

# Change in Progress

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*This paper explores the beginnings of the movement of the Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual & Transgendered community (GLBT). By analyzing pioneers such as Henry Hey, Dr. Evelyn Hooker and Harvey Milk, and also by revisiting events such as the stonewall riots, the paper illustrates the social stigma that the GLBT community has been enduring. Also, by exploring institutionalized discrimination, a better understanding of the adversity that some people face can be reached.*

<sup>1</sup>Social Change can be reflected by a change in values and an increase in tolerance. The changes in sentiments have made revolutions and a change in human rights possible. Social changes have helped the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender movement's progression (GLBT). The GLBT movement has been progressing slowly but surely the GLBT community has been able to gain certain liberties that were not readily available before. The analysis of the GLBT movement will be focusing on the progression of their framing strategies that were and are currently being used today. The paper will begin with the analysis of the use of the motivational frame work utilizing Henry Hey and the

Stonewall Riots to further emphasize its importance. The motivational frame work will then intertwine with the surge of Diagnostic framing; consequently, this framing serves the purpose of diagnosing the problem and attributing the blame to particular sources. The progressions from motivational to diagnostic are both important for the emergence of the prognostic framing stage that evolved from being a personal problem to a social problem seeking a change in the political and social system. This is the particular sequence that is reflective of the GLBT movement's success.

As opposed to the Civil Rights and Women's movements, the GLBT required a higher degree of motivation in order to get the movement started. A hero is a martyr willing to come out and express his sentiments, and that individual was Henry Hey—an educated and political advocate who wrote about the “oppressed minority.” Henry Hey

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was one of the founders of the Mattachine Society, and he recommended gay and lesbian individuals to come out and fight against their oppression. The conception of an oppressed minority was important because it legitimized homosexual identity. Not only was this conception important at the personal level, but it was vital for the uprising of GLBT movements. The uprising of individuals and the collective community is an example of the motivational incentives that initiated from the conception of the "oppressed minority." Having legitimized their grievances, this idea of an "oppressed minority" was the threshold needed for gays to "come out." This brought about the conception of "Identity," and this conception, consequently, allowed for GLBT individuals to gain a sense of community, allowing individuals to share testimonies of their grievances and struggles, while bolstering their sense of identity, outrage and Pride.

In June of 1969, Police raided the Stonewall Inn, a bar where gays socialized. This act of police violence was symbolic because the gay men fought back with frustration, which would later fuel and cause the emergence of the "Gay Liberation movement" as a result of the Stonewall Riot. This took place about sixteen years after Henry Hey professed the oppressive reality of the gay and lesbian community. The latent support was brought to the frontlines after the Stonewall Riot. The oppressive behavior of the State caused a heightened level of indignation within the GLBT that has lasted and continues till this day. The Stonewall riot was to the GLBT community what Rosa Parks was to the

Civil Rights movement, as both helped motivate group members to organize and resist (Write1999).

Due to the GLBT's lack of identity and lacking sense of community, it was essential for organizers to appeal to people's individual's beliefs. In the beginning stages, the majority of the people, including gay and lesbian individuals, thought that being homosexual was not a social problem but a personal problem. Since the individual was to blame, society was justified when they were mistreating and oppressing their behavior. During the motivational stage, leaders had to take extreme measures in order to appeal to the GLBT individuals. By appealing to the individuals beliefs and emphasizing the importance of identity, Henry Hey was successful in embedding a sense of pride and outrage in the individuals. As a result, individuals began to assemble and began to build organization groups that will ultimately led to collective action. Without pride, outrage and a possibility of success GLBT, individuals would not have participated in any collective action because the consequences for doing so were great. Reaching a communal state was a success for the GLBT community because it allowed for people such as Henry Hey and other members of the Mattachine society to be influential. Although it is important to note that many gay individuals came out, the political system and religious groups were not willingly ready to acknowledge their new found identity.

Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals were denied the right to initiate romantic involvement and forced to deny their sexual identity. GLBT were imprisoned in a role that

denounced their needs and denounced their civil liberties. The community needed to acknowledge who they were and demand that they be granted equal rights. Without the obvious relation between identity and oppression, the resources needed to mobilize the movement would not have been possible. Their new found pride and outrage was enough motivation to initiate the movement. Henry Hey was the leading advocate promoting gays to come out, and he also helped transform the concept of what it meant to be gay in America. Without Henry Hey and his efforts the gay community would not have been motivated enough to rise up and mobilize. Thus, Henry Hey was a symbolic figure that represented another perspective of the gay individual, one that is educated and successful. Although this was not the overwhelming perspective, this triggered scientific research. One of the most important research studies was done by Dr. Evelyn Hooker. Her groundbreaking paper, presented in 1956, demonstrated that “gay men were as well adjusted as heterosexual men, often more so” (Ritts2009). Although gay and lesbians were not removed from the American Psychiatric Association until 1973, Dr. Hooker’s developments brought the symbolic justification that reinforced the reality of their discontent of their mistreatment and oppression.

Determining the point at issue is an extremely hard task to arrive at, but many groups have chosen to specialize in specific grievances, whereas others have focused on a large range of topics. More specifically, the social organizations being discussed are the Mattachine Society, GLAAD, and the Gay and

Lesbian Task force. These organizations diagnosed four problematic areas. They attributed blame to the religious organizations, to inaccurate accounts of GLBT lifestyles, to the lack acknowledgement, and to the oppressive political system working in concert with the other three.

