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Collective action and the lesbian activist

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COLLECTIVE ACTION AND THE LESBIAN ACTIVIST

By

Stephanie Hope Damelio

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the University Honors Program
St. Petersburg Campus
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CHAPTER ONE

COLLECTIVE MOVEMENTS

This thesis will offer a comprehensive analysis of collective movements, review the history of the Gay Rights Movement, and explore the motivations of three female activists. I will assess how these movements develop, what elements lead to their success, and examine who the participants are. In order to explain these topics, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of the most extreme form of collective movements -- revolution, and how revolution relates to social and industrial-labor movements. Revolution is a violent upheaval by men and women who seek to create a new social order. Revolutions, generally, stem from disenchantment with an existing political system, a system which the participants believe to be oppressing the common man, the lower to middle classes. Revolutionaries seek not only to change a system but also to create an original, utopian ideal. Inevitably in the fight for revolution, counter revolutions subsequently emerge to fight against the original revolutionaries. These counter-revolutions can be a fight for the existing power, or they too may be seeking a new social order, though in differing ways and sometimes to differing ends. The
social revolutions of the late 1700s, throughout the 1800s, and into the 1900s—the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, and the American Revolution, succeeded in altering the political structure of entire countries. The acts of petitioning fellow countrymen to fight, lecturing on injustices and new political doctrine, recruitment, marches, strikes and violent uprisings laid the groundwork and inspiration for the industrial movements and social movements of the late 19th and early 20th century.¹

A social movement, as defined by Melucci, “is the extent in which its actions challenge or break the limits of a system of social relations.” Social movements work within a constructed system to change boundaries, adopt new thought patterns, and make already existing laws more inclusive. This is not to say that the industrial movements and social movements do not utilize journalism, strikes, marches, and violence, but rather to recognize that their goals are different. Industrial movements and social movements fought against the establishment to be recognized by the establishment. In the industrial-labor movement, the workers wanted recognition for being key players in the industry and rightfully compensated for filling such roles, and as such were not seeking to overthrow the system. Social movements usually entail a minority group or segment of society that does not feel equal to others and which fights for equality.
Regardless of the type of movement, to begin a movement there must be one key ingredient - the activist.²

Activism is the practice of an individual or a group of individuals working in unison to correct an injustice. Activism has been prevalent throughout history. The injustice can be anything from abolition of slavery to more break time for a corporation’s employees. These people or groups organize and fight for something in which they believe, and they actively find others to fight with them for the shared cause. What motivates these individuals to act, to act for themselves, for others like them, and sometimes, for other groups with whom they have no direct contact? Usually an oppressed group unites to fight a larger and more powerful entity. This fight can be fruitless, dangerous, and yet, at times, rewarding. For example, looking back at activism in 19th Century United States, where speaking one’s mind against the highly powerful slave owners sometimes led to ostracism and death, people stood up and found ways to fight for what they believed in, freedom. Slaves and free African Americans fought for the eradication of slavery, as did white Americans. What made these white Americans, who were not discriminated against, fight for and help a population not connected to them? Why did certain people risk themselves for others? Did their sensibilities differ from others who shared the same feelings of injustice but
did nothing? In examining all types of movements, even those less momentous than the abolition of slavery, the same questions prevail.3

Theories of what psychologically drives individuals to join, promote, and establish social movements have been as numerous as the movements themselves. When examining the modern era, social movements or collective actions have sometimes been characterized of as pathology. In the book Grassroots Resistance: Social Movements in Twentieth Century America, the author Robert Goldberg describes several patterns of thought by psychologists who postulated that persons joining protest groups were in psychological distress. This was a complete turnaround from the Progressive Movement (1880 - 1920). The Progressive Movement did not center around one particular theme but involved a myriad of differing groups working toward humane improvements and government regulation. Inspired men and women organized themselves and fought to correct what they felt were the wrongs of "big industry." These reformers were the underdogs fighting against money moguls. Living conditions, the reconditioning of factories, and the plight of the poor were the issues for which the reformers fought. The progressive era was the work of individuals motivated by influential journalists, commonly known as the muckrakers, who brought the stories of injustice to the American people. The social feelings and the mindset of those trailblazers during the progressive era were based on courage
and honor. Farmers, businessmen, low, middle, and elite classes proudly fought the institutions for change. It was not their honorable intentions that the companies challenged, just the changes themselves.\textsuperscript{4}

With the enjoyment of the prosperity of the 1920s, and the implementation of governmental reforms during the Great Depression, activism, as seen in the Progressive Era, faded from its prominence. After the uprising of the Nazi social movement, following Hitler’s ascension in 1933, and its horrific aftermath, social protest movements were often viewed as an unhealthy outlet for social illegitimacy. The public stereotyped any individual who desired to start or join a collective action as a communist. The attitudes towards social movements had drastically changed. Social movements were thought to be indicators of despair and stress brought on by war, urbanization, and the industrialization of the modern world. Joining or constructing collective action groups was a display of a person’s psychological abnormality. They “housed the emotional, the fanatical, and the violent.” Being involved with such movements did not instill admiration, but rather contempt. Erich Fromm, a psychoanalysts, and Eric Hoffer, a philosopher in this period, traced “participation in social movements to feelings of inadequacy and purposelessness rather than the rational pursuit of an objective.” Joining a social group gives these emotional, violent fanatics meaning and takes away their feelings of autonomy. Fromm diagnosed the desire to join
any type of social movement as a negative reaction to the ever-expanding freedom individuals have in society. This disconnection led these people to seize an opportunity for a new social movement. Hoffer refuted any ideology supporting mass movements and only saw the purpose of wanting to join one as an attempt to fill some part of an otherwise meaningless existence. Hoffer described people involved in social movements as "the failures, misfits, outcasts, criminals, and all others who have lost their footing, or never had one in the ranks of respectable humanity." The underlying reason for an individual to join a social movement was a reaction to an unbalanced society not an attempt to reform the political establishment but rather an attempt to deal with personal inadequacies. Psychologists' of this period, 1940 through the early 1960s, believed that activists needed curing for society's sake. The overall belief of American politics was that everyone had a chance through governmental means to air grievances and obtain satisfaction using the political system. A pluralist democracy, with its checks and balances, in theory, provides the guidelines for this satisfaction.5

Gamson, in The Strategy of the Social Protest, evaluates this pluralist logic in the success of fifty-three randomly selected collective action groups that appeared between 1800 and 1945. Gamson categorizes these groups as "challenging groups." He evaluates these groups to seek their "strategies... and organizational characteristics that influenced the success of their challenges."
Gamson uses the argument of pluralist politics as the framework of his discussion. He asks whether America’s present structure provides the sufficient conditions for any individual or group to advance its concerns? Do the check and balances imposed on and by our government allow all persons to be heard or does a certain high elite dominate? Pluralists would maintain, according to Gamson, that challenging groups will be heard through the American government arena. If a group does not conform to the governmental structure, then their goals will not come to fruition. Gamson evaluates this argument along with other possible reasons why some groups prevail but others do not. In view of Gamson’s strict following of the scientific method and statistical analysis in his study, his evaluation of what makes a successful collective action movement will be used in evaluating the social movements of today.6

Gamson defines the challenging group as a group that is capable of raising money, organizing, calling demonstrations, planning, and holding meetings. He recognizes that there is a range of involvement in any movement group. A member of a group can have either formal or informal acting status. An informal acting member could be as active as paying dues and being a card-holding member. A formal acting member is a member who actively participates in the running of the group or engages in-group activities. The challenging group itself may demand formal involvement by its members or, as with many industry-
based movements, rely heavily only on informal participation. Gamson defines three targets the challenging groups, that he utilized for his study, need to succeed: target of influence, target of mobilization, and target of benefits. The target of influence is the set of individuals, groups, or social institutions in power that the challenging group needs to influence in order to alter their decisions or policies for the benefit of the challenging group. Gamson refers to them as the group’s antagonist. Targets of mobilization are the groups or institutions whose resources the challenge group needs to utilize to effect change. This is the group’s constituency. The third target is target of benefits. Individuals or groups that the challenge group hopes will benefit positively from change are the target of benefits or the group’s beneficiary. For Gamson’s study, each group must have been trying to mobilize an unmobilized constituency and its antagonist must have been outside its constituency. Within these guidelines, Gamson randomly selected 53 groups from 500 to 600 potential challenging groups. Gamson’s definition for success by a challenge group contains two terms, new advantages and acceptance. Gamson defines new advantages as achievements of the challenge group’s goals, and acceptance is the act of being recognized or accepted as the representative of the people whose interests the group “championed.” Gamson defines two types of quasi-success, preemption (benefits but no recognition) and co-optation (recognition without benefits) (Figure 1).
In determining the means to success, Gamson evaluates several different aspects of each group and statistically determines whether it corresponds with groups who had succeeded. Gamson first appraises the success of single-issue groups versus multi-issue groups. His data suggest that the number of issues taken on by a group does not influence success, but rather, failure is a direct result of whether one of the group's goals was to overthrow the existing power structure. Only 6% of collective action groups studied achieved preemption success when one of their goals was replacement of the antagonist. The intent to displace the current leaders presented an obstacle for all the displacement group's goals. Group size promoted co-option success. The larger the group, the more acceptance it seemed to gain while the opposite was true for preemption success. A majority of the smaller groups achieved their goals, but never gained acceptance. In other words, groups that achieve their goals and remain relatively small, under 10,000 members, lack acceptance, while groups that obtain their goals while increasing membership also achieve acceptance. Gamson found that groups that offered selective incentives to join the challenge group not only had high rates of acceptance, but also, in all cases but two, achieved their desired goals. Relying solely on solidarity for action in a movement proved less successful.
Assessing the issue of violence in social changes creates many subpoints. The history of social movements shows a lack of violence in the United States. Only eight of the 53 groups that Gamson investigated resorted to violence as a means of action. However, the issue of the violence's origin and whether its enactment was a definitive tactic utilized by the groups is in question. This lack of intention to use violence by most groups seems to signify that violence does not facilitate the accomplishment of goals. Perhaps, because numerous other methods exist for members of the American public to be heard, it is simply from social mores that we perceive violence as wrong. Though the number of instances of violence in these movements is surprisingly small, violence as a tool or catalyst consistently achieves results. Those groups that initiated the violence against their antagonists achieved not only their goals but, to a lesser extent, also gained acceptance. Gamson asserts that the movements that use violence are movements whose members feel confident that the movement would eventually succeed but require more immediate results and subsequently demand satisfaction through violence. Therefore, violence is not a last resort employed by fledgling activists but rather a decisive move by confident activists to achieve goals faster.¹⁰

Besides violence, the use of constraints also proves to be effective. Constraints are the use of boycotts, strikes, and individual verbal attacks. Four-fifths of the groups using constraints in Gamson's study were successful,
compared to only two-fifths of the groups studied that did not use violence or constraints. Interestingly enough, the time period in question did not seem to influence whether or not movements used violence. About 38% of pre-Civil War movements used some type of violence or constraint, 44% of post-Civil War/ pre-World War I groups used some type of violence, and 33% of the pre-World War II groups used violence to help achieve their goals. It is important to note, though, that of the 85% of groups using violence, 50% were successful. Nonetheless, the next chapter will demonstrate the evidence that violence leads to successful recognition of a movement. Violence not only brought the Gay Rights Movement into recognition, but was arguably the cause of its rapid achievements.\textsuperscript{11}

The last issue of successful movements deals with bureaucracy, the centralization of power, and factionalism. Bureaucracies are organizations with well-established rules, roles, and power structures. While a bureaucracy in itself does not lead to overall success in a movement, it does enable the movement to be ready for action when necessary. In other words, the movement, through organization, can immediately congregate its constituents to battle for its goals. A more effective tool in gaining success seems to be the power structure of a movement in accordance with a bureaucratic form of organization. This can be either a centralized or a decentralized power structure. A centralized power structure contains one center of power, usually a single person. This person is not
only the leader but also the focal point around which the movement revolves. The process of disbursing the power structure throughout the movement is a decentralized structured movement. No one person makes all decisions. Gamson suggests that centralized systems eradicate internal conflict and produce intrinsically stronger movements. Their strength lies in being prepared to act. In his study, 75% of groups that were bureaucratic and had a centralized power structure gained their goals. Furthermore, there is evidence that challenging groups with decentralized power structures are more prone to factionalism. Factions occur when internal conflict arises and part of a challenge group leaves and organizes a similar but separate challenge group. This occurs in only 25% of centralized power structures, while two-thirds of the decentralized power structure movements experience a splinter group. Typically, factions are the downfall of collective movements. Of the groups plagued by factions, only 25% obtained acceptance, and only 12% obtained the goals they originally sought. There is evidence that decentralized, bureaucratic groups that remain intact do obtain moderate success supporting the view that factionalism is a huge proponent of failure or success.12

Evidence suggests that the success of a collective action movement is a complex interaction of meaningful variables. Size, whether a group has a large or small membership pool, or what a group focuses on -- one or multiple issues,
does not seem to be a catalyst for success. Rather, a movement's key to success is whether the group is fighting to overthrow the existing power structure or trying to work within the existing power structure's bounds. This supports the pluralist view of government. Working within its confines can promote one's interest.

