

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

FROM PINK TO DETOURNEMENT: THE SEMIOTICS OF RADICAL
QUEER DESIRES ON INTERNET SPACES

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

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Norman, Oklahoma

2012

FROM PINK TO DETOURNEMENT: THE SEMIOTICS OF RADICAL
QUEER DESIRES ON INTERNET SPACES

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

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Acknowledgements

Many wonderful people in my life have contributed to shaping this work. My family, friends, colleagues has done more to help me than I can ever express. The patience you have shown me in this project have been invaluable. The stories, ideas, advice, and encouragement you have shared with me have been one of the most rewarding aspects of this journey. I owe everything I am to this community.

I would also like to thank all the wonderful queers in my life that have helped to educate me on queer issues. Without all of your ceaseless efforts to educate me, I would be more fully complicit in the hetero-patriarchy. I would also like to thank all the Oklahoma Queerz for the endless conversations about what it is like to be queer in a red state. I know that with love and persistence we will make a better world here where not everyone talks about going ‘somewhere better’.

I would also like to thank Dr. Clemencia Rodriguez for all the support, guidance, and advice she has provided throughout this process. I greatly value your friendship and support. Dr. Lisa Foster has helped a great deal with the sections pertaining to public sphere. Your class was one of the first places where I understood the connection between queer scholarship and communication. Dr. Ralph Beliveau has been more than generous with his time and energy. To Dr. Bisel and Dr. Hansen, thank you for your many insights during my graduate study, exams, prospectus, and dissertation. Thank you to the faculty in Communication, Women’s and Gender Studies, Film and Video Studies and other various departments where I have taken classes or had the opportunity to learn. You have contributed significantly to my ability to think critically about social change. I would also like to thank Dr. Jill Irvine and the Women’s and Gender Studies Program at the

University of Oklahoma for all of the support and guidance they have shown me. If it weren't for my passion for teaching in WGS, my research would have taken a very different track. Without the great students in this program and all of our wonderful discussions on identity, I would be a radically different scholar.

Further, I would like to thank my family for all the support they have given me in this process as well as my partner Summer S. Graham. Without all of you, I would not have been able to do this work.

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Abstract

This research explores the way queer political groups use symbolic capital in their web presences. It seeks to read semiotically how images deployed in queer Internet spaces can create and reinforce queer identities. This process takes place through the generation of heterodox discourses, embedded within the code system, and denotative signifying level of queer symbolisms. These discourses generate moments when radical breaks between the heteronormative power structures and actors are possible. I explore how these semiotics as seen through Bourdieu's theories are in relation with the concept of counterpublics. This body of theory is further refined by the addition of my examination the identity formation processes found in alternative media.

PART I
INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2010, I was asked to teach a course on queer theory for the Women's and Gender Studies Program. Until that time I had focused my scholarship on small political groups and the way they created media. My research was primarily on anarchist groups. I had gotten to a point in my research where I felt that there were many scholars covering the issue, and I had nothing particularly new or interesting to say. My work with queer theory changed that.

I have always felt like an outsider and the process of discovering queer theory with my students created moments of *conscientização* within myself about the way I had constructed and performed my own identity. I was conforming to a number of axes in identity and exposed to a variety of new ways of understanding issues surrounding my personal experiences of sexuality and gender performance. The queer umbrella is a broad one and offered a chance to bring key issues in the intersectionality of repression into my work. I knew that this was the new direction that I wanted to take my research.

Having already done work in alternative media and social movements, I began to wonder how queer political groups functioned with their unique post-structural positionalities. This study is in part an answer to that question. I seek the antiphon to my questions about how the unique characteristics of being queer relate to the creation of media and the formation of social movements around this uniqueness. Because there is no one way to be queer and ways of being queer become structured by the situation of the individual, queer social movements face interesting problems around representation. In addition, unlike the early nineties, when the first waves of queer activism appeared, new

media technologies were offering access to a new generation of queer activists ready to communicate their positions.

Most of the academic research surrounding queer activism comes out of the late 1990s just as the early queer group ACT-Up and Queer Nation were dissolving. The scholarship that covers this era in social movements caught them at a unique time. The HIV-AIDS crisis had created a radicalization in lesbian and gay social movements causing them to rediscover their radical roots. This had created a new crop of radical queers, which caught the attention of social movement scholars. By the mid 2000s, writing about queers had moved to theoretical writing and theorizing queer theory. Scholars were producing little work on the way that queer groups were using new communication technology or representing themselves on Internet spaces. I have come to believe that we are at the end of this era in queer social movements as well.

The Internet experience has allowed for queers to self-represent and self-publish in a way that is so accessible that the queer experience online is now highly individualized. Social media, has in part, mitigated the need for queer social movements to be an information source for queer citizens. Each individual queer can now be a hub for queer information. This does not mean that queers do not need social movements. Rather than solid representational movements like those theorized in the new social movement literature (Atton, 2002b; Bagguley, 1992; Cloud, 2001; Kriesi, Koopmans, Duyvendak, & Giugni, 1995; Pichardo, 1997), they form temporary groups committed to specific actions. This postmodern form of social organizing creates groups when they are needed and dissolve them when done with a project or action. In this way, the right of representation is spread across the membership of the citizens that form the groups. No

one group can come to represent the queer political project. No one group can dominate the field of queer political discourse.

Being queer is being non-normative. Queer means having desires that are outside the boundaries of what is generally acceptable for social conversation. Queering is a process that moves the individual to a position outside of normalizing social structures. This marks the queer body for oppression. The queer body of the individual ultimately feels this process. The queer body feels in unique ways the oppression of normative sexual and gender structures that seek its conformativity. The queer bodies are more open to physical violence. The queer body is more open to symbolic violence. Queers with multiple intersectionalities experience a further othering in their bodies. Queer people of color are doubly marked. Queer people with different abilities are doubly marked. Transgender people are marked in both sexuality and gender. Intersex people are similarly misunderstood. The queer body is ultimately the site of oppression and the nexus from which resistance arises.

Translating this individual feeling to other queers is one of the primary functions of queer media. Challenging the heteropatriarchal system of oppression with the body and the way that the body feels and expresses desire is a parallel function. The queer political project seeks to find commonality and celebrate differences experienced the unique bodies of queer people. Unlike rights-based movements that seek to enter into normative structures on the terms of the oppressor with claims along the lines of “we are just like you,” queer people recognize their differences. Gavin Brown (2007, p. 2685) states “[q]ueer revels in its otherness, difference, and distance from mainstream society (gay and straight), even as it recognizes that this distance is always incomplete.” This

moment of creating a world where those differences can be tolerated and difference itself is deconstructed is a queer political moment.

Queer people recognize that their experience in a world that does not privilege the way they experience their body and their desires makes them unique. They are not just like the rest of the world and refuse to enter into a social structure that deprivileges their unique experience. The queer political project recognizes that rather than entering into the heteroexperience and calling for rights within those regimes of power, a better way of social organizing is the radical restructuring of the social system so that it has an ability to recognize and tolerate difference.

How queer political groups communicate this symbolically is the core of this project. The symbolic system that supports heteropatriarchy preexists the arrival of any singular queer person. In short, the structural formations that prevent the freedom of abnormality preexist any desire. The symbolic system of oppressions is, if Derrida, Bourdieu, and Foucault are to be believed, preexistent. These oppressions are the very things that structure the nature of abnormality in the individual, the things that symbolically mark their differences. It is in the process of opening up symbolic codes of the oppression that the queer political group primarily challenges this structuration. The symbolic code system that structures oppression in the individual has the possibility of being recoded or rewritten. This operation by a queer individual changes the structural moment of oppression by generating a counter-moment of symbolic freedom.

The reclamation of the word queer is an excellent example of how this process, taking place in a series of individual moments, aggregates to a larger social re-formation

of the codes of oppression. Queer, a term of derision and part of the deep structure of the heteropatriarchy is rewritten by queer activists into a term of political power.

Queer is itself a passive symbol placed on an individual as a marker of difference (abnormality). This symbol becomes recoded in its adoption by the individual as a term denoting political power. The moment of semiosis shifts, and the structural relations of the word queer change all other words within that context. This is a moment is a moment of political power. This power is extended and compounded within the multiple moments of queer political actors expressing their agency as they reconfigure codes and make media. This semiotic power moves sexuality and gender performance to the realm of social protest. Benjamin Shepard (2010, p. 21) states “[r]ecognizing that queer sexuality intersects within a series of competing narratives, the challenge for queer activism and its bountiful approach to pleasure is to shift ontological terms of debate.” The queer project seeks to reconfigure the meaning of desire and reshape that meaning into a world where abnormality and desire decouple from one another.

This process is *the process* of creating and communicating queer desire. Queer counterpublics open spaces where the knowledges, desires, and presencing of queer people can take place. Queer political projects enter into a public space and create queerness. Similarly, queerness is translated into their web presences through the deployment of symbolic content. Internet spaces created by queers reflect the symbolic desires of queer groups. Because the Internet space is controlled entirely by the producers, it is an excellent site of study to consider the projections of queer desires that queer actors wish to create.

Rapid technological change has dramatic effects on the nature of queer discourses and the creation of queer counterpublics. Previous forms of queer activism are changing rapidly to meet this new media landscape. I propose that the theories of Pierre Bourdieu allow the researcher the ability to focus on individual experience through the ways that actors seek to reconsider their world *and* the structural elements limiting the actors' abilities to act and shape social attitudes, which influence their subjectivity. This makes it possible to consider both a personal level of individual activism and political citizenship *and* the structural limitations and danger of presenting queer positions in public.

As alternative media scholarship continues to explore the process by which media making allows more and more individuals to enter the public discourses, there is a need for a theoretical model that can account for the personal change experienced by media producers. Bourdieu's theory of habitus allows the researcher to understand how a shift away from misidentification heteropatriarchy takes place within an individual. Creating media that posits a different desire highlights the moments where an actor breaks with habitus and creates the world, as they would like it to be. Queer people making media are resignifying a world in which their markedness is diminished, erased, or celebrated.

Queers are also renegotiating the structural elements of a social order that renders them invisible. Part of that political strategy is the use of the Internet. This media allows queers to display their worldview in ways that overcome the orthodox discourses on sexuality and gender. The creation of these counterpublics provides points of entry for others searching for conformation and affirmation of their own non-normativity. The creation of queer Internet messages disrupts discourses on compulsory heterosexuality

and gender conformativity. It opens political spaces that have previously been difficult to access. This is a revolutionary change in the way that queers are able to self-present. The *illusio* surrounding sexuality and gender is a powerful force. Previous forms of queer activism sought to counter this through the creation of moments in the public sphere that would disrupt heteronormative structures. Queer political groups still participate in direct action campaigns and these moments are a core part of the way the queer political process is enacted. The use of the Internet has allowed the meaning of these moments to be extended and re-represented. Multiple challenges to structural elements can be achieved through a single live action. Queer radical media on the Internet serves as a way of achieving self-actualization.

Chapter two looks at the way that three scholars, Mikhail Bakhtin, Antonio Gramsci, and Paulo Freire, have theorized social change and the way that knowledge becomes authority constricting an actor's ability to envision alternatives to a social system. It then reviews the literature on alternative/radical/citizen's media as initiatives engaged in the process of de-centering authoritative knowledges. Alternative media projects, spaces, and processes allow subaltern groups, like queer people, to move into the realm of the public. Creating media allows queer political groups access to a form of political agency that shapes queer identity and reflects queer desire.

Chapter three reviews the body of theory connected to social movements. Social movements such as queer political groups are formed in relation to social and theoretical ideas about what the purpose and goals of a social movement can be. Queer social movements take their imaginable goals and processes from the cultural and symbolic capitals of past social movements. They have developed their ability to enact social

change based on the experiences of previous social movements. What is new about queer social movements is their ability to radically re-imagine the goals and strategies of what a social movement can accomplish. This change in the goals of queer social movements exists in relation to the gay rights movement which relies on identity models extending from the emergence of new social movement and new social movement theory. Queer political groups have more in common with the newer forms of social movements that emerged during the late nineties. This chapter also theorizes the way that radical media interact with these forms of social movement organizing.

Chapter four examines theories of the public sphere. First, it covers the development of major public sphere theories. Then it covers public sphere theories that deal with sexual and gender identities. Finally, it theorizes how the way Pierre Bourdieu can make an important contribution to public sphere studies. This creates a theoretical model that allows a better understanding of the way queer social movements are challenging structural inequalities.

Chapter five provides a review of the history of organizing around sexual and gender minorities in the U. S.. Starting with the early organizing of groups like the Mattachine Society, it ends with the early queer activism of the late 1990s. This chapter also reviews the literature on different modes of organizing around sexuality and gender issues. Much of the research in this area has been part of a historical project to record practices, materials, and contexts rather than theorize social movements. Very little work in the social movement literature or alternative media literature has looked at the specific ways that sexuality and gender organizing influences social movement organizing and media creation.

Chapter six outlines the research methods used in this project. I selected queer groups with an internet presence as my sites of study. Next, I created link maps to illustrate the linking patterns for the groups. Finally, I collected a corpus of images from five Internet sites. These images were then subjected to a semiotic analysis to extract themes and commonalities.

Chapter seven presents the results of this study. First it presents the groups in relation to their Internet presence and provides a description of the groups' stated purpose and the way they present their goals online. Next, it produces the link maps and discusses the patterns of interaction for the groups. Finally, in this chapter, I present the results of the semiotic analysis of the corpus. Examples of the thematic communications are presented along with a discussion of the way that queer symbolic material reflects queer political desires. The creation of queer symbolic material is a direct reflection of the ontological purpose of queer social movements as they seek to change the structure of symbolic relations and open new categories for sexual and gender performances.

Chapter eight provides a conclusion and highlights areas where further research is needed. The queer political landscape is changing, and scholars need to be prepared to meet this change. The queer presence online is more individualized, and this brings with it new sets of theoretical questions. The early queer activists came of age in a dramatically different media landscape. Access to material about different sexual desires and different gender performances is radically different for a 35 year old queer and a 19 year old queer youth. This ease of communication about desire (if we bracket the digital divide) must have some sort of impact on the lives of young queers. The digital divide between queer citizens with the access to the cultural capital of the Internet and queer

citizens without access is a concern. The globalization of communication may also have an impact on queer spaces and queer communication.

PART II

MEDIA STUDIES AND ALTERNATIVE MEDIA

Introduction

Queer people and their media products are mostly absent from alternative media studies. Queers are minoritized within social structures and this status continues in the scholarship on alternative media. through the lack of theorizing on their media productions and organizations. Because hetero-patriarchy embeds itself in all levels of our ability to communicate, queer projects' attempt to overturn heteronormativity while embedded in a structure is challenging. This is a particularly compelling and important project to research.

Transgressive sex and gender practices as acts of resistance are absent in the literature on alternative media. This study seeks to address this problem by privileging media that expresses queer desires. By privileging queer social movements and their media this study hopes to expand the theorizing on new media, alternative media, and social movement media.

While all of the scholars in this section are concerned with the relation of citizens to the structure of normativity, queer people and their social movements are not part of their corpus. This study seeks to change this relation. I hope to introduce queer social movements and queer media to this arena. This chapter covers major theorists and their work on radical/citizens/alternative media. Within the field of mass communication scholarship, only alternative media researchers address issues of communities and social movements reappropriation of media technologies. The vast majority of media studies has ignored citizens taking control of their own media and communication needs.

Media Studies

The term 'media studies' encompasses a large and complex field of inquiry. While primarily concerned with the question of who is communicating with whom and to what effect it has created several subfields. For close to one hundred years media studies have been interested in the way that media influences the lives of citizens in a democratic process. They have not been interested in how citizens have had a political impact through creating their own media. It took scholars developing theories of alternative/radical/citizens' media to shift the focus from abstractions to real people. This study further expands this process by examining the way that queer citizens create media to communicate their ontological and epistemological positionalities.

Since its founding, media studies has theorized how media impact society, changing the social landscape. Media scholars have been primarily concerned with the impact of media on western democratic processes and comparing commercial media to state owned media systems (M. DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989). Another main field in media studies is research on media effects. However, close to a hundred years of scholarship have not produced a definite conclusion on the nature of the effects of media. In addition, there is little agreement on how to create open media access.

More recently media studies has started to focus on gay and lesbian (G/L) representations in corporate media (such as studies of *Will & Grace* and *The Ellen Degeneres Show*). However, media studies scholarship still focuses on representations in the mainstream media. Media scholarship has interpreted the rise of gay and lesbian shows and cable networks as a change in social attitude (Avila-Saavedra, 2009; Hill,

2009; Morrish & O'Mara, 2004; Oakenfull & Greenlee, 2005). However, it could also be interpreted as opening niche markets in the preexisting capitalist media system.

One of the few areas of agreement in media studies is that media ownership has an effect on the construction of messages. Media ownership shapes the direction and focus of discourse, influencing the actions of the social body that receives these messages. What media scholars do not agree upon is the extent of the effects or the normalizing functions that media can create. Many scholars have found negative social effects in a structure of elite media ownership and control (Baudrilard, 1981; Bernays, 1928; M. DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989; Gerbner & Morgan, 2002; Giddens, 1998; Gitlin, 1980; Katz & Lazarfield, 1955; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; McLuhan, 1964; McLuhan & Fiore, 1968; McQuail, 2000; Riesman, Glazer, & Denney, 1965; Schramm, 1964; Thompson, 1995).

Drawing on psychology, sociology, communication theory, cultural studies, anthropology and media studies, this group of media effects theorists point out a wide range of possible problems that the production and distribution of symbolic material has on the social order.

The works of media effects theorists make the *problems* of symbolic control clear, yet there is little clarity on how to *overcome* these problems in a way that opens media to sexual and gender minorities. The one proposal that appears more often than any other, as a general solution to the problem, is the decoupling of media from capitalist economic structuration (Ang, 1996; D. Armstrong, 1981; Artz, Macek, & Cloud, 2006; M. L. DeFleur & Larsen, 1987). The two most common reforms proposed by critics of the

capitalist media structure are suggestions for state-controlled ‘public/people’s media’ and alternative media (also called third sector media).

The proposal of most interest here is the one that centers citizens as agents in creating symbolic material. This type of media is neither state run or commercially owned. It is a ‘third sector’ of media commonly called alternative media among media scholars, a lesser known line of research in media studies¹. Third sector media has spread around the world among scholars and activists as part of social movements, political action organizations, and as development schemes.

This type of media has its own particular body of theory. This theory arises out of the unique needs and goals of alternative media. In the last twenty years, this body of literature has seen an explosion of work examining the existing networks of alternative media, theorizing their impact on the public sphere, studying their practices, and encouraging their growth. One of the most current debates among alternative media scholars is how to come up with a single definition of their object of study. French scholar Benjamin Ferron has compiled a large family of concepts that is used in the field to refer to alternative media; these include community media, alternative media, autonomous media, participatory media, and radical media, radical, citizens’, marginal, participatory, counter-information, parallel, community, underground, popular, *libres*, dissident, resistant, pirate, clandestine, autonomous, young, and *micro-médias*, among others (Ferron 2006). Today the field of

¹ In my job search, I use the common term ‘alternative media’. I have been surprised several times at having to explain this term to senior communication scholars that seem to lack even a passing familiarity with the issue. While the ground media studies covers is enormous I would expect at least a passing knowledge of this term if not the body of literature.

alternative/radical/community/underground/free/copy-left/third-sector/citizens'/pirate/marginal/resistant/micro media has its own body of literature as rich and varied as the media and people it studies. Alternative media scholars claim that the multiplicity of names to define a communication phenomenon speaks to the complexity and various facets and dimensions of the said phenomenon.

Generally, media produced by the subaltern seek to overturn the hegemonic system of representation. For queer people this means creating media that facilitate their entry into the public sphere. This action gives them the power to control their own symbolic output. Queer media products overturn a system of symbolic and bodily repression that renders queer subjects invisible. In order to overturn hegemonic structures, queer people must first overcome the problem of the authority of knowledge, or the question of who has the right to speak about whom.

The Authority of Knowledge

In order to understand how alternative media functions, it is necessary to understand the deconstruction of authoritative knowledge and its relation to cultural production. The control of communication and cultural production influences queer people because it deprivileges their actions and knowledges and keeps them in the private sphere. The system of symbolic authority renders queer people minoritized and invisible. If there is a dominant culture controlled by a cultural or economic elite, the elite form discourses to support their interests (Bourdieu & Coleman, 1991; Foucault, 1994). These discourses protect and maintain the transmission of elite culture and its values. The protection of cultural values leaves queer people absent from crucial discourses that make

their lives invisible. Discursive regimes of power limit access to information for queer people about their social interests. Discourses controlled by groups rich in capital, control fields of power, and limit poor groups from entering into the public sphere (Bourdieu, 1991, 2005; P. Bourdieu, 2005; Foucault, 1983). This deprivileges non-normative knowledges and moves queer people and their experience to the periphery.

Below I examine three scholars that examine the authority of knowledge and how subaltern groups question the normativity of the social structure. These scholars' works have influenced the ability of queer people to critique the way that their experience is made absent from the social sphere and the way that a patriarchal heteronormativity is constructed. First, Mikhail Bakhtin developed a theory of heteroglossia and theorized how actors generate symbolic challenges to dominant discourses. Second, Antonio Gramsci broke ranks with the dominant Marxist philosophy of social change, and opened new ways to theorize the discourses by the underprivileged. The third scholar examined below is Paulo Freire, whose work on education criticized the structure of authoritative knowledge and opened new ways of valuing local knowledges. Queer social movements generate media that challenge the authority to represent normalcy. They use techniques like heteroglossia, carnival, counter-hegemonic discourses, and self-produced educational material.

Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin

While never published in a complete form in his lifetime, Bakhtin has nevertheless heavily influenced media, literary, linguistic and cultural studies in the late twentieth century. Here, I take from his corpus two concepts that are key to

understanding the break between authoritative knowledge and local knowledge. The first is the concept of carnival, which opens up the need and space for play in the lived experience of people. The second is the concept of linguistic heteroglossia.

Bakhtin challenged the notions of literary and social formalism. His failed dissertation, later published under the title *Rabelais and His World* (M. Bakhtin, 1984), proposed that acts of cultural exegesis overturned the authoritarian formalism of the church and state rule. At times, these acts allowed the emperor to be on the same level as the fool and opened a space for criticism and parody. Some modern protest movements reflect this theory of critical space (Bruner, 2005; Kidd, 2004).

Power structures often dictate what is possible to vocalize through approved language and what cannot be open to public discourse. For Bakhtin, the use of satire, carnival, and chaos opened up temporary spaces for the mockery of the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate public discourse. We can use these Bakhtinian concepts to shed light on the role(s) of alternative media. Early broadsheets with political cartoons criticized the monarchy in colonial America (Lordan, 2006). This use of satire, while not condoned, was more acceptable than direct dissenting speech. Carnivals in the renaissance utilized costumes, plays, chants and scatological humor as a means of acting up against oppressive power relations.

Defining media in broad terms that include the corporal (Downing, Ford, Gil, & Stein, 2001), this same mockery of power structures appears in the deployment of puppets, costumes and chants in modern social protest, such as the anti- IMF/World Bank protests in the late 1990s (Bruner, 2005; Carlson, 2008). The protest song, often a mocking example of official positions, can accomplish this same task. An example of this

is the popular anti-Vietnam war song “I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-To-Die Rag” by Country Joe McDonald (1965), which becomes a perennial favorite every time the U. S. makes its case to go to war. Many other tactics that use mockery and carnivalesque techniques have been used in recent protests such as the throwing of stuffed teddy bears at police as a means of reducing the seriousness of the standoff between protesters and authorities (International, 2010). These gestures generate carnivalesque discourse, a discourse that seeks to open spaces for rewriting symbolic codes.

Recently, Shepard (2010) has examined the use of play in queer social protest. Covering queer social protest from the beginning of queer activism to the present, Shepard focuses on the way that *queer play* reconstructs the abnormality of queerness into a form of self-representation that strategically avoids essentialized representations. By creating carnival, queer protesters are better able to bring sexual and gender politics into public spaces in a way that avoids seriousness so that the discourses are more palatable to the public. They also avoid the problem of a single social movement representing all LGBTQ people.

Another important contribution of Bakhtin to alternative media literature is the concept of heteroglossia. Found in his work *Discourse in the Novel* (1982), Bakhtin proposes a variety of languages coexisting beside one another. Language is not a unified whole, but a series of strata or social discourses that coexist:

“The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes "one's own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and

impersonal language . . . but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own . . . Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated -- overpopulated with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process.” (M. M. Bakhtin, 1982, p. 293)

According to Bakhtin, two types of forces coalesce in the creation of linguistic codes (M. M. Bakhtin, 1982). The first type, centripetal forces, seeks to unify linguistic codes into a single entity. Examples of these are centralized media, government education programs, and centralized development schemes. The second type, centrifugal forces, works to split and diversify languages. An example is the novel, where different characters can express divergent versions of the same situation. That is, one reality produces many different versions. Bakhtin usually theorized these forces as the languages of the lower classes or unofficial languages.

Queer people seeking to challenge the structure of symbolic authority generate new linguistic codes to meet their communicative needs. Queer people as a means of self-describing sexual and gender positions that are outside of the normalized sex and gender binaries have created terms like genderfuck, demisexual, tomboy femme, bio-girl, bio-queen, gender outlaw, transandrogyny, and the Lifestyle. Among queer people, there is a queer language constantly invented, changing, and becoming nuanced. Even as a queer scholar, I encounter and learn new terms on a regular basis that further re-present different sexualities and gender identities/performances.

The implications of this conceptualization and the relation of power structures to the control over language extend beyond literary criticism into alternative media theory. When alternative media scholars examine local media through the theoretical lens of heteroglossia, different forms of polyphony become apparent, thus supporting the idea that alternative media can generate social change. Social movements also use satire as a form of language play, and as a means of resistance (Atkinson, 2003a, 2003b; Bruner, 2005). Language play and satire are widely used by queer people and queer political groups. Polyphony, language play and satire allow for more nuanced ways describe the range of human sexualities, moving society beyond oppositional and binary categories. When thinking about issues of power, control, and language, we need to examine the process by which a subject misidentifies the conditions that create his/her oppression. This process prevents social change. Antonio Gramsci was one of the first scholars to theorize how agents could overcome the structural elements that create complicity in systems of oppression.

Antonio Gramsci

Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist, is best known for his contributions of two important concepts that challenge traditional Marxist notions of power domination (Gramsci, 1971). The first is the concept of hegemony, understood as the unseen and unquestioned force that informs people's sense of the ordinary. Hegemony reifies boundaries between what is and what is not normal, generating the belief that social conditions as defined by the status quo are to be expected. In other words, hegemony sanctions an order of things, or a common sense. This normalizing feature of accepted

knowledge is generally unquestioned. Consent to oppressive power relations is not always manifest through direct coercion, but through the acceptance and reproduction of ideologies and languages, which remain hidden and change in relation to shifting power conditions. Queer people exist in a social order that tells them implicitly and *prima facie* that they are abnormal and deviant. The presentation of hetero-sex as normal sex, and two-gender-genitals-assigned-at-birth as normal sex/gender essences structures queer people as outside a normality that appears to be a natural state.

In this system, media create a normalizing function that only legitimizes hetero-sex and binary sex/gender through the display and portrayal of life-ways that mass audiences consume. Audiences often assume that the portrayals on screen, while fictionalized, are representations of an actual, normal, and normalizing world. The elite with access to media production have the power to create symbolic and discursive hegemonies. One of the most central roles played by new social movements is uncovering and challenging the taken-for-granted legitimacy of established social orders. This system of hegemonic media creation supports the hetero-patriarchy through the presentation of normal and abnormal sexualities. In this scenario where only binary understandings of sexuality, gender, and sex are legitimate and normal, gay activists² become complicit within hegemonic discourse; gay notions of femme and butch lesbian couples, for example, or gay marriage, are attempts of gay activists to say ‘we are just like you.’ Meanwhile, queer activists are in a counter-hegemonic and opt for bypassing

² I use the term gay activist here to distinguish their position from that of queer activist. Throughout this text I also use Gay and Lesbian (G/L) activist to distinguish the assimilationist position from the queer position. The G/L community has also adopted the term queer as a stand in for gay and lesbian. However, here it means radical queers. I cover this issue more closely in later chapters on the history of queer activism.

the mainstream media systems of representation, and creating their non-binary notions of human sexualities.

Hegemony is ideologically transmitted through language, arts, media, and news production. The normalizing function of hegemony hides unequal power relations. To maintain hegemony, societies use a series of social intuitions that reproduce these relationships. Education, and the access to the power that comes with it, is a primary hegemonic force. The knowledge of 'how a thing is done' or 'how a thing is made' helps to maintain relationships of inclusion and exclusion that reinscribes hegemony in the social order. These codes of production separate those with the knowledges of production from those who do not have access to such knowledge. Alternative media seeks to overturn this function.

For example, when films are criticized as being 'amateur,' this is a criticism of social production seeking to exclude the non-professional producer from the world of media production. This maintains the hegemony of who can produce films and how to maintain the exclusionary aesthetics of film. This extends to more material/economic elements such as funding and resource allocation. This same criticism can extend to standards for all media production (Murphy, 2003). For Gramsci, the intellectual elites control the site of production and the judgments surrounding those products. Only persons trained in the 'proper way' of doing a process have the social right to engage in that activity. When alternative media are critiqued as having little impact or being amateur media this dialogue is informed by hegemonic structures about what quality communication should be.

Gramsci proposes a second concept that seeks to uncover the power relations of domination and opens opportunities to envision different ways of producing new knowledges. This is the concept of the organic intellectual. Gramsci claims that all people have the capacity to be intellectuals because some part of their lives involves creative or intellectual tasks, such as problem solving. When people's intellectual talents are engaged, knowledge is generated and can have a profound social impact. Traditional intellectuals that have received "technical training" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 9) are unable to move beyond theory to an element of "general practical action." By engaging critically with the social process, intellectuals on all levels will be better engaged with "developments of activity and organization." Gramsci writes, "[t]he mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence ... but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organiser, 'permanent persuader' and not just a simple orator" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 10). Organic intellectuals use their³ privileged position to engage in critical discourse and create social change. Queer activists may not represent all queer people. They are however creating media that seek to educate and overturn the invisibility of the queer actor. They are organic intellectuals who are finding new ways to live in a social order that de-privileges their experience.

Applying Gramsci's notion of the organic intellectual to alternative media opens space for the acceptance of media that break from the dichotomy of professional and amateur (Artz, 2003). Some scholars have sought to celebrate this in their examinations of alternative media and artistic forms (Atkinson, 2003a; Carlson, 2008; Day, 2005). Alternative media studies focus on a wide variety of media formats, styles, and technologies that express the creativity of non-professional media producers (Downing,

³ The plural is used here as a gender-neutral pronoun. This occurs throughout the text.

2010). Queer media have the unique position of challenging media authority and the authoritative regime of sex and gender identities and relations.

The recent developments of numerous information and communication technologies have opened new ways for subaltern groups to enter into public discourse. The invention of the copy machine in 1959 aided social movements that before were unable to print due to the high cost of initial investment. This provided a new form of media reproduction for groups. The Internet and computers have opened up production technologies to organic intellectuals in audio, distribution, print, publishing, and video technologies (Curran, 2003). Because of the era in which they emerged, queer groups have been active online. For indigenous communities, community radio stations can challenge the normative language and hegemony of the power elites. With their own radio technologies, indigenous communities can produce and distribute media content that reflect the aesthetics of their particular cultures, rather than the dominant culture. Social movements use alternative technologies to create alternative media. This process is inherently counter to hegemony. Organic intellectuals form knowledges in and through the processes of media production.

Paulo Freire

In 1968, and in response to the authoritative educational system in which he had participated in Brazil, Paulo Freire produced *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). Freire's work became highly influential in the social sciences, affecting the assumptions surrounding relationships of knowledge. While never touching on the role of media directly, Freire opens spaces for the critical examination of core assumptions in media

production through his analysis of the educational process. We can apply Freire's theories to examine the education of sexual normalcy, which, for queer people, privileges hetero-patriarchy and creates queer invisibility.

An important portion of Freire's work focuses on the relationship between teacher and student. In hegemonic educational settings, the teacher is a figure of authority, while the student is a receptacle for information. From this perspective, education is the process of transmitting information from the teacher to the student. The teacher controls information flow, as he/she makes every decision on what content the student should receive and dictates how new information builds upon the content that the student has already 'banked.'

The sender-receiver model of communication flow reflects this conceptualization. As in education, media producers in the field of communication assume the decision-making processes about what audiences need. The producers conceive the audience as a storage facility, a passive receptor that has to be carefully controlled.

Freire proposes a different type of relationship in the education process. According to Freire, the learner does not come into the educational process as an empty vessel, or as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Locke call it, a *tabula rasa*. The learner, particularly the adult learner, comes to the educational process with their knowledge in the form of their own set of skills, values, and information. This, rather than being a hindrance to education, can be a means for developing a much richer pedagogical process. Queer people come to any situation with their own sets of body knowledges and sexual desires centered around their experiences.

Similarly, the teacher comes to the educational process with her own set of preconceived and often unconscious assumptions about the learning audience. Teachers also come to the classroom, in the case of sexuality, with their own set of body knowledges and sexual desires. Such pre-conceived ideas about who the student is negatively affect the educational process. One of the main consequences, according to Freire, is that, based on the assumption that the student is an 'empty vessel,' educators produce educational material that has nothing to do with the life, values, and knowledge of the learner. This is especially true in the working classes, said Freire, but we can apply this same notion to other marginalized groups such as queer people. In regards to sexuality and gender, the teacher may not be aware of the range of queer experiences that other bodies can have. This may recreate a 'normalcy' if the educator is unaware of the range of body knowledges that are possible and it may isolate students that do not share this normalcy.

Latin American communication scholars (Matta, 1983) have used Freire's pedagogical theories to critique the sender-receiver model of communication. According to these scholars, understanding communication as transmission of information led to notions of audiences as *tabula rasa*. The notion of media producer as know-it-all and media audience as empty vessel is particularly salient in the field of communication for development (Gumucio-Dagron, 2003, N.D.).

Freire believed that reciprocity best serves the student and teacher relationship. In the ideal educational process, learners have the ability to participate in the process of their own education recognizing and building from their previous experiences. Actively involving the learners in a dialogic relationship with the material and the teachers'

willingness to learn and to guide, rather than to transmit, creates situations tailored to the learners' needs. Queer social movements are careful to avoid the teacher as authority role. Queer social movements make a strong effort to maintain a balance between educating public about the limitations of binary sex/gender notions, and at the same time not becoming the know-it-all of queer sexualities. Queer social movements' leaders continually diffuse the tendency to aggrandize their role, avoiding becoming the center or hub of queer legitimate knowledge. The open nature of the queer project requires this openness to create learning opportunities that recognize the intersectional nature of oppressions.

The dialogue between the novice and teacher is effective in removing preconceived notions of what is superior knowledge. This helps to erode power structures and to generate a process that leads to *conscientization*. Freire believes that the process of *conscientização* allows the learner and the teacher to understand power relationships in new and critical ways. Placing the student at the center of the learning process creates a new form of educational and political engagement. Queers create opportunities for *conscientização* by maintaining the multiplicity of the queer experiences in queer social movements and avoiding defining what queer is in rigid terms.

In Freire's concept of mediated information flows the relationship of the sender and receiver is de-centered, and the needs of the audience become the needs of the producer. Rather than the top-down flow of knowledge from an elite, alternative media create information that wants and needs. Deconstructing assumptions transmitted from powerful elites leads to *conscientização* (McLaren & Lankshear, 1994). Queer social

movements are continuously in a process of deconstructing the relationships of normalcy, sex and gender.

Alternative media in the hands of the producer and audience can more directly meet the needs of the community. Queer media can create educational materials for queer people. The dichotomy of the producer and audience as separate entities collapses upon itself. This collapse allows for the examination of problems in the community of production and the development of local solutions. This process has increased with the introduction of new media technologies like the Internet. Social movements that increase direct action create an active community rather than a passive audience. This can lead to a greater level of political engagement between social movements and the local community (Findley, 1994).

Freire's work and subsequent interpretations of his work have had a major impact on alternative media, social movements, and cultural studies. His work helped move development communication away from top-down approaches to more participatory models, such as those found among queer social movements. The rise of new social movements is reflected in the loss of the top-down approaches to problem recognition and problem solving. Cultural studies and education have benefited from the inclusion of core Freirian concepts in discovering the sources of core cultural beliefs (Giroux, 1998). Freire's ideas have become central to these areas to the extent that many times I believe that Freire's work is not acknowledged enough by alternative media studies.

Other Power Relations

These three scholars in no way represent the full extent of theorization on the nature of power and authoritative knowledge. How individuals come to know, what they know, and how social change happens are problems that many other scholars have examined (Adorno, 1983; Arendt, 1958; Bakunin, 1990 (1873); Bernays, 1923; Bourdieu, 1991, 1996; P. Bourdieu, 1977; Debord, 1967/1994; Dewy, 1927; Foucault, 1975, 1983, 1984, 1994; W. A. Gamson, Fireman, & Rytina, 1982; Giddens, 1986, 1998; Horkheimer, 1947; Laclau, 2005; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Marx & Engles, 1998 (1932)).

The question of power and authoritative knowledge has also been one of the many struggles in queer scholarship. Various scholars have struggled with what the queer political project is, thinking of it as an abstraction rather than as the product of queer actors. (Blasius, 2001; Brown, 2007; Eng, Halberstam, & Muonoz, 2005; J. Gamson, 1995; J. Gamson & Moon, 2004; Glick, 2000; Green, 2007; Hoad, 2007; Kirsch, 2000; Martin, 1991; Iain Morland & Willox, 2005; K. Namaste, 1994; Viviane Namaste, 1999; Regales, 2008; A. M. Smith, 1992; Stryker, 2008). In this study, instead of a theoretical vantage point, I intend to start with what queer activists articulate as the queer political project. My trajectory will go from political activism to theory, not from theory to political activism.

The symbolic normativity of hetero-patriarchy requires as a start an analysis of that power structure. Control of representing normalcy and in that process creating abnormality comes from a privileged position. Queer intersectionality can emerge from positions of race, class, gender, choice of sexual partner, sexual desire, sexual practice,

gender performance, religious position, and bodily ability. Queer social movements create media that seek to challenge the authority to represent this normalcy through the creation of heteroglossia, carnival, counter-hegemonic discourses, and self-produced educational material.

Many works, such as Nick Couldry's (2003a) study on media rituals, draw on several different theorists as a means of understanding power relations. Some scholars criticize 'mixing theories' like this. However, it is more useful to think of this use of multiple theories as a bricolage, a form of expression used in queer social movements and examined later. Scholars that use multiple theories of power recognize that in the social sciences there is no objective truth, but many truths that can coexist and reinforce or contradict one another. In later chapters, I will use a similar bricolage of the works of Pierre Bourdieu and public sphere theory to theorize the way that queer social movements confront regimes of truth through the creation of symbolic material. This process creates new codes of meaning that queers use to communicate their unique positionality in a social structure. Next, I will examine important moments in the history of the development of alternative media studies, as alternative sites of meaning-making.

Major Events in the Development of Alternative Media Studies.

This section traces some major events that historically have had a great influence on the development of alternative media and alternative media studies. This section cannot claim to represent all the major points of structural or theoretical change in this field. These moments often depend on the context of the media studied and the locality in which the alternative medium is situated. Studies that focus on a specific medium will

usually focus more on particular events that have created change. Studies that trace a particular locality will also focus on the events that influenced that context. For example, a study of Argentinean micro-radio would need to include the military Junta (1976-1983) as a factor in its history.

