

ISSUE FRAMING AND IDENTITY POLITICS IN THE LOG CABIN REPUBLICANS

CHAPTER I

PLURALISM, DOUBLE MARGINALIZATION, AND INTERSECTIONALITY

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ABSTRACT**ISSUE FRAMING AND IDENTITY POLITICS IN THE LOG CABIN REPUBLICANS**

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This chapter of the larger dissertation project locates the guiding theories related to my inquiry of the Log Cabin Republicans. The central question of the dissertation uses six frames, issues, conservatism, individualism, family, equality, and inclusion to guide organizational strategies in response to contemporary issues. LCR works toward inclusion and equality on a range of contemporary gay and lesbian issues such as the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, marriage and family equality, inclusive military policies, and immigration reform. The central tension in this project emerges from the incompatibility between gay and conservative identities. Agenda setting within LCR is directly impacted by the position of the organization as doubly marginalized: marginalized by mainstream gay and lesbian politics and marginalized by the Republican Party. Yet through careful issue framing, LCR work to reconcile the tension and advance their organizational and public policy goals. The focus of this chapter brings multiple theoretical strands from political science, feminist studies, and gay and lesbian studies into conversation with one another. The existing literature on pluralism and interest group liberalism do not adequately explain the complex role of identity politics seen through the example of the LCR. At the same time, theories of marginalization and intersectionality fail to address the importance of interest groups in the American political system. I elaborate on theories of marginalized interest group politics, which expands upon pluralism, interest group liberalism, and identity politics. Marginalized interest group theory explains the important role of adopting assimilation approaches from the margins. Assimilationist interest group strategies translate into tactics that work to influence legislative decisions and public policy. The chapter includes extensive literature review across disciplines and theories to promote interdisciplinary theoretical understandings and explanations for the Log Cabin Republican organization. The theoretical perspectives described here aid in understanding the broader dissertation question: how does the LCR develop and situate frames into organizational strategies?

TABLE OF CONTENTS	
INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE	...4
RESEARCH PROBLEM	...6
THEORETICAL REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT	...7
PLURALISM AND INTEREST GROUP LIBERALISM	...7
IDENTITY POLITICS AND MARGINALIZATION	...10
INTERSECTIONALITY	...12
ASSIMILATION v. LIBERATION	...14
CONCLUSION	...15
APPENDIX	...17
BIBLIOGRAPHY	...19

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF DISSERTATION STUDY

The Log Cabin Republicans (LCR) rally around increasing the recognition, inclusion, and equality of gay and lesbian¹ citizens while maintaining conservative political values and ideologies. The LCR emphasize key contemporary issues including combating employment discrimination against gays and lesbians, promoting marriage and family, and supporting equal opportunities for gays and lesbians to serve in the military. The organization maintains conservative political stances supporting individualism and rigid economic and military policies.

Precisely defining LCR to an interest group type is elusive. Interest group types are determined by the scope of a group's actions and the strategies they employ. LCR is centrally concerned with promoting equality through civil rights. Yet they also emphasize business interests and function like a professional association (Schlozman and Tierney 1986). Keleher defines the Log Cabin Republicans as a party club (2007). Calling the LCR a party club suggests that the primary organizational goal is to influence party politics. Instead of emphasizing the goal of the LCR to shift party politics, I focus on the organization's goals of influencing legislation and impacting public and social policy. Therefore, I conceptualize LCR as an ideological group because they focus on shifting policy around a range of issues that are ideologically consistent within the organization. The project of defining interest groups is a moving target (Baroni et al. 2014).

In order to promote key issues and maintain their political positions, LCR use frames that are palatable to libertarian and conservative ideologies. The purpose of this study is to examine how Log Cabin Republicans frame issues to influence public and social policy. What explains how LCR develop and implement frames in order to promote the group's interests and influence legislative and policy decisions?

In order to measure the process and impact of issue framing on the strategies used by LCR, I develop four case studies:

1. The first case study examines LCR participation and resistance against SB1062, a recent piece of Arizona state legislation that emphasized the freedom for a business to deny gay and lesbian patronage on the grounds of religious beliefs (Kopan 2014, SB1062 2014). LCR advocated for the veto of SB1062 by Arizona governor Jan Brewer.
2. The second case study evaluates LCR participation in the Supreme Court case, *Log Cabin Republicans v. United States* (2011). The case considered and repealed "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" as national military policy. LCR was named as the primary plaintiff in the 9th circuit case.
3. The third case study discusses LCR participation and activism related to the recent Supreme Court ruling on gay marriage.
4. The fourth case study analyzes LCR participation in employment nondiscrimination legislation, most recently in the form of The Equality Act. The Equality Act is currently under debate: it would expand protections for women, include protective clauses for sexual orientation

¹ The phrase 'gay and lesbian' I employ the terms 'gay and lesbian' as a reflection of LCR language.

