professional and efficiently-managed campaign” could defeat Bryant’s efforts as they spread to California in the form of

⁴⁰⁷ In November of 1975, NGTF reported that “NGTF’s staff earns just \$7200 annually,” with the bulk of this money coming from individual memberships and fundraising benefits. “Your Help and NGTF Funds,” *It’s Time: Monthly Newsletter of the National Gay Task Force*, v. 2, n. 2 (Nov. 1975), p. 3.

⁴⁰⁸ D’Emilio 2000, 470.

⁴⁰⁹ See “Lambda Leaves It to Levy,” *Advocate* (Aug. 9, 1978), p. 19.

⁴¹⁰ See “A Gift for the Future,” *Advocate* (Jan. 11, 1978), p. 6.

⁴¹¹ “A Professional Campaign Must,” *Advocate* (Nov. 30, 1977), p. 20.

the Briggs Initiative.⁴¹² All that ordinary citizens could really do was give, and give generously.

The newly elected Reagan administration, proving itself adverse to the gay community, only deepened the community's imperative for financial, rather than intellectual or democratic, contributions. Particularly as the AIDS crisis unfolded, gay organizations found themselves waging an uphill battle on two costly fronts. On one front, gay leaders wished to continue to fight for basic rights—such as the repeal of sodomy laws—that had already been won in several states. At a time when a hostile administration stood directly in the way of achieving these objectives, the *Advocate* asserted that victory would only come via “an ongoing, organized and well-executed economic mobilization agenda designed to demonstrate our purchasing power”—a power that linked directly to *political* power.⁴¹³ Discouragingly, the new administration—which seemed to place a renewed trust in new markets and old morals—meant expectations for more losses. But, the national organizations only seemed to follow along with the intensifying “bootstraps” principles of self-help. As a 1982 editorial stated, “We have to be present in more campaigns, work harder, raise more money, submit more petitions, write more letters and make more personal visits than ever before. Most of all we have to raise lots of money for our political friends.”⁴¹⁴

On the other front, the AIDS virus threatened not only the livelihood of the movement, but the lives of gay men across the country. Nevertheless, the federal

⁴¹² The Briggs Initiative was a (failed) initiative that would have banned gays and lesbians (and possibly all supporters of gay rights) from working in California's public schools. This initiative was directly inspired by Bryant's Save Our Children campaign. Interestingly, Harvey Milk aided the campaign fight, as did an unexpected opponent of the initiative, then-governor Ronald Reagan.

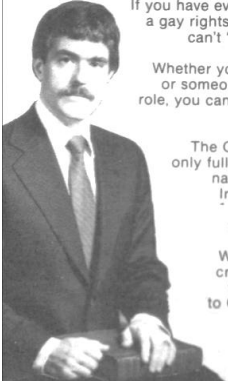
⁴¹³ “Opening Space,” *Advocate* (Oct. 15, 1981), p. 6.

⁴¹⁴ “Opening Space,” *Advocate* (Jan. 21, 1982), p. 8.

government remained painfully unresponsive, and committed few resources to combat the virus. In the face of an obstinate Reagan administration and a revitalized Religious Right, then, the gay movement simply could not meet the funding requirements necessary for major successes on one, let alone both, of these fronts. *Advocate* leadership was particularly unforgiving of the perceived failures of gay leaders on these issues. According to one Goodstein editorial, printed in the midst of months of vicious attacks against executives and boards of directors of national organizations like NGTF and GRNL: “given the state of the finances of gay organizations, directors have one job more important than all others combined: to insure sufficient revenues to make their organizations viable. Give money! Get others to give it! Or get out, resign!” This borderline vitriol was not only directed to gay leaders, however. To those financially capable of giving, he directed a clear message: “until and unless you give generously to gay organizations, you’re just another useless faggot or dyke.”⁴¹⁵ Though this level of public exasperation was rare amongst the “establishment” gay leaders, Goodstein’s reproach was unique only for its tone and not its overall message.

⁴¹⁵ “Opening Space,” *Advocate* (Dec. 8, 1983), p. 8.

**“But I can’t ‘come out’
how could I help?”**



If you have ever thought about contributing to a gay rights group but decided that you just can't "come out," we have good news!

Whether you are gay or straight, an activist or someone who must play a low visibility role, you can help end discrimination against lesbians and gay men.

The Gay Rights National Lobby is the only full time lobby at Congress seeking national gay civil rights legislation. In addition GRNL works to defeat anti-gay bills and amendments designed to turn back the clock.

We all have a stake in ending discrimination and changing the attitudes that cause it. Contributing to GRNL is an excellent chance for all of us to assist significantly.

Our membership list is confidential.

GAY RIGHTS NATIONAL LOBBY
Your lobby in Washington... getting things done for you!

I wish to contribute \$ _____
I wish to become a member:

- \$20 Regular membership
- \$30 Household membership
- \$50 Sustaining membership
- \$100 Contributing membership
- \$250 Business membership
- \$500 Benefactor membership

Please note: The GRNL contribution and membership list is confidential.

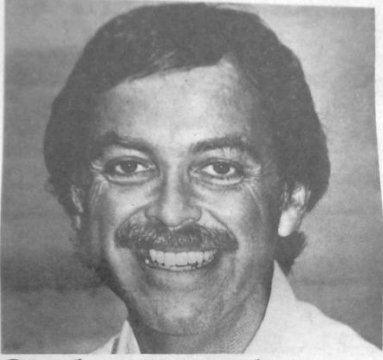
Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ ZIP _____
Telephone (____) _____

A Make check or money order payable to: A
GRNL Post Office Box 1892, Washington, D.C. 20013

1303 F 001 NAW #911 WASHINGTON D.C. 20004

Above: Gay Rights National Lobby advertisement in the Advocate

Join the People of NGTF



Stephen M. Lachs

PROFESSION: Superior Court Judge
MOST RECENT ACHIEVEMENT:
The United States' first openly gay judge ran unopposed for election for a new six year term.

MEMBER:
THE NATIONAL GAY TASK FORCE

REASON:
My freedom to be me is only as safe as your freedom to be you. A strong NGTF is needed to secure this freedom for us all.

Above: National Gay Task Force advertisement in the Advocate

All the while, these organizations endeavored to transform sexual orientation into a basis for a voting bloc and, gradually, an emerging electoral alliance with the Democratic Party. By and large, this decision to support Democrats arose somewhat contingently. Though the GOP had historically been more zealously anti-communist—and, by extension of the faulty logic linking communism and homosexuality, more anti-gay—partisan lines had not yet been clearly drawn. But, in the 1970s a small number of California Democrats demonstrated a willingness to listen to lesbian and gay concerns. And, in the buildup to the 1972 presidential election, eventual Democratic nominee George McGovern, after much prodding from gay activists, supported gay rights as part of a comprehensive approach to ensuring individual rights.⁴¹⁶ After halfheartedly endorsing McGovern in 1972, the *Advocate* followed with another unenthusiastic endorsement for Congressional Democrats in the 1974 midterm elections, acknowledging at the time that although “the overwhelming majority” of gays were probably registered Republicans, “the more liberal stance of most Democrats toward social and civil rights of minorities” made them the better option.⁴¹⁷ This lukewarm support, however, was followed by an increasing number of advertisements in the paper urging readers to register and vote Democratic. By the end of 1975, the paper began to encourage a letter-writing campaign designed to add a gay rights message to the Democratic Platform Committee. Though the Carter campaign was not initially amenable, he soon became the first president to invite gay advocates to the White House. With that action, the

⁴¹⁶ The decision to support McGovern was not universally shared within the movement. The Gay Voters League of San Francisco, newly formed prior to the 1972 election, endorsed Nixon. The *Advocate*, for its part, endorsed McGovern, albeit with an editorial titled “So He’s Not Ideal.” See “So He’s Not Ideal,” *Advocate* (Oct. 25, 1972), p. 28.

⁴¹⁷ See “Our ’74 Votes,” *Advocate* (April 24, 1974), p. 36.

integration of gays into the Democratic Party was nearly complete; the 1980 Democratic National Convention had eighty gay delegates—a caucus larger than that of 25 states.⁴¹⁸

Conclusions: “Money Knows No Sexual Orientations”

The middle and latter portions of the 1970s are often characterized as a departure from the rebellious milieu of the brief-yet-thrilling liberationist era. With the United States entering a more conservative political era and America’s counterculture losing steam, the lesbian and gay movement is said to have adapted to the times, with the historical details of this “adaptation” largely remaining undocumented until quite recently. Importantly, though, the lesbian and gay movement was not simply following the trend towards a conservative era. Rather, it was slowly building an organizational infrastructure designed to thrive in a neoliberalizing political climate. As part of this climate, the primary space of political participation for lesbian and gay constituents became that of financial contributors rather than as participants in the collective activity of democratic governance. Of course, this model of participation effectively suppressed the potential impact of many low-income subgroups; only after the organizations became financially viable institutions did they begin to encourage a slightly wider range of (still fairly conventional) tactics, such as the landmark 1979 National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights.⁴¹⁹ But, as the decade wore on lesbians and gay men were contributing more and more money, and larger numbers of interest group citizens were taking this kind of political action than had participated in the counterculture or in the more militant, direct action wing of protest politics. And, with more

⁴¹⁸ “Gays Plunge Into Democratic Mainstream,” *Advocate* (Oct. 2, 1980), p. 7.

⁴¹⁹ This march—the first national march of its kind—drew an estimated 75,000 to 125,000 marchers to the nation’s capital to demand civil rights and protections. Lambda Legal and the Task Force were significant supporters of the march, as was the National Organization for Women.

strength in numbers came a more compelling case that lesbians and gay men were, collectively, a viable political claimant.

With the 1980s, of course, came the Reagan administration and its businesslike culture emphasizing governmental efficiency and the use of the private sector to fulfill public ends. Though recognizing Reagan as a political opponent because of his staunch antigay personal views and his administration's even more antigay federal policies, the national lesbian and gay movement followed the emerging opportunity structures available within neoliberalism's limits. (Indeed, they remained forced to participate from the realm of advocacy rather than from *within* government.) Most significantly, the Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF) formed in 1980. The HRCF introduced itself as "a political action committee operating to assist congressional candidates based on their positions on civil rights, human dignity and personal privacy."⁴²⁰ The HRCF was designed to be "administered in a businesslike and efficient fashion" in order to inspire "the confidence of its donors."⁴²¹ After making its first ever campaign contribution in 1980 to Oregon Congressman Jim Weaver, it quickly established a massive fundraising network. By 1982, it had already become the nation's 17th largest independent political action committee, raising just under \$560,000 from roughly 8,000 contributors, and sending over 150 donations to candidates (ranging between \$200 and \$5,000 each) during the 1982 election cycle. (About a dozen candidates returned these contributions.)⁴²² These funding patterns held steady through the 1986 election cycle, after which point membership began to explode, enabling

⁴²⁰ Untitled letter to candidates for Congress, accessed at Cornell University Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, HRC Archived Materials, Box 17 (accessed 4-16-12).

⁴²¹ Open letter from HRCF treasurer Steve Endean circa 1982, accessed at Cornell University Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, HRC Archived Materials, Box 17 (accessed 4-16-12).

⁴²² Untitled document on political contributions, accessed at Cornell University Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, HRC Archived Materials, Box 17 (accessed 4-16-12).

the organization to hire full-time lobbyists and broaden their advocacy aims beyond funding candidates sympathetic to lesbian and gay rights.

The continuing success of the HRCF (shortened to HRC in 1995) and its quick emergence as the nation's largest LGBT advocacy organization evidences the trend of the citizen-as-contributor that lies at the heart of the interest group citizen's ethic of participation. Certainly, this ethic is closely linked to the neoliberalization of American politics more broadly. However, the increasing ability of organizational leaders to communicate a message of organizational sustainability, strategic professionalism, and aspirations for inclusion testify to their ability not only to adapt and assimilate, but to make use of those forces that radical leaders were fighting a losing effort to upend. The emerging interest group citizen would not reject the opportunities afforded within neoliberalism's limits, particularly as this individualized and non-governmental approach seemed a fitting way to influence a government that had long denied its citizens fundamental rights. Of course, AIDS would complicate this narrative as it devastated the gay community.