To frame contemporary queer media as part of alternative media is important because these media belong to the family of social movement media, although the following historical account does not include any G/L or queer media.

MacBride Report and the NWICO

In the 1970's media dependency theory evolved from Latin American scholars' attempt to understand the means by which imposed U. S. media systems, programs, and theories were producing a US-centered media hegemony that led to dependent cultural formations in Latin American contexts (Katz & Lazarfield, 1955). There is a flow of northern hemisphere media products exported to southern hemisphere clients. This economic imbalance reflected the gutting of local media industries in the global south. Imbalanced economic flows helped to create a situation in which North American ideology became a key component in the ideologies of consumer countries. Works like Dorfman and Mattelart's *How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic* (1975) examine the relationship between ideologies transposed to 'third world' audiences via first world media messages and also, how these media portrayed third world peoples, cultures, and societies. In a dependent economic model, the raw materials of third world countries are then resold to third-world consumers after they pass through first-world hands extracting surplus value. This process becomes naturalized and

normalized within the structures of mediated ideologies. This in turn, replicated a culture in the third-world that blamed the deprivation in those areas on the third-world itself.

In response to this version of third world dependency, third world scholars began to question the taxonomies of third and first-world countries. Rather than conceiving the separation of countries based on economic structure such as rich and poor, the system needed to be reevaluated in terms of a larger structuration. This process created a new taxonomy with countries conceived as centers and peripheries. Centers, primarily located in the global north, such as the United States of America, Western Europe, and the U.S.S.R. represent world economic domination. These countries and superpowers then had peripheries that they sought to control, which are concentrated in the global south.

When applied to information and communication flows, this model reveals greater flows of communication from the center to the periphery. This imbalance that extended to economics, technology, and trade is the core reason that underprivileged countries are unable to gain a foothold in the world economic system. Changes needed to make a new world order include the need for a new economic system as well as a new communication system. Based on critical analyses of the current information order, third world leaders helped articulate the vision for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO).

In 1977 UNESCO created the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems. Chaired by Sean MacBride, the commission was charged with producing recommendations on the restructuring of communication and information flows. The report titled *Many Voices One World* (Problems, 1980) highlighted the need for greater inclusion of local actors in the process of producing media and access to

media production facilities. The U. S. rejected this report claiming that the report hurt freedom of speech.

Many Voices One World, also known as the MacBride Report helped to start programs of international media studies and opened the field to critical inquiry. Before this, the majority of media studies on first and third world (as it was known at the time) media were comparative media studies or area studies, focusing on media as a tool for development.

The MacBride report found that hardware (newspapers, transmitters, technological apparatuses) and software (programs, information, and entertainment) flowed from center to periphery or from the north to the south in much greater quantities than from the south to the north. An example of this is news flow, where third world media bought news about their own countries supplied by press agencies from the first world.

This information, passed through ideological filters, helped to maintain the status quo. The MacBride report concluded that there was a need for south-to-south communication (Problems, 1980). One of the key findings was the need for strengthening national media systems in third-world countries. This finding reflects what scholars have found in applying Marxist political economy to internal analyses of media in capitalist countries (Mosco, 1996). The rise of better national media systems would then in turn allow better south-to-south communication, which would allow different ideologies to displace the imposed ideologies of the global north.

By strengthening their national communication policies, nonaligned third world countries could then better serve their populations. The MacBride report received

derision from the global north. The U. S. pulled out of UNESCO, and the commission found little traction to enact their policy changes. One major finding of the MacBride Report, communication as a fundamental collective and individual right, helped to reshape alternative media studies. Recast as a human right, communication and access to media became a legitimate claim for marginalized communities. From this moment on, communities in third world countries marginalized by the world's economic powers, and ethnic, class, gender, and sexual minorities marginalized by dominant groups within their own national borders, began claiming access to their own media. This marks the historical origin of alternative media and alternative media studies.

With the MacBride Report, minority groups now had an international document that supported their claim to a voice within the public sphere. These changes led many activists and scholars to reexamine the internal information flow within their own public spheres. Further examination of the sources of information, information privilege, and communication created the development of theories seeking to explain the causes of and solution to this problem (Osolnik, 2005).

The 1990's

After the failure of the NWICO to implement its recommendations, studies of alternative media declined. Development of communication studies continued, but focused on a model of paternalism from the developed countries to the underdeveloped. A convergence of events beginning in 1989 and continuing through the end of the 1990s reinvigorated the field of alternative/community/citizens' media and helped to shape the

theoretical discourses that continue today. The events I briefly outline here are key historical points that many alternative media scholars cover in greater depth.

USSR

In 1989, the nature of the bilateral power structure of the world began to change. In August of 1989, Hungary took down the physical barriers between its border and Austria. By November of the same year, the wall that separated East and West Berlin collapsed. The USSR did not intervene, and General Secretary Gorbachev was attempting to reform the stagnant economy. By February 1990, the Communist Party gave up its monopoly on power and held democratic elections. At the end of 1991, after a coup, riots, internal tension and power-broking, the USSR finally dissolved into a number of nation states.

This signaled a major change in the structure of world power. It also opened communication networks previously closed. Scholars such as John Downing (Downing, 1996; Downing, et al., 2001) examine the role that underground communication networks had in the Soviet Bloc countries. The dissolution of the Soviet Union also, for some, signaled the triumph of capitalism and democracy. This began the wholesale adoption of free-market ideologies, founded in the post-World War II Bretton Woods Agreement, that would change world economic policy and pave the way for neoliberalism.

Video Power

Greater access to production and reproduction technologies in the U. S. changed citizens' relation to media. The introduction of audio tape recording as a home medium

opened audio production and reproduction to the masses. Later, the rise of the personal video recorder opened access to film-making starting in the 1970s and exploded throughout the 1980s as the technology became more available (Fang, 1997). By the 1990s, video cameras were a popular technology in the U. S. and other societies in the global north. While political material had been produced with the portable camera, such as in Haskell Wexler's 1969 film *Medium Cool* (1969) about the 1968 Democratic National Convention and the suppression of protesters there, it was not until the early nineties that the power of portable video as a tool for activism began to be examined in media studies.

The Tiananmen Square protests in 1989 further demonstrated the power of video as a rhetorical and symbolic tool (Croteau & Hoynes, 2002). A single protester standing up to a line of tanks that had been sent by the Communist Chinese government to clear protesters became a worldwide symbol of resistance. This standoff became a mass media event that helped to shape the way scholars thought about media and social protest (He, 1996). This moment, while created within corporate media, redefined a relationship of representation between protesters and media. That same year, video footage of the fall of the Berlin wall would also supply a symbolic hallmark that would symbolize the end of the Cold War.

In 1991, a private citizen videotaped Rodney Glen King while he was being beaten by the Los Angeles Police Department. The tape of the incident made international news, and the police were brought to trial. The trial acquitted the police, and riots ensued. The impact of the Rodney King events helped to propel scholarship in race, urban studies, law, and cultural studies. At the same time, the relationship of mass

produced commercial media and personal media became a consideration for media scholars (Fang, 1997). These scholars scrutinized the political impact of citizenry armed with recording devices. The ‘fourth estate’ ignored the incident until the tape of the beating surfaced and transformed the situation. Alternative producers used the Rodney King event to emphasize the failure of ‘the fourth state’ in its responsibility to citizens.

Activist groups that now had access to media production also closely examined the strategic use of personal media equipment (Waltz, 2005). The group Copwatch started in 1990 and encouraged ordinary citizens to videotape police activity on a regular basis (Marshall, 2002). Other activist groups began to incorporate video as a means of capturing injustice, such as environmental devastation or police brutality during protest (Monahan, 2006). Media studies as a field started to examine the convergence of both personal media and large commercial media producers (Witness, 2011). The access to video technology and new media distribution forms helped to shape queer political activism and continues to have a major impact, as I will discuss more in depth in the chapter on queer activism.

Zapatismo

On the day the North American Free Trade Agreement went into effect in 1994, the Lacandon jungle came alive as a revolution started in the Mexican State of Chiapas. The Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, or EZLN, consisting primarily of peasants, moved into the city of San Cristobal de las Casas (Ramírez, 2009). The media strategies and networks of communication that developed between the EZLN and activists around the world helped to publicize the group's struggle for social justice.

Distributed around the world via activist networks, this information revolution contributed to the EZLN short-lived but explosive insurrection, long-term symbolic insurrection, and relatively non-violent nature (Henck, 2002). The communicative connections formed by the EZLN possibly saved them from being destroyed by the Mexican military forces.

The way the EZLN utilized the networks of NGOs, activists, and media was a revolution in its own right. The relatively new Internet allowed for faster communication and direct contact between the EZLN and activists without the intervening factor of corporate media (Notes, 2002). The EZLN, with its charismatic spokesperson Subcomandante Marcos, provided a hub of criticism of the economic policies that world economic organizations such as the WTO (World Trade Organization), the World Bank, and the ITU (International Telecommunications Union) created (Henck, 2002). These organizations caused economic catastrophes in areas of Latin America, which in turn contributed to the rise of networked alliances between social movements and media organizations. The EZLN uprising helped propel alternative media scholarship and its connections to decentralized networks. The EZLN's reliance on the interconnectedness of struggles also helped open alternative media scholarship to the idea of intersubjectivity a concept that is key to queer social movements.

1999 WTO Protest

The World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference was scheduled to occur in 1999 in Seattle Washington. With the conference came a diverse and decentralized group of protesters. These citizens were angry at neoliberal economic policy, mediocre

environmental policy, monetary regulations, and many other issues. More than any other event in the U. S., this protest signaled that the victory of capitalism over communism was a hollow and dangerous shift from a bilateral world to a unilateral one. Citizens were tired of disenfranchisement by policies that sided with corporate interests. Queer citizens that participated were tired of being invisible in a corporate structure and minoritized in a cultural structure.

The wide collective of protesters, including trade unionists, Marxists, environmentalists, anarchists, feminists, queers and many others, formed large and strong anti-free trade coalitions. The mainstream media covered these groups, the protest, and the riots that helped to shut down the meeting (McCormick, 2005; Navarro & Albert, 2008). However, an important contribution to counter-reporting came from the Seattle Independent Media Center (also called Indymedia or IMC) (Kahn & Kellner, 2004). The IMC provided information that opposed corporate media's misrepresentation of protester violence. This event expanded the field of alternative media studies in the U. S. (Goeddertz & Kraidy, 2003). In subsequent years, dozens of studies of the Seattle IMC and other US and international IMCs were published in communication and media journals.

The success of the IMC helped to launch a movement of citizen journalism in the U. S. (Kidd, 2004; Solnit, 2009; Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2002). This created a viable and nationwide linkage of alternative media producers (Beckerman, 2003; Chomsky, 2004). The IMC movement relied on horizontal networks rather than vertical structures. This helped to shift thinking on the way alternative media is organized (Downing, 2003). Independent Media Centers also helped to launch a new wave of social movements in the

U. S. that combined media production with the causes they supported or opposed (Owens & Palmer, 2003; Tracy, 2002).

Review of Theorists

In this section, I examine a few major theorists who have helped to shape the discourse about radical/alternative/citizens' media. For a more complete list of materials on this subject, I direct the reader to the *Alternative Media Global Project*, a wiki-based bibliography and analysis portal of community/alternative/social communication research, history, activists and organizations (<http://amgp.skamp.eu.org/>). For an excellent and complete analysis of major theorists, I would direct the reader to the work *Making Our Media: Global Initiatives Toward a Democratic Public Sphere Vol. One* (Rodriguez, Kidd, & Stein, 2009).

Herman and Chomsky

Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky's book *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (1988) placed alternative media on the radar of mass media scholarship in the U. S.. Their model views mainstream corporate media in the U. S. as an extension of the capitalist economic system. It proposes that the media reflect this system in their constructs and in the material they reproduce. This reproduction of ideology creates a bias that limits the number of alternatives available for audiences to develop opinions. Herman and Chomsky's model is often *the* model of criticism applied to media systems, because it privileges news production and provides a means of analyzing media content that is concrete (Whitney, Sumpter, & McQuail,

2004). For sexual minorities this model would propose greater representation of their 'problems' in the news media system. This would then lead to greater awareness that would generate social change. However, this model bypasses the agency of queer people themselves, as the action of representing queer subjects is left in its entirety to the mass media.

For Herman and Chomsky, the media system negatively impacts the democratic process. By presenting information in terms that benefits the larger capitalist structure, the media disrupts 'the systematic rational formation' or democratic decision-making process. Their analysis, which primarily focuses on news production, seeks to document the means by which the media control and are controlled by ownership with an economic interest in the reproduction of systemic ideologies. Herman and Chomsky create taxonomies of the major areas of ideological reproduction.

These areas, called news filters, include an analysis of media ownership, thus bringing into question the assumption that media are independent, which provides the basis for the theory of the fourth estate. Media ownership is central to their taxonomy, as are maps of company ownership updated as their holdings have become more concentrated since the first publishing. Each new edition of their text is updated to reflect how levels of media concentration worsen with each passing year. Next, they criticize the means of funding the press and how advertising influences news production. This function is important as advertisers have an interest in favorable press, and the presses have an interest in maintaining advertisers. This system limits the scope of areas for investigating and reporting.

The third filter they identify is sourcing. As news media rely on budgeting to increase profits, the number of sources used is based on economic decisions rather than on information decisions. This leads to a system of information-gathering that is easily controlled by those with power to generate news sources that are, in reality, a function of public relations. The fourth area of control is flack, which is the means by which advertisers condition the news media through loss of revenue, or potential criticisms that could lead to a loss in revenue. Finally, media have a persistent bias in favor of a nationalist privileging. Originally, Herman and Chomsky explained this as anticommunism. Herman and Chomsky's work was revised after the fall of the Soviet Bloc; in revised versions of the model, they explained this bias as anti-terrorism, and then anti-ideologies. The new element on anti-ideologies theorizes the systematic distortion of any ideologies that may be harmful to the owners of media.

Herman and Chomsky propose an alternative to this media system in the form of an independent press. For Herman and Chomsky an independent press would strengthen the democratic process by not making the press complicit with the reproduction of the capitalist class. An independent press would then necessary to maintain the theory of the fourth estate. To Herman and Chomsky, any press not owned by the capitalist class is alternate to it. This would include queer presses and the media created by capital intensive and homonormative gay rights movements.

One important area ignored in Herman and Chomsky's work is other cultural or media products that are not news production. By placing emphasis on the use and development of the independent press, their model privileges news. This implicitly privileges a western model of democracy. By doing this, Herman and Chomsky

reproduce the history of public sphere theory and the Enlightenment-based philosophy underpinning it. According to this model the greater the number of actors working in the public sphere the greater the discourse. Thus, arguments that are more rational will rise within this space to better guide society's actions. This model fails to address the way that systems ignore non-rationalist discourses and minorities that may want to break away from Western notions of normativity.

The Herman and Chomsky model has two major problems. First, it presupposes that the best way for groups to participate in the democratic process is inclusion in the mainstream public sphere. In fact, according to Herman and Chomsky, political agency requires participation in mainstream public conversations. This model is problematic because it leaves off groups that wish to remain insular. For example, an ethnic minority may wish to produce media for internal consumption only. Queer people may not want to out themselves in the public sphere. While Herman and Chomsky are not strictly against this, as their model supports the creation of insular media, they emphasize that minority groups need to produce media that is available for larger audiences. Queer people may not wish to engage with their oppressors or out themselves.

The second and greater problem is the way the model privileges news production. As stated above, the solution proposed by this model to overcome ideological reproduction and the limiting of alternatives is the development of the independent press. This is in opposition to the current ownership paradigm. However, by privileging independent news, Herman and Chomsky ignore other forms of cultural production. What they consider resistance is limited in this model.

By doing so, as alternative media scholars, Herman and Chomsky limit their work to the study of news production. This is useful in the study of western democracy. The history of democracy is linked to the history of the public dissemination. The break from monarchical systems can be traced through the development of the printing press, to the printing of broadsheets, to the yellow press, and beyond. This has led to conditions that privilege the study of the news as a primary form of symbolic and social capital. The analysis then ties cultural production to ownership of the means of production. This ignores other means of resistance that other studies in alternative media have included. For example, production of queer art as a way of opposing symbolic power codes. Because Herman and Chomsky argue that the majority of art production in its current form happens within the boundaries corporate media, they neglect alternative art as an effective means for political resistance. Bourdieu does a much better job at explaining the flow of different capitals within this system. For this reason, I later expand on and privilege Bourdieu's theory as a tool for analysis of queer modes of resistance.

In historical analysis of alternative media, Herman and Chomsky ignore seemingly important areas; that is the case for example of ethnic or indigenous media, which do not share a western democratic orientation and utilize different media forms. The Sioux ghost dance, for example, is a form of resistance internal to that group. That resistance, by not being a form of press, lacks privilege in the political economy model of Herman and Chomsky. The political economy model also fails to privilege modern forms of resistance. Graffiti may provide a form of cultural resistance to some groups. Graffiti, however, is not an independent press thus is neglected in the model. Graffiti is

public. However, it doesn't count as public discourse as theorized by Herman and Chomsky.

The Herman and Chomsky model is useful in particular contexts. However, it will take other scholars to generate models that include more diverse means of resistance. These scholars draw on both historical and contemporary examples that include both theories of the press and other types of media. They also expand on the notion of resistance as a function internal to a group and within a larger social context. Their models better address the symbolic and communicative needs of queer people. Below I provide examples of these models from John Downing, Clemencia Rodriguez, Ellie Rennie, Chris Atton and others.

John Downing

John Downing contributed to the expansion of alternative media studies with the publication of his seminal work *Radical Media* (2001) originally published in 1984. His work written during the Cold War was a direct challenge to the field of media studies, which excluded radical media from the scope of its research. While many scholars had written about the effects of media hegemony, few had included counter-hegemonic media as an area of study. Downing was also central to legitimizing radical social movements as a site of study. *Radical Media* included social movements previously ignored by scholars such as anarchists and women's movements. Downing's legacy greatly influenced my ability to focus my theorizing on queer social movements and their media.

Downing attempted to address the question of how powerful forces shaped global policy-making in media. Written in the time of the Cold War, *Radical Media* was

concerned with the bipolar political powers of the U. S. and the Soviet Union. These forces had helped to carve the world into two media camps. The discourse around the NWICO reflected this same concern and had a major influence on his writing. Downing also expands media in a radical way to include new types of communication methods like graffiti, dance, and song, going beyond traditional electronic media such as radio and television.

In a 2001-revision, Downing shifted his focus from the U.S./ Soviet binary to the new economic order that free-trade policies were producing. In addition, unlike scholars such as Bagdikian (1983) and Herman and Chomsky (1988), Downing was concerned with actual praxis of media production rather than simply calling for counter-hegemonic media.

Furthermore, Downing recognizes that the site of study of alternative media should exist on multiple levels such as the local and national. While the MacBride report focuses only on international flows and the work of Herman and Chomsky focus exclusively on national media, Downing recognizes that media oppression and resistance to that oppression exist on multiple levels. For example Downing recognized that in the global south hegemony does not necessarily come from the global north, but can be internal to the nation state. Or, a community in the global north can also experience oppression coming from forces internal to the nation state or from international sites of corporate, and political power. This is an important theoretical turn that later allows us to focus on queer social movements located in smaller communities. Queer people tend to experience oppressions in a local community; social sanctions applied to them become inherently linked to the desires and use of their bodies.

Downing's theoretical turn allows him to include counter-hegemonic media that confronted inequality in a number of different ways. Downing developed the term *radical media* as a means of grouping a number of divergent media sources into a single category of study. This category, however, as he readily admits, is not always cohesive. Radical media include media that share common characteristics but have diverse goals. This move generated a key shift in alternative media studies. Namely, the question of what defines alternative media becomes a concern in the literature.

Radical media includes any media that seek to counter the prevailing "hegemonic policies, priorities, and perspectives" (Downing, et al., 2001, p. v). This includes media that confront patriarchy, racism, oppressive religious dogma, fascism, or other forms of oppression. Reconfiguring the category of radical media moved the definitional boundaries beyond the anti-corporatism of earlier scholars. It also opened the field to the study of a larger variety of citizen-based projects. Queer radical media fits this category because the intersectionality of oppression often emanates from multiple locations.

However, some readers criticized Downing for making the definition of alternative media too broad. Others criticized him for the inclusion of binaries that establish radical media as a 'media-against' rather than a 'media-for'. These critiques apply more to the original 1984 edition, as Downing addresses them in the revised 2001 edition. Discarding the term alternative media as too broad, Downing retains the term radical media as a means of separating what he described as small media. Radical media are contextual to the goals of the media producers and strategies used in organizing media production. He recognizes this definition is problematic, but seeks to outline ten major identifiers for determining radical media.

First, Downing differentiates radical media from alternative media. Second, he problematizes what radical means. Radical can be a positive or negative construction. Racist media can appear to be alternative; however, it is not radical. Downing refines this position to exclude any media that, if the producers' political program were to succeed, would limit the freedoms of other actors.

The model used in organizing media is an important component to his categorization. Downing identifies two organizing models: the Leninist model and the anarchist-feminist model. He privileges the anarchist-feminist model as being a non-hierarchical structure that seeks organizational methods of media creation to reflect the leveling component of the radical media products. We can apply this standard to help separate radical and alternative media. For instance, minority ethnic media can be radical. However, if ethnic media seek to replace a current ethnic power with another, it can hardly be called radical. If, however, ethnic minority media seek to promote multicultural democracies and social justice, then it could qualify as radical media. Most often queer media organizes as a collective process fitting into this anarchy-feminist model.

The fourth area of identification for radical media is that the depth of radicalism is relative to a variety of circumstances. What is radical in Iran may not be radical in the Western, industrialized world. Radicalism can, and often does, symbolically reinscribe oppression. Content that is radical for a group such as PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) may not be radical for a group such as the ALF (Animal Liberation Front). Queer political movements seem radical when compared to the media of the Gay and Lesbian rights movement.

Radical media are often the targets of oppression from structures of authority. This fifth demarcation of radical media is more apparent in oppressive states rather than in proclaimed democracies. However, as later scholars have shown, media is not always directly suppressed (Boykoff, 2007). The methods used to suppress radical media in democracies may be more insidious because they are less direct and harder to identify. The introduction of new media technologies has done a lot to alleviate this problem. Although, this has opened up new problems with electronic tracking and surveillance.

The sixth demarcation for radical media is their diversity of formats. Downing explores a variety of media in his case studies. Later scholars include a greater variety of media forms that will expand the specific media used as radical media (Atton, 2002a, 2002b). In *Radical Media*, Downing still focuses on print, tapes, television, and radio. He fails to expand the variety of media forms in detail while still touching on some specific types of media, such as performativity. These later components become important to queer counterpublics as they attempt to move into the public sphere.

The seventh demarcation of radical media is the fact that they violate rules that the power structure imposes. Radical media enters into dialogue with power structures that question the normative rules of discourse. The development of counter-hegemonic messages, the core of radical media, seeks to challenge the homeostasis that is the means of social control. Radical media producers create counter-hegemonic discourses through human imagination combined with context. Queer political movements are in dialogue with the normative rules of discourse but the non-normative nature of their desires and bodies bring their being in direct conflict with power structures. The queer political

project of deconstructing normativity further counters and complicates the need for the creation of new symbolic codes.

The eighth mark of radical media is its scale. Generally, for Downing, the oppositional nature of radical media means they do not have access to resources. This deprivation can lead to creativity in form and content. It can lead to long-lived media programs staffed by dedicated workers or to projects that appear and disappear in short periods. Further expanding the literature is the inclusion of short-lived media that help to support the idea that radical media is valuable regardless of the time they exist (Couldry, 2003a, 2003b). Previous alternative media scholarship dismissed radical media as unsuccessful because it was short lived. This process made the efforts of homosexuals during the liberation phases of the movement invisible to media scholars. Queer media projects and processes are often similarly short-lived and localized.

Downing finds that radical media have two major purposes. The first is to confront power from below. Those with less power confront those in power and their attuned behavior. This is a vertical confrontation. However, simultaneously Downing also finds that radical media seek to generate horizontal solidarities. Radical media seek to support one another in order to prevent suppression, build support, and expand their cause. In short, they wish to open more space for similar groups. Downing includes the role of social movements in the creation and dissemination of radical media. Queer media perform both these functions. When a queer group creates programs to critique corporatized gay culture in pride parades, they are confronting a vertical structure. When a queer group creates meeting spaces for queer people to create solidarities between sexual and gender performances and identities they are creating horizontal solidarities.

Finally, Downing includes the internal organization of the media as an important component to demarcating radicalism. While problematizing concepts such as democracy, Downing reemploys them as a means of examining the relations between the goals of radical media and the means of creating them. For Downing, the means and ends are inseparable in the examination of what constitutes radicalism.

While Downing identifies and opens spaces for the inclusion of radical media as a site of study, his work reflects an older dialogue with media studies. His more recent work engages with globalization and cultural discourses more closely (Downing, 2003). This is not surprising considering the climate in which he was writing. However, later scholars seek to both refine his categories into further subcategories and expand his categories through greater inclusion. Downing's work helped to open alternative/radical/citizens' media as sites of study and directly influenced the potential of alternative media studies to theorize queer desires.

Clemencia Rodriguez

Creating the term "citizens' media," Clemencia Rodriguez's (2001) work moves the site of alternative media distribution further away from the mass model to the individual. Rather than focus, as many previous media scholars had, on the need for productions that are re-broadcasted or distributed to a mass, Rodriguez work calls for the need of citizen-to-citizen production and distribution networks. By allowing media consumers to become media producers, producers challenge codes of symbolic power.

This act of challenging symbolic codes allows the individual to actively engage their own self-identity. Identity emerges from symbolic material given to subjects

controlled by powerful communication elites (Rodriguez, 2002). Drawing on the work of Chantal Mouffe (Mouffe, 1992a, 1992b), Rodriguez suggests that citizenship and political engagement are acts of identity, created by the actor rather than given to the individual by the state. The citizen challenges identity and the structural codes that constitute it through the act of media production. When participating in media production groups and individuals working together have the opportunity to collectively examine and redefine their relationships and identities. Queer people creating media are in a process of recreating a given identity and reinventing their identity as they enter into counterpublic discourses.

Ellie Rennie

Rather than follow the trend of limiting the definition of alternative media, the work of Rennie (2006) seeks to expand this concept. Recognizing the problem of naming as a form of limitation, Rennie adopts the term “community media” to represent all media that are not market driven. Citizens control and produce media in a specific geographic location, and these media respond to and reflect the communicative needs of the community. They respond to and are a reflection of their communicative needs. Queer people create media to meet the specific needs of queers in that geographic area.

For Rennie, the geographic location can be a small community or an entire nation. However, the defining characteristic is that it is citizen-driven. Rennie recognizes that production and distribution channels have changed during the decade that preceded her writing. Because of this, community media are expanding dramatically and evolving in their scope and processes.

Rennie ties this trend to the work of Clemencia Rodriguez (2001), who theorizes how the ability to represent the self in the media opens opportunities for political agency to its creators. Creating media is a form of self-actualizing, the often nescient power that individuals have. Using Giddens (1986) as a means of understanding democracy as a process rather than a product, Rennie views the conditions of current community media as being a representation of a political awakening among citizens. Since the HIV/AIDS crisis of the late 1980's, queer citizens have been in the early processes of creating media to fit their specific needs, for self representation, and to access new opportunities for political agency.

Chris Atton

Chris Atton expanded the study of alternative media through his book *Alternative Media* (2002a). His volume incorporated a broader range of media sources into the scope of study. By incorporating smaller, shorter-lived, and more diverse media types, such as zines, Atton expanded the scope of alternative media studies beyond the traditional electronic media types and major party papers. He incorporated media types previously disregarded as a site of study. Other scholars have since expanded the study of zines as an area of legitimate cultural study (Duncomde, 2008). This move in part influenced this study by opening websites created by queer groups justifiable as a site for study.

Because the focus of alternative media and media studies in general had been on stability and longevity, scholars have often dismissed short-lived initiatives in alternative media as unimportant. Atton, drawing from new social movement theory, argues that alternative media are valuable and important because they serve both an informative

public purpose, at the same time that they allow marginalized groups to strengthen their identity in the public sphere. Atton argues that even small scale and short-lived alternative media have the ability to help change the public discourse through the dissemination of ideas and the de-marginalization of identities. This process of media production helps to form publics by linking micro-political groups that do not have a centralized organizational structure (Atton, 2002a, 2003). Ultimately, these groups will form counterpublics.

These early and diverse means of making alternative media can then in turn help to unite small political groups and individuals in the early days of a social movement. This has the possibility of growing into a larger movement, though this is not always the case. Because of their perceived lack of potential, small-scale media were previously overlooked but hold the possibility to generate larger social movements that could then appropriate or gain access to more traditional means of electronic media. In the gay rights movement this process is apparent as I will elaborate in a later chapter outlining the history of gay social movements.

Atton also argues that small forms of alternative media have a unique role in the discourse surrounding social issues. A social issue, such as the environmental movement, generally has multiple levels of contestation. Major groups may dominate the discourse, such as Greenpeace, with their own newsletters and communication channels. These groups have a high level of resources and aesthetic achievement.

However, within the entire movement, there will be other dissenting groups. These are generally smaller and maintain internal forms of communication. For example, the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), also an environmental group, is more radical than

Greenpeace. Their media production is 'less professional' than the dominant groups. The major groups may shape discourse through the deployment of their access to capital. However, the ELF can counter through production of new counter-discourses, which open the environmental movements' internal discourses to the influence of smaller groups. Another example is in the G/L movement where the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) dominates the discourse and comes to speak with authority on the needs of gay peoples. Queer political groups counter this communication literally by reconfiguring the HRC's media products and by creating radical counterdiscourses.

These smaller media open up the field of production to a larger group of potential media producers. The use of new technologies, such as the copier, allowed small groups and individuals to produce and distribute information in ways that were beyond the control of larger movement organizations. This shifted production from a vertical structure to a horizontal one where anyone can produce media. This opened the potential for change to a more diverse array of participants, individuals and radical opinions that are empowered in their ability to communicate their positions. These processes affect the nature of discourses within the social movement and the individual involved in production. Shared within a movement and with the potential audience is the lived experience of the producers. The queer lived experience becomes central to the creation of symbolic material in queer media production.

Media Types

What constitutes media has been an important point of departure in the alternative media literature. The discussion about what constitutes media has roots in the debate over

the control and direction of culture. The control of what is considered symbolic capital, a battle over representational power, has typically excluded *low culture* and self-produced media products as being less valuable than professionally-produced products. This debate reinforces the reliance on aesthetics that developed in a relationship to centers of power. Communication studies interact with these discourses. Alternative media studies first focused on the mass media types from publishing to tapes to radio and television (Ang, 1996). However, the door has opened to include fashion, graffiti and street art, performance, blogs, and homemade video as alternative media. New communication technologies expand this even further as the means of production and distribution increase. This new openness allows alternative media studies to include more groups such as queer people that produce very small media for internal consumption. Does alternative media consist of any communicative activity that expresses individual identity in the social space? What is alternative now? In resource-poor areas or areas under strict censorship, this is easy to identify. In resource-rich areas, this becomes harder to identify. Under Downing's (2001) definition media is not radical unless it includes intentionality for social change. However, intentionality is difficult to determine. Ten years ago, the worldwide distribution networks were not open to every video even if the production equipment was available. New distribution platforms like blogs, twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, and You Tube have changed the relation of citizens to media production and distribution. If self-produced content is altering the ability of an individual to express her identity, is it then radical? The 'real' power of alternative media rests in its ability to give representation to individuals and to meet their creative needs. Queer social movements and queer individuals are now using these new communication

technologies to create an unprecedented amount of material allowing them to form counterpublics.

Guide to Alternative Media

The French publication *Becoming The Alternative Media* (Devenons des médi@s alternatifs! Guide des médias alternatifs et des sources d'informations différentes) (2006) lists characteristics of alternative media that help to separate them from what could be considered micro media. This typology extends and clarifies Downing's (2001) attempt to problematize the relationships between small media and radical media. The French publication has had a profound effect on alternative media in Europe and has been a critical tool for helping establish alternative media collectives by providing guidelines for action including collectives that focus on queer people.

Becoming The Alternative Media lists thirteen keys to alternative media groups. These include the publication of clear actions, critical discourse on social structures, and democratic or non-hierarchical organizing structures. The guide further criticizes the ways that alternative media are funded, insisting that alternative media must be as independent as possible from any major sponsorship. This independence from sponsorship is important to queer groups because of the unique reactions that social structures have to sexual nonconformity. The use of copyright is also discouraged, and the free flow of information, as well as the flexibility and use of that information by other groups, is encouraged. Alternative media combines this with a call for a diversity of information sources that help to balance the information presented. This guide addresses the need for intersectionality.

The guide calls for as wide an audience as possible for alternative media and a reciprocal relationship between producers and audiences. This is problematic because it once again reinforces that the process of creating alternative media is for an audience rather than for the effect it has on producers. Further, production calls for the recognition of issues that relate to gender inequality, a problem found often in social movements.

This guide to producing alternative media is one of many that have been written (Biel, 2008; Censored, 2008; Harding, Avni, Caldwell, & Gregory, 2007; Spencer, 2009; Wrekk, 2009) to assist alternative media producers. What makes the French guide unique is that it provides an analysis of internal production and the political consequences of decisions made internal to the group, rather than focusing solely on the production of the media product. However, in the last decade, there has been an explosion of information published in print and on the Internet that guides citizens in the production methods and ideology of alternative media. This explosion coincides with the rise of queer activism in the early nineties.

Disconnect Between Media Theory and Practice

While there has been an explosion of alternative media theory in the academy and a growth of alternative media production, several disjunctures need to be examined, the first occurring in the field of media studies. A continual stream of scholarship critiques the current media system either on the national level or at the global level and criticizes the failure of media systems to serve democratic communication flows (Clair & Cockburn, 2007; McChesney, 1999; Tomorrow, McChesney, & Nichols, 2008; Vitali, Jacquemet, & Berardi, 2009). Setting aside the problematic assumptions of promoting

democracy as a superior and universal type of governance, this scholarship simply extends the criticisms proposed by Herman and Chomsky (1988). It fails to consider minoritized groups like queers and the special needs that their populations have.

Published studies of alternative media provide history, interviews and categorizations of alternative media (Angel, 2008; Awehali, 2007; Hackett & Zhao, 2005; Hilliard, 2009; Janowski, Prehn, & Stappers, 1992; P. Richardson, 2009). Many of these do little to expand issues of how to theorize the role of alternative media. While these works have an important role to play in the documentation of alternative media, which is a worthwhile goal in itself, it is harder to find original ideas on alternative media and social impact. Further, the complex balance of scholarship and activism complicates the relationship of alternative media producers and scholarship. Even though alternative media scholarship has done a lot to address intersectionality, it has not done a good job of addressing sexual and gender minorities.

Another question that arises is the impact of theoretical scholarship on society (Jankowski, 2002). Is alternative media scholarship expanding the ability of alternative media to grow and become effective? Is alternative media scholarship having an impact on policy-making and the acceptance of multiple voices in the mediascape? With the rise of new communication technologies, which for many (though not all) bring about new production and distribution channels, how can scholarship on alternative media move beyond calls for greater diversity of voices in media and start to critically engage in theorizing its effects? Finally, alternative media scholars need to engage the growing discourse in media studies (Fuchs, 2008; Poster, 1997; Putnam, 2000) that has begun to view this diversity of voices as having a negative impact on social structures by creating

disintegration in society. For oppressed gender and sexual minorities the model of radical media that matches their media needs best is the model of ethnic and indigenous media.

Ethnic and Indigenous media

Ethnic and indigenous media occupy another portion of the field of alternative /radical /citizens' media. As a field of study ethnic and indigenous media have their own particularities because they play a role in process of nation building and national identity. Indigenous cultures and ethnic minorities are pushed to the margins in an effort to create a concept of western national unity. In developed countries, a similar process applies to sexual minorities.

Scholars have taken the works of Habermas (1999) and his notion of the public sphere as a means of understanding the internal communicative networks of a given locality. I examine the public sphere in detail later, but for now it is important to have a general idea. Habermas focused on the creation of the bourgeois public sphere, which excluded minority groups such as females, the subaltern, queers and ethnic minorities. This lack of voice in the discourse surrounding national politics and culture effectively erased the existence of those excluded (Jelin, 1994). Subaltern people create counterpublics to resist the hegemony of the dominant culture. These counterpublics provide alternative spaces for discourse (Fraser, 1992).

Salazar (2009) uses this conceptual tool in his analysis of the Mapuche in Chile. He argues that Mapuche media create communicative space for the recognition and rebuilding of cultural identities. This process helps to build a notion of ethnic citizenship

through the collective manufacture and consumption of the media product. Drawing on the concepts linking media and citizenship found in the works of Clemencia Rodriguez (2001), Salazar expands the notion of carving out indigenous space within larger nation states linking culture and communication.

Creating this indigenous space strengthens notions of community, citizenship and nationhood in the larger collectives. Indigenous communication often does not call for separation, but rather for linkages with others' struggles and recognition of rights (Morris & Meadows, 2003). Zapatismo has been a major proponent of this. Their revolution did not call for Mayan dominance, but for recognition and human rights. Through their calls for unity and empathy in the struggles of all the oppressed and through connections between groups rather than a unifying revolution, the EZLN tapped into the networking shift that has occurred in new social movements. Some queer media also mirrors this process. Queer media relies on recognizing the intersectionality of oppressions and building connections with other oppressed groups.

This process is unique in indigenous and ethnic media for two key reasons. First, the media products often contain symbolic material that is radically different from the hegemonic media content. Colonial powers or national majorities often suppress indigenous languages. Ruling elites have suppressed language such as Mapudungan, Welsh, Catalan, Hawaiian, Hmong, Scottish, Croatian and many others (Ervin-Tripp, 1973). The loss of language often accompanies the loss of cultural identity and thus makes dominance easier for the ruling ethnicity. While queer people do not have their own ethnic language, the colonization of the language of gender and sexuality has had a radical impact on their ability to self-express. I will argue in later sections that queer

media is creating its own set of symbolic codes. I also believe that queer people are building a new language that attempts to move out of gender and sexual binaries.

Second, the symbolic content of the media is often radically different from culture to culture. Eurocentric aesthetics and the power they embody are dominant in mainstream media. This process creates a *way of seeing* embedded in colonization. Indigenous groups may have different ways of seeing and expressing (Ginsburg, 2003). Opening space for creating indigenous aesthetics leads to different ways of telling stories, using technology, and creating ways of viewing the world. This process creates new spaces for citizenship and community (Ginsburg, 1991, 1993; Santo, 2004).

As Michael Leigh (1988) states about Aboriginal film in Australia, “Aboriginal communities are ensuring the continuity of their languages and cultures and representation of their views, by making their own films and videos, they speak for themselves, no longer aliens in an industry which for a century has used them for its own ends” (Leigh, 1988p. 88). In his example the aboriginal community is creating space for communication that meets their own linguistic and aesthetic purposes, rather than having their stories re-presented through the views of outsiders.

Sexual minorities have a similar problem. Queer people have distinct aesthetics, language and symbols. By creating media, queer people create communicative spaces to explore their own representations. They too can speak and explore through creation. The alienation felt through being marked as queer becomes a form of self-exploration.