² This is my answer to the "so what" question.

minorities, and protect citizens from discrimination from businesses (Melling 2015). These case studies illuminate how issue frames impact how LCR approaches policy problems, and whether or not the frames are effective in guiding the strategic development of the organization and the public policy outcomes sought by LCR.

LCR execute a number of strategies to influence party politics, public and social policy, voter mobilization, and organizational membership. One strategy of these groups is to work towards making the Republican Party more inclusive of gay and lesbian concerns, resulting in greater equality for gay and lesbian citizens in the United States (Barron 2004). Another strategy employed by LCR is to file lawsuits and fiscally support court cases related to gay and lesbian issues in order to change increase equality under the law. To offer an example, LCR filed a suit stating the unconstitutionality of Don't Ask Don't Tell, which proved successful in 2010 (Lampo 2012). Educational campaigns and outreach through print media, online newsletters, e-mail blasts, blogging, and in-person advocacy work to impact public opinion and increase membership. The organization's strategies and reach are broad and dynamic as the group works through multiple channels including Congress and the Supreme Court in the American political system. In so doing, LCR aims to influence public and social policy outcomes and legal shifts towards inclusion and social equality.

Despite these initiatives, LCR strategize from the margins because of sexual orientation. I predict that framing issues to normalize sexual orientation (an assimilation approach) is effective for the LCR to meet their organizational goals and gain traction under the umbrella of conservative politics. The reason conservative gay and lesbian interest groups are compelled to use assimilationist strategies is because they work both from the margins of conservative politics and also from the margins of the mainstream liberal gay and lesbian social movement. I expect to find that the emphasis on incremental public and social policy change by influencing legislation works within the gay and lesbian social movement paradigm as well as conservative political ideologies despite alternative approaches described in the literature.

Initial research and pilot studies illuminate the following frames, which are key in the organization's strategic planning: *issue, conservatism, individualism, family, equality, and inclusion*. These frames lead to an emphasis on assimilation strategies, defined by shifting the existing political system in an incremental way. Issue framing, strategic choices, and working to blend political ideology with identity (sexual orientation) are all carefully considered by the LCR to promote change from within conservative politics. Why did specific issue framing around SB1062 successfully stop the bill? Will such frames lead to the success of state and national level employment nondiscrimination legislation?

Even while sexual orientation minority status may limit access to resources, the role of whiteness, masculinity, and financial capital play important roles in the organization's ability to put resources to work. Multiple identities function at once, allowing the group to use resources associated with mainstream identities (race, gender, and class) as capital to resist marginalization based on sexual orientation. The work of LCR continues to be a driving force that challenges assumptions about the Republican

Party, shapes the direction of conservative politics, and works towards inclusion and equality for gay and lesbian citizens.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals remain second-class citizens in the United States (Vaid 1995, Rimmerman 2002, Canaday 2009). Despite recent political changes towards equality for sexual orientation minorities, there are a number of ways in which gay and lesbian people remain marginalized. Access to institutions such as the military and protections from discrimination in private (e.g. housing) and public spaces are all key aspects of full citizenship that are denied to sexual orientation minorities (Canaday 2009). Gay and lesbian citizens remain targets of homophobic violence. The state does not protect equal access for housing or employment for its gay and lesbian citizens. LGBT teens are targeted in schools. Despite the recent Supreme Court decision on marriage equality, local, state, and federal political leaders promise to fight against marriage equality. It is for these reasons that the continuation of academic scholarship in the areas of gay and lesbian studies remains urgent.

Gay and lesbian social movement is often approached ‘from the left,’ through a lens of liberal political perspectives. Organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign are attributed with the success of assimilationist change. Yet gay and lesbian interest groups like the Log Cabin Republicans are working from a conservative perspective and with conservative congressional leaders to create inclusivity and equality for gays and lesbians. There remains a glaring silence around, and at times outright hostility toward, gay and lesbian interest groups working within conservative politics (Muse 2008).

Within the gay and lesbian social movement, interest groups have access a number of strategies (See *Appendix A* and *Appendix C*). There are direct (e.g. direct contacts with bureaucrats, congresspeople) and indirect methods (e.g. media campaigns) that include: lobbying, electioneering, recruitment, engaging public opinion, bringing cases to court, etc... The interest groups working within conservative politics employ the same kinds of strategies, both direct and indirect (Binderkrantz 2005). This is part of the puzzle. Author Getz pulls out three theoretical threads from the extant literature, including: (1) why are groups engaged?; (2) what do they do once engaged?; and (3) what are the systemic constraints groups face? (2001).

