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Los Angeles

Infighting at the Fringe:
How Fields Shape Conflict and Organizational Outcomes
in Social Movements

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Sociology

by

Molly Sarah Jacobs

2017

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Infighting at the Fringe:
How Fields Shape Conflict and Organizational Outcomes
in Social Movements

by

Molly Sarah Jacobs

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

University of California, Los Angeles 2017

Professor Rebecca J. Emigh, Chair

The Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis were the first gay and lesbian organizations in the United States, respectively. Both were founded in the wake of the Red Scare of the 1940s and 1950s, as hundreds of homosexuals were being purged from the State Department and concern was growing over changing gender roles perceived as deviant. The Mattachine Society was founded in 1950 when no similar organizations existed. As the group expanded, so did infighting, which led to its dissolution in 1953. The Daughters of Bilitis, in contrast, began in 1955. Over time, members drew from experiences in other groups and the organization survived until 1971. These two organizations were central to the development of the Homophile Movement, a precursor to Gay Liberation. As individuals sought to develop organizational

identities, I argue they were simultaneously building coalitions to mobilize the burgeoning movement.

This dissertation uses these organizations and the emergence of the Homophile movement to address two questions. First, it asks how external contingencies—specifically other movements and fields—shape internal conflict and organizational outcomes. It argues that when fields provide organizations a limited repertoire from which to draw, infighting leads to organizational dissolution. In particular, this occurs when the organizations debate components of the organization that are not malleable and are linked to individual members’ ideologies. Alternatively, when a movement organization has multiple repertoires from which to draw, other fields can influence either adaptation or failure. When repertoires from proximate fields are compatible with those of the field in which the organization is embedded, infighting leads to adaptation. When repertoires from proximate fields conflict with those in the organization’s field, on the other hand, infighting encourages organizational dissolution.

The second question this dissertation addresses is how does infighting encourage social movement emergence. In particular, as much of the work on movements argues that they emerge from existing networks or other movements, via spillover or spinoff, this project shows that infighting can lead to the diversification of organizations and thus creates a base of activists necessary for a movement to emerge.

The dissertation of Molly Sarah Jacobs is approved by:

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INTRODUCTION

“Perhaps people who build major movements, such as gay rights, are known in the same manner that major architectural structures are known—by the visible structures that emerges, not by the foundation that provides the structure with its strength and shape” (Saunders 2002:143).

Movements and organizations are often discussed as singular, cohesive units. These units, however, are comprised of individuals and are formed through their interactions. This dissertation is particularly interested in that foundation and the way individuals provide organizations and movements with their strength and shape. Individuals, however, often disagree and thus conflict is a central feature of both organizations (Simmel 1955) and movements (Ghaziani 2008). More to the point, then, this project is interested in the role of conflict in shaping organizations and movements.

People and organizations, however, do not exist in a vacuum. They affect one another and are affected by the broader conditions in which they exist. That is, individuals and society are intertwined and thus affected by one another (Stryker 2002). Thus, this dissertation examines the way that the environment shapes internal conflict and how that influences the survival of movement organizations and the emergence of a social movement. In particular, I examine the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis, two of the earliest and most influential homosexual organizations in the United States that played a substantial role in the emergence of the Homophile Movement in the 1950s. While the Mattachine Society dissolved after two and a half years, the Daughters of Bilitis survived for fifteen. The two cases offer the opportunity to examine the dimensions of infighting and the way that it shapes organizational outcomes. Moreover, because both groups functioned in a rapidly changing environment, these cases can

highlight the ways that infighting is shaped by external contingencies. Through an examination of conflict within these organizations, the first question this dissertation will address is how the environment and infighting lead to the dissolution or survival of an organization.

The Homophile Movement represents the earliest case of large scale organizing by homosexuals in the United States. For the most part, however, it is often relegated to a footnote or single chapter in sociological examinations of LGBT activism. In particular, it is discussed as a precursor to Stonewall and is written off for its supposed conservatism and focus on assimilation and integration. This dissertation will show that there was far more to it than that. Through an examination of the homophile movement, the second question the dissertation will address is how does conflict contribute to the emergence of a movement. As much of the work on movements argues that they emerge from existing networks or other movements, via spillover or spinoff, the Homophile Movement offers a unique opportunity to examine emergence when no such foundation exists.

This dissertation examines the factors that contribute to organizational survival or failure as well as movement emergence. In particular, it argues that infighting is the process of developing shared meanings, both within organizations and in fields broadly. In the review that follows, I begin with an examination of infighting, drawing a contrast between those who argue that it corrodes an organization (e.g., Gamson 1975) and those who see it as a mechanism that allows members to engage in meaning making (e.g., Ghaziani & Fine 2008). Here, I argue that both are possible outcomes of infighting and, as such, infighting alone is not a sufficient explanation for a given organizational outcome. I continue with a brief discussion of symbolic interactionism, as this is the guiding theoretical framework for understanding how meaning is created through interaction.

This dissertation argues that most infighting occurs around issues of social movement organization identity. Thus, the review continues by examining collective identity, emphasizing the way that individual members work to generate shared meaning, based largely on individual interests and experiences, within an organization. This will be followed by a review of organizational identity, emphasizing how it plays a role in the way that organizations fit into a given field. Moving from the internal to the external, I address the role of the environment on organizational survival or failure and the concept of a strategic action field. This section will highlight the embeddedness of fields and show how external factors shape internal interactions. In other words, it will provide the necessary background to understand how the environment shapes infighting and the organizational outcomes.

Finally, the review will end with an examination of the literature on social movement emergence. While most literature suggests that movements emerge from existing organizations (Armstrong 2002; Morris 1984) or other movements (McAdam 1995; Meyer & Whittier 1994), this project will show that an additional outcome of infighting is the establishment of a new network of individuals and organizations, thus creating the foundation for a new movement to emerge.

Infighting

Infighting is a subset of general conflict (Simmel 1955). It can resolve the tension between contrasts, though it is simultaneously destructive for some relations. Thus, while it can both unify and annihilate, Simmel (1955) emphasizes the interdependence of the two. Elaborating on Simmel's (1955) work, Coser (1956) argued that infighting is a form of socialization that enables a group to establish and maintain group identities. The emphasis on the duality of infighting

continues to impact the work of scholars interested in conflict. Highlighting the dichotomy that Simmel (1955) posed, in which infighting can both annihilate and unify, contemporary research has often sought to explore the conditions under which it has done one or the other. Infighting thus occurs on a spectrum where at one end it results in schism or the dissolution of a group (Gamson 1975) and at the other end it creates a multitude of opportunities for the group that would be otherwise impossible.

While Simmel suggests that conflict creates unity, Gamson (1975) argues that conflict is likely to lead to factionalism, and the failure of goals or the destruction of the organization. As he states, “Internal division is a misery that few challenging groups escape completely – it is in the nature of the beast” (Gamson 1975:99). Similarly, the movement literature tends to show how infighting and conflict lead to dissent and factionalism within organizations and social movement failure (McAdam 1999). Organizational studies, too, show that conflict leads to internal power struggles (Pfeffer & Salancik 1978) and instability (Scott 2008).

Others, however, emphasize the positive outcomes of such internal conflict. Ghaziani and Fine (2008:53) write, “infighting is not just about personal disagreements; instead, it entails on-going collective disputation that is linked to conceptions of group identity and culture.” They see infighting as a cultural carrier that allows these conversations to occur. Ghaziani (2008:18) further clarifies that infighting is, “the expression of a difference of opinion or the offering of a discrepant view... It is a subtype of conflict that specifically carries concerns of strategy and identity.”

On its own, infighting is just that. It is a way in which people with different ideas—particularly those that pertain to strategy and identity—express their views. So it is not infighting alone that leads to or causes any given outcome. In fact, Benford (1993:694) found a variety of

outcomes when organizations engaged in infighting over framing. Conflict, he argued, can lead to mobilization or demobilization, depletion of resources or increased efficiency, factionalism or cohesion, and effective division of labor or issues with performance. Thus, infighting reflected the process of vying for legitimacy as groups sought to create a unified movement frame.

Similarly, in his review of the infighting literature, Ghaziani (2008:12-17) shows that infighting can lead to any number of outcomes, from factionalism and dissolution to social movement survival. As such, it is the way that other contingencies influence infighting that leads to these various outcomes. Thus, this project will examine how external and internal contingencies shape infighting and influence the affect it has on organizations and the emergence of a movement.

Generally speaking, the primary internal contingencies that shape infighting are different individual views of members (Ghaziani 2008) and organizational problems, such as those relating to goals and strategies (Mushaben 1989). Of course, these are in many ways shaped by the environment. In particular, Ghaziani (2008) argues that debates over identity within gay marches are, in part, shaped by the “changing cultural and political status of gay people” (7). This, along with the nature of the threat, according to Ghaziani (2008), is the extent of external contingencies that affect the content of the debates.

Others, however, have examined the effect of the environment more broadly. Coser (1956) argued that when groups are engaged with external struggles, they are less likely to tolerate conflict and are more likely to become unified. McLaughlin and Pearlman (2012) similarly found that repression can create greater unity or it can increase internal conflict. The outcome, they argue, is dependent upon conditions prior to increased repression. If the groups were satisfied before external conditions changed, they will become more unified. If there was

dissatisfaction, repression increases internal conflict. Thus, these projects show that external contingencies, such as a repressive environment, affects in-group relations.

As Balser (1997) points out, these projects emphasize how external factors *provoke* solidarity or schism. This dissertation will show, however, that the environment affects infighting in other ways as well. In particular, external conditions can have an affect on organizations even when actions are not necessarily directed at the group. In other words, there are external contingencies beyond those specifically relevant to a given group (e.g., a repressive government or a common enemy) to consider; events and experiences in other fields will be influential as well.

The literature on infighting by Ghaziani (2008; 2009) and Ghaziani and Fine (2008) provides the most useful conceptualization for the cases I examine here. It is limited, however, in that they emphasize how infighting is about realizing, “particular interests in politically charged *situations*” (Ghaziani & Fine 2008:53, emphasis added). While one could argue that all movement activism incorporates politically charged events, an organizational identity, while certainly situational, extends beyond specific situations (e.g., marches). Thus, this line of research that focuses on specific situations can help us understand a broader identity that spans many situations.

In sum, infighting in and of itself does not lead to any particular outcome. Rather, this project argues that it is the process through which issues of movement and organizational identity are discussed and meaning is created. It enables participants to share different views, particularly as they relate to strategy and identity (Ghaziani 2008). Moreover, while infighting enables organization members to debate and share their views, thus affecting individual organizations, it has the potential to lead to an expanded network of activists and the emergence

of a social movement. Ghaziani (2008) provides one of the most comprehensive examinations of infighting, both in terms of the theoretical literature and in his substantive cases. There is only minimal attention paid, however, to external variables. When external variables are examined, it is typically in the context of direct repression (Balsler 1997; McLauchlin and Pearlman 2012).

The current project shows that much of the internal conflict is shaped by external variables beyond conditions imposed on an organization. In particular, it demonstrates that individuals shape their own expectations and understanding of the organization based on their external experiences. Both the organization and movement literature have addressed external elements in the context of organization survival and will be examined below. Thus, looking at these pieces together will help explore the dimensions of infighting with particular attention paid to the way that external relations shape the way shared meanings are developed through the process of infighting. In addition to exploring organizational outcomes of infighting, the current project will explore an outcome that has not been addressed previously: the emergence of a social movement.

Symbolic Interactionism

Conceptualizing infighting as Ghaziani (2008; 2009) and Ghaziani and Fine (2008) do suggests that the act is one of meaning making. To determine the identity of an organization or a movement, individuals share discrepant views to achieve some level of agreement. This process of creating meaning through interaction is a central tenet of symbolic interactionism (Mead 1934). This project thus takes an explicitly symbolic interactionist approach to understanding how infighting shapes organizational outcomes based on individual interpretations.

At the most general level, symbolic interactionism is based on the idea that we create meaning through interactions with people around us and that meaning becomes our social reality (Mead 1934). In an effort to formulate a clear statement of symbolic interactionism, Blumer (1986[1969]:2) outlined three premises meant to serve as foundation for the perspective:

“[First], human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that they have for them... [Second,] the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, social interaction... [Third,] these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters.”

These tenets have been elaborated on over time, incorporating human agency, which has the potential to generate new meanings and interpretations, as well as to stress the importance of understanding the interactional context in which meaning making occurs (Snow 2001).

Additionally, Stryker (2002:2) stated that self and society are inherently connected and cannot exist without one another. Further, both are essential to understand social interaction. This is particularly relevant for the current project, as it will show that individual conceptualizations of self, which are used to formulate a collective identity, are largely shaped by society. Thus, as the social environment changes, so does the individual.

Finally, Stryker (2002) emphasized that methodologically, we must incorporate the point of view of participants of social interaction as we attempt to explain the interaction. Blumer (1986[1969]:3) made the same point, arguing that to “ignore the meaning of the things toward which people act is seen as falsifying the behavior under study.” In other words, much like Weber’s idea of *verstehen*, it is imperative that we do not try to understand things from our own perspective, but rather from the perspective of those we are observing. This is particularly

important in a historic case such as this one, as the meaning of homosexuality or being homosexual was central to the identity-based discussions and was largely linked to the sociopolitical climate of the time.

What these elaborations offer is a further clarification about the way in which symbolic interactionism is both a framework and a method for understanding how things come to be understood as they are by a given group. Symbolic interactionism focuses largely on the individual in the social world, thus identity is a central focus of this work. In particular, an identity is an individual's stable sense of who they are and incorporates roles and social categories (Burke 2003). Like reality—or an organizational identity and strategy, as described by Ghaziani (2008)—the individual is socially constructed according to this perspective (Berger & Luckmann 1966). The self, in other words, is a process, and this construction unfolds in the way people interact (Hollander & Gordon 2006). Thus, this project looks at the way individuals within social movement organizations interacted, both publically and privately, as they engaged in the construction of the organizations' identities.

In sum, symbolic interactionism argues that meaning is generated through interaction. This project will show that fields and identities—individual, organizational, and collective—are similarly created through interaction. There are two reasons why symbolic interactionism is useful as a framework here. First, to emphasize the way that identities are flexible, situation-specific, and based on the idea that there is some agreed upon reality that individuals use to create their identities and sense of self. Second, the premises at the heart of symbolic interactionism provide the foundation for much of the organizational and movement literature. Thus, this project bridges these two fields by emphasizing the relevance of symbolic

interactionism for both. If this bridging is to occur, however, it is important to review how these different fields utilize identity

Collective Identity

There is no consensual definition of collective identity (Snow & McAdam 2000), but most conceptualizations focus on a sense of we-ness or connectedness to other members of a group (Cerulo 1997; Owens, Robinson, & Smith-Lovin 2010; Polletta & Jasper 2001:285). It is a “shared definition of a group” based on “common interests, experiences, and solidarity constructed through interaction” (Taylor & Whittier 1995:172). In other words, it is symbolic interactionist in nature. This literature is grounded in an understanding that the identity is derived from the individuals that comprise the collective (White & Fraser 2000). It is both fixed, based on what an individual brings to a group, and malleable, in that it is shaped by interacting with the group (Johnston, Larana, & Gusfield 1994). Both the individual and the collective dimensions of identity, then, should be understood as constantly in flux, each affecting the other.

The problem is not the conceptualization of this concept, but “the specification of the mechanisms that facilitate the convergence of parallel individual identities with a movement and its collective identity” (Snow & McAdam 2000:44). This is due in large part to the fact that little is known “about the cultural building blocks that are used to construct collective identities” (Polletta & Jasper 2001: 299). Efforts have been made to understand the development of a collective identity, though the role of individual identities or the degree to which they are relevant is often overlooked.

This is not to say, however, that the construction of a collective identity has not been addressed. There are three factors that contribute to the understanding the development of

collective identity: boundaries, consciousness, and negotiation (Taylor & Whittier 1992:353). Boundary making largely occurs as actors “become aware of commonalities, establish frameworks that emphasize these commonalities, and build communities or social networks to reinforce these commonalities” (Valocchi 2001:448). The consciousness of a group’s collective identity does not just come from separating “us” and “them,” however, it also comes from the struggle to define, sometimes through conflict, shared interests (Rupp & Taylor 1999:364; Taylor & Whittier 1992:353). In other words, infighting may occur as organizational members seek to identify common interests. This process requires ongoing negotiation among members (Taylor & Whittier 1992), as a collective identity is initially constructed based on the personal identities of founders, though new members will influence later conceptualizations (White & Fraser 2000). In this sense, we should expect infighting to be episodic as new members join and attempt to incorporate their experiences into the broader collective identity.

Once formed, collective identity can be used to mobilize and to inform individual behavior (Owens et al. 2010). A “successful” group identity can affect a movement’s ability to recruit members and is largely dependent upon framing efforts (Bernstein 1997). That is, the collective identity must resonate with potential activists (Hunt, Benford, & Snow 1994) and their own sense of identity. It is here that it is possible to see the connection between individuals and the collective, as personal stories can be used to mobilize actors (Polletta 2009). Once involved in collective action, the collective identity provides rules of behavior for actors should be expected to follow (Friedman & McAdam 1992:157). Thus, collective identity is used to mobilize and guide behavior of a group of actors.

Beyond the role of the individual, organizational forms may be a source of collective identity. The identity may not simply be based on who comprises the organization, but on how

the organization wants to be perceived, particularly when members are selecting from available repertoires of action (Clemens 1997:60-61). In other words, the form of an organization can be an expression of the collective identity of a movement, specifying the strategies and resources compatible with an organization's goals (Roth 2000:303). Thus, it is possible to see how a collective identity can be used to determine the relationship between goals and tactics of an organization. Because a collective identity is fluid, changing with membership and the political opportunity structure, it can lead to conflict within a movement. In particular, competing identities within collectives can generate factionalism (Owens et al. 2010:494). "One of the chief causes of movement decline is that collective identity stops lining up with the movement" (Polletta & Jasper 2001:292). As such, a social movement organization must engage in the maintenance and management of its identity, particularly as membership changes and the environment shifts. This project will show that this maintenance largely occurs through infighting.

In summary, a collective identity is based on the shared experiences of its members (Taylor & Whitter 1995) and incorporates components of individual identities (White & Fraser 2000), particularly for identity-based movements. Additionally, it is based on repertoires available in the field (Clemens 1997) and enables organizations to function in their field (Roth 2000). Thus, the collective identity is based on the identities of members, as well as features of the organization itself. Although implicit, the literature on collective identity calls back to symbolic interactionism. In particular, the idea that the collective identity represents the "shared definition of a group" (Taylor & Whittier 1995) implies that together, a group must come to define what the group is and what it does. This definition is generated through the process of interaction and is based on the personal identities of organizational founders and will later be

influenced by new members (White & Fraser 2000). Thus, meaning is created and modified through an ongoing interactional process. This meaning then affects the way in which individuals (and organizations) act (Blumer 1969; King et al. 2010; Owens et al. 2010). The study of collective identities, however, often looks at movements broadly. Alternatively, in the organizational literature, organizational identity addresses single organizations and focuses on how an organization fits into a single field or industry. It is to this literature that I now turn.

Organizational Identity

Much of the work on organizational identity has its foundations in symbolic interactionism. This work suggests that identity is articulated in a social domain through interaction. Like collective identity, organizational identity is grounded in comparisons and shared interpretations of an individual in a specific situation (Gioia 1998:19). The current section will examine how organizational identity is defined and created. It will also highlight the effect of the environment on organizational identity and the situational nature of that identity. Finally, it will address how organizational identity is used and how it shapes behavior.