Chapter 6

“Promiscuity of the Past”: AIDS Advocacy and the Making of Deserving Subjects

In the low-budget 1975 film *Saturday Night at the Baths*, a young pianist named Michael moves with his girlfriend Tracy from Montana to New York seeking employment. After Michael finds a job at Manhattan’s famed Continental Baths, the movie follows a rather predictable course. The masculine twenty-something receives a great deal of erotic attention from the men in his oversexed workplace, and his initial discomfort slowly fades as he reveals the roots of his own sexual repression, including an emotionally detached father, a rural upbringing, and a quasi-sexual experience with an older man as an adolescent. In a string of scenes that reinforce stereotypes of gay male effeminacy, hypersexuality, and blithesome cheerfulness, the bathhouse culture gradually engulfs Michael, who winds up having a sexual encounter with a male co-worker. Full of confusion and regret, Michael discloses the affair to Tracy, and the movie ends with Tracy sadly requesting to Michael, “Let’s go home.”⁴²³

Though not intended as antigay propaganda, *Saturday Night at the Baths* typified popular representations of homosexuality in the wake of gay liberation. In particular, the film’s protagonist—an ostensibly straight young man from a small American town—embodied the perception that the young were vulnerable to the sexual hedonism of urban gay life. Homosexuality, through this lens, was not merely a *private activity* between consenting adults; rather, many religious groups viewed it as a sinful allure that—in tandem with drugs and disco dancing—created a *public menace* by infecting young bystanders and

⁴²³ Though the movie was a work of fiction, its setting was not. The Continental Baths opened in 1968 in Manhattan’s Upper West Side. The facilities’ amenities included a disco, swimming pool, sauna rooms, and a clinic for treating sexually-transmitted infections. The Continental Baths also featured such prominent entertainers as Bette Midler, Barry Manilow, Rip Taylor, and many others who would soon rise to national fame. Though the Continental Baths closed in 1975, many bathhouses throughout the country provided similar services, entertainment, and opportunities for sexual adventure well into the 1980s.

threatening the stability and sanctity of monogamous heterosexual relationships. It is not surprising, then, that “Save Our Children” became a persuasive slogan of the Christian Right; many Americans had come to view homosexuality as a central piece of a broader cultural narrative of sexual decadence, degeneracy, and moral corruption.

This public image, of course, has long troubled lesbian and gay leaders, who were often forced to take a schizophrenic approach to issues like public sex, promiscuity, and “cruising.” On one hand, lesbians and gay citizens had long been denied access to the institutions and conventions that cultivated stable sexual partnerships. In turn, their sexual lives typically developed *apart* from “traditional” arrangements like monogamous courtship and marriage. Taboos against homosexuality often ensured that sexual encounters between gay men, in particular, took place anonymously and in public areas. On the other hand, however, national advocates often tried to mitigate stereotypes regarding gay male sexuality, portraying their community instead as one of responsible adults who behaved differently only within the confines of the bedroom. *Advocate* editor David Goodstein framed this predicament most directly, asserting that “nongay society” had forged an “impossible dilemma” for the gay community. “On the one hand, they make sure that we are not allowed to marry. On the other hand... society complains about our alleged inability to sustain significant relationships. That leaves us the alternative of being promiscuous deviates incapable of love”—an alternative that Goodstein, the *Advocate*, and many gay leaders implored the gay community to *reject*.⁴²⁴ Despite longstanding structural inequities, then, gay leaders encouraged their community to uphold not only America’s neoliberalizing *political* values, but its traditional *sexual* mores as well.

⁴²⁴ See “Opening Space,” *Advocate* (April 28, 1983), p. 6.

With the onset of the AIDS crisis in the early 1980s, it would be easy to interpret advocates' focus upon sexual restraint as merely a public health matter—a prudent way to promote the community's well-being by stemming the tide of a ruthless, sexually transmitted virus. Yet, while public health was certainly not of secondary concern, it was not the *only* concern. The presentation of the community as one of upright citizens deserving of inclusion, respect, and support in the face of crisis also weighed heavily on gay advocates.

Representing their community in the midst of harsh public scrutiny *and* a mounting health crisis, then, gay advocates of the 1980s viewed their role as one of *regulating conduct* nearly as much as that of responding to demands, advancing interests, or fundraising. Importantly, advocates' efforts to temper sexual excess—whether real or perceived—lend themselves to broader questions about how political representatives and institutions influence personal behavior. Dating back at least to Piven and Cloward's *Regulating the Poor*, scholars have scrutinized state intervention into the private lives of disadvantaged citizens.⁴²⁵ According to this research, the state's primary function with respect to the disadvantaged is *not* to respond to their demands, but to engage in social engineering by submitting the poor to intractable rules in order to maintain civic and moral order. Furthermore, this literature points to the coercive power of paternalist social policies that position the state as both therapist and prison guard—that is, the state aims to mold better, “deserving” selves and discipline these selves when they fall short. Recent research has extended this critique to incorporate ways in which *neoliberalism* contributes to these disciplinary functions.⁴²⁶

But are these regulatory functions the exclusive domain of the state? Do advocacy organizations also play a role in the molding of so-called deserving citizens? Recent

⁴²⁵ Piven & Cloward 1971. See also Ginsburg 1982; Gordon 1994; Haney 2004; Mead 2004; Smiley 1989.

⁴²⁶ Soss, Fording, & Schram 2011; Wacquant 2001; Wacquant 2009.

scholarship has only begun to explore these important questions about this function of the advocacy system.⁴²⁷ Utilizing a neoliberal language of personal responsibility, advocates are able to promote democratic inclusion and acceptance by demonstrating that their constituents stand ready to make good on the promises of this inclusion *without* posing a threat to moral order.

Using evidence from both primary and secondary sources, this chapter addresses this question of advocates' roles in molding "deserving" subjects in the face of the "impossible dilemma" described above. Though far less *disciplinary* than state power—expressed through bar raids, surveillance, and entrapment schemes—I find that advocates have used neoliberal discourses of personal responsibility as *tactical* measures geared toward regulating personal conduct. In turn, advocates expect this "better" conduct to translate into greater social acceptance, governmental responsiveness, and group dignity. In other words, the production of well-behaved political subjects enables advocates to engage in a "politics of the possible"—and with it, a politics of affirmation—by complying not only with the prevailing modes of participation, but also the social mores at the heart of American life.

I begin this chapter by describing the intensification of the lesbian and gay movement's masculine biases during the 1970s, when new cultural and sexual practices enabled the growth of a sexual marketplace and, with it, new concerns for lesbian and gay leaders. Next, I document the emergence of organizations on the Right that aimed—with some success—to reverse the modest momentum of the lesbian and gay movement by linking this perceived brazen sexual lifestyle with gay individuality itself. The subsequent section explores how the AIDS crisis entered into, and dramatically rearranged, these

⁴²⁷ See Cash 2001; Reed 2008.

debates over how to police, control, and contain gay sexuality. In particular, I focus on how national advocacy organizations—suffering through not only a major health crisis, but also low membership rolls, funding crises, and mounting criticism from lesbian and gay citizens—linked private conduct with public citizenship by promoting “individual responsibility” as a buzzword of the emerging gay movement. I close this chapter by pointing to new directions in lesbian and gay leadership that arose from AIDS activism and propelled the movement into the 1990s and beyond.

The Gay Movement’s New Masculinism

Citizen conduct—and specifically, the conduct of those citizens considered “deviant”—has long concerned public officials. For generations, state administrators have imposed disciplinary measures upon poor and disadvantaged citizens even for conduct typically considered within the bounds of the law. Whether by regulating the sexual conduct of single mothers, imposing work requirements upon welfare recipients, or incentivizing marriage and other forms of “good” behavior, the paternalist hand of the state is never too far from—and never too invisible to—disadvantaged citizens. Concerned scholars often note that the disadvantaged typically incur these coercive, regulatory measures with no opportunities for feedback or representation, thereby disempowering these citizens from having much, if any, input over the regulatory and disciplinary schemes that characterize their relationship to the state.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁸ Though scholars studying phenomena of state discipline come from diverse methodological approaches, it is useful to note Foucault’s influence, here. In particular, his concept of “governmentality” figures prominently into many contemporary critiques of state disciplinary apparatuses. Governmentality refers most generally to the ensemble of institutions, policies, calculations, and tactics within the modern administrative state that

The state, of course, is not the only concerned party, nor the only agent working to correct “deviant” behavior. Political advocacy, though often viewed primarily as a pathway into the policymaking process, can itself provide a site of social control (albeit with little to no enforcement power). While lesbian and gay advocacy during the AIDS crisis perhaps best exemplifies this phenomenon, demands to temper perceptions of immoderate sexual conduct did not originate there. Rather, these demands had already come into circulation at a time when gay men, in particular, first began to heed the call to embrace their sexuality and “come out”—to themselves, if not their families, neighbors, and coworkers.

As more and more gay men came out during the 1960s and 1970s, a reinvented social landscape transformed the already-complicated gender dynamics of lesbian and gay communities. Of course, complex gender disparities had long operated within lesbian and gay social and political circles. However, prior to the liberationist era—and particularly at the height of Cold War era state repression—closeted lesbians and gay men often formed strategic-yet-rewarding social bonds with one another. Many of those who were active in lesbian and gay social life engaged in “front dating,” a practice whereby lesbians and gay men would take one another to work- or family-related holiday parties, nightclubs, or other such events where presenting oneself as “straight” was socially advantageous or even necessary. Such arrangements were common even at private parties hosted by other lesbians or gay men, as the possibility that law enforcement, landlords, or family members might show up at the door made partnering with a member of the opposite sex a comforting arrangement, even if it only involved hurriedly rearranging seating patterns when the doorbell unexpectedly rang. As Faderman and Timmons note, these arrangements often made for

operate to produce self-regulating citizen-subjects who are well-positioned to carry out the needs and demands of contemporary liberal democracies. See Foucault 2007, 87-114.

socially gratifying friendships, bolstered by the “secret fun gay men and women shared” in acting out, often with some difficulty, their socially prescribed gender roles. These gendered norms “often became a source of humor” for the individuals involved, and the ensuing campiness often served as a basis for common bonds of affection.⁴²⁹

These social bonds began to lose their strategic value as thousands of lesbians and gay men affirmed their sexuality and left the closet behind. Simply put, however, lesbians and gay men came out into different social worlds. Several scholars have noted that a new masculinism emerged within gay urban subcultures shortly after midcentury, reaching a peak during the 1970s. This new masculinism provided a counterpoint to the damning stereotypes attributed to gay men throughout previous decades, which had depicted gay men as effeminate, or even as women trapped inside male bodies. Martin Levine has referred to the new gay prototype as the “gay clone,” characterized by “a specific constellation of sociosexual, affective and behavioral patterns that emerged among some gay men in the urban centers of gay American life” during the 1970s.⁴³⁰ The new gay masculinity often expressed itself through the enactment of hypermasculine sexuality; these men wore traditionally “macho,” blue collar attire and celebrated their erotic prowess by participating in the sexual marketplace of gay bars, bathhouses, and other areas where men could engage in obligation-free, anonymous sex. In other words, the emerging gay culture challenged and transformed long-held stereotypes about male homosexuality, embracing stereotypical elements of heterosexual masculinity and appropriating them, in part, as “a new kind of

⁴²⁹ Faderman & Timmons 2006, 100-101.

