NAVIGATING THE INTERSECTIONAL IMAGINATION:

RACE, SEXUALITY, AND POWER

by

ANTONIO PASTRANA, JR.

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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Abstract

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by

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The intersectional imagination is a term used to describe the analytic process that occurs when examining individual- and group-level oppressions based on identity. Starting with an understanding that individuals and groups are more than the sum of their parts, that each individual characteristic or constituent has the capacity to affect different outcomes, the intersectional imagination attempts to describe the ways that identities come together and are pulled apart. Put differently, the intersectional imagination is about acknowledging the different ways that identities can be looked upon as conduits and/or barriers in various settings. Social movement scholarship has revealed that identity management, in general, is an understudied facet in this field. This dissertation asks: How do lesbian and gay (L&G) leaders of color manage their personal intersectional politics and how does this affect or influence their work within the larger field of L&G social movement organizing?

The data for this dissertation were collected via two primary methods of social scientific inquiry: the in-depth interview and the focus group interview. In-depth interviews (n=7) and four focus group sessions were conducted with non-White lesbian

and gay leaders (n=48) in order to understand how intersectional politics are organized on personal and collective levels.

In sum, organizing intersectional politics calls for an articulation of the ways in which identities are constraining and/or enabling. Findings reveal that the study of intersectionality can be extended to encompass lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) populations and that intersectionality is a vibrant force in the leadership of this group's social movement. In placing their own racial identity at the center, research participants talked about how experiences of racism, homophobia, and discrimination within LGBT populations and within their own respective racial group affected their identities and their activism. Participants also talked about how their racial identities contributed to such things as increased visibility, ease of access to communities of color, and other such enabling effects.

These forces also contributed to the formulation of newer and more innovative ways of doing the work of organizing. For instance, the very idea of leadership is questioned and blurred in order to emphasize the collective nature of identity and of advocating for rights in this country. It questions the utility of traditional forms of identity politics. It draws attention to such things as immigration status, language ability, gender performativity, race, skin color, and other such forces. In other words, the intersectional imagination seeks to understand the ways in which identities come together and are taken apart – in particular settings, at particular times, with particular audiences.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

> I identify as African American, woman, lesbian, butch, and Christian. These intersections and marginalities follow me wherever I go. Henceforth, my "work", whether it's my profession or my community organizing, reflects this experience.
>
> Karen, co-founder of Black LGBT networks in the Midwest, 2007

> If one is not of the dominant race, sexual orientation, or gender identity, then it is most likely that one will have to deal with some type of oppression. Interestingly, each of those areas has heavy implications separately; however, if taken altogether – i.e., Black, lesbian, butch – then your life can be a living hell.
>
> Anonymous focus group participant, 2007

Introduction

> The boundaries of race, gender and class inevitably overlap. Ethnic minorities who are most subject to racist practices tend to be working class or poor, socially excluded in a variety of ways, while the definition of membership within the ethnic group can often depend on performing gender and sexual attributes successfully. Power operates subtly through a complex series of interlocking practices. As a result political challenges to oppressive forms are complex and sometimes contradictory. Sexual politics therefore can never be a single form of activity. They are enmeshed in the whole network of social contradictions and antagonisms that make up the modern world.
>
> Jeffrey Weeks, *Sexuality*

The study of intersectionality is complicated. It begins with an understanding that each subject has multiple identifiers (like race, religion, sex, class, and any other social marker) and that these shape the various ways in which subjects make sense of their surroundings and live their lives. Intersectionality has been used to explain both individual- and group-level social phenomena. Of particular importance is the ways in which multiple subordinate identifiers simultaneously affect the life chances of subjects. For instance, how does being a Latina lesbian in a heterosexual and White environment

affect that Latina's abilities to seek employment or attain an education? The presence of these multiple identifiers often forces subjects to choose which marker to highlight at particular settings, sometimes causing tensions (barriers) while at other times creating opportunities (conduits).

The study of intersectionality is further complicated by positing that these identifiers are socially constructed. The vast social scientific literature on social constructionism – often described as being in opposition to biological determinism – reveals that such things as race, sexual orientation, and sex itself are identifiers that are regulated, created, and maintained by social actors with authority and power. Therefore, they cannot be examined without considering how power relations affect the performance, creation, and management of these very markers. Intersectionality is, then, an examination of multiple social markers and their relationships to power.

Political organizing efforts often reflect the complexities associated with the study of intersectionality. The question *How can a group advocate for rights and still represent all members of its constituency?* is similar to the question *How can an individual thrive while accounting for all of her/his identifiers?* These questions highlight a theoretical and practical problem: How can intersectionality be used to understand group-level dynamics and how can it also be used to inform or institute new forms of organizing or new ways of managing a subject's multiple identifiers? The term *intersectional politics* refers to those efforts that attempt to highlight the connections between the various identifiers that subjects possess and the ways that these come together to create obstacles and opportunities. Intersectional politics extends traditional notions of identity politics by

encouraging an analysis and understanding of the ways in which multiple identifiers function in different situations, with different populations.

Although much of the social scientific literature on intersectionality targets individual-level dynamics, some scholars have also explored the existence of group-level intersectional forces, further complicating the field of study. This dissertation examines the relationships between individual- and group-level identity management strategies. Ostensibly, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people of color[1] possess multiple subordinate identifiers (a LGBT sexual identity, a non-White race/ethnicity, and a non-conforming gender identity/expression to name a few), yet many of them have held, and continue to hold, leadership roles within lesbian and gay (L&G) social movement[2] organizing. They have not only managed personal intersectional politics, but they have also helped to forge group-level organizing tactics. As such, LGBT leaders of color have developed ways in which to manage their identifiers, and they can provide

[1] Throughout, "non-White" and "people of color" will be used interchangeably and will be used to refer to those populations that do not identify as White. Although many Latinos may identify as White, in this research White Latinos will be referred to as people of color. For more about this distinction, see S. Vidal-Ortiz (2004).

[2] To the extent that sexual minority organizing in the U.S. has predominantly focused on lesbian women and gay men, this chapter will utilize "lesbian and gay" (L&G) to signal and identify this relationship. Although other terms and phrases such as "queer," "lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender," "les-bi-gay," "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirited, and questioning," etc. have been used recently by organizers, activists, and some academics, this usage fails to acknowledge the unequal power dynamics that exist within organizing efforts. Additionally, although lesbian women and gay men have separate, historical organizing legacies in the U.S., this chapter mainly focuses on the instances when lesbians and gays together formed a group which fostered indigenous organizations and institutions. This is not to imply that lesbian women and gay men have equal power dynamics within organizing efforts, but that lesbian women and gay men have dominated the discourse and direction of indigenous organizing in the U.S., much more so than bisexual and transgender people, who may also claim sexual minority status. Still, because bisexual and transgender (BT) people have been, and continue to be, influential in L&G movement organizing, the "B" and "T" abbreviations will be used carefully to refer to individuals who specifically identify as such.

insights about how to organize these in order to advance group-level rights. The personal and professional experiences of these leaders highlight their appropriateness for a study about intersectionality and its connections to group-level dynamics and behaviors.

Social movement organizing efforts are a part of the larger trajectory and scholarship of what is known as collective behavior. Scholarship has shown that, throughout, race, sexuality, and class have played significant roles in the formation of movements and the identities born from them. For instance, the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s was criticized for advancing a sanitized (read: classist) version of Black identity; and the Women's Movement was likewise accused of neglecting the needs, or issues, of Black women and of lesbians. This dissertation is similarly rooted in a critique of movement organizing. It focuses on the claim that the L&G movement does not adequately address issues of race.

Statement of the Problem

In 1965 civil rights leader Bayard Rustin called attention to the need for Black civil rights groups and activists to begin the transition from a protest movement to a political movement (Rustin, 1965). Certainly, this transition is not only specific to the civil rights movement of his time; this (political) redefining moment is present in most social movements in the U.S. Having the ability to navigate around the realm of politics in the U.S. is of utmost importance for leaders and participants of social movements. Likewise, institutional support for this process of politicizing rights is also necessary, as Francis Fox Piven and Richard Cloward (1979) have noted. However, by insisting on aspects of (political) integration, Rustin's call for more political involvement, arguably,

hampered the momentum created by Black Power and civil rights protest. It is within this tension between advocating for political rights – both personal and collective – and building an effective social movement that this dissertation is located.

The voices of people living at the intersections of race, sexuality, and power can be centrally placed within the literature on race and L&G movement organizing. This literature has argued that racial and economic justice issues continue to plague L&G social movement organizing (Anzaldua 1990; Smith 1997), and that these issues have fragmented the movement in some ways (Adam 1987; Faderman 1991; D'Emilio 2000; Vaid 1995). Many people of color within the larger LGBT population in the U.S. continue to feel isolated, unrepresented, or disempowered by mainstream L&G organizations[3] and their organizing efforts. While such movement divisions are acknowledged by some, racial justice issues rarely reach the level of public discourse. Instead, ideological differences within movement organizing seem to receive more attention. For instance, the debates about Social Security privatization after the November 2004 U.S. presidential elections presented a unique opportunity for L&G rights groups across the country to critically examine the ways in which movement organizing strategies connect with other social and cultural issues that continue to divide

[3] That organizations are important to a social movement's longevity is not new. This research is primarily interested in movement organizing efforts of powerful, national organizations. The terms "mainstream L&G organizations" and "White L&G organizations" in this research are used interchangeably and are intended to differentiate those efforts typically associated with national, non-race-specific entities and strategies from those specifically aimed at people of color. Although there are many organizations that specifically address the needs of non-White LGBT people today, they are, for the most part, excluded from the dominant discourse of L&G organizing in this country. In fact, that many of these organizations exist is a testament to the enabling (conduit) aspects of race within mainstream L&G organizing. At the same time, however, that these race-specific L&G organizations exist is an indicator of how mainstream L&G organizing does not adequately address the needs of people of color.

LGBT populations (Broder 2004a, 2004b). These debates highlighted at least two things: 1) the L&G rights agenda is far from monolithic, encompassing cross-cutting issues such as Welfare reform and Social Security, and 2) there is internal concern over the future of L&G rights-based organizing tactics and strategies. Although not directly related to race, the first observation does articulate a problem related to intersectional political organizing (i.e., how is Social Security a LGBT issue?), while the second one raises concerns about the practical ways in which to adequately address this (i.e., how can Social Security become a part of L&G organizing?). Though there are countless facets to intersectional politics, this dissertation places discussions of race and racial privilege at the center.

Living and Organizing at the Intersections

As examined throughout this dissertation, intersectionality encompasses many interlocking identities and oppressions. Some of the research participants[4] of this study talked about intersectionality in the following ways:

Respondent 1A:

> Queer folks are never just queer. They bring multiple identities with them wherever they go. This often manifests itself the most with queers who are also of color and who may identify their gender differently from the perceived norm. For some they may be of color first and then queer, or may be trans first, then queer second, then female or male third, etc. We are often asked to separate these identities at the various "doors" of life which is why [a people of color network] has existed here so that [people of color] who identify as LBTQ or are even just questioning can have a safe space where they can be all their identities simultaneously and not have to leave one at the door.

[4] For more information on how these data were collected, see chapter 2.

Central to the study of intersectionality is the idea that there are multiple and interlocking forms of oppression that affect individuals and groups differently. Respondent 1A at once acknowledges that people carry multiple identities but that, sometimes, the viewpoints of individuals privilege one form of identity over others. And, further still, there is an acknowledgement that safe havens or sanctuaries are necessary so that the people who experience these types of issues can be all of who they are and not feel threatened by outside forces.

Respondent 1B:

> The central problem today is the issue of economic inequality. That inequality is frequently racialized and sexualized and gendered – people of color, women, and queers frequently bear the brunt of the economic injustice so prevalent in our society.

Relying on an economic analysis, this respondent highlights another facet of the study of intersectionality: sometimes one form of oppression is intimately tied with other forms of identities. Importantly, this respondent highlights the need to include race and sexuality in conversations about economic inequality. The thrust of this thinking is that by insisting on looking for ways in which race and sexuality continue to appear in all facets of oppression, a more robust understanding of oppression will be attained. In other words, a focus on one type of oppression necessarily leads to an examination of a complex web of oppressions.

Respondent 1C:

> All issues of oppression are similar in denying opportunities to some and conferring privileges on others. For people who embody multiple identities, the ability to negotiate stereotypes in the environment comprise an individual's ability to survive, to thrive, and to contribute to the larger societies we all live in.

Here, respondent 1C articulates something close to what I have called the intersectional imagination, or intersectionality+, a view that acknowledges that multiple forms of oppression exist and they can be used to develop ways in which survival and success can occur. As noted in Chapter 7 of this dissertation, such observations about identities have a history in the social sciences, but what is different about the intersectional imagination is that it operates under the specter of oppression and it facilitates the production of strategies that seek to undo these oppressions in advancing social change. Respondent 1C above, however, makes an observation about identities that is similar to the trumping concept presented in Chapter 4 of this dissertation. This concept is similar to the intersecting social circles concept forwarded by Georg Simmel and developed further by Blau and Schwartz,[5] which states that individuals develop strategies to successfully navigate within their various social circles.

Respondent 1D:

> From an institutional level, most organizations that choose to analyze the environment via a racial justice lens will not also add on or further complicate the analysis by bringing in sexual orientation or gender identity.
>
> From an individual level, they are very much linked. When one experiences discrimination, I don't think people look only at your race, perceived sexual orientation, and gender expression. People have a

[5] For a discussion of this, see Chapter 7.

> sophisticated ability to see all of these aspects and then may choose to respond by ignoring some.
>
> For example, the assumption that only white men are gay may cause individuals to assume that a group of Asian American men are not gay, despite gender nonconforming behavior to the contrary.

Highlighting the observation that multiple identities come together all the time, this respondent argues that these things are sometimes easier to see from an individual level, and harder to tackle from an institutional level. Such an observation makes sense, given the historical legacy of intersectionality within classic, non-White feminist literature. Such texts started out with biographies and personal testimonies that documented the ways in which women of color experience discrimination based on their many identities. The ability to move from biography to systematic analyses of institutions that are present in any society is, arguably, a vibrant part of the field of sociology and of the application of the sociological imagination, according to C. Wright Mills.

Respondent 1E:

> We live in a society that likes to categorize everything from music, to food, to people. When one group of these individuals is discriminated against, all others are at equal risk, and, thus, should be just as concerned as if the discrimination were directly attacking them. We should all be allies for one another, not just ourselves. For example, matters of concern for primarily people of color should also be matters of concern for members of the LGBT/SGL community.

In the same manner that intersectionality draws attention to those times when all forms of oppression come together and affect individuals differently, different individuals must come together to combat all forms of oppression. For instance, making the link between Welfare reform in this country and L&G

organizing may seem odd, at first, but striving to make the critical linkage between these two seemingly disparate entities helps in articulating some core beliefs about oppression, economic security, poverty, and politics (to name a few). This is part of the project of coalition-building and of intentionality, going out of one's way in order to abide by some core values or beliefs that may stem from living a life at the intersections. Respondent 1E above articulates such a stance.

Respondent 1F:

> LGBTs need to be on the frontlines of the fight for racial justice, yet some are so blinded by a unidimensional approach to organizing (one issue rather than multiple issues) that they are not seeing the need to fight all types of oppression outside of the gay rights struggle.

Similarly, respondent 1F targets one of the pitfalls of social movement organizing in this country: single-issue politics. Because intersectionality begins with an insistence that identities and oppressions are inextricably linked, people who live intersectional lives may find it difficult to participate in organizations that promote single-issue politics.

Respondent 1G:

> People think this is new, but *it's not*! The Civil Rights movement encountered sexism. History matters. Racism was part of the Women's Movement too. These complications have *always* existed. We need some historical context. We need to be able to find examples of how that exists in [our communities], from historical to the narrative.

Oppression and discrimination are not new social forces. Having multiple identities and experiencing multiple forms of oppression is not new either. What is new is consciousness. What is new is awareness of *how* these forces come together and how

groups and individuals *navigate* these forces. As this dissertation argues, non-White lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender leaders are doing this today. They are navigating the intersections. They are facing barriers and opportunities along the way. They are helping to craft, live, and operate the intersectional imagination.

The examples above, and those included throughout this dissertation, add to already-existing observations about intersectionality and how it affects the day-to-day lives of people. The respondents above each expressed the belief that within non-White LGBT populations, multiple forms of oppression and identity are operating. As will be illustrated in subsequent chapters, these interlocking oppressions at times not only exacerbate feelings of isolation, disempowerment, and exclusion, but at other times, they have the capacity to open doors, to gain access to power, and to help in formulating new and innovative ways of advancing the work of social movement organizing. This dissertation centers the experiences of non-White LGBT leaders who are living and working with each other to advance a movement for equality, social justice, civil rights, and many other intersectional issues.

Research Questions

Ultimately, this dissertation asks *How does race affect social movement organizing efforts and how does this contribute to the practice of intersectional politics?* How do LGBT leaders of color manage their own intersectional identities and how do these strategies relate to movement organizing? How can LGBT leaders of color contribute to the theory and practice of intersectionality, political organizing, and intersectional political organizing? What can be learned about race and sexuality when

they are examined in tandem? Does the presence of secondary marginalization based on race propel non-White leaders to articulate a unique vision of L&G rights in this country? More specifically, this research asks *What is the role of race within L&G social movement organizing?* Other questions pertinent to this research include:

- How do non-White identified leaders within L&G social movements understand the dynamics of intersectionality and secondary marginalization?

- What are some of the ways in which L&G movement organizing efforts address racial difference? When is race a barrier and when is it a conduit?

- How does being a person of color within LGBT populations contribute to a critical understanding of oppression?

- What can future organizing strategies encompass in order to account for the multiple ways in which people are oppressed?

- How can intersectionality be used to understand group dynamics within LGBT populations?

Methods

As detailed in the next chapter, this dissertation utilized two social science methods in exploring the over-arching research questions. In the spring of 2006, seven in-depth interviews were conducted with non-White LGBT leaders and in the following year, a series of four focus groups were conducted. The seven in-depth interviews were

conducted with formal leaders, while the four focus group sessions (with a total of 48 participants across all sessions) were conducted with both informal and formal leaders. Together, these interviews serve as one of the largest datasets on non-White LGBT leaders amassed thus far.

Organization of the Dissertation: Chapters

This dissertation is about the ways in which race affects social movement organizing. It is about how non-White social movement actors talk about their own experiences in relation to organizing activities. More specifically, this dissertation is about non-White lesbian and gay (L&G) social movement leaders and the ways they navigate, manage, maintain, and create personal identities and movement strategies. This research is influenced by the sociological writings on intersectionality and applies them to LGBT populations. It also builds upon this body of work in order to show how intersectionality can be used to forward social change, instead of continuing to document multiple oppressions.

This dissertation has seven components: 1) Methods – the description of social science methodological tools and techniques used in order to examine the overall research question; 2) The Intersectional Imagination – where the project of advancing social change is introduced as a vital part to the study and experience of intersectionality and intersectional politics; 3) Racial Capital – the development of a concept that seeks to understand the multiple ways in which people experience and use their racial or ethnic identities as a barrier and also as a conduit to practicing intersectional politics; 4) Identity

Constructions and Identity Politics: Blackness, (Afro-)Latinidad, and Intersectionality – an overview of some of the literature on identity constructions for Blacks and for (Afro-)Latinas/os and how the intersectionality framework can be used as a way to clarify some observations about the ways non-White identities have been examined; 5) The Iron Cage of Leadership – an assessment of the different types of leadership that have been subject to social science inquiry and how that relates to the experiences of non-White LGBT leaders in social movement organizations; 6) Privileging Oppression – a discussion and assessment of sociological investigations on role strain and its relationship to the feminist definitions of intersectionality; and 7) Prescriptions and Conclusions – an examination of the ways in which the intersectional imagination can be used to create future research and social movement organizing agendas.

CHAPTER 2: METHODS

Summary

Two primary social science methods were used to explore the research questions for this dissertation. In addition to in-depth interviewing, data from a series of four focus groups were used. Both the interviews and the focus groups were conducted with non-White LGBT leaders from across the United States. Seven in-depth interviews and four focus group sessions (with a total of 48 participants across all sessions) were conducted from April 2006 to June 2007. Eliciting insights about the role of race in L&G organizing, this research attempts to locate how race affects L&G social movement organizing, from the perspective of leaders. How does non-White individual or group membership inform the ways that these leaders talk about the goals of the larger L&G movement? The questions sought to make connections between the needs of a national movement and the needs of the racial or ethnic group with which the research participant identified. On a more practical basis, this dissertation asked participants to locate and expand upon some strategies that they have found useful in their daily experiences as leaders and as people of color. In this way, the research questions sought to identify the kinds of strategies that intersectional organizing demand.

In-depth Interviewing. Utilizing both purposive and snow-ball sampling techniques, in-depth interviews were conducted with seven research participants from across the United States during the spring of 2006. Michael Patton's (1987) "guided interview" technique as well as Irving Seidman's (1991) "three-stage" approach informed

the methodological choices made with regard to the interview schedule for these interviews.

Focus Group Interviews. Similarly, the focus group sessions were tailored to target specific issues and debates relevant to those who participated and to the city at which the session was held. The focus group questions were also informed by many of the issues and themes that arose from the in-depth interviews conducted a year earlier. All together, four focus group sessions[6] were conducted (Chicago, IL; Detroit, MI; Cleveland, OH; and Columbus, OH) during the spring of 2007, and a total of 48 individuals participated.

This chapter has two main components: 1) A brief overview of social science research on sexuality; and 2) An inventory of methodological decisions and techniques employed and why.

Introduction

Social Science Approaches to Sexuality Research

Sexologist is the name given to early pioneers in the scientific study of sexuality. According to Steven Seidman (2003), early sexologists helped to define sexuality in four major ways: Sexuality as biological, genetic (physicality); Sexuality as a necessary aspect of being human, like breathing; Sexuality as a driving force of human behavior; and Sexuality as having a heterosexual basis. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Karl

[6] The collection of data for these focus groups was done in conjunction with the Arcus Foundation's support and its initiatives with regard to LGBT populations of color. This dissertation utilizes data collected for the Arcus Foundation's Racial Justice, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity portfolio. For more information about the Arcus Foundation, visit www.arcusfoundation.org.

Heinrich Ulrichs, Magnus Hirschfeld, and Havelock Ellis were all influential sexologists who argued for the decriminalization of homosexuality by using a nature-based argument. Of particular importance for this dissertation is the research that analyzes homosexuality. In fact, Ulrichs defined homosexuals as "inverts"—people who had the body of one sex and the soul of the other sex. One of the main goals for these early sexologists was to document the various kinds of sexualities present in their time. These studies can therefore be looked upon as being more descriptive than explanatory. They also favor the essentialist view of sexuality (Seidman 2003).

More recently, social scientists in the U.S. have attempted to continue the work of early sexologists but these researchers also acknowledge that sexuality reveals as much about social forces as it does about nature. The investigations by Alfred Kinsey and colleagues were influential because they showed how sexuality was fluid (Kinsey et al. 1948; Kinsey et al. 1953). The Kinsey number scale contained a heterosexual endpoint and a homosexual endpoint. Respondents were then given a number that was a reflection of their past sexual experiences. This development was important because it showed how the categories of "heterosexual" and "homosexual" are rigid constructs, almost like Max Weber's ideal types—something you may get close to but can never truly reach. Other researchers stressed the importance of social forces in the systematic study of sexuality. In 1988, David Greenberg utilized quantitative techniques and historical documentation to show how homosexuality was socially constructed. Similarly, Laumann et al. (2000) emphasized that sexuality is largely organized by other social forces like the state, gender, race, place of birth, etc.

In *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1*, Michel Foucault (1978) presents his argument on how sexuality has been constructed throughout history. A key point for Foucault is that discourse on sexuality has been quite prolific. This directly challenges the belief that contemporary societies are plagued by the silences of sexuality that dominated the Victorian era. Foucault shows how sexuality has been "spoken" and "talked about" all along—in private (in homes and in the family sphere) as well as in public (sexological accounts, therapeutic accounts, hospitals, and other public institutions). Further, Foucault argues that sexuality has been regulated by the power-knowledge effect: the extent to which those in power and those who possess (or have access to) knowledge use these forces to either reproduce inequality or to sustain the status quo. Clearly, Foucault's theory of sexuality is located in the social constructivist camp and his work continues to influence much of the research on sexuality today. Similarly, Judith Butler (1990) argues that while almost everyone can agree that gender is a social construct, very little has been discussed about how the category of "sex" is also socially constructed. Medicine has been the dominant institution that has defined who is and is not a woman, for instance. Butler implicates this industry, and others, in the continual misunderstanding of how social construction operates. Instead, she argues that "sex" is itself a gendered category and, hence, a social construct as well.

Contemporary scholars of homosexuality within non-White populations have found that discrimination and oppression are prevalent concerns and forces for these groups (Akerlund and Cheung 2000). The work of Almaguer (1993), Battle et al. (2002), and Diaz and Ayala (2001)[7] have contributed to the social scientific study of sexuality

[7] To date, the work of Diaz and Ayala (2001) and of Battle, et al. (2002) represents the largest quantitative assessments of Latino and Black people, respectively, within the

and its various intersections with racial groups in the U.S. In talking about Latinos, Almaguer (1993) argues that homosexual men have a propensity for being sexually passive and for not necessarily embracing a "gay" identity. In their study of over 900 Latino gay men in New York, Miami and Los Angeles, Diaz and Ayala (2001) found that experiences of social discrimination based on "race, class and sexual orientation are frequent and widespread among Latino gay men in the US" (2001:vii). Studies like these are important because they show how social discrimination may have particular links to sexism, racism, poverty, and homophobia. Similarly, Battle et al. (2002) in their study of over 2,000 Black lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the U.S. found that respondents identified HIV/AIDS, hate crimes, and domestic partnership as three of the most important issues facing Black LGBT people. Additionally, Black LGBT respondents did not readily identify with the word or label "queer." Arguably, the findings of these investigations suggest that the experiences of Black- and Latino-identified L&G individuals are unique and that race is an important marker of distinction within the broader L&G population.

Embedded in discussions and examinations of sexuality around the world are the arguments that link sexuality to nature and to various social forces. Does nature dictate beliefs about sexuality (essentialist view), or is sexuality a product of socially-constructed norms and behaviors (social constructivism)? This is one of the most salient dichotomies

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larger LGBT population. Other race-based quantitative research that targeted non-White respondents includes Dang and Hu's (2005) study of 124 Asian Pacific LGBT people, and Vickie Mays and colleagues' (1988, 1993) studies on Black lesbians. Additionally, much of the Black feminist scholarship already cited has also contributed to research on the intersections of race and homosexuality. For an historical overview of Black LGBT people see Juan Battle and Natalie Bennett (2005). Additional scholarship on LGBT people of color includes work by David Eng (2000) and Walter Williams (1986).

present in the study of sexuality, which recently has been characterized in the following way:

> Sexuality is a central aspect of being human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors.[8]

Still, throughout, sexuality has been linked to nature, to the psyche, to race, to policy, to organizing, and to markets, just to name a few. This dissertation is concerned with how sexuality intersects with racial identities within L&G social movement organizing.

Relying upon the theoretical frameworks of intersectionality, secondary marginalization, and standpoint theory—which have become staples in feminist investigations—this dissertation primarily utilizes in-depth interview and focus group data in order to develop theory and make observations about how key leaders of color within L&G movements understand racial identities as barriers and conduits in social movement organizing. The use of qualitative methods in feminist research has been well documented (Naples 2003). Further, McCall's (2005) explication of the study of intersectionality acknowledges how complexity shapes the methodological choices and

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[8] This working definition was provided by a World Health Organization (WHO)-sponsored project but is not the official definition from this organization. In fact, the WHO cautions the following: "These working definitions were elaborated as a result of a WHO-convened international technical consultation on sexual health in January 2002, and subsequently revised by a group of experts from different parts of the world. They are presented here as a contribution to on-going discussions about sexual health, but *do not represent an official WHO position, and should not be used or quoted as WHO definitions*" (WHO website: http://www.who.int/reproductive-health/gender/sexualhealth.html). The emphasis is from the web site.

stances that social scientists employ. Using these writings on methodological issues as a guide, this research collected data from LGBT leaders of color in order to understand the relationships between race and the social movement organizing practices that affect LGBT people of color.

Methodological Choices for this Dissertation

Autobiographical Background

Before entering graduate school, my exposure to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) activism was largely informed by the pages of the weekly newspaper at which I worked for four years. At that time, the *New York Blade* was owned by the Washington, D.C.-based *Washington Blade*, the oldest LGBT newspaper in the country. It was during this four-year period that I quickly learned about some of the headliners in LGBT politics, media, and the arts. I also learned about issues of representation in the media and how certain groups within the larger LGBT population were continually left out. After this four-year period of time, I entered graduate school and became much more interested in LGBT-specific issues and policies. I accepted a position as a Policy Analyst for the Racial and Economic Justice Initiative (REJI) at the Policy Institute of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), and it was there that I began to hear the stories of non-White activists who expressed great concerns over the ways in which national LGBT-serving groups dealt with racial justice issues. The stories ranged from outright gratefulness that a national group was *finally* working with non-White LGBT populations to ireful complaints about the lack of initiative and imagination over *how* to work together. By and large, the complaints outweighed the praises. Inspired by these stories, I decided to apply my sociological training and examine

some of the ways in which race, as well as other markers, affects the organizing efforts of LGBT people. More specifically, I became interested in the ways in which non-White leaders were able to navigate the web of national organizing practices in promoting an effective and cohesive movement.