Albert and Whetten first conceptualized organizational identity in 1985. Questions of identity, they argued, related to the goals and values of an organization and addressed three components: what is central, distinctive, and enduring about the organization (Albert & Whetten 1985). Although the third component—temporal continuity—has been challenged as a necessary element of organizational identity (Gioia & Schultz 1995), the first two are a bedrock of the concept.

Identifying what is central and distinctive about an organizational identity implicitly incorporates a comparative approach. That is, organizations must “define who they are by

creating or invoking classification schemes and locating themselves within them” (Albert & Whetten 1985:267). As such, defining an organizational identity incorporates how the organization is similar to and different from other organizations (Whetten & Mackey 2002). Moreover, clarifying the distinctive features of an organization includes both how an organization differentiates itself from others and identifying those features that position the organization in positive self-regard (Whetten 2006:223). This focus on classification inherently incorporates comparisons to existing organizations and implies a reference to the field. It is a way that organizations clarify what makes them distinctive in a broader field.

This is relevant in the current case as it accentuates the way that a changing field affects the models available to a given group. In particular, one organization (the Mattachine Society) began when there were no similar organizations. Thus, the members had a difficult time developing an identity that resonated with potential members, though that certainly made it distinctive in many respects. The other organization (the Daughters of Bilitis), on the other hand, was founded as fields were developing, thus providing more opportunities to clarify how it was similar and dissimilar to other organizations.

Although a statement of what is enduring about an organization was incorporated into Albert and Whetten’s (1985) early conceptualization of organizational identity, it is understood that organizations must be able to adapt to their environments and have some degree of flexibility (Gioia & Schultz 1995: 22). Environmental forces can constrain or enable an organization’s identity (Glynn & Abzug 2002; Thornton 2002). As such, the identity should be fluid, allowing it to adapt and respond to environmental demands (Gioia, Price, Hamilton, & Thomas 2000).

Organizational environments shift regularly and, as a result, require an organization to reconstruct its “identity so that the organization can maintain a light-on-its feet flexibility...that allows an organization to cope” (Gioia 1998:22). This ability to adapt to changes is a reflection of an organization’s stability and fluidity, enabling it to accommodate different situations without seeming erratic or unstable. In other words, this flexibility “is actually adaptive in facilitating organizational change in response to environmental demands” (Gioia et al. 2000:64). Given the comparative nature of an organizational identity, an awareness of the environment or field is implicit. It is not up to a single member, however, to develop that identity. Rather, it is determined by the shared beliefs of members (Hogg & Terry 2001). It “describes what its members *believe* to be its character” (Dutton & Dukerich 1991:547, emphasis added). As such, it is important to understand how members view the organization and how they interpret its identity (Whetten & Mackey 2002:395), as this may be distinct from the external image of the organization. This is the foundation of the social constructivist view of organizational identity, focusing on the shared interpretive schemes constructed by organization members (Gioia et al. 2010:5). Thus, identity is formed largely through interaction with others (Albert & Whetten 1985), both within and outside the organization.

The above provides a general, if abstract, sense of how an organizational identity is shaped by the field and its members. What is necessarily more concrete is an explanation of how the identity is created and used. The processes of identity formation begin when organizers select an organizational form (Whetten & Mackey 2002) and articulate a vision (Gioia et al. 2010). The organizational form incorporates characteristics of the organization that guide behavior and makes a statement about the organization’s identity category (Whetten & Mackey 2002:398). The identity is further clarified through mission statements, policies, and routines. These operate

as the organization's social context, providing members with a point of reference to guide behavior and decision-making (King, Felin, & Whetten 2010; Whetten 2006). In other words, the identity is action-oriented.

Once established by the organization, the identity is used largely to filter an "organization's interpretation of and action on an issue" (Dutton & Dukerich 1991). The identity thus becomes a reference point that allows the importance of an event (or issue) that is collectively recognized as significant to the organization to be assessed. The conceptualization of an organization's identity helps shape meanings and actions given to an event. The identity ensures that the organization does not act out of character (Whetten 2006:220-221).

Finally, Dutton and Dukerich (1991) argue that a connection exists between an individual's sense of who they are and their sense of the organization's identity, suggesting that individuals "have a stake in directing organizational action in ways that are consistent with what they believe is the essence of their organization" (550). Very little research explores this connection, however. Additionally, it does not necessarily take into account the relationship between individual identity and organizational identity.

In sum, an organization's identity incorporates how it is similar to and different from other organizations (Albert & Whetten 1985; Whetten & Mackey 2002). Moreover, the identity must have some degree of flexibility to enable the organization to adapt to changes in its environment (Gioia 1998). Finally, the organizational identity is based on the shared view of members (Gioia et al. 2010) and is used to guide behavior and decision-making within the organization (King et al. 2010). Thus, this strain of research shows how organizations incorporate their environment into an identity that is used to guide action.

Moreover, this literature takes a symbolic interactionist approach, allowing researchers to examine the process through which a group of people come to agree on a shared meaning of what the organization is (in other words, what is central and distinctive about it) and how the group came to these agreement. This is what Albert and Whetten (1985) termed the identity interaction model. This work suggests that organizational identity is articulated in a social domain, wherein it is formed and sustained via social interaction (Gioia 1998:19). Moreover, this is not a one-off process in which once formed, the identity sticks. Instead, organizational identity may change and adapt over time in what can be conceptualized as a form of impression management (Dutton & Dukerich 1991).

Additionally, the process of generating an organizational identity explained here is in many ways parallel to how Ghaziani (2008) describes the process of infighting. Gioia and his colleagues (2010) note that individuals negotiate identity claims as they attempt to identify shared understandings in terms of values and claims. In a quote by a university dean involved in building an organizational identity, this similarity is highlighted. The dean states, “debating among ourselves who we were going to be was necessary because of tensions that existed among the different perspectives” (Gioia et al. 2010:24).

The quote by the dean is more or less identical to Ghaziani’s (2008:18) own definition of infighting: “the expression of a difference of opinion or the offering of a discrepant view...It is a subtype of conflict that carries concerns of strategy and identity.” I should note here that Ghaziani examines infighting in terms of existing organizations and conflict between them. Gioia and his colleagues (2010), on the other hand, see infighting as part of the process of building an organizational identity and this process is ongoing (in their study, for example, it took five years for the organization to firmly establish an identity). Although this literature on

organizational identity formation in organizational theory does not discuss infighting per se, the focus on “debating among ourselves” is conceptually quite similar to infighting. Additionally, as the organization literature often takes a single organization as the case and individuals as the level of analysis, it provides a bridge between the movement literature and its focus on the social movement industry.

Moreover, while organizational theory often looks at the process of generating an identity, conceptualized as singular, movement research focuses more on movements, as a collective or group level (Owens et al. 2010). The article by Gioia and colleagues (2010), for example was a study of how organizational identity forms from the inception of the organization. Their primary research questions were how do members of a nascent organization develop a collective understanding of ‘who we are as an organization?’ and, second, how does a newly created organization develop a sense of itself as a social actor in its field or industry.

Alternatively, studies of collective identity in the movement literature tend to focus on movement outcomes, as opposed to organizational outcomes, and examine how collective identity is used to mobilize (Bernstein 1997; Owens et al., & 2010; Taylor & Whittier 1992). Social movement organizations, however, are in many ways different from the formal organizations at the heart of organizational studies. Unlike formal organizations, SMOs are voluntary organizations that are explicitly tied to a social category with which members identify. What the Gioia and colleagues (2010) and Ghaziani (2008; Ghaziani & Fine 2008) pieces show, however, is that the processes underlying some form of collective identity formation are the same. Both occur through the process of infighting (or “debating”). Thus, these literatures can and should be speaking to and informing one another.

Although often done in reference to or with an awareness of external factors, much of literature on collective and organizational identity focuses on how identity is created and how it is used. Organizations, however, are also affected by external contingencies and thus it is important to understand how the environment influences organizational survival or failure.

Organizations and Their Environment

Organizations do not exist in isolation. They affect and are affected by the environments in which they exist. The current project is particularly interested in the way in which the environment affects internal dynamics of organizations and how it may affect the survival of an organization. The current section begins with a brief discussion of the way that the social movement literature has addressed organizational failure and continues with the organizational literature, which has taken on the topic of the environment and organizational survival to a greater degree.

Davenport (2015:5) notes that although challenging organizations (akin to what I refer to as a social movement organization) frequently die off, this process is not commonly discussed. He examines the role that state repression and internal dynamics play in this process and argues that a repressive environment can lead to demobilization and the failure of organizations. Similarly, Sullivan (2016) focuses on the external contingencies that affect the decline or destruction of movement organizations. Like Davenport (2015), he shows how repression, defined as acts of political violence ranging from death threats and torture to protest policing and politically motivated arrests, affects dissent and future conflict (Sullivan 206:661). When mobilizing efforts are targeted, repression leads to a decline in action. When the government targets ongoing challenges, on the other hand, repression increases action. Repression is not the

only external contingency that affects organizational survival, however. Other elements in the field can influence the survival of an organization.

Before moving on to the external contingencies addressed in the organizational literature, it is worth briefly noting the studies of social movement organization failure, if only to emphasize their focus on internal over external variables. Edwards and Marullo (1995), for example, examined SMO death but specifically in the context of broader movement decline. The decline of the movement is the only component external to the organization that they analyze. The focus is instead on organizational variables such as size, age, tactics, newness and organizational structure. Similarly, Minkoff (1993) examines organizational persistence. The only external variable linked to survival in this study is interorganizational affiliations. Minkoff emphasizes organizational strategies as *the* most important variable that influences success (or failure).

Although organizational theory typically focuses on formal institutions rather than movement organizations or voluntary associations, it has long examined the process of organizational failure or death. Among available frameworks in organizational theory, institutional theory focuses most prominently on the field. Institutional theorists address the process of mutual influence among organizations. In particular, they focus on how field boundaries affect the way organizations select models for emulation (DiMaggio 1991:267). Organizational forms, according to this perspective, are determined by the organizational fields. The survival of an organization is thus dependent upon the established institutionalization and legitimization of a given form to function within a field.

Neo-institutional theory was founded on the principle that organizations become matched with their institutional environments and reflect a socially constructed reality of that environment

(Meyer & Rowan 1977:346). Isomorphism thus encourages organizations to adopt elements that are legitimated externally but may have only a small role, if any, in the effectiveness of the organization (Meyer & Rowan 1977; DiMaggio & Powell 1983). Organizations whose legitimacy is already established may utilize small innovations to improve performance, and others will adopt these changes as well because they are deemed culturally appropriate (DiMaggio & Powell 1983: 148). Alternatively, organizations have the potential to create new cultural elements by imitating organizations in other fields (Zucker 1987). In this context, institutionalization is the process of creating a reality that becomes reified (Meyer & Rowan 1977). Thus, through interaction, a given field of institutional life is socially constructed and treated as real.

While early institutionalism focused largely on stability over change, Scott (2008) acknowledged that change is not only possible, but happens often. The ability to adapt to changes is a primary reason why an organization may survive or fail. Internal change, then, is often a response to external pressures not just from the institutional field, but the broader political, social, and economic environment as well (Scott 2008:437). In particular, change is most likely to take place when established practices—typically in terms of structure and tactics—are no longer effective (Powell 1991:200; Scott 2008).

Although change is possible, organizations “tend to *resist* change because they embed actors’ interests and also because institutions are implicated in actors’ cognitive frames and habits” (Diogo, Carvalho, & Amaral 2015:118, emphasis in original). In other words, members are likely to resist change when their own interests are incorporated into the organization and their actions are dependent upon the organization. Finally, because members may act using only limited information, survival is affected by how well individuals can make decisions about the

organization based on the knowledge they have (Diogo et al. 2015:126). If that knowledge does not align with the field or broader environment, then organizational change will be unsuccessful, leading to organizational death.

It is worth noting, however, that institutionalism typically focuses on a well-developed and highly institutionalized fields (Powell and DiMaggio 1991). As such, although this project emphasizes the role of the field, it is a field that develops throughout the tenure of the organizations. Thus, institutional theory alone cannot explain why one organization failed after a short time and the other persisted. What is useful, however, and represents a common thread through much of the literature examined throughout this project, is the notion that fields are shaped by the interactions between individuals and groups that occupy them.

In sum, when the movement literature addresses the role of the environment on organizational survival, the focus is largely on repressive environments (Davenport 2015; Sullivan 2016). Alternatively, institutional theory addresses the way in which an institutionalized environment affects organizational survival. Institutionalization represents the process of creating a reality that becomes reified and is seen as fact, though it is frequently not connected to a specific situation (Meyer and Rowan 1977). Organizations, to survive, will thus adopt the legitimized elements (Zucker 1987). In particular, organizations are more likely to survive if their form and strategies enable them to function in a given field (DiMaggio 1991; DiMaggio & Powell 1983; Meyer & Rowan 1977).

Strategic Action Fields

The discussion above established that environments change. They are not closed sets on which nothing can be moved, but neither do they appear fully formed. New fields emerge while others

may fade out. The theory of strategic action fields (SAF) seeks to explain how embedded social actors—in terms of individuals and organizations—attempt to fashion and maintain order in a given field as well as how they emerge (Fligstein & McAdam 2012). The terrain of social action where collective actors operate is referred to as a strategic action field when it is well-defined and unorganized social space when it is not.

Strategic action fields are comprised of individuals and collectives who act on the basis of shared understandings (Fligstein & McAdam 2012:9). Thus, like much of the literature above, this framework has a substantial basis in symbolic interactionism. Strategic action fields are socially constructed social orders dependent upon on shared understandings that are critical to field-level interactions. In particular, Fligstein and McAdam identify four types of understandings necessary for the emergence and solidification of a SAF. First, there must be:

“[A] general, shared understand of what is going on in the field, that is, what is at stake... Second, there is a set of relatively fixed actors in the field whose roles and comparative status/power are consensually defined by others in the strategic action field. Third, there is a set of shared understandings about the nature of the ‘rules’ that will govern interaction in the field... This is the cultural understanding of what forms of action and organization are viewed as legitimate and meaningful within the context of the field. Finally, there is the broad interpretive frame that individual and collective strategic actors bring to make sense of what others within the strategic action field are doing” (Fligstein & McAdam 2012:88-89).

Fligstein and McAdam (2012:18) argue that individuals strive to generate shared meanings and identities along these four dimensions, typically in reference to existing fields, both distal and proximate. Distal fields are those that lack ties and have little or no capacity to

affect a given field. Proximate fields, on the other hand, have ties with and often affect a given field. These fields, both proximate and distal, have the potential to affect one another, leading to both change and stability in the fields (9). Thus, the theory of strategic action fields enables us to understand how a field develops as well as the ways in which fields interact. In short, this is the environment in which the organization exists.

Fligstein and McAdam's concept of a strategic action field provides the opportunity to examine an organization (or organizations) when the environment is not well established. Additionally, they note the embeddedness of fields that interact with one another in a broader environment. In other words, fields are not walled off entities with impermeable boundaries. Thus, strategic action fields are useful conceptually in that they reflect an environment comprised of fields—both emerging and sustained—that interact and overlap. Their explanation of how fields emerge, however, is murky conceptually.

Specifically, what Fligstein and McAdam (2012) mean by unorganized is unclear. Perhaps it is merely semantic, but they make a point of stating that it is rare for a single organization to create a strategic action field on its own. Instead, “An emerging field is a socially constructed arena *occupied by two or more groups* whose actions are oriented to each other but who have yet to develop a stable order that effectively routinizes field relations” (Fligstein & McAdam 2012:86, emphasis added). Thus, there must be some degree of organization and collaboration, as they note that the groups are “oriented to each other.” It would seem, then, that in order to emerge, there must be some degree of organization, however small. It may be more appropriate to consider a field, prior to its emergence, as uncoordinated rather than unorganized. Doing so enables a researcher to look at organizational attempts to coordinate action between groups. Additionally, it recognizes that some degree of organization is necessary prior to the

emergence of the field. Thus, this project focuses on how the field becomes more organized over time, moving from unorganized to uncoordinated in the process of generating shared understandings. Moreover, I argue that as fields become more organized, they tend to draw both from within the emerging field and proximate fields.

In the cases of the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis, the concept of a strategic action field will be utilized to understand that way that individuals within the organizations were attempting to generate meaning systems both within the organizations and in the creation of the SAF itself. In this case, the SAF is the Homophile Movement. The focus, however, will be on the role of proximate and distant fields in generating shared understandings within each organization. Although this theory of strategic action fields suggests that distant fields do not have the capacity to affect change, the case of the Mattachine Society (Chapter Two) will show that distal fields can impact change, though that change is not necessarily positive or productive. Alternatively, the case of the Daughters of Bilitis (Chapter 3) will show that utilizing the socially constructed understandings of proximate fields can encourage (positive) change and stability – change to the degree that is necessary to survive in a given environment and stability in that it enables organizational persistence. Additionally, however, proximate fields can influence organizational decline when they offer conflicting repertoires for members.

Finally, Chapter Four will provide the opportunity to examine the emergence of the field specifically. This dissertation argues that although uncoordinated, the efforts of early organizations to develop the shared understandings necessary for a strategic action field to emerge occurs through infighting. In particular, individuals share discrepant views of what the movement should look like. Although this creates conflict and division, it also leads to a

diversification of goals and strategies, thus attracting a larger network of activists, something necessary for movement emergence (Wilkes 2006).

Social Movement Emergence

It is generally accepted that a social movement will emerge when there is a base to organize activists and a collective identity to translate individual interests into group interests (Bernstein 1997:539-540). It is this existing base that is especially pertinent, as a strong network of participants and organizations encourage recruitment and mobilization (Snow, Zurcher, & Ekland-Olson 1980:790; Strang & Jung 2005:299). The previous sections have focused largely on understanding how a collective or organizational identity is built with a particular focus on how meaning making occurs through infighting. This section will examine movement emergence, as this project will show that infighting around issues of organizational identity also encourages movement emergence, as it creates a base of activists where one may not have existed previously.

Social movements are typically thought to arise from existing organizations (Zald & Ash 1966; Armstrong 2002; Morris 1984), other movements (McAdam 1995; Meyer & Whittier 1994), or established fields (Buechler 1990; Staggenborg 1988). Organizations encourage networking among individuals and groups. These networks, once in place, enable the spread of information and resources needed for large-scale mobilization (Wilkes 2006:516). For example, “the Red Power movement was facilitated and supported by several social movement organizations” (Wilkes 2006:516). Similarly, Morris (1981:188) shows that sit-ins were not spontaneous and uncoordinated activities. Rather, preexisting organizational and personal ties provided resources and communication networks needed for the emergence and spread of the

1960 student sit-in movement. Moreover, those movements that come from existing organizations will typically grow more quickly and attract a larger membership than those that are more isolated (Snow et al. 1980:795).

In addition to emerging from organizations, movements may spin-off from others that are already solidified (McAdam 1995). Initiator movements may spark a “wave of ideologically linked movements” (McAdam 1995:1). The movements that follow are termed “spin-off movements” and are thought to draw inspiration from initiators. The classic example of an initiator movement is the American civil rights movement, which emerged from an established network of organizations. The movements said to spin-off from the civil rights movement include the anti-Vietnam war movement, women’s liberation, and gay liberation (McAdam 1995).