LCR frames issues carefully to address problems, create allies and inclusivity, and shift public policy towards equality for gays and lesbians. The results are specific strategies that work to bridge conservative politics and issues specific to gays and lesbians. This piece investigates the theoretical underpinnings which explain what systemic constraints groups face, and how LCR anticipates those constraints (Getz 2001).

The Log Cabin Republicans remain an under-recognized force in the contemporary gay and lesbian social movement. LCR add diversity of political opinion to the heterogeneous movement, challenging the notion that ‘all gays and lesbians believe, act, or desire the same things.’ As a result, LCR must continue to creatively engage with the broader gay and lesbian social movement. Therefore, issue framing must bridge multiple audiences in order to promote the organization's goals and execute its strategies. Narrow and deep study of the LCR demonstrates how operating from within this tenuous

interstitial space will propel gay and lesbian social movement forward through incremental public policy changes.² Understanding how and why LCR operates will allow for new predictive possibilities: what will the future hold for conservative politics and the movement towards gay and lesbian inclusion and increased equality?

*The focus of this chapter is to pull together the underlying theoretical explanations. What theory or multiple theories explain why the Log Cabin Republicans Organize, how they organize, and what they do once they're organized? The following pulls together multiple competing theoretical explanations and works to bridge the conversation, particularly between group theories (e.g. pluralism, interest group liberalism) and theory that explain identity (e.g. identity politics, intersectionality).

THEORETICAL REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

Pluralism and Interest Group Liberalism:

Early group theorists described the importance of groups to use their power in order to engage with the existing system, described as a reaction against the state to impact policy change (Bentley 1908). In turn, governments react to groups, and give groups the power to control agenda-setting and policy making outcomes (Bentley 1908, McFarland 2010). Questions of power are imbricated with questions of politics: where is power located and how does it operate? Pluralist conceptions of power imagine that it is more-or-less evenly *dispersed* in the system.

Power is broadly distributed and widely accessible meaning that the overall system is open to change. Even as power is equally accessible to all, groups form and leaders emerge to create change in the system:

Political power is pluralistic in the sense that there exist many different sets of leaders; each set has somewhat different objectives from the others, each has access to its own political resources, each is relatively independent of the others. There does not exist a single set of all-powerful leaders who are wholly agreed on their major goals and who have enough power to achieve their major goals. (Dahl 1961).

Interest groups come together to play key roles in provoking and guiding systemic change. Nevertheless, because interest groups interact with the system as it exists to make incremental changes within existing structure, assimilationist organizational strategies are common. Pluralism does not allow (and there is no need for) changing political structures of the system (Dahl 1961).

Interest groups must take control of power in order to mobilize, strategize, and accomplish their goals. There are also multiple channels with which to interact with the system, such as legal change, legislation, shifting public opinion, or mobilizing voters. Much like dispersed resources, there are multiple political systems in place that interest groups can interact with: the electorate, congress and the legislative apparatus, and the judicial system. Just as there are dispersed inequalities there are also multiple channels

² This is my answer to the "so what" question.

through which interest groups can engage with the American political system. Power is fragmented and dispersed, making it obtainable by any group interested in shifting the political system (Dahl 1961). A pluralist perspective also encourages, above all else, a serious commitment to engaging with the system as it currently exists. That is precisely what conservative gay and lesbian interest groups are doing, as they work to change the system at multiple levels and through multiple channels in the political system.

Interest group liberalism, according to Lowi (1969) shifted the pluralist paradigm by separating the moral and economic positions brought to the table by a given interest group. Rather than “rational” or “moral” importance, Lowi suggested the importance of resource mobilization. The correlation between an interest group’s ability to mobilize resources and impact politics outweighs the issues concerning a given group. Lowi might suggest that gay and lesbian interest groups have successfully gathered the right kinds of resources and executed the right kinds of strategies; the specific issues are more or less irrelevant.

Lowi remained optimistic about the possibilities to influence politics, and the openness of the political system. In *The End of Liberalism*, Lowi states:

It 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 tis 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 interest and makes no independence judgment of their claims. It is interest group liberalism because it defines the public interest as a result o the amalgamation of various claims. (Lowi 1979)

Lowi assumes that organizational interests are homogenous, democratic, and competitive. The result of interest group participation is a response from the government, usually in the form of incremental policy change.