Sample Selection

This research utilizes in-depth and focus group interviewing of LGBT people of color who have held, or continue to hold, leadership roles within LGBT populations. Although leadership scholars[9] have long debated over the types of leaders that exist, for the purpose of this research, a "leader" is defined as anyone who has been called upon to advocate on behalf of others who hold similar concerns, values, or identities, whether it be in formal (i.e., governmental, organizational) or informal (e.g., opinion leaders) capacities[10]. This definition underscores Linda Smircich and Gareth Morgan's (1982) argument about why leaders are important to study: they are the managers of meaning within group settings. The work of Max Weber (1921/1968) has been instrumental in identifying the distinctions between formal and informal leadership, processes, and organizational behavior. This dissertation does not seek to delineate those qualities which make respondents leaders. Instead, this research seeks to understand how formal and informal leaders of color within L&G movement organizing make sense of their own intersectional politics and how this informs their views about the present and future state

[9] Organizational psychology scholars have contributed widely to the development of leadership theory (Burns 2003, 1978; Chelmers and Ayman 1993; Hogan et al. 1994), which often deals with leadership characteristics and builds upon the work of Max Weber (1947). Other social scientists have also contributed to the literature on social movement leaders; for an overview of this literature, see Morris and Staggenborg (2002) and Barker et al. (2001).

[10] Chapter 6 discusses the issue of leadership and provides data on how leadership is defined by participants of this research.

of indigenous organizing. As such, this research examines the links between personal identity management strategies and group-level organizing tactics.

Due to the nature of the research questions, and because this study specifically targets leaders of color within L&G social movement organizing, convenience and purposive sampling were used. These non-probability sampling methods are appropriate for this study because the research aims to understand how social phenomena (secondary marginalization, for instance) affect the lives of leaders and how this may, in turn, influence the work (organizing) they do. Such sampling techniques involve self-selection and the decision to choose respondents with certain characteristics. For this study, for instance, two main respondent characteristics include a non-White racial/ethnic identity and a recognized leadership status within LGBT populations. As a preliminary measure, respondents who once held, or currently hold, an executive or managerial position within a L&G rights organization were selected. Such formal leaders include presidents, executive directors, and board members. These characteristics were chosen in order to elicit responses that speak directly to the experiences and mechanisms involved in L&G social movement organizing. In other words, the ideal respondent is someone who is familiar with the histories of L&G social movement organizing as well as with some of the mechanics of doing organizing work in this country.

An attempt was made to also interview informal leaders, or "opinion leaders" (Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955). Research has revealed that within group settings, informal leaders play instrumental roles in fostering group efficacy (Pescosolido 2001). For this study, such a respondent (informal leader) did not necessarily have an official affiliation with a formal organization or organizing body. For this dissertation, the seven in-depth

interviews were conducted with formal leaders, while the focus group sessions were conducted with informal leaders. In other words, the seven in-depth interviewees had direct ties to formal organizations, while the focus group sessions were mostly comprised of participants who were part of informal networks. *Tables 2.1* and *2.2* provide race and sex frequencies for all research participants.

Table 2.1
In-depth Interviews
Race and Sex (N=7)

RACE	*FREQUENCY*
Asian	3
Black	2
Latina/o	2
SEX	
Female	4
Male	3

Table 2.2
Focus Groups,
Race and Sex (N=48)

RACE	*FREQUENCY*
Asian	6
Black	25
Latina/o	3
Middle Eastern	2
Other	4
NR	8
SEX	
Female	32
Male	8
NR	8

Because this research seeks to understand the role of race within L&G organizing from the perspective of a person of color, it was important to interview people from a variety of racial or ethnic experiences. The goal of this research was not to arrive at generalizations about race within indigenous L&G organizing efforts but rather to understand how racial dynamics affect the ways in which non-White LGBT leaders interpret movement goals, strategies, and agendas. More data than that collected for this dissertation are needed in order to arrive at representative and generalizable observations within this population. As much as possible, respondent diversity in terms of sex, age, and race or ethnicity was sought.

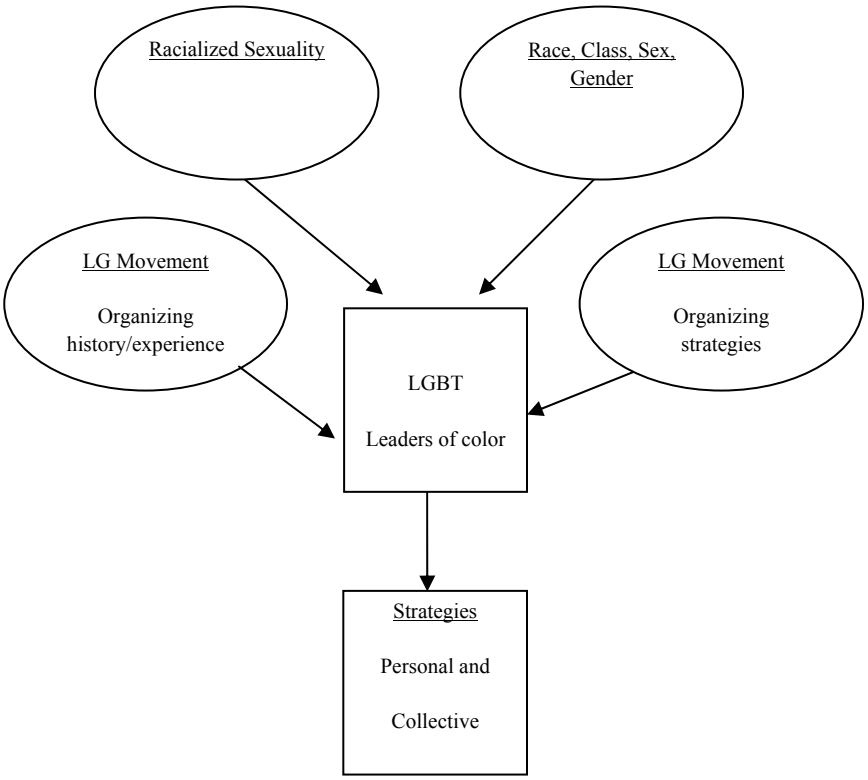
In-depth Qualitative Interviewing

This dissertation utilized a two-method approach and data were collected over a span of two years. In the spring of 2006, seven semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with non-White-identified LGBT leaders. Eliciting insights about the role of race in L&G organizing, the interviews helped to situate these leaders in the mainstream L&G movement. How does being a LGBT person of color inform, for instance, the ways in which these leaders articulate the goals of mainstream movement organizing? The interviews focused on the relationships between these leaders and L&G movement organizing. The questions sought to make connections between the needs of a national movement and the needs of the racial or ethnic group with which the respondent identified. Additionally, the interviews asked about the kinds of strategies that are effective at organizing LGBT people of color and about the kinds of strategies that intersectional organizing demand.

The in-depth interviews utilized what Michael Patton (1987) has called the "guided interview" technique where a general checklist is created by the researcher in order to assist in keeping the interviewee focused on a particular topic. This methodological approach allowed room for asking probing questions or following a line of inquiry that was useful in describing a phenomenon that was not necessarily anticipated when constructing the interview schedule. *Figure 2.1* is an illustration of the broad themes that influenced the creation of survey questions. This was the model first used in developing initial survey instruments.

FIGURE 2.1

Organizing Intersectional Politics: Interview Items, Model



Additionally, following Steinar Kvale's (1996) methods, the questions were kept short and simple while the sequencing of questions flowed logically from one set of ideas to another. Some questions in the initial survey instrument included the following[11]:

- What are some of the strategies used to foster racial and gender understanding? How are they employed? Do they work? How have you personally used them and how does the mainstream movement use them? What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of these strategies?

- Tell me about your profession. How would you describe what you do? How do others describe what you do?

- How has your racial or ethnic experience aided (and hindered) the ways in which you organize? How have issues of race united (and divided) the mainstream L&G movement in this country?

- What are some of the theories and strategies for multi-issue organizing? What types of strategies have you employed and what has the mainstream movement done? Name a particularly effective strategy and tell me how it functioned.

- Tell me about some of the ways in which you have advocated for LGBT rights.

[11] A longer list of initial interview schedule questions can be found in Appendix A.

- Tell me about some of the ways in which you have advocated for racialized LGBT rights.

- Tell me about some of the ways in which you have advocated for non-LGBT rights.

- What do you understand about intersectional politics? What are some examples of this? Have you participated in this type of organizing? If so, how?

These interviews were tape-recorded and, later, transcripts were created. Each interview lasted approximately two hours and consisted primarily of open-ended questions. Because this population is quite diverse and dispersed throughout the country, and because the research questions do not require a representative sample of all non-White LGBT leaders, convenience sampling methods were used to inform the initial selection of respondents. One goal was to attain regional diversity within the U.S. Other forms of sampling were useful as well. For instance, snowball sampling methods—asking respondents to recommend other potential interviewees—were used for this research. Mainly due to their stigmatized homosexual status, LGBT populations as research subjects have been at the center of many methodological debates in the social sciences; however, numerous methods have been used successfully in order to connect with specific research goals (Meezan and Martin 2003), and social scientific training on such populations is available through many academic, governmental, and social service agencies around the world (di Mauro, Herdt, and Parker 2003). Ostensibly, the

respondents of this research—while being "outsiders within"—still possess elite characteristics as leaders within a social movement. Such techniques (e.g., semi-structured interviews; and convenience and purposive sampling) coincide with the methods used to study elites (Dexter 1970; Moyser and Wagstaffe 1987).

The analysis of data was facilitated by Atlas.ti, computer software widely used for organizing qualitative data in the social sciences[12]. The goal was to be both descriptive (in discussing the various social forces involved in managing intersectional politics) as well as prescriptive (in terms of providing concrete ways in which intersectional politics can inform group-based organizing). The coding of data paid particular attention to themes that emerged from the interviews themselves. These themes focused on individual- and macro-level issues of intersectionality, identity management, and movement organizing in order to answer the larger research questions discussed above. This was an iterative process that required analysis both within and across interviews (Taylor and Bogdan 1998). In this way, the interview process itself changed according to the amount and content of data amassed beforehand. In following Irving Seidman's (1991) approach to survey design, the initial survey instrument was converted into a one-page checklist as well[13].

Because the in-depth interviews focused on prominent people and their interpretation of social phenomena, confidentiality was not very necessary, but it was maintained upon request. On the other hand, focus group participant responses are

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[12] For more information on this software, consult the following web site: http://www.atlasti.de.

[13] Appendix B contains an example of this shortened interview schedule, or checklist.

reported anonymously throughout this dissertation. Pseudonyms were created for some participants who supplied written responses and some defining characteristics were kept confidential[14]. Because there were two types of written responses – those obtained before the focus group session was held and those obtained during the focus group – not all written responses were matched with a particular respondent. As is explained in the next section, some participants supplied written responses via email prior to the focus group. For those who did, pseudonyms were created and matched to those specific written responses.

Focus Group Interviewing

In keeping with an iterative data-collection process, the questions asked during the four focus group sessions were informed by the answers amassed from the in-depth interviews conducted the previous year. For the focus group sessions, similar methodological considerations were made. In collaborating with the Arcus Foundation's Racial Justice, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity program, a series of four focus groups were conducted in June 2007. The locations of these focus group sessions were in keeping with the foundation's interests in targeting the Midwestern region of the U.S., and the selection of the focus group locations were informed by current scientific understandings of LGBT populations in the U.S. For instance, recent analyses of the American Community Survey (ACS) 2005 data conducted by demographer Gary Gates

[14] All informants were asked to sign a consent form before each interview session, abiding by Institutional Review Board standards and procedures at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

(2006) revealed two important trends with regard to LGBT populations in the U.S.[15]: 1) "At the state level, the largest percentage increase in the number of same-sex couples occurred throughout the Midwest, an area that had relatively low rates of these couples in Census 2000" (Gates 2006:1); and 2) "Among the states, California, Florida, New York, Texas, and Illinois have the largest GLB populations along with the District of Columbia" (Gates 2006:1). Gates (2006) also reported that Ohio was among the top ten states with the largest percentage increase in the number of same-sex couples.

Given this, and as a starting point for a larger research agenda, four major cities in the Midwest were selected: Chicago, Illinois; Detroit, Michigan; Cleveland, Ohio; and Columbus, Ohio. In addition, according to 2000 U.S. Census data (Bradford et al. 2002), the three counties that reported the highest number of same-sex households in Ohio were:

- Franklin: 3,241 households;
- Cuyahoga: 2,694 households; and
- Hamilton: 1,620 households.

Respectively, these counties are located in the following cities: Columbus, Cleveland, and Cincinnati. Though initial focus group recruitment efforts included these three cities, ultimately, Ohio focus group interviewing took place in Cleveland and Columbus.

[15] Very few national data sets ask questions about sexual identity, and even fewer ask about the sexual identities or sexual behaviors of LGBT populations. However, since 1990, U.S. Census data have been used to identify same-sex couple households and have also served as one of the largest nationwide data sets to collect information about same-sex couples in the U.S. While more research and data collection is needed in order to understand the particular needs and characteristics of homosexuals in general, U.S. Census data provide a very preliminary, and albeit limited, demographic understanding of these understudied populations.

The goal for each of the four focus group interview sessions was to include about eight participants who were knowledgeable about people of color issues as well as issues pertaining to LGBT populations. There were coordinated efforts to recruit a diverse set of focus group participants that included the following types of people: service providers; political leaders; opinion leaders; and activists who serve communities of color. In addition, efforts were made to include participants from Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, Latina/o, Middle Eastern, and Native American communities. In terms of race, a majority of focus group participants were Black; and in terms of sex, a majority identified as female (see *Table 2.2*).

Weeks before each focus group session took place, key informants from each city were identified and asked to suggest and submit the names of people who they believed would meet the characteristics discussed above. As individuals agreed to participate, they were sent a series of research questions via email (see #1 through #6 below). Participants were encouraged to respond to those questions, and email their responses before each focus group date. Some followed these instructions, while others chose to bring their answers to the focus group. In addition, some participants simply showed up on the day of the meeting. Regardless of whether the written responses were sent prior to the focus group, participants were strongly encouraged to attend. For those who submitted their written responses, additional questions were supplied during the actual focus group session. Those who did not provide responses before the focus group date were asked to submit written responses to questions during the session. Ultimately, all participants had access to the same questions.

Before each session, large posters were taped around the room, listing each individual question, one poster for each question. Participants were provided sheets of paper to write their answers to these questions, and everyone had the option of identifying her/himself by including her/his name on each response. Individual responses were then taped to the sheet with the corresponding question. Eventually, each question had several written responses next to them.

After about the first 60 minutes of writing individual answers, a meal was provided as a break to the meeting. As they got their food, participants were encouraged to walk around the room and read the responses that were provided by others in the room, and were taped on the posters. Once they had their food and had read each others' individual (anonymous) responses, participants were then reassembled for the rest of the focus group session.

Each focus group session followed this general pattern of events. In the end, each focus group yielded two types of data: written responses and synopses of the verbal, or spoken, interactions that took place at each focus group session. What follows are some details about each focus group:

- Chicago, Illinois: On June 1, 2007, 20 participants gathered at the Wyndham O'Hare Hotel in Chicago, IL for a focus group on racial justice, sexual orientation, and gender identity. While some participants were recruited through snowball sampling weeks before, others attended the focus group because they were already participating in the "Let's Talk about Sex" 4-day conference, a national gathering organized by SisterSong, a non-profit network that specializes

in the reproductive and sexual health rights of women of color[16]. Overwhelmingly, during this focus group session, participants in Chicago agreed that an emphasis on youth leadership building was needed in order to share available knowledge, access, and resources in the city.

- Detroit, Michigan: On June 4, 2007, 11 participants convened at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Detroit in Detroit, MI for a focus group on racial justice, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Participants in Detroit agreed that smaller groups and organizations that serve lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people of color need assistance in strengthening already-existing organizational infrastructures.

- Cleveland, Ohio: On June 6, 2007, six participants gathered at Trinity Commons, in downtown Cleveland, OH for a focus group on racial justice sexual orientation, and gender identity. In Cleveland, participants agreed that it was difficult to make contact, and sustain relationships, with (LGBT) people of color groups and populations. Many of these groups exist in isolation.

- Columbus, Ohio: On June 8, 2007, 11 people participated in a focus group on racial justice sexual orientation, and gender identity. The meeting was held at Stonewall Columbus, the LGBT Center of Columbus. Participants there agreed that coming out as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender is a challenge. And

[16] For more information on SisterSong, visit www.sistersong.net.

although many people live openly LGBT lives, they tend not to be in leadership positions.

Each focus group session sought to understand current and contextual issues related to the intersection of racial justice, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Focus group interview schedules were developed in order to gain knowledge about how racial justice, sexual orientation, and gender identity operate separately as well as how they intersect. Research questions pursued included the following:

1. How can racial justice leadership be developed in LGBT communities? And, how can LGBT leadership be developed in racial justice communities?

2. For the participants in the focus groups, how has their racial/ethnic identity helped them do their work as leaders? And, how has their racial/ethnic identity hindered the work they do?

3. What do the participants see as the top issue for their respective LGBT racial group?

4. What are the best ways for LGBT communities to work with allies in communities of color?

5. How are racial justice, sexual orientation, and gender identity linked? For the participants in the focus groups, how does their "work" make these connections?

6. In thinking about racial justice, sexual orientation, and gender identity, what would the participants need in order to make these connections more visible in the work they do as leaders?

CHAPTER 3: THE INTERSECTIONAL IMAGINATION

Summary

This chapter[17] examines the complexities of intersectional politics, how they have affected U.S.-based lesbian and gay (L&G) social movement organizing, and how key people of color within this movement talk about the presence of secondary marginalization through the lens of race. This chapter relies on the in-depth interviews conducted with nationally-recognized formal leaders of color within the L&G movement. It is argued that these leaders use what I call the *intersectional imagination*—a form of analysis that attempts to make connections between individual- and group-level oppressions from a perspective that is embedded in the actual lived experience of oppression. Interview participants talked about the multifaceted nature of the "mainstream" and how it manifests itself in movement organizing. It can limit a movement's goals, and it can be used to explore new ways of conducting the work of organizing. Similarly, discussions about leadership both encouraged participation in "mainstream" organizations and advanced a need for new models for thinking about what leadership means.

Introduction

> For that imagination is the capacity to shift from one perspective to another—from the political to the psychological; from examination of a single family to comparative assessment of the national budgets of the world; from the theological school to the military establishment; from considerations of an oil industry to

[17] An earlier version of this chapter was published in Antonio Pastrana, Jr. (2006). "The Intersectional Imagination: What do Lesbian and Gay Leaders of Color Have to do With It?" *Race, Gender & Class,* 13(3-4):218-238.

> studies of contemporary poetry. It is the capacity to range from the most impersonal and remote transformations to the most intimate features of the human self—and to see the relations between the two.…It is a quality of mind that seems most dramatically to promise an understanding of the intimate realities of ourselves in connection with larger social realities.
>
> C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*

Sociologists have longed grappled with the relationships between the self and society, the individual and the group. In fact, many would argue that the tensions that exist between these binaries are at the center of sociological inquiry. Still, social scientists continue to contribute rich understandings of individuals and societies based on research that often privileges one over the other. This chapter will not argue why micro-level analyses are better or worse than aggregate-level ones. Instead, it will argue that a form of analysis, called the intersectional imagination, is employed when talking about individual- and group-level experiences of oppression such that the distinctions between the individual and the group get blurred in order to raise awareness of a need for systemic change.

Scholarship on social movements has produced a plethora of models that attempt to understand how and why individuals get together to form groups for various causes and issues. Still, there is a gap in the research: How does human agency operate within social movements? In attempting to answer this question, this chapter examines how leaders of a movement talk about and interpret aspects of their own racial identity and how that relates to movement organizing and movement strategies. More specifically, this chapter examines how non-White lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) leaders understand aspects of race in advancing the larger lesbian and gay (L&G) social movement in the United States.

In 1959, C. Wright Mills' *The Sociological Imagination* showed how personal troubles can be translated into public issues. This observation helped to situate subsequent sociological investigations about the numerous relationships that exist between the individual and society. Often read, and assigned to students today, as a guide to a sociological approach to research and thinking, *The Sociological Imagination* has become a classic in the field of sociology. Over 30 years later, feminist writers and scholars helped to develop a framework that employed the sociological imagination by drawing attention to the ways in which multiple forms of oppression affect people differently. By connecting the personal effects of discrimination and oppression to larger social systems (like governments, organizations, and institutions), these scholars contributed to what is known today as the study of intersectionality. This chapter shows how the intersectional imagination is deployed by various leaders of a social movement today.

The intersectional imagination identifies, describes, and analyzes multiple forms of oppression in such a way that calls for a protracted resolution and understanding, instead of a quickly-calculated fix. It is about an outlook embedded in, and informed by, histories and experiences of oppression. While acknowledging the particularities of oppression and discrimination, the intersectional imagination also helps to locate these in a larger field of social injustice, thereby calling attention to the ways in which oppression and discrimination systematically affect everyone—not just those who witness or experience oppression. In this way, it extends observations about the existence of intersectionality by anchoring them to a larger call for social justice or social change.

Background

The Case of LGBT People of Color

Across the academic disciplines, people have documented experiences of racism – both their own and those of their peers – within LGBT environments. For example, Essex Hemphill (1991), L. Lloyd Jordan (1990), and Ekua Omosupe (1991) document instances of racism from the perspectives of Black people. Similarly, others have shown that discrimination and oppression based on having a non-White racial identity and a perceived non-heterosexual identity exists for Filipinos (Manalansan 1993, 1994); Latinas/os (Alonso and Koreck 1989; Anzaldua 1990); South Asians (Ratti 1993); and Native Americans (Roscoe 1988). That racism exists within LGBT environments is not something that is a recent phenomenon.

This chapter is based on a larger research agenda that seeks to understand how race, as a marker of difference, has affected L&G social movement organizing strategies in the U.S. The issue of race and when it serves as both a *barrier* and *conduit* in L&G social movement organizing is key to this agenda. To the extent that race and sexuality serve as markers of privilege, the study of race and sexuality is important because it often reveals how discrimination, stigma, and inequality are manifested, maintained, and managed. Further, the study of LGBT populations is appropriate for investigations about intersectionality because while diversity within these populations (and the indigenous organizing that they create) is fairly obvious, some argue that it is unproblematic, or that somehow the population's variance contributes to group cohesion, especially when advancing a "queer" agenda (Gamson 1995; Armstrong 2002). This chapter, instead, contextualizes both the enabling and constraining aspects of racial difference within L&G movement organizing in order to arrive at some observations about organizing

intersectional politics—the bringing together of seemingly disparate identities and issues in an attempt to forge a holistic approach to movement organizing.

Theoretical Framework

This chapter is informed by three guiding concepts. The first is intersectionality, which has developed vocabularies and strategies for examining multiple subordinate identifiers. The second is secondary marginalization, which draws attention to within-group-level power dynamics. The third is feminist standpoint theory, which seeks to investigate the origin, development, and deployment of oppositional, or critical, consciousness. Together, these theoretical developments contribute to an examination of how LGBT leaders of color (as movement leaders) make sense of and manage their own intersectional identities and how these strategies may relate to the development of the intersectional imagination.

Sociologist Patricia Hill Collins (2004) argues that today in the U.S. a new form of racism exists: it is the kind that intersects with sexuality and with gender. This notion of intersectionality, of having more than one subordinate identity and how this affects an individual's life chances, has been a major point of reference in discussions of race and sexuality in the U.S., especially as it pertains to Black women and to Black LGBT populations (Crenshaw 1991; Cohen 1997; Mullings 1997; Collins 1998; Battle et al. 2002). Similarly, non-White feminist scholarship (Anzaldua 1999; Anzaldua and Keating 2002; Anzaldua and Moraga 1983) has also been concerned with this area of inquiry. Although often employed in order to show how Black women face simultaneous forms of

oppression, intersectionality has also been used to highlight how race is interconnected with other social forces.

Historical data (D'Emilio and Freedman 1988; Davis 1981; Giddings 1984) have been used to detail how Black women face various manifestations of intersectionality based on at least two indicators: race and sexuality. These notions of intersectionality build upon the legal writings of Kimberle Crenshaw (1991, 1989, 1988), the sociological investigations of Collins (2004, 2003, 1998), and the works of countless feminist scholars[18]. Still, despite this scholarship on (Black) women and intersectionality, very little has specifically addressed how LGBT populations are affected[19]. Arguably, this work, and many others already cited here, addresses intersectionality by focusing on only two or three identities[20]. More research on how multiple identities affect people and politics is needed.

Intersectionality issues have also spilled over to the study of collective identity. Largely due to its identity-based agendas and its emphasis on cultural difference, L&G organizing efforts have been a fixture in the "new social movement" literature (Melucci 1989; Castells 1997/2004; Adam 1993). While some claim that L&G social movements are particularly useful in highlighting how identity politics can be destabilized in the

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[18] The scholarship on intersectionality continues to grow. Some feminist scholars who have contributed to this field, and who have not already been cited here, include bell hooks (1984), Barbara Smith (1983), Audre Lorde (1979), Elizabeth Spelman (1988), and Chela Sandoval (2000). The writings of the Combahee River Collective as well as the Kitchen Table, Women of Color Press also helped to shape various interpretations of intersectionality.

[19] Some notable exceptions in the social sciences include Cathy Cohen (1997), Battle et al. (2002), Diaz and Ayala (2001), Dang and Hu (2005), Vickie Mays et al. (1988, 1993), Dana Takagi (1993), Paula Rust (1996), and Beverly Greene (1994, 2000).

[20] For an overview of social scientific research on identity, see Judith Howard (2000).

context of "queer" organizing (Gamson 1995; Armstrong 2002), others contend that gender, sex, sexuality, and race continue to serve as dividers for movement organizing (Vaid 1995; Epstein 1999). Combining both of these perspectives, sociologist Mary Bernstein (1997) shows how L&G organizing efforts make strategic use of identity politics, sometimes suppressing notions of identity while at other times celebrating them. Still, as Francesca Polletta and James Jasper note, there is "little evidence about how individuals sort out and combine different sources of identity, or about the psychological mechanisms behind collective identities" (2001:299).

The literature on marginalization has also accounted for the ways in which race and sexuality intersect (hooks 1984; Carby 1987, 1998; Cohen 1999). For instance, Cathy Cohen's (1999) writings on the theory of marginalization, particularly what she calls "secondary marginalization," offer a view of the multiple layers of racial stigma and how it is manifested *within* marginalized populations. Similar to Michel Foucault's (1978) power-knowledge effect, Cohen's "secondary marginalization" shows how individuals are regulated by a more powerful subset of individuals. These advances are important because they uncover the layers involved in the study of intersectionality, and they underscore the relevance of examining within-group power dynamics. Key to sociologist Leslie McCall's (2005) work, within-group analyses of power allow for an untangling of the various layers of intersectional existence, methodology, and scholarship.

The group-level component of intersectionality becomes even more apparent with the aid of standpoint theory (Harding 2004). Standpoint, Collins argues, "refers to groups having shared histories based on their shared location in unjust power relations—standpoints arise neither from crowds or individuals nor from groups analytically created

by scholars or bureaucrats" (2003:207). Though the origin of such standpoints is uncertain, what is clear is that there is nothing automatic or conditional about them. That is, if a person belongs to a particular group, it does not necessarily follow that such a person will develop a standpoint that is similar to others who also belong to the same group. Still, various strands of standpoint theory posit that it is very likely for stigmatized groups to express identifiable standpoints that include a critical analysis of power.

To the extent that LGBT populations are historically-constituted groups—that is, they are defined and dominated by others—they are likely to exhibit shared standpoints about power relations that may or may not necessarily take into account sexual identity. Although the thrust of Collins' (2003) argument is about why it is important to study Black women in the U.S., her ideas about the relationship between intersectionality and standpoint theory may be applied to the study of LGBT populations in the U.S.

In sum, intersectionality—a framework used to understand the ways in which multiple forms of oppression affect people differently—has become an important feature in the broad fields of race and sexuality studies. Similarly, theorists interested in racial stigma have called attention to a phenomenon known as secondary marginalization—the process through which a marginalized group is regulated by more privileged members within their very group. Intersectionality, secondary marginalization, as well as feminist standpoint theory—an outgrowth of Marxist thinking which seeks to understand how the consciousness of the oppressed is translated into a critical stance that is often in opposition to the dominant ways of being—are employed throughout this chapter in order to understand how non-White identified leaders talk about race-based marginalization within lesbian and gay (L&G) social movement organizing in the U.S. By focusing on

these leaders, this chapter relies on what Collins (1986) views as an "outsider within"—a person whose status at once allows room for important interactions with a group that occupies a dominant position yet blocks her/him from inclusion in that very group—perspective and seeks ways in which race affects collective identity constructions within social movement organizing. This chapter attempts to gauge the special significance that intersectionality has when examining the organizing efforts and standpoints of LGBT leaders of color.

Methodology

Data from in-depth interview participants are analyzed in this chapter. These interviews were chosen because they reflect various experiences of gender, race, immigration, and number of years working within L&G social movement organizing. Keith Boykin is a U.S.-born Black gay man, Mandy Carter is a U.S.-born Black lesbian woman, Rafael Diaz is a Cuban-born gay man, Andres Duque is a Colombian-born gay man, Surina Khan is a South Asian lesbian woman of Pakistani descent, Pauline Park is a Korean-born transgender woman, and Urvashi Vaid is an Indian-born lesbian woman. For these leaders, the number of years participating in L&G organizing varied from slightly over ten to more than 35. Additionally, all of these leaders have had experience working with both local and national L&G mainstream and race-based organizations[21].

The coding of data paid particular attention to themes that emerged from the interviews themselves in helping to develop the notion of the intersectional imagination. Such a notion seeks to make critical linkages between the identification of multiple forms

[21] For a list of all seven LGBT leaders of color interviewed for this dissertation, please see Appendix C.

of oppression on an individual and what that may mean for the larger groups to which that individual belongs. Three themes are discussed in this chapter: 1) untangling and working the mainstream/s; 2) race as a barrier and conduit; and 3) non-White leadership in L&G social movement organizing.