Even when movements do not directly spin-off of others, movements have profound effects on one another. Meyer and Whittier (1994) “identify four specific routes of movement-movement transmission: organizational coalitions, overlapping social movement communities, shared personnel, and changes in the external environment achieved by one movement that then shape subsequent movements” (278). In particular, a new movement can emerge from another that may be in decline by transforming existing political and social struggles (Meyer & Whittier 1994:293). In such cases, spillover leads to movement emergence as goals are transformed or redirected into a new movement.

Finally, a social movement may emerge out of an existing field. In the movement literature, this is typically defined as the social movement community (SMC). The SMC incorporates all actors—both individuals and organizations—who share and advance the goals of a social movement (Buechler 1990:42; Staggenborg 1998:182). This can include groups

specifically devoted to the movement as well as others that are involved only peripherally, for example health clinics. As Staggenborg (1988) notes, “community implies mutual support among people who are connected to one another in various ways” (182). Thus, a social movement does not just consist of organizations, but incorporates all other actors who do not belong to groups. An individual, for example, may be invited to join an activity before joining an organization (Snow et al. 1980:795). An SMC enables the emergence of a movement as it can provide both organizational and tactical opportunities, while attracting new constituencies as it signals the possibility of activism (Staggenborg 1998:183).

The social movement community is not unlike a strategic action field, though the concept of an SAF enables researchers to examine the influence of one field on another and emphasize the embeddedness of different fields (Fligstein & McAdam 2012). An emergent SAF is one that is occupied by at least two actors whose actions are oriented toward each other, but agreement over the conditions of the SAF have not yet emerged (Fligstein & McAdam 2011). Organizations in a new SAF may disagree on the “nature of the opportunity, who should have the power to set the conditions under which groups will exploit the opportunity, and how to think about what the identity and interests are of actors interested in the opportunity” (Fligstein & McAdam 2011:11). In other words, there will be multiple conceptions of the emergent SAF and this can generate conflict in the emerging field (Fligstein & McAdam 2012:89).

Fligstein and McAdam (2012:88-89) specifically outline the four issues that actors involved in the negotiation of a strategic action field must agree upon before a field can emerge. First, they argue, there must be a shared understanding of what is at stake. In other words, what are the actors trying to do or what are their goals? Second, there must be identifiable actors within the field whose roles and statuses are agreed upon. Third, there must be shared rules that

govern interaction, which include agreed upon tactics and strategies that are considered legitimate in the field. Finally, there must be a shared frame used by the actors to make sense of what other are doing. By utilizing the concept of a strategic action field, the current project can show how a movement, as a field, can emerge without an existing base.

In sum, social movements are said to emerge from existing organizations, other movements, or established fields. The current paper will argue, however, that when no such base exists, there may still be an opportunity for a movement to emerge. In particular, it will focus on the way that conflicts within the organizations not only reflects issues internal to the groups, but also reflects the conflict that emerge when there are multiple conceptions of the field broadly. This infighting creates a necessary base by broadening and diversifying the field, thus attracting more actors.

Summary and Overview of the Argument

This dissertation examines the way that contingencies internal and external to an organization influence infighting and thus the decline or survival of an organization. Additionally, it will show that infighting can lead to the emergence of a social movement. Infighting can result in the dissolution of an organization (Gamson 1975) or it can create opportunities for a group (Ghaziani 2008). It can unify and it can annihilate (Simmel [1908] 1971). Thus, this project argues that infighting on its own does not have any predictable outcomes. Instead, it reflects the process through which a social movement organization identity is constructed. Infighting does not only occur leading up to a specific event, as Ghaziani (2008) would suggest, however. It is an ongoing process of meaning making that ensures the organization's identity is consistent with its goals and is suitable for the environment (Gioia et al. 2010).

Additionally, this project argues that the way members construct an identity is with reference to fields, both emerging and existing. In particular, organizations must be able to adapt to changes in their field to increase the likelihood of survival (Scott 2008). It is not just the organization's field, however, that is significant. In the current case, because one organization (the Mattachine Society) began at a time when there were no similar organizations or an established field, it provides the opportunity to examine the way in which organizations in a distant field influenced its identity. Alternatively, because the Daughters of Bilitis formed when there were similar organizations, it is possible to see how members drew comparisons from an emerging and proximate fields. Moreover, the theory of strategic action fields suggests that fields are interdependent and can affect change in one another (Fligstein & McAdam 2012). Specifically, this project argues that shared meanings generated in an emerging field will be created in reference to existing fields, both distant and proximate. This summary provides three implications for the current project and for research on infighting more broadly.

First, infighting will encourage organizational failure when repertoires do not resonate with members. Because the social movement organization's identity is based on common interests and experiences of members (Taylor & Whittier 1995), it may be difficult to identify commonalities when the social realities of participants (Stryker 2002) are based on disparate experiences. Moreover, although an organizational identity must have some degree of flexibility (Gioia 1998), it is more difficult to change components that are directly related to an individual's sense of who they are (Dutton and Dukerich 1991). There are two external conditions that influence this proposition.

In an unorganized social space infighting leads to dissolution when a repertoire from a distant field does not resonate with members and is not malleable. A distant field is one that does

not have ties to an emerging field, but when the social space is not organized, there may be few fields available from which to borrow a repertoire. Although Fligstein and McAdam (2012) argue that distant fields do not influence emerging fields, the current project argues that they can and do. When that occurs, however, it is most likely to lead to organizational failure because the broad interpretive frames in a distant field would not resonate with actors in a different field. In an emerging field, on the other hand, infighting leads to dissolution when repertoires from the emerging field and proximate field conflict. The theory of strategic action fields emphasizes the embeddedness of fields and highlights the way proximate fields influence one another (Fligstein & McAdam 2012). It is possible, however, that an emerging proximate field will offer a frame that resonates with some, but not all, participants. When that occurs, social categories that may not have been relevant at one point in time can become central to an individual and, thus, the organization (Burke 2003; Stryker 2002).

Second, infighting will encourage organizational survival and adaptation when repertoires are malleable and resonate with members. In particular, infighting over issues of organizational strategy encourages adaptation when members acknowledge that a given repertoire is no longer legitimate or effective. This is consistent with the idea that identities—here in terms of an organization—should be somewhat flexible and recognizes that they are situation-specific. Thus, if the environment changes, the identity must change with it (Stryker 2002). Again, the state of the field will affect the way that infighting impacts adaptation.

In an unorganized social space, infighting leads to organizational decline when a repertoire from a distant field does not resonate with members and is not malleable. An organization must be able to adapt to external changes (Gioia & Schultz 1995), but not all components of the organization are equally malleable. An organization will more likely survive

when infighting is related to issues of strategy (Powell 1991; Scott 2008). An organization may have only a limited repertoire from which to select a form at its inception and may therefore rely on repertoires in distant fields (Clemens 1997). As members become aware of external changes, however the organization may need to become matched with new features of the environment (DiMaggio & Powell 1983).

In an emerging field, on the other hand, infighting leads to adaptation when repertoires from the emerging field and proximate field resonate with members. As a social movement organization's identity is largely dependent upon framing efforts (Bernstein 1997), members must develop an identity that resonates with potential activists (Hunt et al. 1994). As movements and fields often have overlapping social movement communities and shared personnel (Meyer & Whittier 1994), it is likely that a repertoires utilized in a proximate field would be relevant to an emerging field.

Finally, regardless of organizational outcomes, because infighting enables organizations and individuals to debate different conceptualizations of the field, it encourages the emergence and mobilization of a social movement. In particular, this project shows how infighting leads to a diversification of goals and tactics (Staggenborg 1998), thus attracting a broader network of individuals (Wilkes 2006) and organizations (Armstrong 2002; Zald & Ash 1966) to the field, all of which enable a social movement to emerge.

METHODS

The current project examines the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis in order to explain how various fields and infighting affect the failure or survival of organizations. My objective is to understand how both external and internal contingencies play a role in

organizational outcomes and how these contingencies affect one another. In particular, I argue that during the process of generating and maintaining a social movement organization identity, individual members attempt use their own experiences. The state of the field, however, affects the way that they frame these experiences. In particular, individuals may use experiences in both distal and proximate fields. Additionally, as the field in which the organizations are embedded emerges, it, too, affects how individual members frame their stories.

Each chapter is organized temporally and highlights the major conflicts each organization faced. Although the chapters do not represent a complete history of either organization or the homophile movement, I utilize a narrative in which the material is arranged in chronological order to construct a story (Stryker 1996:305). The narrative is constructed by linking otherwise discrete parts into a coherent whole that gives meaning to and explains each of its elements and is, at the same time, constituted by them (Griffin 1993:1097). These “discrete parts” are made up of actions and events that are constructed to study social change (Skocpol & Somers 1980). Through the construction of a narrative, questions about trajectory and duration can be addressed (Stryker 1996:317).

By connecting actions and events, a narrative allows the reader to follow a story’s coherence and provides it with a sense of intelligibility (Griffin 1993). Analytically, the narrative is constructed as a trajectory, showing that what happened at an earlier point in time will affect the possible outcomes of a sequence of events a later point in time (Sewell 1996). Thus, the trajectory allows the researcher to consider the path dependency of actions that comprise the narrative (Aminzade 1992:463). In the current cases, the trajectory is significant in that it allows each chapter to accentuate how the fields and the environment broadly were changing and, as a result, how the organizations were affected by these changes.

In addition to the trajectory, however, the narratives presented here take into account the duration. The duration of an event provides not only a sense of how a process unfolded over time, but also how actors perceived the event. Although I acknowledge that there may be no definitive start or end date to the phenomenon being studied, I conceptualize the infighting in such a way that both theory and the individual actions of organization members are considered (Aminzade 1992:460-461).

Thus, the first step in addressing the research questions of the current study is to identify those features of the individual and organization that were relevant to identity, both individual and collective, and thus infighting. Second, by ordering the actions and events in a way that would indicate what led to and perpetuated infighting and social movement emergence the project will examine how each action played a role in shaping future events. Next, by studying the duration of the processes of organizational change and social movement emergence, it will be possible to consider both how the processes unfolded and how the actors perceived the events involved in the process. Finally, addressing the differences between the experiences of Mattachine and DOB will enable the current project to compare the cases, showing the conditions under which infighting leads to either the decline or survival and how both organizations contributed to the emergence of the Homophile Movement.

It is important to note that it is hard to get a sense of individual identity, or how each member conceptualizes him or herself broadly. The closest approximation of identity in the current project is the way that individual organization members discuss their own history or their own experiences in a way that reflects the way they think about themselves. I am hesitant to use words like “personal narrative” or even “biography” as narrative implies the telling of a coherent story, while biography indicates the story of one’s life in full. The current cases, however, often

rely on short anecdotes published in the organizations' magazines and newsletters, as well as content from meetings, personal letters, and later interviews (the data will be addressed in the following section). Thus, they reflect parts of a narrative and selections of a given biography. The way that members discuss components of their lives, however, was done with the organizations' identities in mind (and again, identity incorporates what is central and distinctive about the organization, as well as providing information about how the organization should respond to a given event. As such, the identity also incorporates goals and tactics, even if only implicitly). Similarly, these anecdotes were used to identify the common interests and experiences of members, which is explicitly linked to a broader collective identity. In short, although this project does not incorporate full narratives or biographies, that should not be seen as a limitation, as that is not how people interact in everyday life. Instead, these are a reflection of how people 'share' or 'act out' their identities in everyday life, which is particularly the case when engaged in infighting.

Data

To illustrate how the field and infighting affect a social movement organization's identity and success or failure, I will analyze the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB). In particular, I will identify the experiences and interests of members as they relate to the organization. These are expressed as members try to clarify what they believe is central and distinctive about the group. In this sense, I will show that infighting may shift, as will the focus of the narratives, as the environment and various fields shift. This occurs because different issues may become prominent at different times and because various components of individual narratives will be more or less relevant for different topics around which infighting is focused.

Additionally, I will incorporate references to other organizations to address the ways in which organizations and strategic action fields form in reference to existing organizations and fields.

To this end, I used both primary and secondary documents. The documents were collected from three archives. First, the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives in Los Angeles houses the Mattachine Society Project Collection. ONE boasts being the largest archive of gay and lesbian history in the world. It collects data nationally, but focuses on organization and events in Los Angeles. Second, the Charles E. Young Research Library at the University of California, Los Angeles contains six linear feet of documents pertaining to the Daughters of Bilitis. Most of the documents in this collection are from the founding chapter of the organization and the national governing board, though there are documents related to several other chapters as well. Third, documents from both the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis were collected from the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society located in San Francisco. Although it is anticipated that there was some overlap between the archives in San Francisco and Los Angeles, there was additional information pertaining to the San Francisco Chapter of the Mattachine Society in the former and the Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin Papers in San Francisco includes more personal documents as well as those pertaining to their work outside of the Daughters of Bilitis.

Three primary types of documents were collected from the archives: organizational documents, public documents, and personal documents. The organizational documents include meeting minutes, various drafts of the organizations' mission statements and by-laws, incorporation documents, organization policies, memos, drafts of proposed organization structures, and correspondence with professionals, group members, and leaders of other organizations. The public documents include newsletters, flyers, editorials written to local

papers, and news clippings from various local and national publications. The personal documents consist primarily of correspondence to and from members within each organization and letters to personal friends, often those who were active in other groups. They also include personal statements by the organization founders of the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis, Harry Hay and Del Martin, respectively. Whenever possible, I utilized primary documents, though they were supplemented by historical texts and oral histories.

LOOKING AHEAD

This dissertation examines how the field and infighting affect organizational survival and movement emergence by analyzing the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis, two of the first gay and lesbian organizations, respectively, in the United States. Additionally, this project shows how infighting within and between organizations can influence movement emergence by examining the Homophile Movement.

Chapter Two begins by discussing the early mobilization of the Mattachine Society. Through an analysis of the major conflicts that led to infighting within the organization, this chapter will show how organizational members used their own experiences to discuss what they felt was appropriate for the organization and its identity. Although most of the infighting was ongoing, it is possible to differentiate between three major issues that caused conflict. Not all of the conflicts impacted the organization equally, however. This chapter will show that infighting related to issues that were more peripheral to the organization, particularly related to general functioning of the organization, would not have led to its dissolution. In particular, this chapter will show that although a repertoire was borrowed from a distant field, infighting enabled members to acknowledge the need to adapt to a changing environment.

Alternatively, those issues that were central and pertained to the ideology and interests of individual members were far more detrimental. Specifically, Chapter 2 will argue that because Mattachine existed in an unorganized social space and the founders were drawing from a distant field—primarily the American Communist Party—different factions were unable to identify shared experiences or interests to generate a sustainable organizational identity. As a result, the organization largely failed after two and a half years.

Chapter 3 also examines the ways in which organizational members utilize experiences in other fields to shape their narratives as they engage in infighting about what they believe is an appropriate identity for the organization. This chapter shows that because the Daughters of Bilitis existed in an emerging field (the Homophile Movement) and members were drawing from proximate fields—the Civil Rights Movement and Second Wave Feminism—members were able to identify some common interests and the organization was able to adapt to the changing field. As a result, the organization survived for 16 years, through the end of the homophile movement and into Gay Liberation.

Like the Mattachine Society, there were several issues at the heart of infighting in DOB. Unlike Mattachine, however, infighting in DOB was episodic, enabling the group to focus on one issue at a time. This chapter will show that the issues were influenced by fields and as the fields shifted, so did the issues that DOB addressed. Eventually, it was a conflict of ideology, which was also occurring in the emerging fields, that led to the decline of DOB. Specifically, Chapter 3 will show that as the emerging field and a proximate field created conflicting frames, organization members were unable to agree on which was an appropriate frame for DOB.

The emergence of the Homophile Movement will be discussed in Chapter 4. Here, the Homophile Movement will be conceptualized as a strategic action field. Typically, movements

are said to emerge from existing networks of organizations or other movements, either via spillover or spinoff. What this chapter will show, however, is the way in which it emerged from uncoordinated social space as early homophile organizations were developing and, over time, working together to generate a shared understanding of the field. In particular, addressing the third implication, Chapter 4 will show how infighting within early organizations contributed to diversification and the expansion of a network of activists who contributed to a shared understanding about what was at stake, who were the primary actors, what were the appropriate tactics, and finally, what was an appropriate frame for the developing movement.

Finally, Chapter 5 will review the major contributions of the dissertation. In particular, it will show how infighting is the process through which meaning making, and the process of generating a social movement organization identity, occurs. Additionally, it will show that infighting is driven both by different experiences of organizational members and the ordering of the social space in which the organizations are embedded. By examining fields, the dissertation shows that in an unorganized social space, infighting leads to decline (as shown in Chapter 2). As a strategic action field emerges and individuals engage with proximate fields, however, infighting leads to organizational survival (as shown in Chapter 3). By examining the organizations, the chapter will emphasize the dimensions of infighting and when it is more or less likely to lead to organizational decline. Finally, this chapter will review the processes through which an uncoordinated social space develops into a social movement (as shown in Chapter 4). The chapter will conclude with a discussion of limitations and empirical implications for future research.

THE MATTACHINE SOCIETY

“It may sound strange that an organization sponsoring research in homosexuality and reform laws on deviation came into being in that part of the West Coast where official prejudice is strongest and where there are more laws against sex crimes than in almost any other country in the world. But injustice has a way of stimulating those who hate it, and the Mattachine Foundation is very stimulated indeed” (Hieronymous K.¹, *ONE Magazine*, January 1953:18).²

In the few years that the Mattachine Society existed as it was initially proposed in 1950, members sought to identify what it meant to be homosexual. These early discussions incorporated individuals’ personal experiences prior to joining the group as well as the members’ experiences once involved. As homosexuality was seen as a threat to the United States, members were forced to meet in secret, through clandestine encounters, and word of the organization spread only through word of mouth.

The founders used their experiences with other organizations, primarily the American Communist Party, to inform both the structure and ideology of the organization. Over time, as new members joined, the different conceptualizations of homosexuality expanded, as did expectations for the organization. Although the Mattachine Society is recognized as starting homosexual activism via the Homophile Movement (D’Emilio 1998) and members are credited with the first collective victory for homosexuals in the United States (Timmons 1990), its tenure was brief. A Mattachine spin-off did emerge, but it resembled the original organization in name only.

¹ Hieronymous K. was a pseudonym used by Dale Jennings, one of the founders of the Mattachine Society.

² *ONE Magazine*, January 1953, Box 11, ONE Incorporated Records, Coll2011-001, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

The current chapter will examine the process of Mattachine's mobilization and eventual dissolution.³ In particular, it will show that because Mattachine existed in an unorganized social space in which there were no similar organizations or proximate fields to draw from, members had drastically different ideas about what was appropriate or possible for a homosexual organization in the 1950s. Moreover, this chapter will highlight the differences among the individual members' conceptualizations of homosexuality. These variables influenced infighting among organization members, but it is the way these variables interacted that led to the demise of the Mattachine Society.

In particular, this chapter will show how the field, and specifically the unorganized space in which the Mattachine Society existed, shaped internal conflict and affected the organization. Because the founders had to use repertoires from adopted from the American Communist Party, they did not resonate with the rapid increase of members who joined the organization later on. In the case of some components, to say that they did not resonate with members is putting lightly, however. In fact, the ideology and goals borrowed from the distant field sparked such great controversy that the founders were essentially forced out of the organization. Not all issues, however, were as problematic. This chapter will also show that even when components of the organization, in this case its structure, came from a distant field, as long as members are willing to acknowledge that they are no longer legitimate as the environment changes, infighting has the capacity to help organizations adapt.

