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A Longitudinal Study of LGBTQ-Rights Interest Groups, PACs, and State Rights

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 1: Introduction

One of the most recent movements to appear upon the United States political scene is the push for rights for citizens that identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ). The movement first emerged with the Stonewall riots in 1969, spread quickly across the country to another stronghold in San Francisco, and by 2000, gained national recognition (Gutterman, 2010, p. 99). Now the movement has expanded to where fourteen states and Washington, D. C., have legal same-sex marriage or civil unions and more have acknowledgement of legal rights associated with marriage (HRC "Interstate Relationship Recognition," 2012). President Barack Obama has identified same-sex marriage in his 2012 inaugural address as well as his 2013 State of the Union address as policy goals, stating at the inauguration, "Our journey is not complete until our gay brothers and sisters are treated like anyone else under the law, for if we are truly created equal, then surely the love we commit to one another must be equal as well" (Office of the Press Secretary). Public opinion polls show ever increasing support among Americans for LGBTQ rights, especially among younger age groups, but it remains a divisive political issue.

Concurrent with the movement for LGBTQ rights has been an explosive increase in interest group and political action committee membership as a method of political participation. Furthermore, there has been a similar increase in groups of these types whose goal is gaining LGBTQ rights. This increase in the visibility of LGBTQ rights as a political issue and interest groups and political action committees that focus on LGBTQ rights begs the question, what can we expect to see in coming years? If the trend continues and LGBTQ rights are expanded nationwide, will the number of groups continue to rise? Furthermore, what should states with few permissive laws for its LGBTQ citizens and a political climate that is unaccepting of its nonheterosexual population expect in the future? Will more interest groups in these states create a rise the number of rights, or do rights have to come first to nurture the entrance of successful groups? The research proposed in this work seeks to address these questions.

Chapter 2: The Research Question

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The principal research question I will focus on is centered on the relationship between political participation and *de jure* rights for citizens. The question I will seek to address follows: does increasing political participation create an increase in legal rights? I will study this through political participation as measured through the proxy of interest groups and political action committees and legal rights as it pertains to LGBTQ citizens. Theory in explaining social movements will undergird my work and guide me on a more detailed explanation of why in some areas, movements remain energized and successful in achieving intended political change, and why some groups in other areas find little success or instead can only make a small gain then stall. Within the study, I will attempt to foresee the future of the movement. Specifically, I will review the future of LGBTQ in states where these populations do not currently have marriage rights, employment anti-discrimination measures, and other legal protections. In these areas with few laws and presently few interest groups, will an increase in groups need to precede an increase in legal rights and protections? Or will the legal changes need to occur for political participation to grow? This is a question my analysis will help me answer.

Next, I would like to address the importance of this topic. Evidently, to ensure a functioning democracy, most analysts would prefer a participative citizen base. Studying participation, furthermore, by focusing on interest groups reflects the reality of groups' activity in governance as well as the practicality of data that groups provide, with solid numbers on the number of groups in geographic areas that other forms of political participation may lack. But why do I want to focus on LGBTQ rights, given a dizzying array of issues that groups have formed around, such as gun rights and reproductive rights? First, as explained in the introduction, the issue is under considerable focus from political and cultural leaders and legal change from both state legislative bodies and the Supreme Court at this point in history. Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, individuals identify as LGBTQ, whereas most people do not identify by their views on gun rights or abortion legality. For people who identify within the LGBTQ spectrum, these legal issues affect them in a very real way on a day-to-day basis, touching every aspect of their life, from marriage and its associated taxation and health insurance benefits as well as societal recognition of the validity of a relationship, the ability to be themselves at work without fear of being fired, being open about themselves in attaining housing without discrimination, and so on. Finally, expanded LGBTQ rights, for the first time in American history, is something that a majority of Americans support. The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life reports that forty-nine percent of Americans support same-sex marriage with forty-four percent in opposition, as of March 2013, and seventy percent of those in the "Millennial Generation," born in 1981 or later, support same-sex marriage (The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life).

Before beginning the analytical section of this work, I would like to define some terms. First, "LGBTQ" is an acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer. An individual who identifies as a lesbian is someone who identifies their gender as female—that is, regardless of their biological sex, their internal sense of gender and/or their expression of gender is mostly female—and who is primarily emotionally, romantically, and sexually attracted to women. An individual who identifies as gay is someone who identifies their gender as male and is primarily emotionally, romantically, and sexually attracted to men. An individual who is bisexual is someone who identifies as male or female and is emotionally, romantically, and sexually attracted to both men and women. Transgender refers to an individual whose gender identity and/or gender expression to the world differ from conventional and societal expectations from the individual's gender assigned at birth. Finally, queer is a term that describes an individual whose identity lies outside the terms previously described, as "destabilizing the assumed categories and binaries of sexual identity" through a recognition of fluidity in sexual behavior and gender identity (Cohen, 2000, p. 200-1). Though the term remains an anti-LGBTQ slur, a movement to reclaim it as an identity began when the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT-UP) renamed itself the "Queer Nation" in the 1990s and began the politicizing of the term "queer" (Levy and Johnson, 2012, p. 130-1). "Queer" as a reclaimed identity defies definition or categorization and instead seeks to break the boundaries of the more traditional "GLBT" acronym. Indeed, now an academic discipline exists as "queer theory."