Untangling and Working the Mainstream/s

Across all of the in-depth interviews, notions of a mainstream were articulated; multiple layers were identified, further complicating the nature of relations between and among these forces. In 1995, Urvashi Vaid's *Virtual Equality: The Mainstreaming of Gay and Lesbian Liberation* accused the L&G movement of mainstreaming its concerns, tactics, and organizing efforts in such a way that mimicked the U.S. Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Clearly, this notion of a mainstream held non-LGBT-identified people and culture as the referent, thus forcing an LGBT versus non-LGBT comparison. But another form of mainstream was present as well. This was the type that did not necessarily speak on behalf of LGBT people of color. The referent here nests itself within the L&G movement and has White-identified LGBT people as a reference point, forcing a comparison between LGBT people of color and White LGBT people. Still further, there is even the presence of such a thing as a mainstream LGBT people of color movement which has as its referent a form of people of color organizing that simply mimics the larger (read: White-identified) L&G movement. If one adds to this the fact that, as Joshua Gamson notes, "The LGBT movement has shifted from one of loosely affiliated activists to one of organizations," (2000:20) then the possibility of local, regional, state, national, and international groups having their own versions of a

mainstream complicates matters exponentially. Clearly, one can detect a matrix of mainstreams that is reminiscent of Patricia Hill Collins' matrix of domination.

Interestingly Andres Duque, the director of a program called Mano-a-Mano[22] that serves Latina/o LGBT communities and organizations in New York and throughout Latin America, notes the following:

> I think what defines them [mainstream LGBT organizations] is that they're single-focused on LG, not necessarily on LGBT issues. A lot of them only work on gay issues or lesbian issues, not necessarily too much on transgender issues or bisexual issues. Nonetheless I think the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force has done tremendous work, and I think they're like the shining example of a national mainstream organization that has done work with other communities, not just with gays and lesbians.

And, later, he added:

> I ultimately don't feel that the mainstream organizations have a clue of where people of color—*queer* people of color communities—are right now, or how they can support them. So even now, years later, when [these mainstream organizations] want [to work with] people of color communities is when they do a forum on an issue that they think is important. [The mainstream organizations] don't necessarily go to queer people of color organizations and ask them, "Well, how can we plug into something you're doing?"

Duque's words above at once splits the movement into lesbian and gay issues on the one hand and bisexual and transgender ones on the other. Here, the mainstream is used to mean lesbian and gay issues only. Later on, Duque expands this notion of mainstream when he considers LGBT people of color communities. Here, when non-White issues are examined, the mainstream shifts and becomes bifurcated based on racial identity and aspects of support for non-White L&G organizations.

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[22] Mano-a-Mano is one of a number of programs housed in the Latino Commission on AIDS in New York. For more about that organization, see www.latinoaids.org.

Mandy Carter is a self-identified "Southern out Black lesbian social justice activist" with over 37 years of organizing experience in numerous movements like the anti-Vietnam War movement, the Women's movement, and the L&G movement, to name a few. Carter served, most recently, as the executive director of Southerners on New Ground in Durham, North Carolina. She too commented on the use of "mainstream" in the LGBT lexicon. She said:

> [M]ainstream sounds like, you know, you're mainstreaming it. You're not challenging it. You're not trying to think of creative and wonderful ways of getting the work done. And sometimes I think mainstream means those organizations that have the resources and that can afford to be up and running.

Similarly, Surina Khan, a Pakistani-born lesbian and former executive director of the U.S.-based International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, stated the following about the mainstream:

> I think it describes to me what is visibly seen as being dominant. Something that maybe appeals to a wide range of people on some level, but that it doesn't have a very nuanced analysis in terms of the range of people who should be included in the conversation. So I think that on some level, mainstream for me is leaving out certain voices and populations and going with a strategy that is watered-down or appealing to a larger cross-section of maybe middle America. But a cost has been people who get left out.

More than highlighting a referent group, mainstream, here, points to an ideology or analysis of change as well as a form of economic stability. To be part of the mainstream is to support the status quo. Mainstream membership means having the economic means to ensure organizational longevity. It is also about leaving certain types of people out of the conversation and process of organizing. These notions of mainstream show how secondary marginalization manifests itself within LGBT populations.

Race as Barrier and Conduit

Moving on to more personal aspects of being a LGBT leader of color within the L&G movement, leaders were asked to think about the ways in which their own racial identity has helped (conduit) and hindered (barrier) the work they do. Pauline Park, who has founded and run a long list of organizations and associations that specifically address Asian LGBT issues, and who is the current Chair of the New York Association for Gender Rights Advocacy (NYAGRA), talked about her own racial identity in the following way:

> I think obviously when I walk down the street not everyone realizes I'm transgendered, but everyone can see I'm Asian. And so the difference is written on my face, my physiognomy, the epicanthic eye fold which sets me apart and which even in this city…people wonder if I'm a foreigner. It's a problem that Asians have of being the perpetual foreigner….
>
> But the fact that I was born Asian and have Asian features has set me apart to begin with. And so simply by virtue of that difference I've had to think about myself in different ways. Now that doesn't mean that everyone who is of Asian descent, or a Korean adoptee, is necessarily automatically an agent of social change....
>
> [M]y identity issues, sorting through issues of racial, ethnic, and national identity—along with issues related to sexuality and gender identity—have meant that I was really either cursed or blessed with an identity complex in some ways from birth because of the circumstances of my growing up….
>
> I concluded, ultimately, that there must be something wrong with society and not with me. As I like to say, I don't think I have a gender identity disorder. I think it's society that has the gender identity disorder. And so that, combined with some rather powerful experiences, both positive and negative, over the course of my life, propelled me ineluctably in the direction of becoming an activist and advocate and an agent of social change.

According to Park, racial difference is felt on a face-to-face level, and these experiences have informed her decisions to become involved in activism and to pursue a form of organizing that calls for a change in the larger social arena. There is a clear articulation, above, of the links between Park's personal experiences of difference and her beliefs about how this difference says more about the larger social structure of which she is a part. "I think it's society that has the gender identity disorder," she states. Still, Park is careful to admit that difference is not an automatic characteristic of someone who advocates for what she calls "social change." Similar sentiments were present in all of the interviews, indicating that while (racial) difference may be connected to a social change perspective, it's not always so. This observation can be used to address the applicability of standpoint theory, as explained earlier, in this instance. Additionally, for Park, racial difference has both positive and negative effects. In this way, she feels "either cursed or blessed." Similarly, Keith Boykin contributed the following about being a Black gay man:

> I think that my creativity has been largely stimulated by my role as a Black gay man, and certainly my role as a Black person and my role as a gay person individually as well, but collectively, because I'm able to see things in ways that other people don't see them. And that's not just me. I think it's part of the curse or the blessing of being a Black gay man.

Here, unlike Park, Boykin – a blogger and media personality who has had experience running and founding Black LGBT organizations – gives support to one of the observations that standpoint theorists make, mainly that being a part of an oppressed group gives one an incentive, if you will, to speak out against injustice and to have shared viewpoints with others solely based on these experiences of oppression.

Unlike Park, Duque's own racial identity cannot be readily detected by others. He said:

> I also have thought that because I don't necessarily look like the stereotypical Latino that sometimes there is that [Pause]. You know, you're invited to a place and you show up and they're like "Who are you?" I'm Andres Duque, you know. They're like, "Oh, OK." [Laughs]. You get that sort of like [look]. Also within the Latino community, I don't think that my face or the way that I dress or talk…sometimes relates to some of the communities in New York. So it takes an extra effort to sort of mend those things and be able to work with all those communities in New York….
>
> I'm also aware that because of the color of my skin, I'm not necessarily discriminated against, where[as] a lot of my friends are and they feel the sense of discrimination. I don't feel it. People who see me in a store don't think I'm Latino. So I don't feel it.

In exploring how his own racial identity presents a barrier to some of the work he does, Duque highlights one of the most fundamental aspects of racial difference and the process of racialization: sometimes, color counts. Conversely, upon discussing some of the ways being Latino has helped him do his work today, Duque points to national L&G organizations like the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), a media watchdog group, and Freedom to Marry, an organization devoted to the advancement of L&G marriage, whose recent programmatic and hiring trends are supporting Latino LGBT people and issues. In Duque's words, "All of a sudden, the Latino community is an IN thing and you think of the Latino community as a gay community."

Non-White Leadership

The importance of leadership in social movements has been well documented. However, in acknowledging that people of color face impediments within L&G movements in the U.S. and understanding some of the ways in which race serves as a

barrier and conduit in the work that several LGBT leaders of color engage in today, some questions remain. What kinds of things are said about non-White LGBT leadership? How do LGBT leaders of color articulate what leadership means for a person of color within the L&G movement context? Urvashi Vaid is a veteran L&G movement leader who has been involved in an array of organizing for such groups and issues as the Women's movement, violence against women organizing, anti-nuclear proliferation, and prison issues. She was the executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and now serves in the same capacity for the Arcus Foundation, a national foundation that funds LGBT issues and the conservation of Great Apes. About leaders of color within the L&G movement, Vaid stated:

> I've always wanted to acknowledge that there are people of color, like me, who have worked in the gay movement for many years and there are a number of us. And yet it never feels like there's a critical mass…so you work in organizations that are largely so White. So there's a composition issue on staffs, boards, and volunteers. Then there's the agenda or the program of what an organization does and how that gets affected by whether people are conscious of race….
>
> And so there [are] all sorts of challenges to the whole idea of how does an organization that's serving the gay community…change its program to reflect that it's conscious that the community has people of color, and serving different populations in different ways.

More than achieving a "critical mass" of LGBT leaders of color working within the L&G movement, Vaid claims that groups and organizations themselves must be able to concretely and programmatically state, and then act according to, a critical understanding of race. Here, the connection is made between a matter of numbers (i.e., increasing the amount of LGBT people of color input) and a matter of vision (i.e., what is the group's

understanding, or analysis, of race). Later, Vaid comments on what specifically is needed in order to increase people of color leadership within the L&G movement. She said:

> I think it has to happen in both tracks. I think you have to have people of color organizations. Absolutely. And [it could be] a national [organization]…or it could be networks. It could be conferences. It can be collaborations across local organizations that are working together to produce a survey or a project together. All sorts of formations….
>
> But, at the same time that we do that, I think it's critical to have a *much* bigger presence and participation and leadership in so-called mainstream or non-POC LGBT organizations. I mean, frankly, we need to continue to work in them and take them over and not be afraid to run them.

Vaid's two-pronged approach to supporting and sustaining LGBT leaders of color requires efforts from within and from without. That is, LGBT leaders of color must be able to continue to form affinity groups with their own racial populations, and they must be able to establish their leadership in groups or organizations that do not necessarily have an explicit racial focus. Echoing a similar insider/outsider perspective about LGBT people of color leadership and participation, Mandy Carter stated:

> Where are our current and where are our future LGBT of color leaders going to come from, and how do we define leaders?...This kind of goes back to mainstreaming too. We live in a place where an organization starts up. There's *an* executive director, one person. There's *a* board, one. Could we not come up more creatively, within communities of color, of alternate ways of how you define leadership, with a little L?…
>
> In other words, [let's] try to think of other ways that we still get that wonderful work done that empowers people and makes anyone who is brand new to the movement, or someone who has been kicking around a lot like some of us, feel like we have an equal stake or an equal share, an equal sense of ownership of the movement and how powerful that is….
>
> I think it's an incredible movement, but only part of a larger, broader movement, and let's keep our humility. Let's get away from, "It's just about *me*."

Interestingly, in thinking about how to increase the numbers of LGBT leaders of color, Carter not only identifies that this is a difficult task, but she also acknowledges that perhaps leadership itself requires a new definition. In other words, given some of the difficulties with sustaining and developing leaders of color today, perhaps one way to confront this is to revamp the thinking around what leadership means and how it can emerge. Echoing Carter's rhetorical question about where would non-White leaders go if organizations are not helping to develop them and create them, Duque added:

> You can send people to workshops forever, but if there's no opportunity in these agencies, what are they going to do with all of the training they received? I know people who for six years have gone to every single training that every organization in the city offers, and they are still not employed by the agencies that work with gay Latino communities.

Clearly, for non-White leaders, access to opportunities is also of importance and such matters can serve as further barriers to leadership experience.

Discussion

Like the sociological imagination, the intersectional imagination requires thinking on at least two levels: individual-based and group-based. It requires a set of analyses that connects one with the other, in order to arrive at observations about the lived experience. Unlike the sociological imagination, however, the intersectional imagination privileges the position of the outsider within. That is, it speaks from a particular standpoint that includes experiences of discrimination, oppression, or otherness. And while these standpoints are not necessarily owned by only a particular set of people, they have the capacity to address everyday understandings of oppression or discrimination.

The scholarship and writings about intersectionality have largely focused on an effort to establish that people exist within the intersections. In other words, people have multiple social and cultural identifiers that are not necessarily privileged by the larger social arena in which they live and work. These identifiers—together, separately, as well as multiplicatively—affect people's lives differently. The intersectional imagination extends this perspective by claiming that it is not enough to simply end all analyses with the observation that, yes, intersectional lives exist. It demands, from its observers, and from the very people who live intersectionist lives, a further articulation of what can be done with these observations and these lives. It demands that they utilize their experience of difference in imaginative ways that connect the individual to the group and the structures that support the group. Just as the sociological imagination does not only apply to sociologists (anyone can use it), the intersectional imagination does not only apply to those who have multiple subordinate identifiers. It is a perspective that requires a leap of analysis that privileges the lived experiences of an intersectional person.

In articulating their intersectional experiences, the interview participants included in this chapter not only made direct connections between their individual experiences of discrimination or oppression and how these affect the work they do, but they also articulated concrete ways in which these observations can stimulate conversations, organizations, and other groups in examining the ways in which power and institutional structures affect everyone.

The discussions about the mainstream address the multiple layers contained within the field of L&G movement organizing. Issues (as in the separation between lesbian and gay issues on one side and bisexual and transgender issues on the other),

ideology (as in not challenging an assimilationist program), and economics (as in having the economic means to support advocacy agencies or groups) all emerged out of conversations about what "mainstream" entails, who it is, etc. This is important because it shows the various layers that exist within the work of L&G movement organizing. These are some of the factors that contribute to the reasons LGBT people of color may feel disempowered by L&G movement organizing. For, as legal scholar Kenji Yoshino writes, "In the new generation, discrimination directs itself not against the entire group, but against the subset of the group that fails to assimilate to mainstream norms" (2006:22). Issues, ideology, and economics are some of the ways in which the secondary marginalization of LGBT people of color manifests itself.

The discussions about race serving as a conduit and as a barrier to the work of organizing within the L&G movement illustrate first and foremost that racial difference is experienced differently by different people. An Asian epicanthic eye fold and a Latino white skin are lived experiences that both constrain and support the individual leaders who talked about this. While these experiences may help to shape a particular stance, it does not necessarily mean that it is what has, ultimately, contributed to a particular form of analysis. Neither does it mean that others who share that particular experience feel the same way about any other particular subject matter, but more data and research are needed for us to fully understand some of these standpoint-related issues. In Park's words, "Now that doesn't mean that everyone who is of Asian descent, or a Korean adoptee, is necessarily automatically an agent of social change." This warning is particularly useful when attempting to test, or empirically observe, how some of the tenets of standpoint theory might manifest themselves in everyday lives or, in this case, in

the lives of LGBT leaders of color. On the other hand, Boykin clearly expressed that he believed his racial identity combined with his sexual identity places him in a position that is unique and, therefore, fosters more creativity. This observation may serve as a beginning to understanding some of the ways that situated standpoints can benefit members of groups that experience multiple oppressions.

Given these observations, why, then, is it necessary to embark upon a research project that examines how LGBT leaders of color talk about the work they do in the larger L&G movement? Scholarship has shown that leaders are managers of meaning within group settings (Smircich and Morgan 1982). The interview participants of this study are not just leaders; they are leaders who live intersectional lives. As such, they have navigated and experienced both individual- and group-level forms of oppression. Further, they have insights about the ways in which these two levels are connected and what can be done with it. In the context of social movement organizing and in the field of organized politics in this country, these leaders are experienced and knowledgeable. In the words of one of the interview participants, Urvashi Vaid:

> The progressive movement is running away from issues of race and gender and sexuality *all* the time. And those of us who come out of those movements have been saying for years: We see our work as intersectional….
>
> I think what we're trying to do is to birth a new movement out of the common soil—a common soil where race, gender, sexuality, [and] class are all churned up. And what we're trying to do is to say: What would institutions look like that came out of that common soil? What would leaders look like who've had that whole understanding of [the] world? What would our values look like if we really valued the lives of people of color?

Here Vaid insists that identities (even when they are oppressed) can serve to birth a new movement based on how these very identities come together at pivotal intersections. Such identities, according to Vaid, can stimulate new conversations and new ways of looking at how groups can come together to produce power and break away from the traditional ways of doing these things. In a similar vein, Rafael Diaz, a researcher whose area of specialization includes social oppression and its effects on health and well-being, contributed the following about his research and the way it relates to L&G movement organizing:

> I came to the academy not just to do research and get grants for Latino gay men, doing the same type of research that has been done. I wanted to shift the paradigm of how research was done. It was not about having research but now we have funding for Latinos. And I was resistant a little bit when people tried to put my name in all of these projects with all these big surveys that included Latino questions. They wanted to sample Latino gay men.
>
> But it's not about replicating the same studies, the same sampling, the same surveys, with Latinos. It's about shifting the intellectual paradigm. How do we understand the risk of HIV in this community, for instance?
>
> It's like this kind of unquestioned participation at the table, which is ultimately about adoring the table that you want to be a part of, without thinking that the table is really a table of the powerful and the unjust, and the people I don't want to be a part of.

Here Diaz provides a cautionary comment about non-White involvement in L&G organizing efforts. Including people of color in leadership positions can be more than just having a non-White face in the picture, but it can be an opportunity to question the photographer and to ask for a different angle so that a different photo can emerge.

In short, all of the research participants included in this chapter are using their intersectional imaginations to come up with various ways of including a racial justice perspective in the field of L&G organizing.

Conclusion

This research contributes to the study of intersectionality by interrogating how intersectional politics are managed by LGBT leaders of color. The focus on these leaders speaks to two projects. The first is to understand how secondary marginalization functions within the L&G movement, and the second involves the study of movement leadership, which is, according to some scholars, in need of more theorizing. On a more practical level, this chapter attempts to gain insight about how L&G organizing can address individual- and group-level divisions that arise due to racial differences. Interview participants talked about the multifaceted nature of the "mainstream" and how it manifests itself in movement organizing. It can limit a movement's goals, and it can be used to explore new ways of conducting the work of organizing. Similarly, discussions about leadership both encouraged participation in "mainstream" organizations and advanced a need for new models for thinking about what leadership means. With the aid of the intersectional imagination, we can create and stimulate social movements in such a way that seeks to understand how the lived experiences of racial difference both constrain and enable movement dynamics.

CHAPTER 4: RACIAL CAPITAL

Summary

Drawing upon one of the features of the intersectional imagination (Pastrana 2006), this chapter focuses on how lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) leaders of color talk about race as a barrier and conduit in their work as activists. Using qualitative data from four focus groups, with a total of 48 responses, this chapter highlights three things: 1) that although research participants view their lives as intersectional, certain traits or characteristics often take precedence over others; 2) that viewing intersectionality through the lens of race often showcases how stereotyping is perceived and experienced; and 3) when asked to talk about how race has helped and hindered their activist work, all research participants answered how it helped them, but the reverse was not true. That is, as a recorded response, several participants in every focus group session reported that their racial identity was "not a hindrance" or "not a problem." This chapter further underscores the justification for including LGBT people of color in the study of intersectionality, and it adds a new dimension to the framework: positive identity management.

Introduction

> As a biracial woman of Mexican and Irish decent, I walk with much privilege, carry much history, and can often see issues from multiple perspectives. I am both strengthened and blinded at times from my own experiences and struggles but am most alive when [the intersection] between multiple identities is complementary versus in conflict.
>
> Luisa, focus group participant, 2007

In a speech titled "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action," noted scholar and poet Audre Lorde (1977/1984) lamented over those instances in her life when she fell silent. Lorde's speech opened with a lesson and a warning to her audience: "I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood" (1984:40). The general theme throughout her speech was the need to speak out about injustice, pain, and fear. Cumulatively, Lorde's writings and speeches have been influential in feminist scholarship and in the development of intersectionality, a framework used to examine how multiple forms of oppression manifest themselves. The quote above highlights the need and utility around speaking out against and talking about the numerous ways oppression affects our lives, even in the face of fear. Certainly, scholars from across many disciplines have shown how a person's racial or ethnic identity can serve as a form of oppression. So what are some of the things that non-White people say about race within LGBT populations?

More recently, sociologists Jonathan Warren and France Winddance Twine (1997) have shown how in everyday conversations, people tend to talk about the Black and White binary, which then serves as the basis for discussions about race and race relations in this country. Related to this, Ellis Cose (1993) found that when talking to Black middleclass people about race, a rage is identified. The effects of speaking out and identifying how race affects one's life and work are multifaceted. What happens, however, when people are asked to talk about how their own racial identity or experience has helped them and hindered them in the work they do? What types of responses are gathered? What are some of the themes talked about? This chapter explores these issues

with regard to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) organizing – from the perspectives of leaders of color.

This chapter introduces a concept called "racial capital"[23] – a form of power that is linked to how individuals experience racialized lives. Placing perceptions and experiences of racial identities at the center of analysis, this concept asks the following: How has your racial identity or experience affected the work you do? What are some of the ways that it has benefitted and/or hindered your work? More specifically, within lesbian and gay (L&G) rights-based organizing, how has race affected the work of activism and social movement organizing? This chapter draws from participant responses across four focus group sessions (n = 48).

In the social scientific literature on race and ethnicity, scholars have developed numerous definitions, crafted nuanced explanatory models, and recommended the creation of countless forms of measurement that seek to understand the effects of race and racism. How does being a Latina affect a woman's earning ability, for instance? Or how do Black children from single-parent households fair compared to their White counterparts? These questions, and countless others like them, start out with the premise that a person's race affects that person's life-chances. But how do such people talk about their racial identity and how it has affected their lives? This chapter explores such questions for leaders of color within L&G movement organizing settings.

In *Outline of a Theory of Practice,* Pierre Bourdieu (1977) develops the notion that, through relationships, every individual vies for domination over others. Such an exchange or quest for power is done when an individual seeks to exchange capital with

[23] This concept draws upon a term used by sociologist Reginald Daniel (2005), who links racial capital to a person's skin tone or skin color, but a definition of the term was neither explored nor expanded upon.

others and to have relations with others. According to Bourdieu, there are distinct kinds of capital that every individual jockeys for within the social structure. Economic capital pertains to how much wealth an individual possesses; social capital is the network of people an individual knows and can rely upon; symbolic capital pertains to representations of the self in gestures; and cultural capital is the "knowledge in things," such as art. Further, Bourdieu's theory of practice is one that calls for an observation of both the objective (structures and fields) and the subjective (habitus) forces within society. Following this theory, power becomes something that is both objective – which can be observed when individuals vie for economic capital, for instance – and subjective, which deals with the acquisition of status. For Bourdieu, because of the way society is structured, individuals have a say in how they will use their capital capabilities. This chapter examines Bourdieu's form of agency as it pertains to social movement actors and organizing.

In Bourdieusian terms, lesbian and gay (L&G) leaders of color "practice" their racial identities. That is, they navigate the "field" of social movement organizing by making use of their objective status as a person of color ("capital") and the subjective ways in which they interpret this ("habitus"). This kind of practice is what I term racial capital – the resources and assets people of color have in examining their lives. In this chapter, racial capital is used to talk about L&G leaders of color and how they view their racialized status in light of the work they do in advancing the needs of L&G social movements in this country. This chapter examines some of the ways in which L&G leaders of color talk about, utilize, and view their own racialized existence as assets and liabilities, conduits and barriers.

Background

How do we understand racial identity management and what do we know about the racial identity management of social movement leaders? Today, thanks to the work of historians (Anderson 1997; D'Emilio 2004), no one doubts the important roles that someone like Bayard Rustin played in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Not only credited with helping to plan the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, Rustin was a seasoned strategist, activist, and organizer. He was also a Black homosexual. Rustin's prowess and talent were an asset to the civil rights movement, and yet for many (and, arguably, sometimes for himself), his homosexual behaviors were a hindrance. Although there is some evidence of Rustin's embittered relationships with various law enforcement agencies, there is no clear understanding of how Rustin managed his identities as a Black homosexual and leader within the civil rights movement. Some questions remain: *Was Rustin ever able to draw upon his experiences as a homosexual in order to inform his work as a movement leader?*; *Did Rustin consider his homosexual identity an asset to his work as a movement strategist?*; and *How did Rustin view his homosexual identity in light of his racial identity?*

While focusing on L&G organizing (and what has been termed the "modern lesbian and gay rights movement"), this chapter asks similar questions. The emphasis here, however, is on racial identities. In attempting to understand how racial identities are articulated, experienced, and manipulated, two key questions are asked: *How has race served as a barrier?*; and, *How has race served as a conduit?*

From the literature on psychology and mental health, scientists have developed models used to explain racial identity creation, maintenance, and management for Whites (Hardiman and Jackson 1992), Blacks (Cross 1991), and Latinas/os (Gallegos and Ferdman 2007), as well as for other racial and ethnic formations. Of particular importance for this chapter is how "spoiled" (Goffman 1986/1963) – or stigmatized – identities are managed. While some have ventured to document the times and settings at which one identity might take precedence over others (i.e., does race trump sexual identity, or vice versa; or for women, what are the effects of racial identity on income, etc.), seldom do scientists investigate how actors manage and utilize their various, multifaceted identities. More specifically, within an already-stigmatized environment or setting, how are subsequent stigmatized identities managed? This chapter, for instance, examines how leaders of color manage their racial and ethnic identities within L&G social movement organizing[24] settings.

In the vast literature on social movements, some attention has been paid to the strategic use of identity. For instance, Mary Bernstein (1997) has argued that identity can be either celebrated or suppressed, given movement goals and historical opportunities. Likewise this chapter shows that non-white L&G movement leaders also think of, or perceive, their own racial and ethnic identities in these ways. In this regard, this research is utilizing macro-based observations about social movements in order to inform micro-based, or individual-level, data on how movement actors experience and manage personal agency.

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[24] Philanthropically, L&G issues and organizing is one of the lowest funded causes in the nation. In fact, according to a recent report, L&G issues ranked next to last in a long list of issues and how well they are funded (FLGI 2008). This is one indicator of the stigmatized nature of this type of work and area of activism. For more information about how LGBT issues and organizing work is funded, see Chapter 6.

Identity Management: Non-White LGBT Populations

> To understand if and how Black LGB identity can mediate the negative health effects of marginalization and empower Black LGBs in the struggle against oppression is to understand how to unleash a powerful resource not only for Black LGBs but potentially for LGBs, for Blacks, and for other marginalized groups.
> (Battle and Crum 2007:321)

How do marginalized individuals and groups manage their multiple forms of identity and what are some of the things that people say when asked to talk about their identity? In a ten-year review of the scientific literature on L&G people of color, Akerlund and Cheung (2000) found five common themes that affected the identity development of Black, Latina/o, and Asian American L&G people. That list included the following: discrimination, oppression, choosing between cultures, rejection, and social support. In focusing on race and sexual identity for Black gay and bisexual men, Crawford and his colleagues (2002) found that having a "positive self-identification" as Black and gay led to more positive health outcomes. This finding is important because it provides a psychological (mental health) justification for examining the practice of intersectionality. Still, as Crawford and his colleagues (2002) caution, data reveal that "attachment to cultural heritage and identity as an African American are the most important factors to the emotional health of [African American gay and bisexual men] AAGBM" (Crawford, et al. 2002: 186-187). This finding is particularly important when examining the relationships between a LGBT person of color and her/his racial and cultural identity. From a more macro-level perspective, it would not require much of a leap to hypothesize that if LGBT people of color organizing does not have a positive relationship with its respective racialized groups, then the LGBT group will suffer.

Theoretical Framework

Building upon the theoretical framework used to develop the intersectional imagination in Chapter 3, this chapter utilizes Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) theory of practice (in association with various forms of capital) and applies it to the field of lesbian and gay (L&G) activist settings. In explaining Bourdieu's theories of capital, Elizabeth Silva and Rosalind Edwards (2004) write: "We accumulate and invest in all forms of capital, yet the effects of accumulation and investment are not the same throughout. In addition, they must be thought of not simply in terms of accumulation or investment processes because power and control are conferred and legitimized through particular possessions of capital" (Working Paper 7: 3). This observation about the application of Bourdieusian theory underscores the benefits of situating different forms of capital in specific locations, times, and settings with the understanding that these forms of capital are not static. They can, and often do, mutate according to the setting, the subjects, and the fields. These observations are similar to those of the study of intersectionality, namely that identities are relational as well.

Earlier it was noted that the study of intersectionality has a basic sociological question in mind: How does an individual navigate all of her characteristics or identities in the larger social structures, even in the face of adversity? And how does such an individual manage all of this in group settings? A basic feature of intersectionality is that oppressions are not additive but instead are multiplicative. Intersectionality as a framework has been used in legal studies, in critical race studies, in health studies, and in feminist investigations. But the roots of intersectionality are very much tied to sociology

and to how an individual fares within larger social structures. Though sociologist Patricia Hill Collins has helped to develop intersectionality as a concept, her work clearly has ties to other fields and to other concepts that capture some of the characteristics of intersectionality as a framework where interlocking systems of oppression come together. For instance, some economists use "double whammy" to talk about how race and gender, particularly being Black and female, affects a person's life chances. W.E.B. Du Bois' (1903/1996) "double consciousness," (a two-ness in being an American and a Black person); Andersen and Collins' (1992) "simultaneity;" Gloria Anzaldua's (1999) "borderlands" and "mestizaje", which advances a need to examine social forces beyond a binary; and other concepts and terms like "the antillano perspective" (Flores 2002); or "latinidad" (Lao-Montes 2001) have all contributed to the ever-widening field of intersectionality as a lived experience and as a method of inquiry that privileges oppression and how it can be used to advance ideas about group cohesion *based* on these oppressions.