The chapter will begin with a brief summary of the climate of the late 1940s and early 1950s, when the idea for the Mattachine Society developed and members first began meeting in

³ I should note, I refer to this as a case of organizational dissolution despite the fact that a Mattachine still existed after the 1953 conference. This is intentional, as the analysis will show that what remained after the convention was not the Mattachine of 1950. Instead, it was entirely new and had nothing in common with the original organization except a name, which was maintained only because it had already become recognized and thus had established some semblance of legitimacy in the turbulent field.

secret. This will be followed by a history of the organization to provide an overview of the significant events that represent both successes for Mattachine as well as those that increased infighting. After a timeline has been established, the chapter will highlight three conflicts that fueled infighting within the organization. This will provide context for understanding how the relationship between individuals and the field contributes to infighting. The chapter will conclude by emphasizing the conditions that lead to the dissolution of the organization, and how that related to both individuals and the field.

The Climate of Repression

The period after World War II was characterized by fears of communism and anxiety of waning masculinity (Loftin 2007). As men were returning home from the war and women were expected to relinquish their jobs, concern grew over changing gender roles that were perceived as deviant (Freedman 1987:87). Moreover, the frequent overlap between terms such as “sex criminal, pervert, psychopath, and homosexual” conflated these identities in the mind of the public (Freedman 1987:103). The conservative climate of the era represented a restorative trend, started by those who felt their standard of living was declining (Adam 1995:60).

As early as 1947, Congress began to express concerns about homosexuals in the State Department. Just as the State Department declared that membership in the Communist Party was evidence of psychological maladjustment, homosexuality was identified as the maladjustment that led people to communism (Johnson 2004:35). Homosexuals were seen as a threat to American security and morality. In 1948, Alfred Kinsey published *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, which reported that incidences of homosexuality and homosexual thoughts were not limited to a small portion of the population, as had been the popular conception at the time

(D'Emilio 1998). Rather, as much as half the male population had erotic thoughts about their own sex and 37% had at least one homosexual experience. Although Kinsey himself expected his report to lead to diminished punishments for homosexuality, it had the reverse effect. The study appeared to magnify the dangers that homosexuals posed to the security and morality of America (D'Emilio 1998). Homosexuals were thought to be morally questionable and open to blackmail. If Kinsey's numbers were correct, the security of the United States was in danger. From 1947 through 1950, more than 400 government employees were dismissed or resigned for sexual perversion (Johnson 2004:166).

If homosexuality represented a weak link that could allow communists to infiltrate the government, the presence of homosexuals among the general public was equally threatening. A "sex crime panic" swept across the US in the post-war decade and permeated the media, politics, and law (Freedman 1987). Although it is questionable whether sex crime rates did in fact increase in the period following World War II, there was increased coverage of sex crimes by major newspapers. At this time, homosexuals were considered sexual psychopaths, a label which lumped them together with violent offenders in laws enacted in 26 states and the District of Columbia by 1955 (Terry 1999).

During this period, Los Angeles experienced rapid expansion, during which "hundreds of thousands of migrants came to L.A." (Faderman & Timmons 2006:72). During the war, gay male activity increased, in part because soldiers were coming through the port of Los Angeles and were able to engage in activities far from home. Many of these men chose to stay, and as a result, "L.A.'s underground expanded greatly...as did places where gay people could meet one another" (Faderman & Timmons 2006:73). The Chief of Police in Los Angeles, William Parker, was concerned about the changes to the city after the war. He encouraged the force to be aggressive,

seek out, “shake down, and arrest” those who were likely to commit crimes. “Under Chief Parker’s ascendancy, arrests for ‘sex perversion’ crimes, involving primarily male homosexuals, jumped dramatically” (Faderman & Timmons 2006:75).

The war produced conditions in which the homosexual population of Los Angeles boomed. It also, however, produced fear of those who were different, fear of the subversive, and specifically, fear of the homosexual. It is in these conditions that homosexuals began to organize and one primary reason why is that political organizing was already occurring in Los Angeles. In the early 1930s, the area of Los Angeles known as Edendale became a tightknit community for artists, communists, and homosexuals (Hurewitz 2007). The neighborhood earned the nickname “Red Hill” because of its affiliation with the communists that gathered and resided there. Members of this community, like members of the American Communist Party more broadly, tied together the social, cultural, and personal. “Edendale leftists forged a personal-political identity not unlike what Mattachine would embrace” (Hurewitz 2007:155). This was the neighborhood where Harry Hay lived and thus, it was not just that he was involved in the Party in the sense that he attended meetings and taught courses. He was also immersed in a community of like-minded people who believed that the personal was simultaneously social and political. It is therefore not surprising that he would utilize a personal-political identity forged by the leftists in Edendale (Hurewitz 2007:155) for his own organization, The Mattachine Society.

History of the Mattachine Society

Harry Hay first proposed a politically-active homosexual organization in 1948, not long after the publication of the first volume of the *Kinsey Report, Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. The sheer number of individuals who identified as homosexual suggested to Hay that they were an

organizable minority. Hay drafted a prospectus outlining the problems he believed homosexuals faced along with several ways to solve them. Although this original prospectus was lost, a surviving document dated July 7, 1950 is thought to be almost identical in content (Hay 1996). He believed that homosexuals represented what he called the “androgynous minority.”⁴ This minority, he argued, was being pitted against a fascist American government that sought to isolate them. Specifically, he wrote, “that encroaching American Fascism...seeks to bend unorganized and unpopular minorities into isolated fragments of social and emotional instability.”⁵ In other words, he argued the government intentionally isolated minorities and drove them to emotional instability to control their fates.

Since homosexuality put individuals at risk, homosexuals were often unwilling or unable to associate with others. Accusations of homosexuality could result in penalties or blackmail even when there was no proof aside from statements made by anonymous parties. As such, Hay claimed that individuals faced threats of “androgynity” by association in much the same way that people faced charges of communism by association. Hay wrote that integration into the community would benefit both the androgynous minority and the communities in which they lived.⁶

These preliminary concepts for the Mattachine Society aligned the problematic conditions of homosexuals to the threat of communism by association, and acknowledged the link between “commies and queers” made by the government. In this early document, Hay uses the comparison to highlight the fact that anybody could be accused of androgyny by association,

⁴ Harry Hay initially used the term Androgyne instead of homosexual because he felt that the term homosexual carried a negative connotation.

⁵ “Preliminary Concepts,” Box 1, folder 21, Mattachine Society Project Collection, Coll2008-016, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

⁶ *ibid*

just as one could be accused of communism by association; an accusation on its own does not imply membership in the communist party, however. Although the message itself was clear, the experiences of early Mattachine do not suggest that people were willing to listen to or read a proposal that appeared sympathetic to communists. Because communist sympathy could lead to prosecution, people similarly would not want to be accused of sympathy to the androgynous minority.

The first frame developed by Hay resulted in the recruitment of four other individuals—Rudi Gernriech, Bob Hull, Chuck Rowland, and Dale Jennings—who were equally passionate about starting a homosexual rights organization. These early activists were all members of the American communist Party or “fellow travelers.” As such, they understood and embraced a frame that recognized the danger of androgyny by association. The five men began meeting secretly in November of 1950 to discuss their organization. The need for discretion was associated with the political climate of the times and reflected the founders’ experiences in the Communist Party.⁷ In addition to an oath of secrecy, the structure of Mattachine was designed to protect the identities and activities of its members.

Although the ties between Mattachine leaders and the Communist Party became publicized several years after the organization was founded, the connection was not strong. Only Harry Hay maintained his affiliation after founding Mattachine, though he resigned not long after. Moreover, aside from the desire to keep membership roles secret, the two had very little in common, with the exception of a single theoretical tie. Hay had spent many years studying Marxism and incorporated one key aspect to the foundation of Mattachine. Hay applied the term

⁷ Hay was a teacher at People’s Songs, an organization affiliated with the American Communist Party. Gernriech was affiliated with the Lester Horton Dance Theater, a company with “markedly progressive membership” (Timmons 1990:140). Hull and Rowland were members of the American Communist Party and though Jennings was not, he was described as “one hell of a fellow traveler” (Timmons 1990:144).

“cultural minority” to homosexuals, believing that they qualified because of a shared culture and language (Timmons 1990).

In April of 1951, the founders of the Mattachine Society rewrote their missions and purposes. They changed almost all aspects of the original frame, including the language. Two of the biggest shifts were removing references to “American fascists” and replacing “androgynous” with “homosexual.” They still believed that homosexuals were repressed, and they sought to provide “enlightened leadership” to elevate homosexuals from “the social ostracism an unsympathetic culture has perpetrated upon them.”⁸ The statement suggests that society itself has been antagonistic and it places it at fault for the problematic conditions facing homosexuals. The founders still recognized that isolation was one of the biggest problems they faced, but they believed this was the result of misinformation about homosexuality.

With the creation of the “Missions and Purposes” in 1951, the organization identified three goals: to unify, educate, and lead. To unify, the Mattachine Society would bring together isolated homosexuals and help them adjust to the dominant culture. To educate, they would collect and study research from a variety of fields—psychology, physiology, anthropology, and sociology—that they could use to inform both homosexuals and the public at large. To lead, they would recruit “all socially conscious homosexuals” to provide leadership and achieve an explicitly political aim. The founders wrote, “once unification and education have progressed, it becomes imperative (to consolidate these gains) for [Mattachine] to push forward into the realm of political action to erase from our law books the discriminatory and oppressive legislation presently directed against the homosexual minority.”⁹

⁸ “Missions and Purposes,” Box 1, folder 5, Mattachine Society Project Collection, Coll2008-016, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

⁹ *ibid*

The structure of Mattachine was derived from the model used by Freemason's in the 18th century, which allowed for various levels of secrecy and involvement (Timmons 1990). The first order units, also called guilds, were made up of individuals who ran discussion groups. These groups were "semi-private," though their affiliation with the formal organization was kept secret (Timmons 1990). The second order included representatives from the first order, who took on a more prominent role than other group leaders, and several members from the higher, fifth order. Although third and fourth orders were included in the original model of the organization, they never came to fruition as the organization developed. The fifth order was comprised of Mattachine's founders and was later joined by two other members. Individuals at this level were fully entrenched in the organization and kept their identities hidden even to other members of the Society until 1953.

Early meetings of Mattachine were held in secret. Fear of exposure dominated meetings and made recruitment difficult. "Since any public mention of homosexuality was equated with scandal, few workplaces would retain an employee whose involvement with such an organization became public" (Timmons 1990:147). As such, members and guests frequently used pseudonyms or brought along a female companion to serve as a "date" in the event that the discussion groups were raided.¹⁰ The purpose of the discussion groups was twofold. First, the groups allowed participants to debate the concept of homosexuals as a minority and discuss forms of political action that could be taken to ensure equality for all minorities. Second, and perhaps more important, the discussion groups served as the primary method of recruitment. Individuals who attended several groups and appeared enthusiastic were told privately about the organization behind these meetings and were invited to join the Mattachine Society.

¹⁰ Although there were several women in the Mattachine Society, the organization was dominated by men. The women who accompanied men to these early meetings, however, were usually lesbians and participated in the discussion groups.

The desire for unanimity among Mattachine's founders and the need for secrecy meant that the organization had a difficult time expanding in its first year. That changed, however, with the trial of Dale Jennings, one of the founding members of Mattachine. He was arrested in 1952 on charges of lewd and dissolute conduct as a result of police entrapment. In order to keep the existence of Mattachine a secret, a front organization was created to address the Jennings case. The Citizens Committee to Outlaw Entrapment (CCOE) allowed Mattachine to publicize the case and find support among the community. Flyers were distributed in areas frequented by homosexuals – including beaches, bars, and restrooms that served as cruising areas – and help was elicited from gay male shop owners (D'Emilio 1983). In their "Anonymous Call to Arms," the CCOE wrote, "It is not only idle, but dangerous, for the Community at large to placidly assume that illegal police techniques as practiced against the Homosexual Minority are special and confined."¹¹ The threat faced by homosexuals was no longer an isolated problem; everyone was at risk.

Although police entrapment was typically associated with "staged seductions," the Mattachine Society warned that, "the police officers of the Traffic Division... can hardly be expected to remain content and quiescent on their their [sic] pedestrian salaries while Vice Squad Officers admittedly reap rich rewards from phony entrapments."¹² Just as it is difficult to prove that a victim did not make sexual advances toward a Vice Officer, how could one prove that they were not speeding drunk? "HOW DO YOU PROVE THAT YOU ARE NOT WHAT YOU ARE

¹¹ "Anonymous Call to Arms" Box 1, folder 14, Mattachine Society Project Collection, Coll2008-016, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

¹² *ibid*

NOT?”¹³ Providing real cases of entrapment and bribery, the Call to Arms highlights the loss of money and the shame that results from such cases.

The call concludes by presenting police entrapment as a problem that was in direct conflict with the Fifth Amendment:

“Under the Fifth Amendment, any form of entrapment or attempted entrapment is illegal. But in ‘so-called’ morals cases, few victims of entrapment or attempted entrapment are in a position to brave or to defy public prejudice sufficiently to command a judicial evaluation of the civic conspiracy to subvert their constitutional rights and privileges as citizens.”¹⁴

The Mattachine Society continued to elaborate on the problem of police entrapment and corruption. They claimed that anyone was at risk of being mistaken for a homosexual. Anyone could be accused of lewd behavior for striking up a conversation with a stranger.¹⁵ The organizers also pointed out that the Vice Squad would typically call the employers of the victim even before a trial was underway.¹⁶ This highlighted the fact that entrapment was not merely a matter of being found guilty and paying fines. The damage it could do to one’s career or personal life was the bigger threat.

Police entrapment was a common form of intimidation in the 1950s (Johnson 2004). The few lawyers who were willing to handle such cases generally encouraged their clients to plead guilty. Victims were forced to pay substantial fines to avoid jail time. Refusing to give in,

¹³ *ibid*, emphasis in original

¹⁴ *ibid*

¹⁵ “Now is the time to fight,” Box 1, folder 14, Mattachine Society Project Collection, Coll2008-016, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

¹⁶ “Letter to City Editors,” Box 1, folder 14, Mattachine Society Project Collection, Coll2008-016, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

Mattachine encouraged Jennings to fight the charges. The case represents one of the first few cases of police entrapment in which the defendant acknowledged his homosexuality in court. As the trial came to a close, the jury was deadlocked and the judge dismissed the charges. The decision sent the message that homosexuals could no longer be charged with lewd conduct simply because they were gay.¹⁷

Although the major newspapers did not publicize the case or the outcome, the Citizens Committee to Outlaw Entrapment was able to get the message out to the public. Discussion groups sprang up all over the state, and those that had been meeting regularly drastically increased in size. With almost two-dozen guilds, the secrecy associated with the early days of Mattachine grew more difficult, though the anonymity of those involved was still largely intact. In the summer of 1952, as the membership of the Mattachine Society increased so did the organization's activity. In an effort to appease those who were concerned about the legality of such an organization, the founders sought to incorporate Mattachine as a non-profit education organization. The Mattachine Foundation registered with the state of California, though the founders themselves were not identified as affiliates. Rather, two of the founders' mothers and one's sister were listed as the board of directors.

With the incorporation of the Mattachine Foundation, the organization moved forward with its political agenda. The little bit of attention that Mattachine received from the media, however, set in motion a course of action that would lead to factions and infighting within the Mattachine Society. In February of 1953, Hay was named as a Marxist teacher by a Los Angeles newspaper. Although Hay had long since dissociated himself from both the Communist Party and the classes he taught on Marxism, the politics of fear associated with communism drove

¹⁷ As Timmons (1990) notes, this was not the first case of police entrapment in which the defendant both acknowledged he was gay and was not found guilty. It was, however, the first instance of a *collective* effort by homosexuals to fight such charges.

Mattachine to publicly dismiss any affiliation with other organizations. Additionally, the Fifth Order agreed that Hay should distance himself from any public affiliation with the Mattachine Foundation, the organization that served as a public front, and the Mattachine Society, the still secret organization that had been center of Hay's life since 1950.

Despite this change, Mattachine was presented with an even larger hurdle in the form of an article published on March 12, 1953 by Paul Coates in the *Los Angeles Daily Mirror*. Mattachine had sent a questionnaire about the rights of homosexuals to candidates for the Los Angeles City Council, which Coates obtained. In his article, Coates both acknowledged the potential in an organization focused on a social problem and raised several questions that "could alarm both its gay members and the general public."¹⁸ The first issue that Coates addressed was that there was no record of the Foundation. Second, he claimed that he was unable to locate Romaine Cox, the treasurer of Mattachine. The third and most damning issue he raised was that the Mattachine Foundation's attorney, Fred Snider, had been an unfriendly witness before the House Un-American Activities Committee.

Although Mattachine addressed all three points in a letter to Coates, their response was never printed. Surprisingly, despite the red-baiting that was apparent in Coates's references to Snider, the Fifth Order distributed copies of the article to its members. Likely, they had assumed that the positive references to the organization in the article would outweigh the fact that Mattachine had been publically linked to a communist sympathizer. The effort backfired, however, and a small faction of members from San Francisco and Laguna Beach became convinced that the communist party was running Mattachine. Pressure mounted as several

¹⁸ "Editorial by Paul V. Coates in the *Los Angeles Mirror*," copied and distributed by the Mattachine Society, Box 1, folder 8, Mattachine Society Project Collection, Coll2008-016, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

members from a guild in Laguna called for the inclusion of a loyalty oath denouncing communism as a requirement of membership in the organization. Several First Order and discussion group members had become uneasy with secret structure of Mattachine. Although not all of the founders were onboard with the idea initially, the Fifth Order decided that Mattachine would have to become an “above ground” organization.¹⁹ They called a democratic convention to create a constitution for Mattachine and invited representatives from every guild.

The convention was held over two weekends in April and May of 1953. Although the founders had presented the guild representatives with a new constitution, not everyone supported it. Two distinct camps arose among the attendees. The larger of the two consisted of the founders and their supporters. This group accepted structural changes sought by the other faction. They did not, however, share in the desire to purge the organization of any individuals who had at one time been affiliated with the Communist Party.

The opposition had three concerns that they presented to the convention. First, they did not support the concept of a homosexual culture that was central to the Mattachine Society. They sought integration into society and did not see themselves as a distinct group of people. Additionally, they did not believe that they should be teaching the community about homosexuality. Rather, they felt that it was more appropriate to work with professionals who were more qualified to discuss homosexuality. Finally, they did not believe that Mattachine should be involved in politics in any manner.

Although there were no drastic changes made to Mattachine during the first weekend of the convention, the founders realized that a more democratic structure with public leaders would

¹⁹ Letter from Chuck Rowland to Harry Hay, March 11, 1953, Box 1, folder 10, Mattachine Society Project Collection, Coll2008-016, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

be necessary for the organization to survive.²⁰ For the first time in the history of the organization, the five founders (with the two other fifth order members) appeared on stage together. They stood in front of the convention and resigned before the end of the first weekend (Sears 2006). During the second weekend, a new constitution was drafted with some difficulty. Major disagreements between the two groups of Mattachine members made it difficult to compromise. Although the faction supporting the founders was larger than the dissenting group (or what I refer to as the assimilationists), their voices were often lost in the crowd. This was due in large part to the fact that the individuals appointed to run the second weekend all belonged to the assimilationists. Although many of the dissenting group's proposals did not pass during the convention, their new positions of power ensured that they would be able to move forward with a new agenda, a new Mattachine.