Conclusion

The field of alternative media is broad but under-theorized. The introduction of new technologies will continue to expand the field's boundaries. As new media technologies and new information sources fragment the traditions of media studies, its focus on the producer/audience relationship will become more important. As neoliberal economic policies fail in the wake of a world economic downturn, alternative media scholars' critical examination of power structures will make alternative media scholarship a valuable resource. As new communication technologies create and are created by networks of activists and engaged citizens, the field's focus on networks will help position it to be prepared to theorize networks in the next wave of social struggles. Part of this struggle will be queer attempts to create counterpublics that can represent sexual and gender performances.

In its theoretical foundations, the field of alternative media articulates many of the most important sociological questions today such as how representation shapes identity. However, it largely fails to address sexual identities. There is little agreement in the literature about the nature the reproduction of the structures of oppression. Most alternative /radical/citizens' media scholars do agree that the structure of internal organizing of the medium needs to be horizontal rather than vertical.

Alternative media studies are poised to be the next major arena of research in media and society because it incorporates analyses of power. This analysis will only be useful if it takes into account the nature of the political goals and epistemological foundations of the groups it studies. This requires an understanding of the nature of social

movements as social processes that involve elements of power, representation, and social change. The next section will address this issue.

PART III

COMMUNICATION, SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND RADICAL MEDIA

In this chapter I outline the history of theories and strategies of communication for development and social change and how they relate to social movements. I theorize how these two bodies of literature can be combined and expanded. The first section will examine traditional theories and methods used in communication for development. Major perspectives will be described and opened up for critique. Providing an examination of new social movement theory, the second section will examine new social movements as a broad area of study. Starting with some major theorists, I consider the recommendations and problems arising from their theoretical perspectives. This section will then briefly examine the North American social movement literature. Finally, the theory proposed by Pierre Bourdieu will be employed in an attempt to reconcile the variety of perspectives.

Communication for Social Change/Development

Communication for social change or development is a broad area that draws from theories in communication, psychology, sociology and marketing. Starting in the post-World War II era, communication came to be viewed as the center of effective problem-solving in underdeveloped countries. The approach of communication for development holds that underdeveloped countries could be developed if their cultures could be ‘updated’ with modern ideas and technologies that are passed along from the nations that have the technological expertise. This western-centered development program viewed underdevelopment as a lack of information resources. Development programs seek to increase individual access to western centered ideas and information, in the hope that third world communities will change their culture and modernize. Later theories or strategies for development communication challenge this idea and moved communication from the sender-receiver model to that of dialogic communication and grass-roots participation. The following section will examine the major corpus of these theories.

Communication for Development

According to the communication for development model, poverty was blamed on lack of information. Based on the sender–receiver model of communication, communication for development states that the site of poverty is located in the habits of the poor. Changing these habits would then create social change and alleviate poverty (Schramm, 1964). If a particular development goal was designed by development experts, say to have children immunized, then the solution was thought to be to bombard

third world audiences with messages originating from first world authorities. Within this model, traditional cultures and ‘folkways’ were perceived as both backward and harmful to progress (Lerner, 1958).

Development and the Diffusion of Innovations

Everett Rogers (1962) further intensified the condescending attitude of the communication for development model. He believes that social change occurs through the diffusion of media and information technology. This model theorizes social problems as a lack of information and technology on the part of the disadvantaged. Social problems can be ‘overcome’ by the use of communication networks that diffuse innovations, both ideas and products, which will alleviate poverty through technocratic expertise. Rogers’ main contribution to previous models is the incorporation of mass media as a means of diffusion along with interpersonal networks. He theorized that humans use multiple media sources, and even with a strong effects model, any information that requested a change in culture may need to be supported by interpersonal communication. Media did not follow the direct effects model of communication, but rather went through a process of two-step flow (Katz & Lazarfield, 1955). Individuals, when exposed to a media message, would talk about this message with their peers, and then formulate an opinion on whether the desired change proposed by the media should be adopted. Interpersonal networks became crucial in decision-making.

The Diffusion of Innovations model became the dominant paradigm in development communication. It combined the use of mass media and the need to interpersonally convince opinion leaders of the need for social and cultural change. This

model, with its top-down flow, is attractive to governments and development agencies. It has easily-quantifiable assessment measures, and allows development agencies to maintain a sense of control.

The diffusion model often leads, as Gumucio Dagron (N.D.) states, to systems of communication that do not necessarily improve the lives of the audience it targets. Often, so-called development initiatives are used as means of opening up new markets, and their history is one of failed projects:

“Over fifty years of failed attempts to promote development in Third World countries, particularly Africa and Latin America, have demonstrated that the paradigms of development could not be dictated by the North, and that the development agendas of bilateral and multilateral organizations had not taken into consideration social, political and cultural factors that determine social change and development” (Gumucio-Dagron, 2003).

By focusing on a matrix of problem-solution, the diffusion model fails to interrogate the structural inequalities that surround third world communities and objectify the audience rather than generating agency among poor communities.

Social Marketing/Campaigning

Social marketing is a further refinement of the diffusion model. Today, it is the dominant model among all the different top-down communication for social change approaches. Social marketing targets specific audiences with messages designed following advertising and public relations strategies, and relies on an understanding of communication as persuasion. The audience is still objectified, and marketing research

techniques are applied in an effort to find the best means of persuading a receiver and generating the greatest effects (Pratkanis & Aronson, 2001). This is a small divergence from the mass-diffusion of the previous models. The goal shifts slightly from changing cultural beliefs to changing the behavior of the individual targeted. While a product (the desired behavioral change) in this model is manipulated to better fit the needs of local communities, it still treats the receivers of the communication as passive receivers (Pratkanis & Aronson, 2001).

Health Campaigns

While not a specific model of communication for development, health campaigns are a dominant method in use today. Eclipsing the earlier focus on pro-social cultural change, agriculture and infrastructure, health campaigns tend to focus on behavioral change for specific habits surrounding health practices. Examples of this include immunizations, condom use, HIV/AIDS prevention, and water treatment. Health campaigns tend to center problems on the individual choices made by actors, rather than on structural inequalities such as access to education, infrastructure, health clinics and other important elements of social justice. By centering the health problem on the individual (a strategy imported from the developed nations' internal health campaigns), the site of the social problem becomes the individual actors and their behavioral choices. Later in the sociological theories on social movements section, I reflect of this focus on *methodological individualism* and their deployment of economic capital in generating campaigns for social change. These types of campaigns were and continue to be used to target communities like the gay and lesbian community around HIV/AIDS issues.

Entertainment/Education/Edutainment

Another form of social marketing is the direct placement of pro-social messages in the entertainment media. The pro-social product placement is meant to model good behaviors to an audience that may then adopt it. This model combines propaganda and marketing. Entertainment shows have ready-made audiences that generally have a known set of demographics and psychographics. Edutainment techniques make placing pro-social messages into programs easier than other forms of development for social change. It could be argued that because edutainment does not let audiences know about the educational nature of its messages, audiences are more likely to respond because the information and subsequent behavioral change are based on audience decision making (Bandura, 1997). It is, however, still a hierarchical model of information transfer.

Participatory Communication

Because the messages of the previous models are hierarchical, they rely on information transfer rather than communication. Information transfer involves a one-way movement from a sender to a receiver (of information, knowledge, technology). Communication is a dialogic process where both parties should be senders and receivers. Because many development programs originated in western industrial countries, it became clear to many ‘underdeveloped’ countries that these models were contributing to their subjugation. With the UNESCO work on the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) in the 1970s, countries in the global south started to control their own media networks to generate autonomy.

Although the NWICO recommendations brought about major changes that helped to generate national autonomy and strong local identities in the third world, they contain two key problems. First, while national autonomy is important, switching from first world media domination to a nationalistic media hegemony does not necessarily lead to social justice; switching from one ruling elite to another is hardly a major social change. The rule makers may be local, but the methods for generating and disseminating the rules changed very little. In their critique of globalised capitalism, Hardt and Negri (2000) challenge the rise of third world nationalism as a source of social justice. The second problem is that this model still objectifies users and approaches third -world communities as subordinates who need to be informed, persuaded, and enlightened.

In response to these problems, there is a body of theory that attempts to accomplish three major tasks. First, these theories seek to acknowledge subjectivity through the active participation of individuals and communities. Second, participatory communication theories intend to define programs around how the community itself identifies its own problems rather than relying on experts. Third, these theories attempt to change the nature of the metrics used to measure the success or failure of development and social change projects.

Participatory communication models are strikingly different from the models previously presented here. Drawing on the works of Paulo Freire (1970), participatory communication models of social change make radically-different assumptions about the nature and site of social justice and human liberation. They theorize the site of social change to be linked to the direct action of individuals acting collectively in a specific social context. Participatory communication assumes that social change happens only

when communities collectively decide to shape their local context according to their own ideas of what the future should look like. Freire argues that education and communication, not information, are the means to human liberation and social change (Freire, 1970). The local community is able, if given the opportunity and cultural capital, to develop solutions to specific local problems without the need for hierarchical models. It will be useful to outline the contrast between participatory and hierarchical models and develop a set of definitional boundaries in the process.

Participatory communication seeks to generate social change through a dialogic process with the subject. In this model, the subject of social change is a direct participant in the change-making process. In the previous models of communication for social change, the causal factor for problems was seen as behavioral; that is, the subject did not know *enough* to change their behavior. In participatory models, the causal factors are often identified as structural. The social inequalities and lack of access to resources prevent the implementation and generation of subjectivities that can be active in the solution-making process.

Social movement theories that account for the generation of subjectivities are useful to understanding this process. In order to confront systemic oppression, it is necessary that an individual become aware of their oppression. Subsequent sections will show that this process can be explained through the writings of Pierre Bourdieu. According to Bourdieu the act of becoming aware of one's oppression is the first step in moving from a position of object of information transfer, to a position of subject who acts on the forces of oppression (field, doxa, and habitus).

Participatory communication is crucial to this process, because, rather than maintaining or re-inscribing power structures, it provides a way to carve out new spaces for social change. This occurs because participatory communication involves senders and receivers in horizontal decision-making processes. The actors take an active role in developing solutions and identifying problems. In more traditional models of communication for social change, the actor is treated paternalistically by the State, NGOs, or social movements that decide what is best. In hierarchical models of communication for social change, the model is one of persuasion, and the audience is seen as passive receivers. In participatory communication, the audience is active in the development of solutions and becomes the agent of change.

Social Mobilization

The strategy of social mobilization is a compromise between community-based participatory models and hierarchical models. It attempts to link information campaigns with local communities through the generation of local movements. This strategy can be useful in the way that it draws resources to communities that may not have the ability to move on their own from an oppressed state. As will be examined later, it is difficult to recognize the nature of complicity in one's oppression while existing within a system that naturalizes that oppression. The social mobilization model relies on the use of social movements acting as catalysts for change. However, this model is also dangerous in the way that it can be used by ruling elites for creating what seems like populist campaigns that simply reinforce power structures (McKee, 1999).

Social mobilization theories conceptualize communication as a means of creating a political body. Participants are encouraged to generate an active public sphere by engaging in dialogue and action around a specific social problem. Social movement participants and their media mobilize actors towards social change. Downing identifies this area as the point where interpersonal communication and radical media converge in communication networks (Downing, et al., 2001). According to Downing (2001), this area draws on several major fields such as public sphere theory, communication networks, and social movements. Unlike the social marketing model, participants generate messages in a dialogic processes. Individuals involved in a cause address social problems through existing communication networks or through the generation of new ones. The focus is on building coalitions to resolve social problems. Mobilization is itself the way in which community members become aware of the problem and then participate in the solution-generating process.

Measuring Effectiveness

While mass diffusion, hierarchical, or informational models for communication for social change provide ready statistics on their penetration or ‘success,’ participatory models are more difficult to evaluate. Participatory communication relies on the dialogic process and the resolution of specific community-based problems, which leads to long-term processes rather than short-term campaigns. Social movements that adopt the campaign model or the media effects models run the same risk of failure that information providers that use campaign-models. Hierarchical theories of communication for social change rely on traditional measurements of media effectiveness, such as short-term

changes measured in terms of votes counted, surveys about individual behaviors changed, perceptions and impressions of messages, or rates of adoption of new technologies.

Furthermore, the measure of what is considered successful is radically different. Participatory communication sees success in the process rather than in the outcome (Atton, 2002b). This model relies on the means rather than the ends. This is similar to criticisms levied at social movements and radical media that are seen as “ineffective” due to their small audience numbers. According to social theorist Clemencia Rodriguez (2001), this is the case with citizens’ media.

The following section will cover the work of Pierre Bourdieu and how he understood the processes that an actor can go through in social change processes. Bourdieu explains that social structures act upon social movement participants, but at the same time social movement participant can act upon social structures. When people and communities act upon structures, actors moves from a position of being objects that are acted upon to having subjectivity and acting upon the world.

Bourdieu’s theories offer important contributions that allow us to shift our theorizing communication for social change. Instead of conceptualizing change as the process of an individual aggregated to a mass, the site of change moves to the habitus of the individual; Bourdieu explains habitus as the given assumptions of how the world works. Participation in radical media allows people to manipulate symbolic content, and this process has the power to call all other assumptions of the individual into question. This process creates a radical new way of challenging social structures.

Social Movements

I separate the social movement literature into two categories. First is the body of theory that developed in the U. S., which in general attempts to answer how social movements form and how actors employ the means to make political change ((W. A. Gamson, et al., 1982; McAdam, 1982; McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1988; Tarrow, 1994). The second is the European school of social movement theory, which in general attempts to examine why social movements develop within a culture, how social movements develop historically, and how participation in social movements impact participants.

The difference between these two theoretical schools is a product of their historical development and the disciplines in which they developed. The North American school views social change as a product of communication strategies deployed in ways similar to marketing or public relations. In this body of literature, quantitative data can show the relative effectiveness of a social movement in changing public opinion.

In many ways, the European school has become a more significant body of theory with a more global focus. The European school will view social change as a process that is ongoing and transformative through contestations of symbols and their meaning. Emphasizing qualitative assessment of social change, the European approach to studying social movements focuses on consciousness and culture. Nevertheless, European social movement research does not reinscribe the quantitative and qualitative research divide. Some studies such as Manuel Castells' *The City and the Grassroots* (1983) are excellent examples of the combined use of the two data types. The intention

here is to focus on the cultural dimension. Located in the realm of the symbolic, culture mutually shapes actors and is shaped by actors. Therefore, a theory that includes communication in social movements will be useful to understanding cultural change. I later examine the North American body of literature in an attempt to reconcile it with Bourdieu's theories.

European Social Movement Theory

European social movement theory finds its origins in the works of Karl Marx. Marxist theory emerges from Marx's attempt to understand the transformations taking place due to urbanization and industrialization, the hallmarks of the modern world. In his explanation of this transformation, Marx developed an economic structuration that viewed social change as the result of the imbalance of capitalism and the structural contradictions internal to the system. Marx proposed that societies moved through history in a linear path based on class conflict, which, during his time, was expressed in the dialectic of the bourgeoisie and proletariat. According to Marx, class conflict was the fundamental conflict that moved history in the post-Feudal period. Class antagonism was considered the fundamental point of conflict in society, and all social movements were, at their heart, an expression of the class dialectic.

Marx believed that the process needed to bring about social revolutions was already in place and that a Communist party system was the means to social change (Marx & Engles, 1998 (1932)). Later, followers of Marx such as Lenin (1961 (1902)) reinforced this idea, saying that the party should address the tensions between labor and

the capitalist class, and this, according to Lenin, was the primary means of making social change.

Before the 1960s, most European scholarship on social movements and cultural theory was an expression of Marxist historical materialism (Marx & Engles, 1998 (1932) Lenin, 1961 (1902) #233). Marxism theorized history as a fundamental movement towards a predestined end. Opening new spaces for explanations of social movements and social change required scholars to question the Marxist project. They also questioned the values of the modern industrial age (Lyotard, 1979/1984). If we assume that Marx was right and modernity has its own the structural tensions between the capitalist and the proletariat, then the new postmodern age must have structural tensions of its own that generate new social formations. This was apparent in the 1960s, when new types of cultural formations emerged from the extant social movements and from social movement literature. These new cultural formations were taking place in a variety of diverse locations, but they had similar goals. This gave rise to the term *new social movements*.

New Social Movements

Before the 1960s, social movements were generally based around conflicts of labor and capital. Developed to help understand the rise of non-party, non-labor social movements of the 1960s, new social movement theory holds an important place in the process of understanding political change. Scholars originally characterized new social movements as a break with the older Marxist or party-based social movements in the rise of the post-industrial society. They address the specific problems of the industrial social

conditions, and frequently social movements revolve around issues of culture and identity. Characterized by parties and strict hierarchical control, 'old' social movements tend to concentrate on the political process directly relating to capitalism and capital control. With the rise of post-industrial societies and the middle classes that emerged with them, the structure proposed by Marx could not be explained any longer. The focus of social change shifted from conflict based on labor issues to issues of rights and recognition for the subaltern.

Some scholars have questioned this break, pointing out historical movements that are not characterized by these criteria that occurred simultaneously with the 'old' social movements, such as the antislavery movement (Phil, 1989). Other scholars have even questioned the title of "new social movements," stating that they are no longer new in the sense that the world of extant organizations and the world of theory have drifted apart (Bagguley, 1992; Day, 2005; Pichardo, 1997). Pichardo (1997), argues that the concept of new social movements is centered in the industrialized West, and therefore cannot reflect the concerns of more-global struggles, especially those located in the global south.

Regardless of their 'newness,' new social movements began when movements started forming around more-diverse issues besides class. These movements include topics such as the peace movement, colonialism, race, feminism, environmentalism, and queer rights. These issues are matters of both legislation and identity. In turn, these issues generate a struggle centered on the control of symbols and symbolic content (Castells, 1983). While it is true that economics plays an important role in pushing entire communities to subaltern positions, processes of identity formation and conscientization become more central to the struggle than pure class antagonism. When an actor begins to

gain awareness of their oppression based on their race, gender, or sexuality, their activism generally crosses class boundaries. In the case of the environmental or antinuclear movements, the goals of the movement are not directly tied to participants' identities, as they address the very existence of all humanity. It is important to note here that new social movements are closely related to radical media because they both struggle over the deployment of symbols. Thus, frequently new social movements count on radical media, as a tool to contest power. Sociologist Sidney Tarrow (1994) believes that communication technologies specifically helped to generate this new form of social movement through new forms of association, regular communication linking center and periphery, and the spread of print and literacy.

Strangely, while arguing for a symbolic struggle, few scholars within the corpus of new social movements have specifically made the connection between radical media and social movements. For example, while arguing for the transnational character of many social movements and the development of new repertoires of contention generated by a new transnational public sphere, few of the authors in Guidry, Kennedy and Zald's (2000) work *Globalizations and Social Movements Culture, Power, and the Transnational Public Sphere* mention the deployment of radical media as a force for public sphere formation. They mention very little on the effects of deploying new communication technologies that allowed the survival of the EZLN. Guidry et. al., take for granted that the communication process will take place, and the outcomes, but not processes, are examined. Regardless of when they were developed or discovered, new social movement theory has opened a larger horizon of study.

Alain Touraine

We can find the origin of new social movement theory in the works of Alain Touraine (Touraine, 1988, 2007). He sought to find after Marx a new form of dialectic that could explain the rise of non-labor related social movements that developed in the post-war period.

Touraine believes that there is a movement towards a more-programmed society, one in which the state has more control in a less-direct way on the individual. Rather than repression through the use of physical force, repression came instead through the systems of meaning generated by the state. The individual loses freedoms as the state penetrates more areas of the lived experience. Habermas reached the same conclusion in his concept of the colonization of the *life-world* (Habermas, 1999). This is a concept that is seen in other theories that propose an unconscious or hidden set of forces that affect the ability of humans to express free will (Gramsci, 1971; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). Later, this study proposes that Bourdieu's concept of habitus can address the unconscious nature of oppressions, as found in Touraine's and Habermas's theories.

Touraine states that, because of the new programmed society, the new struggle is a combination of cultural, political and symbolic arenas (Touraine, 1988). The political arena and social movements centered around political issues are similar to those of the previous Marxist/labor era. However, other new social movements emerged to protest against state control of the cultural and symbolic realms. Whatever the site of social struggle, for Touraine the core issue of new social movements is how collective action produces new social formations and new historical interpretations of past and present social structures and processes.

For Touraine, because the site for social change moves people's everyday world, the actor becomes the most important agent for social action. The social struggle becomes a collective act against hegemonic forces that create structures. These structures are no longer Marx's rigid forms of historical materialism, and instead are interpreted as ever changing cultural forms that come into contestation.

In a similar rejection of historical materialism, Anthony Giddens (Giddens, 1986) calls this the process of structuration, or the process of production and reproduction of society that lies with the actions of actors and in groups of actors. Therefore, whoever controls the process of cultural reproduction (as emerging from the actions of actors) also controls the social formation. This process has communication as a central focus, because all actions have symbolic meaning, which gives them value, power to maintain or transform social formations, or, what Bourdieu referred to as capital (Bourdieu, 1991).

While recognizing this process, Touraine and Giddens fail to hail communication as the primary act of contestation. However, the control of an actor's life-world is incumbent to the control of symbolic material. For example, the banning of Catalan in Franco's regime was an attempt to control both the cultural and symbolic arenas. Franco knew that controlling people's language and culture would lead to their subordination to his oppressive regime. Post Franco, Catalan television stations sought to counter state oppression specifically in the language and cultural arenas, thus reclaiming the cultural and symbolic realms for their own identity formation. In this example, documented in the work of Clemencia Rodriguez (2001), it is apparent that the nature of social movements and communication are inseparable as processes of social change.

Alberto Melucci

Alberto Melucci (1989) was one of the first new social movement scholars to identify this connection. The use of language and the symbolic became key components to his version of new social movement theory. Communication, if taken as the deployment and development of symbolic capital, then becomes a critical feature. His work focuses on the renewal of culture through social movements manipulation of language habits (Melucci, 1989). His work shifts new social movement theory away from the search for a new historicity, as in neo-Marxist scholarship, and places the focus on the problems that social movements attempted to address in their locality. According to Melucci, an actor is trapped in the production and reproduction of symbolic content which may be a cause of their oppression. Departing from Touraine's view, where actors try to counter the state's intrusion in the form of social control, Melucci viewed social movements as actors that actively generate new cultural forms. That is, actors are attempting to carve out spaces for their life-ways to exist.

Melucci argued that, because they do not necessarily have access to the means of production, underprivileged groups employ different strategies of representation than groups that have greater privileges. This is the beginning of a theoretical melding between communication for social change and new social movement theory. Melucci states that these social movement messages may fall out of traditional communication. Melucci finds that these messages highlight difference through the celebration of identity formation and community particularities of structuration and symbolic manipulation.

Social movements then can generate cultural space through symbolic manipulation, "through changes in language, sexual customs, affective relationships,

dress, and eating habits” (Melucci, 1989, p. 74). In Melucci’s theory, the actions of the movement participants are central to the manipulation of symbolic content as a form of contestation. The private becomes a site of contestation. The private sphere is also site of communication that is used by actors and groups to express their social struggle.

New Social Movements in Context, Criticisms and Communication

In new social movement theory, the focus has been on the changes that occur in the individual or group as they go through the identity formation and transformation process. This theoretical shift has helped to explain the transformation in the last quarter of the twentieth century from social movements based on traditional labor and party focus and toward social movements based on localized identities (i.e. women’s movements, queer movements, civil rights movements). This is not to deny that the *old* social movement rubric has eroded completely. The spectrum of types of movements has expanded to incorporate other forms of social change goals. These groups tend to focus on *consciousness raising* rather than legislative policies.

This theoretical shift allows for a redefinition of the goals of a social movement. Rather than social movements being judged by traditional goals, such as stability, longevity, power to enact legislative change, access to resources, and other concrete goals, new social movements sought change in other arenas. This change primarily takes the form of renegotiating the values, attitudes and beliefs of the structure in which they exist. However, the effectiveness of the group can no longer be measured by the goals of the previous movements. When measured with the standards of old social movements, new social movements seem capital poor and ineffectual. Their impact appears limited.

However, when seen through Melucci's theories, their supposed 'ineffectuality' appears more as result of looking for effectiveness in the wrong place, and not because the movement does not achieve any social/cultural changes.

When tested for effectiveness in a different way, new social movements can be seen as vibrant and effective in their stated goals. If a social movement's focus is shifted from appeals to state apparatuses for the redress of grievances as a metric of effectiveness, to the goal of raising, forming or playing with identity, then new social movements can be reread as a new and powerful form of countering hegemony (Lovell, 2007). Oppressed groups with little access to resources, who exist in a structure that constantly reestablishes their subaltern position, now have a tool for restructuring their identity according to the social terms developed by the group, rather than the terms imposed from above. However, this process is only possible if the group has access to capital.

A brief look at the three 'waves' of the feminist movement illustrates this well. The first wave focused on petitioning the state apparatuses for recognition and incorporation of voting rights. The campaigns of Suffragists for the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment represent a classic 'old' social movement in their goals and tactics.

The second wave of feminism expanded from this goal to incorporate the redress of further grievances, but focused on both the state and larger hegemonic intuitions. The number of goals expanded to include issues such as equal pay, equal access to education, and non-discrimination, among others. Focus also expanded to new hegemonic

institutions including the state as well as universities, the workplace, and other centers of power.

The third wave of feminism developed as a means of creating new identities for the actors involved in the movement. The third wave started as a response in part to the perceived failure of second-wave feminism. Third wave feminism focuses on renegotiating identities away from traditional cultural binaries. Third wave does not focus on social institutions as carriers of hegemony and hegemonic practices. Third wave feminism works to deconstruct the hegemonic ideas within the individual. This is a form of *habitus*, as will be argued later (Skeggs, 2004). Third wave feminism seeks to raise the consciousness of the individual in an effort to promote freedom from oppressive social structures.

This brief sketch of the three waves of feminism hardly does justice to the rich literature and theorizing on the subject, nor does it honor the hard work of thousands of individuals and their struggle. If the third wave is taken as a starting point, it represents the new social movement position. Under traditional social movement theory, this wave is the least effectual and most fragmented. Redefining the goals of a social movement redefines the means by which it is measured. The nature of the social movement has changed, and so must the means by which it is understood.

New social movements generate an incorporation of other arenas of oppression such as race, sexuality, language, locality and other issues that were ignored by the previous social movements with their exclusive focus on class. This new form of social movement engenders the expansion and incorporation of struggles and forms of oppression that were willfully or accidentally ignored. Rather than a vertical examination

of oppression and a vertical solution to that oppression, new social movements developed horizontal and integrated examinations of oppressions and a horizontal and integrated means of resistance.

Some scholars have questioned the effectiveness and usefulness of new social movements because the focus is more on long term cultural and social changes than on dramatic legislative changes (Giugni & Passy, 2001). This argument lacks nuance because it fails to take into account the fact that individuals and groups exist in a larger social milieu (Calhoun, 1991). The singular group may not, in any case, cause dramatic social change. Dramatic social changes are an easy way to demonstrate success. In the new forms of social movements, this dramatization is missing because the site of change is focused on the individual. There may be no heroes in the movement to laude and hold up as martyrs, like Elizabeth Cady Stanton or Betty Friedan, but this does not mean that there is no change occurring on the structural level.

To illustrate this point, John Downing has written about the ways in which radical media have been criticized for not being an effective replacement for hegemonic corporate media (Downing, et al., 2001; Downing, Mohammadi, & Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1990). He, however, rejects this as the primary goal of radical media. He envisions radical media as 'swarms' that work counter to hegemony by building cultures of resistance. Clemencia Rodriguez (2001) expands this by interpreting alternative media as processes that allow individuals to become active political agents. Social change does not occur in the drama of a revolution but in the reformation of identities. However this process is not just localized to the psychology of the individual. For new ethnic, gender, or sexual identities to emerge as embodied by individual men and women, social and

cultural structures have to give way and open up to the new identities and social relationships.

Individuals that participate in social movements, be it third wave feminism or radical media, are located within a larger social structure. They are, in effect, points in a larger network of relationships to other individuals and systems of oppression. While terms such as 'state', 'capitalism' and 'oppressive social structure' are useful for understanding, they are abstractions and do not exist outside of the actual beings that create them. Utah Phillips puts this well in his famous quote in the case of environmental destruction, "The earth is not dying, she is being killed...and the people killing her have names and addresses" (Klein, 2001, p. 325).

Recognizing the site of hegemony or other hidden forces of oppression becomes important. However, hidden oppression is backed up with coercive force held by individuals within a social structure. Real people with real powers enforce social oppression. These individuals affect the social structure in ways that reinforce and make apparent metaphysical concepts like hegemony or habitus. They have access to resources and powerful networks or relations between networks that many others do not, but nevertheless, they, as individuals, maintain oppressive social systems.

Because they are less powerful, individuals in subaltern positions, who have less access to power, have less opportunity to make dramatic changes. This may account for the shift in social movement goals. However, we need to recognize that multiple individuals, working in small groups and spread across social networks, can in time enact radical changes by transforming the consciousness of individuals and social relations. This change is subtle and less direct. Over time, these 'swarms' help to shift the rigid

structures of oppression, interrupting flows and conjunctions of power in ways that are harder to measure quantitatively. These changes take place on an individual level, are fragmented throughout the social structure, and slowly transform the entire social system at a historical level. Pierre Bourdieu's theory provides a good set of tools to begin examining this process.

Pierre Bourdieu

Pierre Bourdieu provides a structural theory that allows the integration of the critical focus of new social movement theory and the goals of communication for social change. In his *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977) and other works (Bourdieu, 1991, 1996, 1998, 2005; Bourdieu & Coleman, 1991; P. Bourdieu, 2005) Bourdieu develops a new theory that explains how social change emerges at the intersection between individuals' use of symbolic manipulation and larger structural forces of oppression. Because of this, *The Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977) is crucial to bridge the gap between social movements theories that focus on the process of the social movement in society and social movement theories that focus on the process on the individual.

Bourdieu provides tools for understanding these subtle processes. His theory can be expressed in an equation that shows the relationship between the social structure and the experience of the individual. This formula incorporates the necessary portions of structural constraints and individual processes:

$$(\text{Habitus})(\text{Capital}) + \text{Field} = \text{Practice}$$

Field

Field is the social space that situates individuals who contribute to the production of cultural works. Thus, fields are arenas in which individuals exist and produce/reproduce materials for a culture. Bourdieu originated this idea when theorizing about the literary field. Within the literary field, a set of rules regulates cultural production as to what is and is not valid within that field. The production of a cultural product, or capital, in the field is autonomous in its set of heteronomous rules (the rules of the field only apply to that field), but it can exist within larger fields or cross over into other fields. As an example, consider the field of media production. Sets of rules govern media production and stipulate what is and is not considered journalism. Those actors within the field of media, which have a greater share of power, have a greater share of the ability to confer legitimacy to the journalistic product. By setting the standards for journalism, regulating judgments on journalism, and regulating access to resources based on these judgments, journalism is controlled as a specific cultural product in the field of media production. Accepting and generating the heteronomy in the field sets forth the rules of the game that legitimize large media institutions such as the *New York Times*. When the field of media claims that what the *New York Times* produces is ‘good’ or ‘impartial’ news coverage, it generates a structure that any other media producer is forced to follow in order to become legitimate within that field.

It should be understood that the *New York Times* does not generate heteronomous doxa alone. The process of legitimization and rule setting within the media field takes place across interactions of several normative forces and actors (Magerski, 2004). The

large media corporations seek to maintain control. The field of media maintains its power in several ways, first by manipulating the media market; second, when actors within the field enact the perceived rules of the field; and finally, when the media field is encompassed by larger fields such as the political field (Herman & Chomsky, 1988).

Subfields within the media field also strengthen the normative power of that field. Subfields are smaller arenas within a field that break the structure of the field into various working parts. Examples in the media field might include distribution networks, editors and editorial conventions, audiences and consumers, and journalists. The key however is that the rules of the field and subfields are reproduced (Lance, 2006). Legitimization is conferred on those actors reproducing these rules and strengthening the power held by those in the field that set the rules (Bourdieu, 2005b). For example, schools of journalism help to reestablish journalistic conventions with each new class they graduate. Normative concepts like objectivity, which reinscribe power structures, are maintained.

This concept of fields does, however, leave space for the actor to enter into subjectivity. For Bourdieu, this is the role of the avant-garde. In the literary field, he examined how the avant-garde helped to move, change, and challenge the structure of that field (Bourdieu, 1996). In the field of media production, radical media has a similar role in changing the field and social structures. For example, judging radical media as a failure due to the size of its audience or the longevity of its existence is to judge radical media based on the rules conferred by the larger field. However, if radical media is judged by an ability to transform those involved in the production, for example, to create new identities and change the way actors interact in a field, then radical media can shift

the heteronomy of the field, and create actor autonomy. This change is due in part to the willingness of social movements to use this form of cultural capital.

Autonomy is the process and the effect of contesting the legitimization of the current set of rules or doxa within the field. For Bourdieu the avant-garde moved the literary field in new directions through the eventual delegitimization of the previous order (Bourdieu, 1996). For the media field, the *radical* in the term *radical media* is what pushes and stretches the idea of what media production is and how it functions. However, the goal is not to replace the existing order of media production with a new one. New social movements do not intend to generate a new structuration. Changing the whole structure would align with the goals of previous social movements in the era of revolutionary change. If the goal of radical media is to open up and fill fissures in the mediascape (or field) with new means of production and identities, then the field shifts in its ability to confer legitimization. By creating autonomous networks of radical media, the old field is left to its own devices and a new field emerges. This process creates an entirely new space for cultural production and the control of symbolic content by ignoring the doxa that govern the preexisting field.

This process can, however, be thwarted. For example radical media can and sometimes do get swallowed into the structure of the dominant field. Those on the spectrum of radicalism closest to the fields' ability to change can get absorbed into the legitimization of the normative field. Bloggers and blogging started as an alternative to corporate media. Now, however, some of the blogging actors and techniques have been legitimized by the field of media and thus have been incorporated into the heteronomy of the field.

Another process that changes the autonomy carved out in fields is the adoption of radical methods for the promotion of the heterogeneous cultural production. The media field is interlocked with the larger field of sales, marketing and neo-liberal economics. Marketing in particular is adept at adopting the strategies of resistance from the media field and transforming them into sales techniques. Radical media production like flash mobs, graffiti, and street art installations have been adopted to promote corporate products that often want to be associated with the avant-garde. However, even with the absorption back into the legitimization of the larger field, the autonomy creating process is never completed.

Human imagination is the greatest challenge to the doxa of a field (Baudrilard, 1981). The ability to conceive different worlds starts with the critical examination of an actor's role and habitus within a field. This critical examination, if taken far enough, leads the actor to consider and enact different ways of being. The process of questioning the rules set forth by the dominant powers within a field opens spaces for the reconfiguration of the rules. This creates critical consciousness that reveals new ways to produce, manipulate, and reproduce cultural products. These new ways exploit spaces left open within a field, or create new spaces, challenging the field's codes. As actors interact in new ways and inhabit these new spaces, a new habitus emerges.

Habitus

Habitus is the unconscious internalization of objective social structures. These are generally taken as being part of the natural order of the world. The actor absorbs habitus to the degree that they are unable to critically examine their actions. Bourdieu's concept

of habitus seems then to provide a reason for the continuity of actors within a field to produce and reproduce the social structure in which they exist (Bourdieu, 2005a).

Habitus can be understood similar to Wittgenstein's language games, which he uses in his explanation of the process of unconscious reproduction (Wittgenstein, 1961 (1921)). The actor is independent in their choices by their free will to deploy and calculate their 'move' within the game. Simultaneously, the actor is constrained by their view of their ability to control and shape the rules or doxa. This in turn influences their calculations of their choices' cost and benefits. The rules of the game are fixed, but only to a certain degree. In most cases for Bourdieu, this doxa is inhabited in an unconscious way by the actor, thus becoming habitus. Actors then take what they know about the world and act based upon those rules or how they believe the world functions.

Doxa then pre-exists actors. Here Bourdieu draws from the work of Saussure (1959 (1915)). According to Saussure, the actor is shaped by the preexisting codes of semiotic relations. However, the actor also works within those sets of semiotic codes and shapes them. This dialectic of shaping and being-shaped gives the actors within a social field some freedom to play with symbolic codes (Vladiv-Glover & Frederic, 2004). Breaking with trans-historical structuralism of theorists like Marx or Althusser, Bourdieu understands that the actor can move from an objective position to a subjective position. This deconstruction of unconscious barriers gives the actor the ability to generate social change (Laclau, 2005).

However, the actor can also choose not to generate social change. Habitus can serve as a constraint to action, because not all actors within a field can enact their potential to understand, critique, and shape the system they inhabit. In fact, Bourdieu

argues that the majority of actors participate in the rules of a field based on their cultural trajectories, even if these are not beneficial to them. The subject naturalizes habitus so that it is often uncritically accepted along with the cultural rules, values, and beliefs that make it possible.

Capital

Even if the actor becomes aware of habitus, the actor is constrained by another force, capital. Capital is the extent of one's ability to act within a given field at a given time (Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002). Capital comes in multiple forms. Once again, breaking with the Marxist construction of pure economic capital as being the driving force of cultural continuity, Bourdieu conceives of multiple capitals that allow for a greater theoretical nuancing of power relations.

By theorizing multiple capitals, Bourdieu generates multiple sites of power that actors employ within fields to both change and maintain the structural nature of the power relations. The control of production and distribution of capital in a field sets limits on the ability of the oppressed to move throughout the field. Those with greater capital have greater control of the 'game,' thus greater control of the doxa that maintains habitus. This control of capital aids in the process of reproduction of social structure. Actors with less capital will, according to Bourdieu, adjust their actions based on their calculations of what they will be able to gain.

Capital for Bourdieu comes in a variety of forms. Economic capital is, in the Marxist vein, the control of the mode of production. Cultural capital is the status acquired through education that allows the user to gain entry into fields that require and admire

elite knowledge. For example, having a great amount of economic capital may allow an actor to purchase the labor of lawyers, but it will not make a person one. However, acquiring cultural capital through law school will allow an actor to enter that field. Symbolic capital is capital related to status. Acquiring art through economic capital can then make an actor into an art collector. With enough cultural capital this art collector can in turn become a “major player” in the art world acquiring cultural capital and seeking to designate what is and is not “legitimate” art (Bourdieu, 1996). Social capital is the acquiring of social status and networks within a field. A social actor might acquire social capital through parties, schools attended, social class, profession, and similar relationships.

Social movements as a field

In the field of social movements, an actor or group might acquire social capital through their ability to set up and maintain groups or networks with other groups working around similar issues. An individual might also acquire social capital through their personal experiences. For example, being arrested for a social cause might provide social capital for an activist. The actor can then claim to have a higher degree of investment and participation in ‘the cause.’ The experience of the individual allows the actor to use their personal experience as a means of uniting others around a larger cause. As abstractions, social movements can acquire symbolic capital in a myriad of ways. In generating radical media, slogans, symbols, pictures, and similar symbolic content, the symbolic capital can be used to show others the social movement’s purpose. The body itself can be used as a form of symbolic capital in the case of protests (Gitlin, 1980). For example when police

attack peaceful protesters, the images are used to demonstrate the oppressive nature of the state. In the case of the WTO protest in Seattle in 1999, protesters took up the same chant of the protesters from the 1968 Democratic Convention, “the whole world is watching” (Montagner, 2001), a statement also reused in the recent Occupy Movement. The methods or habitus of making protest and the capital of the social movement field was used in all three situations in a similar way.