In sum, informed by Bourdieu's (1977) theory of practice and Collins' intersectionality framework, this chapter attempts to understand how individual experiences of oppression are talked about within a setting where oppression exists on multiple levels. How do L&G people of color navigate intersectionality through the lens of race? These ideas and questions are all used to develop the concept of racial capital – a form of power related to one's own racial identity and how this power changes according to the environment and to other social forces, both perceived and experienced.

Methodology

This dissertation focuses on three specific research questions, and this chapter addresses the last one in particular: 1) How are multiple forms of oppression understood and navigated?; 2) How has race affected lesbian and gay activism?; and 3) How is race understood as a barrier and conduit in this activist setting? Additionally, these questions are used to respond to two findings within the broad research on social movements. First, as Aldon Morris and Suzanne Staggenborg (2002) note, very little is known about how such things as leadership and human agency affect the development of social movements. The data analyzed in this dissertation address such things as human agency by examining the ways in which social movement actors, particularly leaders, navigate the field of L&G organizing. Second, as sociologist Mary Bernstein (1997) has noted, identity is an important part of social movement organizing, especially within LGBT populations. Although Bernstein's (1997) observations were rooted in macro-level dynamics, her research is important in understanding how (movement) identities are manipulated in different historical settings.

As with most qualitative methods, an iterative process was employed during the data collection phase of this research. One way in which this process affected this dissertation was in the responses obtained from the seven in-depth interviews conducted in 2006. These leaders not only expressed such things as respondent fatigue (apparently they have been the subjects of many research projects or inquiries), but they also each recommended talking to individuals who were more "on the ground" – meaning people whose main focus is on local, community-based organizing, rather than on large, national causes. Because of this, focus group sessions were developed so that more robust

responses could be attained and this from participants with different social movement organizing experiences.

Focus Groups

A series of four focus group sessions were organized in the Midwest (Chicago, IL; Detroit, MI; Cleveland, OH; and Columbus, OH) in the spring of 2007[25]. With a total of 48 participants, these focus groups yielded data in two forms: the written responses from participants and portions of the spoken responses collected during the sessions themselves.

The coding of data paid particular attention to themes that emerged from the responses to two questions: How has your racial or ethnic identity helped your work?; and How has your racial or ethnic identity hindered your work? Coding was also guided by the notion of racial capital, which highlights those times and settings at which one's racial identity is either/both a conduit or/and a barrier to movement organizing efforts. Three themes are discussed in this chapter: 1) Trumping or Who is my audience?; 2) Race and Language; and 3) Show Me the Color.

Participants reported a range of written responses to how they viewed their racial or ethnic identity as a benefit to the work that they do as activists. A summary of some of these responses included the following about racial identities:

- it gave them a personal connection to doing race-based organizing;
- it provided them with a one-of-a-kind perspective;
- it helped them to understand and cope with discrimination;

[25] For more information about these focus groups, please see Chapter 2.

- it provided access to communities of color;
- in minority-rights situations, it ensures that their voices will be heard
- it is a physical and visual reminder that LGBT issues are also relevant to communities of color;
- it provides legitimacy and credibility to race-based work;
- it encourages more than one point of view on a topic
- it forces a questioning of the status quo; and
- it contributes to the diversity of the immediate environment

While the summary above provides an overall picture of responses collected across each of the focus group sessions, what follows are specific responses from anonymous participants.

Respondent 4A:

> My racial identity helps to understand the complexities and layers and intersections of race, class, sex, gender and orientation. It helps me to be more emphatic and think critically about these issues that I feel personally connected to based on my own identities.

Respondent 4B:

> It has helped me learn to be less judgmental, being from groups that have been victims of discrimination.

Respondent 4C:

> By being a woman of color, I have more understanding and a higher tolerance for discrimination than the gay White boy down the street who was called a fag and is hurt by that. I think I'm more tolerant and more

> patient. I can wait longer to get desired results. I can stick with it. This doesn't mean it's easier, but it's part of my nature, being a person of color.

The three participants above each provided responses that are related to some of the ideas that standpoint theory attempts to untangle. While isolating one of their identities (racial), each of these participants mentions that a greater understanding of complexity and of oppression exists. Here there is acknowledgement that something unique is occurring. The next set of responses adds another element to this acknowledgement: being aware that racial identities can be used and relied upon in order to access power, and to change ways of thinking.

Respondent 4D:

> I also know that at times, my racial identity is going to open doors. I'm going to use it if I'm in the room with White people, but you have to have that substance too.

Respondent 4E:

> My race has helped me move to places I may not have been able to get into otherwise. For example, it has helped in becoming a board member in a large gay center.

Related to these two responses, Rafael Diaz, a self-identified "socially-engaged scholar," and one of the in-depth interview participants included in this research, contributed the following:

> I think I have been able to use my race and ethnicity [as a White Cuban] to critically challenge myself. And I examine my paradigm and my hypothesis and try to create situations that are somewhat objective to sort of contest my biases and to try to get a sense that I'm not just using the data to do my politics even though I really do, because my data very powerfully support these notions of social oppression. This has helped.

In explaining that he often challenges himself to think of new paradigms when conducting his research, Diaz admits that his racial identity is a component in this process. In this way, racial identity is playing an important part of his work and of his activism. It is helping him to think of new ways of analyzing and collecting data.

Moving from the positive to the negative, when asked about how their racial identity has served as a hindrance in the work that they do as leaders and activists, participants listed a range of written responses. A summary of these includes the following about racial identities:

- it results in stereotyping;
- it is often interpreted as aggressive;
- it is often seen as a distinct or separate facet of who they were, and not related to their other identities;
- it fosters feelings of alienation, isolation, and contributed to the closeting of sexual identities;
- it limits access to certain communities;
- it blocks objectivity;
- it adds to the list of issues about which one must be able to speak;
- it makes it difficult to talk to heterosexuals who cannot look beyond the LGBT identity;
- it fosters racist acts; and
- it is not a hindrance at all

And below are some specific responses to this question:

Respondent 4F:

> Sometimes, in the GLBT community, I feel being Black may work against me because there is so much racism in the GLBT community.

Respondent 4G:

> I'm seen as the angry black woman; the angry black lesbian; the angry and aggressive woman, when all I'm doing is the cross-cultural dialogue. I'm seen as a complainer about racism. I'm not taken seriously.

Respondent 4H:

> Working within my racial community is a hindrance, as a LGBT-identified person. When I turn to my racial community, there is no support there.

Though discussed in Chapter 7, these responses are similar to the views expressed by the middleclass Black people that Ellis Cose (1993) interviewed in his book titled *The Rage of a Privileged Class*. While respondent 4F mainly identifies a hindrance when interacting with LGBT populations, 4G seems to be expressing that the barrier is felt everywhere she goes, and 4H mentions friction that occurs when dealing with her/his own non-White environment. As suggested in Chapter 7, these observations lead to more questions about exactly when and where race is a barrier and conduit.

Interestingly, across all four focus groups, when looking at how their racial identity has served as a barrier to their work, some respondents reported that it was not a hindrance at all, or that it was not a problem. Given the research on non-White LGBT people, this finding seemed inconsistent with what has been documented already about this population. What might be contributing to these "not a problem" responses from

research participants? Though more data are needed, part of the answer to this question can be found in the literature on the multiplicity of roles and role strain[26].

Trumping or Who is My Audience?

In many U.S. playing cards games, a trump card is one whose value is higher than any other. The player who reveals a trump card is usually the winner of the game, or set. Trumping is the act of playing a very high-valued card, usually with the intention of winning the game. When considering the universe of identities that people possess, it may become apparent that at certain times and during particular situations, one identity may take precedence over any others. However, what happens when a subject has multiple subordinate identifiers?

Michael[27] is a 41-year-old gay man of Middle Eastern descent and co-founder of a LGBT Middle Eastern network in the Midwest. He reported the following:

> As an immigrant, I get picked on by every group of color AND helped by every group of color. For me, racial issues became more obvious in college. Teachers placed me in high regard and they pushed me to learn, but becoming gay and coming out was a different story. I had to hide. Being LGBT is like being of color in this country. Segregation and prejudice in Middle Eastern communities exist (against LGBT people). And, yet, my presence alone helped to enlighten others.

This is part of a story about racial consciousness and group belonging. Michael emphasizes the difference experienced when examining the development of his sexual identity. Then it is argued that being homosexual is similar to being non-White. Still, toward the end, Michael acknowledges the power of presence and how, simply by his

[26] For a discussion of this, please see Chapter 7 of this dissertation.

[27] All names of focus group participants are pseudonyms, and some defining characteristics have been altered to protect the identities of research participants.

presence, he is able to help others to understand the multiple layers involved when organizing around diversity.

Similarly, James, a 45-year-old African American bisexual man, parent, and religious leader, delineates what happens to him when he is interacting with different types of audiences. James wrote:

> As a person of African, Native and European ancestry, who identifies as an African American bisexual male, I find that my self-identifying labels can be either a strength or a challenge, depending upon my audience. Yet with regard to my professional portfolio, how, when and with whom I choose to declare my sexual orientation becomes fluid, depending upon the targeted group. Within heterosexual communities of color, I don't often speak about my sexuality, unless directly asked or I recognize that a teachable moment is before me. In declaring my sexuality among some Black people or African American organizations, I have often witnessed that for them my sexuality overrides my ethnicity. Thus I am not viewed or respected as authentically African American but instead gay, queer or even abominable….
>
> As I move about the nation training people about the fabric of oppression, specifically anti-racism workshops, I have the opportunity to bring awareness to the multiple ways which race, gender, and sexuality intersect and are inextricably linked.

Here, James tells about how racial and sexual identities are revealed according to his environment and audience. Because of a racial identity that is not based solely on one identifier (James reported that he was of "African, Native, and European ancestry"), there is an acknowledgement that revealing one's racial identity is also a matter of choice, at times. James chooses to identify himself as African American. Similarly, revealing one's sexual identity is also dependent on location, setting, and audience. Interestingly, James mentions how, within Black settings, his sexual identity trumps his racial affiliation. Sometimes, sexual and racial identities are not so apparent or obvious. Race sometimes overrides sexuality and vice versa. Similarly, an anonymous focus group participant

posted the following response during one of the sessions. This response was posted next to the question about race being a help or a barrier to doing the work of organizing:

> Within my own racial community, if I talk about racial issues, it's OK. If I talk about sexual issues, I'm an alien. It's 2007. There should not be any taboo issues. Also, there is still racial profiling. I walk in through the door, and the first thing they see is a Black woman: Two strikes. If I were White, I would be viewed as a woman. So I have to work harder.

This response from a Black woman is important because it shows how racial and sexual identities are viewed in different settings for this leader. In the act of trumping, sometimes playing the card is not a matter of choice and sometimes playing the game is difficult and causes some to have to "work harder." Having a sense of who one's audience is and then using one's identities strategically to gain entrance is not the only form of trumping that occurs. As revealed during the spoken part of one of the focus group sessions, trumping also occurs for groups. Shelly,[28] an Asian-identified 40-year-old woman who has been involved in Asian-specific organizing since 1988, shared that while the largest LGBT pride parade draws some people who are from Asian descent, by and large, Asian LGBT participation is much stronger numerically during Chinese New Year celebrations. This suggests that trumping is not solely about individual decisions, but it is also about group-based choices about comfort and affiliation.

Race and Language

Racial and sexual identities are also influenced by perceived and actual language acquisition, for some. That focus group participants included the issue of language is an indicator that such a topic is also intimately tied to notions of racial and sexual identity.

[28] Focus group participant, 2007

But how does this occur? Migdalia, a 46-year-old Puerto Rican lesbian woman, is a co-founder of a number of Latina lesbian networks in the Midwest. She reported the following:

> As a Puerto Rican lesbian born and raised in [the Midwest], my identity has helped me in creating an organization for Latina lesbians, but being American-born and lacking a strong command of the Spanish language has also been a hindrance given the incredible increase in the monolingual and dominant Spanish-speaking reality of [this Midwestern city's] Latino community. This language barrier has caused women to shy away from [the organization] – both because we don't speak enough Spanish as well as because we can be perceived as speaking only Spanish.
>
> In addition, I have not been able to participate in Spanish language news media interviews, again because of my skill level and it has been very difficult to find Latina women who can speak Spanish [and] who are willing to be on camera as an out lesbian. This has been very frustrating.

Migdalia laments the ways in which Spanish-language fluency is viewed among people of her own racial or ethnic background. In fact, while her ethnic identity as a Puerto Rican benefits her by providing easier access to other Latina/o communities, it is her perceived and actual Spanish and English language abilities that serve as barriers to some of her organizing efforts.

A similarly complicated relationship between language ability and racial identity was expressed by a 47-year-old Chinese gay man. Nelson is an immigrant and new to organizing in LGBT populations in the U.S. During a focus group session, Nelson reported that being an out gay person was difficult and complicated because of fear of isolation from his family. If his family disowned him, he would have to live with the knowledge that their well-being would also diminish because he would not be around to serve as interpreter for his family. As a bilingual person, he explained how his family depended on him for economic and social well-being, based on his role as interpreter for

his family. Nelson's English-language abilities were an asset to his family's health. This is an instance of how racial identities are often complicated by language abilities or skills, among other things. Migdalia and Nelson both experienced and perceived stereotyping resulting from their racial and ethnic designations and what those reveal about language abilities. Similarly, Michael, the 41-year-old immigrant gay man of Middle Eastern descent mentioned earlier in this chapter, added the following about language and culture when asked about how race affects his activist work:

> There are not resources within the GLBT community to address the issues around religion and culture or even language that faces GLBT Arabs, especially new immigrants. Unfortunately, what that means is that this community is not only underserved but in many cases they have absolutely no resources whatsoever.

This response also illustrates some of the pitfalls of asking people who experience multiple forms of oppression to isolate one of their identities. What current intersectionality scholars have said holds true for some of the respondents in this research: identities are interlocking and so it is difficult to talk about how one of the many contributes to one phenomenon or not.

Show Me the Color

The next set of responses highlights some of the ways in which a person's outward and visible appearance sends signals to others about racialized identities. Karen, Myra, and Brian's visible racial identities provides access (to their own and to other communities of color), legitimacy (around working on non-White issues), and sometimes adds to the multiple ways in which they experience oppression. Karen is a 48-year-old African American lesbian woman. She has been a member and co-founder of several African American LGBT groups in the Midwest. Karen shared the following:

> Just by my being African American, I bring a lot of credibility to the conversations about multicultural issues and social justice in particular. What I find unique and interesting is that I find myself within the minority in just about every space I enter. When I enter spaces where I'm in the racial majority, I'm still a minority being either a woman, a lesbian, or a butch. When I enter spaces where I share [same-sex attraction], I'm often the minority as either a woman, a person of color, a butch, or a Christian. When I'm in spaces where I share race, gender, and [same-sex attraction], I'm a minority as a butch, especially (I'm observing) when it comes to leadership and organizing in LGBT communities of color. …
>
> My racial identity adds legitimacy to these conversations and gives credibility to the knowledge of having experienced pure oppression, not just for being African American, but for being an African American woman, an African American lesbian, an African American butch, an African American Christian butch lesbian, etc. …
>
> My racial identity helps me to connect with others of my race, to get their attention about certain social justice issues, without them having to doubt me (due to my racial credibility), I can get into doors that others cannot. I can tailor my messages in a way that I know my own people will understand and heed to. I can have a powerful influence just based on my race.

And Brian, a 39-year-old African American gay man, reported the following:

> My race is helpful. It provides access. It gets me in the door, even in minority communities. And this is true even within minority populations, because I'm visibly of color.

Additionally, Myra, a 35-year-old African American lesbian woman wrote:

> I'm often given opportunities and access to come to the table because I'm identified as a proud African-American out lesbian. But my racial/ethnic identity as African-American has allowed me to be identified as someone with a different perspective. …
>
> It's the same thing. On the surface, I'm relatively common, but when I get to the table, I'm going to be direct and challenge the status quo. I always have an agenda, but sometimes I'm left out. I'm not always included.

Unlike Migdalia, whose Latina identity was questioned by others (because of her language abilities), Karen, Myra and Brian each found comfort in the ways that they connected with their racial group. In fact for Karen, Myra, and Brian, skin color was like an outward measure of group affiliation.

Discussion

Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) theory of practice posits that every individual has a certain amount of agency in her/his interactions with larger social structures. This agency is usually used in order to acquire certain types of capital. As a form of capital that is embedded in oppressive social structures, racial capital is the amount of power individuals have in utilizing their racial identities. It is a form of power that shifts according to the setting or the environment, to language proficiency, and to skin color. In other words, a racial identity that is oppressed is not always and everywhere that way. There are particular locations and particular settings in which these identities are valued slightly more, or differently, than at other places.

Writings about intersectionality do not have to end with a deficit model – one that highlights how individuals suffer or experience oppression. Writing about L&G people of color, Ian Barnard shares: "As peoples of a particular race are routinely homogenized (both by those inside and outside of that race), so queers of color are imagined by some members of the race as a threat to this (fictitious) unity, or are merely claimed not to exist (by some members of the race, by some outside the race)" (2003: 9). Traditional intersectionality writings have revealed a strong tendency to document that multiple

forms of oppression exist. Empirical evidence on what people do with these oppressions is not as prominent in the literature that utilizes intersectionality as a framework. Racial capital extends the field of intersectionality by identifying the various instances, locations, and settings where racial identities can be both an asset and a liability to a particular task. This renewed intersectionist lens opens the door to rooms full of opportunities and it helps to document how people have produced strategies for survival and success in the midst of experiencing multiple forms of oppression. A racial capitalist perspective helps us to see these things more clearly.

The ways in which intersectionality is navigated is messy, subtle, overt, and liberatory. The responses collected from the question *How has your racial identity hindered the work that you do?* can be viewed as the standard deficit-model of intersectionality. On the other hand, when asked to talk about how their racial identity has helped them, participants highlighted one of the strengths of the intersectionality framework: the ability to identify racial identities as a relational concept that is in constant interaction with other such concepts (like class, sexual identity, sex, etc.). In addition, within an intersectional framework, it is important to acknowledge that success and achievement also occurs. Such observations are similar to Leith Mullings' (2005) study about the Sojourner Truth Syndrome, particularly for Black women. Mullings writes: "The Sojourner Syndrome – which speaks not only to the structural constraints that have implications for illness but also to what people do about them – represents a strategy for fostering the reproduction and continuity of the Black community. The usual roles historically assumed by African American women have allowed African Americans to survive through four hundred years of slavery, Jim Crow segregation, discrimination,

and postindustrial redundancy" (Mullings 2005:87). Understanding these strategies not only helps us to view racial identity as a relational concept, but it allows us to collect stories of triumph, resistance, and resilience (Mullings 2005). Certainly the mental health implications for using a racial capital perspective are also far-reaching. In fact, in a recent study of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people, Ilan Meyer and colleagues (2007) found that Blacks had fewer mental disorders than their White counterparts. This finding suggests that Black LGB populations may be practicing healthy management techniques in order to combat such things as racism and homophobia. Although such a claim requires more study, here is an instance of scientific discovery that highlights positive identity management in the midst of intersecting oppressions.

For focus group participants Michael and James, the relational aspect of racial identity was clear. At various times and with various people, James identified how and when he revealed a specific identity that he thought would either be embraced or rejected. Migdalia and Nelson were not able to exercise this strategy in this manner. Instead, both Migdalia and Nelson expressed that their racial or ethnic identities were intimately tied to their real and perceived language abilities and this affected the work they did as organizers and leaders. Lastly, for focus group participants Karen, Myra, and Brian, racial identity was not a matter of choice. Due to their outward physical appearance as people with dark skin, they were not able to choose to hide their racial identity. Though they each expressed that these identities clearly helped them to do their work, they also talked about how it hinders their work as activists. This is important to note because while racial capital may be used to help us to view how positive identity constructions develop, it must never lose sight of the persistence of racism, and particularly of

colorism[29]. In the context of social movement organizing, the findings in this chapter suggest the following: 1) that racial identities can be viewed as a positive component to organizing; 2) that for Latina/o, Asian, and Middle Eastern leaders, language issues can often serve as barriers (to coming out, to interacting with others from the corresponding racial population, and to accessing basic social and economic resources); and 3) that skin tone or color is often articulated as a way of gaining entry into non-White populations.

Conclusion

Racial capital allows for the extension of the intersectionality framework. It shows how racial identities mediate other relationships. It highlights those times when people are constrained by their racial identity and it also allows for an examination of ***what*** people do within these constraints. These observations give empirical basis to the theory of intersectionality and how the examination of oppression can go beyond the deficit model as an endpoint. Within structures of oppression, people are indeed thriving. It is not easy, and it is often confusing, but these strategies for living intersectional lives do exist. And it starts with the articulation of how racial identities can constrain *and* enable people in different settings.

Although, as Crawford and colleagues state, "Overcoming the social pressure to view identity as a singular construct that requires the renunciation or devaluation of one's

[29] Though sociologist Margaret L. Hunter (2002) makes a distinction between "racism" and "colorism," this is mainly done to denote an audience or reference group. For instance, for Hunter, racism is used when referring to the discrimination that people of color face in the United States in the hands of Whites; and colorism is used when referring to the discrimination that a subset of people of color (namely, darker skin people) face within larger people of color populations. This dissertation uses "colorism" to denote skin-tone privileges (or lack thereof) regardless of the identity of the reference group.

race/ethnicity or sexuality appears to be associated with the most psychological benefit for [African American gay and bisexual men] AAGBM" (2002: 186), they also warn that race still matters. Though research participants viewed their lives as intersectional, particular settings or situations often called for certain traits or characteristics to take precedence over others (in particular, language, skin color, or group affiliations). Viewing intersectionality through the lens of race showcases how stereotyping is perceived and experienced. Additionally, when asked to describe how their own racial/ethnic experience has helped or hindered them, all research participants reported that it has helped them in some way, but the reverse was not true. That is, participants sometimes reported that their own racial or ethnic experience was "not a hindrance", but they never said that their race or ethnicity did not help them in some way. This finding gives an indicator of a type of racial identity analysis that readily articulates how individuals benefit from their racial identity as a person of color, but clearly more research is needed.

In placing their own racial identity at the center, research participants talked about how experiences of racism, homophobia, and discrimination within LGBT populations and within their own racial group affected their identities and their activism. Participants also talked about how their racial identities contributed to such things as increased visibility, ease of access to communities of color, and other such enabling conditions. These findings contribute to the practice of intersectional politics. They draw attention to such things as language ability and skin color. In so doing, the findings of this chapter demonstrate how identities come together and how they are taken apart.

Still, some questions remain. What are some of the structural barriers and opportunities within L&G activist work? As will be discussed in Chapter 6, some of the factors identified by research participants included the definition of leadership itself and what this means within L&G organizations. How do non-White L&G leaders manage their leadership roles? What does leadership mean in this context? As was evidenced by Mandy Carter's and Urvashi Vaid's (see Chapter 3) references to how new leaders can be developed and encouraged to participate in L&G organizing efforts, there are conflicting views to how leadership roles can be managed by L&G leaders of color. And, finally, how can positive identity management and expression be linked to the study of intersectionality?

CHAPTER 5: IDENTITY CONSTRUCTIONS AND IDENTITY POLITICS: BLACKNESS, (AFRO-)LATINIDAD, AND INTERSECTIONALITY

Summary

The current paradigm for L&G social movements in the U.S. does not rest so much on a protest agenda as it does on an identity politics agenda. That is, much of the current discussions about where L&G social movements should go next stem from differing notions and understandings of identity politics. According to A.L. Kaufmann (1990: 67): "Identity politics express the principle that identity – be it individual or collective – should be central to both the vision and practice of radical politics … [and] also express the belief that identity itself … is and should be a fundamental focus of political work." Certainly, identity politics has affected the ways in which LGBT people have organized in the U.S. since the end of the civil rights movement. What does this mean for L&G leaders of color, however? Drawing upon key sociological texts on Blackness, this chapter outlines how Black identity constructions have been articulated by analysts. It is posited that throughout, social analysts have contributed to somewhat lopsided evaluations of Black identities that have supported traditional notions of identity politics. This chapter utilizes observations about Blackness and identity politics in order to inform how this process may also be affecting L&G social movement formations and identity constructions. Some suggestions for breaking free of the tensions identified come from the scholarship on intersectionality itself.

This chapter[30] calls attention to the modern and postmodern divisions that have occurred in articulating and developing complicated notions of identity and its links to oppression. It is argued that the modernist inclination is akin to traditional forms of identity politics, where one identity tends to override others; whereas the postmodern inclination is to blur these unilateralist distinctions in order to arrive at observations and practices that highlight commonalities. This chapter shows how the intersectionality framework can be used to address some of the pitfalls of identity politics. Clearly, these observations are in line with the intersectional imagination that is explored in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

Introduction

> When we raise the specter of identity politics, when we offer a stale "no" to political and cultural activism that not only has helped strengthen democracy in America but has also helped people survive and thrive in spite of the horror of American racism, homophobia, class exploitation, anti-intellectualism, militarism, anticommunism, and hard-boiled capitalism, we must at the very least offer an alternative that speaks to the realities of people's lives, the means by which they seek not only for justice but also for beauty, light, the transcendent, the metaphysical.
>
> Robert Reid-Pharr, *Black Gay Man: Essays*[31]

Many of the problems facing Black people in the 21st century reflect the challenge of postmodern identity politics – the task of reconciling modernity's[32] specificity with

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[30] Portions of this chapter were published in Antonio Pastrana, Jr. (2004). "Black identity constructions: Inserting intersectionality, bisexuality, and (Afro)Latinidad into Black studies." *Journal of African American Studies*, 8(1-2): 74-89.

[31] Reid-Pharr, Robert. 2001. *Black Gay Man: Essays*, pp. 7-8.

[32] The distinctions between, and the definitions of, modernity and postmodernity continue to be highly contested in the social sciences. Throughout, scholars have acknowledged both the positive and negative aspects of modernity and postmodernity. One of these is

postmodernism's intersectionality. This task entails recognizing the particular ways that Black identities and lives have been constructed and devising new ways of incorporating other, more catholic, perspectives. Such perspectives can be useful in dissecting and discussing how Blackness has been lived and how Blacks can align with other groups in order to combat some of the pitfalls of unilateralist theorizing and organizing. Building on such perspectives, this chapter will 1) examine some of the ways that being Black in the United States has been constructed by social scientists, cultural critics, and writers; 2) identify how other bodies of literature – mainly some types of Black feminism, bisexuality, and Latinidad – can be used to reinvigorate discussions of racial organizing and race relations; and 3) provide several suggestions throughout on what the future of Black identity politics and Black studies must incorporate in order to complicate one-sided, or unidimensional, notions of race.

The rise of modernity, according to such influential social thinkers as Adam Smith (1910), Karl Marx (1976), and Emile Durkheim (1933), saw the rise of factionalism in social relations. The industrial revolution promoted the practice of identifying people based on particular functions or roles. Gone were the self-sustaining family units that provided nurturance to each member, while also producing basic necessities like food and shelter. Arguably, modernity, with its emphasis on differentiation and on the division of labor, signaled the virtual end of multifaceted personal and social relations. Instead, institutions were created in order to provide specific services. Labeling became more and more particular, with an emphasis on the

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related to identities and whether or not modernity facilitates or hinders identity formation. In this chapter, it is argued that postmodernity facilitates the production of fluidity, but some social scientists (Blau and Scwartz 1984; Coser 1975, 1991; and Crosby 1987, for instance) have found the opposite. For more about these ideas and how it relates to intersectionality, see Chapter 7.

stability of functions and identities. It is within this environment that modern (racial) identity politics begins to take shape. Concerned with how modernity affects social relations, social theorists continue to formulate theories about group behaviors and identities. These formulations continue to thrive today, but they are not without their limitations. This chapter will examine how some social theorists conceptualize, operationalize, and otherwise analyze Black identities in the U.S. since the civil rights movement of the mid 20th century.

Organizing and analyzing racial identities in the U.S. has proven to be a gargantuan and complicated task not only for political leaders, social scientists, cultural critics, and writers, but also for those whose identities are being discussed: the people themselves. Relying heavily upon particular aspects of modernity, many theorists, academics, and activists have created static and unilateralist notions of what it means to be Black. In other words, Blackness has become tied to a single characteristic that attempts to explain all other life experiences for a group or an individual. Modernity, as used in this chapter, relies on a static and singular notion of being or of identity, while postmodernity attempts to complicate lines of distinction in order to arrive at multifaceted definitions or understandings of being or of identity. These notions are informed by changing social relations that are occurring or have occurred in society. I have chosen to narrow my examination of Black identity construction by looking at how social analysts have discussed or conceptualized aspects of class, occupational status, and sex in the U.S. since the civil rights movement of the 1960s. I will then discuss how some theorists in the fields of Black feminism, (bi)sexuality studies, and Latino studies have formulated the problems of identity construction processes utilizing postmodern ideology. These

discussions will serve as bases for possible solutions to the problem of Black postmodern identity constructions.

The Classification of Blackness

Since the U.S. civil rights movement, class has been closely bound to issues of race. "We may speak of 'class,'" writes Max Weber, "when (1) a number of people have in common a specific causal component of their life chances, in so far as (2) this component is represented exclusively by economic interest in the possession of goods and opportunities for income, and (3) is represented under the conditions of the commodity or labor markets" (1946:25). It is clear, here, that one's class corresponds to one's economic position. As one of the founding theorists of sociology, Weber, too, is concerned with how the rise of modernity affects social relations.

One of the major economic changes that occurred since the civil rights movement in the U.S. was the decline of the manufacturing industry and subsequent rise of the service industry and what Robert Fitch (1993) calls the FIRE (Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate) structure, which continues to dominate employment in U.S. urban areas today. It is this transition that William Julius Wilson (1987) has in mind when he observes that "the rapid contraction of the black 'male marriageable pool' is related to basic changes in economic organization that have occurred in recent decades" (p. 100). It is further argued by Wilson that the rise of the service sector does not permit Blacks (especially males) to acquire the semi- to low-skilled jobs they once held. A similar argument, made by Peter Hall (1989), accentuates the spatial aspect of the economic change. Hall's "jobs/skills spatial mismatch theory" states that not only are skills not

conforming to the demands of today's jobs, but the jobs themselves are moving further and further away from the cities (where many Blacks and other minorities live).