⁴³⁰ Levine 1998, 7.

camp” blending liberationist sexual sentiment with mainstream culture’s emphases on consumption and status.⁴³¹

This new masculinity—frequently reflected in cartoons, advertisements, and pictorials in the gay media—often alienated lesbian women. As this new ethic gradually emerged in urban gay communities, then, many women found that their social and sexual priorities deviated sharply from those of gay men. Moreover, they often found that their *political* priorities diverged as well. For example, local gay male leaders across the country typically focused their political energies on the issue of police harassment, as vice squad arrests kept pace with the growth of public or semipublic areas catering to gay clientele. Though lesbians and gay men still shared a number of public spaces, men typically faced greater police scrutiny and therefore stood to benefit most from a political agenda focused narrowly upon police tactics. Law enforcement officers typically targeted gay men rather than lesbians for a number of reasons: First, men were much more likely to frequent public cruising areas, as these areas were often dark and secluded, and put women at risk of sexual assault at the hands of male predators. Second, men were also more likely to frequent taverns or nightclubs catering to gay audiences, as they were often more likely to have expendable income due to long-entrenched workforce inequalities. Such inequalities were exacerbated by the reality that many lesbians and gay men alike led “straight” lives with a traditional family unit, which often meant that women were expected to stay at home with the children as their husbands enjoyed occasional nights out; as a result, gay men were in a relatively advantageous position of being free to discreetly take part in their town’s gay social scene—a freedom that ultimately led to a greater susceptibility to police harassment. Finally,

⁴³¹ Levine 1998, 29.

police forces employed significantly more men than women, making entrapment schemes against lesbians less practicable.⁴³²

While lesbian women shared a number of other objectives with gay men, including opposing workforce discrimination, building social institutions, and eliminating the cultural expectation of a traditional family unit with a male bread-winner and a female domestic worker, male-dominated organizations often devoted a seemingly disproportionate focus to issues that—like the Stonewall riots—antagonized law enforcement officials. Perhaps in part as a result of these organizing patterns, many lesbians took their political issues to the women’s movement rather than the homophile movement. As homophile organizing gave way to more militant liberationist groups, many women who had joined groups like the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) felt excluded not only by the group’s male-dominated agenda, but by overzealous personalities and “hypersexual” men who treated women with little more respect than did their heterosexual counterparts. Many of the women who had joined the movement at the dawn of the liberationist era, then, soon found themselves in splinter groups like the Radicalesbians within a year.⁴³³ Others devoted their political energies exclusively to the women’s movement. In fact, rather than retain its focus on lesbians’ issues, the *Ladder* transitioned more broadly into a women’s magazine in 1970, as editors

⁴³² Faderman & Timmons 2006, 23.

⁴³³ While the Gay Liberation Front fought against sexism and prescribed gender roles, several personalities within the movement engaged in sexist behavior, whether overt or subtle. Though many male members of the group struggled to recognize the gendered dynamics of power operating within the group, female GLF members were occasionally asked to make coffee or were referred to as “girls”; they also clashed with male leaders who were seen to have overbearing personalities. In the spring of 1970, women within the GLF requested funds to hold a dance for lesbian women after objecting to the plans of male dance organizers. The ensuing events created a schism within the GLF, leading to the formation of Radicalesbians. See Marotta 1981, 229-255; Jay 1999.

proclaimed that the magazine stood “squarely with all women,” even as the magazine continued to support lesbian causes until it ceased its operations in 1972.⁴³⁴

Even as they fled the gay movement for the women’s movement, however, lesbians faced in-group marginalization within organizations like the National Organization for Women (NOW) and, for that matter, more radical women’s groups like the Redstockings.⁴³⁵ In fact, many lesbian participants within the women’s movement defected to some of the same lesbian splinter groups to which former GLF members defected. Perhaps as a result of these patterns of intersectional and secondary marginalization, leadership of radical lesbian groups often militated *against* forming national organizations, participating in “mainstream” organizations, or even talking to the mainstream media.⁴³⁶ Even as most gay liberation groups had faded by mid-decade, lesbian groups like Lesbian Feminist Liberation persisted.

For their part, gay advocacy organizations found themselves struggling to gain the support of lesbians despite what they considered to be concerted outreach efforts. One 1975 *Advocate* editorial stated, “No communications problem confronting us is more difficult than that concerning gay women,” explaining that lesbians faced greater barriers to coming out and participating politically, including lower incomes, more children, and more radical

⁴³⁴ See *Ladder* (Aug./Sept. 1970). With this issue of the *Ladder*, the publication was no longer affiliated with the Daughters of Bilitis. For a synopsis of the turmoil within the Daughters of Bilitis, including its disassociation with the *Ladder*, see Gallo 2006, 159-184.

⁴³⁵ Though the National Organization for Women would later come to support gay rights, NOW president Betty Friedan was concerned that lesbians would tarnish the image of the women’s movement, leading to her infamously calling lesbians a “lavender menace” plaguing the movement. See Jay 1999, 137.

⁴³⁶ It is important to note that pathways to greater inclusion did slowly open up within the women’s movement. As early as 1971, NOW had expanded its agenda to acknowledge lesbian rights (though this acknowledgement included only ambiguous support); in 1973, it established the Task Force on Sexuality and Lesbianism. Local chapters of NOW sometimes included a Lesbian Task Force. Significantly, by 1977, Betty Friedan—author of the infamous “Lavender Menace” phrase—had come out in support of lesbian rights at the Houston Women’s Conference, which proved a significant event in the opening up of the women’s movement to its lesbian constituency.

spokespeople.⁴³⁷ Undoubtedly, though, erotic advertisements featuring nude and near-nude male figures also contributed to the paper's overwhelmingly male appeal. (The paper's few efforts to appeal to the lesbian libido proved largely unsuccessful.) Quite tellingly, a May 1975 readers' poll of *Advocate* subscribers elicited approximately 2,000 responses; only *six* were from women.⁴³⁸ Editors would appeal for more lesbian readers with some regularity, and these efforts to draw in a larger female readership would prove only mildly successful. A 1978 readers' poll, for example, found that women made up 2% of readership—still a small proportion even if it had increased more than sixfold from three years prior.⁴³⁹ By the end of the decade, the paper had finally resigned itself to catering almost exclusively to gay male readers. Reporting the results of that 1978 poll, the paper stated that the *Advocate's* “audience is male, white, and middle-class. As you know, that is fine with us.”⁴⁴⁰

The *Advocate* would repeatedly apologize for this broader cultural rift while simultaneously absolving itself—and, often, gay men—of its own responsibility for alienating women from the movement. A 1977 editorial even noted that men had been exceedingly open to sharing power since the end of the more combative liberation era, suggesting that much of the blame resided with lesbians themselves for their failure to participate and, in particular, contribute financially.⁴⁴¹ Later commentary would become more pointed. A 1979 editorial stated that “not until women take serious entrepreneurial risks” would they exert any significant amount of power within the publication or

⁴³⁷ “Opening Space,” *Advocate* (March 26, 1975), p. 3.

⁴³⁸ “Opening Space,” *Advocate* (May 7, 1975), p. 3.

⁴³⁹ “Opening Space,” *Advocate* (March 8, 1978), p. 5.

⁴⁴⁰ “Opening Space,” *Advocate* (March 8, 1978), p. 5.

⁴⁴¹ “Opening Space,” *Advocate* (Dec. 14, 1977), p. 5.

movement.⁴⁴² A year later, the paper issued a rather spiteful diatribe against “militant lesbian activists,” and a number of cartoons published in the *Advocate* depicted lesbian activists as stubborn, angry, and unappealing partners in the cause.⁴⁴³ For the first two decades of the paper’s existence, then, the *Advocate* remained a men’s magazine without equal in the increasingly isolated lesbian world.

The National Gay Task Force, for its part, made more concerted efforts to represent both gay men *and* lesbians, though their membership rolls were only slightly less male-dominated than the *Advocate*’s readership. Well aware of these growing rifts between lesbians and gay men, the Task Force appointed both male and female co-Executive Directors. Bruce Voeller and Jean O’Leary acted as co-executives from 1975 to 1979; after they retired, they were replaced by Charles Brydon and Lucia Valeska, respectively. The organization made no secret about its desire to maintain an equal sex balance within their leadership positions. When O’Leary stepped down from her post, NGTF’s newsletter *It’s Time* solicited résumés specifically from qualified *women* before hiring Valeska who, like O’Leary before her, was a former lesbian separatist. (Significantly, Brydon and Valeska would largely find one another uncooperative, and the duo attained few successes as co-executives.) Additionally, upon attaining its landmark meeting with Carter administration officials, the Task Force made sure that the meeting included an appropriate gender balance; of the ten representatives of the movement to meet at the White House, five were lesbians and five were gay men. Despite these efforts to maintain a gender balance within leadership positions, however, the organization’s rank and file remained heavily male. A 1980 poll of

⁴⁴² “Opening Space,” *Advocate* (Oct. 28, 1979), p. 5.

⁴⁴³ “Opening Space,” *Advocate* (Aug. 7, 1980), p. 5.

NGTF members revealed that men made up about 85% of the organization's membership.⁴⁴⁴

Despite some organizations' mindfulness of the value of *descriptive* representation, then, patterns of intersectional marginalization with the lesbian and gay movement of the 1970s are quite clear. Women who struggled to find a voice often joined one group or shuffled between the two movements, hoping that the success of *both* movements would bolster their social and political standing. To some extent, however, this understanding obscures an additional byproduct of the movement's inability to successfully mobilize women, particularly as women were still less likely than men to have the expendable income necessary to "participate" as interest group citizens. Even as late as the 1970s, many lesbian women found no organizational vehicle for the political expression or interpretation of their erotic lives. During a decade in which gay men were coming out not only to friends, family, and colleagues but also *publicly* and *politically*, lesbian women often struggled to gain their political footing, and internecine conflicts troubled many of the local-level organizations that *did* specifically promote lesbian causes. More commonly still, they were simply not coming out, at least not in large numbers or in ways that positioned themselves as a politically visible and unified national constituency. The prevailing public image of homosexuality in the decade after Stonewall was that of the gay male, particularly of the young, urban, white, and masculine variety—perhaps the demographic most likely to have come out, and the demographic most likely to have been reached by the national organizations and the gay media.

⁴⁴⁴ "Membership Survey Results," *It's Time: Monthly Newsletter of the National Gay Task Force*, v. 7, n. 2 (Feb.-March 1980), p. 1.

“Promiscuity of the Past”: The Policing of Sexual Behavior Before AIDS

As the interest group citizen emerged as the most effective weapon to establish the community as a viable political claimant, it became increasingly important that these citizens projected a positive public image. As Chapter 5 described, advocates often viewed countercultural and antagonistic forms of political participation to be counterproductive to this struggle for entry into the contemporary pluralist system. Such experimental participation would not be the only perceived barrier from within the community. Interest group citizens were not only expected to participate in the “right” ways; they were also expected to conduct themselves in a manner viewed as suitable for political inclusion. In short, to the extent that neoliberalism demands a spirit of “self-help” and restricts the role of democratic institutions within processes of collective governance, this philosophy permeated lesbian and gay advocacy by forcing advocates to confront perceived sexual excess and risk within their community rather than struggle to upend the power dynamics that marginalized same-sex sex as a “deviant” practice in need of curtailment.

In particular, the sexual behavior of urban gay men—the demographic within the community most likely to be *mobilized* as an interest group citizen—troubled lesbian and gay advocates, particularly at the national level. Leaders worried that the unrestrained sexual behavior that characterized the new masculinity would cast the entire community in a poor public light. Understanding the theoretical significance of the national gay leaders’ impact upon the conduct of their constituency, however, requires an understanding of the local institutions that commercialized sex between men in the years leading up to the AIDS crisis.

As noted in previous chapters, gay bars became important social institutions in the generations leading up to Stonewall, and many of the movement’s earliest political successes

resulted from efforts to protect them as legitimate places of commerce and association.⁴⁴⁵ These establishments allowed women and men—though mostly men—the opportunity to meet new people, socialize with others sharing their sexual orientation, and, like any other bar or social club around the world, find a potential partner, whether for the night or for a lifetime. Their presence not only created the basis for a distinctly gay social life, but they also gave rise to a number of other gay-themed social institutions including a gay press, lesbian and gay bookstores, a number of local political organizations, and, in the Bay Area at least, an association of bar owners who banded together to protect their emerging industry. (Patrons and owners alike, after all, had a stake in maintaining a flourishing bar scene.) While this scene was at the cutting edge of gay social life throughout the 1960s and beyond, however, bars often disallowed same-sex physical contact, fearing that a free-and-easy bar culture would prompt ever more scrutiny from law enforcement officials. With the 1970s, however, came disco, and with disco came dance clubs that became more audacious in their tolerance of same-sex dancing and physical contact. Some clubs even contained backrooms designed for sexual activity.⁴⁴⁶

As the decade wore on, sexually adventurous males found new opportunities for sexual exploration within an old industry, though reinvented and reworked. Though not originally designed with gay men in mind, “Turkish baths” had developed a reputation as cruising spots for gay men in the early decades of the 20th century. Capitalizing upon an emerging market for gay-themed baths as early as the 1950s, managers began to modify their properties, installing semiprivate rooms in which men could meet to have sex. And entrepreneurs found that promiscuity was good for business. As new bathhouses emerged,

⁴⁴⁵ See, for example, Achilles 1992, 2-18; Branson & Fellows 2010(1957); McGarry & Wasserman 1998, 81-97.