Since the concept of identity brought about enlightenment and awareness, both of which were necessary for the transition to a diagnostic framework, the progression from motivational to diagnostic was necessary because mere motivation to act is not sufficient for successful collective action. This particular framework attributes blame for the injustices; for example, GLAAD is concerned with the media, and the effect it has on the portrayal of GLBT character. They attribute the blame to the mass media; although mainstreaming has helped build awareness, it has also been used against the GLBT organizations.

The Mattachine Society and the N.G.L.T.F. (national gay and lesbian task force) both attributed the blame to the political system for legitimizing oppression. In the case of the NGLTF and Mattachine Society, they oppose any unequal treatment to GLBT community topics ranging from marriage to job opportunities. For example, these organizations wanted to alleviate the stress of both being gay and career consequences, such as “GLB sociologist who participated in activism, according to a survey were more likely to encounter difficulties in obtaining academic positions than non-activists” (TaylorRaeburn262).

Many argue that focusing on specialization of issues within the GLBT movement would be successful. With

particular issues movement, organizations are less likely to lose focus of the main goal. What was most problematic for the GLBT movement was the decision to bridge with other movements. The Civil Rights movement (CRM) took full stage in the 1960's, and many GLBT organizations decided to support Civil Rights organizations. Later, many Lesbian organizations would dissolve to either join or counter the Women's movement. Depending on what was of highest priority to the social organizations, many would dissolve and join other organizations or bridge with other movements to join forces. For this reason, the diagnostic frame adapted an extension alignment in order to increase movement participation. For instance, the alliance between gay and union activists, when voicing their concerns regarding job security, bridged their framework with unions to unite around a common agenda (Sweeney35). Support of other social movements increased the level of organizational support, as well as increased resource availability.

In diagnosing the source of the problem, the political system has been overwhelmingly the problem (Snow 1999). Minority groups have been the overwhelming victims of political oppression; for example, the Civil Rights movement, the Women's movement and the GLBT are all representative of minority groups being oppressed. The GLBT differs because many viewed the GLBT as deviants being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, as they were thought to be a matter of choice. There are currently eleven states that have legalized marriage between gay and lesbians, either through the use of civil unions or domestic partnership.

California is currently in a battle regarding the legalization of gay and lesbian marriages. Even though the California Supreme Court ruled that couples have the right to marry, proposition eight, which denied gays and lesbians from being legally married, was voted on and passed in November 2008 by Californians taking their right to marry away. This proposition was timely for the countermovement because the 2009 elections had conditions that were not favorable to GLBT members, as the first African American candidate was running for president. Because a majority of African Americans are Christians and because the African American turnout was higher than prior years, I can be asserted that their ideals conflicted with the GLBT ideals, and, as a result, most African Americans voted in favor of proposition 8. Admittedly, the GLBT community was so reliant on California's Liberal majority that they failed to predict African American Christian turnout. This is an example of affluent religious groups using money to bring about success to counter GLBT movement in the political system.

The GLBT movement was initiated through motivation then it began diagnosing the problems and determining who was responsible for the injustice (Snow 1999). Blame was attributed, which led to the transforming of diagnostic to prognostic framing, where solutions are proposed and tactic strategies are developed. The Civil Rights and the Women's movement have paved the way for collective action tactics. Tactics most commonly used by the GLBT were protest, Pride parades, media, and lobbying power. The NGLTF has been the leading organization

composed of a large range of grievances, all of which are fought through lawsuits and proposed legislature.

Countering the countermovement and the proper use of resources has led to the movement's success. For instance, Pride Parades have been very successful countering the "choice" argument because pride parades are representative of individualism and sharing of life and knowledge. The counter for the deviant argument has been made successful by individuals of positive influence in the fields of Academics, Politicians Harvey B. Milk, Entertainers and many more. As stated by a GLBT member "our sexual behavior and how we define ourselves, is usually a choice. Though some people claim their sexual orientation is a choice for the vast majority this doesn't seem to be the case, in a world void of homophobia few people would construct their identity based on sexual orientation" (Miceli 603). This article is important because it states that sexual orientation is biological, and that sexual identity is socially defined. Countering the argument of "choice" was done by giving an example of social determinism that questions whether individuals living in a society actually have choices.

Resources available to the GLBT community also varied from the amount of resources available to CRM and WM, in that many GLBT members were affluent facilitating the availability of resources that took time for CRM and WM to raise. Money facilitated the distribution of information through media, parades, and lobby groups. Mainstreaming information and properly educating citizens about GLBT struggles can be a result of using the media as a

tactic. It can also facilitate parades because of the massive distribution of information, thereby increasing the amount of potential participants being exposed to the information, while affecting the influence money has on lobby groups. Money as a resource has a major influence on the success or failure of a social movement. Lobbying has become a very influential tool in politics. As seen by CRM and WM, political know how is important for reform, since there has not been exponential national policy success; thus, the GLBT have focused on State as opposed to national policy.

The GLBT struggles are not a modern phenomenon, and the increase of GLBT individuals that are out and open about their identity has increased as a result of a new found perspective. Incrementally, the movement has been able to gain momentum, regarding the fight for civil rights and their decriminalization, while also highlighting the debate of how much influence should religion have on political laws and the political process as a whole. Taking away the religious and moral argument of right and wrong from the GLBT debate, it forces us to see it as a matter of human liberties. Although the GLBT movement has gained certain acknowledgements, they are still denied the national acknowledgement needed for complete freedom and acceptance. Unfortunately, this is still a working progress, but with perseverance and an increase in national understanding the movement can hopefully transcend borders and ultimately reach national success.

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