Of course, shifts in the economy can be both detrimental and beneficial to various sectors of the population, but the rise of the service industry was devastating for Blacks in the U.S., according to Wilson (1987). However, by solely concentrating on economic aspects of Black experience for males, there is a risk of neglecting other, more dynamic, components of Black identity. While Wilson is quick to criticize the liberal approach that highlights racism as the cause of the social dislocation of Blacks, he blames the economy for the continuance of a racial division of labor. But this was not something new for those familiar with public policy discourse. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (1965) made similar observations in his report titled "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action" over ten years before Wilson's first book on the topic. In fact, an examination of one of Wilson's main determinants of underclass membership – joblessness – reveals that a call for change is not what Wilson is promoting. The operationalization of joblessness rests on traditional, patriarchal, and functional concepts; and thus the structure of society is maintained, not changed. "Designated as a 'male marriageable pool index' (MMPI), this measure is intended to reveal the marriage market conditions facing women, on the assumption that to be marriageable a man needs to be employed. The men and women are matched by age and race, since most people marry within their own race and near their own age" (Wilson 1987:95). Wilson's measurement is man-centered in that it seeks to advance the status of men in society while neglecting to comment on the creation of jobs for women. Consider, for instance, the rise of Black female-headed households in this country. Wilson's MMPI does not speak to the abilities or desires of women to access

jobs. The index also promotes a one-sided aspect of family conditions – one that is dependent on the incomes of males. This critique is less about the creation of jobs which, ostensibly, is a plus for everyone. Instead, this critique is based on a lack of imagination on the part of policymakers who fail to incorporate some of the gendered realities of Black families in this country. Wilson's MMPI promotes heterosexual marriage as an incentive toward economic well-being.

Additionally, Wilson advocates a people-to-jobs solution to the problem of joblessness for the underclass. In a *Newsweek* article, Wilson is portrayed as advocating "subsidized car pools, shuttle buses or new public-transit lines" that would "help connect the very poor with jobs" (McCormick 1995:33). In terms of associative relations, a people-to-jobs program would further alienate Blacks and other minorities by widening the chasm that exists between minorities and the dominant society. Arguably, if occupational busing is advocated in order to help the underclass, two phenomena will occur: the homogenization of cities as workplaces for White, where high-skilled jobs are located, and the homogenization of suburbs as workplaces for the underclass, where low-skilled labor is needed.

The class-ification of Blacks contributes to the maintenance of a traditional society and further segregates its members into two categories: Whites and non-Whites. These effects occur because of discursive practices among policymakers and social theorists who are determined to show the declining significance of race (in this case, of being Black) in the U.S. While Wilson's arguments were instrumental in forming a class-based analysis of race in the U.S. after the civil rights movement of the 1960s, his observations and theories also helped other policymakers and social scientists to conflate

notions of class and race. The *underclass* became synonymous with *non-White,* further complicating Black identities. In articulating how race and class intersect in the context of public policy, Wilson winds up neglecting various dynamic aspects of race, aspects that are mainly located in the realm of ideology, not the economy. In presenting his work and ideas to various public policymakers, Wilson preserves the structure of the almighty economy while stressing the need for government funding to alleviate joblessness, which, in turn, has the capacity to affect change in the lives of many Black men and their traditional, heterosexual families. It may be argued, then, that by underscoring issues of class, Wilson finds another way of making sure that Blacks benefit from various public policies. Still, just as some of the civil rights programs benefited those who were already advantaged, these class-based proposals and programs have the potential of benefiting those who already subscribe to patriarchal and heterosexist norms. Wilson's (1987) insistence that class has the capacity to override race continues to be challenged and amended by other theorists who claim just the opposite – that race continues to matter (see, for example, Thomas and Hughes 1986; and Feagin 1991).

Blacks and Occupational Status

Racial identity has also been tied to occupational status. Attempting to formulate his own way of measuring status, Weber (1946) writes, "In content, status honor is normally expressed by the fact that above all else a specific *style of life* can be expected from all those who wish to belong to the circle" (p. 29). This "style of life" phrase does not take into account the existence of multiple identities and identity formations. Granted, a specific style or manner of doing certain things might be expected from club members,

but membership to a group (especially to such a broad category as status) should neither automatically exclude one from other groups nor limit one from participating in outside activities.

Weber's writings about status have much to do with the effects of living in a society where ascription is losing ground to achievement. That is, one of the gifts of modernity is that honor, or status, can be earned rather than linked to family heritage. Arguably, status today is directly related to one's occupation. What happens, however, when status and racial/ethnic identity are intertwined? What happens to Black identities when they are viewed in conjunction with occupational status? The changing hierarchical structure of occupational positions in the U.S. and the perceived inconsistencies that emerge whenever status attainment and ethnic identities intersect are two phenomena that must be addressed when examining the role of status in society. Changes in the estimation of occupations can lead to a type of false-consciousness within Black populations. Being an accountant, for example, was once a very high status and high paying profession, but today such is not necessarily the case. If more Blacks are suddenly becoming accountants, this does not mean that they are also entering a high status and high paying profession. The point is that estimation of occupations – how much a profession is valued in terms of status and pay – changes and often reflects changing economic conditions. Following the example, if the field of accounting has declined in estimation, then the new Black accountants risk having their occupation devalued as well. Furthermore, perceived status inconsistencies can prove to be destructive to Black identity formation processes and this, in turn, can have negative psychological and emotional effects on an individual (see, for example, Cose 1993).

Determining which occupations are considered to be of a high status depends largely upon economic conditions. It also depends on the needs of the particular society in question. According to Kingsley Davis and Wilber More (1945), "a position does not bring power and prestige *because* it draws a high income. Rather, it draws a high income because it is functionally important and the available personnel is for one reason or another scarce" (p. 428). With this functional/scarcity notion in mind, Natalie Sokoloff (1992) analyzes occupational data for Black and White women and determines that occupational status or prestige is not a static concept at all. When high status positions are flooded, the scarcity component goes down and so does the level of prestige previously attached to that occupation.

So, are Blacks supposed to rejoice whenever Black people are represented in high status positions? Attempting to answer this question, Sokoloff (1992) proposes a way of operationalizing status attainment through occupational positions that takes into account some of the fluctuations that occur in occupational prestige. "Instead of using the size of the occupation as the standard by which to develop percentage-point changes and thereby enter into a zero-sum approach to change," Sokoloff writes, "I use the Index of Representation to learn about the *proportionate share* of each race/gender group's participation in a *growing or shrinking occupation*" (p. 48). With the aid of this new measurement, Sokoloff believes that Blacks should be happy whenever non-Whites enter into prestigious occupations (half-full perspective), yet Blacks must also realize that they and other non-White groups have a long way to go before they achieve a level of parity with the dominant society (half-empty perspective).

Still, there is the question: How do Blacks in the U.S. deal with having an occupational status that is valued more than their status as Blacks? In *The Rage of a Privileged Class*, Ellis Cose (1993) interviews several Blacks in the professions to see how they have fared in their struggle to achieve high status positions. What Cose finds is that, due to conflicting expectations about what it means to be Black in the U.S. and what it means to be a professional, a rage develops that is difficult to explain. While it is possible that this rage develops because of racism, it is also just as likely that the rage exists because a false meritocracy has developed in the U.S. where achievement is no longer enough to combat ascriptive expectations. Another one of the supposed gifts of modernity is the belief that a high status can be achieved by anyone who applies her/himself and who receives the appropriate training for a particular position. This is in direct contrast to the assignation of roles via ascription – bestowing status on an individual based on such things as family lineage, privilege, or some other characteristic that cannot be earned. In the midst of these two conflicting arguments "lies what most will recognize as the more complicated truth: that much indeed has changed since the fifties, and even since the sixties, but that we are incompetent to judge just how lasting, how important, and how far-reaching many of those changes are; that while some basic stereotypes remain very much in play, some formerly unbreakable barriers have crumbled" (Cose 1993:150). Herein lies one of the challenges of examining Black identity through the lens of occupational status. While some occupational opportunities have opened for Blacks, there are still many more that remain blocked or guarded. The effects of these conflicting experiences put a strain on Black identities.

The way an occupation is valued and occupational status is measured affects the identities and identity formation processes of Blacks in the U.S. Although Sokoloff (1992) attempts to examine how Blacks fare in the professions, her argument is mainly about how occupational status changes due to economic conditions. Like Wilson, Sokoloff has tied Black identity formation with economic conditions. How do these economic changes affect the identities of Blacks? Clearly, Cose's (1993) observations show that changes in the economy affect Blacks in both positive and negative ways. The intersection of occupational status and race in the U.S. must incorporate both structural and individual components of identity.

Sexualizing Blacks

Like the measurements of class and status discussed above, the examination of sexuality as it pertains to issues of race/ethnicity can both enable and constrain aspects of Black identity in the U.S. All too often, public discussions of race in this country receive little to no attention until or unless they involve celebrities, public officials, or those in high-visibility positions. Although this is, arguably, a function of who controls various media outlets and who is in the White House, there still exists a need to highlight how Blackness intersects with other issues such as class, sexuality, gender, and health. In reporting some of these relationships, analysts, writers, and social theorists must continually determine how best to shed light on a grievance that is directly linked to being Black in the U.S. For example, in order for the dominant society to understand the complexities involved with race, issues of gender and sexuality tend to get pushed to the background. This is how myths of race and sexuality are either created or deconstructed.

Kimberle Crenshaw (1992) argues that because race and sex are often examined separately, racism and sexism are looked upon as social forces that can never truly intersect. “When feminism does not explicitly oppose racism, and when antiracism does not incorporate opposition to patriarchy,” Crenshaw writes, “race and gender politics often end up being antagonistic to each other and both interests lose” (1992:405). Here, Crenshaw calls for an all-encompassing ideology to help address issues of race, sexuality, identity, and politics without having to ignore one in order to highlight another. For instance, Crenshaw claims that the Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas hearings were a present-day example of how race and sex are viewed in society. She writes: “Hill (and Thomas) had to be deraced, so that they could be represented as actors in a recognizable story of sexual harassment” (1992:407). A discursive method is employed in order to help a minority group present a problem to the dominant society. However, this process of being deraced constrains and complicates racial and ethnic identities. As Crenshaw points out, since race was being ignored, many people (especially white feminists) could not comprehend Hill’s silence. Arguably, silence was Hill’s way of displaying that she did not want to tarnish the reputation of a Black man who was in the process of gaining entrance into dominant society.

Because of her silence, Hill was seen as a stereotypical Black woman who enjoys any sexual advancement because of her exotic sexual appetite. Hence, the dominant society was able to reassert this myth based mainly on constructions of what it means to be Black. Similarly, the raping of Black women has also, throughout history, rested on stereotypical notions of what it means to be Black in the U.S. (see, for example, Davis

1983; Giddings 1984; and D'Emilio and Freedman 1988). These instances show how race can also take precedence over sex whenever the two intersect.

The intersection of sexuality and race (Blackness) is often complicated by notions of power in society, as Angela Davis argues (1983). Clearly, the Hill and Thomas hearings were an example of how issues of sex get favored over issues of race. By emphasizing one aspect of this intersection, a lopsided view of (Black) identity is constructed. The particular ways in which Blackness intersects with class, status, and sexuality must resist emphasizing one aspect over any of the others. The deracination of Blacks in the U.S. is a result of modernist inclinations to highlight one aspect of identity while virtually ignoring the complicated ways in which race continues to be a factor.

Potential Solutions: Intersectionality and Bisexuality

> The overall impact of the postmodern condition is that many other groups now share with black folks a sense of deep alienation, despair, uncertainty, loss of a sense of grounding, even if it is not informed by shared circumstance. Radical postmodernism calls attention to those sensibilities which are shared across the boundaries of class, gender, and race, and which could be fertile ground for the construction of empathy – ties that would promote recognition of common commitments and serve as a base for solidarity and coalition.
>
> bell hooks, 1990

Despite the methodological devices used to investigate Blackness in the U.S., there must be ways to highlight syncretic notions of identity that not only reveal some of the macro-structural obstacles that Blacks face, but also uncover the depth of experience Blacks have as stigmatized, multi-identified individuals. It is simply not enough to discuss how class, status, or sex, among other factors, intersects with race. There must be ways to incorporate all of these experiences into a more cogent and comprehensive

analysis of what Blackness may be in the U.S. Interestingly enough, some of the work that sexuality theorists have engaged in is particularly astute at addressing this issue of intersectionality, of being more than just the conjunction of race and sex, race and class, race and status. In fact, intersectionality has been a major point of reference in discussions of identity in the U.S., especially as it pertains to Blacks (see, for example, Battle et al. 2002; Cohen 1997; Collins 1998; and Reid-Pharr 2001).

Similarly, the notion of simultaneity, of being multiple things *at the same time* has also been quite visible in non-White feminist (Anzaldua 1999; Anzaldua and Keating 2002; Anzaldua and Moraga 1983; Brewer 1993; Lorde 1979) and bisexual (Storr 1999) investigations. However, that intersectionality or simultaneity exists is no longer enough. Social scientists, cultural critics, and others must do more than simply make these observations an endpoint. Not only is it necessary to show how intersectionality functions or affects individuals and groups, but it is also crucial to advance this idea even further and make it blend with other, postmodern, observations about identity.

In 1979, when Audre Lorde delivered a speech at the Second Sex Conference, there was a clear articulation of what it meant to occupy multiple identities in a modern society that insists on differentiation and difference. Lorde (1979) put it this way:

> Those of us who stand outside the circle of this society's definition of acceptable women; those of us who have been forged in the crucibles of difference; those of us who are poor, who are lesbians, who are black, who are older, know that *survival is not an academic skill*. It is learning how to stand alone, unpopular and sometimes reviled, and how to make common cause with those others identified as outside the structures, in order to define and seek a world in which we can all flourish. It is learning how to take our differences and make them strengths (p.99).

Lorde's words implicate modernity's insistence on rigidity and differentiation in the demise of holistic or humanist identity constructions. Arguably, one way to draw

attention away from group or individual differences is to address the ways in which groups or individuals are similar. Bonding with others who experience discrimination may help in articulating how some aspects of oppression are universal.

Similarly, Marjorie Garber (1995) shows how bisexuality can be used as an analytical tool in the study of identity politics. "For as bisexuality," she writes, "by its very 'existence,' unsettles ideas about priority, singularity, truthfulness, and identity, it provides a crucial paradigm – in a time when our culture is preoccupied with gender and sexuality – for thinking differently about human freedom" (p. 140). Unfortunately for Garber, however, there is a danger of continuing to reify this concept of bisexuality as well. That is, in the same way that bisexuality can serve as an anti-identity of sorts and as a theoretical tool, it also can be used as yet another differentiated identity in and of itself. Inserting this concept of bisexuality – this denial of primary, secondary, or even tertiary identities – into an examination of Blackness in the U.S. may be both constraining and enabling. It may enable theorists of race to reject static notions of Blackness and to embrace a more humanist notion of what it means to be Black in the U.S. By denying singularity and priority, the theoretical notions of bisexuality that Garber wants us to consider – mainly that bisexuality is an all-at-once yet none-of-these theoretical construct – necessarily leads us to examine identity in terms of contextual and ontological notions of what it means to be living in a particular time and place.

Conversely, this theory of bisexuality may also lead others interested in the investigation of Blackness to adopt yet another form of identity with which to address issues of intersectionality. It may allow for new constructions of Black identity, mainly by continuing the modernist trend and insisting that there are new and intersectionist (that

is, a Black person who is upper-class, woman, professional, etc.) identities and that these identities must be necessarily differentiated from all others. Robert Miles and Rodolfo D. Torres (1999), on the other hand, provide an examination of the pitfalls of using "race" as a categorizing (and reifying) tool of analysis. Unsatisfied by the ways social scientists have used the category of race as a thing in and of itself, Miles and Torres argue that "the process of racialization takes place and has its effects in the context of class and production relations and that the idea of 'race' may indeed not even be explicitly articulated in this process" (p. 33). However, their discussion of Cornel West's (1993) *Race Matters* fails to account for the multiple ways that race – a malleable social construct that can serve as either/both a restriction or/and a license – intersects with all other aspects of living. Read as a postmodern treatise on contemporary Blackness, *Race Matters* conjures up diverse and intersectional aspects of identity. West presents a multifaceted view of what it means to be Black in the U.S. that encompasses both structural and individual perspectives.

The incorporation of theories of intersectionality and bisexuality into discussions of race in the U.S. may help to overcome fragmented and lopsided articulations and analyses of what it means to be Black. Structural analyses of race must also include individual accounts of race as it connects with other identities. The field of Black studies must insist on multifaceted approaches to research that look at historical, interpretive, and multivariate aspects of being non-White. In short, if notions of intersectionality and bisexuality are not incorporated into future discussions and research on Blacks, social theorists are doomed to repeat some of the mistakes that our mostly modernist predecessors have committed: separating race from other aspects of identity.

More Solutions: Postmodern Coalitions, (Afro-)Latinidad, and Articulating Sameness

> Whilst it is important to set up our own separate groups, based on race, gender, sexuality, disability and other identities which are discriminated against, as these provide safe and comfortable environments, where people do not feel intimidated, this can only represent a short-term measure against oppression…. There is no doubt that single issue politics is important and has made considerable headway in the past few decades, but how much stronger our voices would be if we worked more closely with one another through setting up networking groups, organizing joint actions and sharing resources, expertise and experiences.
>
> Prabhudas, 1996[33]

More than just inserting intersectionality and theories of bisexuality into all examinations of race, future works that address Black identities must also be willing to incorporate the experiences of others who face some of the same obstacles that Blacks have faced historically and continue to negotiate today. These other populations may help to highlight not only the personal effects of being, as Lorde (1979) puts it, "outside the structures," but, together with Blacks in the U.S., they may also prove to be a formidable force whose calls for change and justice may be too difficult for those in the dominant society to ignore. For example, data released from the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau reveal that Latinos, now 13 percent of the population, slightly outnumber Blacks in the U.S. (Armas, 2003). Latinos are also the fastest growing non-White group in the U.S. (see Holmes 1998; Korgaohkar, Karson, and Lund 2000). Still, parallel to some of the findings about the socioeconomics of Blacks cited earlier (Cose 1993; Sokoloff 1992; Wilson 1987), Latinos earn less than Whites, and are more likely – than Whites – to be unemployed and to live in poverty (Therrien and Ramirez 2000). These experiences of inequality can serve as binds which hold Blacks and Latinos together in the struggle for equality.

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[33] Prabhudas, Y. 1996, p. 151.

However, like some of the articulations of Blackness discussed above, discussions and conceptions of/about Latinos have been subject to the particularizing constructions of modern identity politics as well. The needs of Puerto Ricans living in New York City, for instance, are different from those living in Puerto Rico. That variance exists within Latino and within Black populations is not new. Moreover, as Crenshaw (1994) observes, "the problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference, as some critics charge, but rather the opposite - that it frequently conflates or ignores intra group difference" (p. 93). With this in mind and with an eye toward making the link between Black studies and Latino studies, it may be useful to examine the ways in which some theorists have conceptualized Latino/a-ness, or Latinidad.

Like Garber's (1995) usage of bisexuality, Latinidad can serve as a theoretical construct that complicates unitary identity constructs used to examine some of the experiences of Latinos in the U.S. For instance, as Agustín Laó-Montes (2001) argues, Latinidad is "an analytical concept that signifies a category of identification, familiarity, and affinity…[It] does not denote a single discursive formation but rather a multiplicity of intersecting discourses enabling different types of subjects and identities and deploying specific kinds of knowledge and power relations" (p. 3-4). Key to Laó-Montes' theory is the idea that there are many forms of Latinidad and that these forms often point to a process or an idea in motion. Hence, there is no such thing as Latinidad per se as much as there is this process of latinization (Laó-Montes, 2001). Similarly, upon introducing their concept of tropicalizations, Frances Aparicio and Susana Chavez-Silverman (1997) note that their formulation of Latinidad "problematiz[es] the monolingualism, ethnocentrism, sexism, and homophobia present in the dominant Anglo

as well as traditional Latin American and Latino cultures" (p. 16). Suffice it to say, Latinidad is a continuously contested term that has become part of the lexicon of Latino studies (see, for example, Roman and Sandoval-Sánchez 1995; Noriega 1993; Flores 1997, 2000; among others). Arguably, Latinidad may prove to be a useful entry point in discussions of the intersection of Black and Latino identities because while Latinidad attempts to recognize the particular experiences of groups and individuals, it simultaneously locates these experiences in a broader field of power relations that acknowledges the existence of variance within these groups.

Recent writings on Afro-Latinos may serve as yet another entry point used for tackling the complex set of relationships and opportunities that exist when examining the intersection of Black and Latino identities and cultures. In an article entitled "Best of Friends, Worlds Apart," Mirta Ojito (2000) tells about the friendship between one Black Cuban boy and one White Cuban boy and attempts to highlight some of the harsh realities of racial identity in the U.S. One of the most contentious observations that Ojito makes deals with her understanding of "racial identity." Talking about Bill Brent (a Black Panther leader living in Cuba), Ojito states: "Not only does racism persist, he lamented, but black Cubans lack the racial identity to do anything about it." Here, not only does Ojito reinforce the myth that racial oppression is not as rooted in Latin America as it is in North America[34], but she also conflates racial identity with a particular form of racial consciousness. Certainly, every immigrant in the U.S. goes through some form of socialization, and a very strong component of this is learning to navigate the realm of race relations. That the Black Cuban boy became more embedded in Black social circles

[34] See Leslie Rout's (2003) *The African Experience in Spanish America* for an historical account of racial oppression and domination in Latin America.

is a result of numerous factors such as neighborhood concentration effects, family obligations, and a history of legal and extra-legal racial discrimination, to name just a few. To imply that it was only after this boy moved to the U.S. that he was able to identify instances of racial oppression/discrimination as a child in Cuba is to deny the powerful nature of socialization processes in the U.S. The intersections of Blackness and Latinidad must incorporate an understanding of what Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994) call "racial formations", a concept that attempts to account for the contextual nature of both identity and culture.

By locating race/ethnicity and identity on a continuum, Omi and Winant acknowledge the ever-changing and dynamic nature of these sets of relations. This approach is similar to W.E.B. Du Bois' (1903/1996) "double consciousness" because it highlights the unstable nature of racial/ethnic experiences and leaves it as an unstable category of analysis. Additionally, in discussing the utility behind unifying terms/concepts in racial discourse, Flores (2002) specifically examines the use of the term *antillano* as an entryway into discussions of the relations between Blacks and Latinos. "Although in their dominant and 'consumer' version, Latino realities are often walled off from or counterposed to blackness and Afro-diasporic cultural experience, the *antillano* perspective encompasses the continuity and mutuality between them. This more porous border, of course, has made for a far more active reciprocity with African Americans" (Flores 2002:68). Here, Flores shows how Black and Latino identities can be located within a broader field of experience that highlights the ways in which these two populations are similar to each other.

Although modernist examinations of Latinidad and Blackness might reveal that the experiences of Blacks and the experiences of Latinos in the U.S. are qualitatively different, there are areas where these two populations can find commonalities. It is this very process of articulating sameness with other populations that our modernist inclinations to differentiate refuse. For this reason, the future of Black identity politics must broadcast and emphasize how the experiences of being Black in the U.S. is not only a matter of particularizing experiences of injustice and discrimination to a specific population, but it is also a matter of universalizing notions of stigma and oppression. Analyses of Blacks living in the U.S. are incomplete if they fail to include how stigma and deviance are negotiated and deployed both within Black populations (Cohen 2003; Crenshaw 1994) and throughout society (Link and Phelan 2001).

Because Latinos are projected to outnumber all other non-White populations within the next 50 to 100 years, it is imperative that alliances between Latinos and Blacks be made. In fact, Manning Marable (1993) notes that "on a series of public policy issues – access to quality education, economic opportunity, the availability of human services, and civil rights – Latinos and African-Americans share a core set of common concerns and long-term interests" (p. 125). In addition, Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres (2001) have shown how Blacks and Latinos can form political coalitions with great success. Such work not only documents the times and places where Black and Latino identities and ideologies come together, but they also attempt to refute the Black/White binary and instead show new dimensions of Blackness and Latinidad. Those interested in making a contribution to the field of Black studies must be willing to highlight some of the similarities between Black and Latino populations in the U.S. More than just being

politically feasible, showing how Blacks and Latinos have similar life experiences can create yet another body of research that focuses on some of the persistent (and negative?) effects of being non-White in this country.

Moreover, this articulation of sameness must encompass not only Blacks and Latinos but also all other peoples in the world who face oppression. In fact, it is this call for coalition politics that William Julius Wilson advocates. Although Wilson (1999) continues to rely on macro-economics – not race – as a foreground unit of analysis, he does motion toward a more vocal expression of unity between Blacks and other economically disadvantaged peoples. "I call upon the American people," writes Wilson, "and especially the leaders of the poor, the working classes, the displaced and the marginalized, the downsized and the deskilled, to set aside differences and work together to discuss, in vocabularies that reject the unuseful particularisms of race, the true task before us" (p. 128). This task, according to Wilson, is the task of forming coalitions between Blacks and others who face economic barriers. Similarly, upon debunking the historical myth that Blacks were not treated with brutal disrespect and were not discriminated against in Latin America, Leslie Rout (2003) recognizes the utility of collective action. He writes: "Thus, some individuals will continue striving to gain power and position on a personal basis, while the Negroid masses can expect to achieve the social change they desire only through collective action with other impoverished racial and ethnic groups" (p. 321). It is clear that coalition-building is a vital part of Black identity formation. Such coalitions, however, must include other members of society who have experienced discrimination and stigma.

Conclusion

The examination of race (and especially of Blacks) in the U.S. has been dominated by modernist notions of identity that highlight aspects of differentiation. Particularly in the social sciences, since the civil rights movement of the 1960s, Blacks have been viewed through the lens of class, status, and sexuality, to name a few. Such studies are no longer sufficient today. Instead, Black identities must be viewed through intersectionist lenses that attempt to show how numerous factors simultaneously affect groups, individuals, and institutions. For, "[b]y dismantling the narrow politics of racial identity and selective self-interest, by going beyond 'black' and 'white', we may construct new values, new institutions and new visions of an America beyond traditional racial categories and racial oppression" (Marable 1993:129). Theorists of race must resist relying solely on economic conditions in order to talk about how Blacks live and function in society. They must incorporate both structural and individual notions of what being Black means, while refusing to derace their subjects. Additionally, social scientists must incorporate notions of intersectionality and bisexuality and they must be willing to pursue an analysis of Blackness that draws on the fluidity of identity, especially as it relates to Latinos and to other groups. An analysis of stigma and deviance is also necessary in all future works that address race in society.

At the same time, we as researchers and critics of culture and identity must be vigilant about who exactly we are examining when we begin to utilize racial/ethnic labels. For, as Jonathan W. Warren and France Winddance Twine (1997) argue, although some racial categories have changed for various reasons – mainly due to U.S. immigration policies and to U.S. Census vocabulary – an examination of some people's

everyday language reveals that "racial politics based on a Black-White dualism is still the prevalent logic in the United States" (p. 215). This finding, they contend, calls attention to the need for a research agenda that seeks to account for the changing nature of racial labels in the U.S., particularly those of Whites. This is important because it underscores a fundamental element in the study of Blackness and (Afro-)Latinidad: racial categorizing and labeling often reveals much more about the social and temporal settings of the analyst and less about the people s/he sets out to describe or observe.

Although W.E.B. Du Bois was by no means a self-identified postmodernist, his *The Souls of Black Folk,* first published in 1903, was a work that attempted to blur the lines of racial distinction while never losing site of "the Veil" of race that sometimes inflicts pain upon our very existence. Du Bois' methodological tool for the investigation of Blackness simultaneously articulates the painful realities of race with the beautiful potential of humanity. He writes:

> From the shimmering swirl of waters where many, many thoughts ago the slave-ship first saw the square tower of Jamestown, have flowed down to our day three streams of thinking; one swollen from the larger world here and over-seas, saying, the multiplying of human wants in culture-lands calls for the world-wide cooperation of men in satisfying them. Hence arises a new human unity, pulling the ends of earth nearer, and all men, black, yellow, and white (74).

Here, Du Bois acknowledges differences in the origins of groups of people but he refuses to make these differences into obstacles that block human cooperation. In fact, there is an overall unifying theme embedded in human experience that ties all people together and holds all people accountable to each other.

Continuing to talk about race may make the articulation of (human) sameness more pronounced. That is, identity politics cannot afford to discontinue dialogues and

discussions about the particularisms of race unless and until stigma is eradicated entirely. Until then, there should always be a place and a space for the articulation of particular enabling and disabling aspects of race. That is, all of us interested in the future of Black identity and Black identity politics must actively seek ways in which to speak out against all types of oppression and stigma – both structural and personal – without ignoring what it still means to be Black or non-White in the U.S. This is our unifying call.

CHAPTER 6: THE IRON CAGE OF LEADERSHIP: NON-WHITE LEADERS AND L&G ORGANIZATIONS

Introduction

> Organizing means looking for leaders. Organizing means understanding the iron rule "Never do for someone what he or she can do for themselves." Organizing means understanding that power comes in two forms: unilateral, top-down, expert-driven power from organized money….But power also comes from organized people with their institutions.
>
> Ernesto Cortes Jr.[35]

In his critique of rationality and its bureaucratic forms, Max Weber (1958) drew upon the image of the iron cage or steel encasement. As the endpoint of an ideal type, the iron cage was the symbol of how individual agency is hampered by strict and limiting bureaucratic structures. Previous chapters of this dissertation have discussed how, for instance, identity constructs can serve as iron cages by highlighting only one part of an individual's many identifiers, by not viewing how identities are relational, and by adding to existing forms of oppression. Certainly, within the field of L&G social movement organizing, there is an iron cage. It is one that exists on at least two levels: within organizations and within complicated and often competing notions about what leadership means.