⁴⁴⁶ Levine 1998, 67; McGarry & Wasserman 1998, 95.

men found themselves increasingly free to engage in quasi-public sex. As McGarry and Wasserman note, these institutions often incorporated fantasy elements “that harkened back to an older, more furtive, hazardous era,” including simulations of public restrooms and other “classic” public cruising spots.⁴⁴⁷ While most gay men did not participate in this facet of gay life—a point that deserves emphasis—the bathhouses offered a vehicle for the new masculinist ethic by linking gay male desire and liberationist vigor not only with the commodification and mass production of consumer culture, but also with campy reincarnations of the very taboos from which many gay men had been fleeing—impersonal public sex.⁴⁴⁸

Typically costing more than a movie but less than a hotel room, the bathhouses were commonly governed through the use of informal codes such as body placement, hand gestures, and towel arrangements rather than words, largely institutionalizing the rituals of clandestine, anonymous public sex in (arguably) a safer and more controlled environment.⁴⁴⁹ About 200 gay-themed bathhouses would open by the end of the 1970s; most though by no means all of the businesses within this \$100-million industry were located in America’s major cities.⁴⁵⁰

Still in an age in which most sexually transmitted infections were more a nuisance than a death sentence, a typical bathhouse patron would encounter two or three sexual partners per visit, and had about a one-in-three chance of contracting syphilis or gonorrhea during any given stay. These diseases, of course, would not remain confined within the walls

⁴⁴⁷ McGarry & Wasserman 1998, 95.

⁴⁴⁸ Tattelman 1999, 74.

⁴⁴⁹ While the origins of public sex undoubtedly reach as far back as the origins of public spaces themselves, public men’s rooms—whether in libraries, public parks, subway stations, or roadside rest areas—have long served as venues for clandestine sex. It is also worth noting that methodologies used to *study* public sex have been sources of great controversy and contention within academia. See, for example, Humphreys 1970.

⁴⁵⁰ See Bérubé 2003.

of the bathhouse. By the end of the 1970s, as journalist and AIDS historian Randy Shilts claimed, a gay man had a one-in-five chance of contracting hepatitis B within twelve months of moving into an urban gay scene. At the New York Gay Men's Health Project, about 30 percent of patients suffered from gastrointestinal parasites; in San Francisco, "Gay Bowel Syndrome"—a catch-all term for gastrointestinal symptoms and sexual traumas affecting gay men—increased by 8,000 percent between 1973 and 1980.⁴⁵¹ Even if relatively few men were participating in the sexual marketplace that the bathhouses offered, then, the undesirable consequences spread to the wider population. So, too, did the allegedly harmful stereotypes about intemperate and self-indulgent gay male sexuality.

To the extent that these newly developing forms of quasi-public sexual contact were linked to the growing political struggle and emerging forms of interest group citizenship, they complicated the narrative of the "deserving" citizen. While fund-raising reigned supreme as the ultimate act of gay citizenship, then, public conduct became increasingly integral to the movement's success as well, in ways that both mirrored and deviated from the homophile's language of "respectability." Though many gay leaders *did* become more tolerant of "flamboyance" (or what had previously been called "swish"), gay leaders—particularly those struggling for "mainstream," national success—continued to mobilize in a manner mindful of the role of a positive public image. Rather than *respectability*, the tone increasingly became one of *responsibility*—in some ways a distinction without a difference. San Francisco's Society for Individual Rights (SIR)—one of the first gay organizations to appeal to a young crowd and depart from "traditional" homophile emphases on

⁴⁵¹ Shilts 1987, 18-19.

professionalism—made this claim perhaps most explicit; SIR published a newsletter, *Vector*, under the motto: “responsible action by responsible people in responsible ways.”⁴⁵²

Before the AIDS crisis, expectations of responsible action took a few primary forms. In a departure from the more repressive 1950s, the first was affirming one’s sexuality to friends, family, colleagues, and peers. Though no major national figures argued for self-segregation during this era, gone were the days in which lesbians and gay men were expected to “pass” in the straight world. In this regard, as the movement became national, it followed the precedent set by the 1960s West Coast homophile organizations by encouraging greater involvement in gay social life. For many, of course, the benefits of such involvement were not worth the price of admission—coming out of the closet. Nevertheless, editorial after editorial and advertisement after advertisement extolled the benefits of, and discussed proper methods for, coming out to unsuspecting family, friends, and coworkers. These people, after all, were likely to hold stereotypical views of lesbian and gay men, largely because most Americans assumed that they did not *know* any lesbians or gay men.

Although advocates argued that coming out provided the first essential step toward responsible gay citizenship, wealthy gays were seemingly granted amnesty so long as they were willing to *fund* the movement. One 1977 *Advocate* column claimed that while the “affluent must take responsibility for funding the needs of the community,” it is the “alienated” who “must take responsibility...in order to make their environments less oppressive.”⁴⁵³ In other words, the masses were to demonstrate their desire for responsible political participation while exuding conduct suitable for public respect and acceptance, and

⁴⁵² SIR organizers formed their group specifically in hopes of departing from the domineering professionalism exuded in Hal Call’s tenure with the Mattachine, claiming: “We don’t want to have a paid staff. We don’t want professional homosexuals.” Quoted in Sears 2006, 520.

⁴⁵³ “San Francisco’s Political Stew,” *Advocate* (July 13, 1977), p. 8.

the wealthy were to fund the movement, “from the closet if necessary”—a point made not only by the *Advocate*, but echoed by the Task Force and other organizations who desperately needed more financiers to stay afloat.⁴⁵⁴

The demand to come out marked a point of agreement between the liberationists and national leaders; this new reality provided a stark contrast with those in the homophile movement who had been overzealous in their perceived demand for strategic Puritanism. Nevertheless, the national organizations did communicate an important corollary to the imperative that all gay citizens come out. Most concisely stated in the first issue of NGTF’s newsletter, *It’s Time*: “the whole gay movement is public relations.” As such, the “double goal in the media” was to first “rid ourselves of the negative, stereotypical images” and secondly “replace them with the real ones.” Being a proper gay citizen, then, meant that one needed to be vigilant in projecting the *right* image by “letting your local community, and its media, know who you are”—honest, hardworking citizens who share the same fears, concerns, and allegiances as the rest of the community.⁴⁵⁵ The harsh reality that negative stereotypes kept many people closeted and, in some cases, in a constant state of fear of job loss, poverty, and reliance upon state aid seemed at this point to be of less concern. Nevertheless, the newsletter’s tone reflected a broader shift in which lesbian and gay men—who throughout the 1950 and 1960s often had to rely upon authorities to take charge of lesbian and gay public relations—began to take charge of these efforts themselves. Importantly, this change in tone demonstrated not just a more open and inclusive advocacy

⁴⁵⁴ “An Open Letter to Gay America,” *It’s Time: Monthly Newsletter of the National Gay Task Force*, v. 1, n. 1 (May 1974), p. 2.

⁴⁵⁵ Ronald Gold, “Gay and Public Relations,” *It’s Time: Monthly Newsletter of the National Gay Task Force*, v. 1, n. 1 (May 1974), p. 8.

system, but a heightened “self-help” ethic in which marginalized citizens were increasingly viewed as responsible for their own fate.

Though these appeals at times appeared as no more than vague warnings imploring the movement’s rank-and-file to behave themselves, advice was occasionally more specific. National figures like Goodstein still encouraged “appropriate dress and behavior when speaking for gay people to purportedly non-gay individuals or groups,” as those who engaged in “effective gay lobbying,” he claimed, “should make it very, very easy for their listeners to accept them, and by extension, the rest of us.”⁴⁵⁶ The Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF) would echo this sentiment nearly a decade later, stating in a flyer prepared for 1984’s National Gay and Lesbian Lobby Day that lesbian and gay men should “present [themselves] and [their] views in a respectful, dignified manner. Dress appropriate to a business appointment.”⁴⁵⁷ This type of rhetoric would grow particularly germane as the perceived need for a wholesome public image intensified in the face of opposition bent on portraying homosexuality as a depraved and immoral lifestyle choice.

Counter-Mobilization of the New Right

At the same time that gay urban spheres gave rise to new sexual practices—many of which pushed the limits of what most Americans considered to be sexually sensible—conservative critics capitalized upon this new sexual climate to reinscribe heterosexuality as a necessary precondition for democratic inclusion and political rights. In fact, it is through this response that the philosophical foundations of the modern Republican Party were born,

⁴⁵⁶ David B. Goodstein, “Watch Your Image,” *Advocate* (Aug. 12, 1975), p. 14.

⁴⁵⁷ “Tips on Lobbying Congress,” Accessed at Cornell University Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections HRC Archived Materials, Box 18 (accessed 4-16-12).

as the Right built an enduring partnership between Christian evangelism and neoliberal economic theory. As a result of this convergence, as Lisa Duggan and others have claimed, a “heteronormative hegemony” has emerged in which the traditional roles of gender, sexuality, and intimacy are viewed to symbolically reinforce prevailing economic relations, the state, and civil society.⁴⁵⁸ Having no ready-made majoritarian coalition themselves, lesbian and gay advocates have long had to distance themselves from perceptions of sexual deviance rather than challenge or subvert the discursive basis for sexual normality outright—a state of affairs that reflects the strategic limitations that constrain the transformative potential of advocates representing historically-disadvantaged groups more broadly.

These new directions in conservative leadership arose partially from the power vacuum left by the old guard of anticommunist crusaders, who lost some clout as communism slowly disappeared as the primary threat to American values. Rather, a new generation of leaders succeeded in constructing new opponents—feminists, supporters of abortion, and homosexuals—who appeared much closer to home, and in much more concrete form than the shadowy communists of decades past. Largely, this new brand of conservatism—typically classified under the label “New Right” or, rather, “Religious Right”⁴⁵⁹—was comprised largely of evangelical Christians alleging that the amorality of the Sexual Revolution threatened the stability of traditional, “profamily” Christian values.⁴⁶⁰ (In

⁴⁵⁸ Duggan 2011, xxvi.

⁴⁵⁹ While characterizations of the New Right may vary, it is typically noted for its merger of evangelical Christian ideology—particularly as it pertains to the nuclear family, sexuality, and traditional social/gendered arrangements—with the capitalist class and its political organizers.

⁴⁶⁰ The “profamily” label claimed by evangelical Christian groups was more than a rhetoric measure designed to exclude lesbians and gay men. Rather, the Christian nuclear family became an important element of Christian ideology, providing the foundation through which children could learn about the positive value of strict behavioral norms, as well as establishing a safeguard against the corrupt influences of secular society. See Carpenter, 1997, 61.

this regard, they borrowed from the rhetorical successes of the “old” Right, who linked anticommunism with traditional family values.)

Building on many generations of Protestant institution-building, networking, and media growth, Christian evangelism became the basis of a distinctly *political* identity in the late 1970s, if somewhat reluctantly. Prior to that time, many orthodox Protestant leaders isolated themselves from the secular institutions—including political institutions—even as they built a nationwide following. Recruited by political insiders, however, Christian leaders such as Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and James Kennedy quickly found politicking good for fundraising, morale, and recruiting; for their part, secular GOP leaders saw great appeal in recruiting formerly apolitical members of a demographic—that is, white, conservative Protestants—that had been growing reliably more Republican.⁴⁶¹

The New Right’s first major entry into political activism came in Dade County, Florida (now Miami-Dade) in June of 1977, where singer, television personality, and former Miss Oklahoma Anita Bryant launched the “Save Our Children” campaign. After attempts to sway county commissioners to vote against civil rights legislation for lesbians and gay citizens proved unsuccessful, Bryant’s campaign gathered signatures for a ballot initiative—a tactic that would be repeated time and again to repeal or prohibit lesbian and gay civil rights measures across the country. After months of campaigning on a message linking homosexuality with predatory sexual practices and moral deviance, voters repealed the six-month old civil rights law by the wide margin of 202,319 to 83,319. Energized by this success at the ballot box, a national coalition of conservative communities and churches

⁴⁶¹ As sociologist Tina Fetner pointed out, “Contrary to popular media accounts of the religious right, Christian evangelicals did not necessarily push their way into party politics as much as they were pulled.” Rather, “The development of the Moral Majority was a joint effort by political insiders, evangelical leaders, and socially conservative activists.” See Fetner 2008, 8-9.

found common cause in sponsoring and supporting similar antigay ballot initiatives wherever civil rights measures had been enacted.