Then, again, the issue of using violence and constraints to obtain one goal works against the pluralist view. The pluralist may assume a backlash against those who ignore expected standards and employ more unorthodox methods of politics. However, as previously stated, violence and constraints do get results. Gamson states that "a member of the polity may need to wheel and deal, but a challenger should be prepared to stand and fight."13

We also need to explore the myriad of theories that attempt to explain what motivates individuals to join and participate in these groups. One theory that has gained widespread recognition involves the notions of collectivism and individualism. Individualism is the notion that people do to help themselves. Collectivism, described by Kelly and Breinlinger, has three components. These three components are an "interdependence with others; a belief that collective goals are synonymous with personal goals and/or should supersede personal goals where the two are in conflict; and . . . [these individuals have] a strong sense of in-group and out-group." In-group and out-groups are characterized as a "them and us" mind set. A high sense of in-group identity captures a feeling of
being the “upholder of virtue and develops among its members feelings of altruism, loyalty and fidelity.” A line is drawn dividing the out-group, an “unscrupulous and vicious [group who is thought to be] attacking the values of the in-group.” Kelly and Breinlinger evaluate these components and compare them to social movements and industrial movements.14

Another important influence on whether an individual decides to act for a common cause is the concept of locus of control. Locus of control is a “generalized expectancy operating in a variety of situations which relates to an individual’s beliefs that his or her actions will be effective in obtaining desired goals.” Locus of control is divided into two categories, internal and external. Individuals who believe that events happen regardless of any action taken have an external locus of control. Events occur outside any individual’s actions. Conversely, those who believe that they have control or command over events in their lives have an internal locus of control. In the realm of psychology, locus of control pertains to personal life and socio-political events. This control ideology allegedly has influence on whether certain individuals take part in political causes. If an individual believes that their actions, regardless of what they are, do not cause significant effects or changes in events, then becoming involved in an attempt to make change is futile. Believing that one has the power to change or keep things at a status quo is a significant view when it comes to political action.
This notion leads into the idea of political efficacy. Political efficacy simply is the belief that one can have an impact on the political process. Kelly & Breinlinger point out "participation in politics and the feeling of efficacy reinforce each other producing circularity of effects." In Skinnerian terms an intermediate positive reinforcement of action leads to further action by these individuals. Individuals who have an external locus of control will never receive reinforcement for participating, thus reinforcing their lack of behavior. Conversely, having an internal locus of control can lead to initially getting involved and thus obtaining reinforcement, enhancing the political efficacy of that individual.15

One's locus of control begins to explain the motivations of individuals who become involved in movements. Kelly and Breinlinger also contend that there is evidence that the more active an individual is the higher the levels of identification within a group and the higher the levels of political efficacy. Subsequently these individuals display a collectivist orientation. Having a collectivist orientation simply means that one characterizes oneself by the group or groups to which one belongs. The term further describes a person whose identity is characterized by their goals, personal choices, and achievements.16

The third major influence on participation in collective movements is the concept of relative deprivation. Kelly and Breinlinger maintain that "the perception of collective relative deprivation . . . has the most impact on
participation in collective action,“ Relative deprivation is an “individual’s perception of inequality in either current or future in-group status relations.” In other words, the potential activist senses an unfairness between himself and another group of individuals. This discomforting feeling of unfairness stimulates, inspires, and motivates the disadvantaged individual(s) to act. To examine these three main concepts as motivators -- collectivism, political efficacy, and relative deprivation -- Kelly and Breinlinger survey an industrial base collective movement and compare female activists to female non-activists.17

Kelly and Breinlinger completed a survey of 894 randomly selected members of the NALGO (National and Local Government Officers’ Association), a local government authority union situated in London. The trade union membership contained two thousand members, but a large percentage of its members were virtually inactive, besides paying union dues and possibly voting. Normally, large industrial movements have a handful of individuals who control, organize, and perform the work. This nucleus derives its power from being able to pull together the remainder of the group for action. Why do individuals of industrial base collective members join these collective movements? To begin answering this question one must look at several different elements of these people’s lives. How do the union member’s friends, co-workers, and families feel about the participation? How do the union members value the people already
involved in the trade unions? Is it reinforcement just to say one is a participant or is there a stigma associated in joining the union?\textsuperscript{18}

To analyze motivation for participation Kelly & Breinlinger questioned the union members on collectivism, locus of control, relative deprivation, and three other different types of motives: social motives, goal motives, and reward motives. \textit{Social motives} are the perceived reactions of friends, family, colleagues, and superiors to the individual becoming a member. \textit{Goal motives} include the desirability of more union influence in the work place, the perception of whether or not participation would make any difference and the perception of whether or not the union could influence management into providing better terms and conditions of employment. \textit{Reward motives} are getting to know people, the ability to express one's beliefs, and influencing others. The survey showed that goal motives ranked highest among those individuals who participated in informal forms of activism (voting, reading union journals), but social motives also played a decisive part. These members also identified with the in-group, had out-group stereotyping, and held a collectivist orientation. The members also believed the goals sought by the union were equivalent with their own individual goals, clearing showing a collectivist ideology. Individuals who participated in difficult forms of participation like speaking or being an active board member also showed goal motives ranking higher than any other motives, but the strongest
element for more difficult participation in industrial movements was in-group/out-group identification. The authors did not delve heavily into the trade union members' political efficacy, but the data did indicate political efficacy scored relatively high for members involved in the more formal union tasks.\(^{19}\)

In a much more elaborate survey, Kelly and Breinlinger formulated a survey for both female activists and non-female activists to determine why some participate while others do not. To differentiate between activists and non-activists, Kelly and Breinlinger used membership in women's groups as a basis to separate these two categories. Support for this distinction came from the women who responded. They reported that being a member of an activist group constituted labeling oneself an activist more than another form of definition, including protesting or individual protest. The women surveyed conveyed several differing reasons for why they were involved in activism. These included personal background, personal characteristics, concern of unfairness, life events (experiencing discrimination, family background, experiencing sexually harassment at work), a sense of being different, social beliefs (for example, relative deprivation), and a belief that there was a need for collective action.

Fitting an archetype of a group also seemed to enhance individual participation in that group (Figure 2).\(^{20}\)
Another reason for involvement in a collective action group relates to social outcomes - a safe place to speak and be who you are without fear of a backlash, having social support and friendship, and having the satisfaction of helping others. This leads to the idea of group identification. Social movements normally do not involve as much collective social support (coworkers, supervisors, family) for joining a movement as trade unions do. Therefore, social motives must come directly from the movement. This feeling of being part of a group leads to the willingness to participate in a range of activities. This willingness is homologous to the drive that motivates more difficult activities in trade unions. Kelly and Breinlinger also indicated that group identity was a determining factor in their participation in the union, they also identified female activists as collectivist who displayed a high in-group/out-group identification. In contrast, while union participation seemed to rely on goal incentives, this was not as prevalent in the women's groups.

A further contrast arose in the study of relative deprivation. Relative deprivation was a low-level concern with trade unions but a high concern for the women activists. According to the study, relative deprivation was a primary factor in why these women considered themselves activists and joined these groups. The majority of women's social beliefs reflected this concept of relative deprivation. They believed that society did not treat them equally in comparison
to men and were motivated to act to achieve equality. The women indicated that the outcomes of participation gave them a sense of empowerment.  

A powerful correlation between political efficacy and involvement in women's groups emerges from the study supporting the earlier statement that political efficacy is an almost inseparable component in the involvement of individuals in collective groups. In other words, these women believed that their participation would help them achieve the goals they pursued. The fundamental reason, besides political efficacy, that inspired women to have formal participation was their identification as an activist. When looking at all other reasons, gender identity, relative deprivation, political efficacy, collectivism, the idea of being an "activist" corresponded foremost with actual participation in activities. The self-labeling of "activist" suggests that these women aspired to fulfill their title. To determine whether or not these women would truly act in the future, the authors asked whether one intended to participate in a collective action within the next year, then returned a year later with a follow-up study. To measure the types of potential participation of these female activists, the researchers made several types of participation available, including collective protest, informal participation, participation in women's groups, and individual protest. Informal participation, for example, reading articles and discussing women's issues had the highest scores. The self-proclaimed activist had the
highest active participation over the year. Fifty percent of those who responded that they would take action in some way did in -- less than 10% of all other respondents who indicated they would take action (yet who did not proclaim themselves to be activists) took some type of action.\textsuperscript{23}

When evaluating why some women chose not to act or did not get involved, the idea of individualism and collectivism re-emerges. The authors maintain that cultural differences may play a part in the participation in collective action. This idea of collectivism suggests that the group takes precedence over the individual. The authors state that Americans and some European cultures rate high in individualism. These cultures place an emphasis on personal goals, separatism, being unique, and perceive less stringent attachments to in-groups. Another reason surmised for not acting is the perceived ineffectiveness of action - again an external locus of control takes place. Some of these individuals also held negative stereotypes of activists or stereotypes that they did not believe they emulated. Other reasons given on the survey included apathy to the issues, burnout, or simply that they felt skeptical about the necessity for action. A small percentage of the women reported that they could not identify with the group and claimed to act by themselves on their own behalf.\textsuperscript{24}

With a more complete understanding of what motivates some individuals to act, we will now explore the development of the collective action groups
themselves from several essays. The first essay, “Collective Behavior” by Park & Burgess, suggests that a social movement passes through three steps of development from birth to death. Park and Burgess believe that the birth of a movement begins when a vague, general discontent begins to fester in the environment. Then, out of this vague discontent, a violent, confused, and disorderly movement begins to take shape. The authors assert that this movement is developing from the enthusiasm of making change, from this a popular movement arises. Once born, the movement takes form as it develops leadership, organization, and formulates doctrines and dogmas. After the movement becomes organized and recognized by the established institutions of power, the movement itself dies but the institution lives. It is the institution that maintains the group’s cause. This short, glib account of social movement development does not capture the complexities of social movements, but it does illustrate the central point of social movements: they do not occur without some type of mass discontent. This shared feeling of relative deprivation, as Kelly and Breinlinger describe it, is a driving force for the beginning of a collection action and is encountered repeatedly in an important essay on social movements authored by theorist Denton E. Morrison.25

In his essay, “Some Notes Toward Theory on Relative Deprivation, Social Movements, and Social Change.” Morrison defines the beginning of relative
deprivation as involving a special type of cognitive dissonance. This cognitive dissonance involves legitimate expectations for an individual, but, concurrently, there exists the belief that there is a high probability that they cannot fulfill this particular expectation in the current social setting. The author asserts that if this dissonance is not reduced by a fulfillment of the expectation then involvement in power-orientated movements is a likely occurrence. Morrison defines power-orientated movements as "a deliberate voluntary effort to organize individuals to act in concert to achieve group influence to make or block changes," -- in other words, a collective action (Morrison 203). Morrison postulates that the underlying cause of social movements is social change created by relative deprivation. His argument suggests a circular cause in effect; social change causes relative deprivation, this deprivation, leads to social movements that bring about social change. One could take this a step further and argue that social movements beget social movements.26

Melucci refutes the notion that relative deprivation has any type of significant cause or effect whatsoever in these movements. In his book Nomad of the Present, Melucci discounts relative deprivation as a motive to social action because "discontent is present in any society (and I might add at any time in history) and hence insufficient to explain collective motivation." Another problem that Melucci has with relative deprivation is that it does not adequately explain
the transition from relative deprivation to collective action. I admit that this is true, but the theory of relative deprivation is buttressed by the fact that throughout history there has always been collective action. The next essay delves into social movements as a whole and examines possible answers for how relative deprivation originates for certain groups at certain times in history.

Herbert Blumer's essay, "Elementary Collective Groupings," explores the beginning of social movements and focuses on how movements recruit their members and ensure loyalty. Blumer describes the beginnings of social movements as determined by "cultural drifts." Cultural drifts are "gradual and pervasive changes in the values of people" in a society. As these cultural drifts occur, people find themselves having differing perceptions of themselves and where they believe that they should be compared to everyone else. This feeling particularly pertains to their rights and privileges, as opposed to others' rights and privileges. With this new ideology, they develop new values and seek to find ways to satisfy their new value systems. Although Blumer does not characterize this feeling as a feeling of relative deprivation, that is what he is describing. These individuals become dissatisfied in what they presently perceived to be injustices. These general feelings lead to chaotic but defined movements for change. Those who feel in the out-group seek to participate in the social change. Blumer postulates that agitation by the leaders of the movement excites and evokes
others outside the movement. This new excitement helps awaken the out-group's dissatisfaction with the status-quo and causes a desire to act. These activists become the in-group that fights against the out-group that did not join the movement. This perception of an out-group allows the in-group to focus on a common enemy that is viciously attacking the in-group's values. This thought leads to feverish participation and more action in the in-group. Blumer believes that a sense of *esprit de corps* helps not only to define a group but also allows the members to feel connected through in-group/out-group thought patterns.\(^{28}\)

Other issues help bind the members of an action group together. Ceremonial behavior (demonstrations or protests that allow people to feel distinctively important), and informal fellowship (the coming together of people for general meetings) allow participants to take on each other's roles and share experiences. According to Blumer, this allows members to feel a loyalty toward the movement and in fellow members, increasing the likelihood of continued participation. Blumer argues that for a social movement to work, its ideology must contain a direction, a justification, weapons of attack, weapons of defense, inspiration, and hope. Important to the movements is the intellectual expression of these ideologies to the masses. The resultant mass appeal will lead others to join the movement and, perhaps more importantly, lead to the public sense that social changes should take place.\(^{29}\)
Blumer believed that there are two types of movements—reform and revolution. Each type Blumer suggests, has different ways of working. Reform works in the already existing mores, while a revolution attempts to change the mores that already exist. This, of course, opens revolutions up to more attacks by the established power structure. Reforms involve a conflict group opposed by interest groups. Reform movements must obtain the acceptance of public opinion to have their own issues satisfied. Conversely, a revolution does not seek the influence of public opinion but seeks to convert the public's opinion much like many religions. While both of these movements develop from cultural drifts and they recruit and maintain their members in the same way, their modes of action differ.

Of course, there are other conceptions of how and why people get involved in social movements. An essay by Jeffery M. Paige, "Political Orientation and Riot Participation," takes a detailed look at political efficacy and how it influences individual action. Paige argues that there is a relationship between efficacy and governmental trust. Governmental trust entails a belief held by the individual that the government is doing what it should be doing and is supporting their specific individual interests. Paige believes that if governmental trust and efficacy are high people will actively support the system. On the other hand, low efficacy and low trust, produce an alienated orientation toward
inhabiting participation in either radical movements or in socially acceptable movements. Individuals who possess a low efficacy and a high trust in government are usually passive. Paige defines these individuals as having a loyal, unquestioning faith in the existing political structure. Therefore, not only will their actions not have an impact, but they believe that no reason to act exists. These individuals are stable people who do not seek change. 

Conversely, Paige calls those with low trust and high political efficacy “inherently unstable” individuals. High efficacy leads to a belief that one can influence or change the existing dogma in the current political system. The more extreme the mistrust, Paige argues, the more radical the response will be from those individuals when they do take action. In comparison, the high efficacy—high trust group will act just as frequently as the high efficacy—low trust group, but the group with high efficacy and low trust will engage in more extreme forms of participation. These are the persons involved in the more radical anti-government movements and, Paige continues, the individuals most likely involved in riots or violent means of political change. 