In 2001, Surina Khan[36], the then executive director of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) made a public statement against the

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[35] As quoted in Paul Osterman's (2002) *Gathering Power: The Future of Progressive Politics in America*, page 2.

[36] Interview with Surina Khan, 2006.

U.S.-led war against Afghanistan. Khan, a native of Pakistan and open lesbian, immediately became the subject of many news articles in the L&G press in the U.S. Was Khan being unpatriotic? Was she being an extremist? But the question that ultimately arose from Khan's comments against the war was as follows: Was Khan being a good leader? A Weberian interpretation of these events would reveal that while Khan was exhibiting the qualities of a charismatic leader, she was also constrained by an organizational structure that required a certain amount of balance or adherence to bureaucratic rules endemic to rational-legal forms of authority. That is, arguably, Khan's remarks against the war were seen as an egregious affront to how an organization works because it was perceived by various media outlets that her identity as a native-born Pakistani was trumping[37] her identity as a leader of an organization. One editor from the LGBT press accused Khan of speaking out against the war without first receiving explicit permission from the board of directors of IGLHRC. This is an example of an iron cage. Hampered by perceptions of the bureaucratic processes of organizational work and by perceptions of her identity as a Pakistani (elements contributing to the iron cage), Khan's outspokenness led to a questioning of her leadership abilities. Khan is not the only one who experienced this type of criticism. Still, instances like this have the capacity to affect the ways in which non-White LGBT people choose to lead and what they say about leadership within L&G social movement organizing.

In Chapter 3, both Mandy Carter and Urvashi Vaid reported slightly different views of leadership for LGBT people of color. While Vaid voiced a need for a two-pronged approach to leadership – separate, non-White formations and taking over

[37] For more about trumping, see Chapter 4, and for its relationship to role strain, see Chapter 7.

already-existing, primarily White-serving organizations – Carter advanced a need to redefine leadership entirely. Both of these research participants tied their views about leadership to organizational structures. They, and many other research participants, also questioned the definition of leader and leadership. Organizational structure and leadership are two prominent facets of the scholarship on social movements. But what makes a leader? In their attempt at formulating a definition of leader, Aldon Morris and Suzanne Staggenborg write: "Organizers who create strategy, develop projects, frame issues, or inspire participation are clearly a type of leader. But other participants in organizing projects, who carry out tasks such as fundraising and canvassing (and may be called 'organizers' within movements), should not automatically be considered leaders if we want to retain any analytic meaning for the concept of leadership" (2002:13). This definition is itself already part of the problem, according to research participant Mandy Carter (see Chapter 3). Her comment about thinking of leadership with a little "L" speaks to this and it is also part of the development of the intersectional imagination. It is about questioning the structures of oppression themselves, about questioning the cage itself. Although Urvashi Vaid's stance on leadership may be viewed in a similar vein, her argument points to a proliferation of singing within cages. It is an argument that calls for more race-specific formations and for non-White leaders to continue to lead large White organizations. Subsequent in-depth interviews and focus group discussions conducted for this research revealed that, continuing the metaphor, people within iron cages continue to lead for at least two reasons: 1) to show other people in cages that they too can lead; and 2) to rally against the cage. While the first approach is captured by Vaid's views, the second one is similar to what Carter was advocating. These are two themes explored in

this chapter, which uses data collected from all in-depth interviews and all focus group sessions.

This chapter considers the following questions, as reflected in the survey instruments used for both the in-depth interviews and for the focus group sessions: 1) Describe what a leader of color is (in the context of L&G organizing)?; 2) How can racial justice leadership be developed in LGBT communities?; and, 3) How can LGBT leadership be developed in racial justice communities?

Background and Literature Review

In 1998 Cathy J. Cohen[38] spoke to a crowd of activists at an annual Creating Change Conference which the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) hosted in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She outlined how the present-day lesbian and gay rights movement was adversely affecting her political beliefs and the wider quest for social justice. Taking a critical stance against single-issue political organizing, Cohen – a political scientist and veteran lesbian activist – articulated a need for the monitoring of L&G rights organizations and their lopsided connections between rights, identity politics, and political goals and maneuvers. Making connections between the struggle for worker rights and benefits, domestic partnership ordinances, and adoption rights is not enough. Cohen goes on to implicate L&G organizations for making domestic partnership and adoption the *main* issues with which LGBT populations should be concerned. By doing this, organizations are guilty of pandering to a particular set of LGBT people in the U.S.,

[38] An edited-for-publication version of her remarks could be found at Cathy J. Cohen, "What Is This Movement Doing to My Politics?" *Social Text* Volume 0, No. 61 (Winter 1999): 111-118.

mainly those who enjoy middle- to upper-class status/economic positions. Clearly, these observations are in line with much of the data collected for this dissertation and are related to the mainstreaming effect that Urvashi Vaid (1995) outlines.

Cohen's reflections underscore the need for more rigorous investigations of L&G organizing efforts and the link between this and the overall thrust of movement-building. Echoing some of Cohen's observations, John D'Emilio (2000) agrees that more research on L&G organizations is needed and he outlines the importance of studying them: "Through organizations, an amorphous entity called a 'movement' is able to frame missions, define goals, develop strategies, implement campaigns, achieve objectives and, above all, mobilize lots of individuals to act. Organizations help set the direction of social movements" (D'Emilio 2000: 470).

Sociological inquiry on authority has produced a plethora of theories about leaders, the types of qualities they possess, the kinds of environments in which they thrive, and even the ways in which they can be replaced or reproduced. Similarly, social movement scholarship has provided insights into the ways in which leaders gain authority and are able to affect movement strategies and outcomes. Very little attention has been devoted to the ways in which leaders manage authority while experiencing discrimination both inside and outside of their immediate movement environment/s. This chapter draws upon in-depth interviews as well as focus group data about what (non-White) leadership means.

Max Weber's writings on authority helped to form the basis of studies about leadership. Weber's three ideal types of authority include traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational. Traditional forms of authority require a powerful entity to emerge while

subordinate entities ritualistically follow without question. Charismatic forms of authority are ones in which special, personal qualities of a leader emerge as the unifying force for a group. And, finally, legal-rational forms of authority are ones that emerge from calculated rules. In keeping with his critique of rationality and his use of the iron cage metaphor, Weber, arguably, believed that groups would eventually become less traditional and more legal-rational. Hence, future leaders will tend to exhibit more legal-rational expertise. In addition, researchers have also identified some differences between expressive and instrumental forms of authority. While the former is usually concerned with group efficacy or collective well-being, the latter is usually focused on the completion of tasks. In his structural analysis of expressive and instrumental forms, James Kimberly (1986) found that expressive formations can often compensate for the injustices that instrumental formations may produce. Put differently, an emphasis on group well-being may have the capacity to address conflicts that arise from strict adherence to instrumental rules and agendas.

Although many different forms of leadership have been identified, one constant feature of authority has remained: the image of one person, a singular leader. In contrast to this, Ganz (2000) argues that successful movement strategies often rely on the efforts of a "leadership team." Ganz writes: "Although strategy is more often described as the work of individual leaders than of formal or informal leadership teams, I argue that strategy is usually a product of the interaction among those persons who share responsibility for its formulation – what I call here a 'leadership team'" (2000:1015). Similarly, in framing leadership as part of a series of interactions with a collective, Helen Brown (1989) helped to define the notion of "distributed leadership". In his historical and

political analysis of leadership, Manning Marable (1999) traces some of the successes and failures of four Black male leaders in the U.S. "Leaders," he writes,

> are essentially individuals who have the ability to understand their own times, who express or articulate programs or policies that reflect the perceived interests and desires of particular groups, and who devise instruments or political vehicles that enhance the capacity to achieve effective change. In very limited ways, leaders imprint their personal characteristics or individual stamp on a given moment in time. Leaders do make history, but never by themselves, and never in ways that they fully recognize or anticipate (p. xvi).

Still one of the common features of (Black) leadership that Marable identifies lies in the distinction between "leader-centered groups" and "group-centered leaders." It is the latter that helps to define Black leadership, according to Marable. Together, these notions of leadership have helped to complicate its singularity and what it means to be a leader.

Another strand of scholarship on authority questions the composition of groups and the leaders themselves. That is, in looking at social movement strategies, successes, or failures, some scholars have investigated the effectiveness of leaders who do not share some of the same characteristics as a group's constituents. In the U.S., classic examples of this include White involvement in abolitionist movements or in non-White civil rights causes. In fact, in a comparative analysis of three social movements (the Civil Rights Movement and the abolitionist movement in the U.S. and the movement to remove untouchability in India), Gary Marx and Michael Useem (1971) found that across all three movements, conflicts arose due to ideological (prejudice) and organizational (the numbers of non-minorities in leadership positions) differences. Still, the authors argue that such struggles are inevitable for every social movement. That is, friction in terms of insider and outsider status within social movement organizing is a necessary feature of growing movements (Marx and Useem 1971). As discussed in previous chapters, that

L&G movements experience tensions due to racial and economic social markers is not new and has been documented by many. What is lesser known is what leaders *do* with their leadership abilities and how they conceptualize leadership. Marx and Useem (1971) and Morris and Staggenborg (2002) all conceptualized inside and outside leadership in similar ways. The insiders were the aggrieved population and the outsiders were the ones who did not necessarily experience the same types of oppression as the aggrieved and who were perceived as being elites within movements. Recalling Patricia Hill Collins' (1986) outsider within concept, the leaders included in this research all identified as non-heterosexual, making them insiders within the larger LGBT population; yet they are also non-White, making them outsiders in many LGBT organizations.

What Is Said About (Building) Leadership

Before exploring what is known about L&G organizations, next is a review of what research participants talked about when asked about non-White leadership in L&G social movement organizing. Using data from in-depth interviews with seven research participants and focus group data from sessions conducted in four different Midwestern cities[39], this chapter examines what non-White LGBT leaders talk about when asked to dissect leadership. More specifically, in-depth interview participants were asked to describe some of the ways in which non-White leadership has manifested itself in L&G organizing, and focus group participants were asked to envision how leadership can be developed within LGBT communities and within racial justice communities.

[39] See Chapter 2 for more about the in-depth interviews and focus group sessions.

As mentioned earlier, Surina Khan is a South Asian lesbian who was born in Pakistan. She has over 15 years of experience as an activist, writer, and researcher in the U.S. From 2000 to 2003, Khan was the executive director of the then San Francisco-based International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC). About the types of leaders needed in L&G environments, Khan expressed the following:

> People who are really most marginalized in terms of income levels or race and ethnicity, people who are really vulnerable within both the LGBT community and the broader society are people that we really want. Not only to have their input but on some level it is very strategic to take guidance from them…
>
> These are people who are facing multiple oppressions in a range of issues…
>
> The people who are particularly vulnerable are the ones who have also been coming up with day-to-day strategies and solutions for living. Ethically and strategically, we need to look for leadership from people who have been surviving the attacks on them by organized movements or otherwise.

Here, Khan highlights one of the aspects of racial capital discussed in Chapter 4: the importance of documenting how marginalized people thrive and lead. By doing so, all members of movements benefit because these are instances where identity management faces the most obstacles. When we learn about how to navigate these obstacles, our strategies become stronger and our intersectional imaginations are put into practice.

Another research participant, Keith Boykin, talked about how the concept and practice of leadership includes both individual- and structural-level elements. Boykin is an out Black gay author, blogger, and media personality who has also helped to create Black L&G organizations in the U.S. Upon commenting about leadership, Boykin stated:

> I think leadership exists at the individual level and at the institutional level. Each person individually has the capacity to … make a big

> difference. If each person as an adult simply reached back and tried to help someone else – that can make a huge difference. Institutionally, organizations …can and should be involved in creating youth programs, particularly leadership development programs and encourage people to learn to acquire the skills necessary to be the leadership of the future and to get them involved in being leaders today.

Boykin then goes on to delineate various types of leadership activities and, in so doing, he suggests a break in our traditional understandings of who can be a leader. Clearly, Boykin advances the notion that anyone can be a leader. He stated:

> I've always believed that leadership is more than just running an organization or running the mouth. It's about doing something that makes a difference. You don't have to be in an organization at all to be a leader…
>
> Sometimes organizations compromise your ability to be able to say and do what you like to do. I also think that in our increasingly media-dominated, new technologies generation, we will see more forms of creative, constructive leadership that don't necessarily fit into the traditional boundaries.
>
> You don't have to have a 20 million dollar budget and an organization and an office in Washington DC in order to have an impact. In fact, sometimes those things slow you down because you can't move as swiftly as the people on the ground level who are watching something happen and can respond to it instantly, and have an impact within the same news cycle.

Similarly, Rafael Diaz advocated for a break in traditional forms of leadership. In fact, he argued for a break from tradition itself and toward a critique that steps away from the pitfalls of replicating already-existing models of leadership. Rafael Diaz is an out Latino gay man who was born in Cuba. He is the director of the Cesar Chavez Institute in San Francisco, where he conducts research on the impact of social oppression on health and well-being. Diaz reported the following when asked about leadership:

> My perception of the whole LGBT movement in the United States seemed to me misguided…because it was about leaders trying to find a place at the table without questioning what is at the table. 'I want to have

> marriage.' 'I want to be in the military.' 'I want to have a credit card.' 'I want to have my own organization.' 'I want to go to my own bar, in my own neighborhood.' It's almost like, 'I want to replicate the society that we have, but now in a gay version.' And I was not very interested in that.

Pauline Park, a nationally-recognized Korean transgender political activist and co-founder of several Asian-specific networks and organizations in the U.S. (see Chapter 3), voiced something similar, which was reiterated by many participants in subsequent focus group sessions. When asked to describe how people of color have dealt with leadership issues within the L&G movement, Park described a conundrum that was echoed by focus group participants across all four Midwestern cities included in this research. This conundrum is part of what Collins (2004) has called the new racism – one that intersects with gender and with sexuality and is regulated in subtle ways. Park stated:

> The real challenge now is that people can end up being promoted and pushed to the forefront not because they have leadership qualities but because they happen to be people of color and obviously so…
>
> I think there's a real tension here. There's a very delicate balance between actively seeking out people of color, which I think every LGBT organization should do, versus a kind of subtle tokenism where people would be promoted and put into a prominent position simply because they're people of color and because the organization feels the need to do so. I see that a lot. A lot.

From written responses collected in focus groups held in Chicago, IL; Detroit, MI; Cleveland, OH; and Columbus, OH, participants identified key areas that were related to developing leaders. Within LGBT communities and organizations, participants reported such things as focusing on youth development; insisting on a racial analysis when it comes to seeking funding; supporting small non-White L&G political and social groups; networking with non-White groups that do not necessarily have an inclusive

analysis of sexuality; educating people about civic engagement; demonstrating how racial injustice continues to plague communities; developing anti-racist educational resources; insisting on diversity in terms of a group's composition and membership; and building long-term initiatives. Some individual anonymous responses included the following:

Respondent 6A:

> Leadership and organization begins with one's self esteem and sense of self worth. One must get to a level of recognizing their self worthiness before that person can sustain a stance or position of leadership and motivation to organize… Therefore, leadership around racial issues can be developed in the LGBT community by starting with our own work, as LGBTs of color, toward healing ourselves and making amends between each other (personally and within organizations).

Respondent 6B:

> Working systematically to support skills-sharing and skills-building for and among a group or cadre of LGBT leaders, rather than individualized leadership development that puts all the responsibility/pressure on one or a few people and that may leave people isolated.

Respondents 6A and 6B present two different aspects to building and supporting non-White leadership activities. While one argues for more self-healing and self-awareness, the other believes in supporting a group of leaders. These observations are related to the debates in the social scientific literature on leadership configurations. Though there isn't enough data to hypothesize which one of these configurations would work best for non-White LGBT leadership building, these responses, and others like them, indicate that perhaps both models can be pursued. In other words, there isn't a clear consensus on what type of leadership model would be appropriate or desired, for now.

Respondent 6C:

> We have to do three things: 1) To acknowledge racial justice is not an issue that only "people of color" should be invested in and care about; 2) To have LGBT community organizations and groups be racially diverse so that leadership can be cultivated from within; and 3) To acknowledge and live racial justice in a way that avoids tokenism.

Respondent 6D:

> Racial justice leadership can be developed in LGBT communities if the community itself were not so racially divided.

Respondent 6E:

> Many of the GLBT leaders are not intentionally excluding [people of color], but by being complacent and not reaching out specifically and addressing this community's unique issues, they are creating an environment which is not welcoming.

Respondents 6C, 6D, and 6E each underscored the pervasiveness of racism within LGBT settings. For these research participants, leadership issues must first address that overt (within organizations) and subtle (whenever those in powerful positions fail to reach out to non-White populations) forms of racism exist. Again, there is mention of tokenism as a problem for non-White LGBT leaders. These responses are not surprising given that the second most reported issue of importance to research participants was racism itself.

Similarly, when asked about leadership within racial justice communities and organizations, participants reported the following: Resource-sharing between L&G and race-specific organizations; focusing on youth development; supporting out LGBT people who primarily work within race-specific organizations; demonstrating links between racial and sexual identities; working with religious communities; developing

educational tools about human sexuality; promoting LGBT visibility within non-White communities; and building long-term relationships among L&G organizations and race-specific organizations. Some individual anonymous responses included the following:

Respondent 6F:

> In communities of color, where issues of economic justice, health care disparities, public education, criminal justice, and, of course, racial justice are daily conversations, I feel that the topic of human sexuality must be introduced, especially among those who are morally or religiously conservative.

Respondent 6G:

> Leaders of color and women are often marginalized and forced to the edges of gay rights issues. Just acknowledging the disparity based on race often opens opportunities for dialogue and shared problem-solving. Sharing the access and resources of the gay communities with racial justice struggles would broaden the base and strength of both movements.

Respondent 6H:

> It's also extremely important for groups to see leaders that look like them in positions of leadership to assist with establishing trust and to present that the initiative is a real initiative.

Respondents 6F, 6G, and 6H, each identified different components to supporting leaders within racial justice settings: More education initiatives on basic human sexuality; a willingness on the part of the L&G organizations and racial justice organizations to share resources; and an emphasis on role-modeling, so that the rank-and-file constituents can be exposed to leaders who look like them as well.

L&G Organizations: Issues and Leadership

Philip Selznick was an influential researcher in the study of organizations in the U.S. He wrote about the nature and function of formal organizations, leading to a sociological approach called organizational analysis (Selznick 1948), where "large scale organizations are seen as a collection of groups harnessed together by incentives of various kinds to pursue relatively explicit goals" (Zald & Ash 1966:328). Although couched in the language of rational choice theory where options and outcomes are considered based on certain costs, benefits, and goals, organizational analysis opens the door to a systematic way of investigating formal organizations. Such research, however, must not fail to account for time and place. That is, situating an organization in a specific historical setting is key to understanding the work done by that very group. One of the key historical elements present in L&G movement organizing and organizations today is race and representation. More specifically, how can L&G organizations respond to the demands to include racial justice in their agendas?

As mentioned earlier, that leadership is a prominent feature of social movement scholarship is not new, and neither are organizations and their structures. What is known about the kinds of L&G organizations that exist today? What is the racial composition of employees within these organizations? And, directly related to this dissertation, is the question: What are some of the issues of importance to non-White LGBT populations and how can organizations and L&G organizing efforts address these issues? Two sources of research have emerged in addressing some of these questions: Funders for Lesbian and Gay Issues (FLGI) and The Movement Advancement Project (MAP). For over 30 years, FLGI has worked with funders who are interested in L&G equality and institutional giving. Over this period of time, it has produced research about philanthropic trends that

affect L&G organizations across the country. In fact, FLGI recently reported that, "In 2006, 266 U.S.-based grantmakers awarded 3,042 grants supporting LGBTQ organizations and projects totaling $65.6 million dollars – a 24 percent increase from 2005" (Funders for Lesbian and Gay Issues 2008: 4). Still, according to the same report, $65.6 million is only 0.1 percent of total philanthropic giving in the U.S., indicating that L&G issues and organizations are one of the lowest funded causes in the U.S. Only 9 percent of all giving to L&G organizations and projects went toward non-White identified L&G organizations and/or projects. And of that, the largest amount of giving (3%) went toward organizations and projects for "people of African descent" (Funders for Lesbian and Gay Issues 2008: 14). *Table 6.1* shows FLGI's data on funding for LGBT people of color issues.

Table 6.1
Non-White LGBT Funding

Population Served or Addressed	$ Value of Grants	% of Total Dollars Granted	# of Grants
People of African Descent	2,255,750	3	75
Asian/Pacific Islanders	398,700	1	27
Hispanic	375,487	1	28
Native Americans	11,500	0	4
Other Named Groups	4,500	0	2
POC – General	2,712,027	4	98
All People of Color	**5,757,964**	**9**	**234**

Source: Funders for Lesbian and Gay Issues (2006)

In their review of 25 LGBT organizations, the Movement Advancement Project (MAP) – an independent group of researchers who collect data on organizations in order to make movement-based recommendations to the organizations themselves, to scholars, and to funders interested in this type of organizing work – compiled a list of the top five issues of importance cited by organizations in 2006. This list included the following: 1) Marriage/Civil Unions; 2) Non-Discrimination Acts/Human Rights; 3) Youth/Schools; 4) HIV/AIDS and Leadership (both issues were tied); and 5) Health and Parenting/Adoption (again, both of these issues were tied) (Movement Advancement Project 2007a: 31).

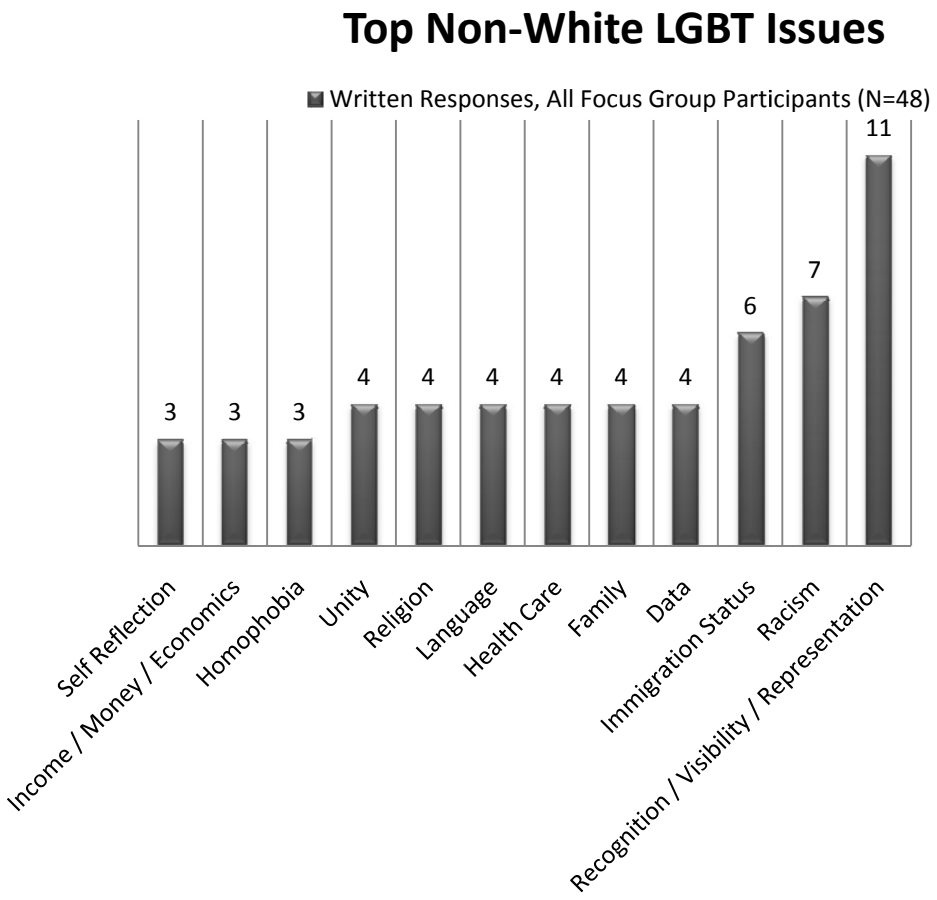
Interestingly, when asked to write down what the top issues were for their respective non-White LGBT population, focus group participants reported different issues. For instance, the top three issues[40] for focus group participants included the following: 1) Recognition/Visibility/Representation; 2) Racism; and 3) Immigration. These three are not part of the top five collected by MAP in 2006. This suggests that the issues of importance to non-White LGBT people differ from the ones that L&G organizations are working on. However, more data are needed. Other issues reported by focus group participants included such things as a need for more demographic data on non-White LGBT populations, language issues (some of which were discussed in Chapter 4), religion, homophobia, and inequality based on income. Still, while identifying issues of importance to various groups is key to understanding a population's needs, an intersectionist approach realizes that some of these issues are inextricably connected in oppressive ways. As one anonymous focus group participant commented:

[40] *Table 6.2* reports the number of times issues were listed by focus group participants. Participants often listed more than one issue, hence, the number of responses exceeds the number of participants.

> The interconnectedness of oppression must be emphasized. There has to be a movement away from single-issue politics…. All of society, but particularly those who consider themselves activists, must work with different groups. We need to learn up-close and personal why issues are thought to be of importance for a group.

Additionally, as mentioned in Chapter 2, each focus group session produced two kinds of data: individual and communal. When participants interacted with one another, they sometimes wrote down new and different responses, and when it came to the spoken part of the focus group, more communal data were produced. This is important to note because while *Table 6.2* presents the issues that participants wrote down, other issues were identified during the spoken part of the focus group sessions. As reported in Chapter 2, there were some major themes that emerged from each focus group. For instance, Chicago focus group participants agreed that youth leadership was an important issue; in Detroit, participants agreed that more infrastructural support for already-existing non-White LGBT-serving organizations was important; in Cleveland, participants agreed that a major issue was making and maintaining relationships with non-White groups and populations, both LGBT-serving and otherwise; and, finally, in Columbus, visibility and living an openly lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender life was a big concern.

Table 6.2



The authors of the MAP report also analyzed data on non-White (leadership) representation in (L&G) social movement organizations. While slightly more than a quarter (27%) of the general staff members of L&G organizations surveyed were non-White, only about a fifth (21%) of members of boards of directors were non-White. As for executive directorships, while 14 percent of executive directors identified as non-

White for all U.S. non-profits, only four percent of executive directors in L&G organizations were so (MAP 2007c). While an accurate accounting of all people who identify as LGBT is not available, largely due to such things as social stigma, demographer Gary Gates (2007) offers the following: "As more LGB people come out, they increase the geographic, racial-ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of the visible LGB community. They look, at least demographically, more and more like the general population in this country…It does challenge us to rethink our understanding of what exactly being LGB means in our society today."

As data from MAP and FLGI indicate, there are some structural constraints within LGBT-serving organizations. In general, there is a strain due to low amounts of funding (as compared to other issue- and identity-based organizations), and to low numbers of formal non-White leaders (as measured by executive directorship numbers). So if indeed, as Gates argues, LGBT populations look demographically similar to their heterosexual counterparts, why is it that within LGBT-serving organizations, formal non-White leadership (executive directorships) does not look the same as the heterosexual counterpart? Though structural analyses on L&G organizations are limited, the work of MAP and FLGI offers a sound basis for future investigations. Data collected for this dissertation can assist in locating some areas of future research. Such efforts include a survey of all LGBT-serving organizations, with particular attention to racial (leadership) compositions and to how issues or projects become the focus of organizational work.

Related to this kind of research is the work of Dara Strolovitch (2006), who used an intersectionist approach to analyze membership data and other organizational data collected on national advocacy groups in the U.S. "Recognizing that inequities persist

between marginalized and dominant groups," she notes, "intersectional approaches stress the overlapping inequalities *within* groups and the resulting unevenness in the gains they have made" (Strolovitch 2006:896). Based on this approach, Strolovitch created a typology to help understand how issues affect different types of memberships within advocacy groups. She identified four types of policy issues that affect members: "universal issues" – which are those that affect the entire population; "majority issues" – which are ones that affect members "relatively equally;" "disadvantaged sub-group issues" – which are issues that affect members who are not as powerful as others in the membership; and "advantaged-subgroup issues" – which are those that affect the most powerful of a membership (Strolovitch 2006). Because it devotes attention to the ways in which oppression and power affects people and policies differently, such a typology can be applied to how LGBT-serving organizations respond to, and create, advocacy issues. Though this type of analysis is beyond the scope of the dissertation, the participants in this research had some things to say about how L&G organizational settings affect non-White leadership. These observations can assist in understanding how employing an intersectionist approach often highlights the uneven ways in which issues, policies, or organizational realities contribute to the iron cage of non-White leadership.

Data from the in-depth interviews with seven formal leaders also contained similar observations about how to sustain or encourage more non-White LGBT leaders within the larger L&G movement. Starting with a delineation of characteristics needed in order for leaders to be effective, for instance, Pauline Park then emphasizes that the type of racism that exists in L&G organizations is marked by a subtle form of tokenism. All non-White LGBT leaders should be wary of such practices. Park put it this way:

> Certainly, foresight, a perceptive analysis of a situation, organizational skills, and people skills – all those kinds of qualities are needed. However, in the LGBT community, we've reached a moment where there's pressure on organizations to diversify their leadership….
>
> There's a huge amount of tokenism that goes on all over the place, but particularly in circles where you don't see many people of color….
>
> When it comes to the LGBT community…it's not that there isn't racism. Of course there is. There always is. But it's more subtle….
>
> It's not the Ku Klux Klan kind of racism. It's not the cross-burning type. It's the subtle racism of the White liberal, and in this case, the LGBT White liberal, particularly gay and lesbian White liberal, who wants to do the right thing but doesn't really understand the difference between having a few happy Black and Brown faces, Yellow faces, versus having people of color being in prominent positions in leadership with real decision-making power. And I think that's a difference.