Accordingly, from these terms, what I call an "LGBTQ interest group or political action committee" is a group that seeks to increase legal rights, legal recognition, societal acceptance, or any combination of these things of any people who identify as LGBTQ. Focusing on one group instead of all five does not mean a group is excluded. For instance, I include groups that focus on rights of transgender individuals as opposed to gay or lesbian individuals.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

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The theoretical basis for research lies mostly within the study of social movements. Many models exist: the political opportunity thesis, the political process model, the resource mobilization theory, strategic or game theory model, and the poor people's movement theory. The strategic model is most relevant to my research, but all other models contribute important solutions to answer why social movements occur and their methods for success or failure.

The political opportunity thesis was the first to propose an explanation for social movements focusing primarily on opportunity. "Movement formation… is the product of people making and seizing opportunities. Movements *create* opportunities for themselves or others," writes Tarrow in his definitive 1994 work, *Power in Movement*, one of the first articulations of the focus on a political opportunity structure, or POS (p. 81-2, emphasis in the original). Tarrow defines four variables that control the success of social movements: "the opening up of access to participation, shifts in ruling alignments, the availability of influential allies, and cleavages within and among elites" (1994, p. 86). The focus in the POS is on the specific opportunity, and as later scholars have noted, "neither intense grievances nor extensive resources are sufficient or even necessary for movement mobilization to occur... What is necessary… is the 'opening up' of political opportunities" (Goodwin, Jasper, and Khattra, 1999, p. 30). The POS view of social movements finds its key point in specific political opportunities.

However, there is considerable disagreement on what exactly constitutes a "political opportunity." Much literature exists on the problem of tautology within the definition of POS and that "political opportunities" can define social movements themselves (Goodwin, Jasper, and Khattra, 1999, p. 30). A revised version of the political opportunity thesis was created by McAdam in 1996 in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements* to attempt to address some of these problems. In the work, McAdam redefines Tarrows' original four requirements for POS to "openness of institutional political system, stability of elite alignments, presence of elite allies, capacity for repression" (1996, p. 10). Furthermore, McAdam clarifies that POS should be used as "a key explanatory variable in regard to two principal dependent variables: the timing of collective action and the outcomes of movement activity," thus focusing the opportunity on dimensions of when the movement occurs and the movement's success based on how it uses the political opportunities (1996, p. 29). Later literature like that written by McAdam attempts to clarify the political opportunity thesis by redefining exactly what a "political opportunity structure" is.

Yet even this redefined definition contained conflicts. McAdam acknowledges that successful movements occur without the prerequisites given in the political opportunity thesis of a more open system, the help of elite allies, and low repression. He even uses the LGBTQ rights movement as an example of this: "One would be hard pressed to identify any specific change in the institutional features of the system that suddenly advantaged gays… In fact, the movement was preceded by a[n] electoral realignment that can only be seen as disadvantageous to gays, Richard Nixon's ascension to the White House in 1968. If anything, then, it would appear as if the movement arose in a context of *contracting* political opportunities" (1996, p. 32, emphasis in the original). Clearly, the political opportunity thesis, while contributing many useful claims to the study of social movements, warrants further examination. How can movements that occur in the face of seemingly no political opportunity make progress?

Thus, the political opportunity thesis was expanded into the political process model, the second theory which will guide my research. The PPM addresses some shortcomings within POS, mainly by adding the concept of "frames" to the origin model, defined as "emergent meanings and definitions… shared by the adherents of the burgeoning movement" (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 1996, p. 8). This concept introduced some cultural fluidity to POS, which was considered by many theorists to be hindered by its structural rigidity. Frames allow for "recast[ing] language and cultural codes that organize information" (Melucci 1996, p. 102). In researching LGBTQ social movements, this is significant because the idea of cultural framing lends itself to queer theory well. Indeed, the idea of queerness is unique in the way it emphasizes constructivism and how each individual can define themselves fluidly at each moment in time without having to fit within binaries of gender or sexuality, so the framing addition in the PPM is especially relevant to the LGBTQ movement. Furthermore, how an issue is framed in a political context can determine its political success in a very tangible way. For instance, framing the issue of LGBTQ rights in a way that emphasizes human rights instead of reworking the institution of marriage or redefining gender makes political success more likely, especially in areas like the Southeastern United States that may be opposed to it otherwise (Mucciaroni 2008, p. 16-17). The PPM incorporates cultural differences that are ignored by other models as well as considering best strategies for political success.

These models have been further reinterpreted by other theorists in the past decade. For instance, Tilly further adjusted the political opportunity thesis to encompass new research by adding "stability of political alignments" and "pace of change" to the four factors of POS (2008, p. 91). This opens the model to a larger range of causes for success or failure of the movement, important to the LGBTQ movement due to its need to consider a constantly evolving political climate which makes success or failure more likely. Moreover, Tilly's new PPM reduces focus on a necessary structure of a movement, as many theorists state that the models are all far too formulaic for something as complex and situation-dependent as social movements.