Cultural capital is also present in the social movement field as people learn to organize, transfer methods of protest from group to group, and generate new ways of creating protest (Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2002). As groups within social movements discuss the ‘most effective’ ways to generate change, agents contest the nature of cultural capital within that field or subfield. Some activists question the role that social movements play in lobbying state structures. Some groups have a greater ability to perform lobbying and thus may have greater cultural and social capital. For example in the media activist subfield, different groups employ different tactics based on their ability to gain access to symbolic capital. Adbusters relies on this ability to critique media and the larger capitalist field (Harold, 2004). Their protest relies on their ability to generate new cultural codes in the face of the habitus created by mainstream media. Adbusters’ process of culture-jamming seeks to confront the doxa of media and the normalization of that doxa. This process both builds their cultural capital as a social movement but also uses that cultural capital to confront the cultural capital of capitalist media. Other groups like the Electronic Frontier Foundation lobby legislative centers such as the Federal Communication Commission.

Economic capital is another major factor in the field of social movements. Undoubtedly groups or actors with access to large pools of money have a different set of abilities to try to enact social change. What can be recognized by actors in a social movement is that this ability to make social change through economic resources is not necessarily sufficient. The ability to reach greater numbers of individuals through, for example, purchasing media time, printing, or hiring professional staff comes with this access. Smaller social movements may have less access to economic capital. This may lead to focusing on different forms of capital. Groups with small amounts of economic capital may concentrate on symbolic capital as in the case of Adbusters, or on social capital as in the case of Cindy Sheehan. Other groups may perceive the lack of economic capital as an obstacle to be overcome. This may account for the fact that many social movements focus their main resources on raising capital and building membership, a form of economic and social capital, rather than on actual actions that contest the power in the field in which they operate.

Transformation of Capital

Capital can be and often is a complex issue. Depending on where they are located in the structure of a field, different objects can be different types of capital. Capitals are also homologous in the creation of the structure itself. One type of capital also helps to generate other capitals. In a social movement, the symbolic capital can mutate into social capital as members join what is perceived as a common cause. This can in turn lead to greater levels of economic capital. Without this process, it would be impossible for a social movement to go through growth and expansion.

Defining capital is also contextual to the field in which that capital exists. As historical processes take place, capital in one period can become less valuable in its ability to either maintain or change the doxa of a field. The changes that moved the capital of the labor movement from a valuable asset to a hindrance are an example of this. Other scholars have argued that capital can be expanded, with new capitals identified depending on the field in which they exist (Reay, 2004). As new social movements emerged the value of social identity or what was valued as symbolic capital became important. Identity became a type of capital. Because of this new social movement's used identity as a form of cultural capital. Identity as capital created the need for new forms of protest and contestation against the reproduction of doxa in a field. Harker, Mahar and Wilkes point out that Bourdieu wanted capital to be understood broadly in that:

“The definitions of capital are very broad for Bourdieu and include material things (which can have symbolic value), as well as ‘untouchable’ but culturally significant attributes such as prestige, status and authority (referred to as symbolic capital), along with cultural capital (defined as culturally-valued taste and consumption patterns)...For Bourdieu, capital acts as a social relation within a system of exchange, and the term is extended ‘to all the goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation.’” (Harker, Mahar, & Wilkes, 1990)

Because capital is in a form of exchange, actors ‘spend’ capital in an effort to meet their goals. This has been a major criticism of Bourdieu's theory. He has been accused of economic reductionism, which is characterized as pessimistic and has, as

argued by Guillory, led to a “refusal” of Bourdieu’s theory (Guillory, 2000). Guillory believes cultural theorists prefer to put the impetus for action on a novel idea of volunteerism that makes the actions of social actors more intellectually pure. The nature of the calculations explained by Bourdieu, privilege an actor's motivation for action; thus, Bourdieu’s theory reinstates the actor’s subjectivity, an element missing from works of theory that wish to set forth transhistorical laws. Unlike the followers of Marx or the Frankfurt school, Bourdieu attempts to generate a theory that describes a super structural element, accounts for change, and allows for the randomness that arises in systems.

Bourdieu’s combination of field, capital, and habitus allows the researcher to navigate one of the great sociological divides, the separations of structures and the individual. Field as a concept allows an examination of the structural elements of a social situation. These elements are the processes set in motion historically that shape the actions available to the actor. They precede the actor in history and are comparable to Habermas’s concept of life world (Habermas, 1999). Structure cannot be transcended by any one actor and represents the level of study that, since Marx, has been the site of most sociological research. However, Marx focused solely on the economic superstructure (Marx & Engles, 1998 (1932)). This reduction to one singular economic field did not, for Bourdieu and for the other social movement theorists, display the full complexity of a social system.

Study of social systems on this meta-level, has been the main vein of sociological research for the majority of the history of sociology and cultural studies. However, one of the key problems with this approach is the fact that it moves the actors under examination to the objective level. Historical forces act upon actors, and they are simply

points within a historical continuity towards social change. This conception is useful for understanding the processes of larger historical and social forces but fails to address the subjective roles of the actor. Unlike Anthony Giddens (1998) who ultimately rejected the need for fixed structures, Bourdieu maintains structure through the retention of capital and structures limiting effects.

The addition of habitus as a level of study allows a subjective understanding of ideological effects. We can understand the actor as a dynamic force. As habitus is a condition of the field and influences and shapes the actor without their awareness, the process of subjectivity, if the actor is critically aware, allows for personal change and this change is aggregated to the group and leads to social change. The individual-aggregate-change becomes group change. This theory can then account for why change occurs and why it does not occur. The use of the concepts such as reproduction and transformation, allows Bourdieu to research and account for both stability and change. Reproduction through the forces of *illusio* and doxa keep the game stable and functioning (Robbins, 1991). Bourdieu's work also rejects the more-postmodern turns in theory. Radical postmodernism rejects the significance of structural elements and claims that the only knowable information is in/of the individual. Bourdieu's combination of structure and agency can become particularly useful when applied to the study of social change.

Understanding Purpose in Social Movements

Social change scholars in the U. S. and their European counterparts differ on the location of social change. In the U. S. schools of sociology, the trend has been towards what can generally be called the set of Rational Actor Theories (McCarthy & Zald,

1973). Rational Actor Theories view the rise of social movements as coming from the needs of social actors in addressing the calculated interest of the participants (Oppenheimer, 1963; Peele & Morse, 1969; Simons, 1976). Participants in social movements are involved based on a rational calculation of perceived benefits. These theories rest on the assumption that the actor is employing a *methodological individualism*, a term borrowed from economics. These theories seek to explain why an individual is involved in social movements.

The 1970's saw a subtle shift from explaining why an individual actor joined social movements to the way in which social movements were successful. Central to this shift are the rhetoric of economics and the calculations of power through access to resources. The works of Charles Tilly (1978) represent this type of thinking. His work on resource mobilization attempts to show who has the power to engage in the political process. Again, the theoretical focus was on outcome, and movements were judged on the amount of calculable change they could create.

Finally, the U. S. social movement literature moved towards a new form of calculation. This one was based on the means that social movements could use to engage in the political process. Some social movement literature draws from marketing and advertising, and privileges the means that social movements use to gain attention for their cause. Theories of the repertoire of protest, framing, and opportunity structures became popular (Giugni, 2004; Giugni & Passy, 2001; Harper, 1998). Framing serves as a good example of this type of theory. Framing states that a social movement needs to 'frame' their protest in ways that attract media attention while at the same time avoiding negative media. Riots may gain attention for a cause, but they may also produce negative

stereotypes of the protestors and their movement (Doolittle, 1976). However, if a protest is too calm it may not gain any attention to the cause itself. Many scholars have examined the balance of types of protest and the means by which social movements calculate the tactics they employ (Boyle, McCluskey, Devanathan, Stein, & McLeod, 2004; Brasted, 2005; Giugni, 2004; Giugni & Passy, 2001; D. McLeod, 1995; D McLeod & Dentenber, 1999; D. M. McLeod & Hertog, 1998; J. McLeod & Scheufele, 1999; Stewart, 1991; Watkins, 2001).

These theories do not examine the structural characteristics of the social system. Instead they determine the worth of a social movement purely on the calculations of the changes achieved. They fail to judge the effects of the movement on the individual level and their ability to improve an actor's life world. The root causes of the social movement and the structural inequality that leads to their development are ignored. These theories focus on quantitatively non-politicized explanations of the rise and fall of social movements.

Bourdieu's theory also account for this process; but it goes beyond traditional assessment of outcomes. The best parts of the rational actor theories are incorporated in the calculations that actors use in the deployment of capital. The resource mobilization theories are also accounted for in the way that groups use the variances within capital in their struggle for control of a field. Resource mobilization with the incorporation of networks of capital is absorbed through the twin concepts of economic capital and social capital. The political process theories can be understood as the use of symbolic capital. Framing is, in effect, a battle within a field over who can legitimize the symbolic capital. Repertoires of protest can also be understood as the deployment of symbolic capital

within a field. Bourdieu's concepts can unite and explain processes of framing, resource mobilization, and political process while at the same time explains the super-structural processes, the focus of European sociological studies of social movements.

Bourdieu also allows for the politicizing of theory—a goal shared in Queer Theory and many other critical discourses (Horkheimer, 1975; Jagose, 1996). Because the level of field can be examined, the level of who can deploy symbolic power can be critiqued. Deciding what acts are felicitous within a given context gives the researcher the power to examine the channels of power and who benefits from these channels. This opens space for critique. What is considered felicitous and who benefits grows historically and changes over time to privilege certain groups. Opening up this space for critique is, for Bourdieu, an extension and a politicization of the work of J. L. Austin's *Speech Act Theory* (1962). However, where Austin's theory left out a political critique, Bourdieu insists on the necessity of including it (Bourdieu, 1991).

Similarly to how Foucault's archeology or genealogy of knowledge (Foucault, 1975, 1984, 1994) Bourdieu gives the researcher a language and lens through which to examine both the effects of the actions in terms of individual change, both in attitude and behavior, and the effects on structural forces that seek to maintain system stability.

Social Movements, Participatory Communication and Radical Media

Moving beyond the boundaries of new social movement theory, Bourdieu includes the changes experienced by actors in the change of habitus and structural changes through transformations in fields. His theory also allows for the inclusion of the better parts of the U. S. social movement literature because of the inclusion of the

contestation of ideas within a field. Most importantly, Bourdieu helps to clarify the conjunction between social movements, communication, and the role of radical media.

First, his theory provides the tools to analyze how social structures oppress individuals and at the same time contain the conditions for social movements, communication for social change, and radical media. Bourdieu's theory also provides the analytical tools to examine capital flows, structural inequalities in fields, and opportunities that arise out of these inequalities. Second, his theory allows for the inclusion and understanding of the multiple ways in which actors use communication in an effort to generate freedoms for themselves and others in a variety of places. Finally, social movements, activist group, and actors can be examined as generating fields or subfields, which in turn generate their own discourses. These discourses are reflected in the movements' and groups' media products and also in the act of creating their own media products. Discourses can also serve to explain in-group dynamics, as issues raised and problems resolved.

Social movements are also in dialogue with other social movements through a larger field of political processes. The much-discussed divisions in the gay community in the U. S. are a reflection of various groups vying for capital in that subfield. The Queer subfield then vies for capital in the larger field of politics. The subfield contains a habitus, capital allocation, and doxa in and of itself. As a subfield, radical Queer politics has its own set of rules. However, as a political force, it is also constrained by the larger rules of the political field. Queer media are constrained by their own internal rules of media production and the larger rules of the media field. The individual actor must engage in a process to become aware of this doxa.

Because habitus is an unconscious process, it cannot be examined without first being questioned. This can be related to the process of overcoming hegemony, or Paulo Freire's (1970) *conscientization*. This process fits well with the social mobilization theory as it requires community participation with self-aware groups and can avoid the issues of vanguards (Flacks, 1994).

Those that control the majority capital of a field can seek to control habitus. Bourdieu makes this process central to exchange that can either oppress or liberate. Capital can be understood as a form of information. Those that wish to solve problems relating to the oppression of others can examine the social structure and generate messages to the entire field for behavioral change. The rewriting of habitus and doxa is similar to the models of development communication. Another possibility of social movements' action is the ability to create new forms of habitus developed from below through field separation. This is the model found in participatory communication. In either case, there must be a mechanism for the initial break with patterns of habitus. This break is facilitated by social movements and their relationship with radical media. Both social movements and radical media are therefore necessary for the creation of critical publics in the public sphere.

PART IV

PUBLIC SPHERE THEORIES AND BOURDIEU

The Public Sphere

This section will look at public sphere the literature, problems, and theories. Next, it will examine the connection between public sphere, social movements, and radical media. Finally, it will examine the way that Bourdieu's theory helps to bridge public sphere theory, social movements' theories, and radical media scholarship.

Social order exists as a complex set of networks and relationships. We could interpret people's experience of subjectivity as a series of negotiations and manipulations of these networks. Individual actors shape these networked relationships through the choices they make and the actions they perform. This performance shapes the space around the actor, and in turn, changes the space for others. Individual actors can impact the public sphere, but a greater impact results from collective action.

People exist in structures that are outside of an individual's sphere of understanding and ability to create social change; and these structures construct and constrain subjectivity.

The decisions of how to act *within these complex networks* is shaped by the groups' or individuals' ability to understand the historical conditions of the public sphere. Individual actors use what they think they know about the social sphere in a given context to formulate actions toward social change.

For political groups the process is not different. The advantage collectives is the ability to have greater access to information. This information, brought to the group by the individual actors, becomes a collective asset and allows greater diversity of possible views of the situation and courses of action. This, theoretically, allows groups a larger set of information from which to make decisions.

Social theory attempts to look at social practices as a set of actors in motion tangled with different dynamics in the distribution and redistribution of resources. Public sphere theory conceives communication as a resource. Hierarchies within the public sphere limit the ability to communicate. Differential access to communication resources establish different power dynamics among the individuals and groups within a given social space. The control of communication is critical to maintaining power relations because the decision to act is linked to information about the context.

Communication social theorists have tended to privilege access to communication resources as a way to strengthen people's ability to enact social change. This model, which relies on the expansion of communicative space within a given social setting, has been the dominant form of theorizing communication for social change. However, this model is limited agency is understood merely as the power of actors or groups *to expand* their ability *to distribute* messages to larger (*mass*) audiences. The model's main limitation is that public sphere is perceived as a spatial metaphor and agency is understood as more messages distributed to more places.

When the act of communication for social change shifts from the spatial metaphor to the means by which the act of communicating changes the individual communicator, there's less emphasis on public sphere and more on agency. However, this does not mean that social theory needs to abandon its ability to generate theory that describes the ways that social actors are related and networked. There needs to be a refinement of the tools to understand the complexity of social relations.

Public sphere theory in particular has attempted to expand the variables it accounts for in theorizing the way that social relationships and the distribution of

communicative power take place. With rare exception (Warner, 2005), the trend has been towards identifying variables on a larger and larger level of spatial abstraction. Habermas (1999) proposes the concept of the public sphere as a way of understanding the basis for and effects of communication in society. His concerns focus first on the nature of the public sphere as it formed during the Enlightenment. With later revision (Habermas, 1985), his focus shifted to exploring the forces that prevent public discourse from emerging. For Habermas the public sphere is a process orientation, which, according to this author is the use of discourse as a vehicle to exercise one's will. Investigating process orientation allows the researcher to better understand the democratic process, the role of reason as part of that experience, media, and the concept of public opinion. Critical reflections on publics allow for self-reflection on social forces and open opportunities for social change.

Other scholars, discussed below, will expand, contradict, and criticize Habermas' theories. For scholars theorizing the conjunction between social movements and media, public sphere theories provide the opportunity to engage in, create metaphors for, and make salient the public sphere. As Benhabib (1992) proposes, public sphere theory renders visible an abstract principle and an actual space where individual actors exist within a continuously unfolding drama. Rather than holding to the early Habermasian notion of the equality of access to the public sphere, Benhabib believes that actors must have an equal chance to engage in their conditions and opinions for publics to be effective. Therefore, we need better means to examine the conditions of the public sphere and the ways in which opinion is formed.

The shift from Habermas to focusing more on individuals and how they push their discourses to the public sphere helps to privilege subjectivity. This is the point where the abstractions of space and the theories of communication for social change meet and reinforce one another. Oscillating between individual agency and subjectivity on the one hand, and conditions and structures on the other hand generates a richer picture of the way in which social change actually takes place. It is no longer useful to force the issue as a dialogue between the macro and meta-level of abstractions. In a complex universe, what is needed is a theoretical frame that allows the researcher to switch between these positions, privileging the macro level of analysis at times, and at others, the meta level.

Introducing Bourdieu to the Public Sphere

The theories of Pierre Bourdieu offer one such means of shifting back and forth between agency and structure (Bourdieu, 2005; P. Bourdieu, 1977, 2005; Calhoun, 1991; Lance, 2006; Lovell, 2007; Magerski, 2004). Combining the theoretical expansions, criticisms, and limitations of public sphere theory can reveal a broader picture of the means by which actors, social movements, and critical discourses move in society. Bourdieu provides a language that can be applied to the principles of publics, and in particular, their critical component, counterpublics and helps reveal the actor as moving between subjectivity and structure. This helps to avoid what Arendt (1958) identified as the dilemma between universalizing and the conditioning of individuals in social spheres. Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital is key to be able to move beyond Habermas and into a more nuanced theory of subjectivity/structure.

Cultural Capital

Cultural capital is a form of value associated with taste, consumption patterns, attributes, skills, and awards. For Bourdieu cultural capital is embodied in the State:

“Cultural capital, in the objectified state, has a number of properties which are defined only in the relationship with cultural capital in its embodied form. The cultural capital objectified in material objects and media, such as writings, paintings, monuments, instruments, etc., is transmissible in its materiality. A collection of paintings, for example, can be transmitted as well as economic capital (if not better, because the capital transfer is more disguised). But what is transmissible is legal ownership and not (or not necessarily) what constitutes the precondition for specific appropriation, namely, the possession of the means of ‘consuming’ a painting or using a machine, which, being nothing other than embodied capital, are subject to the same laws of transmission.” (P. Bourdieu, 1983, p. 242).

For example, within the field of education, degrees represent cultural capital. The fashions of a given arena is a form of cultural capital and marks the subject in class and region. There is often an activist style/aesthetic which also forms a type of cultural capital. A trip to any local health food store will reveal shortly that the patterns of consumption in that place are different than that of a ‘regular’ grocery store. This construction of consumerist space is also a form of cultural capital. In this case economic capital and cultural capital are in conjunction and in the process of what Bourdieu calls transmutation.

“The different types of capital can be derived from *economic capital*, but only at the cost of a more or less great effort of transformation, which is needed to produce the type of power effective in the field in question.” (P. Bourdieu, 1983, p. 249). Actors who have accumulated cultural capital in a specific field have a greater chance to use their voice in that particular field. This cultural capital provides added-value to their position in the discursive arena. Counterpublics are located in a particular field and accumulate cultural capital in that field, which members of a counterpublic can utilize in specific discursive moments. However, not all counterpublics will be equal in their access to or accumulation of cultural capital. Counterpublics comprised of the underprivileged in a field will start with a lower ‘bank account’ of cultural capital. Capital, cultural or otherwise, is a limited resource within a field. Competition over capital, which takes place within the boundaries of a field, also happens between multiple publics and counterpublics in each arena.

Cultural capital can be compared to economic capital, which is the deployment of value-associated material, such as money, that allows movement within the hierarchy of a field. Several scholars such as Dewey (1927), Lippmann (Lippmann, 1922, 1956), Habermas (Habermas, 1985, 1999), Fraser (1992), Schudson (1992), and others (Mouffe, 1992a; Pratkanis & Aronson, 2001; Spivak, 1988) note the link between economic capital and the disappearance of the public sphere, the limitations on the public sphere, and the media’s role on the public sphere. Thus, understanding economic-capital flows become important to understanding changes in discursive formations and actor relations.

Capitals and Political Economy

Counterpublic studies that use a political economy focus in their analysis, such as those done by Stanley Aronowitz (2000) on unions, provide a useful example of this type of research. His analysis focuses on how, when unions make money (economic capital), the media de-legitimize them as money-making institutions; thus, the credibility of unions (cultural capital) reduces as the unions increase their financial capital. In this case, a counterpublic such as a union, seeking access to economic capital loses cultural capital. Unions, over time, became more powerful in the labor fields where they existed. The increase in economic capital ironically created a situation where their status as ‘counter’ to the hierarchy became questioned. The argument against unions, by their opponents, became one of unions losing their counterpublic status and entering into the orthodox formations of the field.

Fields

Bourdieu proposes the concept of fields as the arena where discursive production takes place. Fields are a metaphor for the place of cultural practice. Fields are the site of a series of intuitions, rules, rituals, conventions, categories, designations, and appointments, which constitute an objective hierarchy, and produce and authorize certain discourse and activities. Fields emerge from the conflict among groups or actors attempting to determine what constitutes capital and what does not (Webb, et al., 2002). The boundaries of a field are determined by the conflicts and discourses surrounding what constitutes capital and how capitals are to be distributed. This concept is similar to

Habermas's concepts of *the system* and *lifeworld*. The system as proposed by Habermas most closely resembles Bourdieu's concept of fields. The system encroaches on the lifeworld of an actor, dictating the direction of the subject's actions. The lifeworld becomes the self-evident normative discourses to the actor. Put another way, the lifeworld is experienced as 'the way the world functions.' This concept closely matches Bourdieu's concept of doxa and orthodoxy discussed below.

Doxa

Discursive production and conflict within a field create doxa, or the set of core values that a field articulates. The core values become the field's fundamental principles, which are then internalized by actors as inherently true and necessary. The doxic attitude is internalized as a means of both corporeal and unconscious submission to the conditions that are seemingly logical within the field, but are in fact the products of arbitrary historical formation. The doxa of a field may have emerged from processes of conflict over capital but appears as normal and logical to the actors located inside the boundaries of the field.

The doxa of a field can be unearthed and examined, and their illogical nature can be deconstructed and separated from their natural appearance. Bourdieu suggests that actors, or groups of actors, can achieve this process through a form of Nietzschean genealogy. Bourdieu uses this approach to engage with the ways in which the values, discourses, traditions, and rituals characterize a field and present themselves as coherent and permanent. Some scholars have used Foucault in a similar way when seeking to theorize counterpublic discourses. This concept is similar to what Fraser (1992)

proposed in her analysis of the way that some subjects are excluded from public discourse.

Doxa, as the members of the field internalize it, becomes orthodoxy. For Habermas, this is the *lifeworld*. Orthodoxy is a set of beliefs and values that constitute the received wisdom and discursive status quo within a field. Orthodoxy represents the history of the field as it is generated by actors in power, and this version of events is preserved in the official records, documents, authoritative publications and practices.

Cultural Literacy

Cultural literacy is another concept proposed by Bourdieu that can be useful to understanding publics, counterpublics, and the process of social change. Cultural literacy is a strategic engagement with the field based upon self-reflexivity, an understanding of the rules, regulations and values of the field, and an ability to negotiate conditions and context at any given time. For Michael Warner, whose publics “act historically and according to the temporality of their circulation,” a high degree of cultural literacy prior to the circulation of discourse would allow counterpublics to gain an advantage in the discursive formation (Warner, 2005, p. 105).

Warner hypothesized that a public is self-organized. Like a field, the public is autotelic. It is comprised of both an ‘empirical thing,’ and a ‘metaphysical thing’ that reproduces themselves through their own history. Controlling the history of that discourse, in a public or field, generates power, and that allows power to be self-regenerative. Bourdieu calls this concept the *field of power*. The field of power is used in

his work to describe the way that individuals and systems in dominant fields relate to one another and the whole social structure.

Field of Power

The field of power operates as a configuration of capitals (economic, social, cultural, and symbolic) that shape relationships and practices between fields. Nancy Fraser (1992) makes a similar assertion in her essay *Rethinking the Public Sphere*. She claims that a public sphere theory should “render visible social inequality that taints deliberation within publics in late-capitalist societies” (p. 107). Many public sphere scholars break with Habermas at this point. His early concept of the public sphere focused on the historical formation of the bourgeoisie public sphere and, according to Habermas, every actor had equal access to enact his/her discourse in the public sphere.

Different types of capital are used in differing proportions in competing fields. This interplay of capitals changing in context is similar to Michael Schudson’s (1992) work on resources in publics. Schudson proposes that there are different resources available to publics and actors (he uses the term citizens) within a public. Schudson recognizes the need for further elaboration on the many forces at play in the way that actors are shaped by larger social structure. His solution was to theorize the unequal nature of the distribution of resources in a given social situation.

Many of the types of resources Schudson (1992) chooses to explore are similar to types of capital. For example, electoral procedures can be a type of cultural capital but also a type of doxa. In the field of power, orthodoxy is used as a form of symbolic and cultural capital to normalize the existing power relations. Actors within a field accept

these normalized power relations and this creates *illusio*; actors also become the carriers of that *illusio*.

Games

Like Wittgenstein's (1961 (1921)) language games, *illusio* is the act of accepting the discourses of a field and yet believing that agency is possible within those discourses. Bourdieu uses the concept of games to describe how members of a field come to believe that the game is worth playing, while they also recognize their stakes in the game. Agents within a counterpublic make a similar choice. They must decide the amount of 'counter' they wish to engage with. In the union example above, the unions were not 'counter' enough; on the contrary, as we will examine later, the HIV/AIDS activist group ACT-UP was accused of being too 'counter.' Whatever the level of acceptance, the process of gaming brings strangers into a relation: individual agents join the counterpublic, and in this new field, they come in contact with other actors. Also, counterpublic actors interact with people outside the counterpublic, and both engage in their own ideas of how the game is played. Actors in this affiliation believe that they have a set of rules to enact discourse around. Michael Warner (2005) states that the site where this takes place is the "social imaginary." Strangers in relation to one another are the "raw materials" that creates a public or a counterpublic. Negt and Kluge (1993) similarly argue that a public is based on shared norms. The public is the place where actors can enact experience. Negt and Kluge propose that the public is formed by what they call an organizing ideology. Publics are generated around social organization, and this benefits power structures. For Bourdieu this ideology exists internal to and external to the field.

Althusser

Bourdieu's distribution of power in discourses is also examined by Louis Althusser in his concept of ideological state apparatuses (Althusser, 1971). The key difference is that, for Bourdieu, ideological power and the power to create orthodoxy can move between actors, thus hierarchies can be overturned. On the other hand, Althusser believed that individual actors and collectives did not have the power to overturn ideologies. Despite this difference, Althusser and Bourdieu see power as moving beyond economic or coercive power structures and residing in discursive formations. For Bourdieu, discourse becomes orthodoxy; for Althusser, discourse becomes ideological state apparatuses, and in both cases, people are driven toward commoditization. To Warner (2005), the possibility to deconstruct ideological state apparatuses or orthodoxy—the elements that constitutes public discourse—is a form of poetic world-making. Power, publics, and fields are created through discourse. However, beyond this point, Althusser and Bourdieu disagree. By revisiting Marxist thought, Althusser was attempting to illustrate why actors do not have agency. Bourdieu brings back individual and collective agency with his concept of heterodoxy.

Heterodoxy

Heterodoxy is the set of beliefs that challenge orthodoxy, or the status quo and normative structures within a particular field. Heterodoxy can come from critical thought, discourse, or historical moments of fracture. Whatever the source, heterodoxy challenges the doxa and orthodoxy, as they exist in a field. Members of a field can generate

heterodoxy as a means of redistributing social, cultural, symbolic, and economic capital. Counterpublics generate counter-discourses, or different discursive spaces. They both create and are shaped by heterodoxy.

Feminist Criticism

Feminist criticisms of the public sphere (Landes, 1998) have often shown that what is disallowed in discursive formations is arbitrary. Historical processes determine which discourses will be relegated to the private sphere, and which ones make it to the public sphere. History determines the allowable discursive subjects. Counterpublics sometimes seek to bring private discourses in to the public sphere. This generates heterodoxy. In this moment, counterpublics will face the doxic formations within the field that they are attempting to change in the discursive formations. Warner states, “[t]he discourse of a public is a linguistic form, from which the social conditions of its own possibility are in a large part derived” (Warner, 2005p. 105).

Action and Actors

Fields contain the doxa of discourse, which in turn limits what can be brought into that field as a legitimate topic of discourse. Hannah Arendt (1958) has stated the *vita activa* is the act of speech, and speech in western culture has been the realm of men. This is supported by western culture orthodoxy where the realm of action has been dominated by men. I would also apply the notion that the realm of action is dominated by men as a means to criticize Habermas’s early work on the public sphere. If heterodoxy arises and competes with orthodoxy in a field and if this discursive competition is the purview of

men, then women are relegated to the private sphere or excluded from fields. Habermas's concept of the public sphere never dealt with these nuances, and he believed that everyone had equal access to the public sphere. Bourdieu examines this closely in his works on education and masculine domination. Like Bourdieu, Arendt's theory provides actors with agency. Actors are bound by constant conditioning, or orthodoxy, but not by plutonic essences or a human nature that is inescapable. New acts allow the actors the opportunity to change orthodoxy through the creation of new discourses. New acts are generated through imagination.

The Act of Creation

The ability to create discourses, counter-discourses, or heterodoxy is a process that arises out of the ability to move beyond *illusio*. Arendt (1958) believes that this comes from the *vita complentiva*, while Bourdieu argues that it comes from actors questioning doxa when the structure of the field limits their ability to act. Habermas (1985) argues that it arises out of the seams that open up between the system and the lifeworld.

Henry A. Giroux (1998) creates a similar argument when he engages the work of Paulo Freire, counterpublics, and the attack on public education. Education, and the ability to use that education in a public setting to question and redirect discourses, creates a problem for those that benefit from dominant discourses. Within a field, changing orthodoxy (which is counterpublics' role or, in Habermas's case, new social movements) endangers the capital and *illusio* of the dominant stakeholders. Dana Cloud examines the role of myths (*illusio*) about capitalism and new social movements in her essay on the

way that counter-discourses can create new discourses of orthodoxy (Cloud, 2001).

Beyond the dominant stakeholders, heterodoxy also threatens the cultural literacy of all other members in a field. Threatened cultural literacy may account for resistance to social change and counter-discourses.

Counterpublics and Social Change

Queer groups are located in the political discourse of a given geographic and political space. The political space they occupy is inherently opposite to the larger hegemonic forces of the orthodoxy of the public sphere. Nevertheless, do queer groups constitute a counterpublic? The concept of counterpublics developed as a means of recognizing the multiplicity of voices that are left out in Habermas's conception of the public dialogue surrounding a given community (Habermas, 1999). Counterpublic theories seek to expand the dialogue of publics to include voices that have been excluded from the majority dialogue.

According to Ansen and Brouwer (2001), counterpublic theories have made three key changes to public sphere theories. First, they show that there are multiple public spheres and not a single unifying discourse that is dominated by a single group. Second, counterpublic theories show that the boundaries of what constitutes the public sphere may not be so impenetrable. The topics of discourse and persons involved may move from public to private across this demarcation. In addition, the members of a given group may move between sub-sets in a given public sphere. Finally, the relationship of the machinations between state and public sphere may not be as idealized and clear as early theorists, such as Habermas and Althusser, had assumed.

While it is well documented that queer groups have been excluded from the majority dialogue, the question of whether queer groups qualify as a counterpublic remains. What level of communication is necessary to enter into the public sphere as a counterpublic? Further, if they are, is there anything specific to their discourse that makes them different from other counterpublics? In order to answer this, first we need to define a counterpublic.

Identifying what constitutes a counterpublic has been a key problem since the introduction of the idea by Felski in 1989. First, by describing counterpublics as a “plurality of competing publics” (Felski, 1989, p. 155) in a culture that promotes mass-consumerism and is driven by global forms of mass communication, Felski’s arguments helped to deconstruct the solidity of the public sphere as conceived by Habermas and earlier theorists. While this definition opens up new arenas for study in the process of social communication, it fails to provide enough specificity to identify what constitutes a counterpublic.

Theorists such as Nancy Fraser (1992) also expanded the theoretical bounds of counterpublics. Seeking to create measurable boundaries as to what constitutes a counterpublic beyond speculating about their mere existence, Fraser moved the question of counterpublics towards a narrower definition. Because counterpublics must exist in an ontological condition, their identification is predicated upon containing specific elements.

Fraser provides a definition that goes a long way to delimiting these conditions. Counterpublics are “parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interest and needs” (Fraser, 1992, p. 67). However, even within this

definition, terms and concepts such as *subordinated*, *circulated counterdiscourses*, and *oppositional* create problems of delimitation and specificity. This proposed definition generated a host of writings on the subject that created tremendous ferment in the theory and the identification of possible counterpublics. This opened a wide area where scholars sought to identify counterpublics. Asen and Brouwer's statements of counterpublics highlight this issue. Stating that counterpublics can "differ with regard to density, complexity, breadth, and access to resources and power; they may be episodic, enduring, or abstract" (Ansen & Brouwer, 2001, p. 10) opens the issue of counterpublics again to broad interpretations.

Queer Counterpublics

Do queer groups conform to this conception? First, queer groups as a category occupy the position of a subordinated political group. Being self-identified as queer is a choice. A member chooses to align herself with the broad principles and political goals of the queer position (Regales, 2008). A queer person with a subordinated social status is not the same as a person with a subordinated social status because they are gay, a specific ethnicity, or a person of color.

However, queer groups are subordinated politically and economically in ways that are similar to other subordinated social groups. Queers can be members of positionalities that limit their subjectivity on multiple levels (Hines, 2006, 2009; K. Namaste, 1994; Viviane Namaste, 1999; Vivane Namaste, 2009). Actors may not self-identify with the things that mark them as being other. The things that make otherness for the group may also be objects of pride for the individual actor.

Because of this, affinity groups are problematic in particular ways. Unlike demographic subordinated groups, psychographic subordinated groups contain an element of ‘choice.’ The person is marked both by the stable markers of a social structure, but also by their political alignments that help to make, in part, the social markers that apply to them (D. Richardson, 2006). Nevertheless, the choice to become a political outsider is one with real material implications.

One becomes a queer through political struggle (Namaste, 1999). The queer position in the political discourse is counter to the ontological and epistemological assumptions of a society built on modernism (Iain Morland & Willox, 2005). One’s commitment to deconstruction means to be able to enter a discursive arena where the goal is to rewrite dominant discourses (J. Gamson, 1995; J. Gamson & Moon, 2004). Discourses centered on genders and sexualities are often the most naturalized and normalized. Being queer requires engaging with and creating discourses that seek to de-normalize and de-marginalize. “Queer activism is not limited to lesbian and gay politics, but necessarily includes transgendered people, bisexuals, and all individuals who are marginalized by hegemonic heterosexuality” (Namaste, 1999, p. 213).

Challenging this naturalized discourse is a threat to the doxa of fields. This threat to cultural literacy can direct anger at those participating in the heterodoxy. This can provide another reading for situations involving counterpublics such as the one proposed by Brower involving the members of ACT-UP. This balance between the introduction of heterodoxy, (as well as heterodoxic discourse and heterodoxic discourse methods) and the need to preserve the cultural literacy in a field is also found in the works of other counterpublic theorists. Erik Doxtader describes this balance between heterodoxy and

cultural literacy when he attempts to “introduce oppositional argumentation into the public sphere but do so in a manner that preserves the consensual nature of deliberative democracy” (Doxtader, 2001, p. 61).

Counterpublics and actors in a field may attempt to change the field, but they must also preserve it to some degree. Fields need their orthodoxy to function, and actors need to understand the rules defined through cultural literacy. As Doxtader (2001) continues, “[c]ounterpublics are not isolated formations. They reflect, engage, and represent the (procedural and material) terms of public deliberation” (p. 63). However, as Doxtader also points out, a counterpublic is not a public. It separates itself from publics in some way. Bourdieu also theorizes this separation and uses the concept of poles in an attempt to explain the closeness or distance between heterodoxy and orthodoxy (or, as I see it, between counterpublic and public).

Poles

Lastly, I see another point of intersection between public sphere theory and Bourdieu in his concept of poles. To research a thing, Bourdieu develops the concept of *construction*. Construction is the principle that the objects of study exist for the researcher only within the framework of the researcher’s hypothesis. For Bourdieu, the fundamental scientific act is the construction of the object of research. Following his principle of construction, Bourdieu constructs a place for social movements and agency to exist. This place is the autonomous pole

Counterpublics must exist within a field. To spatialize this, Bourdieu claims that there are two poles representing discourse in fields. The heteronomous pole is bound in

the doxa and hierarchical structures of a field and the field of power. The autonomous pole operates within the field, but is not bound to the field of power or other fields. It is in this pole that Bourdieu situates social movements. Habermas makes a similar move when he theorizes the location of social movements in *seams*. Michael Warner also finds this to be the location of counterpublics:

“Counterpublic discourse is far more than the expression of subaltern culture and far more than what some Foucauldians like to call “reverse discourse.”

Fundamentally mediated by public forms, counterpublics incorporate the personal/impersonal address and expansive estrangement of public speech as conditions of their common world.” (Warner, 2005, p. 121)

Developing Metaliteracy

An examination of any field should provide a schema for developing and examining the autonomous and heteronomous poles. Using the concepts above (orthodoxy, heterodoxy, *illusio*, capital) illuminates the relations of discourses in a field at a given historical moment. The rhetoric of the prevailing orthodoxy and heterodoxy are revealed when Bourdieu’s concepts are applied in specific historical processes. This allows empirical examination of a field (or public) and generates data that can be used to understand the nature of discourses, counterpublics, and counter-discourses in social movements. In a recent study on the online leathersex community, Nathan Rambukkana

(2007) provides a model similar to the intersections proposed above. The BDSM⁴ community is moving part of their subculture to online communities; in part making it easier for those that wish to join these communities easier than it was in the past. The creation of an autonomous BDSM pole. Using Nancy Fraser, Nathan Rambukkana proposes that the BDSM community is strengthened through the creation of these discourses but the level of individual sexual identity is lessened as a stronger community creates specific and cultural expectations. This has opened the community to new members. “For BDSM practitioners, the Internet appears to enable the beginning of an apparently new style of BDSM discourse-culture, with many roots in Leatherculture, but certainly moving beyond it.” (Rambukkana, 2007, p. 43) In creating sexual counter discourses “it seems as though having this information available beyond the purview of those within the subaltern counterpublic proper would, then, be beneficial to inter-cultural communication between this public sphere and others.” (Rambukkana, 2007, p. 43) As Habermas proposes, new social movements are the sites of counterdiscourses. Incorporating Bourdieu into public sphere theory conjoins social movement theory and publics/counterpublics.

⁴ BDSM is a form of sexuality that combines Bondage and Discipline with combinations of dominance and submission or Sadism and Masochism. This is a broad term for a variety of specific sexual practices including but not limited to animal transformation fantasies, age play, spanking, bondage, cock and ball torture, Dominant and Submissive sexual fantasies, fireplay, golden showers, mummification, scatplay, tit torture, wax play, service-oriented submission, infantilism, leather play and many others.

PART V

QUEER AND GLBT ORGANIZATIONS, MEDIA AND RESEARCH

In March of 2012, I was a speaker at a social group formed to give gay men over the age of 50 a place to meet and share their experiences. After the meeting, I was milling around shaking hands and answering questions about my research on rural queers. A tall thin man came up and shook my hand. He thanked me for coming and speaking and I asked him what his experience was like when he was younger. He said he was eighty-eight years old and worked in a hospital in the 1950's. No one knew he was gay. Even then, he had been in a constant state of fear that someone would find out. As a nurse, his masculinity had been questioned many times. Now sixty years on he was attending an open meeting in a gay friendly restaurant where a reporter from the local gay paper was writing a story for the next issue in the reddest state in the country. The collective experience of gays and lesbians has changed dramatically in the last sixty years. This is because of the brave individuals that placed their personal safety on the line to organize social movements centered on LGBT issues. This work continues today. It has expanded to include gender presentations, rights to the body, other minoritized sexual desires, and queers. This chapter will briefly cover the history of these movements and key social movement organizations.