Post-Convention Mattachine Society

In May of 1953, the members of the fifth order of the Mattachine Society stepped down from their leadership positions. By the end of the year, all would officially leave the organization. They believed this was necessary “for the advancement of the movement to which [they] had given birth...in favor of an organization which had what they consider to be a larger and broader conception.”²¹ The faction that had been divisive at the end of 1952 and sought to purge the Mattachine Society of any link to communism or an ideology based on a cultural minority took

²⁰ Although the founders had already agreed to a new format, it became necessary to implement it as quickly as possible. Several impatient members of the dissenting group threatened to hand over the membership roles of Mattachine over to the FBI during the heated debates in April.

²¹ Statement by Martin Block in the Meeting Minutes of the Coordinating Council of the Mattachine Society, 27 May 1953, Appendix II, Mattachine Society Minutes 1953-1961, Harold L. Call Papers, Coll2008-010, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

control of the organization and began to focus primarily on social responsibility and education. This more moderate stance came to reflect the assimilationist goals of homophile activism through the end of the decade. Even in the immediate aftermath of the convention, some Mattachine members took issue with the assimilationist stance. As Jim Kepner told several members of the Southern Area Council, “Our enemies are all those who would try to force their own conformity on us. That includes Communists, but it includes as well those comfortable and respectable middle classes.”²²

“Throughout the summer and into autumn there had been open rebellion among chapters, resignations of key leaders, and diminishing member interest. The Foundation, too, had yet to officially dissolve and some of the Founders, most notably...Dale Jennings...had become rabid opponents of the Society” (Sears 2006:233). There was a third convention in November of 1953 to rewrite the constitution of the Mattachine Society. Here, the assimilationists were a clear majority and many original members had already left the organization, though Rowland remained and attended the convention. “The people who controlled the convention, remembers Dorr Legg, ‘were the people who were going to root out lock, stock, and branch every shred of the previous doctrine. They were going to decapitate anybody who had any part of the original Marxist-oriented ideas’” (Sears 2006:265).

The organization rejected the requirements of loyalty oaths but they simultaneously “abandoned the radical, militant impulse that had characterized the first three years of the organization” (D’Emilio 1983:86). At the end of the convention, “chapters were not autonomous units. Their...activities were now limited to working with ‘established’ persons and organizations” (Sears 2006:268). Working with professionals, like the goal of assimilation,

²² “Memorandum and Resolution on Politics in the Mattachine Society.” Presented by Jim Kepner to the Southern Area Council, 31 August 1953, Chapter 106, Mattachine Society, Harold L. Call Papers, Coll2008-010, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

became a second characteristic of the emerging movement, though the organizations did not agree on the way in which professionals should be incorporated into the work of the movement more broadly.

David Finn and Hal Call wrote a new “Aims and Principles” focused on the Society’s three tasks, “education, integration, and social action.” The public was to be educated on “sex variation” while they would teach homosexuals “a pattern of behavior that is acceptable to society in general and compatible with recognized institutions.” They sought to integrate homosexuals into the civic affairs of the community “instead of attempting to withdraw into an invert society of their own.” This integration would further social action whereby more ‘realistic’ laws could be enacted and employment discrimination eliminated, while dispelling the belief that “the sex variant is unique, ‘queer.’”²³

In addition to squashing the cultural minority ideology of the original Mattachine Society, another substantial shift after the convention was the new non-political nature of the organization. There was still division among those who remained, but several chapters, along with National, emphasized the importance social activities and work that was explicitly non-political. For example, the pledge for Chapter 102, a Los Angeles-based chapter advised by Marilyn Rieger, required members to acknowledge that they should “try to aid any homosexual to his adjustment to society [and] in no way bring any political influence to the chapter.”²⁴ Instead, “the chapter pursued public relations projects such as organizing a blood bank for

²³ “Aims and Principles,” Box 1, folder 30, Mattachine Society Project Collection, Coll2008-016, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

²⁴ “Initiation Pledge of the Pioneer Chapter #102 of the Mattachine Society, June 1952, p 3. Chapter 102, Mattachine Society, Harold L. Call Papers, Coll2008-010, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

members and assisting a county hospital with donations for patients” (Sears 2006:236).

Similarly, when Ken Burns, acting on behalf of the Coordinating Council, hired attorney David Ravin to represent the Mattachine Society, Ravin told them, “All you can do is hope to change people’s thinking. *Don’t go out changing the law!*” (Sears 2006:247, MMCCMS, 20 July 1953, p 7, emphasis added). As D’Emilio (1983:87) argued, in lieu of working on consciousness raising or political change, the organization sought to “demonstrate that homosexuals were solid citizens.”

By the end of the year, after what many considered an unsuccessful November Constitutional Convention, many Mattachine members fled the organization. Dorr Legg, Jim Kepner, and Chuck Rowland all left and became active in ONE, Incorporated. Marilyn Rieger also left around this time, though she was more turned off by the “sexual antics” of the members rather than for ideological reasons (Sears 2006:298). Membership fell drastically, as did participation. The Vice Chairman of the San Francisco Area noted in a letter that, “the chaos and confusion which has confounded us in the past...continues in the present... [Very] few members remain, perhaps only eight or ten, and even these on a very limited basis.”²⁵

Another San Francisco-based member wrote a letter to Ken Burns stating, “the ‘Review’ or a similar type of periodical will be the only salvation of the Society...I think if the Society is to survive it will be imperative that the emphasis on membership be switched to a type of participating membership such as exists in the National Geographic Society or other groups drawing from large mail-contacted followings. Chapter meetings, and the structure of the Society

²⁵ Letter to Ken Burns, Donald S. Lucas Papers, 1997-25, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

could, of course, be continued, but I feel that the great strength, at least financially, must come through a type of ‘mail order member’ rather than the faithful meeting goes.”²⁶

“By the time the first issue of the *Mattachine Review* was in preparation during the autumn of 1954, a majority of Mattachine chapter, area council, and national officers of a year earlier were no longer active in the Society... From the original group that had effectively challenged the Foundation in the spring of 1953, only Ken Burns and Hal Call remained” (Sears 2006:299).

These documents show that not only was the post-convention Mattachine Society a wholly different organization than the one founded in 1950, it was also struggling to stay afloat. Mattachine’s first struggle was to mobilize homosexuals in California. Once they succeeded on that end, however, infighting became a much larger struggle to overcome.

Infighting and the Organization

Because the Mattachine Society was founded in secret by a small group of individuals, it grew slowly. The success of the Dale Jennings trial, however, resulted in the rapid expansion of the organization. What had once been a handful of like-minded individuals became a diverse group with conflicting ideas about homosexuality generally and the organization specifically.

This section will focus on the three main issues that resulted in infighting within the Mattachine Society. The first was the structure of the organization. Although it is likely that all members would recognize the importance of secrecy when Mattachine was first founded, many were uncomfortable with the degree of secrecy the structure of the organization provided, particularly in that it kept the names and identities of the founders a secret. The second issue

²⁶ Letter to Ken Burns from “Chal” November 14, 1954, 1997-25 Don Lucas Papers, 3/20, Homophile Organizations Mattachine Society Correspondence, 1953-1955

focused on the goals of the organizations. While one group sought to educate and make political and legal gains for homosexuals, the other thought these were issues better left to “professionals.” The final, and most problematic, issue was the conceptualization of homosexuals as a minority with their own culture. Both Hay and Rowland acknowledged the idea of a homosexual minority was specifically drawn from a Marxist perspective, thus in the era of the Second Red Scare, it is not surprising that this became such a heated subject.

Organizational Structure

The original structure of the Mattachine Society was chosen in direct response to the state of the sociopolitical environment when Hay first proposed the organization. In particular, Harry Hay suggested the secret structure in large part because he was aware of the dangers of being a known homosexual. Hay himself had an FBI file related to his work with the People’s Education Center. The structure was one of several elements that enabled the anonymity of Mattachine’s members. As the organization grew, however, the secrecy created conflict within the organization.

Newer members were concerned about who was running the organization and, largely in response to the articles connecting the Mattachine Society to the communist party, the organization’s affiliations. The secret cell-like structure called the organization’s legitimacy into question and many felt that to increase the viability of the group, the Society would have to go public. The dissenting faction tied the structure of the organization to the trust they had in the leadership. Thus, not only did their narratives reflect the sense that they didn’t trust the leaders, they all explicitly reference communism.

For example, David Finn was an anticommunist who served on the Bay Area's Loyalty Research Committee. Based on the work he did with that group, he called out Mattachine's structure as problematic in the way it would reflect the identity and goals of the organization. At the 1953 conference, he noted that the structure of the organization was a warning that there was a Red influence in the group. Additionally, in an attempt to appeal to the more conservative faction, Marilyn Rieger, a member of the Long Beach discussion group, noted that a secret society in and of itself posed a threat during an era of Senator Joe McCarthy and red-baiting columnists. Rieger believed that the structure of the Society made it apparent that members were "moving underground, in secrecy and fear. For an organization to exist in secrecy is to invite its persecution" (Sears 2006:208). Rieger also claimed that, "in order to continue working for a cause, I must have complete faith in the people behind the scenes" (Rieger quoted in Sears 2006:154). Similarly, Hal Call wanted a "Society with where we had an elected leadership and we knew who our leaders were. We wanted to take it out of the hands of the founding fathers and have an elected Society with a voting members *without* communists in our midst" (Sears 2006:152, emphasis in original)

Aware of the problems that the structure was creating for the organization, Chuck Rowland addressed the problem with Hay. In a letter dated March 11, 1953, Rowland laid out his concerns:

Three years ago when you and Bob and Dale and I began our initial discussions on the possibility of setting up Androgenes Anonyms [*sic*], we were pioneers in a hostile society, and we had to take elaborate precautions to insure our safety and that of others we were trying to influence. Our pioneering achievements, however, have created a qualitatively new situation... I'd still say that our pioneering has

created a whole, new situation and it is in this new situation that we must act and act intelligently or we will loose [sic] our leadership (paltry objection!), all our aims and purposes...wr've [sic] set a movement in motion...Gwartney made the most brilliant suggestion of all. He said that he, as a professional and employee of the State could not possibly join a 'secret' organization. He said, however, that he could and would join an organization of individuals.²⁷

As indicated in the letter, the work of the Mattachine Society had changed the conditions in the field. At its start, they had to "take precautions to insure our safety and that of others." Because of their work, however, they "created a qualitatively new situation." Now, as membership increased, people were concerned that joining a secret society, regardless of its goals, would put someone at risk.

In a hand-written note on the attached to the letter, Hay replied, "No, thanks! This move isn't radical, it's betrayal! Mattachine is nothing if it isn't Brotherhood of the spirit. You can't build a democratic society on a bunch of diversified 'individualists' going nowhere."²⁸ Although it is unclear whether this letter was sent, Hay eventually relented. He was convinced that changing the structure of the organization would not betray the "Brotherhood of the spirit."

The conflict over the structure of the Mattachine Society alone would not have led to the failure of the organization. I incorporate it here, however, as it shows that infighting does enable organizations to adapt to changes in the environment. When the Mattachine Society began, anonymity was of the utmost importance. After the Dale Jennings trial, however, even the

²⁷ Letter from Chuck Rowland to Harry Hay, March 11, 1953; Box 1, folder 10, Mattachine Society Project Collection, Coll2008-016, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

²⁸ *ibid*

founders acknowledged that the environment (and the times) had changed. The organization could be democratic and more public. In fact, it was specifically this component of the organization (secret structure versus democratic structure) that led to the convention of 1953, which I argue was the eventual demise of the original Mattachine Society. It wasn't until the other two elements of the organization were discussed that the factions split further and the organization dissolved.

This is important to note, as it is not as though uncoordinated social space and the use of distant fields will always lead to failure. Because the social space was uncoordinated, there were few legitimate or meaningful repertoires from which to draw. The organizers, and Harry Hay specifically, drew from what they knew. What they knew was secret, cell-like structures. This did enable early mobilization, but it was not sustainable. On this point, however, the founders were not only willing to budge, but did so because they were aware that their earlier actions had “qualitatively changed the field.”

Tactics & Goals

Mattachine was founded as a homosexual (or homophile) rights organization. The three goals the founders laid out were to unify, to educate, and to lead. The goal of unification, according to the “Missions and Purposes,” was to bring together homosexuals who were isolated and unable to adjust to the dominant culture. From the Mattachine Society, the document explained, individuals could “derive a feeling of ‘belonging.’”²⁹

The organization also sought to educate. By collecting and studying research from a variety of fields—specifically, psychology, physiology, anthropology, and sociology—

²⁹ *Missions and Purposes*, 1951, Box 1, folder 5, Mattachine Society Project Collection, Coll2008-016, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

Mattachine could inform both interested homosexuals and the public at large. The explanation of the final goal, to lead, included the organization's conceptualization of homosexuals as an oppressed minority. The mission laid out under the guise of leadership was a call to all socially conscious homosexuals to provide leadership to others in order to achieve the first two goals. This goal was explicitly political: "once unification and education have progressed, it becomes imperative (to consolidate these gains) for the Corporation to push forward into the realm of political action to erase from our law books the discriminatory and oppressive legislation presently directed against the homosexual minority."³⁰

As the organization grew, Jim Kepner recalls the goals of the organization being a point of contention. As he wrote,

"The exciting Mattachine growth brought on by the Dale Jennings' case victory brought an unexpected backlash. Even as the Society drew in hundreds of enthusiastic new participants and set up membership guilds to inspire them with Mattachine ideals, Bob [Hull] and Chuck [Rowland], at least, became aware how resistant most of the new people were to those ideals...Ready to fight for their own rights, they had no desire to change the world, and no philosophy other than their conformist, bourgeois, Christian notions. Hardly rebels, they merely wanted an equal share of apple pie for gays. Above all, they wanted the right of privacy."³¹

³⁰ *ibid*

³¹ "In Memory of the Mattachine Foundation," Jim Kepner Papers, Coll2011-002, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

As the organization grew, there were those who wanted to continue to pursue the goals of the Mattachine Society and there were those who “merely wanted an equal share of apple pie for the gays...they wanted the right of privacy.” Thus, the three goals were discussed at the two constitutional conventions of the Mattachine Society. For those who believed in the work of the founders, unification, education, and leadership remained reasonable and desirable goals for the group. For the assimilationist faction, however, all three were problematic. To start, Marilyn Rieger believed that the secrecy of the organization called into question whether the stated aims and purposes of the Society were the actual aims and purposes (Sears 2006:154). Once the Society began working toward an open and democratic structure, however, the goals themselves were addressed.

The assimilationist group was most strongly opposed to any kind of political work and instead suggested more social activities. Additionally, they did not believe they were in a position to be educating anyone, particularly the public. Instead, they preferred to seek the help of professionals in various fields to educate. Finally, the assimilationist faction was against the goal of unification among homosexuals, as they did not believe they constituted a specific group. Rather, they wanted to be part of society, with no special attention paid to what they did in bed.

The early goals were very much intertwined with the ideology of Mattachine—that of a cultural minority. Rowland remembers of his childhood that he came across a series of articles on homosexuals. He read that there were millions of homosexuals and thought they should organize and identify with other minorities who had struggled, like Jewish people and African Americans had. His early sense that he was part of a group that should organize led him to the belief that homosexuals should unite and educate and “work for things like retirement homes for gay people and a home for gay street kids” (Marcus 2002:24-25). Thus, his experiences early on,

both in his own research and in his sense that he was part of a minority, led to the support of these early goals.

Moreover, Hay's "early dissatisfaction with the status quo led him to association with the Industrial Workers of the World and eventually the American Communist Party" (Bullough 2002:73). He drew upon policies that were central to the communist party as they related to African Americans when writing his own prospectus. He believed that homosexuals, too, were a minority and his goals reflected his previous experiences.

The assimilationist faction, however, utilized a different frame of reference as the organization debated its goals. Ken Burns, Hal Call, David Finn, and Marilyn Rieger led this group on a platform of assimilation and anti-communism. They sought to "replace Mattachine's Red menace with 'experts' who knew all about homosexuality—heterosexual professionals." For example, Burns believed they should "work through...professional people who could better present what gay people were all about...by working through researchers and people in education we would get this acceptance."³²

Additionally, this group did not want to be seen as a minority and did not want to organize as a minority. Instead, they wanted to be seen as positive members of the community who were just like anyone else. For example, Hal Call sought integration and anonymity. His job was threatened after his boss discovered he was a homosexual in 1952. Call pointed out that half of his coworkers were gay and firing him would not rid the organization of homosexuals. He cited this experience and explained that he wanted to live as he wanted.

Others did not like the "swishes" or those who outwardly displayed more effeminate qualities. They saw the swishes as a threat to homosexuals as a whole and sought to help them,

³² Interview with Ken Burns by John D'Emilio, 10 January 1977, Tape 00401, IGIC

“adjust themselves to a respectable, productive position in the dominant culture.”³³ Marilyn Rieger was as staunchly anti-communist as Finn and helped the Long Beach Chapter create a pledge that would require members to “aid any homosexual in his adjustment to society [and] in no way bring any political influence into the chapter...[and] question any element in the chapter or in the organization which might seem subversive.’

Thus, those who were opposed to the Mattachine Society’s first three goals brought in their experiences either in anti-communist organizations or in the environment more broadly as they discussed their goals for the organization. They believed the goals should be explicitly non-political, but should instead focus on more social elements. This included an education component, though they argued that the education should be left up to heterosexual professionals. The goals were central to the organization. As such, members were less willing to compromise than they were with the structure of the organization. Moreover, the goals were in many ways inherently tied to the most contentious issue that the Mattachine Society faced – that of the cultural minority ideology.

Ideological Conflict

Hay had spent many years studying Marxism and incorporated one key aspect to the foundation of Mattachine. Hay applied the term “cultural minority” to homosexuals, believing that they qualified because of a shared culture and language. Even as the Society drew in hundreds of enthusiastic new participants and set up membership guilds to inspire them with Mattachine ideals, several leaders became aware of how resistant most of the new people were to those

³³ Letter from David Finn to Ken Burns, 14 June 1953, Box 2, folder 49, Mattachine Society Project Collection, Coll2008-016, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

ideals. In particular, a growing faction did not support the concept of a homosexual culture. They sought integration into society and did not see themselves as a distinct group of people.

The other founders, like Hay, belonged to various communist organizations prior to their work with the Mattachine Society. As such, they did not take issue with the framing of an ideology around the concept of a cultural minority.³⁴ In fact, Chuck Rowland explicitly asked Hay about the ideology driving the group. As he recalled, “With my Communist background, I knew I could not work in a group without a theory. I said, ‘All right, Harry, what is our theory?’ And he said, ‘We are an oppressed minority culture.’ I agreed instantly” (Timmons 1990:151). He further explained that he believed that the Mattachine Society and its members could not have the same ideology as heterosexual groups, because the latter was based on the necessity of reproduction and family.

Similarly, Rudi Gernreich supported the cultural minority ideology as opposed to the assimilationist stance. He moved to Los Angeles from Vienna in 1938. Gernreich was well aware of the dangers posed to homosexuals and told Hay “of the homosexual movement led by Magnus Hirschfeld, whose publicly known Institute for Sexual Research had been easily smashed by the Nazis: its records sent homosexuals to death camps” (Timmons 1990:141). Moreover, once in Los Angeles, Gernreich worked in the film industry and danced with the Lester Horton Theater. This set him at the center of L.A.’s most socially conscious audiences and avant-garde artists. Thus, he was not concerned with assimilation because he found a niche and homosexuality did not interfere with that. If anything, it put him in a position to help recruit further.

³⁴ It is worth noting that two other members joined the Fifth Order: Jim Gruber and Konrad Stevens. They became aware that the founders were previously involved with the communist party, but neither were communists nor were they outwardly anti-communist. Moreover, they supported the Hay’s cultural minority ideology.