Consequently, the Tilly school of thought on PPM allows for more consideration of cultural factors and background political changes.

Later perspectives of social movements focus on power and access to resources and add important new considerations when studying LGBTQ social movements. Resource mobilization theory dictates that success for movements can only happen when outside forces intervene on their behalf (Mucciaroni 2008, p. 15-16). Movements in of themselves cannot gain political success or social change. Outside actors that intervene on behalf of movements, in my study, are interest groups and political action committees (PACs). These groups represent the LGBTQ civil rights movement in the realm of politics and law-making. In an ideal form presented by the resource mobilization theory, the interest groups and PACs act as a proxy for translating the interests of those in the movement to legislation and government policies that give LGBTQ individuals more rights. However, in practice, this may not be what occurs: like most social movements, the LGBTQ movement is not a fully united front and contains groups with diverging interests and goals. Though nearly all the groups can agree on ultimate goals of legalized same-sex marriage, protections regarding hate crimes and bullying, and anti-discrimination policies, among others, the specifics about the policies and the best means for achieving the goals vary. Moreover, goal priorities also can vary, leading to groups using strategies that may work against each other. For example, as one group pushes for transgender equality, they may emphasize that transgender individuals may pursue "traditional marriage," like some conservative groups accept. Another group may simultaneously work towards same-sex marriage and emphasize that love is equal. These two groups in the same locality may present too conflicting messages to find political success.

Moreover, the unique method of protest that some LGBTQ groups use has been a frequent topic of study. The group has split into two principle groups: traditional protesters and non-traditional protests. “Assimilation-minded groups” are individuals who press for things like marriage equality through traditional means, like interest groups and PACs, and these are groups that I will focus on in my study (Shephard, 2010, p. 9). The other, smaller group’s principal interest is in changing fundamentally conceptions in society on issues like family and monogamy. In his study of different forms of LGBTQ protest, Benjamin Shephard writes that the “middle-class gays have become homogenized into the cultural mainstream” but left unanswered by that traditional protest are “liberation critique of militarism, racism, and patriarchy” that states that marriage itself as an institution creates inequality and oppression and needs to be removed as a societal force (2010, p. 9). These groups primarily act by using “protest as performance” in events like drag parades and unauthorized parades before and after sanctioned Pride events (2010, p. 12). This is another example of how two groups within the LGBTQ rights umbrella can use methods that work against each other and create an environment that will not allow for political change.

Still other conceptions of social movements focus on aspects how groups use their resources in resource application. The issue-based theory states that a movement’s overall success depends on the specific issues it prioritizes (Mucciaroni 2008, p. 257). Within LGBTQ rights focused groups, this could mean the difference between groups that focus on marriage rights, groups that focus on the adoption rights for same-sex couples, and groups that focus on anti-discrimination language in workplace contracts. The different issues have different arenas in which they will find more or less success; for instance, framing the same-sex adoption issue with fiscal concerns tend to keep fiscally conservative politicians from pursuing legislation that would only allow legally married men and women to adopt children. In fact, some argue this is why Tennessee has such lenient policies when it comes to unmarried same-sex couples in adopting children: if only married couples were allowed to adopt, the state would have to foster many more children at a higher cost. To look how resources are applied in another issue, the Tennessee state legislature as it stands in 2012 would be a poor option for trying to push for same-sex marriage due to its socially conservative slant, and groups would waste valuable resources if they attempted to do so. The issue-based theory focuses on a group's specific goals within a broader issue topic.

Other resource theories focus on the internal workings of the group themselves and how resources are allocated within each group. The isomorphism theory focuses on group internal organization and posits that groups that oppose each other change internally in ways that mirror each other in response to shared constraints in a time period (Fetner, 2008, p. 50). In her 2008 study of how the Religious Right has shaped the LGBTQ rights movement, Tina Fetner proposes that by consolidating their political support within interest groups and PACs, social issue-based religious conservative groups actually caused LGBTQ rights groups to do the same in response and to gain footing on even ground in working with legislators (p. 51). Oddly, groups with polar variations in their issue stances often work in near coordination due to this action-response relationship. The isomorphism theory of resource management as proposed by Fetner has changed the conception of how competing groups work with or against each other.

The primary movement to form in reaction to the political opportunity thesis and the political process movement is the strategic theory, also called game theory in relation to social movements. Strategic theory reformats the processes proposed in the political opportunity thesis and political process model, instead focusing on actions and reactions by opposing groups. These actions are framed as if groups are "players in an arena," exhibiting strategy to achieve their goals (Jasper, 2012, p. 18-9). This theory, like the political opportunity thesis, places weight again on institutional structures that shape groups but instead sees these structures building the "arena" in which the players compete (Jasper, 2012, p. 20). The construction of how movements works changes fundamentally in the strategic theory.