In **Nomads of the Present**, Melucci develops a new approach that offers a unique, though controversial, view of collective movements and social change. As mentioned earlier, Melucci refutes the notions of relative deprivation as a cause in social movements and stipulates that set explanations of collective action and
class condition are no longer appropriate. He disputes the role of social-economic context and the role of ideology and values as reason for collective action. Melucci maintains that people get involved in social action as a reaction to the limits of the system, that is, either economical or political factors that are inadequate. He believes contemporary movements are no longer guided by a universal plan, they no longer have long-term goals, and that their mobilization is limited to specific times and places; activists "resemble nomads who dwell in the present." He argues that researchers have not, in the realm of social action, properly evaluated the reasons for why social actions happen. Because of this, social movements have been reduced to a "cast [of] figures in an epic tragedy, as heroes or villains who are moving toward some grand ideal or dramatic destiny." He further states, "such misperceptions can be ratified only by rejecting the assumption of collective action as a unified datum."33

For Melucci, collective action is the "product of purposeful orientations developed within a field of opportunities and constraints." He defines social movements as having three characteristics: solidarity, conflict, and breaking the limits of compatibility within a system. He expresses the importance of viewing social movements as different and separate from collective action groups. Collective movements are the field in which social movements wage battles. The individuals in these movements take on a shared identity which Melucci defines
as a collective identity: “Collective identity is an interactive and shared definition produced by several interacting individuals who are concerned with the orientation of their action as well as the field of opportunities and constraints in which their action takes place.” Collective identity has three distinct features: formulating goals, activating relationships, and making emotional investments. Through collective identities, individuals combine forms of action that merge into a collective movement: a) impact upon different levels of the social system b) contain diverse goals and c) belong to different phases of development of a system. It is within these contexts that people mobilize and seek change. Melucci believes that the new forms of social action have a different code of action. He postulates that they tend to operate increasingly outside established parameters of political systems. He further asserts that contemporary movements have little to do with politics. Collective identity concerns everyday life, personal relationships, and new concepts of space and time. Today information can be stored and retrieved from symbolic spaces, computers. Technology has also changed in how we interact with social movements. Melucci believes, the time to reproduce information or retrieve the information has changed our inner personal lives and our reactions to them. This new global system establishes new and global interdependence of action. As the rules change
and the members are made immediately aware, the group reacts and the action required is constantly redefined.\textsuperscript{35}

Melucci attempts to redefine collection action movements to understand their complexities. Instead of the lumping together collective actions, social movements, industrial movements, and the activist involved in their creation, he separates them to examine each individually. He asserts this "redefining" is necessary to assess properly collective movements in the technological atmosphere in which we now interact. Society's interconnectedness with computers is changing the concept of who and how we relate to each other. Therefore, the concepts of how to obtain change are also altering. Melucci argues that since these constructs are rapidly changing, the molding of movement goals is different. How this will affect the success, the mobilization, and the goals of these new forms of social action can not yet be evaluated.\textsuperscript{36}

In evaluating the numerous theories of collective action and their actors, the answers are as disparate as the questions themselves. Logically, for a collective action to begin, there must be a sense of injustice in the environment that is shared by a group of individuals. This, of course, is not the sole motivation for joining such a group. Social rewards, the camaraderie, and the feeling of belonging are also common motivations. Those who participate more formally are not guided by social motives alone. Normally they highly identify with the
cause or the goal motives. Furthermore, formal action is taken on by those who have a self-proclaimed identity as an activist. It is here that locus of control and political efficacy are most influential in motivating involvement. In the simplest terms, those who think they can, do. Persons who have an internal locus of control, have a feeling of political efficacy, and regardless of whether or not they trust the established political structure, will participate in a collective action if that collective action holds for them some type of identification, inclusion, and reinforcement of their actions. It seems that their motivations come from within—it is a part of who they are, an activist identity.37

The movements arise from relative deprivation. Regardless of whether or not this feeling comes from cultural drifts or social movements themselves, this group sense of unfairness leads to collective movements. The success of these movements relates to the type of organization that the movement has, its power structure, and its lack of internal conflict. The success of achieving the movement's goals is more readily done through the utilization of a system and not the displacement of the system.38
HOMOSEXUAL HISTORY AND THE GAY RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Where Did They All Come From?

Gay historians argue that homosexuality, or at least the act, has always been a part of human relations. The difference lies in the modern idea of homosexuality being an identity, not just a sex act. Early records of civilizations reveal homosexual acts as part of male rituals in Melanesia, the Amazonian interior, central Africa, and western Egypt to help transform boys into men. In recent times, anthropologists have observed the Sambia tribe of New Guinea perform rituals where young boys engage in sexual acts with men to develop masculine attributes. As they grow older and marry women, it is not uncommon for these men to continue to have sex with men. In ancient Greece, adolescent boys routinely had sex with men as part of their education into manhood. Plato's Symposium discusses and describes many types of Greek love, the "heavenly love" of a young man being just one of them. It seems that Greek men freely satisfied their sexual drives for women and men without any apprehension. The only barrier of sexual pleasure came in the context of social class. Greek society so
accepted homosexual acts that pottery abounds with depictions of men engaging in same-sex acts. Unfortunately, for women, history, until recent times, has been written by men for men. Attitudes, practices, and tendencies of women's sexual encounters during this same period remain a mystery. The only evidence of female homosexual thoughts originates from fragmented love poems to other women written by Sappho, a sixth-century Greek woman.¹

Many native North American societies accepted homosexual behavior by women and men. Berdaches were Native Americans who not only participated in same-sex acts but who also married same-sex partners. In some of these cultures, males and females alike took on the dress, mannerisms, and work customs of the opposite sex. Native American culture thought of berdaches as a third sex. Women berdaches fought, hunted, and even assumed the roles of tribal leaders, if their skills lead them to such honor. Male berdaches were, in some native cultures, thought to possess supernatural powers and were honored as exceptional craftsmen. Not all cultures were accepting of berdaches; the Aztecs, for example, executed individuals who engaged in homosexual acts.²

The assumption can easily be made then that homosexual acts between men were an accepted activity in ancient times. What changed in human sensibilities that proclaimed homosexual acts as not only immoral but also criminal? In the year A.D. 309, the church council in Elvira (Spain) enacted thirty-
seven canon laws dealing with human sexuality derived from European Christian theologians' ideals on sinful sexual behavior. When the Roman Empire declared Christianity the state religion, canon law became state law. The church condemned and judged sodomy by law as a capital offense. Attitudes of sexual pleasure experienced a remarkable shift at this time. St. Thomas Aquinas captured the prevailing attitudes toward sex in his writings asserting that the use of sexual organs for any purpose other than procreation was lustful and sinful. Homosexual acts, labeled as sodomy in the Middle Ages, became an abhorrent, unnatural sex act performed by sinners. This attitude prevailed and grew as the Catholic Church began to dominate European life.³

The Making of a "Homosexual"

Barry Adam asserts in his book, The Rise of a Gay and Lesbian Movement, that economic change not only ameliorated the transformation of a person being a "homosexual," it also helped develop the concept into a gay movement. The feudal system of the fifteenth through the nineteenth centuries trapped not only gays into marriage but heterosexuals as well. In this system, the livelihood of a person resided in his family. Marriage promised to procreate the lineage and supply workers for the farm. Men and women had to marry, leaving out any possibility of falling in love with a same-sex mate. Marriage and moral crusades
forced men to seek out and develop secret meeting places for each other to engage in homosexual acts. Court records in England, France, and Venice indicate that they frequently arrested and charged men for acts of sodomy. The use of the death penalty for sodomy diminished, but harsh punishment and public disgrace followed for sodomites in the sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen hundreds. Women at this time were not criminally sought after, so records of their possible encounters do not exist.  

Capitalism, Adam suggests, set the stage for men and women to break from the confines of marriage, and led the way to a homosexual lifestyle. Wage labor in urban cities allowed individuals to leave their attachments to the land behind and seek a new life. This was an opportunity for men to find other avenues of happiness besides marriage and children. Men's ability to be mobile and financially support themselves without connections to a family set a platform of marital freedom. The decisions of whom to marry or if to marry became a choice. This, of course, would have the same implications for women, but later in history. This is not to say that women did not engage in homosexual acts, only that their options to avoid marriage and a family remained an obstacle. However, as they gained financial independence, women could enter the public realm of the gay world. Capitalism "offer[ed] an oasis of refuge and intimacy in a depersonalized atomized world." Moving into the late 1800s, the gay
"underground" had developed into a mass public existence. Homosexual coffee houses, bathhouses, bars, restaurant, hotels, and dance halls were evident in large metropolitan cities, such as, New York, London, Paris, Sydney, and Hamburg. The concept of engaging in same-sex acts began to define who a person was.\(^5\)

**The Movements Begin**

Supporting Denton E. Morrison’s view that social movements beget social movements, the French Revolution and the uprising of many liberal social movements gave hope to gay men that all men could achieve equality. Liberal ideals saw the sodomy laws dropped from the new Napoleonic Code. However, in Germany, where a large homosexual community lived, there was fear that the new unified German states were going to implement the Prussian legal code. This legal code reclassified sodomy as an illegal act. Karl Maria Kertbeny was one of the first gay men to debate openly for the legalization of homosexuality. In 1869, he wrote a letter coining the term homosexual, petitioning the minister of justice to exclude the “love between men from criminal law.” Another notable man in gay rights history is Karl Ulrichs. Karl Ulrichs’s twelve volume work on homosexuality not only sought legal equality for homosexuals but argued that homosexuality was inborn, unchangeable, and natural. Through introspection, Ulrichs developed his “third” sex theory and an entire vocabulary describing
differing sexual orientations and differing types of homosexuals. Ulrichs postulated that men who desired men where female souls encased in men's bodies, leading naturally to an attraction to men. Ulrichs, taking words from Plato's *Symposium*, called such men Urnings and lesbians Urningins. Although they did not utilize his terms in modern vocabulary, his ideas sparked and inspired the gay movements that developed in Germany.\(^6\)

Despite all of Ulrichs's literary work in the field of homosexuality, his work as an actual activist was short lived. While speaking before the Congress of German Jurists to address the omission of homosexuality in the legal code, he was heckled from the stage by proponents of the code. He never attempted to have a direct influence on reform again, yet his literary work was an inspiration to other gay men to take political action. Paragraph 175 of the German legal code reinstated homosexuality as a crime in 1871. It was this legal code and Ulrichs's revolutionary doctrine that empowered the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee (SHC) to form. Established in Berlin, on May 15, 1897 by Magnus Hirschfeld, SHC was the first gay organization to fight for gay rights. The SHC actively sought to repeal Paragraph 175. Using pamphlets and journals to educate the elite on the third sex, Hirschfeld sought to inform and rid unfounded notions of homosexuality. The movement wrote several books on homosexuality, compiled data on the prevalence of homosexuality, and opened a forum for homosexual
women to speak. Hirschfeld also founded the Institute for Sex Research, a highly respected center for scientific sexual research. The SHC did have an impact, receiving open support from the Social Democratic party, but Paragraph 175 was not removed from the legal code until 1921.7

While early 20th Century Germans struggled to legalize homosexuality in the midst of a large gay population, homosexuals in France, Italy, Holland, Belgium, Luxemborg, and Bavaria, lived legally as homosexuals. As momentous as this sounds, this freedom from legal persecution did not include social acceptance. In France, within the liberal artisan climate, homosexuality was accepted and encouraged to be expressed. Gay artists and writers fled to Paris for its freedom of artistic expression. In the 1920s, Paris witnessed a myriad of gay writers being published; this artistic population helped reduce the feelings of isolation for other gay Parisians. Unfortunately, the conservatives of Paris embraced the medical discriminatory explanations against homosexuality and forced many of these writers to publish anonymously. At this time, the prevailing medical thought on homosexuality, despite Ulrichs pleas that homosexuality was innate and natural, was one of psychological pathology. Medical doctors believed that homosexuals suffered from a degenerative mental illness. For the next eighty years, medical, psychological, and religious doctrines would be the driving forces of anti-homosexual contentions.8
Like France, England produced no gay political movements before W.W.II. With the imprisonment of Oscar Wilde for homosexual conduct, England’s gay population treaded cautiously and did not challenge the political system. Unlike Germany, whose laws against homosexuality were feudal remnants, England’s law codes were modern implements. Adam asserts that the feverish campaign against homosexuals was sustained not only by the medical profession but also by England’s need for reproduction. Fearing a labor shortage, England began enacting laws to increase marriage and procreation. They stripped women of their labor jobs and placed them in the home again as housewives and mothers, halting gay women’s advancement in sexual alternatives. This, of course, did not totally suppress sexual expression. The group, British Society for the Study of Sex, formed in 1914, sponsored public lectures and distributed pamphlets on homosexuality.

Crossing the waters and evaluating the “land of the free,” one can quickly surmise that freedom of speech, expression, and the written word were not intended for gay Americans. In Europe, even in nations where homosexuality was illegal, numerous positive books, pamphlets, journals, and novels regarding homosexuality were published as early as 1864. By contrast, it was not until 1908 that the first book describing gay clubs and restaurants was published in the United States. It does seem that African Americans enjoyed freer artistic
expression of their homosexuality than did white Americans. Through either misinterpretations or lack of concern by white censors, gay blacks found a forum in music to express their homosexual lifestyles. In white mainstream America, the only portrait of gay Americans was darkly painted by the medical model or newspaper articles reporting perverse sex crimes. There was only one political action group before the 1950s, the Chicago Society for Human Rights. Established in 1924 by a German-American, the group’s life was cut short when the wife of one of its directors reportedly saw one of the two journals it published and called the police. Sodomy laws (some of which remain on the books), a public fear of sexual perversions, and religious constraints halted gay American men from expressing themselves.  