In 1978, the New Right achieved three more victories. In the 1970s, several cities passed mild legislative protections for lesbians and gay men; in tactics that would continue for decades, these protections were placed into the hands of voters, who were overwhelmingly unwilling to uphold these antidiscrimination laws. Voters in St. Paul, Minnesota repealed their anti-discrimination law by a margin of 54,090 to 31,690; in Wichita, Kansas, a similar repeal came by the nearly 5-to-1 margin of 47,246 to 10,005; lesbian and gay citizens in Eugene, Oregon suffered a defeat of 23,000 to 13,427.⁴⁶² These electoral losses meant, among other things, that employers in these areas could once again legally dismiss workers who were suspected of homosexuality. Meanwhile, the Oklahoma legislature passed a measure to fire teachers who “advocate” or “practice” homosexuality.⁴⁶³

While the local dynamics of each of these victories may have been unique, each success was aided by the force of new and powerful nationally-active interest groups professing doctrines that had theretofore existed only at the margins of mainstream Christianity. By the time of the Dade County campaign, however, these marginal communities had coalesced into a national constituency quite capable of flexing significant political muscle. Bryant’s campaign, for example, was supported by the National Association

⁴⁶² Adam 1995, 109-111.

⁴⁶³ Despite the New Right’s successes in the late 1970s, it is also worth noting their defeats. Perhaps most notably, California’s Briggs Initiative, which would have expelled lesbian and gay schoolteachers from the state’s school system, lost by a margin of 58% to 42% in November of 1978. Although the initiative initially polled strongly, the lesbian and gay community received unexpected support from then-governor Ronald Reagan, among others. On the same day as the Briggs Initiative’s defeat, Seattle voters decided to retain their gay rights law by a margin of 63% to 37%.

of Evangelicals (NAE), representing sixty denominations and over three million people.⁴⁶⁴ It was also aided by Christian Cause, a direct-mail political lobby that raised funds not only from conservative evangelicals, but from conservative members of the Roman Catholic and Jewish faiths as well. These organizations and their supporters raised awareness and funds for the Save Our Children campaign through television programs such as “700 Club,” the “PTL Club,” and “The Old-Time Gospel Hour.”⁴⁶⁵ Whereas the lesbian and gay community had achieved most of its political successes—still few in number—through targeted appeals to authorities, then, the Religious Right very rapidly succeeded in implementing a social movement model in the spirit of the 1960s, mobilizing a national constituency through direct communications with the evangelical masses.

For her part, Bryant would quickly fade from view as a figurehead of the Religious Right. In her place, noted “televangelists” Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell—two men who had once largely eschewed electoral politics—took on particularly elevated roles.⁴⁶⁶ Robertson’s Christian Voice (founded in 1978) and Falwell’s Moral Majority (established soon thereafter) marked the Religious Right’s first foray into interest group politics. The Traditional Values Coalition, Concerned Women for America, the Family Research Council, and Focus on the Family soon joined them. These groups sent out inflammatory messages to mail lists hundreds of thousands of names deep, and each group individually raised more money than the national lesbian and gay organizations combined could only dream of

⁴⁶⁴ Formed in 1942, the NAE represents the first successful nationwide attempt to organize various isolated evangelical denominations. The organization established an office in Washington, and the organization sent a delegation to the President Eisenhower’s White House in the 1950s, more than a quarter of a century before similar evangelical organizations would reach similar levels of prominence.

⁴⁶⁵ Adam 1995, 110.

⁴⁶⁶ According to John Gallagher and Chris Bull, in prior years, “Robertson had refused to aid his own father’s senatorial reelection campaign on the grounds that to do so would be to participate in an evil political system, while Falwell inveighed against the clergy’s participation in and support of the civil rights movement.” See Gallagher & Bull 2001, 2.

securing. A portrayal of homosexuality marked by lascivious behavior and a pathological focus on the recruitment of minors proved key to these groups' success. A 1981 letter from Falwell, for example, declared, "Please remember, homosexuals do not reproduce! They recruit! And, many of them are out after my children and your children."⁴⁶⁷ (Interestingly, Falwell borrowed, and continued to echo, this mantra almost verbatim from language used in the Dade County campaign.)⁴⁶⁸ Moreover, these conservative citizens' groups—though multi-issue in nature—found that direct-mail fundraising efforts that specifically opposed homosexuality produced greater financial contributions than those of any other topic.⁴⁶⁹

By 1980, with the *Advocate* well over a decade old and Moral Majority only a year old, a severe communications imbalance had already been established over the issue of homosexuality. By the end of that year, Moral Majority alone had raised over \$1.5 million, drawn from over 400,000 supporters.⁴⁷⁰ Christian Voice would soon achieve over 200,000 members and a budget of more than \$3 million.⁴⁷¹ Lesbians and gay men had quickly fallen behind in their ability to portray homosexuality to a mass audience. Whereas the national lesbian and gay organizations had only one national newspaper, a few newsletters, and informal networks of communications with local political groups, the Christian Right was in the midst of building a massive media empire that would reach anywhere from 13 million to 61 million television viewers, with perhaps tens of millions more tuning in on the radio.⁴⁷² These viewers and listeners, moreover provided funds, a large and committed voting bloc,

⁴⁶⁷ Quoted in Adam 1995, 121.

⁴⁶⁸ Anita Bryant used remarkably similar language in her autobiography, stating, "homosexuals cannot reproduce—so they must recruit. And to freshen their ranks, they must recruit the youth of America." See Bryant 1977, 87.

⁴⁶⁹ Fetner 2008, 60.

⁴⁷⁰ Fetner 2008, 59.

⁴⁷¹ Wilcox 1992, 95.

⁴⁷² Fetner 2008, 59.

and thousands of volunteer hours for causes of both national and local concern.

Organizations like Moral Majority and Christian Cause, with memberships that were by no means coterminous but which worked in tandem, depicted homosexuality to mass audiences as they saw it: depraved, immoral, and, with the dawn of AIDS, a public health risk. The lesbian and gay movement's tenuous progress of the 1970s had hit a major roadblock in the form of renewed and well organized efforts to bolster public antipathy toward the lesbian and gay community.

As this conservative backlash intensified, so too did calls for responsible public action on the part of lesbians and gay men. Stated one *Advocate* editorial at the height of the "Save Our Children" campaign: "Our only hope lies in having the most professional campaign that is humanly possible...The image we project will be critical. If we do not project a non-threatening, very ordinary image, we will blow it. The time for flamboyance is behind us and ahead of us, not now."⁴⁷³ (Goodstein and the *Advocate*, it should be noted, at other times took firm stands *against* policing the behavior of "obnoxious" or flamboyant gays, though such commentary was often accompanied by qualifying statements such as that more upstanding lesbian and gay citizens should not "pay any more attention to them than we absolutely have to."⁴⁷⁴) Rather, the paper would later claim, the proper course of action would be to educate the "non-gay" world about "the validity of our lifestyle"—an endeavor that in the late 1970s, as in the homophile era, included frequent reporting about the stark differences between homosexuality and more perverse forms of sexual behavior such as

⁴⁷³ "Opening Space," *Advocate* (Nov. 16, 1977), p. 5.

⁴⁷⁴ "Opening Space," *Advocate* (June 14, 1979), p. 5

pedophilia.⁴⁷⁵ The imperative to cast the group as responsible and deserving citizens, of course, would only intensify in the 1980s, as AIDS forced the community to confront what the *Advocate* termed the community's "promiscuity of the past."⁴⁷⁶

These early appeals to mobilize a sexually responsible gay citizenry planted the seeds for the behavioral element of what scholars would later term "the new homonormativity"—a mode of conduct said to have overtaken the gay movement in the 1990s.⁴⁷⁷ This concept shares much with the concept of interest group citizenship that I have developed throughout this dissertation. Indeed, evidence from the gay movement's communications from the 1970s suggests that this neoliberal language of individual responsibility arose much earlier than the 1990s, as it largely came to supplant the homophiles' identity-building buzzword of *respectability*. As interest groups began to play a bigger role in determining how lesbians and gay men would respond to their disadvantage and political marginalization, these organizations also called upon members to engage in the type of conduct suitable for the full rights of American citizenship. As the evidence presented above suggests, these demands were at least in part strategic, as interest group leaders viewed an "ordinary" image devoid of "flamboyance" as a way to quell the social backlash brought about by liberationist politics. Further, though, this championing of a middle-class image, together with promoting modes of participation suited to middle-class individuals with expendable income, further demonstrated that the full rights of democratic inclusion were more available to some than others. More directly stated, just as it was easier for white, middle-class gay men to

⁴⁷⁵ "Fighting the Briggs Brigade: The California Teachers Initiative Battle, And Appraisal," *Advocate* (June 14, 1978), p. 6.

⁴⁷⁶ "Gay Health Organizations," *Advocate* (July 10, 1984), pp. 24-27.

⁴⁷⁷ Duggan defines the "new homonormativity" as "a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption." See Duggan 2003, 50; Warner 1999.

participate, it was also easier for them to play the role of interest group citizen by tempering their behavior and projecting a wholesome image.

Importantly, the Religious Right played a significant role in initiating these dynamics within lesbian and gay advocacy, and not just by leveling a number of crushing policy defeats and reactivating a proactive and repressive state. Rather, their influence was also discursive, as they succeeded in re-solidifying the rhetorical and moral terrain in which discussions of American sexuality were largely inscribed. In other words, by mobilizing a constituency of their own around issues of chastity, procreation, the nuclear family, and traditional gender roles as they pertained to sexual practice, the Religious Right helped to constrain the discursive terrain through which lesbian and gay leaders could challenge or rethink issues of power, domination, and transformation. The AIDS crisis, of course, would only hasten pleas supporting sexual normality from gay leaders. In doing so, national advocates embedded these strategic demands for responsible citizenship within statements of genuine concerns over the health of the gay community.

AIDS and Sexual Behavior

The unanticipated arrival of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)—known by the names HTLV-III and LAV throughout much of the 1980s⁴⁷⁸—intensified these debates over the links between gay *sexuality* and gay *citizenship*. And, while the Religious Right continued to advocate for a more proactive state with regard to public morality, gay leaders

⁴⁷⁸ In 1984, biomedical researcher Robert Gallo mischaracterized the virus that causes AIDS as a variant of the Human T-lymphotropic virus (HTLV), a virus that causes leukemia. Gallo's research team termed the virus HTLV-III. Meanwhile, a French research team led by Luc Montagnier named the new virus "lymphadenopathy-associated virus" (LAV), asserting that the virus was immunologically different from HTLV-I. The term HIV was chosen as a compromise between these two research groups, and the matter of which team deserves credit for discovering and identifying the virus has remained a matter of controversy within the biomedical establishment.

strove to mobilize gay subjects in a manner that would prove the communities detractors wrong.