Moreover, the concept of how goals of the movements are achieved also undergoes a fundamental change in the strategic theory. Power for groups to achieve their goals occurs with disruption, "rooted in patterns of specialization and resulting social interdependencies" (Piven, 2006, p. 26). This power, renamed by Jasper as positional power, is attained when one group can control "some process that one's opponents value" (Jasper, 2012, p. 15). The strategy of a movement is to cause a hurdle for opposition that can only be rectified by giving a movement its some part of its goals. For LGBTQ groups working within interest groups and PACs, this can mean making voters dissatisfied with the goals of opposing social conservative groups. For instance, by making "traditional marriage" groups seems like they are denying basic human rights to couples who want to marry but are the same gender, the LGBTQ group has disrupted the moral argument made by the conservative group. Furthermore, it has taken control of the tone of the discussion and made voters more concerned with human rights than a religious viewpoint. By displacing these votes, social conservative groups may see changing their positions as the primary way to get their votes back and change accordingly.

Like the other two theories, the strategic theory also defines factors and a process for a social movement, as illustrated below in Figure 1. The institutional factor of openness is reworked to define "what players are allowed to play in what arenas, according to official rules;" elite alignment and potential allies are combined into one group, which is defined as "choices made by other players that help or hinder protestors;" and the factor of repression is expanded into capacity and propensity (Jasper, 2012, p. 21). Due to its addition of surrounding groups and reframing the problem within the strategy of each group, the strategic theory lends itself best to analysis of the LGBTQ movement, but concepts from the other two theories are nevertheless helpful.

Predating the strategic theory but with many similar underlying concepts is Piven's theory of poor people's movements. The poor people's movement theory focuses on how movements fail and is significant to my study because I will be evaluating localities where the LGBTQ rights movements has seen either successes or failures, seen in the difference between New York's state laws and Tennessee's state laws. Piven focuses on the strategy both among the burgeoning movement which pushes for a change in the status quo and among "elites," those in power who seek to resist the change (1977, p. xi). Action for those within the movement is usually sparked by a concession among elites, which leads to energetic planning and goal-building. This is a successful period for the movement.

However, after this period, the movement usually fails, according to Piven's theory. The strategy of the elites' concessions is not to "actually respond to the organizations," instead "responding to the underlying force of insurgency… always short-lived" (Piven, 1977, p. xi). Thus, as soon as excitement and fervor among the movement fades after initial gains, progress is difficult and in some cases, nearly unlikely. Piven cites various labor and civil rights movements as making strong first steps only to stumble when elites resist further concessions but the first appeasement has made groups satisfied with their position and not concerned with continuing a strong fight.

Admittedly, the two groups of poor and LGBTQ people are not paralleled exactly: Piven's hypothesized movement is focusing on those who lack resources and are poor in the economic sense, and the LGBTQ rights movement contains a wide variety of socioeconomic representation, from high to low. In fact, many theorists link many LGBTQ groups white, middle- to upper-class citizens whose goals are "formal legal equality that… primarily benefits white and wealthy gay men and lesbians" (Willse and Spade, p. 311, 2011) and "rhetoric… links marriage to national belonging and citizenship rights in a way that might resonate strongly with anti-welfare discourse" (Kandaswamy, p. 707, 2008). Yet, for the most part, when LGBTQ people are without rights, they are removed from power and unprotected, like the poor, without rights that would come from legal marriage and anti-discrimination protections. Before making strides towards legislation, LGBTQ individuals can attain powerful positions but may still be required to hide their gender identity and gender of their partner to maintain that position, hence having a type of "poverty" in representation and freedom.

Furthermore, Piven draws a line between poor people's movements and more typical political movements in their type of political action. Middle- and upper-class movements focus on typical methods to demand for change, but Piven states that lower classes must resort to methods outside these norms. "Modes of participation and the degree of influence resulted were determined by location in the class structure… protest tactics which defied political norms… were the only recourse" (Piven, 1977, p. 3). Piven's work on these groups predated the rise of the interest group and PAC as method of protest through lobbying for change, yet this description poses the question, where do interest groups fit in? Are interest groups and PACs typical methods of protest or outside the norms? On one hand, interest groups and PACs reinforce the preexisting structure of government and means to power, as well as adding a monetary component to legislation, even to the point that makes some claim that votes are bought and sold by interest groups and PACs. Yet, these groups may be used because voters are too alienated and difficult to reach, and political change requires going to lawmakers directly. Therefore, resorting to interest groups and PACs to promote political changes can indicate flaws in a democratic system, requiring using "protest tactics which defy political norms," to quote Piven (1977, p. 3). The situation varies vastly between localities, which is why my analysis is divided by state. To look at the nation as a united group would be problematic for this analysis because, in different states, to use interest groups to appeal for rights can mean staying within typical means of power or being forced to go outside of it.