Early lesbians often lived the life of a Victorian American entrapped by social conditions that constrained them to marriage and made them financially dependent on men. But since they were labeled by medical and scientific men as non-sexual beings, they luxuriated in their invisibility. In other words, to a certain extent women avoided the problems that men faced with their sexual excursions. Due to their perceived lack of sexuality, they could form close bonding sexual relationships with other women without capturing attention from others. Even public attention could often be overcome. For example, two women in Scotland were accused of indecency with each other; the British court dismissed the
charges having "debated whether a sexual relationship between women was even possible." Men, not threatened by their bond, did little to stand in their way. As long as their wives performed their duties, husbands regarded close female relationships as harmless. Poet Emily Dickinson, social reform activist Jane Addams, and novelist Virginia Woolf wrote and expressed their love for women without negative consequences. If a gay woman was independently affluent, she and her lover could live together as friends without interference. This is not to say society accepted lesbians, they were just able to escape more of the moral persecution and legal prosecution than gay males. Of course, this became less true after Freud's theories of sexual behaviors and sexual motivations for men and women began to instill doubts in the public's perception of "innocent" relations between two women; to some extent this ended the invisibility that had hidden lesbians' love for so long. 11

**Pink Triangles, McCarthyism, and Resistance**

In the United States, the 1920s marked years of extensive underground gay associations, networks, and meeting places for gay men and women. Persons engaging in or desiring same-sex sexual relations were thought of as sick and criminal and treated as such. Cover marriages, which involved two homosexuals of the opposite sex wedding one another to hide their true sexuality, was not
uncommon. Neither was a lesbian masquerading as a man so that she could work and live a life secretly with her same-sex partner. The terms “homosexual” and “lesbian” became labels not for what one did but for whom one was. The Depression years witnessed a stagnation in homosexual lifestyle development. There are reports of lesbians and gay men leaving their financially bereft towns, and surviving as hobos, escaping the obligation to marry. However, most gay man and women surrendered to the confines of society.¹²

World War II proved for many gay Americans to be the dawn of a new era of possibilities. The armed forces recruited young, single men and women for the war. Needing enlistees, the armed forces relaxed their anti-homosexual codes and gay inquiries. With Freud bringing sexuality to the public, homosexuality was no longer an alien concept to most Americans. Awakened knowledge of one's sexuality led many gay Americans to seek ways out of their prescribed lives. The armed forces called to them. The “Women’s Army Corps became the almost quintessential lesbian institution.” Gay soldiers easily found other gay soldiers, and large seaports, such as New York and San Francisco, absorbed even more gay people.¹³

The women who had stayed at home before the war also felt a new freedom, working in war factories and taking the place of the male work force. Here, lesbians could find other lesbians and build gay support groups in their
own home towns. Returning from the war, numerous gay men and women remained in the more welcoming large cities. At the same time, however, employers sent home the now unneeded, female work force, and advertisers inundated them with images of the housewife. Few lesbians were able to keep their jobs, remain financially secure, and maintain their private gay life.¹⁴

While gay Americans experienced a resurgence of gay freedom during the 1940s, Europe’s gay community was subjected to the harsh repression of Nazism. The gay movement that had started in Germany in 1897 had developed into several action groups and gay acceptance in society seemed eminent. Then in 1933, Hitler sought to eradicate the “inferior” in Germany, and gay individuals were high on the list. All gay presses and bars were closed down, and the top crusaders for sex law reform were arrested. The well-renowned Institute for Sex, where Hilschfeld worked, was destroyed and its documents burned. Reinstatement of Paragraph 175, and expanding the infractions to include “a kiss, an embrace, even homosexual fantasies,” led to the arrest of over fifty thousand people. The Nazis imprisoned the suspected, the gay, and the wrongfully accused, and they were taken to concentration camps where they were designated by a pink triangle. The extermination of the homosexuals had begun. By the end of Hitler’s reign, the gay movement of the early 1900s, as well as its leaders, supporters, and members, had vanished.¹⁵
After the war, the release from concentration camps did not lead to freedom for many gay prisoners. The newly established German government upheld its predecessor's opinions regarding homosexuals. The new government thought of gay Holocaust victims as criminals and, therefore, they were not allotted any of the same compensation that other victims received. In fact, Paragraph 175 remained on the books, and hundreds of gay persons were sentenced to years in prison for repeated offenses when they did not renounce their homosexuality. The 1950s saw a few covert homosexual groups publish journals and make vague, indirect comments on legal reform. Authorities jailed some editors of these journals and dissolved their groups. In France, things were no better. In the late 1940s, the government-enacted laws to limit gay employment in public service, forbade men couple dancing, and criminalized "provocative attitudes in public places." Like Germany, sporadic gay groups organized and released pamphlets and journals on sexuality, but they did not attempt direct reforms.16

During the 1950s, in the United States, McCarthyism submerged the entire country in fear. Communists threatened the good American life and Senator Joseph McCarthy was going to wipe out all un-American activities. The federal government saw homosexuals as sick and perverted killers of the American way of life. The FBI and other government institutions sought out and expelled
homosexuals from public service. Four thousand three hundred eighty military and 420 governmental personnel were forced from their jobs between 1947 and 1950. This attitude spread throughout America. Police began systematically raiding gay bars, arresting gay persons, and imprisoning homosexuals for committing the crime of "being homosexual." Under personalized attacks by the government, federal and local, gay individuals began to seek social and political change. The Mattachine Society, founded in Los Angeles in 1951, was the first such group. Excited by the 1948 Kinsey Report that refuted the notion that homosexuals were maladjusted heterosexuals, and oppressed by anti-homosexual sentiment, the Mattachine Society, with the promise of anonymity for its members, initially sought change modeled on the communist party.17

The founding members, both former members of the Communist Party, wanted the Mattachine Society to amass a large contingency of gay people into "a cohesive force capable of militancy." Within two years, the Society had assembled hundreds of individuals through the distribution of pamphlets describing the group's goals to unify homosexuals, to educate homosexuals and heterosexuals on the "ethical homosexual culture," to provide leadership, and to assist other homosexuals whom society had victimized through oppression. Mattachine established discussion groups that provided a safe environment for homosexuals to talk about homosexuality and share experiences. The Mattachine Society
instilled in its members the sense that homosexuals were an oppressed minority. In June 1952, the Mattachine Society took its first political action. The police had arrested an original member of the Society, Dale Jennings, in a police entrapment scheme. The Society, still working under anonymity due to great fear of governmental oppression, created the Citizens Committee to Outlaw Entrapment. The Committee produced thousands of flyers, that they distributed in known gay areas in Los Angeles and West Hollywood, describing the entrapment issue and the group’s intentions to fight the charge.\(^{18}\)

With the financial backing of the concerned gay community that had received the flyers, Dale Jennings defended himself in court as a homosexual scapegoat. After the jury deadlocked, the judge declared a mistrial. This open political stand taken by the Mattachine Society and Dale Jennings brought huge recognition to the group and, within eight months, the discussion groups had expanded down the California coast to include over 2,000 participating members. Unfortunately, the public knowledge of the group forced the group to change. The FBI contacted the group in May 1953, investigating alleged ties to the communist party. The new leadership of the Society quickly refuted any connection to the Communist Party and redefined the Society’s goals. The Mattachine Society modified its stance from a challenging agitator for gay political rights to a group bent on assimilation.\(^{19}\)
The fear of the anti-homosexual spirit in America led to a "homophile" resistance. The term homophile was used to express the function of gaining societal acceptance by keeping a low-profile, not actively seeking changes, and engaging in intellectual discourse with the established order. Other Mattachine chapters around the United States began to emerge with this philosophy, as did entire new groups such as the Daughter of the Bilitis (DOB). Established in 1955 as the first lesbian political action group, the DOB advocated a "mode of behavior and dress acceptable to society" among its members. However, the DOB did address lesbian needs as separate from gay men and for the first time provided a forum only for women. The homophile philosophy would carry the gay movement through the 1950s, maintaining its primary goals: educating the experts that homosexuality was not an abnormality, and urging homosexuals to act appropriately.20

The homophile agenda was not without its successes. The non-confrontational movement brought together gay individuals to discuss gay issues and theories of resistance, and provided an outlet for mutual experiences. Mattachine's journal *Mattachine Review*, the DOB's journal *Ladder*, and Mattachine's first journal *ONE*, still being published by old members of the group, allowed gays and lesbians who could not attend meetings, to express their views and openly debate gay issues. When positive events occurred, such as in
1955 when the American Law Institute drafted a new legal code omitting sodomy laws or when the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) defended homosexuals' right to due process, these journals informed their reading public. Another victory in the gay arena during this time was England's 1957 Wolfenden report which called for the decriminalization of private consensual acts. In the United States, lower courts upheld the rights of bar owners to serve gay patrons. However, the overall apprehension among gay individuals in this country about losing their jobs, going to jail, and being terrorized by local authorities kept the majority of gays in the "closet" and the homophile movement experienced no substantial transformation toward assimilation with society.²¹

Homophiles to Militants

During the late 1950s, some homosexuals were fearful of being caught or outing but others were more disturbed by their inability to bring about fundamental transformations in American homophobia. The three dominant gay journals mentioned above were inundated with letters from gay individuals who did not believe that the homophile agenda was working. These individuals advocated action and chastised these magazines, Mattachine Review and Ladder, in particular, for urging homosexuals to conform for the sake of heterosexuals. The joining of the gay movement's impatience with change, the impending Vietnam
War, the beginnings of the civil rights movement, and the moral shift in America during the 1960s served as the backdrop for a homosexual revolt.22

Beginning in 1957 and throughout the middle 1960’s, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the defendants in several pornography cases involving privacy rights. These rulings permitted books, magazines, journals, and movies to delve into homosexual themes. As never before, homosexuals and proclaimed heterosexuals had the freedom to write and read gay story lines without fear of being sanctioned, shutdown, or having materials confiscated. Newsweek, Life, and The New York Times all published articles describing the gay “lifestyle” and printed various views, supporting and objecting to, homosexuality. Although the literature made homosexuals less “invisible” to the public, other publications counteracted with anti-homosexual rhetoric. Time, for example, published an article supporting the “sickness” theory of homosexuals and the book The Sixth Man (which remained on the New York Times best seller list for three months) held homosexuals responsible for rising divorce rates, juvenile crimes, and the defeminization of women.23

Ironically, some of the first rumblings of change to occur in professional sentiment toward homosexuality were not due to direct homosexual activism. In the early 1960s, psychologists began to question science’s view on sexuality. The psychologists Evelyn Hooker, the psychoanalyst Judd Marmor, and the
sociologist Martin Hoffman wrote books on homosexuality challenging the notion that homosexuality was a sickness. Hooker, studying non-institutionalized homosexuals, reported that homosexuals were not pathological and were no different from heterosexual males. Marmor asserted that psychoanalytic theories of homosexuality resulted from skewed results and were not scientifically sound. Hoffman, studying the impact of legal codes on gay men, called for a dissolution of all laws against homosexuality. Reevaluating sodomy laws, the legal profession began equating the legal harassment of gays and lesbians to that of racial minorities. This shift of psychological and legal professionals towards considering alternatives to the status quo signified a break with homophobic traditions, a break that militant gay activists were quick to exploit.

Franklin Kameny and Randy Wicker were two activists who rejected the notion of eventual assimilation and aggressively fought for equal rights for homosexuals. Kameny worked for and was dismissed from the U.S. Army map service in December 1957 for being a homosexual. Due to his contact with the Mattachine Society during his appeals to the U.S. Army, Kameny, after losing his case, founded a Washington Mattachine chapter. Seeking justice in the turbulent atmosphere of the civil rights movement, Kameny witnessed African Americans demanding their rights from the government without excuses or apologies for who they were. The Civil Rights Movement, combined with his unfair
employment dismissal, inspired Kameny to target the government for change. He and his followers lobbied every congressman and senator and flooded the Civil Service Commission with calls and letters calling for a resolution opposing the policy that banned all homosexuals from employment.25

The commission did not budge but with some reluctance the Washington Chapter of the ACLU reluctantly agreed to help fight the Civil Service Commission's exclusionary policy. In 1965, the ACLU represented Bruce Scott whom the federal government denied a federal job due to evidence of his homosexuality. The U.S. Court of Appeals judged in favor of Scott ruling that the Civil Service Commission must specify the conduct it is denying employment for and how that conduct was related to job performance. This was an important victory for gay rights. It illustrated that changes can occur and that being visible can help, not hinder the movement. The Washington Mattachine Society began lodging complaints about police raids on gay bars, picketing in front of the White House for equal treatment, and encouraging other ACLU chapters to take on gay rights cases.26

Randy Wicker came out as a gay man in college. After graduation, he moved to New York and became involved in the New York Chapter of the Mattachines. Wicker was more radical than most of New York's Mattachine Society's members. Wicker wanted the New York chapter to lobby, petition, and
openly recruit members for the group. Unfortunately, the “old guard” of the movement retained its belief in assimilation. So, Wicker left and established the Homosexual League of New York. He single-handedly launched a media campaign for gay rights. Wicker beseeched a local radio station to allow gay men to discuss the issue of homosexuality on the air with other professionals. The station agreed. Wicker released a press release promoting the show and, though the other panel members berated homosexuality, Wicker brought the story to Newsweek which ran a sympathetic article on the homosexual plight. His media tactics worked and soon Randy Wicker had speaking engagements at universities and churches, ran ads sponsoring the movement in the Village Voice, and spoke on national television. The new militants defied the homophile agenda. The militants of the gay movement, no longer pleading for polite acceptance, demanded full equality.27

Across the country, San Francisco’s militant movement originated from the underside of the gay culture. By contrast, their eastern counterparts who petitioned the government for equality and sought media coverage largely ignored the potential support of gay bar patrons. This was a result of the fear by activists that patrons of gay bars reinforced gay stereotypes. The Mecca of the Beat generation, San Francisco had become known for its homosexual community. Homosexuals flocked to San Francisco to experience the freedom of
the beatnik counterculture and the freedom to be gay. Unfortunately, that freedom was sometimes met with intense police harassment in the gay bars. In 1961, the League for Civil Education developed and began publishing a magazine prodding bar owners to fight against the injustices inflicted on them by law enforcement. This organization prompted the owners to establish the Tavern Guild. The Guild’s members, though membership dues, retained a lawyer and bail bondsman to help defend them against the police. It was the bar owners and patrons who first engaged in action against the harassment and unfair treatment from law officials.28

Other pro-homosexual groups in San Francisco established community programs which gave rise to a political movement. For example, in 1964 the Society for Individual Rights (SIR) actively supported the gay culture by holding dances, parties, bowling leagues, and opening the first gay community center in the United States. Working with the bar owners, holding fund raisers, and mutually supporting each other’s existence enabled San Francisco to form a community of persons that shared not only a sexual orientation but also a political agenda.29

Nationally, fifty gay rights groups had emerged by 1969. University gay student groups spread from Columbia University (Student Homophile League), to Cornell, NYU, and Stanford. The North American Conference of Homophile
Organizations in 1966 adopted the slogan Gay is Good, and, as with African Americans in the civil rights movement, gay people were taking pride in themselves. No longer would these activists invite psychologists and doctors into their meeting halls to spout homophobic rhetoric as the homophiles had done so often in the past. The new militants attacked not only the medical model of homosexuality but also the professionals who advocated the stance. Activists established groups in Kansas, Seattle, Philadelphia, and Rock Island, Illinois to fight police and judicial harassment. The ACLU won several cases against local authorities. Members also began a dialogue with church leaders and, in some cases, clergy supported their cause. Each small victory brought new awareness that gay individuals had legal rights which the courts were obligated to protect.