Queer and GLBT Organizations, Media, and Research: A Brief Overview

The theorizing on social movements has largely ignored the unique ways that organizing for social change around sexual desire or gender performance has been brought about by LGTB grassroots organizations. There is little theorizing on the specific organizational methods of gay, lesbian or queer social movements. There is even less theory concerning the media that these groups have created and how it is specific to their political desire.

The majority of writing on LGBT or queer social movements theorizes them as part of the new social movements. I do not find this surprising because the new social movement literature privileges identity. LGBT and queer groups are the assumed products of the rise of identitarian politics. Some texts such as Guiridy, Kennedy and Zald (2000) make no mention of gay social movements at all. Others mention it in passing as if the struggle for human freedom around sexuality was equal to, and the same as other social movements (Benford & Snow, 2000; Jasper, 1997; Kriesi, et al., 1995; Polletta & Jaspers, 2001; Snow, Zurcher, & Ekland-Olson, 1980).

Other studies use the early homophile movements as an example of the problems in identity movements. These studies center the rise of gay political movements in the rise of urban areas (E. Armstrong, 2005; Barclay, Bernstein, & Marshall, 2009; Bernstein, 1997; Bernstein & Reimann, 2001; Castells, 1983). The use of the built environment as the center for Lesbian and Gay research yielded some of the best accounts of the rise of sexuality social movements and their mobilization (Knopp, 1987). The literature has not extended into the virtual space of the Internet. Actual physical space has been theorized as part of the LGBT political project (Brickell, 2000). Escobar (1992) complains that “[i]ncreasing attention is being paid to women's and ethnic movements and grassroots movements of various kinds; on the other hand, few studies exist of the gay... and ecology movements” (p.32).

Still fewer studies examine LGBT/queer social movements internationally or transnationally (Altman, 2001; J. Gamson, 1995; J. Gamson & Moon, 2004; McRae, 1990; M. Smith, 1999, 2008). Some theorizing goes too far in its acceptance of a lesbian and gay struggle without attempting to understand the nuances of difference within queer

and LGBT identities themselves (Bernstein, 1997). The lack of nuance in the social movement literature that does examine sexual identities social movements only reveals that the category new social movements is too broad, as Melucci has criticized it. Identity has limits, even queer identities (Gamson, 1995; Gamson & Moon, 2004). As far as social movements are formulated around identity issues, they will be too limited to encompass issues of desire. While issues of identity and issues of desire are connected and affect each other, queer identities are, according to Gamson (1995) virtually limitless.

Alternative Media and Queers

Like the social movement literature, the alternative media literature tends to limit its examination of LGBT issue to the barest mention. Waltz (2005) pays little attention to either LGBT or queer activism or media. Atton (2002) only mentions gay social movements as part of the continuum of new social movements. Downing (2003) uses older examples from the early years of the gay liberation movement as a means of supporting his arguments about audiences. His work fails to privilege LGBT or queer social movements as a site of study. Other studies continue the pattern of listing gays and lesbians among new social movements and state that gay and lesbian identities are now more visible in both mainstream media and alternative media (Downey & Fenton, 2003; Gross, 2001). This is as far as scholars engage with queer and LGBT movements and organizations. Lumping LGBT and queer movements into the new social movement category does little to nuance the way that their specific experience and desires are expressed in their media and communication. This problem is compounded further with

queer social movements because their methods and goals are not in accordance with the general goals of new social movements.

Larry Gross (Gross, 1991, 2001, 2003) theorizes that the Internet created opportunities for new forms of gay and lesbian social organization in 'cyberspace.' He claims queers were among the first to realize the new potential of the Internet (Gross, 2001, p. 260). For Gross, the Internet provided new ways for people with minority sexualities to explore their interests and meet others. In its early days, the Internet was a medium for expressing desires online in a way without exposing the actors to the dangers of being marked as a sexual minority. His work recounts some of the early forms of online publishing for lesbian and gay audiences and the way the Internet allowed 'the closet' to expand its boundaries for users. This content was not without boundaries. The second half of this work explores the relation of the Internet and the policies that intersected between youth access and sexual content. He provides a good overview of the situation facing the early Internet and explores some intercultural dimensions of LGBT activism online. However, Gross's work offers limited explanation of what LGBT creators of alternative content experience. Les Wright (1997) points that the rise of bear culture⁵ in the U. S. coincides with the creation of pre-Internet bulletin boards; he explains that bear subculture progressively strengthened with the rise of the Internet. This approach mirrors that of Warner (1993), another queer theorist who does a better job of theorizing what producers of content experience. However, his work focuses on the

⁵ Countering the idea that homosexual men are effete bear culture is performed by men who desire same sex or bisexual relations with men that are hairy and present as traditionally masculine. Bears can desire or are desired for their hyper-masculine performance.

creation of space and how it reflects and affects larger political processes, rather than on how these groups' communication actions express queer desires.

History of Sexual Desire and Gender Performances Organizations

Along with other scholars, I believe that the struggle for different sexualities in the U. S. has advanced through five phases. The borders of these phases are not solid lines. The vestigial parts of organizational styles and methods pass from older groups into younger generations. Embryonic approaches to organizing found in one group can often be located in the work of previous groups. Applying Bourdieu's concepts, more recent groups reclaim the cultural capital of older groups and use it in different ways, taking their political actions in new directions. The historical moment that surrounds the group shapes the way that they perceive and enact their political power. In this section, I will briefly examine each phase, the groups within that phase, and the media they created in the construction of social and communicative power.

Modern queer Internet activism has its root in the organization of lesbian and gay groups from previous epochs. The primary locus of cultural capital has been previous forms of LGBT organization. However, rather than repeating patterns of capital accrual, queers have been active in borrowing strategies from other non gay social movements (Brown, 2007). I believe a good case could be made for how queers use capitals developed in other forms of organizing such as the free love movement, the women's liberation movement, and other radical political groups. This section focuses on the history of sexual social organizing (Bergman, 2000; Cant & Hemmings, 1988; Streitmatter, 1985). Many historical texts focus on a single period of LGBT and queer

social movements; others include LGBT and queer alternative media creation as part of a historical analysis of a group, place or period. As of this writing, no single volume provides a complete or nearly complete history of alternative or radical media related to the homosexual movements.

The pre-Homophile Phase

I consider the pre-homophile phase as ending in the interwar period and extending back to the moment when heterosexuality and binary sexual categories became the norm. Michel Foucault's (Foucault, 1984, 1994) work is one of the first to examine the history of sexuality; his work helped to destabilize the naturalism surrounding the idea that heterosexuality is the only normal way to experience sexuality. The Foucauldian archeology of sexuality and homosexuality has revealed an astonishing variety of discourses around sexual subjects. This project reveals that Western societies include a variety of discourses on homosexuality, meaning that homosexuality has been an evolving concept, one that has an entirely different set of discursive rules depending on each period. From being a sin, the discourse of homosexuality moved in the nineteenth century towards being a medicalized pathology; these historical changes reveal the shifting nature of society's relationship to sexual discourses. Little research has been done on the way that media and alternative media have been part of this process. Further, most of the research is Euro-centric and ignores the nature of different sexualities in the U. S..

I will therefore jump ahead in time from the pre-homophile phase to a more modern period. The rise of cities in the U. S. and the concurrent industrialization of the economy concentrated persons with different sexualities in urban settings. This

concentration in turn made their existence more salient to themselves and to the public. This change brought about social groups that would eventually organize politically and, through the creation of their own media, create the current queer political activism scene.

The Homophile Phase or pre-Stonewall phase

In the U. S. the homophile phase represents the beginning of sexually organized political activity. Starting as a social scene in the interwar period and becoming more politically active in the post-WWII environment, the groups that first formed in this era blazed a new set of trails for the gay community. These were not open groups, because strict laws and social mores still kept homosexuals in the social shadows. The medicalization of homosexuality as a disease and mental disorder prevented homosexuals from openly benefiting from the growth of prosperity in the U.S.. However, these groups and their members, even while persecuted by the likes of Senator McCarthy held out hope that the homosexual would one day begin to enter into the public sphere (Johnson, 2006). These groups are some of the earliest forms of radical organization around sexualities. Some of these groups, like the Mattachine Society, still impact today's struggle for queer political space. Even though the Mattachine Society is defunct, many contemporary queer groups adopt their articulation and mission statement as separatist and radical.

Finocchio's

In the 1930s small groups of urban gays started to form meeting points. Encouraged by the prohibition-era disregard for the law and changing social mores, Joe

Finocchio opened Finoccio's in San Francisco as a gay speakeasy in 1929. Modeled after his father's speakeasy, Finoccio's served as a hidden social meeting point for the gay and drag community. Finoccio's was known for supporting both the gay and lesbian communities as well as the gender-variant community. Famous for its drag performances and over-the-top productions, Finoccio's helped solidify the gay and drag community by providing a space for interaction. At the repeal of the Comstock Act, which effectively ended prohibition, Finoccio's became a legal drinking establishment. Local police arrested several of its female impersonators in 1936 when the club was raided. The club moved to a larger location and during WWII military officials declared it off limits to U.S. military personnel. However, with the changing culture of San Francisco Finoccio's held on. It closed its doors for the last time in 1999.

San Francisco was and continues to be an important gay center in the U. S.. Urban spaces offer several distinct advantages for communities deemed unacceptable by a larger population or moral codification; urban spaces offer better conditions for expressing censured pleasures. First, by concentrating sexual minorities, urban areas allow for greater access to potential partners. Second, urban spaces offer a level of anonymity not always available in smaller communities. Finally, the concentration of numbers allows for group cohesion and the development of grassroots politics as well as easier access to media technologies.

In a social order that made illegal some sexual desires, places such as Finoccio's allowed for a distinct culture to arise that encouraged coupling and 'cruising.' These early spaces, while fraught with danger from the police and moral crusaders, helped to create a community. As a result, a specific *cultural capital* emerged, allowing persecuted sexual

minorities to identify and communicate with likeminded individuals while reducing personal risk. These were the earliest forms of counterpublic in the U.S. built around homosexual and gender variant desires.

According to historian Les Wright (1999), “[b]y the end of the 1930’s the simulacrum of modern gay community had taken distinct shape in the caldron of San Francisco” (p. 172). This formation would set the stage for wartime gay organizing and finally for post-war political organizations. This community created some of the first coded messages that would eventually develop into a set of communicative codes leading to a specific LGBT communicative capital. As Wright (1999) further states, in San Francisco “a gay dialect, an argot impenetrable by the uninitiated had risen, in keeping with the increased censorship of the times, to forge a prototypical bond of community” (p. 172).

In 1939 the MGM picture the Wizard of Oz was released. Instantly popular with moviegoers, its message of tolerance was adopted by the San Francisco gay community as part of their communicative codes. A cruising individual could ask a stranger ‘are you a friend of Dorothy?’ as a means to ascertain their sexual desires. In short, the question was a coded form of ‘are you Gay?’ San Francisco itself was referred to as Oz, the fictional land where Dorothy travels.

The Mattachine society

California also played an important role in the formation of one of the first actively political and publishing groups of the homophile movement, the Mattachine Society (D’Emilio, 1998; Dececco, 2006; Dececco & Bullough, 2002). Founded in 1950

in Los Angeles by Henry Hay and four friends, the Mattachine Society was dedicated to promoting education and information surrounding the homophile movement. Hay proposed to the Mattachine Society the radical concept that, rather than being deviants, homosexuals were a cultural minority. There were four main points to this argument, and its ramifications continue to impact the politics of LGBTQ struggles even today.

First, Hay argued that like other cultural minorities, homosexuals had a common language. A set of linguistic and symbolic codes specific to homosexuality had developed in California, and Hay stretched this issue to support the idea that gays had their own communicative capital. This capital had helped create community. The shared symbolic codes uniting individual actors and giving them a feeling of community helped to create, in Bourdieu's terms, the homosexual field. In order for this field to grow and survive, it was necessary to expand this code to a greater number of users. Hay wanted to disseminate the gay code and communication forms from the San Francisco internal community to a national external community. Alternative media was a means to this end. The production of information and the distribution of media would help to create a community. Hay believed homosexual-focused media would help to create a stronger community and reduce feelings of otherness and anomie.

Second, Hay argued that homosexuals have common practices. Applying Bourdieu's theory to Hay's advocacy discourse, common practices accrue into cultural capital that unites and helps to create a homosexual public sphere. These practices include sexual performances, trends in the homosexual community (i.e., fashion styles, neighborhoods, career choices), and strategies to avoid detection and unwanted attention. One example of this cultural capital is the cruising practice of wearing a red pocket

square with a suit to indicate homosexuality to others who are aware of the symbolic signaling. Later practices such as the 1970's bandana code also fall into this category.

Hay also theorized that 'the homosexual' has a common psychology. While this may seem bordering on the absurd today, and may be distasteful in the era of queer politics, Hay was writing within a specific social era. The majority in the field of power considered homosexuality both criminal and a sign of psychological illness. Hay argues that the common experience of persecution and secrecy created a common psychology characterized by shame and distrust. The fear homosexuals experienced, together with the negative scripts they were subjected to during interactions with straight people, forged this psychology in out of the closet homosexuals. According to Hay, alternative media publications could help create or rewrite this shame and fear into a new cultural psychology of pride. For individual homosexuals, feeling and recognizing that they were a part of a larger community was a key goal of the Mattachine Society.

Finally, Hay recognized the necessity of cruising as a cultural practice. Cruising consists of going to public places and searching for partners through a series of ritualized actions and language. The lack of social spaces for homosexuals kept them fragmented in their search for sexual partners. Straight spaces had to be rewritten as gay spaces. Homosexuals had to have cultural capital to find, participate, and communicate in these spaces. Many homosexuals in rural areas or without connections to the limited homosexual press lacked this ability to search for partners. In other words, access to gay spaces and gay codes and languages becomes cultural capital, and it's a source of political power.

Because of the cultural climate the Mattachine Society relied on secrecy (Dececco, 2006; Dececco & Bullough, 2002). It was organized in a cell structure as it created groups throughout the U.S.. Each member knew only the members in the same group, but had only limited contact with other cells. Modeled after the earlier communist organizations in the U.S., of which Hays was a former member, the Mattachine Society soon became a group of interest to the U. S. government. In 1953, the FBI investigated the Mattachine Society as a threat to internal U.S. security.

The U.S. Congress targeted the Washington D.C. chapter of the Mattachine Society when Congress attempted to revoke the group's tax status as an educational group. The argument of the Congress was that the government should not promote or support an association of people whose acts were illegal and *ungodly*. Congress instructed the IRS to not grant tax-exempt status to groups who 'promoted' homosexuality. Part of that 'promotion' was the publication and distribution of *The Mattachine Review*, the publication of The Mattachine Society, one of the earliest specifically gay-oriented alternative media.

Cory Book Service

At the same time that the Mattachine Society was forming in the early 1950s the Cory Book Service was also getting started. The Cory Book Service was the first gay book club. Its mission was to send books with a gay theme to its members and allow greater access to the developing homosexual publishing industry. Founded by Brandy Ay Mar and Donald Cory, it only lasted a year. However, access to gay publishing would become an important part of creating a homosexual field. Scholars such as David

Bergman (2000) have noted that “gay bookstores were among the first venues not specifically linked to sex in which gays and lesbians could meet” (p.43). These spaces, recalling the leftist bookstores of early eras, created a place for political consciousness, unlike a bar or speakeasy, with their focus on entertainment. These bookstores allowed people to partner. They also allowed people to create counterpublics with like-minded individuals where they could share their experiences of repression and theorize social change.

Grecian Guild Pictorial and Guild Press

Publishing had a critical impact on forming the nascent homosexual community. By the 1960s, publishing houses like the *Guild Press*, were producing pulp magazines like *Grecian Guild Pictorial*, some of the first non-book media available to the early homophile movement. This project was a capitalist enterprise. However, the publishing house also served as a social movement press. The creation of these new forms of media helped to disrupt the heterosexual habitus that had characterized the homophile and allowed its readers to explore their previously hidden homosexual desires.

The pulp magazine with the tag line “Art-Body Building-Health” meant to appeal to a broad gay male audience by portraying multiple masculinities in a homoerotic context. Published by H. Lynn Womack, it was the most popular gay magazine of its time. To put the *Grecian Guild Pictorial* in context, in the early sixties the Mattachine Society had approximately 230 members. These members received copies of *ONE*. The *Grecian Guild Pictorial* had over 40,000 subscribers. While not directly political, the *Grecian Guild Pictorial* served a political role by reducing and removing a level of

invisibility within men who had same sex desire. Womack himself was the object of police investigation because of the magazine content and a convention he held for the gay press in New Orleans in 1958. Pursued by the law for indecent and criminal activity, he evaded the charges by claiming he was insane. In this period, this was a viable defense for gay men in public. It worked, and he was able to continue operating Guild Press. In an ironic twist later, when the homosexual movement was challenging the status of homosexuality as a mental disease to the APA in the early 1970s, Womack and Guild Press published for free the materials used in the campaign. These political materials helped to reverse in 1973 the standing ruling of the APA that homosexuality was a disease and opened up new political possibilities to the movement.

Guild Press also published some of the first gay guides to the U.S.. These publications helped indirectly to create gay centers like the Mission District in San Francisco. Homosexuals from areas with no gay visibility could visit a large city, find a gay guide and be instantly plugged in to a larger community they heretofore had not experienced. This also created concentrations of population and therefore had a direct effect on the movement's ability to organize politically. While later social activists have criticized these gay districts as gay ghettos, their early formation helped to generate the idea that same-sex desire was more common than previously thought.

The Homosexual in America

In 1951 Donald Webster Cory, a pseudonym for Edward Sagarin, published a book that would have a major impact on homosexual politics in the U. S. *The Homosexual in America* (Cory, 1951) the claim that mainstream society despised the

homosexual population; on this basis Cory stated that homosexuals were in need of justice and social services. Cory, a professor of criminology in New York, combined psychology, sociology and criminology in the book to show the subjective experience of the gay community. Written at the time of the McCarthy hearings on communism and the Red Scare, the book was inspirational to the early homophile movement and overall as the first set of printings portraying homosexuals as a suppressed minority in need of sympathy from the larger community.

In this phase, Cory, like Hay, wrote about the subjective uniting experience of the homosexual. Cory argued that the homosexual population has similar experiences and this unites them into a counterpublic. First, hostility from the larger population created an unsafe climate for homosexuals and led to the hidden nature of their activities. Psychologists portrayed this as an element to their mental illness. Cory inverts this relationship and posits that it was the society that created this situation. The solution was to create a climate that was tolerable to the homosexual.

Second, the Cory examined the discrimination that homosexuals faced. He called for decreases in the level of repression. Third, the book posited that there were different kinds of homosexual lifestyles that varied within the population. This variety made it difficult to make general statements about the nature of homosexuality and set the stage for a reexamination of the broad psychological statements that had previously been used to justify repression. Finally, Cory provided (for a time) a positive message about homosexuals being useful and productive members of society.

The homophile movement praised the book as an accurate document of their experiences. The book served as an outside and non-biased source that presented their

struggles to a larger public sphere. A comparison of the major points in *The Homosexual in America* and major points of the Mattachine Society shows remarkable similarity. *The Homosexual in America* became one of the major texts if not the major text in the early fight for homosexual rights. This story however does not end happily.

As a book written by an ‘outside’ expert, the volume was questioned in some of its positions. Later volumes contained an afterword that recanted some of the early positive messages. A decade after it was published Edward Sagarin claimed that his findings were incorrect and that homosexuals were indeed mentally ill and in need of treatment. Nevertheless, the early impact of the volume was positive in gaining allies in the non-homosexual population and as a politically uniting factor in the homosexual community.

Stonewall

Scholars use Stonewall to mark the modern emergence of the gay rights movement. While this marking is questionable, it does signify a shift in the relationship between visibility and invisibility in the area of gay social movements. On June 28, 1969, a regular police vice raid on the Stonewall Inn in New York met with active resistance from the gay and gender-variant occupants. While raids were regular events, this moment became important because the reaction to it was extraordinary. Researchers have documented the importance of this break from previous forms of resistance; Stonewall created a new cultural capital and new spaces for heterodoxy in the field of power around sexual social moments (Carter, 2010; Dececco, 2006; Dececco & Bullough, 2002; Duberman, 1994; Marcus, 2002).

The Stonewall riots represent a shift in the visibility of the gay community in places like New York. A year after the riots the first gay pride parade was held in that city and has been ongoing ever since. While the effects of the Stonewall riots seem to be urban-centric, they opened up new political spaces for the gay and lesbian community. The Stonewall riots and the ensuing news coverage helped to create new capitals with which the gay and lesbian community could engage a social structure that had attempted to render them invisible. The Stonewall riots also serve as a marker for a shift in the rhetoric of the struggle for entry into public politics. However, this moment is only one out of a continuum of moments in the creation of a queer public sphere.

After Stonewall

In some ways, it was what happened after Stonewall that created what LGBTQ scholars consider the gay and queer public sphere today. The new cultural capital of direct action, translated into political movement that helped to render the gay community visible in the field of power. Gay ghettos became more open, and this made new forms of social organizing and performance possible. For a short time, the activism formed in the homosexual community spanned a wide range of tactics and possibilities. Some moved away from the secretive and assimilationist organizations to become early forms of queer radical politics. Others felt that the political possibilities of assimilation and inclusion offered the best possible path towards gay and lesbian acceptance.

After the Stonewall riots, the methods of social movement organizing for sexual rights changed rapidly. The gay and lesbian social movements largely abandoned the secret societies for a model of openness in the public space. Two main forms of

organizing emerged from this change. The first was a radical strand of organizing that is the predecessor and originator of many queer tactics today. These groups were short lived and action oriented. These radical organizations faced many of the same criticisms that queer groups face today. The second form of social movement organizing became the assimilationist position. These movements may have started with a radical political critique but have morphed into the GLBT wing of the nonprofit industrial complex. Their position is in constant dialog and metamorphosis with structures of power rather than radically challenging them.

This set of assimilationist social movements continues to lobby and direct the majority of gay community organizing in the U. S.. The assimilationist social movements measure their progress through the passage of legislation and the idea that visibility is a form of social change. These movements are heavily involved in the heterosexual public sphere and represent for the majority of the populous what gay and lesbian organizations are. Their access to capitals allows them to dominate the discourse on the meanings behind sexual minorities and the actions taken to secure rights. This section will examine two large organizations in this category the Human Rights Campaign and PFLAG.

Human Rights Campaign

Founded in 1980 as a means of funding gay-positive congressional seat candidates, the HRC is now the largest U.S. homosexual lobbying group. While it has moved towards the broader goal of creating and shaping legislation, HRC continues to dominate the gay political sphere. With programs such as National Coming Out Day, the

repeal of DADT, the Hate Crimes Prevention Act, and working towards the National Employment Non-Discrimination Act, the HRC represents a major force in the field of gay politics. It has become for many the symbol of gay political change in the U. S.. The HRC enjoys an enormous accumulation of social and symbolic capital. It is one of the few groups in gay politics that can mount a national campaign and command the attention of national politicians.

Queer Criticisms of HRC

Queer activists regularly criticize HRC for the assimilationist tactics that they employ. Because HRC is working within a structuring political field, it becomes necessary for their rhetoric to be one of inclusion. The signs deployed by the HRC emphasize the similarities between the hetero and homo lifestyles. To most queer groups, this represents the erasure of the very things that make queer people unique and necessary in the public sphere. Rather than celebrating the unique things that people with different genders and sexualities can bring into the body politic, the HRC represents to queer groups the inclusion of gay people in larger systems of oppression that ignore intersectionality. Unlike queer groups, which produce radical media, HRC compares to any other political action committee. They are licensed by the state, hold enormous power, and control the ability to purchase and distribute media material on a large scale. The HRC represents the modern homonormativity that structures and promotes a very narrow type of gay activism.

‘HRC Gay’ has become a term used among current queer organizing to represent modern homonormativity. This form of activism represents the collection and

distribution of non-profit resources for a few narrowly defined social and sexual categories. Rather than the radical activism and media of the queer political project, this form of homonormativity relies on accumulation of capital and distribution of resources in selected communities. Many queer organizations today and during the height of the HIV/AIDS crisis, have sought to critique and rewrite the message of the HRC-style organizations and dominance in the public sphere.

PFLAG

Queers criticize the large organization PFLAG, like they do the HRC, for focusing their strategic campaigns on fairness under law and equality issues. Founded in New York City as the Parents and Friends of Gays, PFLAG has grown into a national organization with a professional structure. Their first meeting had twenty attendees, while PFLAG now has chapters spanning the continent. In the 1980's, PFLAG experienced enormous growth as the HIV/AIDS crisis created more social organizing. By 1993, PFLAG added bisexuals to its mission statement and in 1998 recognized transgender people. Criticized by queers for focusing on white homosexuality, in 1999 PFLAG added the FOCN network. The Families of Color Network was a response to criticisms of lack of diversity in the organization. Its goal was to inform the various PFLAG chapters on matters of cultural difference within diverging sexualities. Today PFLAG has chapters in all states and provides assistance to its local chapters with media kits and public relations advice. While not targeted as often as the HRC by queer criticism, PFLAG has many of the same organizational and non-profit issues as the Human Rights Campaign.

Other Forms of Organizing Post Stonewall

Gays and lesbians were not the only sexual and gender minorities empowered by the Stonewall riots. Transgender social movement organizing also increased. This organizing resulted in some of the first trans alternative media. At the same time homosexuals in the workplace, feeling the restrictions of discrimination began to organize. This period witnessed two major accomplishments, the creation of a trans-social movement and the formation of the first professional association for gay and lesbian people.

Tiffany Club

The Tiffany Club, later becoming the Tiffany Club of New England (TCNE), is an interesting example of early transgender political organizing. Founded in the mid 1970s by Merissa Sherrill Lynn in New England, the club was started to give transpeople and people who dressed in drag a place for community. Founded as a non-sexual organization, the club wanted to create safe spaces to experiment with gender identity for people that were subject to arrest and public degradation. The club grew and eventually created a living/working space where the rent members paid funded the purchase of the building. Wanting to create a greater level of societal visibility, the Tiffany Club staged parties and published *Tapestry Magazine*, an early form of trans alternative media. Originally, a photocopied newsletter, *Tapestry Magazine* transformed itself into a glossy and professional periodical. Through a series of moves and the creation of other groups, including the First International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) in 1987, the Tiffany Club has worked to bring trans and cross dressing visibility into the public

sphere. *Tapestry Magazine* became the TCNE's *Rosebuds* magazine still in publication today.

G.L.B.T.R.T

The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Roundtable of the American Librarian Association is the oldest LGBTQ professional association. Founded in 1970 after the Stonewall riots, it continues to look into the library needs of LGBTQ library patrons and library workers. Many other gay professional organizations would follow in an effort to create employment atmospheres where homosexuals could work with, rather than against their sexuality. The formation of professional organizations represents an important moment in social movement organizing. The gay and lesbian counterpublic sphere was entering into new territory. This gave LGBTQ people access to new forms of capital; the recognition of gays and lesbians by business provided a form of social capital that added legitimacy to their positions.

The roughly decade long period between 1969 and 1981 marked a high point in the creation of a gay and lesbian counterpublic. In some areas like New York and San Francisco the visibility and power of the community increased. Restrictive laws went unenforced and police raids disappeared. This feeling of social progress and sexual liberation changed with the arrival of the AIDS/HIV epidemic. This change in social attitude and the public response to it would lead to a resurgence of radical social movements in the queer community. This moment would create the basic social and symbolic capitals that queer politics employ today. In the next section, I examine the way

that this moment created the queer counterpublic and how its creation affected the field of sexual social movements as a whole.

The AIDS/HIV Phase

In June of 1981, the Center for Disease Control reported a new type of virus now known as AIDS/HIV. The popular press would characterize this as a gay disease. The public response to AIDS/HIV reconfigured the relationship of sexual social movements to the heterosexual public. For sexual minority social movements the appearance of AIDS/HIV represented a major loss of capital and representational power. As the epidemic went unaddressed by health organizations, its devastating impact on sexual minorities access to capital and the nature of organizing became a matter of life and death. Since Stonewall, gay activists had enjoyed modest gains. Many of the vice laws used against gay people by authoritative structures were not enforced. In metropolitan areas, there was a rise in gay party scenes, gay bars, and other gay meeting places where a vibrant, even if politically disinterested, gay social culture had been growing.

AIDS changed this. The perception, among heterosexuals, that AIDS/HIV was a death sentence and the death of gays at the hands of AIDS/HIV ripped apart the growing gay field. There was a seismic shift in the 'gay culture' and the interpretations of it by the larger straight culture. The AIDS/HIV epidemic had two major effects on political organizing. First, it strengthened the homonormative wing of gay politics and created a new image of the homosexual as victim. Second, it revitalized queer politics and created a resurgence of queer activism in the U. S.. The fear of AIDS/HIV and the association of the condition with the gay community set up a systemic backlash against post-Stonewall

gains. Metropolitan areas shut down gay districts as a way to control the disease. The death of members also depopulated these areas. New York City shut down the city's bathhouses, a key site of gay culture and cruising. The bathhouses had been crucial as a place to meet and cruise with other men. Shutting them down removed a key social space that also served as a political space.

The U. S. government provided a mixed response to the AIDS crisis. Because it was a disease of a minority, it placed little priority on funding or research. This caused the rise of groups dedicated to making the social cost of the AIDS/HIV virus visible in the public sphere. While some of these groups were queer groups, this type of AIDS/HIV activism drew from the social and symbolic capital that radical groups had been developing from the time between Stonewall to 1981. Furthermore, the actions of radical AIDS groups set the tenor and tactics for queer groups that would follow the initial outcry.

The AIDS/HIV crisis is also a unique moment in social movement organizing related to people with different sexualities. Organizing shifted from morals and acceptability of social behavior into the realm of capitalism, the medical-industrial complex, and government responsibility. Steven Epstein in his work *Impure Science: AIDS, Activism, and the Politics of Knowledge* (1996) theorizes the unique nature of this type of social movement formation. His complex work examines the direct actions and specific goals HIV activists worked toward, the age of participants, and the way that AIDS kept killing leaders of the movements, forcing organizations to create structures that relied on new forms of social mobilization.

Because of the fast spreading disease, the social movement participants rapidly created new forms of capital. The death of participants meant that the social movements needed organic intellectuals that could engage with the scientific community in the cultural language of science. Persons without scientific training had to be educated in the cultural capital of epidemiologists to effectually engage in counter discourses. The accumulation of symbolic capital on the part of AIDS activists helped to reorder the codes of expertise in the biomedical research field while simultaneously opening up spaces for biomedical social action.

Today, the AIDS crisis persists, although science has made some progress in treatment. AIDS activism has morphed from its early radical roots into Political Actions Committees types of organizations in the U. S.. Some queer groups blame this reliance on political action committees for losing the focus on the HIV/AIDS problem and seek to return to the original issues and forms of radicalism. However, at this moment the most radical AIDS/HIV activists are outside the U. S., where the privilege of a developed medical community cannot hide the continuing deaths at the hands of the disease. However, the activism from the main HIV/AIDS crisis period did carry over into queer political organizations who recognized that the process of ignoring AIDS victims was tied to a larger heteropatriarchal goal of rendering queers invisible in society.

The Queer Movements, the Queer Moment

The AIDS crisis reinvigorated the radical elements in the GLBTQ community. The refusal of the larger social structures to recognize the common cause of AIDS between the GLBT community and the straight community created a political situation

where queers were once again either vilified or ignored. This process set in motion a new wave of radical queer groups that rose at this historical moment. Queer groups in the late eighties and early nineties sought to take queer sexuality out of the gay ghettos and into the public sphere. They refused the assimilationist line of political patience and to be silent. Created to counter queer invisibility, their counterdiscourses targeted hetero-patriarchy and created a new form of queer social movements.

ACT UP- AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power

Larry Kramer founded ACT UP in March of 1987 after a speech he gave at the New York Gay Community Center. Founded on the principle of direct action, ACT UP brought the AIDS problem into the public consciousness in a way that other assimilationist groups had failed to do. ACT UP became a nation-wide movement that directed public attention to the deaths that were taking place in the GLBTQ community. ACT UP opened up new possibilities for understanding the politics of AIDS and the AIDS crisis through their use of unorthodox tactics (Gould, 2009).

The direct action tactics of ACT UP relied on the presentation of theater and disruption of the public sphere to make AIDS a global issue. In their time, ACT UP protested the FDA, CDC, and global pharmaceutical companies. They dropped a giant condom on Senator Jessie Helm's home to protest his negative characterizations of gay sex. ACT UP disrupted a Catholic mass at New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral to protest the Catholic Church's stance on AIDS and homosexuality. In 1990, ACT UP disrupted national television during the Rose Bowl Parade. ACT UP also disrupted several

international AIDS conferences, halted trading on the New York Stock Exchange, interrupted the CBS Evening News, and the Arsenio Hall show.

Some of their most effective actions were the holding of mass funerals. ACT UP was artistically supported in these actions through the work of an important sub-group in their social movement, the Gran Fury Collective. The Collective was formed after the New York Museum of Contemporary Art halted an installation about AIDS called *Let the Record Show*. The response to the cancellation of the show was the formation of an artist collective specifically dedicated to creating art that would raise awareness of the AIDS crisis. Gran Fury took their name after the model of Plymouth automobiles used by the undercover police in New York City for vice raids. The Collective produced art and graphics for the emerging AIDS activist scene in New York, including designing the famous 'Silence=Death' graphic. Gran Fury created both physical and performance media (Roman, 1992). Their aesthetics helped to create the general style of queer art. Their methods continue to influence queer activists and many of their tactics are repeated by current queer social activists (Horn & Lewis, 1996; Meyer, 1995; Shepard, 2010).

Queer Nation

Founded in the spring of 1990 Queer Nation lasted until 1992. Queer Nation was one of the first major queer social movement organizations. Publishing the broadsheet *Queers Hear This/ I Hate Straights* and distributing it at the New York Pride Parade, it was one of the first groups to start the reclamation process of the word queer. Recognizing that the AIDS crisis had set back gay and lesbian political activism and refusing to fall in line with groups such as the HRC that wanted political assimilation,

Queer Nation adopted radical direct action as a method of political visibility and created moments where the discourse of mainstream gays was subverted and reclaimed.

Many of their actions attempted to rewrite homo- and heteronormativity. One such action was *Queer Night Out*, which they held at straight bars in an attempt to create new queer spaces and presences. Their use of the body as a form of political performance art would set the tenor of future queer actions, some of which are discussed in the results section. Another program, the Suburban Homosexual Outreach Program or SHOP, intervened in the consumerist homonormative culture that was and continues to be one of the primary forms of homosexual inclusivity. Queer Nation also disrupted the 1991 filming of *Basic Instinct* and protested the 1992 Academy Awards for the way in which media portrayed homosexuals. Queer Nation also created special subgroups for action such as LABIA or the Lesbians and Bisexuals in Action to encompass a greater range of diverse political and identitarian struggles. The actions of Queer Nation had a major impact on the upsurge of queer theory in academic writings at this time as well. Scholars like Michael Warner (Warner, 1993; 2005) helped to bring queer theory to a greater scholarly community by theorizing the role that groups such as Queer Nation played in generating a public sphere and a queer public sphere.

P.U.S.S.Y- Perverts Undermining State Security

P.U.S.S.Y.⁶ formed in 1991 as an offshoot of OUTRAGE! in response to the censorship of Della Grace's book of lesbian pornography. The erasure of queer sexuality in the LGBT movement and the HRC style of rights activism sought to diminish the role

⁶ Pussy is a slang term for female sex organs. It is also used in a derogatory way to refer to the weak or ineffectual.

that sexuality played in queer lived experience. P.U.S.S.Y. also took on the issue of pornography. Unlike the moral objections to pornography from the right wing, P.U.S.S.Y. saw some forms of pornography as liberating. Unlike some feminist criticisms of pornography, P.U.S.S.Y. saw the removal of pornography from the public sphere as an erasure of sexuality. P.U.S.S.Y. wanted to highlight the difference between heterosexist pornography that supports inequality and lesbian pornography that according to P.U.S.S.Y. is less hierarchical. In this project, P.U.S.S.Y. created links between the feminist and queer movements and activists.

Queercore

Queercore is not a specific social group but a series of events that create a collective style of social movement production. Also known as homocore, the roots of the movement are found in the punk rock of the late eighties. Recognizing the homophobia inside the punk movement and realizing that punk had moved away from some of its anti-assimilationist roots, queercore pursued creating a new queer moment in alternative musical and publishing culture.

First published in 1985 the punk zine *J.D.*'s criticized the homophobia of the punk musical scene. After an initial welcome reception, *J.D.*'s ran for eight issues. The zine also created a space to criticize the consumerist and accommodationist stance of the GLB movement. This introduced the punk DIY (Do It Yourself) ethic to a new generation of organizing for queer liberation. This publication helped to launch a number of punk/queer/DIY projects where the multiple oppressions joined forces to create counter discourses. Punks could be queer and queers could be punks. Queercore came to

be the catchall term for various bands, houses, and zines. David Ciminelli and Ken Knox (2005) have examined this closely in their work.

Lesbian Avengers

Another queer group that is no longer active is the Lesbian Avengers. Founded in 1992 the Lesbian Avengers aspired to support 'dyke issues' that were ignored by the GLB movement and the larger culture (Cogswell, 2011). The Lesbian Avengers, known for their media grabbing stunts such as holding 'eat outs'⁷ at a Jenny Craig diet center in Boston, relied on direct action. The Avengers also released a 'plague of locust,' in reality a thousand crickets, at the headquarters of Exodus International, a well-known anti-gay Christian organization. The Lesbian Avengers also confronted the AIDS crisis by distributing safer-sex materials that focused on the specific safe sex needs of the lesbian community.

In April 1993, ACT UP and the Lesbian Avenger created the first Dyke March meant to confront the invisibility of lesbians in gay pride parades. The Dyke March movement continues today, often held in the same time period as a city's gay pride parade as a means of gaining visibility and calling for political activism for lesbian issues. While the focus has changed slightly and moved away from AIDS activism, dyke marches form an important element in modern queer activism and activist events. Some queer activism has been criticized by gay and lesbian activists for removing the particular nature of the lesbian experience (A. M. Smith, 1992).

⁷ This is a play on words referring to cunnilingus; the oral stimulation of the clitoris or vulva it also refers consuming food.

After the 1990s, queer activism experienced a decline. Part of this is probably due to the HIV/AIDS crisis receiving more national attention. Another factor could be the loss of a generation of queer leadership to the disease itself. It may also be that as the lesbian and gay community received more attention, and ‘positive’ representation in the corporatized media structure, invisibility decreased. Many queer groups argue that this ‘visibility’ is a very narrow and accommodates homonormative ideologies. With the reduction of queer activism came the perceived reduction of queer alternative/radical/citizens’ media products. With the introduction of new communication technologies queer media forms have changed.

Research Directions

There is a need for the development of future research in the connections between queer activism and alternative/radical/citizens’ media. This area remains both under-theorized and under-studied empirically. The literature on new social movements often mentions gay and lesbian communities as an aside and constructs them as a monolithic category that relies on identity for their formation and organization. Social movement scholarship as well as alternative/radical/citizens’ media need to differentiate between queer radical movements and media and the more accommodating homonormative media. By homonormative media I mean media that seek sexual minority inclusivity without disrupting dominant repressive social structures. It may be time to consider the homonormative forms of social mobilization as part of the non-profit industrial complex (INCITE!, 2001). This would remove the least-radical forms of media from the area of

study and place them within the confines of marketing, public relations, and advertising where they would find a better fit.