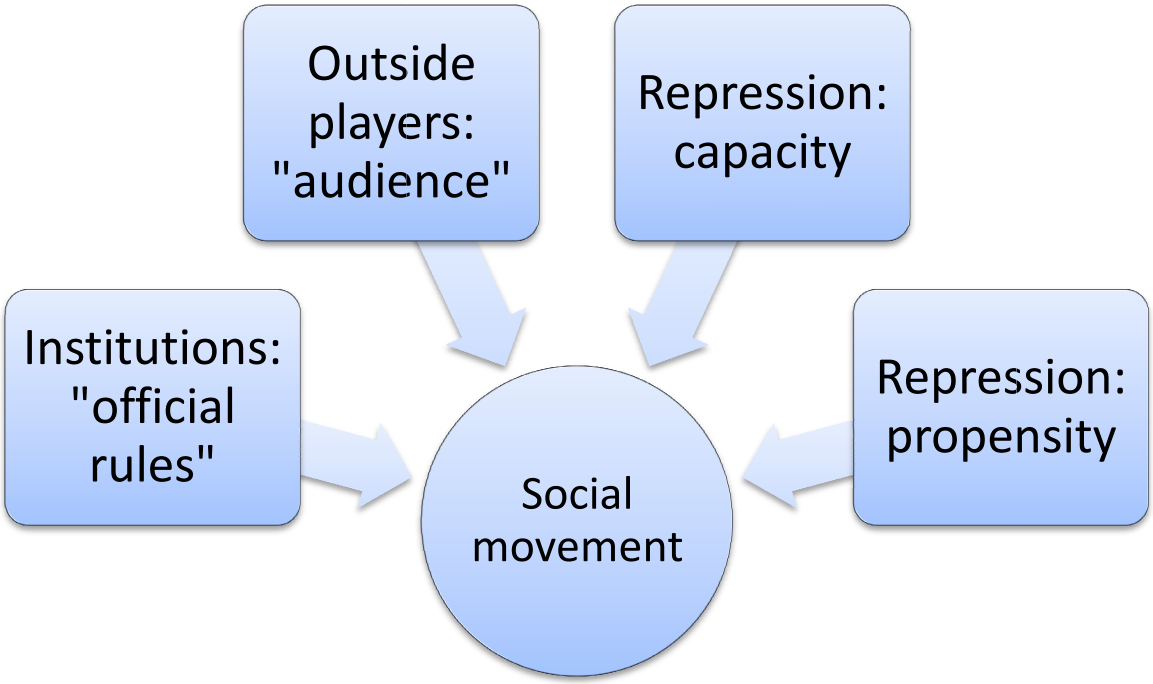
In addition, Piven acknowledges that poverty has a moral side to it that makes the poor people's movement applicable to the LGBTQ rights movement. To state in Piven's terms, "beliefs and rituals reinforce inequality, by rendering the powerful divine and the challengers evil" (1997, p. 1). The separation of sides—one into good, one into assuredly evil—is mirrored in the way the LGBTQ debate is generally centered. Critics paint LGBTQ individuals as outside the norms and evil, less moral, or less Christian, while LGBTQ groups paint critics as close-minded, ignorant, and on the side of wrong side of justice. Moral definitions are used in some localities to keep LGBTQ people out of power and in other localities, as a means for inclusivity.

Significantly, the poor people's movement theory specifies, if a group is outside of power, it becomes difficult for them to affect the political process. Thus, the group has to gain ground in accessing power elites before they can gain further rights because they are so hindered by being removed from power. It also explains lower feelings of political efficacy among those removed from power. This fits my hypothesis and model for my study, which dictates that a participation gain increases rights.

In assessing the relationship between rights and political participation among LGBTQ individuals, my hypothesis is informed by multiple theories. First, the political opportunity structure theory gives my assumptions in the study plausibility by connecting the concepts of the likelihood of political change being connected to wider societal forces and legislators. The POS theory states that, by certain conditions increasing the likelihood for a movement's success, interest groups increase the probability for rights. Next, the political process model adjusted the POS to a better fit for issues like the LGBTQ rights movement by adding frames and cultural flexibility. The PPM describes the movement with a fair amount of accuracy by including that different localities face different challenges and support in gaining LGBTQ rights and that levels of interest group activity should be expected to vary accordingly. The resource mobilization theory lends credibility to the thesis that interest groups and PACs can act as a proxy for political participation through social movements by stating that outside resources are necessary for change to occur. Issue-based strategies further note the differences between geographic locations in even starker contrast. The strategic theory adds the dimension of the goals of each group—both supporting and opposing LGBTQ rights—to other theories. Moreover, it phrases the likelihood of success of the social movement in terms that closely link to the LGBTQ movement. The institutions are the state's legislatures; the outsider players are interest groups and PACs; and repression stems from opposing groups, the capacity specifically legislation that opposes LGBTQ rights and the propensity from the general supportiveness of the state. Finally, the poor people's movement theory adds a theoretical backing for my hypothesis that participation will precede rights because "poor people" can get modest changes first by swaying elites then changing the status quo is the debate. This is nuanced with the note that once rights are achieved, participation can flourish in the ways the prior models specify.

The study of social movements is certainly a lengthy and detailed one with many perspectives. Most theories stem from historical reviews of past movements. Indeed, only by looking to the past can we begin to study the future, but it must be important to note, as I will in my data analysis, that not all of these theories can be correct, especially with as complex and diverse of an issue as LGBTQ rights. The data analysis in the next chapter will provide insight to the plausibility of these theories, suggestions for improvements and replacements, and analysis on the change the US system has undergone with the introduction of interest groups and PACs as key players in movements.