(1) Organized interests are homogenous and easy to define. Any duly elected representative of any interest is taken as an accurate representative of each and every member. (2) Organized interests emerge in every sector of our lives and adequately represent most of those sectors, so that one organized group can be found effectively answering and checking some other organized group as it seeks to prosecute its claims against society. And (3) the role of government is one of insuring access to the most effectively organized, and of ratifying the agreements and adjustments worked out among the competing leaders. (Lowi 1979)

Groups have the opportunity to fight for a place at the table, both on the national and state levels. That echoes the notion that all groups vying to change politics have an equal footing in the system and are equally competitive with one another. According to Lowi, the system is open, even while it remains competitive. Further, Lowi’s conception is morally ambiguous or at the very least deemphasizes the role for morality in the process of interest group competition. For Lowi, as groups fight for their issues and use their

multiplicity of resources, equilibrium emerges, which accurately reflects the desires of the citizens.

Pluralism and interest group liberalism reflect the political and economic framework of liberal democracy. Bound up with classical liberalism, liberal democracy emphasizes core American values, which include individualism, equality of opportunity, liberty, and freedom (Hartz 1955; See also Abbott 2005 and Hulliung 2010). In a consensus system, imagining equal access to politics through dispersed resources makes anything possible (Schattschneider 1960). Pluralism and interest-group liberalism suggest that assimilation strategies are the way forward: anyone, including gays and lesbians, can access resources, create groups, and impact the political system.

The liberal tradition and its conception of pluralist power contrasts sharply with others who imagine a different role for morality in the system. Hyperpluralism emerges in the face of so many competing moral and social forces, pulling away from the perceived equilibrium in the system.

Critics of the liberal tradition suggest that we can clearly see that interest group completion results in anything but equilibrium. The result is *hyperpluralism*, the exaggerated form of pluralism ‘at its worst.’ When multiple and competing groups have power in the system, and those groups adopt extreme views, they all pull away from a moral center³ or common good when they get what they want (Rawls 1993). When the system pleases too many competing interests, hyperpluralism reveals itself in the form of a torn society which lacks a clear moral and political center. At its worst, multiple policies contradict one another and competition stalls government (Ferrara 2013).

Ferrara exchanges Rawlsian notions of public unity for a concept he calls multivariate democratic polity. The polity consists of three groups, who maintain order in the system through citizen engagement and intervene when “conjectural arguments fail to remedy the shortcomings of public reason” (Ferrara 2013). The three groups Ferrara describes all have moral, constitutional, and prudential logics are able to mitigate... the condition of hyperpluralism under which... democracies function today” (Ferrara 2013).

But interest groups are not all created equally with access to the same influence and resources. For instance, there are insider and outsider groups. Groups that coalesce around marginalized identity are a part of outsider groups (Binderkrantz 2005). Internally, a given interest group may also experience internal conflict around class inequality (Schattschneider 1960; Schlozman and Tierney 1986) or identity (Strolovitch 2007). In addition, maintaining an internal democracy is nearly, if not totally impossible because groups form with an initial elite, who maintain power in the group whether or not they intend to do so (Michels 1959). Face-to-face interaction for groups may help to solve some of these issues, but many organizations do not have local chapters, and therefore miss important face time (Skocpol 2004). The survival of an interest group ought not be assumed. Systemic factors like limited resources, organizational legitimacy, and density lead to interest group death (Nownes and Lipinski 2005).

Unlike the assertions often found in pluralism and interest group liberalism, the identity and issues important within a group also impact a group’s ability to access power

³ Kleinsman developed a term to describe how contemporary competing moral forces pull away from an imagined moral center: moral hyperpluralism (2013).

in the system. Identity functions both as a resource and a limitation to resources, but deserves more emphasis than the pluralism or interest group liberalism give to the role of identity.

Identity Politics and Marginalization:

The identity politics literature originally set out to locate the meanings and articulations of identity. In so doing, early theorists relied upon important binaries to explain and understand the shape of identity. Understanding racial and sex/gender inequality still draws upon the binaries of white/non-white and man/woman or masculine/feminine. Binaries situate a mythical norm or mainstream identity associated with privilege against another identity on the spectrum, one associated with marginalization.

For instance, Du Bois (1903) described his insoluble experiences as Black and American. Collins (2005) demonstrated that two marginalized identities can be simultaneous: to be Black and Woman (juxtaposed against white and man) resulted in a matrix of oppression. Lorde (1984) adds lesbian (juxtaposed against straight) to an understanding of multiple oppressions. Feminism also works from a perspective of sex and gender dualisms, and continues to center gender binaries for the purposes of analyzing social inequality (Butler 2006). Post-colonial feminisms add a binary of Western/non-Western to a deep understanding of inequalities refracted through colonialism (Mohanty 1988). The citizen imagined in liberal democracy (and by early pluralists) was a mythical norm, and imagined citizen with ‘invisibilized’ identities: white, male, able-bodied, heterosexual, wealthy, and Western (Mohanty 1988, Pateman 1988, Mills 1997, Pateman and Mills 2007).