Removing homonormative media from the field of social movements and alternative/radical/citizens' media reveals a rich array of media created by more radical and subversive LGBT and queer groups. While possibly homonormative, the radical nature of queer social movements and their media implies a lesser degree of access to the various capitals. This lack of access, I believe, makes their media more similar to previously studied forms of radical and citizens' media, and very different from gay imitations or gay iterations of mainstream media products. Radical queer media include a wide diversity of types, ranging from art and zines to more modern digital and online formats. The horizontal nature of digital modes of delivery, particularly that of the Internet, has further reduced the need for groups of actors to be working in conjunction.

Queer radical media are headed towards individualization as actors produce and share media content in digital spaces that overcome the problem of geolocation (Villarejo, 2004). This reading relies on the assumption that queers have access to the technological hardware and software necessary for media creation, are linked to the Internet, and have the cultural capital to produce online media products. I center these assumptions within the confines of the developed world and even within technological communities within the field of power. However, there is a growing use of cell phone technology in many parts of the world, and this may have an interesting effect on LGBT and queer networks and organization in many places.

In LGBT and queer social movements that require a geolocation, even with a web presence, there is a need for research into the media products of these collective actions.

As with other radical/citizens'/alternative media, queer groups may be short-lived and very small. However, exploring what they communicate about the unique nature of queer intersubjectivity and how they access capitals within their given field, is an important contribution to the literature. A contribution of this kind would disrupt the reliance on the glittering generalities of gay identity as it has been theorized in the alternative media and new social movement literature. By empirically examining the communication modes, means, and messages of radical queers, I intend to refine the theorization of the queer presence in the public sphere.

PART VI

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology

Introduction

The search for objective truth is the hallmark of methodologies that are bound by the philosophy of modernism. Queer methodologies seek new ways to read the world without reinforcing the category of truth. These methodologies recognize the subjective nature of the researcher, as she is bound by the research process and by language.

Queer communities are different from other political, ethnic, or sexual communities. Most communities delineate boundaries through a process that marks some as being members of that community by having specific signs, either material or immaterial, which structure the individual as belonging. One becomes a Republican by declaring membership to the Republican Party. A person becomes homosexual by having same-sex desire. A person becomes queer through an adoption of an identity based on desire. The queer identity is a combination of desire and declaration. A queer identity has to be a product of self-ascription and performance.

Queer communities seek to deconstruct the notion of the fixed essence of identity (Jagose, 1996). To be queer is to be *in a process*, rather than to demonstrate a fixed identity. To be queer is to deconstruct within oneself the nature of the binaries that are placed on humans from birth, gay-straight, boy-girl, normal-deviant, health-unhealthy etc.. Being queer is by necessity post-structuralist. As Kirsch (2000) states, “[t]he basic tenant of postmodernism and of post-structuralism is this destabilization through deconstruction” (p. 28). To be queer is to be in opposition to structure and the accompanying power relations that it reproduces. Queer requires the deconstruction of the habitus that structures the individual; queer implies rewriting the subjective actions of

the individual. Queer is then a position of no position; to be queer is to resist location in one stable identity. Queer is an open-ended identity and an open-ended political project. As Edelman (1994, p. 114) states queer is “a zone of possibilities in which the embodiment of the subject might be experienced otherwise.” Being queer is to be constantly changing discourses and identity. This means queers switch between the interrogation of social structures and the interrogation of the self as embodied in social structures.

Queer discourse is performative. To be queer is to perform queerness. It is a state in metamorphosis rather than a complete discursive position. To be queer necessitates communicating queerness, thus creating messages around the markers of queerness. To map a queer community is not to map a stable model of queerness, instead it is to delineate the soft edges of actions and practices that suggest the existence of a community. This study seeks to look for those edges through queer radical media embodied in Internet spaces.

Queer radical media provide a loose coalition that reflects queer performativity. Queer communication creates the very idea of queer communities. The online queer presence both creates and reflects the queer community. The radical media presence is open to a semiotic reading that can help to reveal the second-order desires and political goals of the queer community. This study will research and analyze the semiotic content of a corpus of queer websites. This analysis develops a richer understanding of the way in which queers come into the public sphere and create a queer counterpublic. Further, it generates a hermeneutic reading of the Barthesian myths and coding of the queer political community.

This project engaged in three main stages. First, I probed the limits of the field of U.S. queer political groups on the Internet and created a map of the interlinked queer counterpublic. Second, I assembled a corpus of imagery from a select group of queer Internet sites. Finally, I produced a semiotic reading of the imagery to generate a theoretical analysis of queerness and the symbolic capital it expresses.

The first consideration was delimiting the queer field on the Internet. This is a difficult process because of the ephemeral nature of the queer political project. This nature causes queer projects to often emerge in a single moment of history, with very short life spans. Imagery of queer events created by short-lived social movements can have a longer presence in the public sphere via Internet sites. As Irmi Karl (Karl, 2007, p. 55) states, “[n]ew ICTs, by way of their articulation as text and technologies, offer means of expressing, rearticulating, and reinscribing these identities and are being reconfigured themselves in the process.” For this reason, this research probes the limits of the queer field through online media projects.

What, then, is a queer website? A queer website is known here as a website that the creators declare as being a queer site. Rather than using my position of privilege as a researcher, I defer to queer activists to define what a queer site is. The self-identification of/with a queer positionality is one of the key aspects to the queer political position. Queer Internet presences share some commonality and this is examined in the results section. Queer Internet presences also are different from the LGB online presence, and this becomes clear when observing political material that is specific to the queer political project. While LGB sites insist on defining gay, lesbian, bisexual identities, queer sites refuse to represent queer as a fixed essence and insist that queer is an action. “More than

a critique of gender identity, queer theory has enabled an understanding and experience of sex acts as signifiers of pleasure, not signifiers of sexual identity” (Ian Morland, 2009, p. 289). Queer Internet spaces are not the signifiers of a queer identity, but a queer state of being. They serve to show how one can queer rather than what queer is.

The corpus for this study emerges at the point of intersection between queer theory and queer activism. The process of defining the corpus was informed by two elements: first, queer theory and queer epistemology. In this sense, I selected web sites that reflect the epistemological and ontological elements of queer theory. Using queer theory to set the boundaries of the corpus I defined the following claims as basic elements of queer:

- a. Rejection of hetero-patriarchy
- b. Rejection of homo-assimilationist policies
- c. Rejection of narrow definitions of sexuality
- d. Rejection of narrow definitions of sex/gender
- e. A proposal or series of proposals on how to enact these rejections in queer lived experience
- f. A representation of queer desires

Thus, I will use the list above as criteria to differentiate queer web sites from LGBT web sites. Only queer web sites were selected as part of my corpus for analysis.

While queer notions could be either explicit or implicit, a semiotic reading helped to reveal the semiosis of images and their possible interpretations. The queer reading of

the symbolic material expressed on queer websites follows some general principles. The semiotic reading was implemented on the following expressions of queerness:

- g. A deconstruction of objectivity
- h. A deconstruction of truth claims
- i. A problematizing of dualistic ontology
- j. A problematizing of straight lines
- k. The generation of queer or queered epistemologies
- l. The generation of queer or queered praxiologies
- m. Representations of queer desire

As I said before, my corpus emerges from the intersection of theory and activism. I just explained how queer theory served to define the boundaries of the corpus. My participation in queer activist groups also helped me define the corpus. First, I selected those queer sites that have become common names in the world of queer activism. Second, I selected the web sites more commonly mentioned by queer activists online and offline. The search for the web sites included in the corpus started with Google searches using the terms 'queer' and 'activism.' The results were then filtered through the criteria specified above (a. to m.) I narrowed the corpus to web sites that align with queer epistemology and ontology. The next step to finally select the corpus was to narrow down even further, and privilege those web sites most commonly mentioned by queer activists both online and in my real-world activism in Norman. Finally, my corpus is comprised of five U.S. based queer political group websites. My work in the queer political community, plus the criteria specified above, informed this selection. The web sites are:

Gay Shame (<http://www.gayshamesf.org/>)

LAGAI – Queer Insurrection (<http://www.lagai.org/>)

Naughty North (<http://thenaughtynorth.blogspot.com/>)

Queer Liberation Front (<http://queerliberationfront.us/>)

Radical Homosexual Agenda (<http://www.radicalhomosexualagenda.org/>)

Many of the groups that were at the apex of queer organizing in the late 1990s early 2000s are now defunct. The groups selected had active web presences and had updated their material in the last two years. This is a reflection of the ephemeral and moment based nature of queer activism. After the selection, two types of analysis were applied to the groups selected. The first was to generate a link network map for each group to create a visual representation of the interconnections of the projects. The second was creating a corpus of all the images available on the web presences. These images were then subjected to a semiotic analysis. I will describe the two processes in detail below.

Queer Networks

I examined the five queer web presences as part of a larger queer counterpublic and as a portion of the queer Internet activist presence in a larger network of lesbian and gay activism. These maps create visual representations that show the connectivity between these queer web presences and a larger online community. They also help to reveal the boundaries and limits of the online queer presence. This helps to understand the interlinked nature of the queer web presence. The map of links also allows a visual

representation of the lack of links between queer groups, as well as fractures within the groups. The absence of links in many ways were more telling than who was linking to whom. The relatively low level of linking revealed a much more fractured counterpublic than was expected. While there was little disagreement in what constituted queerness, the shallow networking revealed that the paths queer capitals take are not as direct as was first suspected. The links between the queer web presences and the LGB community were weak as well. This finding was in line with the original expectations. Despite the absence of links, there is an engagement with the LGB political project in the visual representation on the queer sites. This however is not a positive engagement. The lack of links to more mainstream groups that hold an assimilationist position is in line with expectations.

I wanted to examine how the linkages between queer web presences inform the notion of a queer field and I think these maps support my findings. The maps revealed the fragmentation of the queer field when it comes to the Internet presence of specific political groups. There was a distinct hierarchy in which smaller groups link to larger groups and smaller groups failed to link to one another. While this lack of linking among small groups is worrisome for the strength of the queer political presence, I believe that the means of communicating queerness has shifted to a more individual web presence. I discuss this in the results section.

The link maps also helped to reveal the distribution of the symbolic and cultural capitals of queerness. While the level of linking is low, there is a similarity between the visual material and the groups' declarations of purpose. On this basis I can say that the field of political queers holds a distinct set of capitals that developed out of specific

historical circumstances. The links failed to reflect this movement. I believe that this capital flow has now shifted to different Internet platforms. This shift in media styles is an extension of the shift from queer zines to the Internet. It will most likely shift again as new forms of political organizing and new media types come to take precedence as the primary forms of capital for the social movement.

By probing the boundaries of the queer web presence and mapping the way in which queer sites link to other points, the limits of the queer field emerged. The network link maps only provide an incomplete understanding of a queer counterpublic and the limits of the field at a given moment in time. This method could not provide a comprehensive delineation, however, it did help to reveal the social capital of the queer field. Further, it allowed me to build a symbolic corpus that revealed the cultural capital of, and desires within, the queer political project.

Symbolic Corpus and the Queer Political Project

I collected a corpus of images and graphics from the selected groups. This included all the images and graphics of the site, including banners, snapshots of actions, buttons, and downloadable graphics. When I deemed it relevant to the analysis, I included the text attached to the image. I judged this relevancy when it helped to reveal the nature of the queer desires of the group. This mainly took the form of the statements of purpose that each group displayed.

This queer political project is not a monolithic project. It does however have some common themes. I call the combination of these themes queer desire. This is the desire of the queer political groups to create a world different from the one we now inhabit. This is a political project. I separate this queer desire into several parts. The first area of

examination is how representations of the queer position reject dualistic categories and the process of categorization. I was interested in how the groups construct their rejection of dualistic categories in their visual material. Another area of scrutiny is the way that queer politics eschews identity politics and assimilationist tactics. Connected to this I was interested in the way that queer symbolic material might queer the idea of objectivity. This is especially important when we consider the way that images become understood as an objective form of mediated representation.

I am also interested in the way that images can be analyzed through a queer lens. This includes the way queer groups present images, the way that symbolic material is combined and reconfigured and how this reflects the cultural and symbolic capital of the queer groups. This includes seeing how images and graphics re-read or re-presented normative cultural structures.

This corpus represents only a small part the queer political project. Unlike political projects that arise out of a modernist epistemology, this project has an open-ended goal. This makes the examination of the corpus contingent on a reading of queer desire. The desires embodied by the visual material reflect the tenants of the queer web presence discussed above. Further, it revealed other queer desires that I had not anticipated before.

Semiotic Analysis

The corpus of visual material gathered from the queer web presences was analyzed using semiotics. Because a queer web presence proposes a queer ontology, the visual material displayed on a queer website reflects this desire. “Symbols can take on

many meanings to many people; they can be incorporated into existing systems of thought and transformed – that is to say changed” (Kirsch, 2000, p. 29). By using semiotic readings as informed by Barthes’ theories (1972), the second-order discursive function of the images revealed the queer desire of the creators.

The semiotic reading of the corpus revealed the code(s) embedded in the visual material of the queer media. This process in turn opens the field of queer politics to a reading of the mythologies contained within the symbolic capital. This advances the queer project and benefits the queer community because mythologies are antithetical to the queer political project.

Semiotics moves the site of analysis to media products while retaining the encoded desires of the creators. It helps uncover identity, philosophy, and intention, through the analysis of the deployed symbolic capital. Because queer images, as artifacts, are the creation of specific groups and are products of human production, they can hermeneutically tell the researcher something about the desires of the producers and the myths that encompass their deployment:

“While formerly the emphasis was on studying sign systems (language, cinema, architecture, music etc.), conceived of as mechanisms that generate messages, what is now being examined is the work preformed through them. It is in this work or activity which constitutes and/or transforms the codes, at the same time as it constitutes and transforms the individuals using the codes, performing the work; the individuals who are therefore, the subjects of semiosis” (Lauretis, 1982, p. 167).

Semiotics is the study of symbols as people in specific communities employ them. Briefly, semiotics represents a relationship between a signifier and the meaning it signifies. The world is both known and shaped by the relationships between signifiers and signified, and the implicit power relationships they reproduce. As Thomas Sebeok (1999, p. 3) states, signs “allow people to recognize patterns in things; they act as predictive guides or plans for taking action; they serve as a specific kind of phenomena.” This set of “predictive guides” is very similar to the way that Bourdieu defines habitus. For Bourdieu habitus shapes oppression in a material and symbolic way.

“The effects of symbolic domination (whether ethnic, gender, cultural or linguistic, etc.) is exerted not in the pure logic of knowing consciousness but through the schemes of perception, appreciation and action that are constitutive of habitus and, which, below the level of decisions of consciousness and controls of the will, set up a cognitive relationship that is profoundly obscure to itself” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 37).

To access the fractures in habitus it is important to interrogate the use of symbolic material. In this context, the type of semiotics developed by Saussure serve the research purpose of understanding how human signs *make* the human world (Saussure, 1959 (1915)).

I specifically employed the semiotic methods of Roland Barthes, derived from the semiotics of Saussure to understand the nature of signs as expressed in images produced by queer groups (Barthes, 1964). For Barthes, signs contain two levels of understanding, denotation and connotation. On the level of denotation, signs are the non-coded iconic

message. The sign represents the *thing in itself*. This is the thing as it is apprehended, the object form of the signifier. This can be the linguistic message or the images shown.

I analyzed the queer corpus primarily on the level of connotation. The level of connotation contains the codes of the semiotic material that in turn build and reinforce the mythologies of a particular group. These mythologies become the symbolic capital of the political group, which in turn becomes the habitus used to generate messages about the group's political position. The decoding of iconic messages must then take place on the connotative level. To Barthes, the picture represents more than it appears to when read within a particular coded community. Communities contain hidden signifying activity, specific to the discourse in which it is created, and this can be decoded. This act of decoding can be used to challenge the hidden nature of myths. Myths to Barthes are the systems of signs that naturalize the world. Myths are a form of habitus for Bourdieu. This naturalization is the site of habitus, orthodoxy, and *illusio*. Sign systems generate myths (Barthes) and habitus (Bourdieu) and contain unexamined implicit assumptions about the ontology of a symbolic community. As Bourdieu theorizes, the boundaries of the field are set through the use of symbolic capital, and the membership within a field is also bounded by the myths/*illusio*/orthodoxy, or naturalized assumptions of that field. It is only through a deeper analysis of the codes of that field that myths can be (re)read, opening up space for a reexamination of the assumptions of power and the nature of queer political desire.

Semiotics creates a way to explore the range and nature of the queer subfield within the field of politics. It helps to unveil the relation of identity formation and identity production in the making of media (Shelton, 2008). I discovered denotations and

denotation disjunctures in the political field through this semiotic analysis. By doing this, I revealed fissures in the symbolic capital of the political field, which queers utilized.

Limits of Method

It was never the goal of this research to create a fixed truth about the desires of queer media, their creators, or the entire queer political project. The goal of the semiotic analysis was to provide only one of many possible readings, informed by theory, which reveal only one version of the meaning of the material. It was tempting within the process to make normative judgments and reinscribe modernist philosophical positions. I often tread on the edge of making judgments. However, where possible I attempt to avoid this type of judgment in the results.

One of the key issues that I wished to avoid was making distinctions about the relative queerness of the groups in the study. It would not have been helpful or appropriate to create levels of ‘queerness’ or to compare the way that one group or actors experience their queerness and compare this to another group’s experience. I also tried to avoid creating enduring and fixed truths about queer activism. This study relies on epistemic force over validity and my reading of the field of queer politics is by its nature a subjective one. It cannot create fixed positionalities and simultaneously maintain the queer project as a “zone of possibilities” (Edelman, 1994). The study can only describe my version of how things are done by queers in a specific moment in history. I attempt to not generate normative positionalities of how things should be done. Here the connection with radical media is most clear. These queer web presences are pushing and pressing into the boundaries of the way that sexual and gender minorities are represented in the

process of representing themselves. In keeping with the queer position of the method and subjects, it was very hard to not reinscribe operational binaries such as effective/ineffective, positive/negative or possible/impossible. These are part of my own habitus and being cognizant of them was particularly difficult.

While it is likely that this research re-inscribes the positionality of normativity, I hope that the reader will be patient with my deficiencies and realize that knowledge of queer praxiology and everyday practices is often divergent. My hope is that this research provides a new way of reading queer images, generated by queer producers. Also, I hope to expand the literature on queer media by providing a reading of that media that contains, if not truth, epistemic force. Finally, I hope this research opens new ways for other scholars to examine and read queer media using methods originally developed within modern normativity but that can be re-invented toward designing queer methodologies.

PART VII

A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF QUEER IMAGERY ONLINE

Queer Groups

I selected five queer groups from the few queer political organizations with a web presence in the U. S.. There are many types of queer projects but not all have a web presence. Some notable queer groups such as Bash Back have had a web presence, but it has since vanished and the group has fragmented. Queer political presence online reached its apex in the late 1990s and has since dwindled (Karl, 2007). The number of queer political groups actively online has shrunk in the last five years. The electronic ghosts of many inactive groups remain, and even some of the groups included in this corpus are posting and updating less frequently. Many links to queer sites lead to dead or abandoned pages.

However, this does not signal the end of a queer online presence. The landscape has simply shifted. First, there has been an explosion of queer personal blogs. Second, many queer groups have shifted their web presence to online social media. Finally, many international queer political groups still maintain a strong web presence. While all three of these shifts would make for interesting future studies, they are not the focus of this project. However, it is important to note that these trends are occurring. I will examine queer blogs later as a possible direction of future study.

Queer Links

The linking patterns of queer groups reveal interesting data. There is an international linking trend with some of the larger groups, while others have few links. I expected to find a high level of reciprocity in the links between groups, but this does not appear to be the case. Some of the smaller groups link to larger groups with older web

presences, but the smaller groups seem to be isolated both geographically and on the Internet. For example Naughty North, which is a smaller group, links to LAGAI, which is one of the older and more established groups. On the other hand, Naughty North does not connect with Queer Liberation Front, which is another smaller group. Radical Homosexual Agenda, one of the groups with more activity and larger membership, does not link to any of the other groups. This points to a lack of social capital for the smaller groups. I believe that this is an indicator of a fragmented and weak queer counterpublic. The groups may have an active role to play as local activist but at a national level the evidence suggests that, unlike larger GLB activists networks, queer groups are isolated (see Figures 1 to 6).

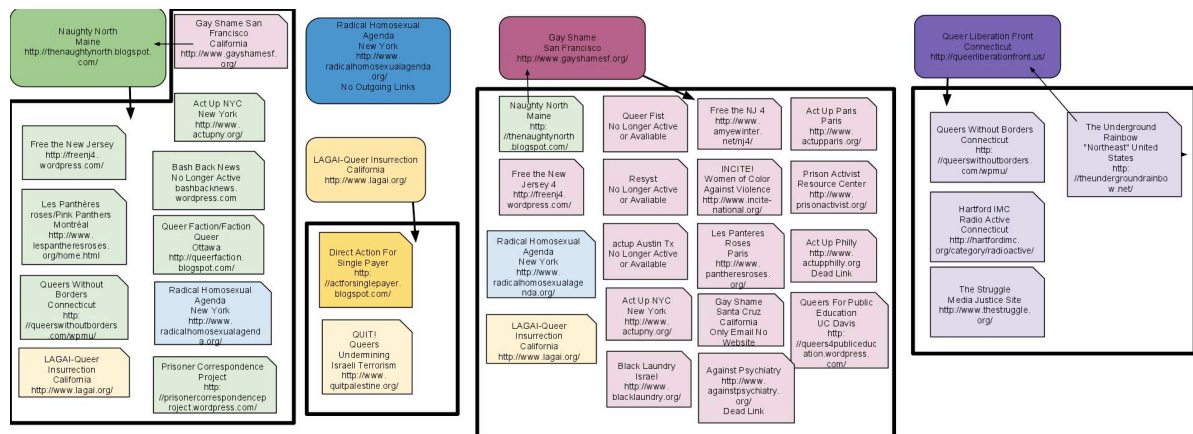


Figure 1: Link Map

Link distribution was not even. Some groups had a high level of links to other queer sites, while some like the Radical Homosexual Agenda contained no links but were linked to by other queer groups. With older groups, such as LAGAI, I expected a high level of outgoing linking, but this did not turn out to be the case. I later explore the reasons for this and relate it to the use of cultural capitals in media production.

Below are the link maps for the individual groups.

Naughty North Links:

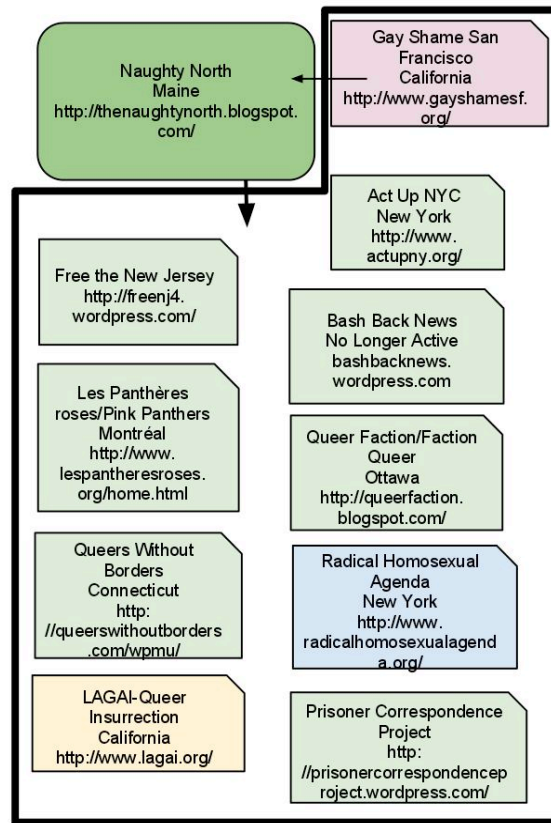


Figure 2: Naughty North Links

Radical Homosexual Agenda Links:



Figure 3: Radical Homosexual Agenda Links

LAGAI Links:

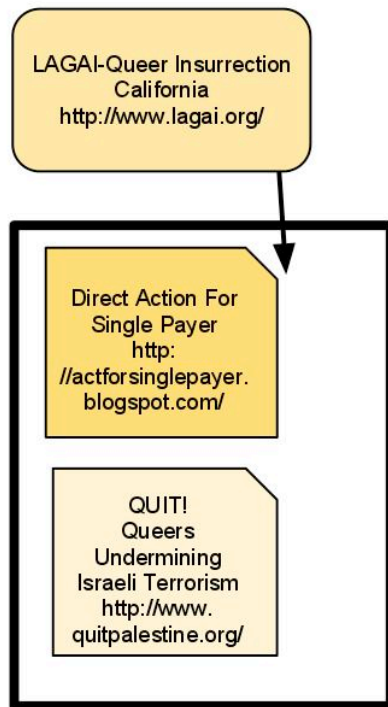


Figure 4: LAGAI Links

Gay Shame Links:

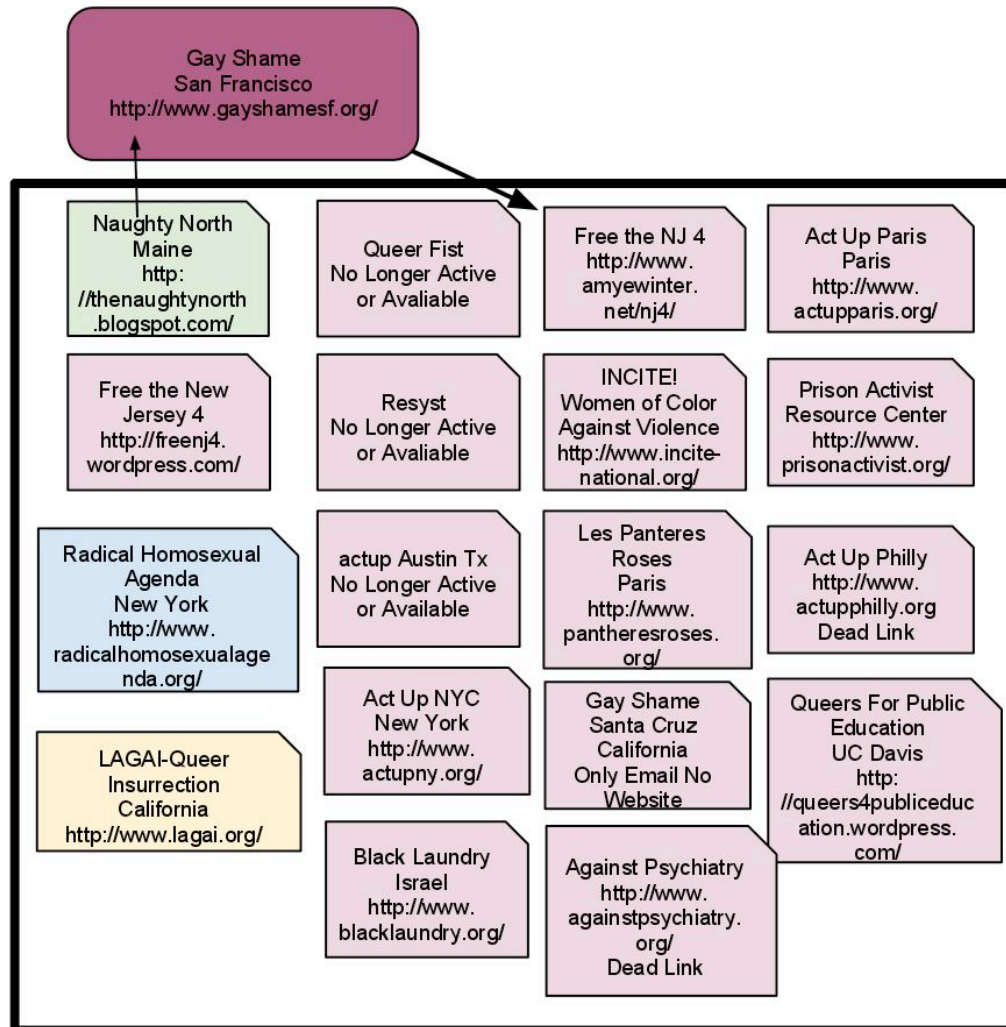


Figure 5: Gay Shame Links

Queer Liberation Front Links:

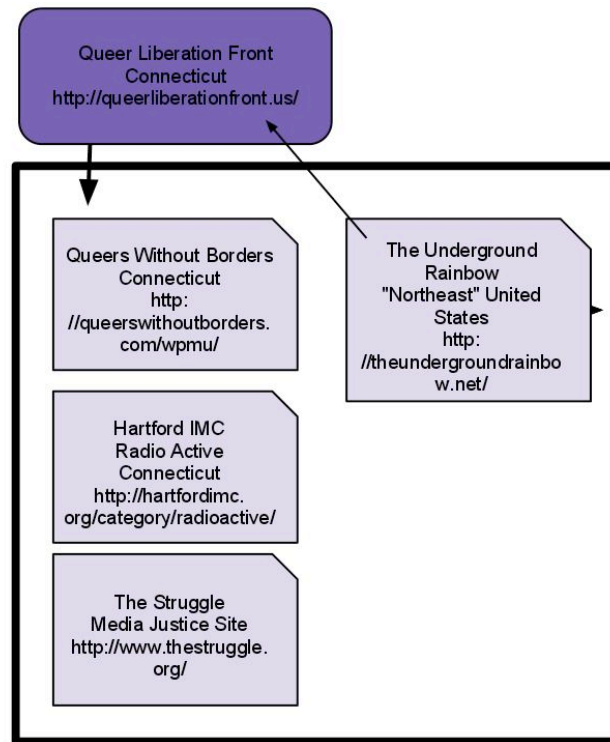


Figure 6: Queer Liberation Front Links

Group Descriptions

Gay Shame (<http://www.gayshamesf.org/>)

Gay Shame is a radical queer group based out of San Francisco. Organized as a non-hierarchical collective, Gay Shame claims to be a “virus in the system”. The organization meets every Saturday and has been a critical part of the San Francisco queer

movement. The group has been very active in planning and enacting *actions*⁸ in the area, directly confronting what they perceive as the growing corporatization of the LGBT community. Below is the Gay Shame statement of principles taken from their web presence:

“GAY SHAME is a Virus in the System. We are committed to a queer extravaganza that brings direct action to astounding levels of theatricality. We will not be satisfied with a commercialized gay identity that denies the intrinsic links between queer struggle and challenging power. We seek nothing less than a new queer activism that foregrounds race, class, gender and sexuality, to counter the self-serving “values” of gay consumerism and the increasingly hypocritical left. We are dedicated to fighting the rabid assimilationist monster with a devastating mobilization of queer brilliance. GAY SHAME is a celebration of resistance: all are welcome.” (Shame, 2011)

The actions planned and executed by the group highlight their queer political projects in relation to the intersectionality of oppressions. They have disrupted the Gay Pride Parade, now a corporatized event in San Francisco. They have demonstrated against mayoral candidates who had platforms they considered to be against the poor and homeless populations. Gay Shame has participated in national calls for action to help defend the “New Jersey 4” or “NJ4.” The New Jersey 4 are four lesbian women of color that were arrested in 2006 and later convicted of assault after they attempted to defend themselves from an attacker.

“On June 14, [of 2008] four African-American women—Venice Brown (19), Terrain Dandridge (20), Patreese Johnson (20) and Renata Hill (24)—received

⁸ I should note here that the term *actions* is being used to describe the events that the group plans or participates in. I learned this term for the first time while interviewing political groups in France and heard it again among Argentinean activists. I have preferred to use this term instead of ‘events,’ which I considered too broad. Group meetings are events but not specific *actions*. Among contemporary political groups, ranging from Occupy to queer groups, the term *action* is preferred over ‘protest’ or ‘demonstration,’ which are associated with traditional social movements. While traditional social movements function around exclusive leaders followed by masses, current social movements tend to be non-hierarchical and consent-based. Thus, actions are collectively designed and carried out.

sentences ranging from three-and-a-half to 11 years in prison. None of them had previous criminal records. Two of them are parents of small children. Their crime? Defending themselves from a physical attack by a man who held them down and choked them, ripped hair from their scalps, spat on them, and threatened to sexually assault them—all because they are lesbians.” (Henry, 2007)

Many groups including The Women of Color Blog

(<http://www.womenofcolorunited.org/category/women-of-color-blog/>), INCITE

(<http://inciteblog.wordpress.com/>), and FIERCE (<http://fiercenyc.org/>) view the NJ4 case

as a misapplication of justice. Because queers experience assaults at a higher rate than

cisgender straight people the fact that the defenders were convicted after the assault

became a moment for action in the queer community. The assault in this case was

particularly brutal. Below is a description of the event:

“On Aug. 16, 2006, seven young, African-American, lesbian-identified friends were walking in the West Village. The Village is a historic center for lesbian, gay, bi and trans (LGBT) communities, and is seen as a safe haven for working-class LGBT youth, especially youth of color.

As they passed the Independent Film Cinema, 29-year-old Dwayne Buckle, an African-American vendor selling DVDs, sexually propositioned one of the women. They rebuffed his advances and kept walking. “I’ll f— you straight, sweetheart!” Buckle shouted. A video camera from a nearby store shows the women walking away. He followed them, all the while hurling anti-lesbian slurs, grabbing his genitals and making explicitly obscene remarks. The women finally stopped and confronted him. A heated argument ensued. Buckle spat in the face of one of the women and threw his lit cigarette at them, escalating the verbal attack into a physical one.

Buckle is seen on the video grabbing and pulling out large patches of hair from one of the young women. When Buckle ended up on top of one of the women, choking her, Johnson pulled a small steak knife out of her purse. She aimed for his arm to stop him from killing her friend. The video captures two men finally running over to help the women and beating Buckle. At some point he was stabbed in the abdomen. The women were already walking away across the street by the time the police arrived. Buckle was hospitalized for five days after surgery for a lacerated liver and stomach. When asked at the hospital, he responded at least twice that men had attacked him.” (Henry, 2007).

Groups like Gay Shame and LAGAI have worked on actions and fundraising events to help support the women in their defense and after their conviction. The sharing of events like this and the making of common cause is one of the effects of the ability of networked groups on the Internet to interact.

Gay Shame has also taken on issues surrounding gentrification, racism, immigration, and body commodification. If queer groups dedicated to political action had resumes, Gay Shame would have one of the most diverse, especially considering the types of actions and social justice arenas where they have chosen to place their efforts.

Through their modern, well-presented, and efficiently-organized web presence, Gay Shame highlights this intersectionality in their mission statement: “[w]e seek nothing less than a new queer activism that foregrounds race, class, gender and sexuality, to counter the self-serving ‘values’ of gay consumerism and the increasingly hypocritical left.” Their web presence dedicates a great deal of space to criticizing homonormativity. They encourage participation of people who may not be queer or identify as gay but are interested in social justice activism, and state clearly that they reach and enact their decisions on the basis of consensus and non-hierarchical decision-making processes.

The Gay Shame website includes a front page with the group’s name and statement of purpose. Clicking on the front page loads the next *Contents* page, where the user can navigate the remaining portions of the site. The site is paged through an upper-level navigation bar that contains links to the *About* section, *Archives* section, *Image Gallery*, *Links* and *Contact Information*. The main body of the page contains a center bar, thumbnails to specific actions and issues to the left, and links to upcoming or recent events and materials in the middle. The overall color of the page is pink. The group

repeats this motif on all of its pages and within the *actions* it takes. It becomes their signature symbol and I examine the semiotic meaning of this later.

LAGAI – Queer Insurrection (<http://www.lagai.org/>)

One of the oldest radical queer groups in the U. S. is the LAGAI – Queer Insurrection. Located in San Francisco and the Bay Area, LAGAI was founded in 1983 as Lesbians and Gays Against Intervention. The group shortened their name to an acronym and later added “Queer Insurrection” to better explain their goals. LAGAI has a broad base of support and focuses on a variety of issues that highlight the intersectionality of queer politics.

LAGAI publishes on their web presence a statement of principles titled *What We Believe*. This statement emphasizes the interconnected nature of the queer struggle with issues such as capitalism, class, race, gender, and gender identity, as well as other points of oppression. Though brief, the following statement captures the struggles in which they are involved and some of the humour that they express throughout the rest of their media:

“We are anti-authoritarian, anti-militarist, pro-feminist and anti-racist, and we demand that queer issues never be put on the back burner. We will accept nothing less than full civil rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people, but we believe some rights are not worth fighting for. We do not think queers or straights should be in the military of a society like the u.s. [sic], or probably any government, and we feel that the queer liberation position is to oppose marriage as the central institution of patriarchy, not to try to get married ourselves.”
(Insurrection, 2011)

Queer issues that are of particular interest to LAGAI include the critique of gay marriage as assimilationist, the pride parade and its corporatization, and the perceived lack of interest from the larger gay community in issues that do not directly affect gays

entering into the mainstream social order. LAGAI is critical of the lack of intersectionality in the gay struggle for equal rights. The invisibility of transgender individuals and women in a process that focus on white homonormativity receives special attention by the group.

LAGAI Web Presence

LAGAI has a very simple web presence. Although the content is updated, the design is not contemporary. Their website is not a modern frame-based design. Rather, their website reflects an earlier generation of design which featured spatially-unrelated material that at times seems randomly placed. This lack of cultural capital in the design of their web presence makes the overall presentation of the material seem outdated. The dated format is probably a reflection of a different form of cultural capital, especially in comparison to the modern format used by groups such as Gay Shame. For Gay Shame the focus of publishing is on the Internet. Their content creation is focused on utilizing the inexpensive distribution potential of the web. On the other hand, the focus of LAGAI has been on the creation of printed materials with the web content as a secondary form of publishing. LAGAI's focus on print reveals an older form of cultural capital in radical politics.

LAGAI and Traditional Media

LAGAI produces a bi-monthly newspaper titled *Ultra Violet*. Unlike Gay Shame, who uses its web presence as its primary medium for information, LAGAI use a print medium as their primary information outlet. This is a reflection of their cultural capital,

as the group developed well before the Internet was available for publishing. Starting in 1988 and originally titled *Out*, LAGAI's main periodical has been in continuous publication since. The name changed as the title *Out* was adopted by more-corporatized media publications. LAGAI still calls *Ultra Violet*, their main publication, "organ"⁹, a term frequently used by earlier period Marxist and communist groups referring to their newspapers, newsletters, and other print media. According the Leninist theory of the press, the main political tool of the communist party was its press—referred to as "the organ of the party"(Insurrection, 2011). This is strong evidence that the cultural capital LAGAI draws from when it comes to media, belongs to previous eras of political activism. This is a turn of phrase that newer social movements in the U. S. have abandoned. *Ultra Violet* is available through their web site with back issues dating to April of 2000. The Graphic User Interface (GUI) for the newspaper appears as a simple text file on a violet background with one issue per page after clicking the issue link. This is another older form of GUI and highlights again a different level of cultural capital invested in the web presence.

Two interesting features of *Ultra Violet* are the humorous stories that open each issue and the *Mocha* column. The opening story of each issue is a joke, an anti-gay news story is re-presented ironically as opposite of the way that it is actually creating oppressions. This queering of oppression takes a topic and inverts the pain of the story into something new. For example, *Ultra Violet* reported Sarah Palin's death at the hands of a moose in December 2009, inverting stories of her hunting prowess. The inversion and subversion of symbolic material by queer groups is used consistently as a tactic in publications, imagery, and other media.