Figure 1.


Outside players: "audience"
Repression: capacity
Institutions: "official rules"
Repression: propensity
Social movement

Chapter 4: Methods

Chapter 4: Methods

Basic Approach

To analyze my research question, I took the approach of assessing the association between the level of rights in states and political participation, specifically looking at the relationship assuming that political participation leads to more rights. This was done by simply counting the number of LGBTQ interest groups and PACs in each state in the specified years of 1992, 2000, 2008, and 2012, in the states of California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Texas. I analyzed the number of groups through regression analysis to assess the relationship between the level of rights, which I coded based on the level of legality of same-sex marriage in each state at each point in time. Finally, I adjusted this analysis for the state's population in each year and the percentage of the state population living in poverty, which would both alter the interest group activity state-by-state.

The Variables

I used interest groups to act as a proxy for political participation in each state. In this case, I defined interest group as an association with the goal of influencing policy. Furthermore, each state-based organization for each year focuses on addressing state and local policy regarding LGBTQ individuals. The groups provide a measurable level for each state based on year. The source for the number of groups each year is the *Gale Encyclopedia of Associations* for each year. The 2012 encyclopedia is an online digital database.

Clearly, interest groups do not encompass all political activity and can never in sum accurately measure the level of all political participation in a state. Further directions for research could focus on the other methods of political participation, especially voting which is arguably the most important form of political participation. In particular, the 2012 Presidential election marks the first year that polling groups began to ask voters, besides their partisan preference, their sexual orientation. Accordingly, as this practice becomes more widespread and as a database is built across elections, in a matter of decade, this research could be conducted by looking at voting rates among LGBTQ groups and identify in what states and at what levels LGBTQ people vote the most.

My other principle variable concerns marriage rights among same-sex individuals. This is centrally linked to legal and social acceptance of LGBTQ people and is why I chose it from a myriad of other variables. There are other tangible benefits from same-sex marriage for LGBTQ citizens like tax reductions and legal protections. Furthermore, the issue of same-sex marriage is currently in flux and has seen the most legal change in the past decade as many states changed their laws to legalize same-sex marriage.

However, many other rights exist regarding the legal acceptance of LGBTQ people, such as hospital visitation rights for same-sex couples, adoption rights for same-sex couples, bullying and hate crime protection, and specific rights for transgender individuals like the ability to change sex listed on an individual's birth certificate and driver's license. Again, these are included in future areas for research and exist in murkier areas that states are only starting to address in a myriad of ways—by passing legislation to legalize or illegalize these actions, adding constitutional amendments, and passing ballot measures.

Furthermore, some argue that the issue of same-sex marriage may ignore transgender rights, leaving out what some call "the silent T" in gay rights. I disagree because legal and societal acceptance that comes with same-sex marriage is important in adding to transgender rights. Moreover, transgender individuals span the range of sexualities and genders, and to assume that every transgender individual simply wants to switch biological sex and engage in heterosexual relations is simplistic and reductive. My research is not attempting to exclude transgender-specific issues; the decision to focus on marriage laws only stems directly from the feasibility of research that would span so many dimensions of rights.

Choosing to adjust my analysis on the basis of population and poverty was straightforward. It is clear the states with a larger population would have larger groups, and more wealth in a state would also allow for more groups. Accordingly, the data reported have been adjusted by population based on the year and the percent of each state's population in poverty, both sourced from the United States Census Bureau. I chose to include poverty instead of average per capita income due to regional differences in costs of living and certain types of income that go unreported or underreported in per capita income.

Coding

The principle challenge in coding was in marriage legality. Interest groups, population, and poverty percentage were straightforward by simply counting or using the numbers given by the Census Bureau. Deciding how to represent rights based in numbers, however, is more difficult. My final decision was a number for each year studied between zero and four, as described below.

A rating of zero is a state that has a constitutional amendment defining marriage specifically as between a man and a woman; this is because this is the most entrenched legal measure and least likely to be change.

A rating of one could be a state that either has a constitutional amendment but also some mixed recognition, such as Colorado with an amendment but also a statutory provision for rights bestowed to spouses, like hospital visitation and adoption of children, or only a statutory law that defines marriage as between a man and woman without a constitutional amendment.

A rating of two is a state without laws or constitutional amendment on the sex of individuals attempting to get married. A rating of three is a state that allows legal civil unions or some ambiguous recognition, such as California after the passage of Proposition 8 which left many same-sex couples with all rights of married couples, just no official marriage documentation.

Finally, a rating of four is given to a state with full legal marriage for same-sex partners. Below are my data for marriage legality in the states studied for the years studied:

Table 1.