The broad umbrella of identity politics includes many axes of identity: sex, gender, race, ability, age, nationality/citizenship, religion, sexuality, and political ideology. Identity politics, then, acknowledges that the process of understanding ‘who I am’ juxtaposed against ‘who you are’ becomes political. In other words, individuals and groups have multiple sites of identity, all of which are political (Hutchinson & Smith 1996). Often, this boils down to a limited conceptualization through an “I” lens. Theoretical work to understand groups resulting from identity politics are often skeptical of the role of identity in impacting political systems. For instance, when community organizations or lobbying groups form, they are rarely defined by their identity, or at least not *more* defined by identity than the issue around which the group rallies. Williams (1998) attests that this remains too limited an understanding for how identity functions within groups, particularly women, gays and lesbians, or racial/ethnic groups.

In relation to interest groups, identity can function as both a constraint and also a resource: identity shapes organizational which influence the group’s ‘radical or routine’ approaches and strategies (Halpin and Daugbjerg 2015). Kruks argues that not only are identities multiple, but key to paths toward recognition (2001). She states:

What makes identity politics a significant departure from earlier, pre-identitarian forms of politics of recognition has previously been denied: it is *qua* women, *qua* blacks, *qua* lesbians that groups demand recognition. The demand is not for inclusion

within the follow of “universal mankind...” nor it is for respect “in spite of” one’s differences. Rather, what is demanded is respect for oneself *as* different. (Kruks 2001, 85)

In short, it is unsatisfactory to merely acknowledge different and the inequality that parallels outsider identities. A demand for recognition is a central tenant of identity politics (Kruks 2001).

Early pluralists discuss race as an archetype of outsider identity in the abstract. Dahl includes race and ethnicity as a resource (1961). According to Dahl, a group has the potential to form around identity and cultivate that identity as a resource. Identity can be used as a tool to increase recruitment (Dahl 1961). This conceptualization is limited in a number of ways. It does not consider the difference between exogenously and endogenously defined identities. Self-ascribed (endogenous) identities are defined according to an individual’s own subjective perspective. This may not always match the ways an individual is categorized by others (Appiah 2006). Marginalization results when identity is co-opted by those in power and then shaped exogenously. Identity is not always simply a resource gathered by those who endogenously define themselves in similar ways. Further, Dahl’s conceptualization of race is too simplistic. Dahl and early pluralists fail to explain what might happen when an individual or group of individuals embody multiple or competing identities (Dahl 1962, see also Phillips and Hardy 1997). Identity, after all, is dynamic. Hobsbawm describes the simultaneous embodiment of multiple identities with the following analogy: if each part of an individual’s identity is like a piece of clothing, that individual can change into a number of outfits (1996). Identity is fluid, and so must be identity politics.

Hero picks up the thread that Dahl drops around race and ethnicity, and does not adopt an intersectional lens. Hero agrees that power is distributed throughout the system, but it is not simply an even distribution accessible to everyone. There is, according to Hero, a two-tiered system, divided starkly along race lines. Those in the top tier have access to more resources and institutional power than those in the bottom tier and those tiers are divided along race. The edges of these tiers are impenetrable, but highly visible, particularly to those on the bottom, like a translucent curtain, to borrow from Du Bois (1903). Hero describes the bottom tier as including those who have been systematically and historically situated in ways that limit access to resources and limit social mobility (1992). Similarly, van Dijk (1996) argues access to political systems is racialized, which limits access for non-whites seeking political participation:

Since most ‘ethnic’ policies, however, are national and federal [in the United States], minorities are more or less effectively excluded from more influential text and talk about their own position. On the other hand, minorities are frequent topics of political talk and text, but this form of passive access is hardly controlled by them: they have virtually no influence on this ‘representation’ in political discourse. (van Dijk 1996)

The system remains divided along race lines, but that conceptualization ignores other aspects of identity that also negatively impact the ability of a group to access resources.

Sexual orientation also divides and limits access to limited resources in the system, even while it can be utilized as a resource to mobilize interest group

participation. Thus far sexual orientation has been discussed as an axis of identity ‘tacked onto’ others. Gamson (1995) describes the dual importance and limitations of identity-based politics and social organizing. He posits that one problem with identity politics is “the instability of identities both individual and collective, their made-up yet necessary character” (1995). Identity is a moving target.