⁹ Referring to the use of a publisher as the organ of a political party and/or as a sexual organ

Another interesting feature found in *Ultra Violet* is the media review column by Mocha the dog. Here staff contributors review recent movies and books for the readership. These reviews are ‘contributed’ by the dog Mocha who provides a brief “woof woof woof” at the end of the section. For example, in the February 2012 column in *Ultra Violet* Mocha the dog reviewed the film *Tomboy* “Tomboy: After seeing the ads for Tinker Tailor (see below) which stars seven – count ‘em – seven men, and barely includes women, this French movie made us wonder if patriarchy was experiencing a tiny little downturn in France.”(Dog, 2012).

Ultra Violet also regularly features obituaries for activists that have died. These are usually short, containing a brief history of the person and the causes they worked for. This is an interesting feature and demonstrates the wide range of social capital that the LAGAI membership has accumulated through its existence. While the passing of an activist could be considered a sad event, the fact that LAGAI knows a wide variety of activists, engaged in diverse social justice struggles, in a very intergenerational way, demonstrates that its presence in the field of queer activism and activism for social justice in general is greater than many other queer groups.

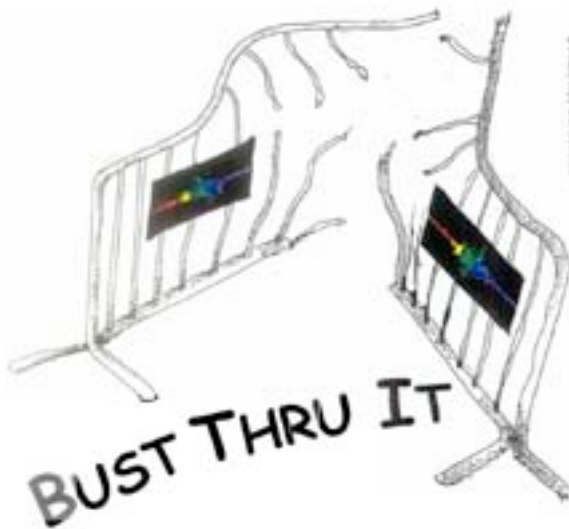
Ultra Violet, as well as the web presence of LAGAI, also queers spelling as it reports on issues. For example, California is often spelled “KKKCalifornia” to highlight the existence of racism in the state. Often, LAGAI does not capitalize “u.s.” and the proper names of other political figures that are, ostensibly, active participants in oppression. By queering the symbolic capital of language, LAGAI creatively opens new spaces for the semiotic meaning of the content. The use of ironic humor fractures the illusionary bond between language and meaning. By inverting the symbolic meaning of

language, the group queers the linguistic project. In the moment that they turn the description of reality upon itself, the things that mark them as ‘other’ because of their queerness invert.

LAGAI and Other Activities

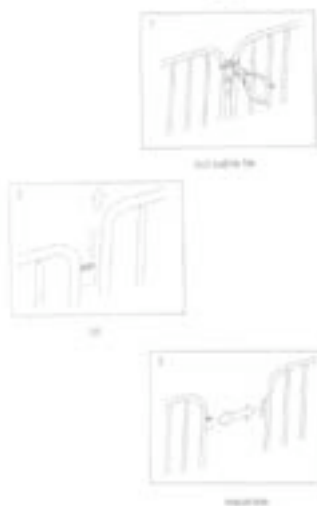
While *Ultra Violet* is one of the main forms of expression used by the LAGAI, they are not limited to that alone. The LAGAI also designs, publishes, and distributes posters that relate to their campaigns. In 1988, they published twenty different posters for the “Crash the Parade” campaign that criticized the corporatized and assimilationist direction that the San Francisco Gay Pride Parade was taking at that time. These posters are available in an archive on their website. This campaign continues, and other groups like Gay Shame continue to rally around many of the same issues. They also produce posters for singular events and issues.

Crash The Parade



(815) 750-3376 notamarket@bigfoot.com

Don't Forget Your Tool...



These pliers are designed to remove pins from parade floats. They are made of heavy-duty steel and have a long, comfortable handle. They are the perfect tool for anyone who wants to remove pins from their parade float.



The fact is, Mr. Miquelot, if you don't get involved, nothing is going to change.

Crash The Parade

Crash The Parade!

(815) 750-3376 notamarket@bigfoot.com

(815) 750-3376 notamarket@bigfoot.com



once upon a time,
you could join any contingent that
tickled your fancy,
from anyplace along the parade
route...



so what's with the barricades?

Crash The Parade

It's a Movement, not a market! (415) 750-3378 notamarket@bigfoot.com

© 1998 Not a Market, Inc.

http://www.notamarket.org/parade/1998/



the AUDIENCE

The Pride audience is not just a collection of people
strolling with flowers and family members. Though a growing
number of...

There is a growing and better aware. The annual Pride audience is
diverse in its views regarding its own message. In a survey of
three other national cities in 1997, a surprising 70% said that
they were...

The Pride audience is a mixture of people who are interested in a market
oriented by the "Pride Parade" and a "Pride Parade" that is
not...

"The Pride audience is a gateway to the gay consumer?"

"a marketing channel worthy of serious interest?"



Not my parade!

Crash The Parade

(415) 750-3378 notamarket@bigfoot.com

© 1998 Not a Market, Inc.

it's a Movement, not a market!

Figure 8: LAGAI Posters

LAGAI also participates in direct action events and demonstrations. They choose the term “demonstrations” in their description of activities and, when compared to Gay Shame’s use of the term *actions*, seem to also highlight a different form of cultural capital. LAGAI is also active in coalition building, working locally, nationally and internationally with other groups who engage in actions that do not seem to connect to LGBT issues. Adhering to their statement of beliefs and to a queer demonstration of intersectionality, LAGAI lends their resources to other oppressed peoples and anti-oppression causes. Some of the issues that they have been active with include healthcare issues, prisoner rights, and anti-Israeli apartheid. They are also active in local labour struggles, elections, and ordinance campaigns.

Ultra Violet covers a wide range of topics with contributing members who write news stories on important social justice issues. One interesting theme that recurs in *Ultra Violet* is stories about the struggles of Native Peoples. No other queer group that I am aware of touches on this topic. While there are LGBT Native Peoples groups, it is an area where the queer political projects have been negligent¹⁰. The April 2007 issue, for example, covers this topic as well as bar discrimination in San Francisco, Hamas, Clarence Hill, an anarchist bookfair, torture legalities, and grand juries. The paper also includes contact information and activities from these groups to aid in coalition building.

¹⁰ I had a student in my Queer Theory class attempt to produce her final project on Queer (as opposed to LGBT) Native Groups. She came to me for help finding information and ultimately we were both disappointed with the results of our literature search. Our frustration is compounded by the fact that Queer Theory scholars often use examples from native peoples to show disruptions to gender and sexual binaries. The lack of bidirectional scholarship and activism in this arena may be an interesting area of investigation to other scholars in the future.

Naughty North (<http://thenaughtynorth.blogspot.com/>)

Naughty North is a radical queer group based in the state of Maine in the U. S.. Naughty North has had a web presence since November of 2007. In contrast to Gay Shame and LAGAI, Naughty North uses a pre-made web publishing service named Blogger in order to construct and host their content. This use of the blog format is becoming one of the most common ways that smaller groups create a web presence because the hosting is free, the web templates are prefabricated, yet customizable, and they are easy to navigate by the user. Some of the ability to create your own end-user GUI forms are lost; however, the trade off is a sleek modern design that avoids the problems of having an outdated design. This format also makes the content-creator GUI easy for participants. This allows the content producers to work in a collaborative way rather than requiring members to have technological expertise in a publishing program or HTML. Each user with minimum training can publish material to the web presence if they are allocated the password to the site. This method allows for ease of publishing with a minimum of cultural capital.

By using a corporate publishing medium, the queer group bypasses the need to develop skills needed to create web content directly. Hosting through a third party also reduces the need to have access to the economic capital necessary to purchase domain addresses, servers, and other software and hardware. The group is able to publish web content with a minimum of economic capital, and this allows the group to focus on the creation of symbolic capital. The creation of web content becomes the focus of the publishing activity. The group uses the interface made available by corporate capitalism, yet it critiques corporate capitalism as a source of oppression. However, the use of

corporate communication tools allows the group to enter into the public sphere; refusing to use this interface could mean the exclusion of the group from the public sphere.

The Naughty North site is also constrained by a chronological presentation format imposed by the blogger service. This, however, makes it easy to advertise actions and current events. The frame-based interface also allows the display of other key information. Naughty North has a clean interface that shows only the information they consider crucial. The first frame is the head banner stating briefly, what they believe. Next, they have their *Points of Unity*, which is their statement of purpose and political goals. I will examine these shortly. The next frame is *Links* to other groups. It also links to the archives of their postings.

The Naughty North's *Points of Unity* are their version of Gay Shame's *Statement of Principals* and LAGAI's *What We Believe*. While there are some differences, they seek to highlight their part of the struggle in the queer political project:

“We will build friendships and alliances across urban and rural boundaries, celebrating our diversity and micro-cultures while breaking down isolation. Through campouts, work parties, dance parties, sleepovers, farm days, etc, we will create and share a positive queer experience.

We will not only critique targets like corporations, but we will also expose inconsistencies within our social groups and so-called ‘communities’ in order to grow more toward our radical ideals. Whenever possible, we will use theatrics, humor and satire to communicate and to critique ourselves.

Fighting racism, classism, misogyny, heterosexism, transphobia, ableism, capitalism and all other hierarchies is a central purpose of Naughty North, not an add-on. We will work to create a space where radical queers can challenge these hierarchies and build alliances with other oppressed peoples willing to struggle with us.

We are committed to inter-generational struggle. Radical queer history has been systematically distorted, erased and disappeared by the AIDS genocide and fear. We will re-learn and teach these histories to inform our present and push the boundaries of a new queer activism.

We will confront notions of shame from both the Christian Right and the mainstream gay and lesbian community.

Assimilation is death through erasure. We oppose all forms of assimilation, especially gay marriage and inclusion in the military industrial complex. Our (direct) actions will not only be fierce and critical, but fun and empowering. We will create a radical presence at queer events and a queer presence at radical events.” (North, 2011).

When compared to Gay Shame and LAGAI, Naughty North is a very small and much less active group. However, being located in Main, an area where the queer struggle is far less evident than a place with a larger LGBTQ population, such as San Francisco or the state of California, in some ways makes them more interesting. For example, the first paragraph of their *Points of Unity* mentions struggles in rural areas. This is an area of oppression that the other larger social movement groups ignore. In addition, they locate themselves in the state of Maine and do not give a particular geolocation. It is clear that most of their action is centered in Portland, Maine, however, by not specifying that they are an urban group located in Portland, they attempt to create space for isolated rural queers that may be alienated by a clearly urban group. One of their key remarks in their *Points of Unity* is to break down the isolations of queers.

Naughty North, both by statement and practice, is a direct action group. Following the queer paradigm, they have participated in actions that open queer places and directly confront power relations that create oppressions. Naughty North created an action against The American Red Cross; the group designed a set of posters that looked like a Red Cross blood drive flyer with the addition of “no faggots allowed” in small font embedded within the poster. The group posted the flyers around urban areas near communal spots, such as bulletin boards and bus stops. The action shows that the FDA and the American Red Cross do not allow any male who has had sexual contact with any

other male since 1977 to donate blood. The posters caused quite a stir with people calling the local Red Cross to complain, and the local news reported on the issue.

“American Red Cross workers in Portland took down 25 posters Wednesday that a group of gay activists had put up to protest a federal policy prohibiting blood banks from receiving donations from homosexual men. The posters mimic Red Cross blood drive fliers and use the organization's logo. The only difference is that they say no homosexuals are allowed, using a slur for gay men that many people find offensive. Donna Morrissey, a spokeswoman for the American Red Cross Northeast Division, said the protesters essentially stole the Red Cross logo and caused confusion in the community. "We consider this to be an act of vandalism," she said.” (Bell, 2010)



Figure 9: Naughty North Blood Drive

Other actions include protesting restaurants that they perceive as homophobic, as well as participating in panel discussions and local Dyke Marches. Naughty North has also been involved in transgender events such as performance nights. From these events, it is clear that Naughty North has been involved with many other groups. They have also formed coalitions with other queer groups such as Bash Back. Naughty North also irregularly publishes the *Naughty North Newsletter*, a one-sheet publication where they cover queer issues and political analysis. There are three issues of the publication.

Queer Liberation Front (<http://queerliberationfront.us/>)

The Queer Liberation Front uses a different form of web presence from the previous groups. With a contact phone located in Connecticut, there is no other indication to their geolocation. Their mission statement contains much of the same themes of the previous groups in a very compressed form:

“The Queer Liberation Front was formed in November 2010 to take the struggle for queer rights and the rights of all people to a new level using non-violent direct action and other forms of activism.
Join us in building a world free from transphobia, homophobia, sexism, racism, classism, imperialism, militarism and all oppressions.” (QLF, 2011)

Their site is a modern frame-based design that has entries ordered by posting date. Built on a blog engine (WordPress) it still hosts its own URL. Queer Liberation Front’s main content is queer news and actions from other places and queer groups. Unlike the groups discussed earlier, Queer Liberation Front seems to be in an early stage of organizing. Wanting a web presence in the meantime, they have taken a media aggregator role, gathering and republishing media content primarily from other places. This aggregation role makes their mission different from that of the other groups.

All this is not to say that Queer Liberation Front does not have content of its own. The group has been active in a number of actions. For example, Queer Liberation Front participated in the *United National Anti-War Committee’s Bring The Troops Home Now!* march and rally in April 9th 2011 in New York City. The membership has also participated in anti-war marches in Danbury, Connecticut.

The Queer Liberation Front uses a modern frame-based web design. The main frame on the left-hand side is the post of their activities, news, photos and videos of actions, and other material. On the right are separate unchanging sub-frames that contain

links to recent posts, a means to log in, a blogroll (which serves as a link bank to other queer web sites), categories or tags for each post to allow fast searching of content, and recent comments on posts. Logging in is necessary in order to post content to the site. This is a well-organized format, and the prominence of the blogroll and links section highlights the connections that the Queer Liberation Front has built or is building in the larger queer community.

At the bottom of the page, a static frame contains three columns. The first column is the *About* section that contains the group mission statement. The second is a repeat of the *Recent Comments* section. Finally, the third column is a repeat of the *Recent Post* section. The top of the page contains three links: a link to their *About* section, a *Contact the QLF* link and their *Privacy Policy*.

The background of the site is black except for the inclusion of a rainbow that looks like streaks of refracted neon light. This streams down from the top of the page and ends intermittently four inches from the top. Half way down the page length whirls of neon cross the page with a faint glow that interrupts the black. The bottom of the page repeats this top pattern with the neon rainbow light streaming upward. The use of the rainbow seems odd in comparison to the other queer groups and their rejection of mainstream LGBT politics. One possible explanation is that the page uses a template. This may have been the best available design. Or, the short history of the group, and its lack of their own cultural capital, may inhibit them to reject all the semiotics of the larger LGBT community.

Radical Homosexual Agenda (<http://www.radicalhomosexualagenda.org/>)

The Radical Homosexual Agenda or RHA is a group that formed in the metropolitan area of New York. RHA takes their name from the trigger words that right wing discourses use to attack homosexuality. The Radical Homosexual Agenda has attempted to rewrite the fear of an elitist homonormative agenda into a queer political position. They are strongly critical of the Human Rights Campaign and other more general homosexual rights groups. Their mission statement titled “Who is the RHA?” elucidates their position against a society that seeks social control and a homosexual movement that seeks to be complicit with that control. While not as compact of a statement as the other groups, the RHA makes their queer goals known:

“We’re the Radical Homosexual Agenda, a contingent of the NYC queer community who believes that our rights extend way beyond marriage. Why do we call ourselves the RHA?

“Beware the Radical Homosexual Agenda!” That’s the Right Wing’s rallying cry. It’s meant to conjure a legion of pink-clad, poly-loving, left-of-left queers who are threatening to invade Small Town America. Well, that description sounds sort of nice to us, too, actually. Except for the invasion part—’cause we’re also anti-imperialist. And besides, we’ve been in those small towns and everywhere else all along.

Who is the RHA?

We’re queer folks of diverse ages and backgrounds who are based in the New York City metropolitan area. We’re gender-queers and run-of the mill homosexuals, bisexuals and transsexuals.

What is the RHA all about?

If you listen to the Human Rights Campaign or the liberal politicians, you’d think all queers wanted to sign their life away to Uncle Sam or get “married” and have kids. But queer liberation reaches way beyond these issues.

The queer liberation groups of the 60s and 70s had much broader social visions. They were anti-war, they fought for economic rights and agitated for free speech and a greater vision of democracy.

In the downsizing of our dreams that occurred during the last several decades, mainstream LGBTQ groups have forgotten these connections. They’d rather feed queer soldiers to Bush’s war than fight the military-industrial complex. They forget that, even more than marriage, the majority of queers also need affordable

housing and health care. And this is convenient for these groups and politicians, since they're underwritten by corporations whose very existences are threatened by steps towards economic equality and a more egalitarian democracy." (RHA, 2011)

Within the mission statement the RHA makes explicit what they see as sources of oppression: first, the larger social formation that renders queers invisible and; second, the homonormative organizing of the gay rights movement as the two main spheres of their queer struggle. The reference to "downsizing our dreams" refers to the loss of more radical groups and agendas in the earlier gay liberation movement that slowly became assimilationist style gay rights movements.

It is interesting to note here the mention of small towns in the beginning of the RHA explanation. I believe that there can be two readings that can emerge from this section.

"It's meant to conjure a legion of pink-clad, poly-loving, left-of-left queers who are threatening to invade Small Town America. Well, that description sounds sort of nice to us, too, actually. Except for the invasion part—'cause we're also anti-imperialist. And besides, we've been in those small towns and everywhere else all along." (RHA, 2011)

The first is a positive reading, one that recognizes that queer people exist in non-metropolitan areas. The last line in the sample above highlights this positive reading. It is a rarity for queer or the homosexual rights movement to recognize the particular needs, aspirations, and social constructs of rural homosexuals and gender nonconformists. I read this section as recognition that the queer political project reaches out and understands these individuals. A second reading that is less positive focus on this portion of the section "who are threatening to invade Small Town America". The previous mention of a pink clad legion leads one to believe that it is "Small Town America" that is at fault for the ills that are perpetrated on queers. While it is clear that the concept of "Small Town

America” is a political tool deployed in political rhetoric as an exemplary and geo-mythical place that needs protection from urban (gay and effeminate) elites, the threat to invade seems to be on the cusp of being anti-rural, thus reinforcing the idea of New York being the home of urban elites.

The reinforcement of the small town as extant later in the paragraph highlights that RHA is not problematizing the concept of “Small Town America” as a rhetorical idea rather than as an extant place. This concept functions like other mythos in American politics where the myth and the reality conflate the participant’s worldview. This is the process of *illusio* at work. Just as individuals tend to self identify (no matter their actual reality) as ‘middle class’ or as the ‘average American,’ the mythos of your geolocation representing the ‘real’ America by being “Small Town America” is a piece of cultural capital adopted for political and symbolic myth-making.

The Radical Homosexual Agenda’s Web Presence

The Radical Homosexual Agenda uses a frame-based site and appears to have its own webhost. While much more modern in comparison to LAGAI, it is a bit more simplistic than the Queer Liberation Front. The front page contains upcoming actions, and to the left is a frame containing links to the other pages. These include *Coming Actions*, *Who is the RHA?*, *Why Quinn’s Face?/Letter to Quinn*, *Past Actions*, *Activist Figures*, *Get Involved* and *Contacts*.

Coming Actions is a section explaining the current action campaigns in which that RHA is involved. It is in a scrolling format and uses text and imagery to display information. *Past Actions* contains the archives of past actions including photographs and

some text about the success and meaning of these actions. *Why Quinn's Face/Letter to Quinn* does not have as obvious an explanation as the others. It explains the RHA action in contacting and protesting a city council member who opposed RHA demonstrating without a parade permit. Other homosexual groups have condemned the Radical Homosexual Agenda for protesting Councilman Quinn, who they regard as a political ally. This appears to have been one of the reasons for strong opposition to RHA in New York, and they felt it necessary to have a page available for the web traffic that it produced to clarify their actions and their political motives.

The *Activist Figures* section is an interesting project unique to the RHA. The section is designed as an art project that sells action figures that represent the most significant tropes in the organization's activist agenda. Each activist trope takes the form of packaging that a toy store action-figure would come in. This method of calling out the particulars of the homonormative identity movements is an interesting and irreverent way of making some key points about the connection between the 'HRC style' of gay assimilation and the queer political project.



Figure 10: Activist Action Figures

The *Contact Us* section provides an email address for inquiries, and the *Get Involved* section provides a text field to send your information to the group in order to be contacted for the next set of actions or meetings. Unlike the other queer groups examined above, the RHA does not seem to have regular meetings or a regular meeting space. While not mentioned on the site, the reason for this may be the lack of social/economic capital. It could also indicate a form of security culture that means to protect their membership from harm.

The RHA does not seem to have any other regular media production. While it has its website and the site contains links to a few flyers on specific actions that the RHA participated in as well as specific issues that the RHA was concerned with, there does not seem to be any sort of regular media production. This may be because the RHA has

positioned themselves as a more ‘direct action’ oriented group that values confrontation of political injustice over entering into a more constrained form of discourse.

The angle of confrontation is supported by the majority of the imagery, which expresses activism as confrontation rather than assimilation. By being a direct action group, the RHA is positioning itself in a way that signals the queer political project as being in opposition to assimilationist political positions. The RHA aligns its political agenda with the queer political project, in terms of organizing around actions that directly confront power imbalances rather than trying to lobby for political power without disrupting the status quo. The RHA’s web space is a means of creating social and cultural capital for the queer political project.

Corpus of Images

The corpus of images collected from the sites totaled more than 718 items. I gathered these images and saved them to electronic files organized by group. I sorted and semiotically classified them to look for emerging patterns. These patterns emerged out of the comparison of images and pictures used on the web presence of the five sites described above. Through repeated viewings of the image library, patterns of symbolic meaning began to emerge.

I recorded these patterns and reexamined the corpus to reinforce or confront these choices. The images used below are exemplars of each of the patterns and serve as examples to illustrate the broader range of images displayed on the five sites. In general, the analysis below follows a pattern of providing a connotative reading of the images and their meaning followed by the denotative reading of the larger symbolic and political

meaning behind their use. I place these in relation to power structures read through a Bourdieuan lens.

Semiotic Patterns

Color

Color plays an important role in the display of symbolic material for these five queer political groups. Because the web presence is a construct of the group, the representation of color is a specific choice that reflects the specific symbolic and connotative desires of the group. It therefore represents the symbolic political motives of the queer political project and the meaning giving process of creating a space on the Internet. Color choices become important when they stand in relation to the symbolic codes of the larger modernist heteronormative social structure.

The queer groups use two main color codes. The first is pink, a color traditionally associated with the female gender and the denotation of being rhetorically weak and powerless. Pink is not a color of strength, political power, martial strength, or voice. By adopting pink, queer groups can use this symbolic femininity to disrupt the codes of the larger social structure. Blue is another color that appears though with less frequency than pink. The heteronormative code structure that assigns blue to boys carries with it a stunted childlike quality. Blue is not the mature political male but the apolitical child. These queer groups use this denotation in some rewritings of symbolic code systems, though with less frequency than pink.

Pink

Pink appears everywhere in the corpus. It appears on drums, hair, helmets, signs, backgrounds, makeup, bullhorns, gasmasks, fishnets, socks, shirts, pants, faces, dresses, ribbons, baubles, beads and in many other places. A quick scan of the icon view of the corpus shows that easily two thirds of the images contain pink.

Pink has in the Western world been associated with female qualities. As a signifier, pink creates on the denotative level associations with the demure, passivity, the female, and other elements traditionally associated with femininity (cute, vulnerable, vain, playful, soft-spoken, passively sexy). Pink is an apolitical color. One need only see the movie *Legally Blond* (Luketic, 2001) or to wonder in the girl toy sections of Wal-Mart or Toys' R Us to find pink deployed as a color representing a lighthearted and gay nature. In the film *Reservoir Dogs* (Tarantino, 1992) one of the characters gives a speech where he complains of being named "Mr. Pink." When associated with males, pink signals their gayness and status as a 'nancy,' the feminized male.

Gay Shame in particular has adopted pink as what appears to be its trademark color. In the way that the anarchist Black Bloc has adopted black as its color of defiance, Gay Shame has incorporated pink into its own semiotic regime. At Gay Shame actions pink is the color of their bandannas. Flags, shirts, bags, and pants are often pink. However, Gay Shame has a reputation for toughness in its actions. Highlighted in their picture archive are arrest and disruptions. There are many files of the members, often clad in pink being pressed against the ground as black clad police officers make their arrest.



Figure 11: Gay Shame Member Arrested

The color contrast is striking and creates a visual image that ideationally represents the structural brutality that queers face in their lived experience. The police stand in for power on both a connotative and denotative level. The social movement actors represent the minoritized body in a literal and figurative state of repression. The adoption of pink signifying a passivity, vulnerability, and need for protection is set against the war like black. The deliberate use of pink in a militarized environment makes for striking photographs with strong visual impact.

The use of pink also rewrites some of the stereotyped images of the post-Seattle protest movements. Rather than being black or red, colors semiotically associated with maleness, pink as a signifier for femininity helps to rewrite the androcentric nature of modern social movements. However, rather than reinscribing pink as feminine, the adoption of the color reopens it to interpretation, giving pink a new chance at signification and breaking the chain of semiotic meaning. I read pink in this context as a color of strength and a signifier of the transmutation of gender codes that Gay Shame seeks through their political enactments.

Pink also carries with it a different set of signification to the greater LGBTQ community. Nazi Germany used the pink triangle as a way of signifying persons that were in violation of Paragraph 175 of the draconian German penal code. This legislation criminalized homosexuality. Prisoners in the German concentration camp system wore a pink triangle badge like those that contained a star for Jewish prisoners. This badge marked their differentiation from Jewish captives. Even upon liberation and release of Jewish prisoners at the end of World War II, the damned that wore the pink triangle remained incarcerated because they were considered criminals under German law rather

than political prisoners. Early radical lesbian and gay movements adopted the pink triangle as a symbol of resistance. After designing the rainbow flag in 1974, the prominence of the pink triangle waned. The rainbow came to be the dominant symbol of the gay and lesbian rights movement.



Figure 12: Lesbian Symbolism

The rainbow flag and all its accoutrements soon became part of the corporatization of gay culture. While the rainbow flag is probably the most easily recognizable of the color symbolisms surrounding the LGBT community, it should be considered a symbol of only one part of the movement. Queer groups seeking to differentiate themselves politically and symbolically have returned to the earlier symbolism of the pink triangle.

Queers also use pink to rewrite the symbolic codes of militarism. If we accept militarism as a modernist philosophical position, challenging its symbolic codes becomes part of the queer political process. The use of force granted by the State to particular social institutions ultimately upholds structural limitations in the field of power. The military and police are primary examples of this. These groups have their own symbolic codes that represent that force. These codes contain color schemes such as olive green, green-black-brown camouflage, black (as in boots, masks, belts, and harnesses), and khaki.

The radical queer groups have in part sought to disrupt this color code of power by rewriting the color and objects associated with a modern militarism and thus social order. Helmets are used but are painted pink. The helmets, covered with pink fishnets in some cases, are symbolically rewritten. This causes a confusing and conflicting set of codes in a *détournement* of symbolic imagery. Gas masks are painted pink, rewriting their power as a militarized and masculine object. Camouflage is (re)colored, as a means of conveying a radical and militarized queer positionality, while separating it from other types of radical or militarized political positionalities.



Figure 13: Militarized Queers



Figure 14: Uses of Pink

Groups of Queers

Queers in groups are another pattern found in all the images displayed on the websites. On the denotative level, the group is a natural and understandable image to select. A political group wishes to display its group strength and status as an organization. Pictures of the group involved in the process of ‘doing’ politics seem to be a natural and

normal choice. Pictures of the queer group at actions saturate the corpus. The group marching in a parade, participating in a protest, or dancing and gathering for festivities are common images. This display shows strength in political numbers and displays the group both to in-group readers and out-group observers. As a political image, display of the group becomes necessary to the members as a means of meaning-making and to a political public as a way of presenting in the field.

On the connotative level, the group takes on an added significance. Pictures of the group become symbols for political power. When a group uses images showing queers standing together, the minority position of queer politics in a given field or geolocation is rewritten. Queer political groups generate symbolic capital using images showing their numbers. By appearing in numbers in a number-obsessed society, the minority position of queer politics is symbolically ameliorated. The use of mass renders visible the invisibility of the singular queer. This process creates a form of political strength. I examine strength as a separate semiotic pattern later and link its role to actions against authority. In the group images, the queer moves from a singular minority position to one of political strength and greater potential for social change. This serves as a visual proof for the viewer that queers are becoming a counterpublic.

The display of the group in a public space serves as a further reinforcement of this semiosis. While I examine confrontation later as a penetration of public space, the group image displayed in the public space is an attempt to erase queer invisibility. The connotative visibility allows the observer to read the queer presence on a street or in a shopping mall as a greater queer presence. This creates access to a symbolic capital

previously denied. It may also build social capital as the viewer may be more inclined to interact with a group that has a greater perceived strength.

Queer spaces are rare. Queers need to make heteronormative spaces queer spaces. To make a queer counterpublic, queers need to be in an active process of queering space. This can be and sometimes is reinforced through confrontation; however there is a category of images of non- (direct)-confrontation where a queer presence ‘queers’ a space. I specify the pattern of non- (direct)-confrontation because in the world of heteropatriarchy, any symbolic material that disrupts the normalization and naturalization of the hierarchical categories becomes a symbolic confrontation of the power structure of a field and its *illusio* of normalcy.

By existing in a non-queer space, a queer group disrupts that space. This is a symbolic confrontation and not a direct one with persons of invested authority as discussed below. I think that in this moment a symbolic conflict occurs. A depoliticized space becomes a site of political conflict. Queering the normalcy of the space causes *illusio* to be fractured. This disruption of the space’s *illusio* is consequently a confrontation with the space’s symbolic authority. Because queer spaces are rare, queers need to make queer spaces where they are able to. Queers, appearing queer in public, force straight people, secure in their privilege, to confront the symbolic codes of normalcy they function effortlessly within by forcing an explanation of the queer symbolic codes.



Figure 15: Gender Bending

For example the appearance of a gender-bending group in a cisgender space, an area where gender bending is not a contextual normalcy, disrupts the public perceptions and symbolic readings of gender. In cisgender spaces the signs of gender are more normalized and naturalized. The queer presence highlights the disruption. Recoding this sort of event and displaying it on the queer web presence shows the power of the symbolic presence in that moment to both the queer group and the outside viewer. This rewrites the normalization of public space and the online image communicates that process.



Figure 16: Queer Street Presence

Confrontation

Confrontation appears often in the imagery of queer sites. This includes two major forms of confrontation: direct and indirect. Direct confrontation is when the queer is in an engagement with the representations of power or the direct agents of power. Indirect confrontation occurs when the queer is engaging the field of power in a more abstract way. This form is harder to recognize and often blends with other patterns selected.

Direct Confrontation:



Figure 17: Queer Arrested

This image from *Gay Shame* shows direct confrontation. The agents of the field of power, the police, engage in actively repressing a member of the group. On the denotative level, this is an easy read. The police shoving a baton into the back of a queer force the pink clad figure forward. In the background, another police offices and a citizen look on.

On the denotative level, this image represents the direct state oppression of the queer political project. The protester has their back turned. The policeman is engaging the subject from behind. Their queer's gender is unknown. They are pitching forward as the oppressive arm of the state pushes, expelling them from an area in which they are unwanted. The lack of a face by the protester allows us to imagine that anyone could be in that situation. This makes the connotation more open to multiple readings.

On the connotative level, the image supports the queer project. The gender identity of the person is unknown; audiences read gender cues from the use of pink, short hair and a dress. The bystanders represent society and their unwillingness to intervene. The hat that says "hot" stands in for the fashion industry. This picture comes to represent the literal expulsion of queer bodies and queer politics forming fields of power. The queer is not able to enter into the public sphere because discourse in this situation is not possible. The turned back, with face and mouth facing away, are a turning away of discursive ability.

Even with this loss of discursive ability and with the exclusion from the public sphere, the queer in the picture is a representation of qualities mentioned in many of the groups' mission statements, especially that of direct action. The voice may not be present

but the body is. The body, as the site of queer repression engages with the powers of the state apparatus. To be queer is to ultimately feel repression, not because of intellectual positions, but because of bodily desires and needs. The State's political will to power over representations of the body expresses itself in this moment. This queer body is in representation its own queer body, collapsing signifier and signified. Although it appears to be losing, if that binary can be permitted, in the moment the queer body is presenting itself in public it gains political power through the image. It is unwanted, but it is not hidden.

The body of that queer is in public; queering and experiencing direct repression rather than the indirect repression found in habitus or symbolic control this queer body is in a direct confrontation with authority. In this sense, this body is embodying the queer political project. It is in public, not silent or demure, but in direct action against someone or something.

In the image below, the police are leading the queer away in handcuffs. The police are restraining and containing the body that refuses obedience. This restraining symbolically links it to the lived experience of queers everyday. While discourse is possible in this situation, I must assume that it is ultimately futile. The picture works denotatively to remind the viewer that the power of the state rests in its power over the body. Connotatively, the picture serves to show that the power of the queer rests in the power to put that body in danger for a political cause. Unlike the homosexual rights movement, the queer movement relies on direct confrontation and symbolic rhetorical confrontation. The queer represents the postmodern state of genderlessness and pastiche, while the uniform and modernist police both lead and follow their captive.



Figure 18: Queer in Handcuffs

Further queering the image is the unknown nature of gender in this situation. The color pink, long hair, and dress semiotically signal that the captive is female. However, this is unknown as with the previous image. The image taps into our societal preconceptions of how genders should be treated. Confrontation itself is a gendered issue.

Confrontation is gendered. Social mores have different expectations of how repressive force should be used against genders. Persons who do not fit a specific gender binary consequently become hard to read when it comes to our expectations of repressive force. The following image plays on those expectations. This body can be read as female. Consequently, the blood running down their face and in their teeth is startling. The image plays upon the archetypes set up within the field of gender relations. While ultimately we do not know this person's gender identity (or even that they have one), we react to the image because of our own gender biases embedded within our habitus of gendered expectations.



Figure 19: Queer Bleeding

The denotative level of this image is the creation of an uncomfortable ambiguity. Why is conflict a privileged choice of images on queer web presences? I believe that it serves two functions. First, images of this type demonstrate that the group is engaged with their politics directly and communicates to the viewer that they are not just another website that discusses issues without actually engaging with them in any real way. Queers are in the street and creating engagement with a larger public. They may have less access to capital, but in a moment like this, their body becomes capital. Second, the image of conflict creates a semiotic of strength.

Indirect Confrontation:

By showing their group in actions that are engaging directly with oppressive powers, queer groups show that they are engaged in a political struggle that they are willing to sacrifice their bodies for. By creating and displaying images of this, the queer groups move the realm of politics from one of passivity to activity. This active state is ironically the ‘male’ state-of-being in our culture and consequently denotes a form of strength and courageousness that comes to be equated with political efficacy.

This symbolism rewrites the ‘male’ semiotic state within the image itself. The use of the color pink, for example, allows the ‘male’ state to turn in new directions as we see with the examples above. However, it is still politically effective in a very modernist sense to show projections of strength in the public arena. This picture from Naughty North is entitled as “getting rowdy.jpg”:



Figure 20: Getting Rowdy

This image taps into the images of strength in the indirect confrontational way. While there are no police visible in the image, the queers have taken over the street for this moment of time and, through this photograph, forever. The figure in the foreground holds a pink and black flag with drummers drumming in the background. This is not your normal parade. It is not a normal scene on the streets of the U. S.. Here the conflict is ‘in the street,’ but the act of banding together and taking over the public arena is in itself an act of strength. The masked figures recall the wrestler. Queers in this case are wrestling to enter into the public sphere. The protest form recalls the anti-WTO protesters in Seattle. However, this projection of masculinity is queered by the costuming of the protesters. The clothing and masks obscure their gender cues to the audience, opening a queerer reading of the action.



Figure 21: National Bash Back Convergence Poster

This poster from Naughty North for the Bash Back Convergence in 2009 also taps into the semiotics of confrontation in an indirect way. Here we see pink again, with a drag queen raising her fist in defiance in the background. We cannot see what the fist is being raised against, but in the end, this specificity does not matter. Drag queens are engaging and confronting larger system of oppressions. The confrontation here is with the larger social order that devalues the drag culture. By virtue of being a drag representation on a queer flyer displayed on a queer group's website, the image confronts the devaluation of drag culture in the gay rights movement.



Figure 22: Direct Action Sit In

Direct action and protest are another form of confrontation that moves the site of protest from one of rhetoric to the realm of the body. This picture from LAGAI shows a sit-in blocking ingress and egress from a building in an action meant to convey the protesters' willingness to place their bodies in harm's way for a voice in the body politic. The protesters can be seen with their mouths open, shouting or chanting in front of an unknown audience. When placed in the text covering the issue on the website of the group, this image conveys their willingness to enter into a larger field of power and engage with structural inequalities that prevent social change. The body becomes a form

of capital. The very physical constitution of the protester becomes a rhetorical object that is primary to the subjectivity of the participant. Bodies transform into capital when no other forms of capital are available.

By tapping into the semiotics of strength, either in the image of direct confrontation or the image of indirect confrontation, the queer web presence reasserts the power of the queer group. This use of the protest, placing the body in the way of power and the danger involved, creates a reading for the viewer that the queer group is serious about their politics even when the image subverts this seriousness in other ways. This, however, also creates a semiotic of strength and power.

Strength and Power

Queer groups are generally small. They have very little political capital when compared to the larger LGBT rights movement and other political machines. Queer people isolated in communities lack a social/community solidarity found in other forms of social movements. The strength of queer Internet presences and their ability to communicate to other disparate queers rest on their power to communicate that queers are actively engaged with queer politics in a variety of fields.

The act of communicating strength on the queer web shows the viewer the way that queer politics, even though it is in the minority, emerge in the public sphere. The semiotics of confrontation represents part of this process. Strength is also conveyed on queer web presences using other signs.

The fist and strength

One sign that appears often on queer web presences is the fist. The image of protesting drag queens above features this symbol as an act of resistance, which is also found in other images (see Figure 18). The fist as an act/sign of resistance has its roots in the CNT/FAI of the Spanish Civil War, where it was used as a salute. In addition, the fist relates to the Black Power salute made famous in 1968 by Tommie Smith and John Carlos. The fist is found in the works Hunter S. Thompson and is used by many other political radical groups.



Figure 23: Queer Fist

Militancy and the fist are semiotically connected. Militancy symbolically joins projections of strength. Unlike other parts of the LGBT community, queer groups often use militancy or perceived militancy as a form of symbolic and cultural capital in their political sign systems. I have seen a little of this in the reading of confrontation. However, while militancy relates to confrontation, they are not the same. Militancy is the display of military, aggressive, or combative materials in a way to convey the unity and strength of the individual or group. This can include objects such as batons, boots, and military hats, or it can include the symbolic inclusion of military materials such as camouflage. I have examined some of these images in the section on color, when I analyzed how the inclusion of pink in the images of military objects queers the symbolic codes system.