	1992	2000	2008	2012
California	2	2	4	3
Colorado	2	2	0	1
Florida	1	1	0	0
Illinois	2	2	0	1
Louisiana	1	0	0	0
Massachusetts	3	3	4	4
New York	2	2	3	4
Pennsylvania	1	1	1	1
Tennessee	1	1	0	0
Texas	1	1	0	0

Chapter 5: Results

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The results from my analysis confirm my hypothesis, yet with some unexpected stipulations. My results are divided into by one group that excludes 2012 data and another group that includes the 2012 data. Reasons for this grouping will be explained in depth below. Both sets show statistical significance for a relationship where the number of groups determine the level of rights in states, with the variation in marriage laws between states being explained about 43% (excluding 2012) or 30% (including 2012) of cases by the number of groups present in a state. The individual variable relationships, however, show some unexpected results. As the thesis would indicate, the number of marriage laws and groups are related in a positive manner, so as one increases, the model indicates the other would as well. Similarly, as expected, poverty is related the marriage laws in a negative relationship. As laws become more permissive towards same-sex marriage, the state's level of poverty seems to be decreasing generally. Obviously, the effect is not causal but states with higher income levels are likely to have more groups in number and more robust groups, able to lobby their lawmakers. Furthermore, a wealthier state population tends to be more educated and thus more participative politically. Additionally, the states that I studied that have less openness for same-sex marriage simply tended to have higher poverty rates. The unexpected variable relationship is between population and marriage laws: as same-sex marriage becomes more legally valid, my model indicates we should expect less populated states. This is an area for further research directions assuredly, and I assumed that more populated states would have more robust same-sex marriage laws, from looking at more populated states like New York and California. However, the relationship I found is not statistically significant at a confidence level of 95% but is still worth noting because it approaches significance in the 2012-excluding figures with t = -1.96 and P>|t| = .061 and would thus be significant at confidence level of 90%.

Figure 2: results excluding 2012

Source	SS	df	MS
Model	19.4021779	3	6.46739263
Residual	19.9644888	26	.767864953
Total	39.3666667	29	1.35747126

Number of obs	30
F(3, 26)	8.42
Prob > F	0.0004
R-squared	0.4929
Adj R-squared	0.4343
Root MSE	.87628

Marriage92	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>|t|	[95% Conf.	Interval]
Groups92	.1229818	.0313255	3.93	0.001	.0585912	.1873723
Pop92	-.0587369	.0299374	-1.96	0.061	-.1202742	.0028003
Poverty92	-.1113413	.0482027	-2.31	0.029	-.2104233	-.0122592
_cons	3.027637	.7197744	4.21	0.000	1.548119	4.507154

Figure 3: results including 2012

Source	SS	df	MS
Model	22.7680901	3	7.58936335
Residual	41.0069099	36	1.13908083
Total	63.775	39	1.63525641

Number of obs	40
F(3, 36)	6.66
Prob > F	0.0011
R-squared	0.3570
Adj R-squared	0.3034
Root MSE	1.0673

Marriage92	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>|t|	[95% Conf.	Interval]
Groups92	.0701534	.0241576	2.90	0.006	.0211595	.1191473
Pop92	-.0247245	.0286324	-0.86	0.394	-.0827936	.0333447
Poverty92	-.1557964	.0515846	-3.02	0.005	-.2604148	-.0511781
_cons	3.339306	.7780942	4.29	0.000	1.761258	4.917354

Points of Ambiguity

One central point in my data is that I am reporting with and without 2012's numbers. This warrants explanation. There are several reasons the data obtained from 2012 are different than the earlier years. First, the poverty and population data from the Census is not officially confirmed yet and is instead official estimates. That being said, they are likely to be accurate enough for my analysis and unlikely to change the results significantly. The second and larger issue is the increase in groups in 2012. I attribute this massive increase to three reasons. First, the rise of the Internet as the prime medium of communication for associations lowered barriers in group creation. Groups no longer needed a physical location, even if it was informal; instead, they need a motivated individual willing to pay for a web domain. Second, the method of compiling the Gale database also changed; the database is now entirely electronic and the method of adding groups to the database was also streamlined, leading me to theorize more groups were added (Gale 2012). Finally, the database is more inclusive in 2012 of smaller, more local groups, sometimes including esoteric groups. Thus, the 2012 data may overstate the number of state groups—or the previously years' data may in fact leave out many existing groups unable to get included in the printed *Encyclopedia*.

This discussion brings me to another issue that needs to be addressed in my data. Unaccounted for is the problem that not every interest group is created equal, yet my data treats them as if they are. This is especially glaring in the data for 2012. For instance, GLAAD, formerly the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, is based in New York City and pours several millions of dollars into political action committees and litigation each year. This is a group observed in all the years of my data collection and is an example of an "old" type of group—large, influential, and long-standing. Integrity of East Tennessee based in Knoxville, Tennessee, is a new subtype of an "old" group, which is Integrity as a national organization. In the old dataset, only the largest few regional groups in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco were noted. Integrity of East Tennessee, however, is a new group in the 2012 dataset and thus is an example of a branch of a long-existing set of groups. Finally, the El Camino Reelers: LGBT Square-Dancing in Silicon Valley, a gay square dancing group from Mountainview, California, is a "new" group in the 2012 data. A concern about these types of groups is that they are both given the same weight in the data. Yet few would make the argument that the El Camino Reelers are more influential than Integrity of East Tennessee or that Integrity of East Tennessee is more influential than GLAAD. This problem remains unresolved and is especially prominent in the 2012 data set. The influx of "new" groups is the primary reason I separated my results into excluding and including 2012.