Newer members, however, were not interested in the generating a homosexual culture, but instead wanted to focus on the integration and assimilation of homosexuals. For this faction, there was no sense of shared belief that many homosexuals were creating cultural products that reflected a culture distinct from the mainstream. The dissenting faction wanted references to a cultural minority removed from the mission statement. It did not reflect their experiences as individuals and as such, they did not believe it should be reflected in the identity of the Mattachine Society. Instead, they wanted to “stress the common humanity of homosexuals and heterosexuals and keep sexuality as such private” (Adam 1987:64).

This faction largely started with members of the Long Beach discussion group—Ken Burns, David Finn, and Marilyn Rieger—as well as Hal Call of the San Francisco group. They sought a platform based on assimilation and anti-communism. These members were attracted to the idea of an organization for homosexuals. As Call recalled of his first meeting, “I was absolutely entranced. Here was a group of homosexual people that was banding together to try to get society to erase the stigma against homosexuality...I thought, ‘This is it! It is what I’m looking for! This is the channel that I can work in the future to help alleviate the threat that hung over the head of every homosexual’” (Sears 2006:151).

Once they learned more about the Society itself, however, their concern grew. They believed the organization was intertwined with the same ideology under which the communist party was governed. “The original founders of the Mattachine were Marxists and they had the insane concept that they were going to marry Marxism and homosexuality” (Sears 2006:151, Interview with Dorr Legg by Brad Mulroy, 1975). Their aims were, thus, twofold. First, they sought to rid the Mattachine Society of any red influence and, second, they wanted homosexuals to be seen as just like everyone else. As Marilyn Rieger stated at the first constitutional

convention, “We know we are the same. No different than anyone else. Our only difference is an unimportant one to the heterosexual society, *unless we make it important*...By integrating...not as homosexuals, but as people, as men and women whose homosexuality is irrelevant to our ideals, our principles, our hopes and aspirations.”³⁵

When infighting focused on a central ideology of the organization, the two factions could not find common ground. Not only were the different ideologies a reflection of how the individual members constructed their own identities (i.e., homosexual as part of a cultural minority versus homosexual as “no different than anyone else”), they also reflected a political field that was dominant in the early 1950s. The different ideologies influenced the goals that the different factions believed the organization should pursue. Thus, once the founders and the rest of the faction that supported the cultural minority ideology left the group, the organization that remained was wholly new, sharing only a name and a handful of members with the original Mattachine Society.

CONCLUSION

Themes in the narrative above provide the opportunity to elaborate on the history of the Mattachine Society in a way that shows how individual factors, shaped by the environment, influenced the infighting as well as how this process led to the eventual decline of the organization. During the three years prior to the constitutional convention of 1953, the social space was not ordered in a way that provided a legitimate or meaningful context for action. As such, members drew on their experiences in distant fields or used those fields as a point of reference when discussing their experiences as homosexuals in America. These experiences were then used to shape the debates about the organization.

³⁵ Marilyn Rieger, “Delegates of the Convention,” May 23, 1953, Kepner Papers, emphasis added.

The first conflict was about the organizational structure of the Mattachine Society. Although it was deemed necessary at the time of Mattachine's conception, all, even those in the fifth order, agreed that it was no longer necessary or viable. It may have been an issue that created conflict at first, but infighting that focused explicitly on structure was not particularly problematic. The broad, political environment in which the field was forming was becoming more accommodating to organizations. As such, infighting, although tense, enabled organization members to debate the pros and cons of an open, democratic structure. Even Harry Hay, the final holdout among the founders, was willing to discuss an alternative structure for the Mattachine Society. On its own, I argue this would not have torn the organization apart. This particular component at the center of infighting shows that as members debated the organizational structure, they explicitly acknowledged that the field had changed and the structure initially chosen was no longer effective. As a result, members agreed that it would be necessary to alter the structure, enabling the organization to adapt to the external changes.

The second conflict had to do with the tactics and goals of the organization. The founders wanted an organization that pursued the goals of unification, education, and leadership. These goals were associated with the idea that homosexuals had been isolated and mistreated by society. Thus, the organization wanted to educate people and show the community that homosexuals were not deviant. Additionally, they sought to engage in political work to attain equality. This was reflected in the experiences of the founders and their work with other minority groups. Others, however, thought such work—both political and educational—was best left to professionals. This was a reflection of their beliefs that they mostly wanted to be anonymous, “regular” members of society. These goals were tied directly with the final issue—homosexuals as a cultural minority.

The conflict over the cultural minority ideology connected externally to a distant field that was seen as a dangerous threat to America, and internally, related to some of the early members' conceptualizations of their own identity. Those who were opposed to this ideology were externally, loyalists, and internally, largely saw themselves as just like heterosexuals and therefore, not culturally distinct in anyway. With such deep-rooted ideological conflict, no amount of discussion seemed to persuade either side to budge. Thus, while it is likely that infighting over the structure of the organization could have been productive, and was at the start, it was the ideology of the organization and its founders that ultimately led to the decline of the organization. This was an issue that related directly to vastly different conceptualizations of homosexuality and an issue that divided the United States more broadly—communism and the Red Scare.

These final two conflicts show that infighting that focused on the ideology of the group, and the goals that were tied up with that ideology, was linked to the personal interests and experiences of many members of the Mattachine Society. As a result, the two factions were unable to identify a frame that resonated with both, particularly as the assimilationist faction was staunchly loyalist and, beyond wanting to rid the organization of any “red influence,” they wanted an organization that was explicitly anti-communist.

THE DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS

“I am a Lesbian. A simple statement, it would seem, which merely conveys that the woman expressing it has a preference for women, both erotically and emotionally. But behind that statement may be years, sometimes decades, of soul searching, untold agonies of self doubt and guilt, and painful conflict...Behind that simple statement -- ‘I am a Lesbian’ -- are implications so vast that the individual who would survive with any measure of sanity must examine all that she has ever been taught, all that she has ever experienced, all that she has ever hoped or dreamed” (Martin & Lyon 1972:20).

In 1955, four couples founded the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB), the first lesbian organization in the United States. Unlike Mattachine, DOB started as a social organization, but turned more political within its first two years. One of the major struggles the organization faced was developing well-defined goals, as many of the members did not have a clear sense of their own identity and thus what they hoped to gain from such an organization. The DOB grew slowly at first, and as they began accepting new members, it became apparent that those who joined “might have little or nothing in common but their sexuality” (Gallo 2006:6). Thus, discussions about being lesbian were a central part of the organization.

These discussions revealed that the women’s different experiences affected what they sought from the Daughters of Bilitis and what they believed the organization should do. Moreover, changes that were happening outside of the organization shaped conversations around organizational identity. There were three issues in particular that led to infighting within the DOB. First, the members disagreed about whether or not the organization should support integration and conformity. This was a topic that was central to early homophile organizing and thus these debates were occurring in the emerging movement. Second, the members disagreed about the tactics they wanted the organization to utilize. While some sought to use research as a primary defense against the studies that lumped homosexuality in with sexual psychopaths,

others looked to the success of direct action in the Civil Rights Movement and pushed for more radical action. Finally, although the DOB was founded as an organization for women interested in the problems faced by homosexuals, the members were divided when two different movements began emphasizing these two social categories separately. As a result, the organization was largely pulled in two different directions.

The current chapter will examine the history of the DOB, from the time it formed through its eventual demise as Gay Liberation replaced the Homophile Movement in the eyes of most activists. In particular, this chapter will argue that DOB formed in an emerging strategic action field in which members were interacting with proximate fields, such as the Civil Rights Movement and Second Wave Feminism. Like members of Mattachine, the Daughters drew from their own biographies and understandings of what it meant to be a homosexual to shape the organization, but these biographies were influenced by both the content of organizational conflict and their experiences in other fields. Like the previous chapter, this one will show that infighting permits multiple perspectives to be incorporated into a group identity. Unlike like the case of Mattachine, however, DOB's history shows that infighting is not always corrosive and can enable an organization to survive and shift with changes in the environment.

This chapter will emphasize the way that infighting over issues of strategy can encourage organizational adaptation when members utilize frames from proximate fields that are relevant to an emerging field. In particular, it will show that as the Homophile Movement was emerging, infighting enabled the organization to adapt in large part because members had experience in, or were aware of the success of, the Civil Rights Movement (a proximate field). Moreover, the repertoires from this proximate field resonated with most members and thus encouraged adaptation.

Once the Homophile Movement was becoming solidified and members were interacting more with new fields, however, individual conceptualizations of lesbian began to reflect different frames of reference and thus, different goals. This contributed directly to the eventual dissolution of the group. Specifically, while some women wanted to continue collaborating with men in the Homophile Movement, others were concerned that the movement focused far more on men than women. This latter group was becoming more involved in Second Wave Feminism (a proximate field). As a result of these conflicting frames that reflected different social categories, the organization folded. Thus, this chapter will show that it is sometimes the case that interacting with proximate fields leads to dissolution.

The chapter will begin with a brief summary of the climate of the 1950s as it affected women and gay women in particular. This will be followed by a brief history of the Daughters of Bilitis to provide an overview of the primary components of the organization's identity that generated conflict. After a timeline has been established, the chapter will focus separately on three different conflicts, incorporating portions of individual narratives of several prominent members. These narratives are meant to highlight the different conceptualizations the women held of homosexuality as an identity and their experiences in organizations in proximate fields. This will provide context for understanding how the relationship between individuals and the field contributes to infighting.

The 1950s for Lesbians

During World War II, the percentage of women in the workforce increased from 27 to nearly 37 percent. Roughly one out of every four married women was included in that number, forcing the nation to "accept the idea of women working outside the home" (Harvey 1993:129).

A working woman was not out of the ordinary until men returned to their jobs and women were expected to return to their homes. “By the early 1950s, American society had assumed a posture that accentuated the deviance of women who pursued a female-centered life” (D’Emilio 1998:100). Women were expected to get married and have children; any other way of life was a matter of concern.

Throughout this same period, rising concerns about communism were entangled with anti-communist hysteria (Loftin 2007:577). Executive Order 10450, issued by President Eisenhower in April 1953, “explicitly listed ‘sexual perversion’ as sufficient and necessary grounds for disbarment from federal jobs” (D’Emilio 1998:44). Attempts to seek out and purge homosexuals and lesbians extended far beyond government and military jobs, however; it permeated all aspects of economic and social life. The simple act of befriending a known lesbian or homosexual could put someone’s livelihood at risk; thus, many gay men and women became isolated.

The anti-homosexual sentiment of the 1950s affected men and women, but in very different ways. The era saw a focus on proper gender roles infused in all aspects of life and lesbians were confronted with a life outside of the traditional nuclear family. Women were expected to return to the home or focus their academic studies in such a way that it would prepare them to be wives and mothers (Harvey 1993:46-47). Because women were more isolated than men, D’Emilio (1998:93) argues that “the articulation of a lesbian identity and the evolution of an urban lesbian subculture” were inhibited, particularly compared to that of men.

Two distinct lesbian subcultures did, however, emerge at this time (D’Emilio 1998). The first was developed out of Victorian America, where middle class women inhabited a sphere of domesticity that was distinctly separate from public space. The second has its foundations in the

working class life of women who worked more frequently outside the home. Some of these women adopted male mannerisms and attempted to pass as men to engage in a male-dominated public sphere (D'Emilio 1998). Those who did seek an outlet in lesbian bars were expected to adopt either the butch or femme role, which in many ways mimicked the mainstream ideals of men and women.

Many lesbians, however, were not comfortable as either butch or femme, seeing them as exaggerations of a gender role that did not fit their sense of who they were (Martin & Lyon 1972). Without bars as an outlet, the way it was for many gay men, lesbians sought an alternative social scene. In part, this desire for an alternative is what encouraged Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon to start the Daughters of Bilitis with several friends. Over time, “the greater isolation and invisibility of gay women [compared to men] continued to exert an influence on DOB’s activities. Though the women’s groups exhibited a concern with law reform and with changing attitudes toward homosexuality, it also preserved a commitment to the personal needs of lesbians” (D’Emilio 1998:104). It is to the organization itself that we now turn.

History of the Daughters of Bilitis

The Daughters of Bilitis was founded on October 19, 1955 by four lesbian couples looking for alternatives to the “bar scene.” In the beginning, DOB held three functions each month: a business meeting; a social; and discussion sessions, later referred to as ‘Gab ‘n Javas’ (Martin & Lyon 1972:212). Even as the original members began meeting, there was conflict over the goals of the organization. Within several months, half of the founding members had left the organization. Those who stayed were largely white-collar women who wanted an organization that was both social and political (the other women sought to create an exclusive lesbian social

club). The Daughters soon discovered the Mattachine Society and wanted to work with them and get involved with the burgeoning homophile movement (Martin & Lyon 1972:213).

In 1956, two things occurred that increased the reach of the organization. First, the Daughters of Bilitis began publically advertising in *ONE Magazine*, a national homophile publication produced out of Los Angeles. Second, they began producing *The Ladder*, a four-page, single-spaced newsletter. The publication served as the primary way to advertise the existence of the organization beyond San Francisco. After the first issue of *The Ladder* came out, DOB began receiving an onslaught of letters. Many expressed joy at the sheer presence of the publication, but most feared being on “the mailing list of an organization *like this*” (emphasis in original, Martin & Lyon 1972:126). That fear may have prevented many women from joining, but nevertheless, women did join and the organization was growing.

The purpose of the organization was printed on the inside cover of each issue of *The Ladder*. Four main points were included, which were not dissimilar to those of early Mattachine. The organization sought to educate the “variant” and the public. It participated in research projects, which became both a major element of the organization early on and a bone of contention in years to come. The final purpose was to investigate “the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual and propose necessary changes.”³⁶

In early 1957, DOB formally incorporated as a non-profit organization in California. In 1958, members began organizing a network of local chapters and by 1959 four chapters were active in New York (started by Barbara Gittings in 1958), Rhode Island, Chicago, and Los Angeles (started by Stella Rush and Helen Sandoz in 1958). In the organization’s first three years, DOB sent out questionnaires to learn more about its members. The survey revealed some

³⁶ “Statement of Purpose,” Box 1, folder 2, Daughters of Bilitis Records (Collection 1946), UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

demographic information about the women, but it also presented the Daughters with their first big conflict, focused on the issue of integration.

Integration was a priority when the organization first started and that included support for outward conformity. Incorporated in the organization's purpose of education, was a goal of enabling "the variant" to "understand herself and *make her adjustment to society* in all its social, civic, and economic implications...by *advocating a model of behavior and dress acceptable to society*."³⁷

As indicated above, the DOB encouraged members to dress and behave in a manner acceptable to society, reflecting a desire to work within the restraints imposed by society. Many members felt that to be accepted, lesbians should fit into a standard created in the ideal image of a woman, particularly when representing DOB at events such as the biannual conventions. Several members, however, felt there was too much focus on integration and that it only served to maintain the status quo. As one frustrated member wrote,

Every cover-to-cover reading of *The Ladder* leaves me with a nagging in my brain that all is not right with the endeavors of DOB. Now, to my satisfaction, I have put my finger on the cause of my disquiet...I prefer to see the problem of the Lesbian as an aspect of the larger problem of society today: Conformity -- the neglect of the individualistic impulse that alone leads to creativity and the ultimate enrichment of culture...Perhaps instead of pleading, 'Please, world, accept us--we're really very nice and not a bit different,' we should say, 'Look, world, we understand the agony of losing what each of you find best in yourself and we can help you to be unafraid of your uniqueness!'" (from *The Ladder* 1960, quoted in Gallo 2006:55).

³⁷ *ibid*, emphasis added.

Despite the resistance from some members, Martin and Lyon (1972:66) argued the focus on conformity, particularly in terms of dress, was central to DOB because it enabled the women to wear something that would allow them to feel at ease in any situation and to ensure their safety. They did acknowledge later, however, that many women were inhibited because they could not wear skirts. The issue came to a head publically when DOB held its first biannual conference in 1960 in San Francisco. Two hundred women registered for the weekend event and conformity was again debated between members. Del Martin recalled that two police officers showed up the first day to ensure that all of the women were wearing either a dress or a skirt and blouse. The organization had informed women in advance that they should be prepared to dress as such, an indication that at the time it was important to conform to society's standards, as they were being watched closely. Regardless, the issue was not resolved at the convention and continued to receive attention in *The Ladder*.

One year later, DOB's national president, Jaye Bell, tried to make the case for the use of conformity in an address to the members printed in the organization's publication. In her article, she wrote,

Perhaps some may feel we are advocating conformity. We are, when it comes to common courtesy to those who are yet so uneducated that homosexuals strike as much fear in them as do child molesters, dope addicts, the mentally ill etc.... This outward conformity, the same outward conformity demanded of numerous groups of people who are in positions foreign to the public at large... To do other than

conform outwardly would hurt them personally and be of no avail until the public is better informed.”³⁸

As Bell’s statement shows, the Daughters were well aware that because they were homosexual, they were viewed in the same light as some of society’s least desirables. The only way to be accepted, she argued, was first to show the public that homosexuals were just like them. Only later could they move beyond this surface-level acceptance.

In 1962, at the Daughters' second convention, Bell again supported an approach of integration and patience with a slow criminal justice system. In that same year, Florence Conrad, the research director of DOB, appeared on a radio program during a segment called “How Normal Are Lesbians?” It represented the first time that a lesbian was featured in a radio segment as opposed to a medical professional or another type of “authority figure.” Conrad “promoted a view of the lesbian as average, wholesome, and nonthreatening; she was also a member of a minority group persecuted as a result of ignorance and intolerance despite her desire for acceptance by society” (Gallo 2006:74).

Within the first year of its founding, DOB began reaching out to the two other existing homophile organizations, Mattachine and ONE, Inc. As Gallo (2006) notes, this was typical of DOB’s organizational style. What is interesting, however, is that partnerships developed with other organizations often created conflict within the group. This was a theme that continued to present itself throughout the tenure of the organization and even the earliest iteration of the group’s by-laws made specific note of DOB’s relations with other organizations. In particular, it

³⁸ (*The Ladder*, vol 6(1), Oct 1961).

read, “National may not join any other organization on an active, participation basis except by a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly.”³⁹

In 1963, a coalition of four organizations created the East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO). Comprised of the Mattachine Society of New York, the Mattachine Society of Washington, D.C., the Janus Society of Philadelphia, and the New York Chapter of the Daughters of Bilitis, ECHO was formed to provide strength in numbers and grounded in the tenet that there was nothing wrong with homosexuality, but with society. In particular, Barbara Gittings noted that when DOB was conceived, it focused on making lesbians feel better about themselves. She stated, “There was a strong feeling that if we spoke nicely and reasonably and played by the rules of the game, we could persuade heterosexuals that homosexuals were all right as human beings (Tobin & Wicker 1975:212). Over time, however, many sought to show that the problem was rooted in society’s beliefs about homosexuals, not in homosexuality itself, and that was the stance that ECHO was founded on.

The Governing Board of DOB initially approved involvement with ECHO, but it was problematic from the start. Two issues generated conflict when it came to partnerships with other organizations and coalitions. First, partnerships highlighted the different positions that members had when it came to tactics. From its founding, DOB had been engaging in research projects, believing it was the only way produce change in society. Some of the organizations the Daughters wanted to work with, however, had begun using direct action to achieve their goals. Second, coalitions came to reflect prominent social categories of organization members. In particular, while some thought DOB should focus on issues that involved all homosexuals, others felt a better-suited goal was to focus on issues that affected women more so than gay men.