Stonewall

Despite the advances being made by the gay activists, the gay movement still lacked a clear image of who it represented and what it was fighting. As the antiwar movement, the Civil Rights Movement, student movement groups, and Women’s Liberation Movement went to the streets, protesting and sometimes violently confronting authorities, awakening middle America to patterns of injustice, the Gay Rights Movements politely and quietly made small legal reforms. A small segment of the homosexual population represented the movement’s actors. The militant gay activists who opposed the assimilation
platform, still reproved the fringe of the homosexual world and did not want involvement from them in their protests. Many homosexuals had new pride in who they were, maintaining that they were normal, productive Americans. However, the movement did not involve the non-white homosexuals, gay stereotypes, or transvestites who received the brunt of the violent crimes against homosexuals. The protesters were conservatively-draped lesbians and business-oriented gay men. An overwhelmingly large majority of homosexuals ignored the gay subculture that had begun to organize in San Francisco.31

On July 27, 1969, the subculture fought back. 1969 in New York City was a mayoral election year, and the incumbent major was attempting to "clean up" New York. During the week of July 27, police raided several gay bars, questioning patrons, harassing owners, and making arrests. Friday, July 27, was another night of raids. Police entered the Stonewall Inn and began the usual routine. Stonewall’s customers were a mixture of transvestites, ethnic gay men, young street people, and a few lesbians. As the police escorted the patrons outside and lined the streets, a lesbian began to resist arrest. Soon the bar’s customers erupted in a violent confrontation with the police. Armed only with bottles and pocket change, the growing mob pushed the police officers into the bar where the police locked themselves in for protection. Incensed by the actions of the police the mob set fire to the Stonewall Inn. The police narrowly escaped,
but the mob increased in numbers and rioted throughout the night; indeed, sporadic rioting continued through the weekend. By Monday morning a gay liberation movement had been launched.32

As never before, gay individuals united to take action against the oppressive establishment. The gay militants viewed the actions of these outcasts as the catalyst they had been seeking. The Homosexual League of New York distributed leaflets to gay bars demanding gay individuals to “come out” and participate in actions for gay rights. Soon the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) formed. Taking part in anti-war rallies, they acquired the support of other minority leaders. When the patrons of the Stonewall Inn rioted against police to combat decades of police harassment and brutality, they exposed the homosexual plight and gave gay individuals the courage to react.33

The gay liberation movement spread quickly across the United States. Transvestites formed the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries, and African Americans and Hispanic formed the Third World Gay Revolution. These groups began targeting specific establishments that discriminated against gays. The movement picketed Macy's, Delta Airlines, and specific work places that had fired group members for being gay. Bar raids brought large street demonstrations and gay activists began going to press conferences and confronting public officials about harassment policies. The bar raids soon stopped, in part because a
new group called The Gay Activist Alliance focused on day-to-day discrimination against gays. Gay liberators stormed into medical and psychological conventions demanding that the medical model of homosexuality be amended. In particular, they targeted the American Psychological Association (APA), and in 1973, with a small contingent of opposition, the APA removed homosexuality as a psychological disorder.34

Gay liberation movements also developed in Canada, Australia, and Western Europe. Throughout the 1960s, sporadic gay reform groups were active in these countries but not until the gay liberation movement in the United States began did these reform movements begin to grow. Of course, some national movements were more successful than others. Canada’s liberation movements received strong support from Liberal and New Democratic parties in their parliament, and passed legal reforms to protect private consensual sex for all adults in 1969. Movements in England, Germany, Italy, Australia, and France all experienced similar victories in the fight for gay equality.35

What about the Women?

As the gay movement advanced, lesbians felt woefully under represented. Gay men were the main actors in the liberation movement and their actions were proving to be more beneficial to them than to lesbians. Consequently, many
lesbians left the gay liberation movement to join and fight for fundamental
dominance. At times, this prompted a negative reaction among the leaders of
women's movement. Some feminists were afraid that, if their organizations
were considered a forum for lesbians, the feminist plea for gender reform would
be weakened. However, the adoption of a new definition of lesbianism by some
radical feminists allowed them to embrace the term lesbian and use it for political
purposes. The Women-Identified Women's Manifesto, published by members of
the National Organization for Woman, claimed lesbianism to be a word
signifying "independence from men, freedom from [the need for] male approval,
a matrix of women's solidarity." Lesbianism was not only women loving women
but also women dissolving the matriarchal confines males used to subjugate
women.³⁶

Gay women, unlike their gay male counterparts, had to deal with issues of
pay rates, violence against women, restrictions of employment due to gender (not
just sexual orientation), and a myriad of prejudicial mindsets about women.
Feminists and lesbians needed to react to claims that striving for equality meant
turning all women against men. While some women who turned to lesbian-feminism shed their heterosexual persona, many did it primarily to free
themselves from male dominance. Others proclaimed themselves "political
lesbians," supporting the views of lesbian-feminism while remaining
predominantly heterosexual. As the gay liberation movement and the women's movement grew, ideological conflict and mistrust among members became relatively common. Nevertheless, the differences between lesbians and heterosexual women did not negate the substantial advances in the overall fight for equality.37

Reaction, AIDS and Real Equality

During the 1970s, referenda were passed in several states protecting homosexuals from discrimination. The Civil Service Commission had altered its stance on firing or rejecting all homosexuals or likely homosexuals from federal jobs. Gay clubs, bars, hotels, music festivals (owned and operated by homosexuals), and a myriad of businesses geared specially for gay men and women flourished in the open without legal resistance. Pride and freedom from persecution defined and sculpted a new gay culture. In cities across the nation, gays sharing commonalities began creating gay support groups, including the Rainbow Society for the Deaf, the Gay and Lesbian Blind Association, and the National Coalition for Black Gays. The gay movement was expanding to include everyone. This eclecticism was represented in the pride marches that attracted thousands in cities such as New York and San Francisco. Predictably, this flagrant
flaunting of pride produced widespread criticism and the gay community soon felt the conservative community’s repulsion.38

"Please remember, homosexuals do not reproduce! They recruit! And many of them are out after my children and your children," read a typical letter from Jerry Falwell’s Moral Majority to his constituents. Right-wing rhetoric, sponsored by evangelical churches, polluted the American airways and mailings throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s. Anita Bryant led a crusade, starting in Dade County Florida (1977), to repeal gay right legislation that legislators had recently endorsed. In European countries, counter-gay rights agendas appeared as did increased police arrests on gay individuals, but none were as pronounced and successful as the “New Right” in the United States. Evangelists told middle class, white, urban, men and women that gays threatened the very fabric of American life. While the gay movement had largely alleviated the anti-homosexual medical and psychology’s doctrine on gays, it had been unable to eliminate religion as a homophobic force.39

Republicans, the Roman Catholic Church, Jewish leaders, and evangelists supported Anita Bryant’s Save our Children campaign. Although gay rights organizations rallied and fought against the campaign, Miami, FL, St. Paul, MN, Wichita, KS, Eugene, Oregon, and the state of Oklahoma repealed their gay rights laws in 1978. The New Right used fear tactics, imploring individuals to help save
the American family from gay people who, allegedly, if given equal rights for employment, would seduce unhappily married individuals into seeking happiness through homosexuality. Television became the pulpit of reform as Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, and James Robison broadcasted the evils of homosexuality to a well-paying audience. Well organized and suitably funded, the New Right's power, for a time, seemed invincible.40

However, the gay rights movement was no longer a fledgling, unorganized, and frightened group that recoiled in fear. Gays had made political connections in the 1970s, and some now even held public office. When Save Our Children (now the Volunteer Organization Involved in Community Enactment of the People) toured Seattle, gay rights groups mobilized to uphold Seattle's gay referendum by a 63 to 27 percent margin. Homosexuals won a similar victory in California. Moving into the 1980s, moderate gay rights groups fought against the religious right through political action. These groups defended supportive gay legislation when under attack and denounced proposals to impose anti-homosexual laws in other cities and states. The wins and losses read like a scorecard, with gains and setbacks for both camps.41

Then, beginning in the early 1980s, a growing number of gay men were struck with a mysterious disease. First termed GRID or gay related immune disorder, AIDS became the religious right's rallying cry against homosexuality.
Allegedly, God had dealt His punishment. Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a virus contracted through sexual contact, contact with infected blood or through beast milk. The virus causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome and is an incurable, terminal disease. In North America, as opposed to other continents, such as Asia and Africa, AIDS primarily affected gay men, at least at first. Baffled by the disease, and unwilling to grasp the idea that their lifestyle was problematic, many gay men resisted acknowledging AIDS as a problem. This was not the case among the leaders of the religious right, who quickly embraced AIDS as a political weapon to halt gay reform and promote their agenda.42

Into the mid-1980s, AIDS became synonymous with homosexuals. Mainstream supporters of gay rights pulled away, and the religious right seemed to be winning the battle until a powerful movement emerged in response to this horrific epidemic. Responding to the need to educate gay men about the dangers of unprotected sex, gay men and women rose up and demanded AIDS research and other action from the government. ACT-UP and QueerNation marched and protested in numbers this nation had not witnessed since the 1960s. People took notice and the government, under ultraconservative rule, slowly cooperated. Coming out, declaring one’s sexual orientation, became a necessity and activists looked down upon those staying “in the closet.” Public “outing” of public figures by gay rights groups forced many gay individuals to declare their homosexuality.
Slowly, AIDS found its way into non-gay communities, infecting heterosexual men, women, and children, giving the gay movement new alliances as families of infected persons pushed for a cure.43

The resurgence of the gay movement over the tragedy of AIDS not only pressured gays to come out but also forced the government to acknowledge gays as a minority. Unfortunately, the religious right still remained a powerful adversary of the Gay Rights Movement. Spouting “family values” and religious doctrine, the religious right adopted the motto, “gay rights, special rights” as a fear tactic to persuade heterosexuals to resist the homosexuals’ agenda.

Nonetheless, homosexuals have made real progress, in recent years. In 1993, with the inauguration of President Clinton, the highest office in the land actively promoted gay rights. Although he was forced to back down from his advocacy of full equality, President Clinton endorsed the rights of openly gay people in the military. In 1993, 120 openly gay elected officials held public office. During the period 1972-1993, 120 cities adopted ordinances protecting gay rights, including 46 in the first three years of the 1990s. A National Gay and Lesbian Task Force 1993 survey reported 72% of Fortune 100 companies included sexual orientation in their anti-discrimination policies. Small business owners have not adopted such measures to the same degree, that larger businesses have, but the fight to expand such policies continues.44
Gays still seek health care rights for their spouses, adoption rights, custody rights for their biological children, housing rights, marriage rights and education for their children that promotes a healthy outlook on homosexuals. Although several states have adopted gay rights ordinances, in half of the states it is still illegal to commit same-sex sex. Even with all the education by gay groups and others, outings of popular public figures, and evidence that gays do not make AIDS, there is still tremendous hostility in this country toward gay individuals, especially gay men. In a 1984 survey of 2,047 gay men and lesbians, 94% reported they had faced some type of victimization. Forty-four percent had been threatened with physical violence. Obviously, homosexuals have taken important steps toward gay liberation, but the journey is far from over. A new generation, one that has never experienced the utter subjugation of homosexuals, boldly treads the way for equality.

In evaluating the evolution of the gay rights movement, one can correlate some of the theories of social movements related in the previous chapter. The gay rights liberation was a reform movement seeking to change the existing laws and mores of the system through the system. By 1969, a small but solid gay leadership had developed and was making limited progress. Then, exasperated by long political abuse, victims of the minority group rioted, producing a gay liberation movement that boldly represented the gay population. While an attempt at using
a pluralistic system did gain some goals, real success did not occur until the 
oppressed unleashed violence, supporting Gamson's assertions regarding 
vioence. As the movement grew, their acceptance and new advantages grew as 
well.46

Yet, why did gays mobilize in the first place? Morrison, Kelly, Breinlinger, and Blumer all postulate the idea of relative deprivation and social movements. The gay movement supports this theory. When individuals began to define themselves as homosexuals and saw themselves belonging to a separate group, in-group/out-group formation began. Homosexuals sensed a great inequality between the two groups. As the country's sentiments on minorities changed, gay individuals began to react and join collective action groups to obtain equality. Relative deprivation incited many minorities to gather together and act. As social changes occurred, new minorities perceived inequality and created new social movements. Unfortunately, one cannot expound on the theories of motivation and why particular individuals joined these movements while others did not. The next chapter will focus on three individual activists. Their personal convictions, activist ideologies, and specific motives will be evaluated in connection with locus of control, political efficacy, relative deprivation, and in-group/out-group stereotyping.47
CHAPTER THREE

LIVES AND MOTIVATIONS OF THREE LESBIAN ACTIVISTS

Gladys

Gladys Carrasquillo was born in Brooklyn, New York 38 years ago. On August 17, 1991, she was diagnosed with the HIV virus. The knowledge of her HIV status had immediate emotional and relationship-oriented effects. Having been newly wed to her female partner in July of that same year, her marriage quickly unraveled with her discovery, and, in March of 1992, she moved back from San Francisco to New York. Fearing the diagnosis could be an easy justification to relapse back into her drug addiction, Gladys left New York on August 29, 1993 to expand her family's music business in Tampa. Soon after relocating to Tampa, Gladys informed her family that she was HIV positive. With this knowledge, her family cut ties to her business venture and did not speak to her for a full year. Knowing only one person in Tampa, she turned to the Tampa Aids Network (TAN) for support and became involved in their Art Reach program.
The Art Reach program entailed HIV-positive artists illustrating their feelings through art. Enjoying her experience with the program, Gladys soon began volunteering at TAN, working with their education staff, and speaking to local groups about being infected with AIDS. Becoming increasingly active with TAN and willing to educate people about her status and the dangers of unprotected sex, she soon obtained a staff position with TAN. Although this was not her first volunteer effort, it certainly was her most extensive. In New York, she had volunteered with the Gay Men’s Health Crisis, counting and passing out condoms during pride marches. Admitting that she was not very active with that movement, she also realized every little bit helped. While in San Francisco she was involved in the AIDS outreach programs there, but she considers her first introduction into activism to be her speech at the April 1993 March on Washington. The march was a momentous event in gay rights history. Thousands of gay individuals marched to celebrate gay pride and to alert the federal government about the needs of the gay community.2