Though post-pluralist scholarship has largely left questions over how group leaders communicate with their constituents about the proper norms of individual conduct, Cathy Cohen's *The Boundaries of Blackness* provides one notable exception to this scholarly absence. In that work, Cohen explored processes of in-group marginalization that alienate or further marginalize those seen to be at the fringes of a particular group or at the intersection of more than one historically-disadvantaged community. Central to this account is the concept of "advanced marginalization," in which marginalized groups face heightened stratification as "dominant society" opens itself for greater inclusion, at least symbolically. According to Cohen, marginal groups are thus put in a position in which they "must embrace a model of inclusion premised on the idea that formal rights are to be granted only to those who demonstrate adherence to dominant norms of work, love, and social interaction."⁴⁷⁹ Cohen's pathbreaking work is particularly helpful in understanding the stakes of inclusion, and why interest group representation strives to produce the types of citizens who may thrive as a result of a more inclusive pluralist system. The activity described in the first part of this chapter, for example, does not entail the outright exclusion of some members of the lesbian and gay community (though leaders certainly did portray many forms of "deviant" sexual behavior as existing outside of the community's own mainstream). Beyond these efforts to distance themselves from deviant group members, however, advocates aimed to *produce responsible selves* capable of projecting a sympathetic face to an outside audience. While

⁴⁷⁹ Cohen 1999, 63-64.

these processes were only beginning to ferment in the 1970s, the dawn of the AIDS crisis elucidates this theoretical point in much greater detail.

The first signs of the public health crisis took many puzzling forms, most of which mysteriously surfaced within urban gay communities. Taxoplasmosis. *Pneumocystis carinii*. Kaposi's sarcoma. Cryptococcosis. Determining why these diseases were opportunistically affecting gay men and, to a slightly lesser extent, intravenous drug users, hemophiliacs, and Haitian immigrants, proved difficult as well. These infections—which typically followed months of swollen lymph glands and began to serve as indicators of an early death—had previously only rarely appeared in otherwise young, healthy individuals. Kaposi's sarcoma, for example, was known as a non-fatal skin disease that typically affected elderly men of Mediterranean descent. *Pneumocystis carinii* was a benign agent commonly found in the lungs of healthy individuals. These infections came eventually to be understood as indicators of a suppressed immune system that resulted from exposure to a new virus. The tragic malady that accompanied this virus, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), would alter the trajectory of lesbian and gay social life, sexual practices, and political organizing. For fundamentalist Christians, moreover, it would come to serve as evidence that an angry and vengeful God had decided to punish the “sinners” in the gay community.

The long-held animosity between national gay leaders and liberationists would resurface among the new cohort of gay leaders, writers, and commentators that emerged in the midst of the AIDS crisis. Randy Shilts's *And the Band Played On*, perhaps the most detailed and emotionally jarring account of the dawn of the AIDS crisis, serves as one prominent example. Shilts's text paints a vivid depiction of the schisms developing within America's urban gay communities as the HIV virus surreptitiously spread. On one side of

this professed divide were promiscuous, party-going men—best personified in Shilts’s text by Gaetan Dugas, a French-Canadian flight attendant dubbed “Patient Zero” of the AIDS crisis. Dugas, like many others in America’s urban gay communities, pushed the limits of sexual experimentation in gay hotspots such as New York’s Fire Island or the San Francisco bathhouse scene. Because of the party-hard lifestyle of many of the men in whom the illness was first discovered, public health professionals initially suspected that the damage to patients’ immune systems resulted from an overactive sexual lifestyle or, perhaps, from recreational drugs called “poppers” that were popular in the 1970s club culture.⁴⁸⁰ On the other side of the divide were men like Larry Kramer, who fastidiously worked to keep the community’s collective libido under control both before and during the onset of the crisis. Kramer’s 1978 novel *Faggots*, for example, graphically depicted the alleged hedonism and lovelessness seen to have permeated many of America’s urban gay enclaves. More importantly, his 1983 manifesto “1,112 and Counting” provided one of the earliest attempts to mobilize gay men politically in the battle against AIDS.⁴⁸¹ While those like Dugas were said to have recklessly endangered thousands of men with impersonal and often depraved sexual behavior, individuals like Kramer provided the voice of reason in the face of

⁴⁸⁰ “Poppers” referred to various alkyl nitrates that were inhaled, often with the goal of enhancing sexual pleasure. These drugs were initially hypothesized to have contributed to, in particular, AIDS-related Kaposi’s Sarcoma. These hypotheses were not thoroughly refuted until a series of studies between 1986 and 1988—more than five years after the onset of the AIDS epidemic.

⁴⁸¹ “1,112 and Counting,” first published in the *New York Native*, served as perhaps the first major call-to-arms in the fight against AIDS. (The number 1,112 referred to the number of confirmed cases of AIDS at the time of publication in 1983; about 47% of these cases were in the New York metropolitan area.) In the article, Kramer inveighed against such authorities as New York City Mayor Ed Koch, the Centers for Disease Control, and the nation’s health care providers as well as the *Advocate* and others in the gay community who seemed to be ignoring the spread of AIDS. Importantly, Kramer also directs a great deal of anger at those in the closet, those who fail to support the community in its time of need, and “guys who think that all being gay means is sex”—a sentiment that the national organizations had been repeating for a number of years, with minimal success. See Kramer 1994.

mounting evidence that a wild and careless sexual lifestyle provided a major conduit for the new killer agent's spread.

If Shilts's description paints too stark of a contrast between the purported heroes and villains of the crisis, we ought to remember that Shilts—a literary journalist who himself lost his life to AIDS in 1994—documented the events while living through the nightmare. Shilts's passionately written account, however, reflects a common presentation of gay male sexual behavior leading up to and during the crisis. Shilts's famous rendering of the crisis, much like many other accounts, paints a picture of selfish, craven men who were unwilling to face their sickness or disclose their health condition to their sexual partners, ultimately endangering and killing thousands of innocent victims. In other words, he presented gay sexuality in terms of individual choice rather than in terms of structured patterns of behavior. In the name of public health and the survival of the community, then, altering these choices became a necessity.

But the call to alter behavior was not only important in order to spare those who were HIV-negative. The many thousands who would eventually fall ill to the virus were in the particularly precarious position of relying on the public health establishment for care, treatment, and, hopefully, a cure. Responsible sexual behavior was also needed, then, in order to present the community as worthy of the public funds that they would assuredly need in order to be rescued from the damaging impact of HIV. While much can and has been written about the movement's eventual confrontation with the state for support, much less has been written about the productive power at work as discourses of sexuality became inherently intertwined with those of risk, health, and death. As Cohen's account of advanced marginalization helps to demonstrate, those who were unwilling to take

responsibility and enact sound judgment were not only viewed as a lost cause, but as an impediment to the broader community.

In the face of crisis, the major national lobbying organizations appeared paralyzed during much of the first half of the decade. Already with limited funding, they were unable to devote many of these resources to constituent mobilization. And, they largely had to decide whether to continue with the civil rights agenda or fight AIDS; they did not have the funding available to fulfill both needs. Steve Endean, the one full-time lobbyist working for the Gay Rights National Lobby (GRNL), continued his work searching for sponsors of a long-pending federal gay rights bill as the disease spread in 1982 and 1983. Though he would succeed in gaining dozens of Congressional sponsors, the bill never became law. The HRCF, newly formed in 1980, focused its early attentions almost exclusively to fundraising for pro-gay candidates. In fact, the organization would not issue regular newsletters until 1995. The National Gay Task Force was in the midst of organizational turmoil as the AIDS crisis unfolded, reaching a low point in 1982 when Lucia Valeska resigned amid criticism of organizational ineptitude. As the Task Force recovered under Virginia Apuzzo's leadership, NGTF primarily focused its AIDS advocacy efforts upon President Reagan's cabinet members in the National Institute of Health and the Centers for Disease Control.⁴⁸² NGTF, like its sister organizations, had precious few funds to spend on connecting with the broader public, and to the extent that they *did* communicate more widely about AIDS, they devoted their limited resources to establishing a crisis line. By December of 1982, this crisis line was

⁴⁸² Both of these bureaucracies—and, for that matter, the Reagan administration more broadly—remained largely unresponsive throughout the crisis. Wearing a “flaming red dress” dramatizing her anger, Apuzzo blasted the Reagan administration for its negligence and indifference at a congressional hearing in 1983. See D’Emilio 2000, 477.

already receiving over five hundred calls per month.⁴⁸³ This and other AIDS advocacy efforts nearly bankrupted the Task Force, as the organization's infrastructure was stretched far too thin.

In the first years of the crisis, then, the task of communicating to a wider audience of lesbians and gay men largely, and perhaps unsurprisingly, fell to the one outlet of the gay media capable of connecting with a national audience of gay men—the *Advocate*.⁴⁸⁴ Throughout the 1980s, the *Advocate's* consistent editorial message was clear: the promiscuous lifestyle that had emerged as the public image of gay male sexuality posed “a hand grenade in the whole affair,” referring to the health of the gay population and, by extension, the gay movement.⁴⁸⁵ “Our safety and survival depend on each of us and our individual behavior,” the *Advocate's* David Goodstein argued in 1982, pragmatically asserting that gay men should be cautious in the early phases of a crisis about which not much was yet known.⁴⁸⁶

Although the *Advocate* had taken stands against promiscuity throughout the previous decade, its message about the proper bounds of sexuality prior to the AIDS crisis had been somewhat mixed. The paper had accepted advertising revenue from bathhouses across the country prior to the crisis's emergence. Moreover, it featured a popular personal ads section suggestively titled “Trader Dicks”; they renamed it “The Classifieds” in 1982, perhaps for obvious reasons. This section was again renamed in 1984, under the less dry label “Pink Pages,” though the paper openly considered eliminating its personal ads altogether. In a particularly angry editorial chastising gay pornography magazines, much of the gay press, and

⁴⁸³ “AIDS Calls Predominate in First Months of NGTF's ‘Crisisline,’” *Its Time: Monthly Newsletter of the National Gay Task Force* (Jan.-Feb. 1983), p. 3.

⁴⁸⁴ Notably, the *Advocate* was not highly regarded for responding to AIDS quickly. Larry Kramer, for example, became a vocal critic of the magazine for its lackluster response in the early months of the crisis.

⁴⁸⁵ Nathan Fain, “Is Our ‘Lifestyle’ Hazardous to Our Health?” *Advocate* (April 1, 1982), p. 17

⁴⁸⁶ “Opening Space,” *Advocate* (March 18, 1982), p. 6.

the mainstream press for wrongly acting as though the crisis had already passed, Goodstein opined in 1984 that perhaps it was time to discontinue the magazine's "Pink Pages" after "a decade during which the frontiers of sexual license have been pushed farther and farther." (Notably, Goodstein singled out national leaders like Virginia Apuzzo of the Task Force and Bruce Voeller, a former Task Force executive but then of the Mariposa Foundation, for being the "only people in our ranks who believe that AIDS...still matters.")⁴⁸⁷ After months of deliberation, however, the *Advocate* decided that the classifieds would remain, claiming in 1985, "We assume that you are responsible human beings," and "providing you with ways to meet each other is even more important" during such a tumultuous time for the community.⁴⁸⁸

At times, Goodstein would even claim that a long-term change in sexual conduct could provide a silver lining on an otherwise worsening crisis. One 1983 editorial stated, "It is probably a positive development that AIDS is causing some of us to reevaluate our sexual lifestyles."⁴⁸⁹ This rethinking, of course, would not only bolster the community's health, but public perceptions of the community as well. Importantly, Goodstein was not the only writer at the *Advocate* making such claims. In a 1983 feature article about the AIDS crisis, writer Toby Johnson warned about how American conservatives were using AIDS to justify their view that God stands opposed to homosexuality. Johnson claimed, "The morality of homosexuality and the morality of prolific sexual activity in an overcrowded environment are two separate issues that must not be confused." As members of the gay community, he

⁴⁸⁷ "Opening Space," *Advocate* (July 10, 1984), p. 6.

⁴⁸⁸ "Opening Space," *Advocate* (March 5, 1985), p. 6.