Bricolage

In the images of the queer sites studied, bricolage is one of the most apparent elements of postmodernism found. This occurs most often with the advertisements for specific events. The combination of disparate images into a complete aesthetic that I see repeated throughout the corpus creates what might be termed a latent queer aesthetic. Access to capital within the group influences this bricolage.

Bricolage found on queer sites extends a method of cutting and pasting that has its roots in the punk rock movements of the 1970s and 1980s. It combines the parts of other elements in a combination that appears to the viewer as a whole. The rise of the copy machine allowed this method of image-making to develop and was an early way for groups with scarce access to economic and cultural capital to create flyers for events.

This method of combination spread within subaltern political organizations and persists in the electronic age.

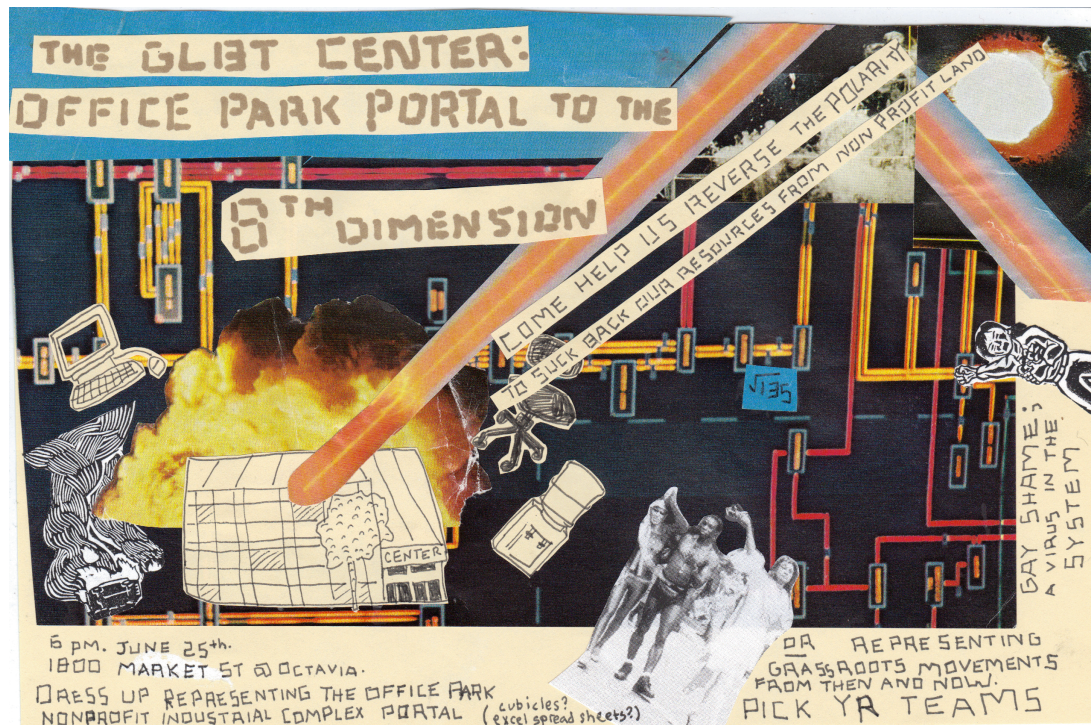


Figure 24: GLBT Center Poster

The reason for its persistence is a matter of cultural capital. On the denotative level the bricolage flyer represents a connection with radical politics. The practical aspects of the bricolage lie in the ability to make flyers easily in an era when the photocopier was the main means of printing available to radical political groups or underground music bands. This practicality has eroded in the electronic era as access to high-end graphics via computers and electronic distribution channels have made the poster a less effective and more archaic social networking method.



Figure 25: Gavin Lies Poster

As a style, bricolage appears on queer websites because it is part of the symbolic capital of protest. Representing radicalism and lack of access to resources allows the queer group to show their place in the continuation with the cultural capitals of previous social and radical movements. The use of bricolage as a means of showing access and continuation with a history of radical politics simultaneously helps to move the queer group away from the 'slick' politics of the more professional gay rights movements.



Figure 26: I'm On the R.A.G.!

By tapping into the semiotics of the underprivileged in the field of politics, queer groups use bricolage to separate themselves from other groups that are attempting to adopt the semiotic codes of more mainstream non-profits. This further highlights the outsider status and commitment to anti-assimilationist politics that the queer political project represents. It would be easy in the computerized age to adopt the aesthetics of advertising and mimic the symbolic and cultural capital of what could be termed more mainstream political movements. However, by using the semiotics of bricolage, the

queer group that employs this method communicates their access to a different set of cultural codes. These codes rely on what is termed the DIY ethic.

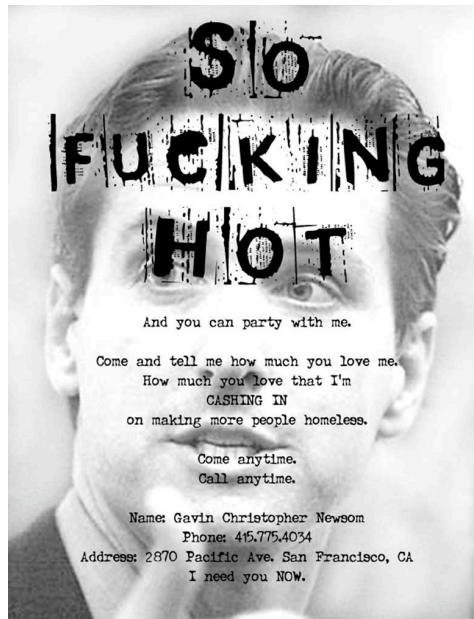


Figure 27: So Fucking Hot

The DIY ethic found in bricolage is a rejection of capitalism and refusal to use 'Madison Avenue' style of advertising. This rejection of capitalism also reinforces the semiotics of being anti-capitalist. The codification of radicalism is not without limits. Bricolage also serves the purpose of breaking away from stable and repetitive uses of images; bricolage, as an aesthetic form, continuously invites to recombine and resignify images, text, graphics, etc..



Figure 28: Street Party

The use of bricolage also allows the signs of other fields to be reconfigured and therefore resignified within their new context. In the example above (see Figure 25), capital can become anti-capital as the glam rock poster becomes a poster for a protest. The millions of dollars deployed to create the original sign of glamour and rock-n-roll become mute as cut-n-paste overwrites the original meaning. A different sign system makes itself known as the modification of the original cultural capital takes place. The poster reads “a celebration of resistance,” but the poster itself is a sign system of resistance. The act of creation rewrites the meaning of mass culture.

Détournement

Détournement originates with the Situationist International, and refers to the act/art of turning a sign against the thing it represents. The fragile nature of the sign system, the ephemeral relationship between signifier and signified is exposed to the viewer of the act. Cultural orders, (or *illusio*, in Bourdieu’s term), consist of signs that

appear stable, and by disrupting this apparent stability, *détournement* causes fractures in the meaning-making process. A group seeking to disrupt the cultural, symbolic, and financial capitals of a field can (re)represent a sign, thus disrupting the stability of the sign system of the dominant field.

The disruption of the sign system of the field's dominant group interrupts the naturalism of the hierarchical power structure. This disrupts the *illusio* of the field maintained in the system of signification. By rewriting the signification, the sign must take on a new meaning, which is more in line with the interest of the group causing the disruption.

Queer groups use this semiotic tactic with regularity, which should not be too surprising. The term 'queer' itself is a case of *détournement*. The term queer referring to same-sex love signified derision and hatred. It was through a long process of rewriting the meaning of the sign 'queer' that the signified moved from an epithet to the position of political pride. This recuperation was only possible with a history of sign system disruption through the act of *détournement*.

One of the best examples of *détournement* from the corpus is the action taken by Naughty North against the exclusion of homosexuals from giving blood. Early in the AIDS scare, when HIV/AIDS was associated with homosexuality and marked as a homosexual disease, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration excluded the gay population from blood donations. These rules are still extant even though testing procedures are improved and homosexuals are no longer the only major population that deals with the HIV virus. They are, however, one of the only populations excluded from the process of giving blood.

Naughty North took on one of the major sites of blood donation and discrimination by rewriting the sign system of the American Red Cross. Using the same font, style, and Red Cross symbol, Naughty North created a poster for a hypothetical blood drive, to which they added the line “No Faggots Allowed” in small letters at the bottom of the poster. Naughty North placed these posters throughout an urban area for the public to see. This disruption of the sign system of a revered social organization caused an upheaval in the *illusio* that the Red Cross was an organization that maintained a denotation of purity. Readers contacted the Red Cross and the Maine Red Cross had to issue several statements about the posters. Naughty North had disrupted a sign system that participated in discrimination but had the *illusio* of purity. They had assailed a moment of discrimination within the field where structures maintain power, not through force, but through the signifiers associated with the Red Cross in their sign system. Naughty North changed the meaning of the Red Cross sign by adding homophobic language. To the observer, this disruption revealed the structures of biopower of an apparently benevolent organization. See Figure 9 page 203 for an example.

Gay Shame employed a similar form of *détournement* combined with pastiche when the group created a campaign against the Human Rights Campaign or HRC. Many in the queer community view the HRC as the antithesis of their political goals. The HRC, while revered by many in the LGB community, seeks a position of inclusion for people with sexual differences. The queer community often accuses the HRC for being assimilationist and erasing differences between queers and non-queer communities. Because of this, ‘HRC Gay’ has come to be a sign in the queer community for a

particular way of doing LGB politics that is complicit with a larger system of oppressions.

In Gay Shame's project, the group rewrote the political communications of the HRC. Gay Shame carefully matched the graphic style of the posters. Using détournement exposed what the queer group sees as a complicit engagement with the powers of the larger political and capitalist field. The HRC is, according to the queer group, arguing that the LGB community is just like anyone else and therefore should have full access and entrance into the field of power, thus erasing all layers of queer difference. The queer group, wary that the HRC's political position does nothing to confront larger structural inequalities and erases the unique nature of being queer, argues that HRC participates in larger oppressions in an effort to enter into the public sphere. Here, the main arguments of the LGBT rights groups and queer groups are taking place on the symbolic content of the HRC. The queer group reproduces and rewrites the HRC's marketing products. By creating this sign disruption and placing it on its web presence, the queer group is using a force multiplier on the debate. [See Figure 29]

Gay Shame is accessing the sign system in multiple ways and extracting extra capital value from a single action. Viewers on the street experience a recoded sign system on the posters, while the online version of the rewritten advertisement is then available for inexpensive or free electronic reproduction. Queer websites can reproduce on multiple platforms the destruction of the HRC sign system. This multiplication of semiotic force was possible in earlier eras of print publication; however, its ease and access were not as great as online publishing and reproduction.

Today, one détournement can be multiplied and presented in multiple platforms, and placed in multiple places as a further means of disrupting systems of signifying power.



Figure 29: Anti-HRC Materials

The Radical Homosexual Agenda also participates in the détournement of sign systems. In the example above [Figure 29] queers rewrite the equal sign of the HRC with a line resignifying inequality because of the HRC's exclusion of transgendered individuals from the LGB rights campaigns. The picture maintains the blue and yellow of the original symbol while adding text that seeks to disrupt the erasure of an underserved and underprivileged population by one of the largest gay rights organizations.

By recreating the HRC symbol in their own terms, the Radical Homosexual Agenda is able to confront a much larger, wealthier organization on a symbolic level where they could not compete in terms of advertising exposure. The resignifying of the HRC symbol stands in for the general confrontation between mainstream LGB politics and the queer political position.

Détournement is a powerful symbolic device used by all the queer groups included in the corpus. While these are just a few examples, the power of the symbolic exchange is a prevalent tactic in the available symbolic capital of queer politics. When taken to the level of the body, the symbols of gender also contain information that, when decoded, helps maintain fields of power. By disrupting the symbolic nature of gender, queer groups can and do rewrite the codes that constrain and maintain bodies and social boundaries.

Gender

Gender is one of the primary sign systems that queer groups seek to overturn. The gender of an individual is read by the viewer in a series of signifiers that supposedly coincide with biological realities. Based on the essentialized nature of gender and the

assumed stability of sign systems, these signifiers are used by the viewer to construct a reality. Gender acts as a sign; moreover, gender acts as an index, the type of sign where the existence of the signifier necessarily implies the existence of the signified. Reading gender takes place on the denotative level of sign systems. However, gender is slippery. We assemble groups of signs to make what amounts to denotative guesses of other's gender identity. The connotative level of sign systems produces assumptions about gender. This production, a form of cultural capital, is almost instantaneous and fully embedded within habitus. The reader becomes bound in the sign systems that reproduce information about gender signs.

This habitus then causes interpersonal interactions and sign reading to follow scripts that stabilize the codes. The queer political project seeks to break this semiotic chain and destabilize the ways in which gender is read and produced in sign systems. This, in turn, should destabilize cultural capital and open new spaces for gender and the signs of gender to be (re)written and (re)signified.

By resignifying or de-signifying sign systems, queer groups attempt to move gender to a postmodern position. In the modernist sign system, there are two genders that form a polarity of signs that represent one or another always in opposition to each other (i.e., strong/weak; active/ passive; male/female; masculine/feminine). The essences of gender are contained within the signs that seek to represent those essences. As individuals and communities use these signs, they reproduce embedded habitus that locks gender into an unchanging sign system.

The postmodern, queer position seeks to destabilize this polarity. This is done primarily in two ways. The queer position re-presents sign systems through the queer

political project. The first is gender bending or the swapping and reconfiguring of sign systems between the two polarities. This method seeks to bend the polarities of gender into a broader representational set of sign systems. Males adopting the signs and symbols of females and femininity and females adopting the signs and symbols of males and masculinity resignify the meaning of those representations. The other primary method is the shedding of the signs and symbols altogether. In these cases, actors attempt to become gender neutral by the combination of elements to such a degree that the signs cannot be read specifically as male or female, thus gender is absent.

Making a distinction between these two methods is difficult. A gender bender with too many elements may appear to be attempting a gender-neutral sign system. An actor whose attempt at gender bending that uses too few elements may appear to be gender neutral. Ultimately, whether or not the original semiotic intention is read correctly is unimportant. What is important is that the sign system of gender is interrupted and the receiver calls the stability of those signs into question, while the fragility of sign systems is exposed.

There is a semiotic danger inherent to gender bending as well. By adopting the signs of the other gender, the signs resignify the opposite gender. That is, the sign system of one pole resignifies as the opposite pole, reinforcing the binary. By doing this, the sign system remains stable and the postmodern destabilization, while attempted, is not achieved. Rather than achieving a new signification, the old meaning is reestablished, only with poles on the opposite side (i.e., what was male is now female, and what was female is now male). This can serve to perpetuate the signs of gender. However, what is

important here is attempt to re-signify. The habitus of the signs of gender is disrupted for a brief time, and a space opened even if not held.

Gender bending

Play with the signs of gender is more prevalent than attempting to reach a gender-neutral position. Most object/signs are already so embedded with connotative gendered meanings that it is very difficult to escape gender binaries and achieve gender neutral signification. Objects that are associated with the human body already presuppose gender before their actual distribution or use by people. Because of this, it is much easier to bend rather than abolish the heteronormative code systems of gender.



Figure 30: Gender Bending 2

The process of bending gender is really the process of juxtaposition of sign systems. The body of the individual and the way they are sexed determines the first set of sign systems. An ‘authentic’ sign system is often determined by biology, hormones and genes. The reduction of those sign systems eventually reaches genitalia, considered the bedrock and unchanging sign of the human body’s sex/gender. I locate semiotic roots

of transphobia in this process. The body as a sign system places the actor in a particular set of fields, such as masculinity or femininity, and violation the signs associated with the sign system of the field determine sanctions on the individual who violates *illusio*.



Figure 31: Marriage Will Cure AIDS

In a situation when a viewer is trying to decipher the signs of a body, gender is determined by the viewer rather than the actor. In a gender bending situation, the actor adds the signs of the ‘other’ to their body in ways that highlight the juxtaposition of the two sign systems. This process queers the body because an ‘unnatural’ or ‘un-normal’ sign system is placed on top of the ‘normal’ or apparent gender. In truth there is no equivalence between gender sign systems and the biology they are supposedly representing; rather it is *illusio* creating associations between bodies and signs. In gender bending, the signs are being de-naturalized or removed from their associated semiotic

chain. The sign system associated with one sex is being disturbed in its semiotic chain through this juxtaposition.



Figure 32: Gender Bending 3

The process of choosing which signs to use as a juxtaposition may have a powerful effect on the way an actor reads and understands their own gender. However, here we seek to focus on the way that the juxtaposed sign system reads in the larger field of gender display. Because gender assumptions embed most signs (a form of modernism), the postmodern queer position seeks to destabilize these signs, not by switching them, but by breaking their semiotic gender associations.



Figure 33: R.I.P. Queer Liberation

The queer position seeks to disrupt this associative chain but often only achieves juxtaposition. This in itself is a major disruption for the sign system and its *illusio* of gender. However, 'boys wearing girls' clothes and girls wearing boys' clothes' in the end

still retains the polarity of boys and girls. The polarity is disrupted; however, the positions at the root of the sign system remain.



Figure 34: Queer Poetry and Gender Bending

The idea of complete disruption of signs in a system where almost all signs are latent with gender is very difficult. Because almost all objects, including the body, are part of the gender sign system, the reordering and juxtaposition of almost any object is a recreation of some sort of gender. Adding more genders may be one way to achieve more ‘space’ in the field. In some ways, this is an elegant solution because it does not seek to move outside of gender, a difficult task, but seeks to broaden the sign system itself. Many queer groups do this. When trying to create more genders the problem is bound to be reintegrated by the habitus of the sign system. This happens because of the *illusio* of the two-gender/sex system—I am intentionally confusing gender/sex here

because these two categories are already confused within heteropatriarchy. Even if queers add more genders, the sign system will create signs to represent those positions, and in the moment of creating those signs, the position and essence of the *illusio* is then locked into the sign. Signs seek to essentialize. This function of signs is also a function of the limitations of language. As we create new language for new genders, we also create new semiotic associations between the new and old genders, and in the end all we achieve is to prop more layers of signification over the original binary male (masculine)/female (feminine).

Gender-neutral

Because of the difficulty to escape the gender binary some queers attempt to achieve a gender-neutral position. This position must balance the sign system between the male-female dichotomies or strip away enough signs to create a sign ambiguity. As mentioned earlier, this is very hard to achieve. The person trying to decode the gender neutral queer must experience sign confusion or sign absence. However, because gender/sex is embedded in our language interactions, we are conditioned by the *illusio* of gender/sex to believe that it is important to our interactions. Thus, we almost compulsively seek signs that will alert us to gender/sex, which in turn sets off a semiotic chain and, therefore, our symbolic interactions. Maintaining an interaction in which gender signifiers are never clear is very difficult for most people.



Figure 35: Queer Love

Our compulsive search for gender/sex signs acts on us and in our interactions in a way that is almost imperceptible. It influences our interactions, including our ability to read signs on the Internet. The images produced by queer sites are no exception. Images are meaningless in their intentionality; images need a viewer to automatically apply gender to the image. However, the disruption of gender/sex sign systems is so rare that any disruption, any pause in the signs of gender, has the possibility for political power.

Image in Support of Discussion and Text

Some of the images hold no real queer semiotic content. These images merely support text. For example, the online version of LAGAI's *UltraViolet* contains news stories of interest to their readers with pictures that are straight representations of the associated content. If there is a story about health care in Texas, there is an accompanying picture of the health care provider logo alongside. There is no obvious rhetorical necessity other than to illustrate the text.

Images that illustrate text are situated in a modernist news formula. They are there to support the text; however, they fail to carry any communicative weight when removed from this context. This pattern includes numerous images of people with power whose actions are being discussed in the text. Generally, this takes the form of a headshot or the individual speaking at a political event.

Text can subvert the use of the same image that has been manipulated. For example, a headshot of a person with added horns, flames, moustaches or fangs becomes a newly signified object. This moves a rather straight image to a queerer category. This move can take the image into the territory of the *détournement*.

The image in support of text is the least interesting of the images from the corpus. The image forms a part of the discussion and the creators select it for a specific reason. However, the image operates on the denotative level only. Consequently, it is not an attempt to convey queer politics through the display of the image. Rather, it is an attempt to enter into the symbolic and cultural capital of news production and a standard of western rhetorical production that adds legitimacy to the media product.

Any local ABC affiliate, when talking about the mayor, is likely to display a picture of the mayor alongside the story. It is very unlikely that they will add or subtract (other than cropping) any parts of the picture. If I take the ABC affiliate as a legitimate media source, that legitimacy extended because of their position in a media field and the expenditure of cultural and symbolic capital. A queer group that taps into this form of 'news' in their media production is reenacting the assumptions of performance in that field based on the players that control capital within that field of cultural production.

However, by adding horns to the picture of the mayor, the queer production violates the codes of production established by the field.

By doing so, the standards of the field become open for criticism and reengagement that can mean a rewriting of the habitus of the members of the field. By imitating or enacting the codes of the field in their image production, queer groups do the opposite. The ‘mayor story-mayor picture’ may seem to be a logical and normal way of creating rhetorical content. However, whenever a queer group opts for communication practices that appear efficient and efficacious, the group is giving into and imitating mainstream communication strategies, thus reinforcing the structure of a field of power . Queer imagery that queers the field of power has more potential to maintain its power to ‘queer’ rather than become imagery simply used by queers.

Anti-assimilation

Ultimately, the queer political position connects to a sign system detonating anti-assimilation. This anti-assimilation exists on two levels. The first level is the refusal to participate in the sign and power system of the larger fields of power that contain the sign system of heteropatriarchy. The second level is the refusal to participate in the sign system of assimilation that is created by groups like the HRC that seek inclusion and acceptance in larger fields of power through the erasure of signs that make the queer unique.



Figure 36: R.I.P. Radical Culture

The symbolic codes created by the queer political project enter into the public sphere on their own queer terms. Rather than assimilate into a system of intersectional oppressions and claim their symbolic 'right' to exploit in an unfair system, the queer political project seeks to create new symbolic codes and spaces for these codes in queer public spheres. Rewriting extant codes for their own purposes reestablishes the agency of queers in a social order that seeks to devalue them. The reworking of symbolic material ultimately opens up spaces for social change because the codes of a political structure contain the *habitus* and *illusio* of that location and, thereby, contain the very things that lead to social subjects participating in their own oppressions and the oppressions of others.



Figure 37: HRC Hates Trannys

The queer political groups in this study understand implicitly or explicitly that their oppression takes place both at a body level and symbolic level. Most importantly, oppressions on the symbolic level translate to oppression on the body level because a subject cannot experience the world outside of the self/body. To participate in a social order means that one's body is shaped by the codes of that order, which contains codes of oppressions that erase difference and seeks to occlude individuality. This is a hallmark of the modernist project. Queer symbolic codes destabilize these functions. By providing polysemic readings of gender, for example, queer symbolic codes seek to deconstruct the inherited naturalism of gender pronouns. By making readings more uncomfortable and presenting this semiotic discomfort to a public via the Internet, queers generate new political 'spaces' (electronic, temporal, and geo-local) where the experimentation with symbolic codes can be decoupled from the struggle for capitals. Thus, the queer political project creates glimpses of postmodernism through a temporary decoupling of the signifier and the signified. While this decoupling cannot last because any actor is embedded in the habitus of modernism and thereby seeks a new stable reading, the

momentary disjuncture of the signifying function of signs is enough to achieve a new form of political space.



Figure 38: Legalize Assimilation

The tactics of image manipulation and re-signification by queer political groups are similar across all the groups included in the corpus. There is a queer symbolic and social capital at work creating particular styles of communicative messages. This form of queer signification marks the boundaries of a queer space within the field of homosexuality and within a still larger political field. The radical media created by these queer groups serve as means of performing an open and critical queerness for an audience and within the group. The learned performance of the signifying materials marks the individual performer as a queer and invests them with the capitals of the group. These capitals are queer by nature and are distributed symbolically as a mark of otherness.

PART VIII
CONCLUSION

One of my friends that first introduced me to the idea of queer was beaten up across the street from the university where I work. His great crime was presenting as male in bodily hexis while wearing clothing semiotically associated with females. In short, wearing a dress was enough provocation that a group of men decided to physically harm him. He refused to receive medical attention after this assault for two reasons. First, he and many other queers have had negative interactions with established medical communities. Second, his poverty created a fear of indebtedness from which he might not recover. He also refused to be involved in reporting the incident to the police. He feared the victim blaming that commonly results when sexual or gender non-conforming people engage with the police. This incident further complicated his depression and fear of the social, a feeling faced by many queers. It took him weeks to bodily recover, and the assault still is a source of mental anguish.

Being queer is easy on paper and tough in reality. In this work, I have tried to avoid the pathologizing discourse that surrounds the queer experience. What is important about this story is that even after being beaten in that moment and by an entire social structure, he continues to organize and participate in queer politics. The queer political project is not simply an academic endeavor. It is a lively and joyful set of discourses built around the radical transformation of a social system that creates rejection at every turn. Queer politics are hopeful and optimistic. While there is pessimism in the queer community, the fact that political actors are willing to challenge the enormous weight and power of social structures that devalue their experience is amazing. Real people, who regularly experience pain and rejection of their being by society, stand up and decide that they have the power to posit and create a different world. They do not accept the

overwhelming naturalization of what is considered ‘normal and normative’ and work to open moments of possibility for themselves and others. The queer political project is born out of love and optimism.

I fear that I have failed to convey this optimism in this work. The symbolic codes created by queer groups and their desire for a different world create moments of possibility. To hold out for this possibility in the face of violence, symbolic violence, and indifference is an amazing thing. Queers are working to make a world where they are safe, difference is celebrated, and the entire social order is restructured. I hope that in small ways my theory building will contribute to a greater academic understanding of the way that these processes unfold. I also hope that this academic understanding has the possibility to influence queer organizing and make the Sisyphean task of confronting a system that devalues and despises queers a little less difficult.

In this work I have tried to bring together several disparate strands of research and apply them to the way that queer social movements communicate their political desires online. First, I examined the authority of knowledge and the way that alternative media challenge that authority. This was followed by an overview of the major theorists in alternative media and unraveling the threads of their theories. Next, I examined theories of social movements and traced the history of the way scholars have theorized them as agents for social change. This chapter also covered theories on the impact social movements have on the actors that participate in them. Then, I briefly traced the history of movements for social change as they relate to groups struggling for sexual and gender liberation. This section also covers key moments that shifted the discourses of organizing for social change around sex and gender issues. This chapter focused on the way that

discourses around sexual and gender liberation have changed through time in relation to a heteropatriarchal social structure.

Finally, I presented the methodology I adopted as a means of exploring the way that queer groups generate and distribute images online as they semiotically communicate their desires. The semiotic method that I chose allowed me to produce a reading of the symbolic material I gathered into a corpus and pull out the visions of utopia communicated by the queer alternative media producers. This semiotic reading revealed several patterns, such as the desire for the transgression of gender in moments of action against the social structure. The semiotic analysis also revealed the use of bricolage as a means of exposing the fragmenting social conditions of modernism and exploring ways to denaturalize individual experiences of identity. Queers are also in the process of recoding the color pink as a bodily gender marker; they interrogate and deconstruct assimilationist LGB social movements, revealing how their lack of radicality erases difference and reinserts bodies into oppressive social structures.

During this process, I have used the theoretical proposals of Bourdieu as a means of explaining social relations. I have combined this with the concept of counterpublics as a way of explaining how queer social movements function online and in relation to structuration. I then bring this work into the area of social movements and alternative media scholarship and call for more work in this field specific to queer organizing and media production.

Bourdieu

Pierre Bourdieu's theories provide a powerful tool to examine social movements and alternative media in relation to social structures. Inquiries into the distribution of capitals allow a theorization of the way that structures distribute power at a given time in a given location. This has allowed me to describe how queer social movements position themselves and become positioned in relation to other organizations for social change. This way of understanding power means that alternative media and social movement scholars can create more nuanced descriptions of the ways in which structural forces influence the creation of media products and actions. I have tried to describe this process in my examination of the way that queer social movements come to position themselves online.

The influence of doxa also explains the way social movements react in a given situation and are limited in their ability to respond. The relationship of doxa and heterodoxic discourse and the structures that create them help reveal the way that radicalism is subject to the position of the social structure. Queer radicalism only exists in relation to the structure of the heterosexual discourses that dominate the West. The use of multiple capitals also creates a better account of the way that distribution of power in a social setting is multifaceted. Social movements and alternative media producers redistribute capitals as a means of creating communicative space for their message. They generate new forms of symbolic capital that they then circulate in their given area of social change. This capital has the possibility of being adopted by other social movements and redistributed through their means of capital exchange. Queer social movements and alternative media products reflect the symbolic and social capitals

acquired in the previous struggles by sexual and gender nonconforming peoples. The earlier queer movements of the late 1990's particularly influenced current queer capitals. The capitals used by queers also represent the accumulation of social and symbolic capitals from previous and different forms of social movements and alternative media production. These capitals reflect the way that queers symbolically construct a world where the queer ontologies are possible and desirable. However, Bourdieu's theories do not limit the scholar to the examination of structuration. He also provides a way of understanding individual change.

Individual participation in social movements and alternative media production has the possibility of radically transforming the way that an individual enters into citizenship in the public sphere. This individual change is the most important aspect of alternative media and social movements. The realignment of subjectivity on the part of an actor changes their relationship to the structures that create their oppressions. The examination of the distribution of capitals in a field and the creation of doxa allow an inquiry into the limitations of actor subjectivity. The moment of social change in the individual occurs when the individual moves out of habitus and posits a new set of possibilities. Queers creating symbolic material access imagination that reflects new utopias. Visual material created by social movements represent capitals created and deployed as a means of communicating political possibilities. Creating theses materials and distributing them online generates new potentials for the relationship between structures and individuals.

Alternative Media

The visual material created by queer political groups reflects the queer desires of the groups. Creating images that reflect their political position is a way of reimagining a world through a queer positionality. The act of creation and access to the ability to create are specific forms of cultural capital that have developed in queer political organizing. This capital, developing out of the historical circumstances of LGBT organizing, reflects the desires for a world where gender differences and heteropatriarchal orthodoxies are challenged. By creating images that reflect queer desires, the queer political groups are able to re-imagine a structural order that better matches their specific cultural needs.

I have read these images semiotically to access the nature of queer desires and the strategies that the queer political groups share. These shared strategies of representation demonstrate the way that a symbolic capital is created in and by these groups. Queer groups represent their political position and desires through this symbolic capital. This symbolic capital is a reflection of the cultural capital that unites the queer political struggle. Queer cultural capital transforms, in the moment of communication, to symbolic capital. The common semiotic codes within this capital reflect the queer political position, while simultaneously reflecting the interaction occurring with the social structures through the creation of habitus and doxa.

The creation and distribution of this symbolic capital unites queer groups as a counterpublic and creates the queer political project. This process generates heterodoxic discourses on the nature of desire and gender performance. This heterodoxic discourse is simultaneously a reimagining of the world and a way of communicating the nature of queer desires to actors outside of the queer groups. When the symbolic capital is

displayed in the public sphere, it challenges the orthodoxy created in the field of power. Images of queers in the act of physically challenging power show queers directly challenging hierarchies of power as actors in a political field. By distributing these images via their online presence, these groups further communicate the desire for queers to continue to challenge the sex/gender power structures.

Displaying images in a public space like the Internet is also a powerful form of political action for queer political groups. This publishing technology has allowed queers greater access to the public sphere and the ability to create counterpublics. The capitals acquired in the creation of electronic online publication allow the groups to reach a broader audience and disseminate the nature of queer desires in the political field. With their online presence, queer desires are visible to larger audiences, often re-presenting the way that queer political subjects interject their body into a field of power that limits their subjectivity. Creating media supports and expands this process. With their online platforms, queer groups widen the power of specific moments and situations of queer desire. An image that captures an instant can be displayed on the Internet and generate cultural capital for the group every time someone access the web page. This multiplies the power of the queer imagery and its representational possibilities. How queer political groups create this display is varied. Some groups control the display through a seemingly high level of technological ability reflecting their access to technological cultural capital. Other groups use simpler forms of display reflecting a different interaction with technology. In both cases, the queer groups have the ability to access audiences that before the Internet would have been fragmented and less accessible.

The Internet as a publishing medium has changed the way that subaltern groups can communicate. Scholarship on alternative media needs to begin to examine the way that the publishing of information by groups opens new possibilities for representation and communication. Recognizing that there is a specific distribution of capitals that allows access to computers and the ability to use them for communication, the digital divide is problematic. However, this does not mean that the creation of material on Internet spaces should be ignored by alternative media scholars. The Internet allows underrepresented groups access to powerful publishing media that can counter representations created through orthodox discourses. However, we must be careful not to fall into the same reasoning that plagues criticisms of alternative media. The impact of alternative media should not be predicated on the size of the audience reached by alternative media products. It is the power generated by actors in the act of creating heterodox discourses and self-representing that is important.

Social Movements and Counterpublics

Social movement scholars need to pay more attention to sexual and gender minorities. The process of placing them into the category of new social movements erases their unique positionality, representational constraints, and interaction with the strong forms of moral orthodoxy that surround them. In part, the construction of these social movements as identity movements erases the unique connections between being a political actor and intrapersonal desires. Queer social movements have developed their own forms of social activism represented in their social and cultural capitals. While interconnected to the social movements of the anti-globalization movement and other

radical groups, such as punks and anarchists, queers have a unique way of interacting politically. Unlike the larger lesbian and gay rights movements, queer social movements have a broader set of doxic conditions to address. Because their position is built on challenging and changing an unequal social order while maintaining a space in which they can experience their unique subjectivities, queers cannot have a fixed political position.

Maintaining a “zone of possibilities” (Edelman, 1994) means that queers cannot have a fixed position that is redeployed in each instance of political interaction. Each interaction is unique in how it challenges orthodoxy, and each interaction is predicated upon the unique nature of the queerness of the person enacting it. This causes the queer political program to be one that, by necessity, maintains openness and the possibility for critique lest they reinscribe the doxa of the field of power within their actions. This process creates a fluidity to queer counterpublics, that is rare in other social movements and identity-based activist groups. The nature of the counterpublic must be in constant dialogue with its oppression and the possibility of recreating oppressions through the internal adoption of habitus.

Future Research

Further research on queer social movements needs to take into account the fragmentation of queer individuals. The Internet has allowed a broader array of queers to communicate; however, group interaction has been replaced by more individual to individual type of interaction. There are fewer queer social movements on the Internet today than there were in the early 2000’s. However, there has been a rise in individual

queer blogs, Tumblr sites, tweeters making tweets, Facebook pages, meet up groups, and chat forums. Several factors may account for this process. One may be the fragmentation of queer communities. Another may be the unique media structure of Internet use.

Queer Blogs-The Future of Queer

This study focuses on the semiotics of the web presence of queer political groups. However, in the course of corpus selection and preliminary searches containing the words ‘queer,’ ‘queer politics,’ ‘radical queer’ and the like, an interesting variation emerged. While there were few queer groups with a strong web presence, a situation that I had anticipated, there were hundreds of queer blogs.

These blogs were excluded from this study based on the criteria set forth about political action in groups; however, it is worth taking some time to think about queer blogs and point out some interesting potential activist trends. Also, this section may serve to raise interesting research questions for the future. While searching the web for the word ‘queer’ is fraught with problems, queer blogs usually make explicit their use of ‘queer’ as a more radical form of LGBT politics and lived experience.

Queer blogs greatly outnumber queer groups. In some ways, their content is more varied and diverse. I cannot say if their traffic is greater, but they seem to have a greater connection in terms of links to one another. There are several explanations of this that I wish to put forward that emerge out of my experience and research on queer politics; this will hopefully be examined in a systematic way in the future.

Queer blogs have become an important part of queer media production. They have substituted the queer zines of earlier generations. The distribution channels of the

Internet make instant publication, dissemination, reciprocal reposting, and commenting possible. Setting aside the political implications of the digital divide, queer blogs are a more efficient form of media production compared to older forms such as LAGAI's *Ultra Violet*. The cost of production is the cost of access to computer technology and the cultural capital to utilize it.

Queer blogs allow queers from diverse and isolated geolocations to actively participate in queer politics in areas where a queer group may not be available. While LGBTQ groups may be in the area, queer blogs allow a connection to a more radical community without the need for local activist groups. Social networks probably have an effect here as well. Queer blogs allow bloggers to publish their personal experience. This occurs on a scale that is unprecedented in the history of sexual and gender based social movements. Considering the minority status of LGBT and the further minority within minority of queer, the blogs allow connection and comparison of the authors' and readers' *lebenswelt*. This may have powerful effects in the creation and distribution of a culture of queer.

Critique of news and events seems to be a central theme of the queer blogs. This allows the queer political project to expand by opening up a vibrant and healthy debate about queer politics and positions. Because blog hosting sites require less cultural capital to interact on the Internet, it allows for a greater number of voices that can comment almost instantaneously on queer critique and events. This level of queer participation is a new phenomenon that surpasses previous generations of queer activists and their media

products. There are attendant problems, such as trolls and infighting¹¹ however, the level of queer debate is vibrant and healthy. If we define queer as ‘the realm of possibilities,’ then this debate reflects a healthy queer culture.

Queer blogs also feed each other content. This blogosphere exposes national audiences to attacks against queers faster than they were before. Queer bloggers modify, aggregate, and redistribute this content. Some content becomes a bricolage where the original author of the content is lost and the authorship becomes a collaborative queer Internet community. This may have interesting political effects in the queer community. It does indicate a distinctive queer counterpublic at work in creating spaces for a queer political project.

The direction of Queer Studies that has already examined queer zines and the current web presence of queer political groups would greatly benefit in the future from the rigorous study of queer blogs. Queer web presences can be analyzed on the content level (rhetorically, semiotically, politically), the systems and network level (whom is talking to whom, linking trends and site statistics), and the creator level (for example, interviewing the creators for meaning and political identity changes and the like). As blog creation seems to be the major trend in queer politics, scholars that are interested in this area of research may need to turn in this direction as a means of staying current and connected.

¹¹ Trolling is the posting of material on a website with the intention of derailing the discussion through inflammatory or emotionally triggering material. A troll is someone who does this. For example in discussions of the NJ4 a troll could post something about how “they deserved it” and therefore derail the conversation and from the original discussion.

Future research will need to address the unique ways that queer communication is being created. It also seems that the queer political project is shifting away from direct confrontation with lesbian and gay rights groups and the larger social structuration that renders them invisible towards a form of organizing that is more about intrapersonal support and care. This move takes the site of social struggle from a structural and public encounter to one where the queer actor re-envisions their subjectivity and shapes the heterodoxic discourses on a personal and interpersonal level. The lived experience becomes the capitals which are deployed counter to oppressive structures. While this process may seem antithetical to the idea of counterpublics, I believe that queer people have adopted the idea that the ‘personal is the political.’ Individual queer subjectivities aggregate in their experience to create a queer polity.

The new queer political project involves being and enacting queer to open social spaces and heterodoxic moments, and communicating queerness to others. Rather than through a specific moment, like protests or actions, being queer means being queer in many thousands of strategic moments, and this creates queer communication possibilities. Queers still participate in protests; however, they seem to have adopted a more postmodern form of social mobilization. I conceive of this mobilization as a social/personal mobilization. By being queer, the person creating and experiencing queerness is constantly reworking their social relationships. The queering of capitals may be the moment where capital relations transform.

Future research on the queer political project should take into account the unique way the communicative goals of queers are constructed by their historical positions. Unlike other forms of social movements, queers cannot aspire to a static and stable ‘end

game.’ The maintenance of “zones of possibilities” requires a constant dialogue with doxic discourses.

PART IX
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