Due to sheer anxiety during the event, Gladys does not have a clear memory of her first activist act. She does recall her support group, searching “quietly through the crowd for a woman with AIDS to speak,” to replace the scheduled speaker that did not show, spotting her and forcing her on stage.” Although she is unable to remember the details, the great feeling she received
from speaking has stayed with her. Now, five years later, Gladys works full time at TAN, lectures across the country on the topic of AIDS, and, being a lesbian with AIDS appeared on television to educate people. Gladys equates anger with activism, but at times during her activist career, her anger temporarily subsides. At these times, Gladys feels she is neglecting her duties as an activist and finds difficulty in defining herself as one. Her anger and frustration re-emerges when she remembers what still needs to be done to combat this terrible disease. Her anger is further perpetuated when she discusses what the government still has not done for people with AIDS. More education, more money, how to get people to show up and get tested, and how to empower others to fight their disease are some of her desired goals. Her life revolves around AIDS and issues pertaining to lesbians with AIDS.3

Gladys believes that she gets her strength to talk openly about being a lesbian and having AIDS from her childhood. She had always felt that something was different about her, and this evoked a defensive attitude in her. Growing up in the “Puerto Rican slums” in New York surrounded by violence and drugs, her first perceived inadequacy was that she was female. Then, while attending a predominantly white school, the students ostracized and verbally assaulted her for being a “spick.” Realizing in her early teens that she was a lesbian, she tried to hide this fact. However, the problem of “coming out” to her family was
inadvertently solved when her mother caught her in bed with another girl. She felt that her mother was ashamed and disgusted with her sexual orientation.

Gladys proclaims "I’m as bad as you can get . . . I’m a Puerto Rican, a New Yorker, a college dropout, an ex-IV drug user, and a lesbian. When I found out that I was HIV positive I thought what else could be wrong with me." After being diagnosed with AIDS, nothing else mattered. She was not going to hide by going back into the closet and denying who she was. Gladys maintains that denial may have been a contributing factor to her exposure to and infection with the virus.4

Getting the message out that not only straight women get AIDS -- that lesbians also are at risk -- is an important objective for Gladys and at times a difficult one. The men’s AIDS movement greatly exceeds the female AIDS movement in size and funding. Being Latino, Gladys targets her education and support specifically to Latino women. Of course, in our society, being Latino (or any other minority) adds complications to the already difficult and challenging activist role that Gladys has accepted. She says that one of her biggest accomplishments was initiating and maintaining a weekly support group for Latino women with AIDS. Before coming to TAN and establishing this group, there was no such group in the area to handle such a topic. Little by little women have started coming to the support group. While attempting to educate others -- not just Latino women -- that support was available, she and another TAN
member participated in Tampa’s Gay Pride March. Conspicuously adorning their arms with “HIV POSITIVE” in black shoe polish alerted women that they -- Latino, lesbian and straight alike -- were not immune to this killer virus.5

After expressing that the opinions given in this interview were her own and not a representation of TAN’s, Gladys delved into the difficulties of working for an activist organization and being an activist. For purposes of argument, borrowing from Park’s and Burgess’s previously mentioned views on collective action, as the initial AIDS movement diminishes, the formal institution that remains, not only carries out the movements policies but works solely in the established boundaries of the government. Political correctness molds the organizational activist. Gladys points out that her activist side is not always politically correct. For example, while working on another cherished accomplishment, an AIDS awareness video for USF’s Florida’s Family AIDS Network (FAN), Gladys hotly debated the opening scene of the video for a year and a half. To call attention to the ugliness of pediatric AIDS and how the disease shatters children, she suggested the image of a little, white girl pulling a wagon full of toys up to a playground. As the wagon rolls behind the girl, white crosses imprinted with the names of dead women and children AIDS victims emerge from the wagon spilling the toys on the ground. When the little girl and the wagon reach the playground gate, the gate slams in her face, slowly turning to
view her wagon of toys, she is only left with the signs of crucifixion. Determined to produce a provocative image of the effects of AIDS on Children, Gladys wanted a scene that provoked unpleasant emotion. Needless to say, USF’s media department rejected this scene, citing that the crosses may offend Christians or ostracize Jews. In other words, the scene was not politically correct. Gladys lost this battle but still calls the video project a success.  

Though inspired by HIV-infected individuals who continue to fight the disease and the system to gather more support for the cause, Gladys does acknowledge that sometimes she still becomes disillusioned. Working within a system that caters to men and working with ethnic women causes much frustration. Gladys asserts that women “have different needs and have different ways in meeting those needs.” Women not only encounter personal obstacles with their disease but also find it difficult to obtain proper childcare when they themselves are sick or need to go to a doctor’s appointment. Gladys maintains that men have numerous advantages in dealing with this disease; for example, pharmaceutical companies often perform clinical drug trials on men but rarely on women. When a drug company does have clinical trials for women, the researchers make them start taking birth control pills. This causes many lesbians to withdraw from drug trials, since they are unwilling to introduce hormones into their bodies. Pediatric care is only slightly better.
Working for awareness and to give a safe place for Latinos to turn for AIDS care, Gladys has decided to step back from many of her public appearances. Having HIV for 17 years, (HIV remained undetectable in her system for ten years - a typical phenomenon) and full-blown AIDS for six years, she believes her health adds to the myth of AIDS. Incredibly, people still carelessly practice unsafe sex. Apparently they have the erroneous idea that there are drugs out there to take care of them and that “they” will find a cure for AIDS soon. Gladys believes that if she keeps going out to the same community looking healthy, it will only propagate the idea that AIDS is not as deadly as health officials tell people.

Gladys was, herself, near death, when her T-Cell count (white cell antibody counts in the blood stream) fell to 13. Healthy individuals normally have a T-cell count of 500 or more. When a T-cell count falls below 200, one is considered to have full-blown AIDS and is in great danger of being infected with opportunistic diseases.8

On, May 6, 1998, the day of the my interview with Gladys, her T-cells hovered around 200, thanks to a new “triple cocktail combination.” Gladys’s AIDS strain has foiled nine different AIDS drugs. Every 21 days she must go to the doctor and check her blood cell count. Still, time is a factor and with hope and fear she dutifully keeps her appointments knowing that each visit could be the one that shows that her virus has foiled yet another drug. She is dying and she
knows she is dying. Working for TAN not only satisfies the activist in her but also keeps her busy enough to deal with her disease. Knowing that people need her and count on her every day are both a strain and a motivator. While the politics surrounding her disease, a disease that not only is connected to an unpopular segment of society but is contagious as well, becomes cumbersome at times, being able to help individuals just diagnosed with HIV is a reward that helps her continue working in the field.

Furthermore, Gladys seeks to change the face of AIDS to help children, women, and other minorities to feel comfortable in coming to a gay-supported facility. She feels that establishing communication with other segments of society will decrease the numbers of ethnic individuals who do not get tested, individually who put others at risk every day. Women are the largest growing AIDS population in Florida and children are the second. Gladys feels that the time is long overdue for America's opinion of AIDS victims to change. Victims are not only gay white males, but also women and children. In addition, AIDS does not discriminate in the basis of place or ethnicity. Men, women, and children -- gay, straight, and bisexual -- and black, white, and "other" -- are all potential victims. She is discouraged by the small number of lesbians who get tested. Funding drugs for women will not occur unless infected women let their numbers be known. She believes that most lesbians are not willing to talk about
their status and that others feel they are immune. Gladys stands up to be heard so that lesbians know they are at risk and they need to take precautions and be tested.¹⁰

HIV-positive women lack a considerable amount of power compared to HIV-positive men due to the lack of support from the women’s movement on the issue of AIDS. Because lesbians feel they are the group least at risk, they do not demand answers or action from the federal government. Illustrating the difficulties of getting women to speak on the topic of their HIV-status, at a conference held earlier this year in Las Vegas (where a large community of HIV-positive women live) Gladys was forced to fly in to talk on the issue of women with AIDS because no women in that area would speak. Unfortunately, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) does not have enough information coming from HIV positive women; thus, Gladys encountered many questions that she could not answer due to lack of information. How do you empower women with AIDS, let alone empower them to take charge of their disease when they will not allow their faces to be counted? Gladys advocates the creation of focus groups designed after the focus groups gay men put together when AIDS first appeared. She would like programs implemented that would pay women to get tested and survey their needs. The more data AIDS researchers have the more funds they can justify and petition for to run these programs.¹¹
Another problem that needs to be dealt with, Gladys explains, is that most AIDS facilities are part of a gay white system, cultural differences between whites and black on Latino communities add to minorities ostracism. In addition, some Latinos in this country must deal with immigration issues. A non-American citizen with AIDS can never obtain American citizenship, and some immigrants are afraid that if the government ever accesses TAN’s files, it will deport them. Attempting every angle to get people to come to TAN, Gladys is now trying to get the staff at TAN to start calling TAN clients, “members”, to create a more comfortable atmosphere. Once people begin attending then they can get tested, become educated, and, if HIV positive, obtain support.¹²

Sometimes Gladys feels as though “[people] do not want to hear it and I do not want to say it anymore.” When dealing with individuals who receive negative test results, she tries to instill the fact that they could be in the window period and are still at risk of being positive. At times, though, she is admits that negative results are interrupted as a sign that they are free to have more unprotected sex. When really frustrated, she feels “let them all get infected - what is it going to take? For all people to get infected before they see it is about them.” Overall, Gladys remains involved and continues to go beyond her duties at TAN because she knows what it is like to be alone and to feel that people do not care. She considers herself a success story because she has survived for so long.¹³
Looking forward to doing more national-level conferences on lesbian and AIDS issues, Gladys feels that to receive one must give; she feels that the rewards in participating have offset any sacrifices that she has made as an activist. Reluctantly, she acknowledges that some people in the community and other workers in TAN see her as a role model. They revel in her superlative efforts and accomplishments and see her as a teacher. Nevertheless, she maintains that she is not perfect and at times feels burnt out and tired. However, she has a gift of listening to people’s questions and is never frustrated with frequently answering repeated inquiries about the disease. For example, when speaking in rural areas she sometimes meets people who believe that AIDS is a city disease; these people do not believe AIDS exists in their towns. Rural residents are disturbed and shocked when Gladys, going into her routine, reveals HIV statistics and the fact that this disease has infected her. She wants people to know that AIDS is a painful disease and while she does not feel that she herself has a disability, others inflicted are not so lucky. Gladys asserts that you “need gut to survive this disease [and there is] no time to feel sorry for yourself.”

Overall, she believes that her perseverance and hard work, as well as that of many others, is paying off. The at-risk Hispanic community is slowly coming in and getting help from TAN. People are becoming educated, AIDS is not spreading as quickly, other HIV-positive-status women are speaking out in the
community, her support group has grown, and other Latino women are becoming active in the AIDS movement. A protein prohibitor will be on the market soon, hopefully stopping HIV from turning into AIDS, but much work needs to be done. Gladys not only wants to see a cure, she also wants to stop the disease from spreading.\textsuperscript{15}

Like many gay individuals in the 1980s, affected by the AIDS virus, Gladys found herself compelled to act in the gay community. Possessing a strong personality molded during a difficult childhood, Gladys's initial motivation to seek involvement in activism was a personal one. Infected and isolated she turned to the movement for social solace. At that time she needed the support and understanding of others who were living with this disease. Then, once she realized she could play an instrumental role in the education and, perhaps, prevention of this disease, her motives changed. Now, while fighting her own disease, she battles the prejudices and ignorance that burden others.\textsuperscript{16}

\textbf{Nadine}

Born in Bangor Maine, and then moving around to New York, London, and California, Nadine Smith and her parents finally settled in Panama City,
Florida when she was still a child. While a college student at the University of South Florida in the mid 1980s, Nadine first embarked upon her role as an activist. She was an active member of the Student Coalition Against Racism and Repression (SCAR) and worked with the anti-apartheid group on campus. In heading the University Peace Alliance, Nadine participated in the anti-nuke rally at Camp Canaveral, demonstrating against the Trident II nuclear missile launch. She was arrested and spent a week in jail with “some of the most impressive people” she had ever met. Nadine recalls the event “as a neat experience [and an] incredible education.” There she sat with fellow women activists who were 60, 70 or 80 years old, and part of a structured peace movement. The event was “a key moment” for her, one that influenced how she viewed the organization she headed and how she would lead that organization in the future.17

At 33 years of age, Nadine views her activism as a natural progression. Graduating from college as a journalist, she worked for the National Public Radio Affiliate in Tampa, and then for The Tampa Tribune. Nadine slowly began feeling a frustration of just reporting the objective facts of an issue about which she had developed opinions. At times, she felt as though she had researched an issue thoroughly for an article and knew more than the “experts” in charge, in others words, she had come up with ideas of her own. In 1987, a Hillsborough County Human Rights Ordinance that included protection for sexual orientation came to
the Tampa City Council for approval. Nadine covered the progression of the bill and its ultimate failure. Afterwards, she and a few other activists decided to push the issue and worked toward getting the bill reintroduced. When the ordinance came up again in front of the city council, she knew that she would not be able to sit on the sidelines and just report the story. At this time, Nadine resigned from reporting due to her overwhelming desire to share her own opinions. In an attempt to exercise her rights fully and to have a say in the politics of the Hillsborough County area, Nadine unsuccessfully ran for City Council in 1989. After the election, she turned her attention to developing a task force.\textsuperscript{18} The alliance that began with the failure of the first Human Rights Ordinance had risen and fallen several times but finally emerged as the Hillsborough Rights Task Force (HRTF). The HRTF began taking on issues beyond Hillsborough County, and soon the founders, realizing that they needed to expand their initial focus, changed their name to the Human Rights Task Force. The HRTF has continued to grow and has received national attention. Nadine herself has appeared on television discussing human rights reform and supporting and defending basic sexual orientation rights. Representing gay and lesbian issues across the state, Nadine has spent many months in Tallahassee working within the political system to oversee the potential passing of various sexual orientation rights issues that would affect the state of Florida. The HRTF's
name has evolved again, this time into the Equity Florida: Human Rights Education Project.\textsuperscript{19}

In discussing why she believes some people are activists while others remain passive, she concludes that three factors are paramount. Nadine believes that, for some people, politics has no relevance. It is a mysterious and intimidating endeavor that they do not comprehend. She equates it to trying to play a sport without knowing the rules. Since politics is abundant with minutia and specific terminology, it is consistently separated from people’s everyday lives. People fail to realize that politics has significant impact on their particular lives. For example, how does an obscure bill in Congress relate to a person’s uncomfortableness with holding his or her partner’s hand in public? Nadine professes that it is difficult to assimilate these political issues into our daily lives and to incite people to take action. Our political system leaves people feeling separated and apathetic. Second, she feels that people who do not get involved in the gay movement may not have a self-respect that other gays and lesbians may possess. She contends that gay activists have fought the internalized homophobia that society has fed to most individuals since childhood, unlike non-activist, “they have been able to receive outside information.”\textsuperscript{20}

Third and most important, she believes that activists have a vision - a vision of what the world should be once all of their fights are won.
When people don’t make assumptions about you [or when] they don’t judge you or put you down. [To imagine] … holding your partner’s hand [and not having to] have this constant fear that am I about to get hit. To imagine that, to imagine … having gone to school and not experience [the] fear of coming out, so intense that you are the one making homophobic comments, to make sure nobody is looking at you, like you might be gay. All of those things, to imagine those being gone and really, really be able to get into the skin of – this is what the world is now, all of my hopes are true now. Once you can get that vision then you will be compelled to do something about it.