With an ever moving target, it seems that either the LCR is ‘adding sexuality and stirring’ or ‘using positions of oppressive power’ to get what they want. Here, two critiques of identity politics come to bear in the case of the Log Cabin Republicans. One comes from former director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, Urvashi Vaid, who describes the impossibility of one homogenous and imagined ‘gay and/or lesbian’ social umbrella:

A false assumption underlies all gay and lesbian organizing: that there is something at once singular and universal that can be called gay or lesbian or bisexual or transgendered identity... The notion that we constitute one community and can coalesce into a unified movement is both a fiction and a prayer. (Vaid 1995)

LCR offer just such an example, a subgroup that is produced and reproduces a non-homogenous gay and lesbian social movement. So ‘adding sexuality and stirring’ has its limitation. If the movement is comprised of dissonant and competing sub-groups, it is less and less clear what an ‘imagined gay and lesbian social movement’ hopes to achieve. At the very least, assuming homogeneity of identity and message in an imagined gay and lesbian social movement remains erroneous.

Intersectionality:

Intersectionality flips the binary logic of identity politics on its head. Insofar as intersectionality has been thought of as a paradigm, it embodies the bringing together of multiple identities to understanding specific human experiences (Hancock 2007). Further, intersectionality considers (1) the way certain aspects of identity impact other aspects of identity and (2) the way individual experiences of intersectionality and social structures influence each other in a mutually constitutive relationship (Hancock 2007).

The concept of intersectionality is not without criticism. Nash outlines four tensions of the concept as it has been applied widely in recent feminist scholarship. She argues that there is a lack of intersectional methodology, an over/misuse of black women as subjects, a vague definition of the term, and questions the ‘empirical validity’ of intersectionality (2008). In short, Nash recognizes the elusive task of defining and applying intersectionality singularly (2008). Still other critics argue that identity politics are in point of fact depoliticizing because they do little to challenge capitalism and leave economic structures intact (McNay 2008). Demanding recognition might be important; but recognition merely factionalizes individuals into sometimes opposing groups rather than coming together to challenge oppressive capitalist structures (McNay 2008).

Adopting an intersectional approach sometimes implies a requirement to reconcile multiple or competing identities. For instance, Weeks (1990) described multiple marginalized identities as, “Each of us lives with a variety of potentially contradictory identities, which battle within for allegiance” (p. 88). Interestingly, Weeks also places

identity in a value-context, which is to say that the identity an individual emphasizes aligns with that individual's values. In the context of the LCR, that means political values.

In a reflection on the positionality of the Log Cabin Republicans, Rogers and Lott (1997) describe the multiple and competing identities the group and its members embody. An intersectional perspective offers a tension for the organization. Rather than being allowed to occupy a "gay Republican" space, the organization is often asked to pick one. "So are you gay or Republican" as though the group functioned with a big light switch in the middle of the room. This has even been posed in somewhat aggressive ways to the organization, who are consistently asked to 'pick a side.'

To offer a few concrete examples, Morgenstern (1994) poses the contradiction in a context of what the organization was doing in the mid-90s: "[are they] putting more of their energy into selling the Republican Party to gays than gay rights to the Republicans [?]" By way of more current example, *The Advocate* recently published "A Lonely Cabin," described the continued verbal assault on the organization from within the Republican party at their first Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in 2012. The article described how few other gay organization would stand to be so humiliated. There are many similar examples that describe the organization as self-loathing, internally homophobic, or are in other ways dismissive of the goals of the organization.

An intersectional lens, which often describes in depth two marginalized identities⁴ seems ill-equipped to take on the seemingly contradictory position of gay and Republican. In other words, intersectionality, much like identity politics, first require the organization to reconcile its two irreconcilable or contradictory positions. Further, Smith (2006) offers the critique of 'oppression Olympics,' which applies in some ways to the name calling toward the LCR from within gay and lesbian social movement (and the gay magazine, *The Advocate!*). The oppression Olympics describe a bottomless cycle: imagine folks standing in a room saying "no my problem is worse than yours..." This is what we see when gay groups are dismissive or openly hostile toward the LCR.

Phelan argues that rather than adopting an identity politics, which separates and factionalizes, coalition building is far more effective. Phelan suggests, "Our politics must be informed by affinity rather than identity, not simply because we are not all alike, but because we each embody multiple, often conflicting, identities and location" (1994). For now, the LCR continue to make clear their identity politics, particularly as Republican, which is not palatable to a broader, if imagined, gay and lesbian community and social movement. Coalition-building in this instance would require that the LCR *and* mainstream groups move away from a politics of identity, and towards the recognition and importance of multiple-shifting sub-groups. An intersectional lens might be one way forward (Rogers and Lott), but that would require huge steps by mainstream groups towards embracing the LCR.

⁴ Nash also critiques the perspective for often adopting and tokenizing black women's experiences (2008).