³⁹ Constitution and Bylaws, Box 1, Folder 2, Daughters of Bilitis Records (Collection 1946), UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

The debates over integration had not fully subsided, but were now supplemented by discussions over how to achieve acceptance in society (whether that meant conforming to society's standards or being accepted as they were). Two tactics, in particular, created conflict among DOB members. First, some members did not believe it was necessary or even useful to engage in research projects, a debate which played out in articles published in *The Ladder* by Florence Conrad, DOB's research director, and Frank Kameny⁴⁰, a friend and colleague of Barbara Gittings. Gittings had taken over as editor of *The Ladder* in 1963 and repeatedly published articles by Kameny. At that time, Conrad had been working with Rudi Gundlach, Associate Director of Research at the Postgraduate Center for Mental Health, and his associates to study lesbians and using the Daughters as subjects.

Barbara Gittings was among those opposed to the group's continued participation in research projects. As she stated in an interview, she asked her friend and colleague Frank Kameny to write an article that would dismiss:

“our participation as a movement in research by professionals on the subject of homosexuality, which is something he felt very strongly about. He wrote it, we published the article, and I quickly got a response from the research director of Daughters of Bilitis. I published that response a couple of issues later, and then I got a rebuttal from Frank [Kameny]. So he got the last word” (quoted in Marcus 2002:98).

The thrust of Kameny's contribution was that homosexuals were the true authorities when it came to homosexuality and that research was a waste of time. Conrad was frustrated, believing that nobody would listen to DOB unless they had findings from professional research showing they were not deviants; they needed to be able to back up their statements with research

⁴⁰ Kameny was the founder and president of the Mattachine Society in Washington, D.C.

in order to get people to truly listen. According to Kay Lahusen, Conrad went back and forth with Kameny, which caused a shakeup in DOB (Marcus 2002:99).

Instead of research, Gittings and several other members of DOB had begun to march on picket lines, a second tactic that created conflict among the Daughters. Gittings began to include coverage of activism and militancy in the movement regularly in *The Ladder*, though members of DOB did not universally support such tactics. Gittings, Lahusen, and several other members – including Ernestine “Eckstein,” an African American woman who was also involved with the Civil Rights Movement as a member of CORE, and Shirley Willer, the president of the New York Chapter of DOB – were joining picket lines on the East Coast as an alternative to reliance on professionals. As Lahusen explained, “Barbara [Gittings] and I were unhappy with DOB’s posture. It was, ‘Now you lesbians had better put on a skirt and shape up and hold a job and go to work nine to five and make yourselves acceptable’” (quoted in Marcus 2002:96). Eckstein discussed the need to protest directly, stating, “The homosexual has to call attention to the fact that he’s been unjustly acted upon. This is what the Negro did...Demonstrations as far as I’m concerned, are one of the very first steps toward changing society” (as quoted in Gallo 2006:124).

In December of 1964, Council on Religion and the Homosexual (CRH) was founded in San Francisco. It incorporated a mix of all male religious leaders and members of DOB and the Mattachine Society. The Council was founded during a weekend retreat after several members of the homophile groups had come together to lament the fact that they no longer felt welcome in church because they were homosexual. Barbara Gittings and Kay Lahusen believed DOB needed to change its strategies from education and research to more legislation and lobbying, but they questioned the commitment of the DOB members (Del Martin, Phyllis Lyon, and Cleo Bonner)

who had formed CRH without board approval (Gallo 2006:110). Moreover, the Governing Board called out the three Daughters' participation with CRH on the grounds that it violated one of the organization's by-laws, which stated:

The Governing Board of Directors shall be composed of the officers elected by the General Assembly and shall be the governing body of the society between conventions. *No person doing business with the National organization or with any chapter which involves conflict of interest shall hold an office on the Governing Board.*⁴¹

At the time that the three women helped form CRH, both Lyon and Martin did hold positions on the Governing Board. It is unclear, however, who determines whether there is a conflict of interest. It is perhaps because it remains undefined that the activities of each chapter seemed to change with the election of new members of the Governing Board every two years.

The second issue related to coalitions, and the final conflict DOB faced, had to do with the primary social category with which members, and thus the organization, identified. Specifically, the Daughters were divided over partnerships that reflected either a desire to work with all homophile groups or focus on problems unique to women and gay women in particular. Barbara Gittings, for example, identified far more strongly with the gay cause than with the women's movement. As she stated, "I feel that gay people of both sexes do have certain common problems as gays which transcend the different socialization of females and males" (quoted in Tobin & Wicker 1975:222). Other members, like Barbara Grier and Rita LaPorte, however, wanted a "more feminist, less gay oriented" organization (quoted in Brownworth 2002:259).

⁴¹ Daughters of Bilitis Constitution, 1955, Box 1, folder 2, Daughters of Bilitis records (Collection 1946). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

Some members, most notably Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, fell in between, recognizing that they were discriminated against as lesbians and as women.

In 1966, Shirley Willer was elected the National President of the Daughters of Bilitis. She wanted to prioritize activism at the local level and building coalitions with other homophile groups. At the same time, however she also emphasized women's rights, stating, "the Lesbian is discriminated against not only because she is a Lesbian, but because she is a women" (quoted in Gallo 2006:130). Willer was not alone in her desire to have DOB return its focus on women. During this period, many Daughters were becoming frustrated with *The Ladder* and its content under Barbara Gittings. In particular, they felt that it was no longer incorporating issues that affected women. As noted above, the contributions of Frank Kameny in *The Ladder* did not just shine a light on the issues of tactics broadly (and the use of research), but with the goals of the organization specifically. In particular, many DOB members felt it was inappropriate to give so much space in the magazine to Kameny and other men of the homophile movement. They felt that there was a tendency of men to dominate discussions when they worked with homophile organizations as it was and this was just one more instance of men encroaching on their space (Gallo 2006:116). As one contributor, Rita LaPorte, wrote later, "The real gap within humanity is that between men and women, not that between homosexuals and heterosexuals."⁴² Immediately after the 1966 convention, which ushered in Willer, Gittings was let go as editor of *The Ladder*.

During this time, infighting continued over the causes that the organization should support. "Debates over DOB's involvement in 'other struggles,' including civil rights issues and antiwar protests filled the pages of *The Ladder*" (Gallo 2006:152). Helen Sandoz was one of the members who believed the organization should be addressing all causes related to civil rights. As she said, "I don't think we can win our objectives at the exclusion of other minorities' battles...If

⁴² *The Ladder*, Aug/Sept 1969

I could not work in the field of civil rights for all people, I could not, in an honorable fashion, work for the civil rights of the homosexual” (Gallo 2006:153).

In the last article that was printed in *The Ladder* by Frank Kameny, he claimed, “You seem to forget that the Lesbian IS, first and foremost--subject to *all*--yes all--of the problems of the male homosexual and with *no* special problems as a Lesbian.”⁴³ By the time this was printed, the Stonewall riots had come and gone, as had the Homophile Movement. Kameny’s statement speaks to the division between individuals and organizations that characterized much of the movement. It was the time for Gay Liberation and it was clear that early coalitions were broken.

Despite these internal debates, the organization continued to function with local chapters in several cities and a National Governing Board that communicated with local chapter presidents and met at the biannual conventions. Conflict continued to escalate, however, between the NY Chapter and the National Chapter, with a particular focus on the role of direct action and the decision to align more firmly with male homophile organizations or feminist organizations. In 1968, Shirley Willer and Marion Glass proposed a restructuring of the organization that would flatten the hierarchy and give local chapters more autonomy. When only a handful of Daughters showed up for the 1968 convention, Willer left the organization. Rita LaPorte was elected National President and Barbara Grier became the editor of *The Ladder*. The reorganization proposal was not discussed until 1970, at which time most of the Daughters had left the organization for other groups. Despite their positions of power within the organization, LaPorte and Grier took the distribution list of *The Ladder* and began publishing it on their own, breaking all ties with the Daughters of Bilitis. Although the organization was clearly on its last legs, it was this action that most former members point to in retrospect as the final nail in the coffin for the Daughters of Bilitis.

⁴³ “Readers Respond,” *The Ladder*, Aug/Sept 1969, emphasis in original

Infighting and the Organization

Like most organizations, the Daughters of Bilitis experienced its share of conflict. There were three issues in particular that generated infighting between members of the organization: integration and conformity; the importance of research versus direct action; the dominant category of woman versus homosexual. All three of these issues were central to the identity of the organization and were based on individual conceptualizations of lesbian and in experiences the members had outside the organization.

To understand the perspectives that different DOB members brought to the organization and how that shaped both individual and organizational level understandings of identity, it is important to first understand the individual. Certainly with no existing repertoires to draw from, or at least no positive ones, many women came to understand what it was to be a lesbian in different ways. In the following section, I will examine each conflict in more depth and incorporate selections from individual narratives of several prominent women of DOB. These are meant to show the range of experiences, and in some cases the commonalities, that shaped the organization's identity. Moreover, by incorporating the changing state of the field and the development of proximate fields, the following sections will show how individual narratives were shaped by these external elements. In particular, it will emphasize the conditions under which the repertoires of a proximate field help or hinder the survival of DOB.

Integration & Conformity: A Reflection of Early Homophile Organizing Around Politics of Respectability

An organization's identity is a point of reference that tells members how to act based on mission statements, policies, and routines (King, Felin, & Whetten 2010; Whetten 2006). In the early

iterations of the by-laws of the Daughters of Bilitis the goals of the organization were to “improve the social, legal, and economic status of the female homosexual.”⁴⁴ To do this, they argued, it was important to educate lesbians to “understand herself and *make her adjustment to society* in all its social, civic, and economic implications...by *advocating a model of behavior and dress acceptable to society.*”⁴⁵ What this statement shows is the degree to which integration was a priority and seen as necessary for the success of the organization. It was also an indication of how members were expected to act.

A substantial part of the organization’s identity was thus built upon the belief that to improve the status of lesbians, it was up to the women to make themselves “acceptable to society.” In other words, they must conform. Whether or not a woman supported this notion can be seen, in part, as a reflection of her own understanding of what it meant to be a lesbian as well as her involvement outside of the Daughters of Bilitis. In this section, I will show how the experiences of different Daughters shaped their opinions about conformity and thus their stance in this conflict. It will also show how infighting enabled the organization to adapt to, and help shape, the emerging field of the Homophile Movement.

The focus on integration in the early years of the Daughters of Bilitis is one that has largely been linked to class and age differences among lesbians in the 1950s (Faderman 1991). In particular, most of the women in DOB at this time were middle class and thus, as Faderman argues, more likely to encourage passing or using standards of gender (in terms of dress and manner, for example) established by mainstream society. This becomes more clear when one looks at the narratives the women presented about themselves. In particular, a persistent theme

⁴⁴ Daughters of Bilitis By-laws, Box 1, folder 2, Daughters of Bilitis records (Collection 1946). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

⁴⁵ *The Ladder*, emphasis added.

was that as these women were coming to terms with their homosexuality, they could not relate to the butch and femme dynamic that they observed in bars. Del Martin, for example, said that after visiting her first gay bar with two friends, she felt more like a tourist and did not identify with what she saw (Tobin and Wicker 1975:49).

Interestingly, although Barbara Gittings also noted that she did not feel comfortable with the butch and femme roles, she did dress in drag (Tobin and Wicker 1975). It seems, then, that she is differentiating between the role of butch and the outward appearance suggested by her manner of dress. Unlike Martin, however, Gittings was not a strong supporter of integration and even spoke out against it over time. The contrast between Martin and Gittings suggests that it is not simply a class and age issue. Whether or not one supported conformity was also based on individual conceptualizations of homosexuality at a young age and experiences outside the organization.

There were not necessarily distinct factions when it came the conformity and integration as a formal goal of the Daughters of Bilitis. Instead, it became apparent that infighting enabled members to express different opinions related to both the strategy and identity of the organization (Ghaziani & Fine 2008). In particular, when expressing support or opposition for conformity, Daughters discussed personal stories that related both to their experiences prior to joining the organization and that related to the state of the field at the time.

Those who were in favor of integration often made explicit references to the butch and femme dynamic, noting that it was not something they felt comfortable with. Similarly, these tended to be the same women who did not feel constrained by gender roles, or what they defined as the typical expectations of women during the 1950s. For example, Martin was married for a time, but she divorced her husband when she realized she was in love with a female friend.

Regardless of those feelings, she continued to date men after her divorce to show that she was “normal” (Martin & Lyon 1972:18-19). Lyon was more direct, noting that “Heterosexuality was fine, kind of fun, and I went along with these things because it never occurred to me there was any option. If you were a woman, you had to have a man! There was no other way” (quoted in Tobin & Wicker 1975:48).

Another common theme in the stories women share in support of integration incorporates the state of field broadly. In particular, there was a need for discretion to ensure the safety of women, both generally and at DOB events. The organization even hosted a gab ‘n’ java to discuss, “how to accommodate in a given situation. Our goal in helping our people fit in was to allow them to live within whatever societal guidelines and framework and limitations that they had to contend with and to come out of it as whole and healthy and sane as possible” (Billye Talmadge, quoted in Marcus 2002:57).

The issue of integration was not one that was simply based on individual conceptualizations of homosexuality and experiences feeling (or not feeling) deviant as a youth, however. Many women pointed to the external environment and conditions that made it difficult to be an out lesbian in the 1950s and early 1960s. Billye Talmadge, for example, recounted the story of a member from the Los Angeles area who called and asked if she had to wear a skirt at DOB events, which she did. According to Talmadge, “She had to wear a skirt, for her own safety. There was a law on the books that you could be arrested for impersonating a male, which included wearing fly-front jeans! We knew there would be police at our first convention and that they would scan every one of us. We wanted to protect people who came” (quoted in Marcus 2002:68). It was not just personal beliefs about homosexuality that shaped the women’s support of the integration; there were external contingencies that impacted them as well.

Thus, individually, those who supported integration tended to be more uncomfortable with butch and femme roles, were more likely to accept traditional gender roles, or what they defined as the typical expectations for women during the 1950s. Moreover, in their support of integration in *The Ladder* and at DOB events, these women tended to highlight the danger of being a known lesbian during the 1950s. Integration or conformity was seen as a tactic to ensure the safety of lesbians.

Those who did not support integration and conformity, on the other hand, were more inclined to express comfort with homosexuality even prior to their time with DOB. Kay Lahusen, for example, said that she came to terms with her homosexuality as a teenager and didn't feel that it was deviant. As she said in an interview, "I decided that I was right and the world was wrong and that there couldn't be anything wrong with this kind of love" (quoted in Gallo 2006:75). Similarly, Barbara Grier experienced acceptance early on and thus never saw homosexuality as deviant. She was close with her mother and, as she explained, "Because Mother and I were always open with each other, I told her immediately. Mother said since I was a woman, I wasn't a homosexual. I was a lesbian. She also said that since I was twelve, I was a little young to make this decision and we should wait six months to tell the newspapers" (quoted in Brownworth 2002:254).

In addition to discussing general comfort with their own individual homosexuality, those who were against conformity felt that the goal was increasingly less a reflection of their values and in fact made them more uncomfortable. Kay Lahusen and Barbara Gittings, for example, were frustrated with DOB, particularly in the early 1960s. As Lahusen recalled, "Barbara and I were unhappy with DOB's posture. It was, 'Now, you lesbians had better put on a skirt and shape up and hold a job and go to work nine to five and make yourselves acceptable'" (quoted in

Marcus 2002:96). This, however, reflected a shift in the state of the broad, sociopolitical environment and, by extension, the field. In particular, Lahusen also noted that during the 1950s, most people were trying to blend in with the mainstream and pass, “because back then it could cost you a lot, including your job” (quoted in Marcus 2002:87).

The push against conformity was even more pronounced for those who were active in other east coast homophile organizations in the early 1960s. These organizations tended to be more radical than west coast chapters of Mattachine and DOB and more inclined to engage in political activism in the public eye. Martha Shelley, for example, was against the integration and conformity goal of DOB. As she stated, “We felt that we are being held back in our politics and our beliefs by the necessity of putting forth the aims of the organizations we belonged to, like having to wear skirts to the Fourth of July protests” (Marcus 2002:133).

When the Daughters of Bilitis started, it was organized in an emerging field. There were two other homophile organizations (the post-1953 conference Mattachine Society and ONE, Inc.). Within the first two years, members were either aware of Mattachine and ONE or discovered DOB through their involvement with one of these two groups. Thus, infighting that occurred in this early period reflected individual conceptualizations based on experiences growing up gay – whatever that meant for the Daughter – and, for those aware or involved with Mattachine or ONE, things they were picking up from them. Over time, however, more homophile organizations were starting, particularly on the east coast. Many Daughters became involved in these groups, which often did not focus on politics of respectability or desire for conformity the way that many of the older homophile groups did.

Integration and conformity were a central component of the infighting surrounding DOB’s identity from roughly 1956-1960. At the start of the “conflict” the prominent goal of

early homophile organizing was integration and politics of respectability. This shifted around 1960, as more homophile organizations were developing, particularly in New York and along the east coast that were led by Kameny and those who did not feel that homosexuals should have to change themselves just to fit in. Eventually, while the goal of “integration of the homosexual into society remained,” the organization rephrased its purpose. In particular, the first goal was rephrased, removing references to making oneself acceptable in manner and dress, as follows:

“1. Education of the Lesbian, enabling her to understand herself and to make her adjustment to society in all its social, civic and economic implications -- by establishing and maintaining a library of both fiction and non-fiction literature on the sex deviant theme; by sponsoring public meetings on pertinent subjects to be conducted by leading members of the legal, psychiatric, religious and other professions; by providing the Lesbian a forum for the interchange of ideas within her own group.”⁴⁶

Additionally, as noted above, the willingness to conform to ‘appropriate’ gender roles was associated with class and age. At its start, the women who joined the Daughters of Bilitis were mostly middle class women in their late 20s and early 30s. As the organization grew, so did the diversity of the organizations’ membership. The New York Chapter, in particular, was comprised of mostly young members in their early 20s. As New York members were more likely to push against the desire for conformity and integration is consistent, then, with the belief that younger women were less likely to follow gender standards set by society. Additionally, however, society itself was changing, as was the state of the homophile movement. Many of the

⁴⁶ Daughters of Bilitis, Statement of Purpose, Box 9, folder 2, Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin Papers, 93-13, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

Daughters who joined the organization in the early 1960s were involved with other organizations that were more radical than DOB.

The issue of integration was never formally resolved, though it did begin to take a back seat to more pressing issues over time. The organization did, however, change the language of its purpose in *The Ladder* after a proposal was formally offered in 1964. From that point on, it was not an issue that was stressed at the biannual conferences, nor did it remain a requirement of membership. Debates continued over proper attire and presentation of self at various marches and protests, but it was not a topic that filled the pages of *The Ladder*, nor did the Daughters openly debate it among one another. As such, it was no longer seen as an issue that was central to the goals or values of the organization and thus, its identity.

The infighting that played out in *The Ladder* and at the biannual conferences largely reflected the state of the emerging homophile movement, starting with a focus on integration and assimilation. It was initially framed as a safety concern, though individual members also incorporated their own experiences in terms of comfort or discomfort with society's expectations about women and personal comfort about homosexuality at a young age. Infighting enabled the Daughters to share their own views about the organization, as they related to strategy and identity (Ghaziani & Fine 2008), in a way that enabled the organization to adapt with the changing state of the homophile movement.