Yet, there are solutions to giving organizations weight based on their importance. Some possible solutions for future research could be rank-ordering the relative importance of each association, though this is problematic too. The examples of GLAAD and IGLTA are obvious, but between Integrity New York, an Episcopalian support network for LGBTQ individuals and allies, or Axios New York, a Greek Orthodox organization that focuses on LGBTQ people, which is more important? Rank ordering would quickly become problematic. Another option would be giving the organizations weight based on their budgets. One problem arises that the community effect for each organization depends far more the efficient use of their money than the direct amount. Moreover, many of these groups do not provide databases such as Gale direct budget information. Though all groups must have public record budget information available due to nonprofit tax exemptions, information would need to be requested for many individual groups. In one year of the groups I researched, about thirty, or around 1/3 did not provide budget information. Many of these groups furthermore did not provide contact information outside of an address. The time drain in tracking each group down would be a consideration future researchers would need to take.

In conclusion, both the data sets that include and exclude 2012 are important and do show statistical significance, though at different strengths. Both results are valid, and more than anything, they point out the need for further research in this field, along with the exciting possibilities for the future. With new technology in recording the number of groups, along with their details like budget figures, will make the type of research I have attempted in the study easier, more detailed, and more robust. With several more years of data, the very same study I have done here could be replicated, but assigning groups into separate categories based on their subject, budgetary strength, and active membership, allowing for classification of groups by their political clout.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

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In review, my initial hypothesis that participation would bolster a state's rights was proved true by my analysis of ten states in the years of 1992, 2000, 2008, and 2012, by focusing on the variables of number of groups and a coded level of rights, adjusted for population and poverty. I also found negative correlations for rights and population as well as poverty, though the population relationship is slight and just outside statistical significance at a 95% level of confidence. In brief, from the data I obtained, as the number of interest groups and PACs supporting LGBTQ rights increases, the level of rights will also increase.

In this review, my method and data seems very successful. Indeed, the relationship I hypothesized was proven and seems to exist at a high level. However, this does not make my analysis flawless, and there are issues that need to be considered with my analysis. First, interest group activity may not provide the best measure of "political participation." It shows the participation of likely wealthy and more motivated individuals as a whole. A better measure would show voting rates by voters who identify as LGBTQ in these states for these years, yet this data does not exist in large enough amounts for study yet. Even so, interest group activity may hide other aspects of political participation. Secondly, I studied only marriage rights for same-sex couples, an issue that may exclude some transgender and queer populations. My study focuses on the "LGB" of LGBTQ, and further research should include quantifying other laws such as protection against employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, protection against housing discrimination based on sexual orientation, the presence of legislation that allows individuals to change the sex on their birth certificate and legal documents, and legislation to discourage bullying in schools based on sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. This would be more inclusive and better representation of the issues faced in day-to-day life by LGBTQ individuals. Finally, the 2012 change in the Gale directory made my dataset considerably smaller if one considers the 2012-excluding dataset. It also makes the data harder to interpret by having multiple sets of results to analyze. Fortunately, both results found statistical significance, which minimizes the problem, but future research could separate these groups out and study exclusively one set prior and after to the digitized database. Furthermore, I hope future research will use the increase in the 2012 data and accompanying increase in the next several years for other opportunities, as the data is now more detailed, inclusive, and accurate.

My data does not allow for speculation into the future. However, with my results in mind, projection as informed by social movement theory is worth examination. Assuming this trend continues and an increase in participation leads to an increase in rights, I would expect that more groups moving to other states will cause increases to occur there. But how will this occur? The resource mobilization theory states that resources will flow from resource-rich to resource-poor areas as markets become saturated with interest groups. Simply put, the groups will act as self-interested economic actors and seeking new sources of income, look to areas with more room for improvement and increase operations in those areas, which are states with few legal rights for LGBTQ individuals. To apply the political opportunity thesis, groups will target areas that are sympathetic to their cause within individual "unfriendly" states, like those in the South. Generally these areas will be metropolitan areas that may be capable of electing a more LGBTQ-friendly governor and state legislators with their population primacy. Framing as specified in the political process model is especially important here, as every state is not the same. A more rural state with an economy focused on agriculture and natural resources, like Louisiana, will require different framing than Illinois, with agriculture surrounding city economic centers. Piven's theory of poor people's movements states that assistance from political elites, especially once the movement gains momentum, will shift their support as it becomes clear the political tide is moving in the direction of LGBTQ acceptance. As more and more elites do so, the new status quo will be LGBTQ legal rights, and from these theories, I expect to see a dramatic increase as a majority of states adopt reforms. As support and resources increase within unfriendly states, I expect to see an increase in groups and an eventual increase in rights that will spread from state-to-state like a "contagion" as LGBTQ rights becomes an accepted model. Indeed, what follows from this research and theory review is that LGBTQ political activists only have reasons to be hopeful for a bright future, arriving quickly.

Chapter 7: Works Cited

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