Nadine continues to explain that once a person is involved “then what used to be some kind of maze of meaningless political psycho-babble” becomes small steps toward achieving that vision. A person may not be willing to get arrested or move to Tallahassee to lobby the legislature, but, perhaps after obtaining a utopian vision, he or she might at least write a letter in an attempt to disseminate that vision. Nadine believes that these changes are already occurring and that a complete change in the mainstream population’s opinion toward homosexuality is an inevitability. The fact that the Far Right (those organizations that petition against homosexual rights) has had to change its rhetoric to fight against homosexual acceptance is an illustration of this. Nadine explains that the opponents of homosexuals in the past use to try to instill anti-homosexual opinions in people by telling them that gay people were people in pain and full of anguish and hate. Then when homosexuals began making gains in the political
arena and more heterosexuals became accepting or tolerant of homosexuals, the
Far Right began to assert that homosexuals may appear happy in their lifestyle
but there were definite, religious consequences in the afterlife for such behavior.
Nadine asserts that they "constantly have to go into their handbag of stereotypes,
before we (homosexuals) did nothing to contribute to society [and] now we are
this wealthy elite clique that has [a] disposable income." The Far Right is forced to
change because "polls tell us that people who don't [think that they] know
someone who is gay are able to keep their stereotypes." That is why Nadine
believes that coming out (disclosing one's homosexuality to friends and family) is
so important.22

Once a person comes out, the unique circle of people with whom each
person interacts is affected. For example, when Nadine outed herself to her
family, it had an impact on the people around her. Her coming out was a
significant emotional event for her family and friends, and it forced them to
challenge the negative stereotypes they had had regarding homosexuals. People
with homosexual stereotypes typically go through a process when they find out
that someone that they know is gay. At first, they may think that the person in
question is an exception to the stereotype, then they progress to believe that
perhaps no homosexuals fit the negative stereotypes. Again, Nadine points out
that coming out is paramount for societal acceptance of homosexuals, not only because of the “political ramifications but the personal ramifications,” as well. 

Nadine describes the presently accepted societal branding and stigmatizing of gay individuals, which causes them to fear coming out. She asserts “it has been clear to us that from day one we are not welcomed - there is no place made for us in this world and are told that the world would be better off without our presence. So to stand up and say ‘I am here and I’m not going to feel bad about who I am’ is an incredible act of bravery.” It is not only an act of bravery, but also a constant process. Using herself as an example, Nadine illustrates how the coming out process is a daily activity. Married to another woman, Nadine usually wears her wedding ring. In doing so when she travels, people ask her all the time about her husband. If asked about her husband’s name, she has to decide whether or not to come out to this person. Moreover, if she does not come out, she has to ask herself why. Is it a “matter of internalized homophobia, matter of self preservation (not wanting to get hit or hurt), [or is it simply] a matter of not wanting to be burdened with explaining [myself] to a perfect stranger?” Feeling as though she has to do the educating, “as if it’s [her] job to explain away heterosexual bigotry” becomes tedious. Nadine says that sometimes she “just wants to fly on an airplane.” However, she always ponders
whether or not neglecting to admit her orientation to somebody will deny them their only opportunity to talk to a gay person.²⁴

Nadine says that she is almost always willing to talk and answer questions from people unless they are hateful. She states that “hateful people don’t get my time because they are not interested in growing and learning [they are only] ... interested in bashing.” Having to interact with hateful people on television, she knows from experience that those types of people make it clear that they are not there to listen but to humiliate and verbally assault. Nadine suggests that all persons, including herself, need to take time to themselves each year to examine personal beliefs thoroughly and determine if they are still valid. Attempting to disprove one’s own belief system leads one to a better understanding of other points of view. Being preoccupied with obtaining perennially perfect solutions hurts personal relationships and causes oppression and repression in society.²⁵

When looking back on her career as an activist, Nadine contends that she has not yet achieved her biggest accomplishment. However, she is incredibly proud of her participation in the March on Washington in 1993. So far her proudest achievement is building and maintaining a healthy relationship with her partner, by virtue of the fact that there are so many factors against its longevity. There is a lack of emotional support from one of their biological families, lack of role models for gay couples, and the psychological damage done from “all of the
homophobia [they] have been poisoned with since childhood. Therefore, maintaining the loving relationship that she has with her wife is of paramount importance, especially since her activism continually requires time from her personal life. An irony in some activists' lives occurs when working hard to protect against discrimination for others leads them to neglect their own personal relationships with their partners. Nadine says this is, unfortunately, a common experience.26

Nadine's second proudest accomplishment is coming back to the local area after the March on Washington and doing grassroots organizing. She believes that the “movement has gotten too top heavy” and although she was offered jobs in Washington and in New York, she maintains that there are too many people “jockeying to be the next leader” of the movement. Activists should not worry about their place in history but should worry about getting their neighbors involved. Nadine maintains that it is “infinitely more brave to come out in Panama City than a march on Washington, infinitely more brave to be [an] out school teacher then be in a national lesbian and gay group.” She is not devaluing the national-level work that activist are doing, but maintains that without the support from the grassroots work, the national level work can be counterproductive. It can give the feeling that other people are handling the job and that some “experts have some information that [others] don't have and [it
should be left] to them." In a way, this thought process exonerates others from doing the work. Nadine believes it empowers the national level activists to do more than they should on the behalf of so many people without their consent. Nadine believes that the struggle of civil rights has shifted to the states. She asserts that the Far Right is taking their agenda state by state and that the states need to be strong. That cannot happen unless strong local organizations are operating throughout each individual state to represent all persons.27

When questioned on the sacrifices that she has made while pursuing the protection of all gay individuals, Nadine declared that, although she has given a lot, she has received more in return. Being an activist is the job that she always wanted to have but did not exist until she created it. This year may be the first year that she will make viable living. While she could feel like a "chump for working for nothing," she feels blessed for being able to accomplish what she has. The fact that she has been fortunate enough to witness some of her actions attain tangible results is an accomplishment in itself. She explains that many activists working in the 1970's never got to see their work come to fruition. And before long, she says, there will be another generation that pushes today's activist aside, not impressed by their accomplishments and begin making new choices and receiving more results.28
While working with the task force Nadine has encountered gay individuals that have been unsupportive of the task force’s work. Nadine recalls being told that they wish the task force would go away and stop causing trouble. Because they have never been discriminated against, they do not understand why the HRTF needs to exist. This attitude exists until, of course, they are faced with a problem due to their sexual orientation and the task force is the only place for them to turn. Nadine asserts that gay people who have done the movement harm are the most difficult faction of people with whom to work. They may own businesses or somehow have their own money and associate with other affluent and powerful non-gay people in their area. Nevertheless, when asked about gay issues, or the passing of a human rights ordinance, these comfortable gay people tell their powerful friends that it is not a big deal. The truth is that gay rights are not a big deal for them. They do not have bosses or need to rent apartments. Their lack of regard for other gay individuals is the hardest thing with which Nadine has had to deal. This class difference is not indigenous to the gay movement. The women’s and other minority movements have been affected by the “successful” segment of their population not understanding the needs of the less fortunate.29

Unfortunately, Nadine describes some people in the gay community who are suffused with self-loathing and internalized homophobia. Nadine maintains
that you cannot motivate people to act on their own behalf but you can model self-respect, which may eventually lead them to become involved in activism. Having pride in who you are and displaying your pride everyday is important in helping others to escape the entrapment of internalized homophobia. Also, people need to be visible where there are all types of people, not just creating a gay ghetto (a place where specific minorities congregate). Some gay people think that being gay is their private life and that what they do in their own bedrooms is their personal business. They refuse to be a "banner carrier or flag waver."

Nevertheless, Nadine declares that it is not about the bedroom, it is about sexual orientation. "I will talk about sexual orientation with anyone but I won't talk about my sex life with anybody." She goes on to say that people are not fired from their jobs because of sex and they are not denied apartments because of sex. People are not dismissed or refused duty in the military based on their sexual acts. Having sex is not a requirement for having a sexual orientation. A large part of sexual orientation is being who you are and not hiding from that fact.30

Nadine cannot stress enough that being out is about living an honest life. She maintains that if a straight person were to say that they were gay for one day they would feel harassment. They "will get the look that we all know, they may be physically harassed or verbally assaulted." She would like to see what would happen if that person were to apply for a job and write the word lover in the
emergency contact section. She uses these examples to illustrate that homosexuality is not about sex it is about having to lie. Not being open about your orientation means that you must lie to stay in the closet. Having a conversation without revealing your orientation, Nadine challenges, is exceedingly difficult. You must “change pronouns, avoid talking about plans for the weekend . . . , not hold hands with your lover.” For Nadine it is not that “everything [has] to be a demonstration . . . [it is] doing what you do when you are [being] affectionate towards” the one you love. She asserts that “the degree in which it makes [a person] feel uncomfortable is the degree in which [that person’s] mind has been poisoned to suppress those things that come naturally to” them.31

For Nadine, possessing the knowledge and skills to make changes in the community is paramount. Displeased with the apparent lack of progress of the local gay movement, Nadine was compelled to set her own goals and lead others to success. The accomplishing of her goals (equality and safety for homosexuals) drives her to continue her work. Although she felt compelled to illicit change while in college, the opportunity that arose in 1987 for gays to have legal protection against discrimination, seems to be the catalyst in which Nadine foresaw her future. Knowing that protection was obtainable, Nadine knew that
she must put aside her professional career and fight for the rights of herself and others.32

Kathleen

Kathleen Malinsky is an assistant Professor at the University of Sarasota, College of Education. One of seven children, she was born, raised, and educated in New York. As a young woman, she was actively involved in the women's rights movement and the anti-war movement during the Vietnam conflict. Her father, a landscaper, did not tolerate prejudice, ethnic or religious slurs, or offensive jokes in their household. When she was growing up her father was very open to breaking stereotypes and was one of the first employers in his line of business to hire women. She recalls that he was very clear on where he stood on human rights. After being raised in this type of household, Kathleen has found that she is very intolerant of injustice and, at times, has found herself “in trouble trying to intervene” with someone who has committed a social injustice — for example, a parent striking a child in public. Compelled to act when she perceives an injustice, she acknowledges that she has a “hard time watching people mistreat other people.” Her family is incredibly supportive of her work in the gay community and they recognize that she has a role to play in society.33
After attending Hofstra University on Long Island and Trenton State College in Spain for her Master's in Education, Kathleen moved and lived in northern Europe for ten years. Returning to the states, she settled in Florida where she obtained her doctorate in Curriculum Instruction. Kathleen has earned three degrees in education; Art, English as a second language, and Curriculum Instruction. While working on her dissertation, Lesbian Students in Public Schools of Florida, Kathleen interviewed many sexual-minority youths in Florida. She learned that Florida has a loosely run network of about ten sexual minority youth groups throughout the state and she was able to contact these groups and obtain interviews for her dissertation. Through the networking and her research, she realized that she was interested in working with gay and lesbian youths as a sexual minority group. After she left the public school system to take a professorship, her desire to continue to work with children grew. The danger of losing touch with young people by specifically working with educators only prompted her to apply for the position of facilitating a youth sexual minority group in the area.34

True Expressions is a youth sexual minority group that meets once a week at Good Samaritan Church in Pinellas Park. The group supports persons 16 to 26 years of age. Due to the way that University of Sarasota runs their programs, Kathleen has a flexible work schedule that allows her to work with True
Expressions and Equality Florida. As the facilitator for True Expressions, Kathleen spends most of her time on the phone, answering a myriad of questions. Her name and number are available and distributed to various individuals who have questions regarding a wide range of issues on sexual orientation. The Line, a hot line for despondent youth, refers many young people to Kathleen for support and information regarding gay and lesbian support groups. Not all people who call are candidates for her group, sometimes the group is not what they need. If a person does not fit the age range or if the group is not what they need, then she refers them to USF’s Gay Lesbian Bisexual Coalition, or the call may be from a concerned parent and Kathleen gives them information regarding PFLAG (Parents/Friends of Lesbians And Gays). At times, callers looking for guidance need serious counseling and Kathleen refers them to a facility more trained to help them. Being the only contact for True Expression all calls regarding any type of gay issue, which the church receives, is directed to her. The various types of information Kathleen needs access to demonstrates how the facilitator of True Expressions has an immense responsibility to the gay community.35

Being an educator for over 20 years, teaching elementary through high school, Kathleen has always had a passion to work with young people. She knows from her research that sexual minority youths are at great risk for depression and suicide. She maintains that all youth today have it “tough in our
society, especially gay kids [who] have it really hard and need role models who are out and living a successful life. Her goal for True Expressions is essentially for the youth to run the group. The group has member liaisons that are involved in the actual running of the organization. They are in charge of public relations, group topics, and basic administrative activities. For the year and a half that she has facilitated the group, the members have gained more and more power to run their own meetings. She takes great pride in the fact that some of her group members have done speakers bureaus, spoken in Tallahassee to state legislators, been interviewed on local television, and have spoken at school board meetings regarding their sexual orientation and gay youth issues.