Assimilation v. Liberation:

The debate between assimilation and liberation is a pervasive theoretical challenge in the history of gay and lesbian social movement and scholarship. Inclusion, not disruption, is central to assimilationist approaches to shifting politics. Liberationist approaches are fundamentally different because the approaches work to confront and upend heteronormativity and compulsory heterosexuality (Jackson 2006). In other words, assimilation works within the existing structure whereas liberation aims to confront and change social structures and institutions. In gay and lesbian studies, that confrontation is generally aimed at shifting cultural norms, although policy is often tied to shifting those cultural norms. For Rimmerman, a combination of both strategies ought to be employed, "...a dual organizing strategy, one that builds on the best of the assimilationist perspective, but one that also considers the possibilities for a more radical, liberationist, structural, social and policy change" (Rimmerman 2008). But, blending the two perspectives is not a possibility. As long as gays and lesbians remain marginalized, radical liberationist change is not possible.

Authors in gay and lesbian studies view the world through lenses of struggle to understand systems of oppression. The struggle of identity within the gay and lesbian social movement emerged as a binary, which imagines stark divisions between hetero- and homosexual. In terms of strategies, the assimilationist and liberationist perspectives are often viewed as incompatible, the exception being the recent attempt to blend the two, suggested by Rimmerman (2008). Still others argue that assimilation is not a homogenous term with one set of strategies to confront heteronormativity or power in the political system. Strategies of assimilation actually compete with 'the affirmation of desire,' as both embody differences when it comes to resistance (Hequembourg 1999).

Queer Politics emerged as a response to all of these binaries, but especially those coming from studies of sexuality and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered lives. For the purposes of this project, understanding the way identity functions within social movement will be important to understand the strategies of conservative gay and lesbian interest groups and make sense of those strategies within a larger context.

The field of gay and lesbian studies includes histories of activism, HIV/AIDS scholarship, and scholarship situated in sociology, sexology, and sexuality studies. The interface between gay and lesbian studies and politics is much more narrow. Over time, theoretical frameworks have shifted based on the emphasis in the gay and lesbian social movement. The movement has undergone several shifts from "gay and lesbian" to "LGBT" towards "Queer." These time periods were, in part, defined by the different assimilationist and liberationist strategies adopted each movement.

Gay and lesbian social movement has lasted for decades, included a range of issues, and includes many participants of diverse backgrounds and interests (Tarrow 1998). To date, there have been three eras of gay and lesbian social movement in the United States. The first, often termed the homophile movement, ranged from 1945-1969. Some suggest movement beginning before that, as early as 1864 (See Lauritsen and Thorstad 1995). The homophile period primarily adopted assimilationist strategies. "Coming out" was central to this time period in the movement. The second period, which ranged from 1969-1974 is termed the gay liberation movement. The gay liberation

movement shifted the discourse (adopting “gay” as moniker reacting against “straight” society) from a homophile movement towards a liberationist movement. This change was precipitated by the Stonewall riots in 1969 (See Carter 2004). Instead of wanting a place at the table of equality, like assimilationists, activists during this period demanded a new table: cultural shifts large enough to make room for gay and lesbian citizenship.

Currently, the movement has shifted to emphasize rights and is called the gay or LGBT rights movement. Broadly, the current movement is issues-based. In response to a given issue the movement has demanded rights from the federal government, state government, and sometimes both depending on the issue. For more information, see “issue frames” (Rimmerman 2002). Groups in today’s movement act from either the assimilationist or liberationist perspectives, depending on the group, and depending on the issue. Conservative gay and lesbian interest groups always adopt assimilationist approaches when developing and implementing strategies to shift politics. Why do organizations remain limited to this approach?

Rimmerman also identifies a central tension omitted by earlier pluralist theorists, and asks, “...what if the political process is not nearly as open and responsive to minority groups as the pluralists and the proponents of interest-group liberalism suggest?” (Rimmerman 2002, 5). He characterizes the resistances of gays and lesbians as social movements, distinguishing them as multiple, multi-faceted, long-term struggles against state action (See Tarrow 1998). As gay and lesbian social movement has progressed through history, it evolved to emphasize assimilationist and rights-based approaches. The epicenter of the movement and specific groups functioning within the movement remains identity.

CONCLUSION

Can ‘marginalized interest group theory’ be the way forward?

Marginalized identity around sexual orientation weakens LCR ability to garner and implement elite framing. Whereas pluralism describes the emancipatory potential of dispersed resources and distributed power (Dahl 1961), the binary between assimilation and liberation describe constraints of how power is used to influence the system (Rimmerman 2002). While strategies remained tied to assimilation, constraint will be felt by minorities organizing to gain power and access resources (Hero 1992, van Dijk 1996).