⁴⁸⁹ "Opening Space," *Advocate* (May 12, 1983), p. 8.

claimed, “we have a responsibility to evaluate our lifestyle... The resolution of this crisis is probably going to be recognition of the importance of being sexually responsible.”⁴⁹⁰

Especially in the *Advocate*, early caution quickly evolved into anger and annoyance, as anonymous and impersonal sex seemed to continue unabated. And, much as the paper, in conjunction with the national organizations, asserted that the success of the gay movement involved financial sacrifice and electoral participation, individual sexual choice was placed at the heart of solving the AIDS crisis. By the turn of 1983, editors reported that health crises may put an end to “the sexual revolution of the 1970s” that had so hastily transformed practices of American monogamy. In its stead would be a heightened role for individual choice. As Goodstein stated: “I believe we are individually responsible for our experience in the area of health...I sincerely hope that gay people do not choose sexually transmitted disease as an acceptable way to kill themselves...we can choose to create a different experience for ourselves.”⁴⁹¹ Many *Advocate* editorials kept the heat on its readership, encouraging them to “accept responsibility” for the role that the community’s “excessiveness” played in the AIDS crisis.⁴⁹² “The solution is responsible sexual conduct,” Goodstein’s editorials repeatedly claimed.⁴⁹³ The repetition of this language of responsibility and choice—often coupled with questions about impending “end of sexual freedom”⁴⁹⁴—reverberated throughout the crisis as worst-case scenarios and doomsday speculation justifiably overtook the gay press.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹⁰ Toby Johnson, “AIDS and Moral Issues: Will Sexual Liberation Survive?” *Advocate* (Oct. 27, 1983), pp. 25, 31.

⁴⁹¹ “Opening Space,” *Advocate* (Jan. 20, 1983), p. 8.

⁴⁹² Nathan Fain, “Coping With a Crisis: AIDS and the Issues It Raises,” *Advocate* (Feb. 17, 1983), p. 17.

⁴⁹³ “Opening Space,” *Advocate* (May 1, 1984), p. 6.

⁴⁹⁴ Nathan Fain, “Coping With a Crisis: AIDS and the Issues It Raises,” *Advocate* (Feb. 17, 1983), p. 15.

⁴⁹⁵ As the crisis continued to unfold in the first half of the decade,

Though often subtle, these messages inveighing against excessive sexual behavior reflected more than a sense of personal disgust toward reckless behavior; even the most unforgiving of gay leaders knew that a “blame-the-victim” approach would ultimately be to the detriment of the fight against AIDS. Rather, leaders reminded constituents of the *political* impact of irresponsible sexual conduct, often by rhetorically linking excessive sexuality to the same types of selfishness seen to have kept lesbian and gay individuals from contributing to the movement financially. Speculating in 1984 about what the future would hold, Goodstein pessimistically asserted that the most likely scenario would see “gay men go back to their promiscuous ways, continuing to dehumanize each other” while “the amount of money collected” by the major lesbian and gay organizations “never keeps pace with the needs of the community.”⁴⁹⁶ In another fundraising plea six months later, Goodstein claimed that the movement was being hampered by those who do nothing “except engage in sex”—a point, he claimed, that did not apply to *Advocate* readers who “are the most responsible members of the gay community” and who “have been making donations to gay causes for a long time.”⁴⁹⁷ And, encouraging readers to donate to the struggling national organizations, he cautioned readers that “there is more to life than your job and getting laid.”⁴⁹⁸ Ever the spirited writer, Goodstein engaged in such pointed attempts to shame readers away from promiscuity and toward “responsible” action—whether through contribution or conduct—until his death in 1985. Though the magazine would lose Goodstein’s brash, bold tone after his death, this political message largely remained intact as new editors carried on his legacy.

⁴⁹⁶ David Goodstein, “Scenarios for a Gay Future: Best and Worst Cases, Movement Probabilities,” *Advocate* (Jan. 19, 1984), pp. 18-19.

⁴⁹⁷ “Opening Space,” *Advocate* (June 26, 1984), p. 6.

⁴⁹⁸ “Opening Space,” *Advocate* (Aug. 5, 1982), p. 6.

Conclusions: New Directions in Lesbian and Gay Leadership

AIDS, of course, did not recede as the decade wore on, despite continued speculation from the gay media that a vaccine, or at least an effective palliative treatment, was just around the corner. By the end of 1981, more than 250 Americans had died of AIDS—most of them gay men.⁴⁹⁹ By the close of the following year, the number of deaths had reached well over one thousand, and the number of people in whom the disease laid dormant remained a complete mystery. By the close of the decade, AIDS had claimed tens of thousands of American lives and had become a worldwide epidemic. In the public mind, however, AIDS was a gay disease. (Some even referred to it as Gay-Related Immune Deficiency, or GRID.) Thus, the public responded to the disease with little attention and even less funding.⁵⁰⁰ Rather, persons with AIDS (PWAs) faced a “conspiracy of silence.”⁵⁰¹

Moreover, the national movement proved ineffectual and largely floundered in the early stages of the crisis, compounding the community’s sense of political defeat. NGTF membership declined 30% from 1983 to 1985.⁵⁰² Much maligned in the gay press, GRNL went defunct. HRCF, the organization that supplanted it as the community’s chief lobbying

⁴⁹⁹ The first known cases of HIV infection in humans occurred as early as the 1950s in the Congo, with the virus first arriving in the United States in approximately 1968. In 1969, a St. Louis teenager died of a mysterious illness that is today believed to have been AIDS-related. The virus is not believed to have begun to spread widely in the United States until the late 1970s.

⁵⁰⁰ As many gay leaders liked to point out, the government’s response to AIDS stood in marked contrast to the response to what had been dubbed “Legionnaires’ disease.” Legionnaires’ disease acquired its name after a July 1976 outbreak of pneumonia among attendees of an American Legion convention in Philadelphia resulted in 34 deaths. The disease received significant media attention and swift action from the CDC. AIDS, of course, received no such swift response, leading many leaders to accuse the government of ignoring this much more severe crisis solely because it primarily attacked gay men.

⁵⁰¹ Famously, President Reagan did not address “AIDS” publicly until September of 1985, about two months after friend and fellow actor Rock Hudson announced that he had AIDS. Reagan would not mention the disease in a major speech until 1987.

⁵⁰² By the close of 1985, the Task Force’s membership was down to approximately 6,400, from a relative peak of 9,200 in January of 1983. Insiders viewed this trend as resulting from the departure of Task Force executive Virginia Apuzzo—a lauded figure throughout the gay press—who left to work within the New York State government. See Peter Freiberg, “NGTF to Take Drastic Financial Steps: Will Move to Nation’s Capital; Turns Down GRNL Merger,” *Advocate* (Dec. 10, 1985), p. 14.

organization, restricted its early advocacy efforts to lobbying and fundraising. Niles Murton, Goodstein's replacement as publisher of the *Advocate*, repeatedly called upon the national organizations to consolidate, as their funding and membership had stagnated, and the broader community had grown increasingly confused about how the functions of each organization differed.⁵⁰³ And, though local service organizations flourished by providing the aid that more powerful or influential constituencies might have demanded from their government, these organizations largely remained apolitical.⁵⁰⁴

In short, throughout much of the decade gay citizenship became a deeply *personal* experience rather than an exercise in collective political action. In contrast to the quasi-libertarian “bootstraps” fantasies of selfhood that have accompanied state aid in an effort to mitigate a perceived “culture of dependence,” the personal experiences and responsibilities thrust upon gay subjects on the part of their own leaders was partially strategic. In calling upon readers and constituents to enact a more responsible sexual lifestyle, a more responsible mode of dress, and a self-reflective attitude toward the lesbian and gay image, professional advocates aimed to bolster an image of the gay subject as deserving citizen. Their efforts did not pay immediate dividends politically, but they did appear to echo throughout the community, particularly as gay responsibility for, and ownership of, the

⁵⁰³ “Niles,” *Advocate* (Sept. 17, 1985), p. 5.

⁵⁰⁴ Central to this service turn was the New York City's Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC). Formed by Larry Kramer and other prominent gay writers, attorneys, and businessmen in the summer of 1981, the organization quickly became sophisticated in the workings of the government and non-profit sectors just as the social and public health implications of AIDS were becoming more apparent. The GMHC engaged in community outreach, held training programs for crisis intervention counselors, and trained volunteers to help handle the rapidly growing caseload of AIDS cases in New York City. They were also particularly adept at raising funds, both from the gay community as well as from the state of New York. The organization had a \$1.2 million budget in 1983, and a \$2 million budget the following year—far more than the combined budgets of GRNL, NGTF, and HRCF, which totaled about \$900,000 per year during this time. (The budgets of local AIDS-related organizations in Los Angeles and San Francisco also had annual budgets exceeding \$1 million per year.) By the early 1990s, the GMHC would operate with a budget of around \$20 million and a volunteer staff of over 2,000. See Kayal 1993, 2-3; “Gay Health Organizations,” *Advocate* (July 10, 1984), pp. 24-27.

AIDS crisis slowly took on new meaning. Whereas the national advocates of the era largely failed, local organizations attained some level of public visibility and clout, empowering lesbians and gay men primarily by encouraging volunteerism, service, and avowedly non-political action. Indeed, according to sociologist Philip Kayal, at the heart of the community's response to the AIDS crisis was "a sense of community ownership in AIDS and gay responsibility for PWA care."⁵⁰⁵ In short, the government's total failure to respond in the early years of the crisis had placed PWAs, and the broader lesbian and gay movement, in a position in which political demands seemed helpless.

With the movement largely at an impasse by mid-decade, three features of the community's response to the AIDS crisis stand out that helped the national movement turn itself around in the second half of the 1980s. First, the community continued to experience setbacks at the hands of the Right. The lesbian and gay community's most significant political defeat, however, came not via a New Right-inspired ballot referendum, but at the hands of the United States Supreme Court. In the landmark 1986 ruling in *Bowers v. Hardwick*, the Supreme Court upheld, in a 5 to 4 ruling, the constitutionality of Georgia's criminalization of homosexual sodomy laws.⁵⁰⁶ The Task Force and the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund noted a marked increase in funding in membership in the wake of the *Bowers* ruling, as mounting defeats—in some cases narrow defeats—seemed to bolster the idea that the community was on the verge of significant advancements, but that more funds were needed to accomplish them. This narrative bolstered the idea that gay

⁵⁰⁵ See Kayal 1993, 7-8. Compare with Crenson and Ginsberg's claim: "Citizenship is no longer about the collective activity of governing." Rather, citizens "are urged to produce the public services that a voting public once demanded from its government...Lessons in service have supplanted training for sovereignty." Crenson & Ginsberg 2002, 6.

⁵⁰⁶ Georgia's law, it should be noted, specifically applied to homosexual sodomy. This ruling was later overturned by the Court's 6 to 3 decision in the 2003 case, *Lawrence v. Texas*.

participation of the sort characterized in Chapter 5 would need to emerge as an even stronger ideal of interest group citizenship. Indeed, the community began to give in larger numbers: Lambda Legal—the organization using litigation as its primary strategy—grew from one staff member and a budget of \$70,000 to six staff members and a budget of \$300,000 from 1985 to 1986, with a particular spike in fundraising occurring in the months immediately following the Court’s *Bowers* decision.⁵⁰⁷

Much as lesbian and gay organizations faltered early in the decade, many Religious Right groups fizzled out around mid-decade. Falwell’s Moral Majority went first, though others soon followed; the National Christian Action Coalition, the American Coalition for Traditional Values, and Christian Voice each suspended their political activities as well.⁵⁰⁸ With some proclaiming the evangelical movement dead at mid-decade, however, the Religious Right was re-energized by a “second wave” of activism spurred largely by Pat Robertson’s Freedom Council. Robertson’s efforts integrated the evangelical movement into the Republican Party, triggering lesbian and gay leaders to push—even if reluctantly—for greater involvement within Democratic Party politics.

The second major turnaround was the role that lesbian women began to play as the movement propelled itself into the 1990s. The Task Force’s 1985 name change to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) provided a symbolic and overdue measure in support of gender parity; unlike past attempts to include women, however, these symbolic measures were accompanied by increased participation on the part of lesbian women, and a greater willingness of gay men to cooperate. As local service-based organizations

⁵⁰⁷ See “Niles,” *Advocate* (Feb. 4, 1986), p. 5; Peter Freiberg, “Hardwick Decisions Increases Donations to Gay Groups,” *Advocate* (Sept. 30, 1986), p. 16.