Besides working with gay youth and referring others to additional support institutions in the area, Kathleen does a great deal of work with Equality Florida. She has developed a guide based on her dissertation research on sexual minority youth, specifically dealing with homophobia in schools. They have published and distributed the guide to the governor's office and school boards in an attempt to educate them on the discrimination that sexual minority youth receive while in the school system. Spending an abundant amount of time working as an activist and an educator this year, she has had to budget her time more efficiently. In addition to creating the guide for Equality Florida, she also does workshops for social workers, numerous public speaking engagements, speaks at school board
meetings, makes statements public to the press regarding problems with sexual minorities in the school system, and has gone to Tallahassee and spoken with legislators regarding these problems and some solutions. At times, she has talked with school board members privately in Pinellas County about specific problems in the school system.37

Kathleen “would like to believe” her actions have had a significant impact on the community. With every speaking engagement or workshop she provides, Kathleen receives additional requests for her knowledge and her services. She consistently receives positive feedback from people after events. Recently she received an invitation to serve on a statewide study on teenage suicide dealing specifically with gay and lesbian youth. The funding coming from Tallahassee, she believes, is due to the pressure that has been put on the Government by Equality Florida to create a commission on gay and lesbian youth issues. A “snowball effect,” occurs; she gives a workshop or lecture presentation or simply talks to someone and then there is someone else who approaches her to speak about her research on the youth situation.38

For Kathleen, her biggest accomplishments include completing her dissertation and being interviewed by ABC news for her research. Kathleen is also proud of her speaking engagements because even though her work on her dissertation provides important information to people, she knows that her public
speaking has a more direct impact on the population as a whole. Kathleen has
also been published in the book School Experiences of Gay and Lesbian Youth, a
project that took over two years in editing alone but turned out to be “a neat
experience.” 39

When evaluating the difficulties that all sexual minorities live with,
Kathleen acknowledges that her experiences as a gay white woman are probably
different from some of the other minority members in the gay community. For
example, her significant other is an African American woman and Kathleen
recognizes that being both black and a lesbian has compounded difficulties.
Kathleen knows that, because she is a white individual, she intrinsically
encounters more advantages or at least does not encounter similar prejudice due
to her complexion. However, Kathleen asserts that she hopes that there are more
commonalities than differences in the women’s gay community. Oppression of
women, oppression of lesbians, and oppression of race are all oppressions, maybe
just expressed on a different scale. 40

Oppression is a motivator for Kathleen’s activism. She observes so much
injustice every day that she feels obligated to change it herself. She considers
herself blessed in “her calling to be an activist.” Kathleen finds happiness and
solace in recognizing and accepting her calling. She truly believes this is “what
she is supposed to be doing, [it is] meant to be.” She knows that the ignorance of
society leads to insurmountable misunderstandings and her role as an activist is to correct these injustices in society. Acknowledging that “there is a lot wrong with our society,” Kathleen would be more frustrated if she did not do something. “And the best thing to do is to educate . . . , make contact with people and to come out and to talk to people.”

In all of her classes at the University, she comes out and talks openly about the oppression of the gay community. She hopes that coming out to her class will dispel the stereotypes that some people hold for the “invisible minority” of homosexuals. Kathleen believes that her status as a professor could dispel the misinformation and prejudice in our society. While some students accuse her of being too political, her philosophy is “everything is political.” Whether it is who has the biggest office or what group is allocated more funds, all decisions are political. She “used to not think of [her]self as a political person then [she] realized [that] everything going on in our society is political [and you can] either close your eyes or change the system.”

Of utmost importance to Kathleen is the continuing of her career as an educator and to “touch as many people as she can and connect with them on a human level.” Her goal is to help those clinging to outdated prejudices and stereotypes understand that sexual minorities are just ordinary people. Her main goal in life is to “break down some of the prejudices that surround sexual
.orientation [because] ... homophobia damages everybody, straight people, gay people, and bisexuals. Everyone is affected by it.” She continues to say that “to break down some of that [would be] wonderful.” Above all, Kathleen is human and, at times, gets discouraged and becomes frustrated when people that she considers educated, wholesome, and ethical “freak when [she] tell[s] them [her] sexual orientation” or when they do not want to hear about sexual minorities. “When people shut down and won’t even listen to what [she] has to say right off the bat, ... that kind of resistance from people” is disheartening.43

Kathleen, reluctantly and modestly, accepts that she is a role model to the youth at True Expressions. The youth members have related frequently her importance and indispensability to them and the group. Also, Kathleen believes that it is important for the youth to know successful and respected people who are out, open with their sexual orientation and comfortable with themselves. Not all lesbians or sexual minorities need to be political figures or Ellen Degeneres to be role models. She becomes aggravated with people in the gay community who do not help because those “people don’t realize [that] each individual can give in their own way to the community.” Kathleen’s role models include Nadine Smith because “she has donated so much of her life to making effective change for the community.” This is why Kathleen consistently finds time in her hectic schedule to attend meetings or be present on a panel to try to change the community for
the better. Personal and professional hardships are put aside and the need to better the community and advance her cause takes precedent. This is the mark of a true activist.\textsuperscript{44}

Besides being motivated by peer activists, anger does play a part in her activism. Kathleen recounts a situation where anger got the best of her. At a presentation at a public school board meeting last year to discuss Largo High School's Gay Alliance, (a gay youth organization that meets at the school) Kathleen was second to last to speak. While sitting there and "listening to people who call[ed] themselves religious... get up and condemn [the gay community] and just completely drag gay and lesbians through the mud, ... blaming us for everything that has ever gone on in the world -- I [got] angry." She was furious at all the anger that these self-proclaimed religious individuals spewed at gays, which contrasted so greatly with the speeches given by the gay and lesbian community. The gay community's statements came from a logical, monistic view. They talked about civil rights, education, brotherly love, and human kindness. Then to be bashed with hatred, Kathleen's emotion overtook her. Instead of presenting her prepared speech, she stood up and vented her anger. Reflecting on the event, she describes it as painful but has been told by numerous people that it was the most powerful speaking she has ever done.\textsuperscript{45}
Occurrences like that make Kathleen realize that, even after all that has been accomplished, her work as an activist is not complete. There are numerous trials and tribulations with which to contend and many other forums in which to get involved. While the school board experience was an incentive, Kathleen proposes that there are positive and negative motivators influencing her and while a good activist needs exposure to both motivations (to be more effective) the experience at the school board meeting was a negative experience. She prefers to think of the growth and actions of the youth members from True Expression. These are the positive motivations, for example, this year True Expressions held a panel on Coming Out Day at the Gay and Lesbian Film festival. During the day, some of the young members of the group spoke about being an out teenager in a public forum. The members have also been interviewed on television and in the newspaper. Kathleen contends that they are proud of who they are and are standing up and speaking out for themselves. These experiences balance out the negative encounters with people and are a positive incentive to continue working in the community.  

Kathleen suggests that anger does have an initial effect in evoking the desire to get involved in a collective movement. A certain resentment manifests when a homosexual examines the heterosexual rights in our society. Homosexuals, unlike heterosexuals, do not have the right to get married, which
Kathleen maintains is a major privilege. Tax breaks, inheritances, health insurance, and the fact that a homosexual couple’s house cannot legally be deeded over to their partner at death without special wording being attached, are all benefits and rights that married and straight unmarried people alike take for granted. Of course, family members can contest even a recorded deed since the homosexual couple’s property is not legally protected. The same injustices hold true for child adoption. Florida is one of only two states that adoption of children by same-sex couples is illegal. This effects Kathleen and many other sexual minorities who would love to adopt children but are legally unable to by law. These are privileges Kathleen believes everyone should have regardless of sexual orientation. What it comes down to is having respect -- respect for homosexual relationships -- a respect that is lacking from heterosexuals and homosexuals. Due to this lack of respect, homosexuals have “learned not to be public, [that they have] not earned the privilege of saying ‘my spouse’ openly” to society. This mindset maintains the negative homosexual atmosphere in which activists are attempting to change.47

Kathleen maintains that her belief system has evolved over time. She now believes that everything is connected in our society. Everything that she does or that others do is connected and affects others. She would like her actions to be about making change for the better. She states that there are those blessed with
the ability and capacity to evoke change. Those people need to be active, despite personal sacrifices they may have to make. In choosing her topic for her dissertation -- to research the problems of lesbian teens -- she labeled herself, in her academic career, a lesbian. She knows that this has narrowed her choices in the academic world, but she only looks at the rewards. Fortunately for her, she has yet to encounter any negative repercussions working at her institution. However, she is sure faculties have omitted her from other institutions because of her public orientation. In the end, Kathleen figures that it all balances out. Even though she may have been purposely uninvited to professional undertakings due to her orientation, she would find it unbearable and unprofitable to work in an environment where she could not be who she really was -- "but then again if [she was] denied because of [her] orientation then they probably need [her] there, it is a catch 22."48

Kathleen's drive to actively help others, whether in a group or personally reaching out to a specific person, cannot be attributed to a signal event. She relates to always having a problem with witnessing perceived injustices. The reinforcement for taking an incentive to prevent or stop these types of events has lead, in part, to her involvement in the Gay Rights Movement. Children are the most vulnerable participants in the discrimination war against homosexuals, and it is the children that Kathleen tries desperately to save. The positive
reinforcement she receives in attending to the needs of sexual minority youths is the prime motivator for her activist's work.\textsuperscript{49}
CONCLUSION

The gay movement, as a whole, is continuing to go through an evolutionary process. Clearly, gay activists still have a tremendous amount of obstacles to overcome before they can obtain equal rights. What started from a few brave souls fighting regional harassment and unequal treatment has become a few million souls fighting injustice and hatred internationally. The activists interviewed acknowledged that although legal reform is necessary, the public’s stereotypes of gays will have to change before gays, lesbians and people with AIDS, can achieve true success. By being honest about who they are with the people around them, these women have advanced the goals of the gay movement. This open display of pride will eventually lead others to overlook sexual orientation and base their opinions of gay people directly on each individual personality. While there are several factors and, in fact, whole institutions that are working against gay activists, these women have proven that with perseverance change is inevitable.50

The female activists in this paper share several characteristics. Despite their chosen field of activism, AIDS, human rights legislation, or sexual minority youth rights, each activist displays an inner drive to change perceived injustices.
These beliefs support the view of relative deprivation. The interviewees describe how they believe there are certain rights and privileges that each person deserves. However, in our society, as the activists have proven, certain individuals are not allocated these rights equally. Their work consists of obtaining those privileges and securing rights for themselves and others like them. Educating outsiders so that they will understand and support the activist's cause is another similarity. Each interviewee is fighting from within an established collective group against an outside force, sustaining the view of an activist having an in-group/out-group perception of the world. The out-group in this situation is the person or institution promulgating homophobia.\textsuperscript{51}

Finally, the concepts of collectivism and locus of control (or political efficacy) exhibit themselves as underlying themes throughout the interviews. Obviously, these women believe that their actions and non-actions have a direct effect on the world around them. Taking action, whether politically or personally, relieves them of the pain they feel from the injustices they observe in our society. The inactivity of those who could strongly influence their movement causes them frustration and anger. They feel that their actions and the actions of others have consequences, confirming a strong sense of internalized locus of control. The three components of collectivism described by Kelly and Breinlinger are observable in each of these women's actions. By fighting for the rights of a larger
group, while at times sacrificing their own needs, being dependent on the support of the other members in their groups, and displaying the strong in-group/out-group sensibilities, each interviewee illustrates the definition of collectivism. The activist is then motivated by multiple interacting variables which drive them further until they reach their goals or their vision is complete. Until then, they will continue to act to achieve equality.52

This thesis represents an attempt to uncover the motivations of activists, to expose and evaluate the elements that these certain individuals possess that separate them from the passive, nonresistant segments of society. The activist is a rarity. Most members of society do not inconvenience themselves to further a cause, even when that cause may extend their personal rights. Though many theorists have postulated hypotheses trying to determine underlining causes for these exceptional individuals, no theory or a combination of theories, can fully explain the basis of their motivations. There are millions of individuals who feel strongly about a cause, who feel their actions can obtain results, who recognize a common enemy restricting that cause from being achieved, but still they remain uninvolved. What compels activists, not only to sacrifice part of their lives but also to endanger themselves? With all the advancements made by the gay rights movement, being out as a gay person, especially a gay person with AIDS, still brings with it a threat to personal well being. In spite of this, these courageous
women expose themselves to rejection, verbal abuse, and violence by attempting to advance their convictions. Perhaps someday we will gain a complete understanding of why they have chosen the courageous path of activism, but the mere fact that they have done so merits our continual attention and respect.
### Possible Success Outcomes

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Figure 1
Figure 2
Provided reasons for participation
NOTES

Chapter One

6. Ibid., 14-17.
7. Ibid., 48.
8. Ibid., 53, 70.
9. Ibid., 82, 124.
10. Ibid., 95, 104.
11. Ibid., 142-144.
12. Ibid., 136, 160.


26. Melucci, Nomad of the Present, 133.

27. Blumer, “Elementary collective,” 77, 80, 82, 81.

28. Ibid., 82, 85.

29. Ibid., 85-86.


31. Ibid., 220-221.


33. Ibid., 27, 29, 34, 35.

34. Ibid., 56, 70, 119.

35. Ibid.,

36. Ibid.,

37. Gamson, The strategy of Social, 82.

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5. Ibid., 11, 12.


8. Ibid., 3.; Mondimore, A Natural History, 35.


10. Ibid., 40, 43.

16. Ibid., 64, 66.
17. Ibid., 58, 62.
24. Ibid., 141-143.
25. Ibid., 150.
26. Ibid., 154-156.
35. Ibid., 90-91.
39. Ibid., 103-110.
40. Ibid., 108.
45. Ibid., 130-135, 60.

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