Urvashi Vaid, on the other hand, calls for leaders to be courageous, but she also recognizes that there are some barriers as well. She said the following:

> One of the biggest challenges for queer leadership in general, but also for LGBT POC leadership, is the kind of outsiderness that we have to those dominant circles of funding and power and privilege…
>
> And you take that down to the level of gay people of color and the disconnect between our world and the dominant power structure is huge....
>
> Another kind of support that I think that gay people of color need is encouragement to not be afraid to take a stand. I think all leadership needs to be courageous. And that's a quality that I don't think can be taught. You kind of have it, or you don't. You have the willingness to say something, or you don't.

Certainly, access to power and privilege is a concern for every leader, but for those whose experiences are marked by a multitude of oppressions, it may be extremely difficult to gain access to the powerful and the privileged. And when Vaid warns that there are leadership qualities that cannot be taught, she brings up this notion that leadership is about a single person and her/his personal

characteristics. Courage, in this instance, can be likened to charismatic authority – one that depends heavily on a single individual and her/his personal abilities. Following this line of thought, Mandy Carter also identifies something that is felt on an individual basis: isolation. She added:

> There are a lot of people I run into when I do my movement organizing that are all out there on their own. All by themselves. LGBT of color. No group, no network. And they feel *so* isolated and if they felt that no matter what state you're in, wherever you are, that you could be a part of some infrastructure, some network that would allow you to be a part of that, it would cut down on the isolation. But then also it would give a sense that you belong to something that's *doing* something.

According to Andres Duque, individual feelings of isolation can also contribute to leadership formations that stress the social over the political. He said:

> There are activists who are just being blind to some of the issues that gay people of color communities face. And one of the examples that I'll use is when they talk about immigration. Often, the only issue that comes up for them is the right for U.S. citizens to bring in their immigrant lover. That, to me, is really insulting.

And later he added:

> I have mixed issues with a lot of this. I do think that a lot of the Latino organizations are staffed – they're not necessarily staff, they're more like volunteers – by people who are immigrants. A lot of them don't necessarily know English that well. A lot of them don't feel necessarily plugged into the system or to politics, or they feel that their involvement in these politics is not going to remedy some of the issues that they're facing in terms of housing, immigration, etc. So I think to a large degree that's why a lot of them become more social organizations. People feel lonely; they want to mingle.

LGBT leaders of color today face many barriers and opportunities. Although tokenism may contribute to advancement in certain L&G organizations, leaders still have to contend with such things isolation and finding pathways to power.

Conclusion

In the 1969 literary classic *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Maya Angelou tells a story about how experiences of oppression based on sexuality, gender, class, and race affected a young black girl in the 1930s and 1940s in the U.S. Like Lorde's speech (see chapter 4), Angelou's story underscores the power behind speaking out. Angelou's young protagonist endures a period of silence or self-imposed muteness as a reaction to some of the oppressive forces she experienced. Eventually, with the help of a benevolent family friend, this caged bird breaks her silence and is able to face the rest of her life with a renewed sense of engagement and a vocabulary full of triumph and survival – a song of self-awareness. Karen, a 48-year-old Black lesbian focus group participant expressed a similar reason for why she chooses to speak out. She stated:

> I feel as if I have no choice but to confront, struggle, empower, uplift, and fight for change. It's a duty, responsibility, and obligation that I chose to live out and that I was called by God to do. The parallels between racial justice, [sexual] orientation, and gender identity/expression are obvious to me although there are obvious well-appreciated differences and similarities between them as well. The links are the conditions and experiences of oppression, marginality, and historical disempowerment.
>
> Groups that have been disenfranchised and oppressed along these lines and intersections have historically been stigmatized, ostracized, marginalized, criminalized, sexualized, eroticized, demonized, minimized, trivialized, tokenized, dehumanized, inferiorized, exploited, misused, hate-crimed, and vulnerable to internalized homophobia, internalized racism, internalized sexism, and internalized self-hatred.

The story of the caged bird is not only a universal story of self-discovery, but it is also a tale of how one faces oppression, what one does in the face of adversity. Likewise, it is a hopeful reading of how oppressive bureaucratic forces alone cannot silence voices. Weber's image of the iron cage at once implicates legal-rational formations in the demise of personal agency and blames structural forces for the silences of individuals. As discussed in this chapter, LGBT leaders of color have talked about leadership and organizations in ways that highlight the tensions between the politics of difference and assimilation. Although hampered by multiple forms of oppression, both individually and structurally, these leaders have found ways to navigate the iron cage. While some opted to sing loudly in their place, others have rallied against the cage itself. Clearly, both of these strategies are useful in understanding how to navigate the intersectional imagination. Both strategies are needed. Both strategies have helped to achieve success for many of the research participants of this dissertation.

CHAPTER 7: PRIVILEGING OPPRESSION: CONTRADICTIONS IN INTERSECTIONAL POLITICS

Introduction

Race, class, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, physical ability, native language, immigration status and more make up the complex mosaic that is identity politics in the United States. In the social sciences, differentiation is the term used to signal that differences exist. These differences are often identifiable, experienced, quantified, or otherwise serve as markers of separation that become convenient labels or constituents in larger social structures. Identity politics is what happens when differentiation is privileged. Related to this, stratification is that delicate, yet sometimes impenetrable, process of morphing difference into hierarchy – not simply allowing gender differences to exist, for example, but insisting that men are better than women, and in terms of sexual identity, that heterosexual is better than bisexual, or when looking at racial existence, that White is better than Latina/o. When identity politics and stratification consummate, intersectionality is born.

There is much debate on the impact and function of intersectionality. Historically, the social sciences have all but celebrated the positive impact of coexisting identities. Borrowing from Georg Simmel's concept of "crosscutting social circles" (1955) that individuals navigate in their social interactions, Peter Blau and Joseph Schwartz, for instance, argue that "[c]rosscutting social differences put individuals at the intersection of a web of group affiliations that exert diverse and often counteracting pressures, weakening the hold any one group has on its members, widening the options of individuals, and increasing their freedom" (1984: 83-84). According to their argument,

intersection often results in increased social interaction and in an ability to move about without being restricted by the lines of differentiation. When differences are consolidated, the opposite occurs: less movement and less interaction (Blau & Schwartz 1984).

Related to this proliferation of roles and in developing a theory of deviance, Robert K. Merton (1949/1968) explained that a typology of behaviors exists. This typology posits that individual and group actions are related to the means and goals prescribed by the larger social structure. According to Merton, the typology is a way of understanding how groups and individuals adapt to some of the social structural constraints present in any given society. In particular, Merton was interested in explaining how groups and individuals navigate or negotiate tensions that may arise when there is a converse relationship between societal means and goals. In so doing, Merton signals how social change and power may occur. Although seemingly hampered by structural forces, groups and individuals still have choices to make when fulfilling their goals. Such choices involve the rejection or acceptance of means or goals. For instance, "conformity" would be a total acceptance of means and goals, whereas "retreatism" would be a total rejection of both the means and the goals. Further still, Merton identifies "ritualism" as the acceptance of means and rejection of goals, while "innovation" is the rejection of means and acceptance of goals. Incidentally, Merton acknowledges that there is one more option that does not easily fit the typology: "rebellion," neither accepting nor rejecting the means and goals. Clearly, for Merton, a group or individual has power over the environment and this power stems from the choice over how to fulfill the identified

goals. Central to Merton's understanding of power is his insistence on fulfilling needs, a common feature of the functionalist perspective in sociology.

Similarly, in her assessment of the applicability of some of Merton's other theories on the complexity of roles, Rose Coser (1975) found that having multiple roles can help individuals to create opportunities, rather than be limited by barriers. For Coser (1975; 1991), this is part of the gifts of modernity – that individuality increases and that individuals have more interaction options because of an increase in the number of roles that one person can possess. This concept of fluidity also comes up in such works as Robert J. Lifton's (1993) *The Protean Self*, where it is argued that individual resiliency has the capacity to override the never-ending role fragmentation that is rampant today. Lifton (1993) takes the reader on a journey through history and details how various individuals psychologically make sense of the role fragmentation that occurs at various moments in their lives and how these individuals develop strategies to help them overcome the seemingly "odd combinations" that they engender.

In her edited volume, *Spouse, Parent, Worker: On Gender and Multiple Roles*, Faye Crosby (1987) gathers a series of empirically-based studies on how married women and men manage multiple roles both in and out of the domestic sphere. One of the overall arguments is that for women, there is a benefit to having multiple roles, namely that a positive self-concept emerges and is supported. Still, the flipside of this is that women also sometimes experience strains in their marriages, as their roles continue to multiply. Clearly, this literature has a history of documenting how the existence of multiple roles can have a positive impact on the lives of individuals. Embedded in traditional sociological analyses of role strain and development, these researchers present a side of

intersectionality that tends to highlight those times when having multiple identities is not so problematic after all. In fact, a general thrust of this body of research is that having multiple roles is common, has existed for quite some time, and provides a necessary function: it highlights how individuality continues to thrive within larger social structures.

Conversely, more recently, scholars have begun to question the wisdom of such a one-sided approach to the effects of multiple roles or identities. Noted legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw (1989, 1990) and sociologist Patricia Hill Collins (1990) helped to coin and develop the term intersectionality, a framework and a lens that assists in documenting how multiple forms of oppression affects identities and opportunities. Starting with the image of a traffic intersection, Crenshaw (1989, 1990) asks us to consider a person who experiences an accident at an intersection: that person is hit by forces from multiple directions. This traffic metaphor was used to help Crenshaw advance a need for individuals to report accidents when they happen. Writing from within the legal literature on battered women of color, Crenshaw privileges those times when oppressive forces come together at the intersections. Arguably, for Crenshaw, battered women of color often experience oppressive forces at the intersection of race (Black), class (lower class), and gender (women), to name a few. An important feature of this framework is that when oppression is experienced at an intersection, such subjugation is exacerbated in a multiplicative fashion, and not necessarily in an additive way. Certainly, this notion of complexity is very similar to how Coser (1975, 1991), Blau and Schwartz (1984), and Crosby (1987) conceptualized and measured the various ways that roles get produced or complicated in modern, industrialized settings.

Collins (1990) further develops this framework of oppression by highlighting how Black feminist thought is created and transmitted. For Collins and Crenshaw, intersectionality privileges oppression. That is, intersectionality exists when multiple forms of oppression affect people, whether as individuals or as members of a group that experiences oppression. This conceptualization of multiple identities differs from that of the more traditional sociological literature on role complexity in that intersectionality, as developed by Crenshaw (1989, 1990), Collins (1990), Brewer (1993), McCall (2005), and other feminist scholars, specifically targets those places where more than one form of subjugation is present. So, instead of examining the existence of multiple roles, recent intersectionality scholarship attends to the existence of multiple forms of oppression. This is important for the development of role constraint theory because it introduces the notion that people and groups exist at intersections where more than one oppressive force operates. Collins (2003) further argues that it is within this matrix of domination that Black women develop group-based epistemologies. While Crenshaw's intersectionality calls for a proliferation of reporting when and how accidents occur at various intersections, Collins' intersectionality attempts to show how these accidents help to shape the ways in which people, especially Black women, develop worldviews or knowledge.

Within the two broad approaches to complexity outlined above – whether it mainly focuses on how roles come together or on how oppressions come together – scholars have acknowledged that individuals and groups are capable of managing the complexity. For the role-strain theorists, this management comes in the unproblematic ways that individuals can choose a role in order to achieve success (similar to the

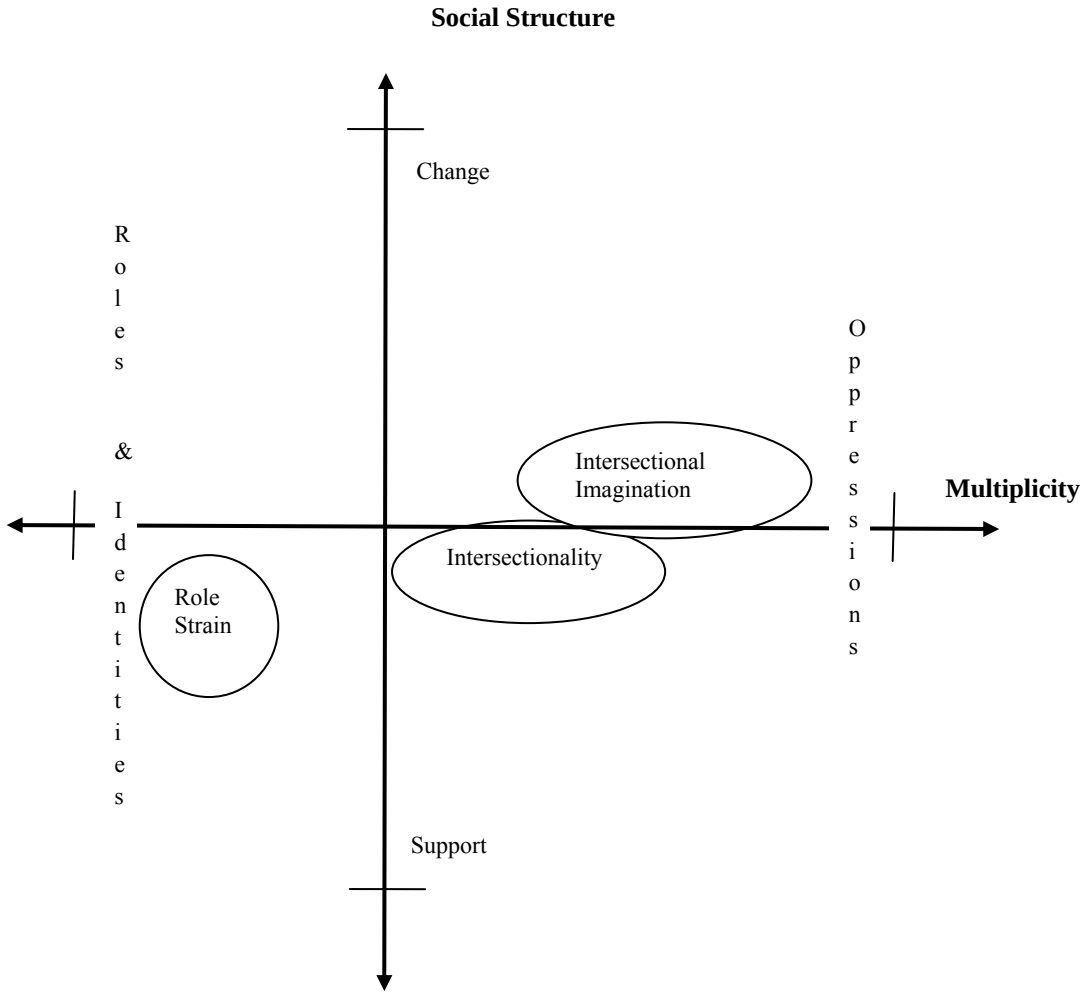
trumping concept introduced in Chapter 4 of this dissertation), while for the intersectionality theorists, this management comes in the ways that knowledge is produced and in the ways that oppressions get documented. A feature of the intersectional imagination (Pastrana 2006) is that people who experience multiple forms of oppression also link these to a need for a change in the structures that contribute to their oppression. Although more data are needed to further develop this theory, some research participants forwarded a need to change the dominant social structures. Role-strain theorists are interested in showing how social structures are not as damaging to the individual, that having concurrent and crosscutting roles and identities is not such a strain on individuality at all. Related to this, the research for dissertation attempts to show that those who experience multiple forms of oppression also carry with them an analysis that aims to break away from the dominant ways of being. In other words those who utilize the intersectional imagination are also forwarding a social change agenda.

All research participants in this dissertation either talked about experiencing multiple forms of discrimination, bias, and oppression, or they belong to groups that do. While the role-strain theorists identify how groups and individuals can experience fluidity and freedom, the intersectionality theorists often lead to observations of how oppressions exist and how they are managed and survived. What the intersectional imagination (Pastrana 2006) and this dissertation's Chapter 4 stress is how groups and individuals can promote change and experience success within systems of oppression. Early role-strain theorists did not necessarily forward an argument about the ways in which individuals tried to change social structures. They mainly wanted to show that individuals can successfully navigate within these structures. Today's intersectionality

theorists not only show how survival is possible within oppressive social structures, but they also point to the need for changing the dominant ways of being. Recall, for instance, Pauline Park's comment on how it is "society that has the gender identity disorder" and Mandy Carter's call for changing the ways that leadership gets conceptualized and practiced (Chapter 3).

Clearly, these bodies of research are tied to the development of intersectionality as a framework, as a method of inquiry, and as a lived experience. Along one axis is the idea of multiplicity and how sociologists have conceptualized and operationalized it. Toward one end there is the scholarship on crosscutting social circles and role-strain, while on the other end there is the scholarship on oppression and current manifestations of intersectionality. Groups and individuals navigate these things in similar ways: there are clearly some ways in which multiplicity can benefit groups and individuals. Still, along an intersecting axis there is a notion of the social structure in which groups and individuals operate. Toward one end there is support for the existing social structure (whether it is labeled acceptance or assimilation) and on the other end there is a challenge to the social structure (whether it is labeled rejection or social change). *Figure 7.1* plots these relationships in order to present a more robust understanding of the study of intersectionality, which incorporates views on multiplicity and on the social structure.

Figure 7.1: Multiplicity and Social Structure



These distinctions may, unintentionally, perpetuate the false dichotomy it is attempting to address or dispel. In other words, it may not be an issue of "either/or" but "both/and," which is why plotting these sociological discussions as points along two intersecting and continuous axes is helpful. Here I propose that just as race, class, and

gender work and are worked differently, by different people, at different times, the same is true for intersectionality and, thus, intersectional politics. And key to these distinctions is an analysis of the larger social structure: Is the aim to continue to support existing social relations, or is the aim to change these relations? Overall, responses from participants in this research contained *both*[41] of these perspectives. That is, while some articulated a need to work within currently-existing social structures (of oppression), others advanced a need for changing these structures. More data are needed in order to empirically test some of these relationships.

In his examination of how Blacks experience middleclass existence, Ellis Cose (1993) notes that a rage develops due to conflicting notions of success. Prosperous Blacks continue to perceive that their jobs and their identities are viewed with prejudice. This, according to Cose (1993), is what contributes to heightened levels of frustration, even for Blacks who are economically prosperous. Cose's subjects are at the intersection of race (Black) and economic status (middleclass), and when viewed in tandem, these individuals identify that they are frustrated and angry because of the ways in which they are perceived by others. Like the participants of this dissertation, Cose's subjects are able to enjoy some benefits (due to their economic class, for Cose, and due to their positions as leaders, for this dissertation).

Race As Conduit?

Still, the experiences of Cose's subjects notwithstanding, and more germane to this dissertation, the question rises: How does intersectionality work for this sample of

[41] While respondents 7A, 7B, 7C, and 7D in this chapter seemed to advance ways in which to work within structures of oppression, the respondents who used their intersectional imaginations expressed the need to change these dominant ways of being.

lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) leaders of color? For these respondents, their multiple identities have been a conduit. More specifically, being a person of color in lesbian and gay (L&G) settings, and being a LGBT person in non-White settings has helped them in some ways.

Anonymous written responses were collected from focus group participants on how their racial identity has helped them to do their activist work[42]. Asking this question is itself a nod to employing an intersectionist approach. Consider, for instance, Crenshaw's initial goal in forwarding an intersectionist approach. Part of her thrust was to get women to report the accidents, to report those times when they experienced multiple forms of oppression. Similarly, while privileging racial identity, this research asked participants to talk about how they benefit and how they lose out, how their racial identity has helped them and hindered them. Below are some of the responses to the question about how race has helped participants in their work as leaders:

Respondent 7A

> It provided a "face" and "voice" to make LGBT issues less foreign and more relevant and connected (within my racial community). And it offered a perspective that makes the message – whatever that is – heard rather than dismissed.

Respondent 7B

> With my ethnic background, I added diversity into the work. I contribute my concept and idea to the mostly white [environment].

[42] While all research participants viewed themselves as leaders in their communities, not all of them worked directly for or within L&G organizations. Instead, many regularly participated in social and political networks and, thus, can be considered to be informal leaders, social movement actors who do not necessarily work for formal social movement organizations.

While the first response is about relations within a non-White group, the second response mentions relations within a White environment. For both of these participants, their non-White identities serve as conduits for increased interactions with those groups. Being a LGBT person in non-White environments helps because it adds diversity to the non-White group (representation). In this way, these responses are similar to what early role-strain sociologists were arguing – that, sometimes, having seemingly disparate (and multiple) identities can ease or foster mobility and interaction. Note that in the responses above, there is no mention of changing the dominant social structure. Still other responses included the following:

Respondent 7C

> Sometimes being the "only one" helps your opinions to be heard, but not necessarily listened to!

Respondent 7D

> Helped because I fit so many boxes, I can be the flavor of the month for a whole year! I get to be a part of many things.

For these two respondents, being the only non-White person in certain environments makes it easier to be included in a variety of events. The implication here is that this ease of access would not exist as prominently if it were not for the non-White identity. Also, being a person of color assists in gaining attention. The implication here is that since there are not many people of color within these arenas, whenever one is present, s/he is so unique that s/he tends to stick out from among the largely White voices. Later, we find that this may also contribute to a sense of tokenism and to a lack of incentive on the part of White-led groups and White people to look for more diversity within L&G people of

color populations. Again, for these two respondents, there is no explicit mention of changing the dominant social structures of oppression.

And still another respondent reported the following:

Respondent 7E

> Being African American has started me from a cultural place of questioning the way things are instead of simply accepting that because they are a certain way, they should be that way.

Here is the presence of the intersectional imagination. It is intersectionality+: an acknowledgement that multiple forms of oppression are at play *and* that this helps in formulating an agenda that challenges current social structures. This is unlike respondents 7A, 7B, 7C and 7D above, who seem to be going along with whatever the social structure provides.

In addition, several of the seven in-depth interviewees contributed the following about how their racial identity has helped them in their activist work:

Surina Khan:

> I'm South Asian, which is in itself a huge diaspora and what does that mean? So the specifics of my daily experience inform the work that I do in terms of how I move in this world as an American on some level – an American-identified immigrant, with a particular class history, with a particular military lineage to my family.
>
> So there's the cultural, religious, and economic parts of me – all of those are parts of me. And it has informed the work I do, I think, on a positive level. It allows me to understand that things are complicated and complex and things don't fit neatly into small packages, or big packages, and that it's really important to have to be able to articulate people's different experiences. To honor them and be strategic at the same time – it's like learning from our own experiences and trying to bring out the nuances at the same time.

Mandy Carter:

> I walk around in those identities every single day – as a woman, as an African American woman, as a lesbian. For me, it helps me kind of get it that it can't be about just the gay thing.
>
> There's just too much life experience that's been a part of who I am or anyone who is a woman or a person of color. You just bring a different sensibility to the organizing….
>
> It just brings a different reality, a different gravity about the situation and understanding that it just can't be about me, my, and what I want for me. And that's really been helpful.

Khan and Carter's responses above are important because they both highlight two aspects of the intersectional imagination: 1) an acknowledgement that identities and experiences are multifaceted, complicated, and cannot be easily disentangled; and 2) an understanding that these experiences affect more than just the objects of oppression, but rather that others must be experiencing this as well. While the first underscores the particularizing nature of discrimination, the second opens it up to showcase the universalizing effects of oppression.

Are the experiences of these research participants reflective of the experiences of their counterparts who are not leaders? In other words, are L&G activist environments truly safe havens for all people of color, or only for those who, through whatever means, become the anointed leaders? If the grass is green for the talented tenth, for example, what color is it for the remaining ninety percent? Though much of the literature on L&G populations of color stresses the existence of discrimination and other forms of oppression, due to a paucity of generalizable data, such studies fail to accurately document the ways in which some of these populations make positive use of their intersectional identities within structures of oppression. For instance, the most recent social scientific studies to target non-White LGBT populations in the U.S. collectively

reveal that discrimination is a prevalent feature of their lives. According to Battle and colleagues (2002), for Blacks, almost a third (31%) of respondents reported negative experiences in White L&G organizations, and almost half of the respondents (48%) agreed that racism was a problem when dealing with White L&G populations. Also over a fifth (22%) had negative experiences with the larger (heterosexual) Black population (Battle, et al. 2002). Diaz and Ayala (2001) found that for Latino gay men, a majority (62%) of respondents reported experiencing ethnic sexual objectification, and slightly over a quarter (26%) reported being uncomfortable in White spaces. And according to Dang and Hu (2005), for Asian Pacific American populations, a majority (82%) of respondents agreed that racism is experienced within White LGBT populations. Experiences of discrimination, like Cose's (1993) rage, are about more than statistics. These experiences come from "the felt experiences of everyday life, from lessons learned in run-of-the-mill human encounters, from the struggles and disappointments of family members and peers. It comes from learning that one can never take the kindness – or the acceptance – of strangers for granted; from resentment at being judged at every turn, if only in part, for one's complexion instead of oneself" (Cose 1993:40).

These studies seem to suggest that in their interactions with White populations, LGBT people of color do not necessarily experience greater freedom or individuality. The leaders who participated in the in-depth interviews and in the focus group sessions for this dissertation, therefore, may help in understanding how identities can be used successfully in order to navigate within these oppressive social structures. Though the data cannot tell us whether these insights are due to the fact that the participants in this research are leaders, they can be used to show that some people are indeed being strategic

about the ways in which they deploy their multiple identities and how multiple forms of oppression affect these strategies. The finding here is not *that* there is a group of people using their identities strategically, but, rather, that people *can* do so within structures of oppression. And this can be understood further if and only if researchers look for these types of relationships and ask questions around these issues. Such questions are especially important when investigating oppression. Noted feminist and legal scholar, Mari J. Matsuda (1991), put it this way:

> The way I try to understand the interconnection of all forms of subordination is through a method I call "ask the other question." When I see something that looks racist, I ask, "Where is the patriarchy in this?" When I see something that looks sexist, I ask, "Where is the heterosexism in this?" When I see something that looks homophobic, I ask, "Where are the class interests in this?" Working in coalition forces us to look for both the obvious and non-obvious relationships of domination, helping us to realize that no form of subordination ever stands alone (p. 1189).

Within the context of this dissertation, which broadly examines how oppression operates within L&G activist environments, explicitly asking about how one's non-White racial identity both helps and hinders activist work is a part of what Matsuda (1991) argues is necessary whenever studying subordination. At first glance, it may seem that I am asking research participants to consider some of the positive aspects of domination, but, in fact, in asking this "other question" (How has your racial identity *helped* you to do your work?), I am attempting to understand and document how people strategize and manage oppression. I am asking participants to share the ways in which they navigate multiple systems of oppression. I am doing this in an attempt to understand how power manifests itself, even in the midst of adversity.

Race As Barrier?

No matter, even for that talented tenth – which again, here, are those individuals who are leaders of color within the L&G movement – they themselves are not completely free from oppression. What is the cost of getting in a position to truly benefit from being acceptable to the larger, White establishment? The following is a set of anonymous responses collected when research participants were asked to consider how their racial identity has hindered their work:

Respondent 7F:

> Finding allies (within my racial group) is often fraught with issues of trust and insecurity. I wonder if people think that my sexual orientation issues will overshadow or jeopardize my relationships with family and community.

Respondent 7G:

> People think I need to pick which cultural identity will take precedence over another, even when I refuse to do that.

In thinking about her/his non-White racial identity, the first respondent identifies sexual identity as something that may be more of a hindrance. Across all four focus group sessions, in fact, some participants answered similarly. That is, when asked specifically about how their racial identity has affected their work, some identified that their gender was more of an issue, or their language abilities was an issue, or that their accent was an issue. Both of the respondents above show how intersectionality is experienced: sometimes when asked about one of the many oppressed identities, individuals wind up talking about one of their other oppressed identities. Separating these identities and experiences may be virtually impossible, further supporting the intersectionist stance – that multiple forms of oppression are inextricably linked and difficult to unravel.

Next are three responses that come close to Cose's (1993) rage concept.

Respondent 7H:

> My assertiveness is often interpreted as aggressive or not passive enough. And my racial identity has cost me promotions.

Respondent 7I:

> I am looked upon as a troublemaker and I am stereotyped.

Respondent 7J:

> I feel that my racial/ethnic identity has had a huge influence on the way I interact with my co-workers and the way they view and treat me. I often feel as if my racial/ethnic identity has caused my coworkers to underestimate my ability to do the job.

Though somewhat privileged by their leadership positions, these respondents admitted that they also perceive and experience negative reactions within the largely White-dominated area of L&G activist work. These felt experiences are similar to the ones that Cose (1993) collected from his interviewees.

In addition, the seven formal leaders with whom in-depth interviews were conducted had the following to say when they considered how their racial identity hindered their work as activists:

Keith Boykin:

> I don't know. I probably need to think about that some more. I'm sure it's hindered me in some way, but I tend to think that it has actually inspired me more than it has hindered me.

Surina Khan:

> I can't really think of a time where it's hindered ME. I think that I have weathered some attacks that I think come from people's own racism. But I wouldn't say that that's hindered me. I think it's comfortable.

Here, Boykin and Khan echo one of the findings reported in Chapter 4 – that some focus group participants across all four sessions reported that their racial identity did not hinder them. While Boykin indicates that his racial experience helps to "inspire" him, Khan reports that it is "comfortable." Certainly, these observations support the general thrust of Blau and Schwartz's (1984) work on crosscutting social differences. Still, while this may seem surprising, given some of the high rates of racial discrimination reported in recent social scientific studies on LGBT people of color populations, such experiences are important to note because they indicate that within structures of oppression, some people do not consider their non-White racial identity to be a problem in forwarding their work as leaders in a mostly White-led L&G social movement. What are leaders doing differently such that race is not considered to be a hindrance? One possible answer to this may be found in the ways in which these leaders invest in, and deploy, some of their other identities – like class, sex, education, etc. – in order to increase mobility within the realm of social movement organizing work. This would be an example of how crosscutting social differences intersect (Blau and Schwartz 1984). Also, could it be that the rank-and-file LGBT people of color are doing similar things but that those experiences are not being documented? Clearly, this is a question whose answer is beyond the scope of this dissertation, and it is an area for future research.