⁵⁰⁸ See Fetner 2008, 66-67.

proliferated, lesbians often played an important role, particularly as AIDS overtook many of the movement's male leaders. Even the *Advocate*—which once defiantly proclaiming to be a gay *men's* magazine—changed its subtitle from “The National Gay Newsmagazine” to “The National Gay and Lesbian Newsmagazine” in 1990, stating, “To be gay in this decade...one must also be a lesbian.”⁵⁰⁹ Though tensions still lingered between lesbians and gay men over the agendas and fate of the movement, of course, lesbians and gay men began to find common purpose as the tumultuous 1980s came to a close. Certainly, internecine conflicts between lesbians and gay men had long involved complex dynamics that extend beyond what can be explained simply by exploring interest group mobilization. But, issues like employment non-discrimination and marriage equality emerged as increasingly real possibilities that, unlike issues like police entrapment or even AIDS, promised to improve the lives of both lesbians and gay men at increasingly equal rates.

The third factor was the revival of the more explosive tactics of the post-Stonewall era, which largely coincided with a remapped political terrain surrounding so-called “queer” and “assimilationist” political camps. The AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power (ACT-UP) proved to be the most vocal, visible, and confrontational of these groups. It formed in March of 1987 with the explicit goal of raising AIDS awareness through civil disobedience and antagonistic rhetoric. Importantly, these localized and participatory groups had a positive residual impact on the more mainstream national advocacy organizations. After ACT-UP began its series of protests across the country, the Task Force grew rapidly in membership and funding, with its operating budget rising by over 50% from 1987 to 1988; its budget increased from \$607,000 to \$915,000, though it fell far short of its lofty goal of a \$1.5

⁵⁰⁹ “Comment,” *Advocate* (Oct. 9, 1990), p. 6.

million budget. The organization was now able to maintain a full-time staff of 10 people, and membership rose to near 12,000. Likewise, the HRCF attained a 1988 budget of \$1.8 million, employing 18 full-time staff.⁵¹⁰ It also began to use more of this growing budget to devote greater attention to AIDS, largely by personalizing the issue, pointing to prominent, successful, and professional individuals who had been afflicted with the disease.⁵¹¹ In doing so, they were largely able to confront the claim that AIDS was a disease that impacted only the most sexually reckless members of the community.

The contrasting approaches to AIDS activism—both of which could claim more victories as the decade wore on—began to look not unlike the contrasting approaches to political participation of the generation prior. The national advocates, though, were forced to acknowledge several of the successes of the “radical flank.” The Task Force’s Jeff Levi, for example, told the *Advocate* in 1988 that he had grown more comfortable with civil disobedience—a view not universally shared among gay leaders, but one that was hard to ignore as protests increasingly fomented anger and, just as importantly, efficacy amongst lesbian and gay citizens.⁵¹² The promotion of radical activist Urvashi Vaid from communications director to the Task Force’s head executive position serves as further evidence of the growing influence of the movement’s radical flank.⁵¹³ Lambda Legal’s

⁵¹⁰ “NGLTF Misses Funding Target by Almost 40%,” *Advocate* (Jan. 3, 1989), p. 21.

⁵¹¹ In an effort to boost communications with donors, HRCF initiated an “Insider Program” for those who donate \$100 per month or more. As part of the program, HRCF sent letters to these members notifying them of pending Congressional action about AIDS and other gay-related bills. One such letter was sent from Dan Bradley, a former Carter administration official introduced as “the highest ranking member of a President’s administration ever to declare publicly his homosexuality.” Actions like this one personalized the AIDS crisis for wealthy donors, demonstrating to those who had not yet been personally affected by the crisis that even the respectable, responsible, and upper-class members of the community were falling victim to AIDS. (Bradley would die of AIDS a year later, in 1988.) Accessed at Cornell University Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, HRC Archived Materials, Box 18 (accessed 4-16-12).

⁵¹² Peter Freiberg, Rick Harding, and Mark Vandervelden, *Advocate* (June 7, 1988), pp. 10-15.

⁵¹³ Vaid instigated “an assertive brand of media advocacy” and increasingly led the organization towards embracing the role of mobilizer of grassroots political action. See D’Emilio 2000, 477-478.

budget continued to grow as well, tripling between 1986 and 1988.⁵¹⁴ The movement—including the descendants of liberationist sympathizers as well as more mainstream activists—finished the decade on much sounder footing than when the decade began.

As lesbian and gay activism strengthened throughout the 1990s, the movement began to confront themes more familiar to contemporary observers, including a renewed focus on military inclusion, and an audacious push for same-sex marriage. Like the intense debates of the liberationist era, in-group tensions continued over how to move forward, as groups like ACT-UP, Queer Nation, and other quasi-liberationist groups have persisted as part of a rejection of the interest group model of political representation. Nevertheless, the interest group citizen has persisted as well. The 1990s witnessed the movement's center of organizational gravity change, as the HRC emerged as the most powerful voice in the lesbian and gay movement, as NGLTF's budget shrank by nearly 50 percent between 1994 and 1996 before a period of slow recovery.⁵¹⁵ By the late 1980s, the HRCF had become the nation's ninth largest independent political action committee (PAC). Its growth was only just beginning. With membership totaling only about 12,000 in 1989, it grew to 50,000 by 1992, to 100,000 by 1995, and to 250,000 by 1998.⁵¹⁶ By the close of the millennium, interest group citizens had strength in numbers, and had only begun to achieve victories that had been unthinkable less than a generation prior.

⁵¹⁴ The organization would grow from a small staff handling a few cases to an organization with five offices around the country committed to redressing inequalities in the nation's court system and, as they now claim, "in the court of public opinion." See "History," accessed online lambdalegal.org/about-us/history. Accessed 6-5-2012.

⁵¹⁵ D'Emilio 2000, 479-481.

⁵¹⁶ Accessed at Cornell University Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, HRC Archived Materials, Box 78 (accessed 4-16-12).

EPILOGUE

On May 9, 2012, one day after North Carolina voters amended their state's constitution to bar same-sex couples from marrying, President Barack Obama announced his support for same-sex marriage rights. The president, who had previously supported civil unions as an alternative to marriage, claimed to have “evolved” on the issue. The president's announcement—perhaps the most significant endorsement of LGBT rights to date—came at a time when the American public was in the midst of an evolution its own. In 2004, President George W. Bush had placed opposition to same-sex marriage at the center of his re-election strategy, as polls consistently demonstrated strong public opposition. For several years thereafter, ballot referenda across the country further empowered the LGBT community's political opponents. Prior to the 2012 general election, in fact, *every* state that had placed same-sex marriage on the ballot—numbering thirty-two states total—rejected it.

However, public sentiment shifted rapidly, particularly as younger cohorts of Americans have come of age long after the “Lavender Scare,” long after the psychiatric community removed homosexuality as a diagnosable mental disorder, and several years after the Supreme Court's *Lawrence v. Texas* ruling barred states from criminalizing same-sex sex. Perhaps more importantly, these gains have led to greater visibility. Today, more than three-fourths of all Americans know at least one person who is lesbian or gay; by contrast, well under one-half of Americans claimed as much twenty years ago.

Given these trends, it is perhaps not surprising that public support for same-sex marriage is rapidly growing. A CNN poll released in August of 2010 was the first of its kind to show majority support for same-sex marriage. By the time of President Obama's endorsement, polls had begun to consistently demonstrate this public support. In the 2012

elections—held about six months after the president’s endorsement of marriage equality and just under two years after opening—voters in Maine, Maryland, and Washington became the first to affirm marriage rights for same-sex couples by popular vote; meanwhile, Minnesota voters became the first to vote down a proposed ban. The election cycle also witnessed several other victories for the LGBT community, including the election of the first openly gay United States Senator, the first openly bisexual member of the U.S. House of Representatives, and the first openly transgender person elected to a state legislature.

So rapid was the change in public sentiment that the president’s political opponents decried his endorsement by claiming that it was nothing more than an opportunity to score cheap political points in the midst of a tight re-election campaign. (In this regard, these denouncements mirrored those of President Bush’s critics during the 2004 campaign.) To some extent, President Obama’s detractors were right—and not just because aggregate public sentiment had shifted toward more tolerant marriage policies. In fact, the president’s endorsement probably gained him relatively few new votes. It did, however, generate new *funds* for his campaign. Within hours of the president’s announcement, the nation’s largest and most visible LGBT advocacy organizations expressed their enthusiasm through press releases, emails, and social media. Over the next month, the president attended several campaign fundraisers hosted by wealthy members of the LGBT community; several major LGBT advocacy organizations even reported that organizers needed to find bigger fundraising venues due to a renewed enthusiasm amongst the LGBT community in the wake of the president’s announcement.

In marked contrast with a generation ago (or even a decade ago, for that matter), the LGBT community has become much more than a marginalized demographic lacking a

political voice. Certainly, the community continues to face many challenges, including widespread discrimination, various barriers to inclusion (relationship recognition, legal adoption, etc.), and, in many areas, a heightened threat of bullying or physical violence. While these are no small challenges, the community has nevertheless emerged as a lobby unto itself—one, moreover, that has become a critical part of the Democratic Party’s base of support. Few would argue that LGBT persons have benefitted little from the community’s strongest advocates. Much of this success is owed, of course, to interest group representation and its corollary, interest group citizenship.

Interest group citizenship entails a struggle for inclusion and civil rights, a championing of diversity, and a demand that historically-marginalized citizens have recourse to state institutions to overcome their disadvantage. It borrows from neoliberal governance the view that constituents are shareholders in the collective fate of their movement, and that strong investment in the advocacy marketplace provides the best means of ensuring just outcomes. It requests that we place our trust into the hands of paid, strategy-minded professionals, and that individual responsibility can serve as a weapon against a long legacy of discrimination and injustice. And it is often hard to argue with the results. For this reason, interest group citizenship has become, to borrow a phrase from Gayatri Spivak, something “which we cannot not want.”⁵¹⁷ Yet, the interest group model of political representation has long faced sharp—if sympathetic—criticism from many who share a sense of linked fate those at the margins, and a shared responsibility to struggle for better opportunities than those offered within neoliberal mechanisms of governance.

⁵¹⁷ Spivak 1993, 45-46.

This dissertation has, in part, attempted to put some of this criticism in context. I have drawn out some of the ways in which contemporary political advocacy serves to *constrict* the space for democratic citizenship, even as advocates across many different social groups continue to open up the political system to historically-marginalized groups. Despite what may seem like harsh criticisms of the United States' advocacy system, I have not attempted to present interest group citizenship as symptomatic of the death or decline of mass political action, nor as a sign of a depoliticized or demobilized electorate. Rather, it is an outgrowth of the new face of American pluralism—one that has strengthened alongside the growth and prevalence of neoliberal governance. It holds neoliberal hegemony to account by demanding the fulfillment of its promises of inclusion, and it warns that the currency of American citizenship is not only available to those bearing markers of privilege. For many, an interest group citizenship indicates progress, empowerment, and inclusion.

Yet, it is also characterized by what it is not. An interest group citizenship does not denaturalize identity categories, as queer theorists, activists, and others looking to shed these “wounded attachments” might hope.⁵¹⁸ It does not foster a spirit of collective self-governance, for which proponents of republican governance often clamor.⁵¹⁹ It does not direct our attention to those who are situated in a *particularly* precarious position with respect to political power.⁵²⁰ Likewise, it does not aim to demarginalize the transformative power of social deviance.⁵²¹ And it does not penetratingly scrutinize the various political, legal,

⁵¹⁸ The term “wounded attachment” comes from Brown, who asserted that the politicization of modern identity categories tends to *reinscribe* these categories, which came about not from a “natural” position *outside* of politics but *through* disciplinary power. Her critique of contemporary identity politics derives from a concern that their use entails the dissolution of political thought and action designed to confront the relationships of power that gave rise to these identities. See Brown 1995, 52-76.

⁵¹⁹ See Crenson & Ginsberg 2002; Skocpol 2003; Wolin 2008.

⁵²⁰ See Cohen 1999; Strolovitch 2007.

⁵²¹ See Cohen 2004.

economic, sexual, and institutional structures through which politics operate; rather, it works *through* them to struggle for the most just outcomes available *within* them. I hope, at the very least, that the writing of this dissertation can serve as the beginning of a long career in which I can appreciate, engage with, and participate in those interest groups that serve as points of strength in an otherwise stacked system; I hope, too, that I can also appreciate, engage with, and participate in those forms of political action that refuse to settle for anything short of democracy's most transformative and emancipatory visions.

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