It is because minority identity groups lack power (even as compared to other interest groups) that they are considered outsider rather than insider groups. Many scholars identify the difference between “insider” and “outsider” groups, albeit in different ways. Schattschneider was one of the first to use these terms in the context of American politics (1935, 166). Later, terms like “helpful” and “unhelpful” (Dearlove 1973) and “established” and “non-established” (Newton 1976) emerged in the interest group politics literature to differentiate between groups that have access to resources and those that do not. Grant evolved these understandings into “Insider/Outsider,” a dichotomy that reflects social realities for those with marginalized identities (outsiders) juxtaposed against those who embody the ‘mythical norm’ (insiders) (1978). The dualism

of heterosexual and non-heterosexual fits into these models: sexual orientation keeps those who would normally have insider access to the political system on the outside.

Even as outsider individuals come together as a group to confront the system (Dahl 1962, Lowi 1979) they do not have access to political system that insiders do, a direct affront to traditional pluralism (Rimmerman 1992). While Rimmerman argues that the heterosexual/homosexual binary keeps groups from equal access, he does not consider the dual marginalization experienced by the Log Cabin Republicans. Gay and lesbian social movement theorists support the notion that sexual orientation has marginalized gay and lesbian groups from access in various ways (Vaid 1995; Rimmerman 2002; Robinson 2005; Cimano 2006; and Stein 2012). LCR are outsiders in the heterosexual homosexual binary, but they are also considered outsiders within broader conceptualizations of a liberal gay and lesbian (LGBT, Queer) rights movement.

I argue that outsider groups are constrained to assimilation strategies. Insider groups have power in the political system, but do not have a need or desire to shift politics in a radical way toward inclusion or equality. Insider groups already have power within social and political institutions, so they have no incentive to change it. Identity as sexual orientation minorities reduces the amount of power held by the LCR to confront to political system and their conservative views marginalize the organization within a broader gay and lesbian social movement.

Therefore, while operating within an optimistic pluralist framework, LCR are compelled to adopt assimilationist strategies in order to garner resources and increase recognition in the political system (Kruks 2001). As the case studies demonstrate, use of carefully crafted messages and political responses through discourse are central to giving LCR opportunities to gain power in the system (van Dijk 1980, Phillips and Hardy 1997).

One area that requires further inquiry is about what happens within the organization. The focus of this theory paper has been to explore what theories explain how LCR behave in a broader gay and lesbian social movement. How do the internal dynamics operate? What are the multiple and competing positions within the group, if any? Further investigation through interviews is needed to explore this area.

APPENDIX

A. List of national, politically active gay and lesbian interest groups in the United States:

1. Bash Back!
2. Daughters of Bilitis
3. Equality Across America (National Equality March)
4. Freedom to Marry
5. Gay Activists Alliance (GAA)
6. Gay and Lesbian Activists and Defenders (GLAD)
7. Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD)
8. Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund
9. Gay Liberation Front (GLF)
10. Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)
11. Human Rights Campaign (HRC)
12. Marriage Equality USA
13. National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
14. National Youth Advocacy Coalition
15. Out & Equal
16. OutServe
17. Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)
18. Turn Out!
19. Queer Nation
20. Queer Resources Directory

B. List of national, politically active Republican gay and lesbian interest groups

1. GayPatriot (blog, conservative)
2. GOProud (conservative)
3. Independent Gay Forum (Libertarian, conservative)
4. Log Cabin Republicans (Republican, conservative)

C. Organizations (that are not only social) in the state of Arizona

1. 1Voice (educational, social, and wellness services)
2. The ACLU of Arizona
3. Democratic Party LGBT Caucus (Arizona)
4. Equality Arizona
5. [Freedom to Marry](#) (Arizona)
6. GLSEN Phoenix (safe schools resources)
7. Human and Equal Rights Organizers (H.E.R.O.; meets @ 1Voice)
8. Human Rights Campaign
9. Log Cabin Republicans (Arizona)
10. NativeOUT
11. Northern Arizona Gender Alliance

12. One in Ten
13. Phoenix Pride Community Foundation (community grants)
14. Project Hard Hat (HIV/AIDS prevention/education)
15. Stand Up Arizona (hate crime awareness)
16. Why Marriage Matters Arizona
17. Wingspan (Tucson community Center for GLT)
18. Yuma County Gay Rights Meetup (gay rights, Yuma county)

D. Gay and lesbian interest groups actively working on marriage equality in Arizona

1. The ACLU of Arizona
2. Equality Arizona
3. [Freedom to Marry](#) (Arizona)
4. Human Rights Campaign
5. Log Cabin Republicans (Arizona)
6. Why Marriage Matters Arizona

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