Another response to how race hinders activist work included the following from Mandy Carter:

> I can tell you one way it's hindered me. One is that I'm still baffled by the fact that in the year 2006 we only have the National Black Justice Coalition as the only single national people of color organization in this country…
>
> And I'm also wondering if funders would be willing to invest more into LGBT of color organizations and infrastructure and training, we would have so many more [organizations]. We'd have a larger pool of people too…
>
> But there's almost like this laziness of just coming back to the same people over and over and over again, versus trying to get a larger pool – more exciting and dynamic pool – of LGBT of color organizers and allies. Race continues to be, in the queer movement, a huge issue.

Here, Carter uses the "only one" response that was used by focus group respondents, earlier, who claimed that their racial identity helped them to do their work. Being the "only one", and in Carter's case she is talking about the only national Black LGBT organization (the National Black Justice Coalition, NBJC), can also serve as a hindrance, mainly because it supports the belief that there is no diversity within non-White (in this case, Black) LGBT populations or groups. Carter points out that viewing organizing through the lens of race sometimes supports a "usual suspects" or "tokenism" mentality, that whenever a Black LGBT issue arises, White-led L&G organizations use old and overused Rolodexes.

Articulating The Intersectional Imagination

In this chapter, we see where both camps of intersectionality exist – those who argue that having multiple roles produce more opportunities and those who argue that intersecting identities often exacerbate or complicate experiences of oppression.

There are indeed other issues that merit investigation in this intersectionality debate and exploration. Earlier, I alluded to the talented tenth versus the remaining ninety

percent. The NAACP traditionally stands for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. However, some have critically called it the National Association for the Advancement of *Certain* People. And this is core the work under investigation here. How are these talented tenth, L&G leaders of color, using their capital – racial, gender, sexual orientation, access, or otherwise? Is diversity more than simply non-White faces in high places? Are these particular leaders agents of change, are they perpetuators of the status quo, or some combination of the two? And if so, how are they agents in that process of change or status quo versus how are they simply being acted upon? Regardless of the answer to these questions – some of which have been explored here and others that go beyond the scope of this dissertation – the exploration itself is an important one. In other words, it is not always as important to get the correct answers as it is important to ensure the correct questions are being asked in the first place. And it is in that space where intersectionality shines brightest. Though the research participants in this dissertation shared ideas and experiences that can be placed in both of these categories (supporting the status quo versus advocating for change), the articulation of the intersectional imagination contains a thread that advances a need for social change:

Rafael Diaz:

> First, I think that what needs to be understood is that race is not a demographic characteristic of people, but people need to understand that the process of racialization creates further divides and creates discrimination and competition among different groups….
>
> So we need to move away from the ethnic politics to understand race as a socially constructed process that has political and economic meanings and that we all are participating in those racialization processes. And we need to do this in the context of coalition, that it's not JUST about Latinos or JUST about this or about that, but it's about us coming together…

> We need to create a space of security and internal well-being so that observation and critique does not become about beating ourselves…then we will be able to observe and critique and have a sense of observation to become more aware of who we are…
>
> We need to critique the politics of the LGBT agenda that just want us to be part of the table without critiquing the table. We need to join the larger war against injustice. It's not about another gay republic, you know. So we need to move in that direction.

Pauline Park:

> LGBT POC-specific organizations tend on the whole to be more comfortable talking about racism and ethnocentrism in the White-dominant LGBT community than they are talking about homophobia and transgenderphobia in communities of color.
>
> As queer people of color we certainly need to be at the forefront in addressing homophobia and transgenderphobia in communities of color. We cannot shirk that responsibility.

Surina Khan:

> I think we have been seeing a discomfort with the kind of approach by smaller organizations that have a deeper analysis and understanding that people's lives are multi-layered and that race in addition to many other things are part of our daily lived experienced. And so that analysis, particularly given the history of this country, has to be right there with an analysis around sexuality and an analysis around class, because it's just people's real lives. We deal with these things every day.

Rosa, a 43-year-old, South Asian lesbian editor:

> The problem with "racial justice, sexual orientation, and gender identity" is that those are the only ways in which we can make our struggles legible within public discourse today. Funding, for instance, is entirely dependent on the extent to which we can claim oppression based on identity politics. And even when we talk about economic injustice, we find ourselves reduced to adopting "class" as just another identity formation – so, for instance, we start asking for funding in order to record the lives and experiences of "working class life." None of that gets at the systemic root causes of economic inequality. We need a new set of paradigms.

Each of these leaders articulated a need for a change in the current social structures, with regard to the everyday ways that people experience race-based oppression, organize movements around race-based oppression, and combat race-based oppression. Each of these leaders identified strategies that question the dominant ways of being. Each of these leaders saw the need to include other forms of oppression whenever combating race-based subjugation. Each of these leaders is employing the intersectional imagination.

Conclusion

Paula Giddings' book *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (1984) infuses an all-too-often ignored reality – the contributions of Black women – into the history of the United States. She uses a Black feminist lens to view historical events and contradictions, with the intent of not only informing minds, but also changing them. Similarly, Cornell West's *Race Matters* (1993) is popular for both its content and its title. West plays with the word "matters." In so doing, he invites, encourages, and at times requires his reader to engage the word as both a noun and a verb. Similar to the efforts of Giddings (1984) and West (1993), intersectionality and the intersectional imagination (Pastrana 2006), as best evidenced by the perspectives and debates of those who choose to emphasize how an intersection can serve as a way of supporting individuality (conduits) and those who continue to document how an intersection further complicates already-existing forms of oppression (barriers), invites, encourages, and requires an even broader audience of academics, activists, and artists to ask a series of questions. Among them, When and where does race

matter? When and where does gender matter? When and where does sexual orientation matter? When, where, and how do their intersections matter?

CHAPTER 8: PRESCRIPTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

One of the most salient ways in which lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people face discrimination is in the workplace. In an overview of 15 recent studies, economist Lee Badgett and colleagues found that since the mid-1990s, "15% to 43% of LGB respondents experienced workplace discrimination" (Badgett, et al. 2007:3). Studies that have sampled non-White LGBT populations have also found that discrimination or bias exists for these groups as well. For example, in one of the largest surveys of Latino gay men in the U.S., Rafael Diaz and George Ayala (2001) documented the various ways in which Latino gay men face discrimination. The majority of respondents in this study reported that their gay identity caused strains in their families (70%), that they were the target of verbal harassment for being gay or acting effeminate (64%), and that they often lacked financial resources for basic necessities (61%) (Diaz and Ayala 2001). Likewise, according to *Say It Loud: I'm Black and I'm Proud: Black Pride Survey 2000* (Battle et al., 2002), on average, respondents from a nation-wide survey reported at least two forms of discrimination, and a majority reported at least one form of discrimination (80%) and over half (53%) reported discrimination based on their racial or ethnic identity. Similarly, in a study on Asian Pacific American LGBT populations, almost all respondents (95%) reported at least one form of discrimination, and 82 percent reported bias based on their racial or ethnic identity (Dang and Hu 2005). Given these observations and experiences of L&G people of color, how can L&G

organizing efforts address these multiple oppressions and meld these concerns into a more inclusive social movement agenda?

Vaid's (1995) account of the various Marches on Washington that have been organized by L&G advocates across the country reveals how both identity politics and intersectionality have affected indigenous organizing efforts. "While the First National March, in 1979, had generated interest in national organizing," she writes, "the 1987 march boosted gay and lesbian activism at the local level. Groups like ACT UP spread across the nation, and new political organizations came into existence" (Vaid 1995: 117). The 1993 March on Washington, however, was a complicated moment for L&G organizing as a whole. Organizers and activists relied on an analysis of power and rights that mimicked the civil rights grievances that were voiced more than three decades earlier. According to Vaid, "If gay organizations at the national and state level wrap themselves in the mantle of civil rights language and history, they must take clear stands on the civil rights of blacks, people of color, immigrants, and women" (1995: 186). Here was the presence of notions of intersectionality within L&G organizing. By recognizing the concerns of other powerless populations, L&G organizing would not only take into account the various, multi-layered identities of their own constituents but it would also be able to foster broad-based alliances with other marginalized groups. Suddenly, L&G organizing became much more difficult. More than a dilution of L&G identity politics, Vaid's mainstreaming effect and its relation to civil rights causes directly tied issues of oppression to indigenous organizing. This was the hopeful reading of the introduction of intersectionality to L&G identity politics. However, as is evidenced by some of the key issues that shape indigenous organizing today (like marriage, domestic partnership and

inclusion in the armed forces), L&G organizing efforts recoiled and could not manage a sustained reading of intersectionality.

Still, as this dissertation discusses throughout, there are people within LGBT populations who are continuing to talk about the ways in which race, class, gender, economics, language, and skin color all intersect. Leaders are talking about it too. So, given what has been documented, what are some of the concrete steps that can be taken to help address these concerns? How can these observations and arguments be put into practice? What are some of the ways in which the intersectional imagination can be developed further? Next is a list of prescriptive measures and tasks that can be exercised in order to address concerns about how non-White L&G organizing efforts can make use of the ways in which identities continue to come together and are taken apart.

Data Generation

More data on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) populations are needed. Although there has been a 400 percent increase in the number of peer-reviewed academic journal articles on LGBT issues from 1995 to 2005[43], data on the behaviors, attitudes, and composition of LGBT populations are not collected in a consistent manner. Since 1990, the U.S. Census Bureau has collected data on same-sex couple households and this has been one of the largest, nationwide data sets to collect information about L&G people. Still, because it only accounts for coupled households, these data are very limited. Also, as was recently noted, "Some anecdotal evidence exists related to both

[43] See the Movement Advancement Project's (2007) *The Momentum Report – 2007 Edition.*

transgender equality and LGBT communities of color, but tracking and analyzing such qualitative data over time is nearly impossible" (MAP 2007b: 8).

Collecting demographic data on LGBT populations over time and in a consistent manner will help to build benchmarks that can then be used to assess such things as equality, health, religiosity, family structures, class, education, and other social indicators. Longitudinal survey data projects can help to address the lopsided nature of much of the data that currently exist on LGBT populations. Because LGBT populations are still stigmatized both legally and extra-legally in the U.S. and beyond, such projects must be able to utilize sampling frames that are culturally sensitive.

Saving (and Using) Institutional Memories

All too often, research initiatives fail to make use of already-existing organizational data on LGBT populations. By partnering with LGBT organizations, researchers and research projects can help to build on what is already known by practitioners, by staff members, by organizers and by leaders within these organizations. Such collaborative endeavors can also help to alleviate respondent fatigue, which was expressed by all of the in-depth interview research participants for this dissertation. Making use of the knowledge that already exists requires extensive archival efforts and clearinghouses for data and records about organizations and research projects that have come and gone. In 2003, the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum, then the only national Black L&G organization in the U.S., closed its doors for good; and the following year, the Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organization (LLEGO) did the same. Representing two of the largest non-White LGBT populations in the country, these two organizations and the people who staffed them, all have valuable stories to tell that can

inform not only future research but also future non-White organizational formations. The materials produced by these organizations can be used to make such assessments.

Youth Projects

Across all four focus group sessions conducted for this dissertation, there was strong agreement that more efforts to educate and train youth about L&G organizing tactics and history are needed. Such things as basic activist training, from developing a flyer and canvassing households to writing opinion pieces for newspapers and lobbying at the local, state, and national levels would be appropriate. One research participant, Mandy Carter, advanced the development of an Audre Lorde and Bayard Rustin Institute for Leadership Training, where issues of race, sexuality, and gender would be a major focus of activist training. Funders for Lesbian and Gay Issues (2008) reported that 17 percent of all dollars granted to LGBT organizations and projects went towards issues affecting children and youth. At the structural level, this is an indicator of interest in such issues. Inserting a racial justice component to these efforts would require cooperation between those entities already engaged in racial justice work and these children and youth efforts. According to a recent study on Black and Latina/o youth aged 15-25, 55 percent of Blacks and 36 percent of Latina/os reported that homosexuality was always wrong (Black Youth Project 2007: 21). Though the reasons for these beliefs are still not yet determined, what is clear is that L&G organizing efforts must engage Black and Latina/o youth.

Leadership Model Exploration

In the previous chapter, two concurrent themes to leadership building included modeling leadership styles that have traditionally existed versus developing newer forms of leadership that may speak to the experiences of communities of color. One example of a lesser-known form of leadership can be found in the concept of shared governance. In 2006, Beverly Guy-Sheftall explained how shared governance – a form of power sharing that intentionally includes members from all levels of an organization or group within one governing body – has helped to foment positive decision-making processes at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the U.S. Her explanation was meant to increase awareness of a different type of leadership and governance style that has not received much attention and has been understudied. Incorporating lesser-known yet culturally functional and organizationally relevant formations that have a history of success within non-White environments is critical to the development of the intersectional imagination. Part of the task here is to insist on questions that attempt to gain an understanding of what has worked and what has been successful within non-White populations.

Sexuality Education

Human sexuality is not only about biology. An area of discussion that arose across the four focus group sessions conducted for this dissertation was the definition of sexuality itself. Though many definitions have been crafted through the years, one thing is clear: “Instead of seeing sexuality as a unified whole, we have to recognize that there are various forms of sexuality: there are in fact many sexualities” (Weeks 2003: 40). The literature on the social construction of sexuality has helped to highlight those instances

when the concepts of race and sexuality intersect. More than convenient analytical concepts, however, they are socially- and culturally-charged markers that carry both positive and negative consequences for everyone. Though it has been over 60 years since Alfred Kinsey and colleagues helped to document how human sexuality can be measured with the aid of a continuum, much of the current debates and organizing around sexuality issues paints a static picture of what sexual identities entail. General education about human sexuality must incorporate this notion of how sexualities are always already fluid and in flux. Attaching a race-specific component to definitions of sexuality can be a start.

Bridge Work

In the classic feminist anthology *This Bridge Called My Back*, scholars, writers and artists called attention to the ways in which sex, gender, and race intersect. Though centered on the ways that personal experiences of oppression come together, this text has significance today in thinking about groups and organizations. All research participants in this dissertation agreed that there were gaps between organizing that was LGBT-based and organizing that was led by non-White organizations. Further, many participants in this research agreed that they experienced these gaps on a personal level. While some felt more comfortable in L&G environments, others felt more welcome in their respective race-based communities. Whatever the case, it was clear that both types of populations needed each other. Both needed to insist on work that incorporated race-specific and L&G-specific components. One way that this can occur is to insist on proactive, community actions that highlight the cooperation between a race-specific entity and a L&G-specific entity. More than having a liaison at one or the other entity, such efforts would center on a specific task, whether it is a social or a political event. Creating a space

for a physical representation of LGBT people in a non-White-led effort or vice versa may help in raising cultural awareness. This idea is similar to the *Take Your Daughters to Work* campaign co-created by Marie C. Wilson, former president of the Ms. Foundation.

Establishing L&G caucuses at primarily heterosexual, non-White conferences and organizations can be one way that bridge work manifests itself.

Visibility Campaigning

Related to bridge work, creating cultural awareness media campaigns within non-White-identified communities is needed. Such efforts would incorporate various media forms, from electronic web casting to highway billboards. In fact, in 2006 the New York State Black Gay Network unveiled a public advertisement campaign that showed Black gay and bisexual men in Black environments. These ads appeared in Black neighborhoods in New York City. Such examples of public awareness campaigning must be sustained over a long period of time and must make sure to include other constituents, like Black lesbians. Utilizing strategic media advertising campaigns is a way to increase awareness of the existence of LGBT people of color. Working with such media watchdog groups as the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) may help in formulating strategies for ensuring maximum exposure of such visibility campaigns.

More Non-White Formations

As discussed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 6, one leadership strategy for non-White people in LGBT populations is to increase the number of non-White groups and organizations. To date, there is a national Black L&G organization (the National Black Justice Coalition) but one does not exist for Latina/o people, for instance. And while this

may not necessarily be a problem, it does send a signal to organizers and to the greater Latina/o populations. But Black and Latina/o LGBT populations are not the only ones that have experienced setbacks with sustaining organizations. As discussed in Chapter 2, though efforts were made to recruit and contact a variety of non-White participants for this research, many were not reached. This is clearly a limitation of this dissertation, and it is also an indicator that more support is needed in terms of building non-White L&G formations. Thinking creatively about how these formations can be supported is part of the intersectional imagination. For instance, researchers and demographers have shown that Native American populations are often disconnected from each other and from urban environments. Supporting a Native American L&G group may entail provisions to increase communication between and among other Native American groups or other L&G organizations. Not every non-White group has to have a formal LGBT organization. Other formations may be just as effective, but these must be encouraged, supported, and initiated.

A Focus on Positive Identity Management

Throughout, this dissertation has focused on the ways in which a group of people who face multiple forms of oppression continues to lead. Within non-White populations or within LGBT populations, all of the participants in this research are managing their identifiers and thriving. This flies in the face of how oppression is usually conceptualized. To be clear, oppression exists and it negatively affects everyone. However, within systems of oppression people are being successful. They are creating new formations. They are making the links between their personal struggles and those of the larger groups to which they belong. They are continuing to talk about how they are

oppressed, but they are also clear about how they benefit, how they can navigate these oppressions, how they survive. The task for researchers and for anyone interested in the study of oppression is to learn to ask about positive identity management. The study of intersectionality must incorporate how success and resilience is made apparent.

Conclusion

Sociologists and other social scientists have often theorized about the nature of groups or collective behavior. These theories range from psychological accounts of untamed group mentalities to treatises on formal groups or organizations. Organizing around issues of sexuality is a complicated task, especially when operating under the specter of identity politics. Urvashi Vaid's (1995) *Virtual Equality: The Mainstreaming of Gay and Lesbian Liberation* was a reflection of her experiences as an organizer and as the head of one of the largest L&G political organizations in the country. Her stories, experiences, and interviews highlighted some of the obstacles that L&G populations continue to face today. Race, institutionalization, and identity politics continue to divide L&G populations in such a way that a unified call for understanding, acceptance, and especially equality is difficult to formulate let alone sustain. Vaid accuses L&G groups of mainstreaming their agenda in support of a world where homosexuals are "virtually equal" to their heterosexual counterparts. Similarly, Craig Rimmerman (2002) shows how the L&G movement has gone from organizing around difference (identity) to organizing based on political feasibility (politics). Embedded in these distinctions is the tension between the politics of difference and assimilation.

L&G populations everywhere across the U.S. must publicly acknowledge the limitations associated with a politics of inclusion ideology that has been operating for decades now, particularly within indigenous political organizations. “Without dialogue and debate about what greater good we are working for,” Cathy Cohen notes, “we may in fact achieve inclusion, but inclusion in an oppressive society. Therefore, we must be prepared to struggle with one another about what politics, ethics, values (yes, values), and visions are shaping LGBTTSQ organizations and more generally ‘our’ movement” (1999: 115-116).

At the center of the research conducted for this dissertation is a maze: the labyrinth of identity politics and intersectionality. It involves an analysis of oppression that toggles between the individual and the surrounding social structures. It includes the strategies that people develop in figuring out how oppressions come together and are taken apart. This maze is full of complex constructions of the social, biological, and relational kind. With the aid of the intersectional imagination, we are able to navigate the maze and develop solutions for positive identity management, the kind that recognizes triumph and resilience in the midst of oppression.

APPENDIX A

What follows is a list of initial interview items developed in the early stages of this research project.

#	Item
1.	What are some of the strategies used to foster racial and gender understanding (i.e. multiculturalism, coalitions, diversity training, racial quotas for boards, affirmative action, redefining missions)? How are they employed? Do they work? How have you personally used them and how does the mainstream movement use them? What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of these strategies?
2.	How would you define identity and identity politics? How have you personally used them as organizing tools and how has the mainstream movement used them?
3.	How/Do you articulate the interconnectedness of sexual identity, race, gender, and economics? How does the mainstream movement articulate it?
4.	How do you understand single-issue organizing? What are the advantages and disadvantages of single-issue organizing? How have you engaged in this type of organizing?
5.	In 1995, Urvashi Vaid observed that pointing out racial dynamics of a situation was controversial. Has this changed? How so?
6.	What actions have you taken to broaden the scope of "lesbian and gay" organizing? How has the mainstream movement supported you?
7.	In 1995, Urvashi Vaid argued that "most gay and lesbian people neither understand nor value the importance of multiracial and multi-issue politics." Is this still the case? How/Have you worked to combat this?
8.	What are some of the theories and strategies for multi-issue organizing? What types of strategies have you employed and what has the mainstream movement done? Name a particularly effective strategy and tell me how it functioned. (Life history of a strategy)
9.	Tell me about your experience with race-based organizing. What organizing strategies did you employ?
10.	Is there a unifying politics for the mainstream movement to pursue? If so, what is it?

#	Item
11.	Tell me about some of the ways in which you have advocated for LGBT rights. When, where, why, how?
12.	Tell me about some of the ways in which you have advocated for racialized LGBT rights. When, where, why, how?
13.	Tell me about some of the ways in which you have advocated for non-LGBT rights. When, where, why, how?
14.	What types of organizing experience have you had? What general areas/specific topics/issues?
15.	What is an LGBT identity?
16.	What have YOU done to expand/support this identity?
17.	What do you understand about intersectional politics? What are some examples of this? Have you participated in this type of organizing? If so, how?
18.	What is the distinction between multi- and single-issue politicking/organizing?
19.	How do you think the mainstream movement addresses issues of race?
20.	What is the mainstream movement? Who is it?
21.	How has your racial/ethnic experience aided the ways in which you organize?
22.	How has your racial/ethnic experience hindered the ways in which you organize?
23.	How have issues of race/ethnicity united (and divided) the mainstream L&G movement in this country?
24.	Tell me about your profession. How would you describe what you do? How do others describe what you do? How does the mainstream movement describe what you do?

APPENDIX B

What follows is a shortened interview schedule, or checklist used as a guide for each interview. Some themes included the utility of single- and multi-issue organizing, race and ethnicity, and the distinct characteristics of race-based organizing within L&G social movements in the U.S.

#		Item/Theme
1.	□	Tell me about your profession. How would you describe what you do? How do others in THE MOVEMENT describe what you do? What types of organizing experience have you had? What general areas/specific topics/issues?
2.	□	(How) Do you talk about the interconnectedness of sexual identity, race, gender, and economics? How do others in the MOVEMENT articulate it?
3.	□	How do you understand multiracial and multi-issue politics/organizing?
4.	□	What does "identity" and "identity politics" mean to you? (How) Have you used these as organizing tools? How do others in the MOVEMENT talk about these?
5.	□	What are lesbian and gay rights? What/Who is THE MOVEMENT?
6.	□	Is there a unifying politics for the MOVEMENT to pursue? If so, what is it?
7.	□	Tell me about some of the ways in which you have advocated for LGBT rights. When, where, why, how? [strategies]
8.	□	Tell me about some of the ways in which you have advocated for non-LGBT rights. When, where, why, how? [strategies]
9.	□	Tell me about your experience with race-based organizing. What organizing strategies did you employ?
10.	□	What is a racialized LGBT identity? Tell me about some of the ways in which you have advocated for racialized LGBT rights. When, where, why, how? [strategies]
11.	□	How do you think THE MOVEMENT addresses issues of race?
12.	□	(How) Has your racial/ethnic experience aided the ways in which you organize?
13.	□	(How) Has your racial/ethnic experience hindered the ways in which you organize?

APPENDIX C

BIOGRAPHIES OF LEADERS INTERVIEWED, SPRING 2006

NAME	ACTIVITY
KEITH BOYKIN Broadcaster, Author, Commentator, Activist, Black Gay Man	In February 2006, Boykin became a co-host of the TV series *My Two Cents* on the BET J channel, a part of BET Networks. In January 2007, he began making regular appearances as a commentator on CNN's *Paula Zahn Now*. Boykin's most recent book, *Beyond the Down Low: Sex, Lies and Denial in Black America* focusing on the Down-low phenomenon, was published in February 2005 and released in paperback in February 2006. From December 2003 until April 2006, Boykin served as president of the board of the National Black Justice Coalition, a Washington-based civil rights organization dedicated to fighting racism and homophobia. He lives in New York with his life partner Nathan Hale Williams. (http://www.keithboykin.com/bio/)
MANDY CARTER Social Justice Activist, Black Lesbian Woman	With over 39 years of social justice activist experience, Carter's accomplishments include the following: March on Washington for Lesbians and Gays, national steering committee, 1987, 1993; North Carolina Senate Vote 1990 and North Carolina Mobilization 1996, director; UMOJA (black gay and lesbian organization), founding member; Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum, board of governors; member of the boards of the International Federation of Black Prides, and the Triangle Foundation. Carter was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize as part of the 1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005 to recognize, make visible and celebrate the impressive and valuable, yet often invisible peace work of thousands of women around the world. Carter found her activist roots in the late 1960s through the Quaker-based American Friends Service Committee, the pacifist War Resisters League, and the former Institute for the Study of Nonviolence. She was born in 1948 in Albany, New York, and today lives in Durham, North Carolina. (http://www.answers.com/topic/mandy-carter)

NAME	ACTIVITY
RAFAEL DIAZ Researcher, Professor, Latino Gay Man	Diaz is by training a social worker (M.S.W., New York University 1977) and a developmental psychologist (Ph.D., Yale University 1982). He completed a two-year post-doctoral traineeship in epidemiology, biostatistics, and prevention science at The Center for AIDS Prevention Studies (CAPS), University of California San Francisco (UCSF, 1992-1994). After 13 years as a Professor of Psychology and Education at the University of New Mexico and Stanford University, he joined the faculty at CAPS/UCSF for seven years conducting research on Latino gay men and HIV. Recently he was appointed Professor of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University (SFSU), where he has assumed the position of Director of the César Chávez Institute (CCI). Guided by principles of community participatory research, the CCI conducts research programs pertaining to the impact of social oppression on the health, education, and well-being of disenfranchised communities in the US. Throughout his career, Diaz has played a major role in the training of ethnic minority investigators, including serving as co-director of the CAPS/UCSF minority research training program, funded by NIMH, and currently as director of the M-RISP program at SFSU. (http://rimi2.sfsu.edu/seminars/2004/diaz.html)
ANDRES DUQUE Blogger, Political and Media Activist, Latino Gay Man	Born in Colombia, South America, Duque is the director of Mano a Mano, a network of Latino LGBT organizations and activists, and a board member of the Empire State Pride Agenda, the preeminent lesbian and gay civil rights organization in New York State. He also sits on the board of the Guillermo Vasquez Independent Democratic Club of Queens, NY (GVIDCQ) and the People of Color Political Action Club, and is a founding member of the Audre Lorde Project and the Colombian Lesbian and Gay Association (COLEGA). He is recognized throughout the United States and Latin America for his activism in the Latino LGBT community, and was named one of Out Magazine's top 100 activists in 2002. (http://blabbeando.blogspot.com/)

NAME	ACTIVITY
SURINA KHAN Social Justice Activist, Writer, Pakistani Lesbian Woman	Khan leads the Women's Foundation of California's reproductive justice and sexual rights program and oversees grant making and capacity-building programs. She has worked for social, racial and economic justice issues for over 15 years as an activist, trainer, board member, researcher, writer and executive director. Khan is currently on the advisory council of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, co-chair of the Women of Color Working Group of the Funders Network on Population, Reproductive Health and Rights, a member of the steering committee of the Los Angeles chapter of Asian American Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy, and a member of the advisory panel for the Catalyst Fund: Resources for Women of Color in Reproductive Justice. From 2000 to 2003, she served as Executive Director of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, and prior to this she was a research analyst with Political Research Associates, a think tank and research center. Khan has served on the boards of the Funding Exchange and the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund. She was born in Pakistan, grew up in Connecticut, and now lives in Long Beach California. (http://www.thetaskforce.org/activist_center/womens_hist_month_08_roll_call)
PAULINE PARK Political Activist, Blogger, Writer, Korean Transgender Woman	In 1997, Park co-founded Queens Pride House, a center for the LGBT communities of Queens, and Iban/Queer Koreans of New York. In 1998, Park co-founded the New York Association for Gender Rights Advocacy, the first statewide transgender advocacy organization in NY. She led a campaign for the transgender rights law enacted by the NYC Council (Int. No. 24, enacted as Local Law 3 of 2002). She served on the working group that helped to draft guidelines, adopted by the Commission on Human Rights in December 2004. Park served on the steering committee of the coalition that secured enactment of the Dignity in All Schools Act by the NYC Council in September 2004. In 2005, Park became the first openly transgendered person chosen to be grand marshal of the NYC Pride March, the oldest and largest pride event in the United States.(http://www.paulinepark.com/)

NAME	ACTIVITY
URVASHI VAID Social Justice Activist, Author, Lawyer, Indian Lesbian Woman	Widely recognized for her work with national gay rights organizations, Vaid worked extensively with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) in many different roles, including as media director, executive director and director of the NGLTF Policy Institute. She is also a former staff attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union's National Prison Project and a former columnist for *The Advocate*. Vaid is the author of *Virtual Equality: The Mainstreaming of Gay & Lesbian Liberation* (Anchor, 1996), co-editor of *Creating Change: Public Policy, Sexuality and Civil Rights* (St. Martin's Press, 2000), and has penned numerous articles on gay and lesbian rights. She was the Deputy Director of the Governance and Civil Society Unit of the Peace and Social Justice Program of the Ford Foundation. Since 2005, Vaid has served as the executive director of the Arcus Foundation, a national, private, grant making foundation that promotes tolerance, gay and lesbian issues, and the conservation of great apes. (http://www.arcusfoundation.org/pages/news_cur_vaid_bio.shtml)

APPENDIX D

How is race/ethnicity understood as a barrier and/or conduit? Spoken Responses		
Conduit		Barrier
understanding/access with other people of color groups		allows for stereotyping to occur
increases ability to connect with multiple issues/networks		interpreted as aggressive/angry
credibility when doing race-based work		questioning of credibility on non-race-based issues
opens doors		affects employment opportunities
informs an underdog perspective		invisibility in communities of color
understanding of discrimination		blocks discussions about sexuality
increases chances of being called upon to speak on behalf of POC issues		increases chances of being called upon to speak on behalf of POC issues
adds unique voice at work		
helps in coping with some of the stressful aspects of being a homosexual		

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