Tactics: Research versus Direct Action

As the first conflict over conformity began to receive less attention within the organization, the strategies that DOB used became the focus of internal debates. To pursue any goal, whether it's conformity or acceptance, education or policy change, an organization must have a method to

achieve it. The early goals of DOB, as laid out in the statement of purpose were to educate “the variant,” educate the public, engage in research projects, and to investigate the penal code as it pertained to homosexuals and propose necessary changes.

These goals were in many ways interrelated. In particular, in order to achieve the first two, the organization participated in research (the third goal). The Daughters began by sending out a survey to its members in 1958. Within the next two years, the organization became involved in more research at the behest of its research Director, Florence Conrad.

During the 1950s, there was also a great deal of concern about the potential for uncontrolled sexuality. Jittery public health officials predicted that ‘sexual chaos’ would be one of the results of an atom bomb attack, and developed elaborate scenarios to prevent epidemics of venereal disease. A strong family unit based on clearly defined sex roles seemed to be the solution (Harvey 1993). Moreover, a “body of theory said that not only could women find perfect fulfillment within the family, but those who looked outside the family for satisfaction were unwomanly” (Harvey 1993:72). Thus, social science research was being used to show that homosexuality was not only deviant, but it was also a threat to society. In fact, research was regarded so highly as the be all and end all when it came to understanding homosexuality, it even made people question their own beliefs and experiences.

For example, DOB sent out questionnaires posing the question, “Why the Lesbian?” as a part of a panel for the 1960 conference. One respondent wrote, “I would be inclined to feel that I was born this way except for the many books and articles I have read on the subject. They say that one is not born a lesbian so it must have happened very early on in life as far as I am concerned.”⁴⁷ Thus, even women who had a relatively clear sense about why they were

⁴⁷ Responses to “Why the Lesbian?” Box 2, folder 2, Daughters of Bilitis records (Collection 1946). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

homosexual were likely to dismiss their own sense of who they were if it was not supported by research done by ‘professionals.’ This speaks to the power of research and the legitimacy attributed to it. If lesbians themselves dismiss their own feelings about their own homosexuality, why would the average person with no experience or knowledge of homosexuality believe anyone other than a professional? It is, therefore, not surprising that research would be used as a tactic to fight against the negative perception of homosexuality.

As the research director of the Daughters of Bilitis, Florence Conrad is many ways the face of the faction that supported research within the organization. When speaking of the importance of engaging research, she discusses her own past, both as an educator and in terms of knowledge of existing research. Conrad joined DOB in 1957, determined to refute the negative theories about homosexuality put out by psychologists and other professionals. She had read negative research from psychiatrists about homosexuality, but felt that none of their findings accurately represented her. She did, however, believe that others likely shared her experiences and that they were not deviant. Moreover, as an educator, “she believed that it was vital to provide data showing that it was societal structures and stigma that created homosexual neurosis. That information, in turn, could help change public opinion. She argued that valid scientific studies were necessary and important tools in dismantling prejudice and discrimination against homosexuals” (Gallo 2006:46).

The Daughters became involved in several different research studies about lesbians, largely meant to educate the public about why women are lesbians and to refute the long-standing belief that lesbians were deviant. As the years passed, however, many Daughters felt that they were being studied like guinea pigs. Despite the fact that these studies were in part meant to normalize homosexuality, some believed they served to highlight their differences.

Others, like Barbara Gittings, however, felt that they neither normalized nor made them seem deviant. Instead, they were seen as a waste of the group's time and only served to give more credit to professionals than to the experiences of actual lesbians.

As the editor of *The Ladder*, Gittings enabled Frank Kameny to become the face of the anti-research contingent of DOB. Gittings supported Kameny's beliefs not only because he was a friend and she respected his experience as an activist, but because they were consistent with her experiences growing up. In her teens, Gittings began to see a psychiatrist because she believed she was a lesbian. Instead of supporting her, however, the doctor offered to try and change her (Marcus 2002). Gittings had no desire to change, but as she said, "I had a lot of problems coming to terms with myself as a young lesbian. The stigma attached to homosexuality made me feel bad about it for a long time" (quoted in Tobin & Wicker 1975:205). She tied these feelings to the negative experiences she had with professionals and did not believe their research should be given more legitimacy than the lived experience of homosexuals.

DOB did not stop engaging in research despite the public infighting that occurred in the pages of *The Ladder*. In fact, in 1967, after Sandoz returned as editor of *The Ladder*, Conrad was again able to publicize her research efforts. Instead of studying lesbians, however, she was interested in the opinions of mental health professionals. After 163 professional therapists responded to a survey designed by Conrad, she was able to show that,

"Nearly all respondents (98%) felt it was possible for homosexuals to function effectively. Likewise, practically all (99%) opposed laws treating private homosexual acts between consenting adults as criminal.' A majority of psychiatrists and social

workers believed that homosexuality should disqualify an individual from neither security-sensitive federal employment nor the Armed Forces.”⁴⁸

Thus, the research itself was changing. The Daughters were no longer put under a microscope as a group to be figured out. Instead, Conrad wanted research that showed how dated existing laws were in that they no longer reflected the beliefs of professionals, whose opinions were still held in high regard. The conflict had shifted in the interim, however. The discussion of tactics shifted from a focus on research to one on direct action.

Here, it is important to note that the sociopolitical environment was an important consideration in the tactics used. In 1955 and for the first few years after the organization’s founding, whether DOB was going to be public was an issue. Most members were concerned about the backlash they may face by being part of a lesbian organization. As it slowly became more accepted, or at least when faced with fewer repercussions, women were less inclined to fear being publically affiliated with a lesbian organization. As such, some members began to champion the use of direct action and protest, which was being used by the contemporaneous Civil Rights Movement.

“As Kay Lahusen remembers it, DOB leaders were beginning to define themselves and their cause differently. ‘In early 1964, when Marion [Glass] said that our movement was basically a civil rights movement, it was a revolutionary concept’” (Gallo 2006:105). Although the debate over research began almost as soon as the research did, it came to a head at a time when many saw alternative tactics as more desirable. This occurred in part because of the proximity of the Civil Rights Movement. Thus, there was a degree of spillover in terms of frames and, as a result, tactics. Those who were either directly involved in the Civil Rights movement,

⁴⁸ Conrad Research Papers, Box 8, folder 7, Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin Papers, 93-13, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

like Ernestine Eckstein, noted the success of protests as justification for DOB's use of direct action.

Direct action had the additional benefit of media coverage. While research may have helped the women feel better about themselves, that perhaps they were not deviant after all, the effects largely stopped there. As confrontations grew, however, the media began to cover the events, publicizing the activities of the DOB and other organizations. Thus, while a hostile sociopolitical environment bound early activity, later activity was slowly changing the environment and what the organization was able to accomplish. Moreover, as the environment changed, so did the Daughters. For example, Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon originally supported research as the organization's main tactic to achieve acceptance. Their work with the Council on Religion and the Homosexual, however, put them at the center of a central confrontation that became a sign of changing times. After a clash with police at an event sponsored by CRH, Gallo (2006:108) notes,

It was the first time in San Francisco that gay men and lesbians had won in a confrontation with local authorities [after several parties were arrested after police threatened to shut down the event]. Continuing public outrage meant that the customary police harassment of gay men and lesbians would no longer be quietly tolerated. The New Year's Day Ball heralded a new era: the media, locally and internationally, gave extensive coverage both to the event and to the alliance of homophile activists and ministers.

Many DOB members, and leaders like Lyon and Martin, were engaging in direct action though the DOB's policies did not sanction them. Even members who supported moving from research to direct action, like Gittings and Lahusen, were frustrated by members' work with

other organizations. Thus, the organization's rules seemed to stifle even those who wanted to see changes made, yet surprisingly these tactics were not discussed at the biannual conference of 1964. Instead, it was the desire to "respect proper procedure" that Gittings believed was problematic.⁴⁹

The issue was covered, however, at the East Coast Homophile Organization (ECHO) conference in 1964, of which Lahusen was a participant. During the next two years, many Daughters continued to participate in protests, though without the formal approval of the DOB. In her coverage of such events, Lahusen stressed that it was the sign, not the individual that should attract notice. As such, dress was still expected to be conservative (*The Ladder*, Sept 1965). Some in the Governing Board felt that protests and thus the thrust of the events were being controlled by Mattachine on the east coast and wanted DOB to "maintain its identity as a separate organization."⁵⁰ The great irony here, of course, is that these were the same three protesting with CRH on the west coast. It is difficult to ascertain why they pushed back against Gittings and Lahusen, as their own involvement with CRH so clearly mirrored the East Coast activism DOB members were engaging in with ECHO.

There are several possible reasons why this seeming contradiction played out as it did. One explanation is that when Glenn, Lyon, and Martin were involved with CRH, they were not claiming affiliation with DOB. The events on the east coast, however, were done under the name of DOB, and the three believed the involved Daughters were allowing Mattachine to run the show. As Gallo (2006) notes, "As a women's organization eager to protect its unique space in the

⁴⁹ Correspondence between Gittings and Martin, Daughters of Bilitis records (Collection 1946). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

⁵⁰ Letter to Marge McCann, Del Shearer, and Barbara Gittings signed by Cleo Glenn, Phyllis Lyon, and Del Martin, 1965, Daughters of Bilitis records (Collection 1946). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

homophile movement, many DOB activists were keenly aware of the tendency of the mostly male Mattachine members to dominate discussions and decisions. DOB leaders were determined to safeguard their autonomy” (116). Another likely explanation is that the public conflict with police at the CRH New Year’s party was unplanned and the Daughters were inside when it happened. The protests on the east coast, however, were planned and the Daughters were present. In their letter, Glenn, Lyon, and Martin went on to say that “we should not engage in direct action until we have considered our strategy carefully and until we as individuals are committed to going to jail if necessary. Timing and strategy are of the utmost importance in direct action project—as is proper training in techniques of non-violence.”⁵¹

Shirley Willer was conflicted over DOB’s official, yet unprinted, 1965 policy against protesting. Despite her own discomfort, she began attending protests in 1965 and believed it was more important to make a public stand than to depend on research to make a case for equality. The organization lost several prominent members, including Del Shearer, who founded the Chicago chapter of DOB and did not believe that DOB should be involved in protest. In 1966, more DOB leaders, including Martin and Lyon, were embracing direct action and public protests. In fact, they were so disappointed that more DOB members did not join a Protest Day sponsored by CRH that they wrote a letter to Willer and Glass withdrawing from the organization as active members.⁵² Martin went on to say that it seemed the only thing that concerned National was publishing *The Ladder* and that “The accent is on the social aspects of DOB, and references to the more serious approach of the homophile movement are considered ‘boring’.”

⁵¹ *ibid*

⁵² Letter from Del Martin to Shirley Willer and Marion Glass, June 2, 1966, Daughters of Bilitis records (Collection 1946). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

In sum, as infighting over conformity and integration took a back seat, tactics became a major bone of contention in the Daughters of Bilitis. As individuals expressed different opinions regarding the appropriateness or usefulness of either research or direct action, personal narratives come in to play, much as they did with the debates over conformity. Additionally, however, the Civil Rights Movement (CRM), which was a proximate field, was becoming more relevant for the Homophile Movement, in part because many newer members had been involved in civil rights organizations prior to joining DOB in the early 1960s. Thus, some Daughters start to incorporate rhetoric that reflects this field. Others, however, continued to align with the developing Homophile Movement, which was comparatively more conservative and focused on publishing.

Later, experiences with other organizations led to the development of coalitions that supported more political actions. Moreover, as the environment changed, so did the Daughters. Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, for example, originally supported research as the organization's main tactic to achieve acceptance. Their work with the Council on Religion and the Homosexual, however, put them in the center of a central confrontation with police that became a sign of the changing times. Thus, it is not just that the organization and its identity shift with the changing state of the field. Individuals are also shaped by such changes.

As with the debates about assimilation and conformity, infighting about tactics enabled the organization to expand its repertoire. Research was the primary tactic to reach out to the public when DOB began, and this reflected the state of homophile movement at the time. Additionally, women were using their experiences to shape their arguments. Members who supported research, like Florence Conrad, incorporated experiences as researchers and educators as they championed the cause. The research never entirely went away, however. It was adapted

to a field in which more and more professionals were arguing that homosexuality was not deviant. As a result, the research no longer focused on the Daughters, but on professionals. Those who supported direct action, like Barbara Gittings, spoke about negative experiences with professionals and were more involved with the east coast homophile groups. Moreover, as direct action was gaining more attention in the Civil Rights Movement, more members of DOB began to incorporate.

In 1966, Shirley Willer was named the national president at the biannual conference and “prioritized organizing local DOB chapters and working in coalition with other homophile groups” (Gallo 2006:129). Thus, an advocate of protest was at the helm, tempering conflict over the issue as it reflected the goals of an ever-growing number of Daughters. In a speech at the opening of the National Planning Conference of Homophile Organizations (NPCHO), Willer highlighted the importance of women within the homophile movement. The “speech reflected an increased emphasis on women’s rights among DOB leaders” (Gallo 2006:130) and reflected an area of growing strife within the organization: was it more important to focus on issues that affected them as women or as homosexuals?

Dominant Social Category: Woman or Homosexual

The final conflict around which infighting focused was central to the ideology of the Daughters of Bilitis and would affect the goals it sought to accomplish and the organizations with which members wanted to build coalitions. Factions developed over the centrality of Daughters as homosexuals or women, or what I term the dominant social category. This became the focus of the organization around 1966 and remained central to the published work of the organization and internal documents until the eventual demise of the DOB.

Individually, those who felt the organization should identify more strongly as homosexual typically shared stories about their childhoods that focused on conflict over homosexuality early on. Barbara Gittings, for example, recalled, “In high school, for instance, where the boys and girls were being groomed for their social roles as heterosexuals, I felt I had little in common with either the girls or the boys...For me at least, the struggle to be gay and feel good about it overrode the struggle of trying to be my own person as a woman” (Tobin & Wicker 1975:222).

Alternatively, those who believed DOB should be foremost an organization for women felt comfortable with homosexuality early on, but believed they were discriminated against because they were women. Barbara Grier had a sense of her sexual self at a young age and came out to her family at a young age. She was familiar with the term “homosexual” from her father’s medical books and looked up the word at the local library when she was 12 years old. In part because she was comfortable with homosexuality and was not raised to see this identity as deviant, she was far more focused on the disparities between men and women.

The field, too, shaped the beliefs of the DOB members regarding their support for a given dominant category. For example, “[Rush] and [Sandoz] found the rhetoric of the early feminist movement too strident. They were particularly concerned that fighting for rights of women, which they strongly supported, was being waged against men. Both Stella and Sandy believed fervently in rights of all women *and* men, and were reluctant to vie their efforts to groups that aimed to elevate one group at the expense of another group” (Bullough 2002:143). As second wave feminism (a proximate field) was developing in the 1960s, they did not believe DOB should adopt an identity that incorporated its rhetoric.

Alternatively, with the burgeoning of new feminist organizations, many DOB members joined, particularly focusing on NOW despite the fact that they were seen as a “lavender menace.” Women in this faction attempted to show that lesbians were facing difficulties that were different than those of homosexual men. Shirley Willer, in an article in *The Ladder*, wrote, “the Lesbian is discriminated against not only because she is a Lesbian, but because she is a women” (Gallo 2006:130).

Changes in the sociopolitical environment broadly and in proximate fields (here, the rise of Second Wave Feminism) meant that the social category of women, as a group discriminated against was becoming more prominent. When DOB began, the focus was on homosexuality (though membership was initially limited to women). Members were eager to work with the Mattachine Society and ONE, Inc. at the start because there were no other gay women’s groups that were also politically active and because the other two homophile groups wanted more people involved in what they saw as a movement. For those who continued to work with the homophile organizations, homosexuality remained central to their identity and their goals for DOB. The narratives about their childhoods come to reflect homosexuality as a social category that was more prominent than female. Alternatively, those who believed that DOB should be a “more feminist, less gay oriented” organization told narratives that reflect their involvement feminist organizations or incorporate elements from their biographies that highlight discrimination they felt as women. In other words, extended involvement in the Homophile Movement or Second Wave Feminism shaped the narratives of the Daughters engaged in infighting.

The conflict over social category became, in many ways, a conflict the organization could not overcome. The social space was becoming increasingly elaborate, with the rise of second wave feminism and the increase in homophile activism throughout the 1960s. When DOB began,

this was not a nail in the coffin, as the organization was able to incorporate both of these social categories, particularly because DOB was started as a lesbian organization that began working with male homophile organizations early on. Being a woman and being homosexual were equally incorporated into DOB's identity. Over time, however, as members became more active in other organizations, whether that meant working with NOW or increasing involvement in other homophile organizations, it began to wear on the organization more broadly. Moreover, the homophile movement itself was coming to an end as gay liberation was coming to the forefront.

The infighting that focused on the discussions of homosexuality and feminism were largely drawn from individual conceptualizations of what it meant to be a lesbian and involvement with other organizations. In particular, some women spoke about being a lesbian as something that was tied to them both as women and as homosexuals. Others, however, felt that being a woman was separate. Additionally, their views on the lesbian identity were shaped by experiences in other organizations. Those who had been active with other homophile organizations--such as Mattachine and ONE--were more inclined to look for similarities in the experiences of gay men and women, and thus sought to generate a collective identity of homosexual that did not specify male or female.

Alternatively, many women became interested in issues that affected women specifically through their work with organizations that were involved in second wave feminism (e.g., NOW). These women attempted to carve out a space for women within the homophile movement, via the Daughters of Bilitis, that they felt was lacking. Thus the collective identity they sought was one that incorporated their personal identities as homosexual and women.

CONCLUSION

There were three conflicts within the Daughters of Bilitis throughout its tenure that were central to its organizational identity. The ordering of social space in many ways affected the way in which infighting was seen as a mechanism that enabled debates about organizational identity to move forward at its start but played a role in its eventual death.

The first conflict was over integration and conformity. This was broadly a focus of early homophile activism. Thus, members were willing to talk about it, weigh the consequences of integrating or seeking acceptance as they were. There were not too many disparate individual identities in DOB that related to conformity and some understanding that this was not an ideological conflict but framed as a safety concern. The differences here did not stem from fundamental differences of belief. Changes in the organization reflected changes in the field more than differences among members. Similarly, infighting about tactics represented not individual differences in identity, per se, but a way that women came to understand themselves through external experiences (e.g. activist identity versus work as a researcher or academic) and again this was a conflict playing out in the field/environment. Thus, open debates, typically occurring in *The Ladder*, enabled the organization and its members to weigh both sides.

These first two bouts of conflict show that when debating issues of organizational strategy, infighting encourages adaptation when members utilize frames from proximate fields that are relevant to the broader aims of an emerging field. In particular, the emerging Homophile Movement was struggling over the issue of integration. Although it was originally framed as an issue of safety, many members found it constricting and pointed out that homosexuals were not as limited in their actions as they had been at the start of the 1950s. Similarly, as many members began to feel that research was only highlighting the differences of lesbians in society, they

simultaneously recognized the success of direct action and demonstrations being utilized in the Civil Rights Movement. Thus, the organization adapted, shifting the focus away from integration and research on lesbians and toward direct action and research on the shifting stances of professionals.

The final conflict was over the primary social category of woman or homosexual. This didn't become a major issue until the field itself had developed, particularly through male-dominated organizations, along with several proximate fields, the most significant of which was Second Wave Feminism. Like with the previous conflicts, this one played on largely in *The Ladder*, though there were internal debates in the form of governing board memos and personal letters between members. The public nature presumably allowed each side to present their case. The editors of *The Ladder*, of course, did have some control over the content of the publication and thus there was potentially some sway in their role in the conflict. It is here that the individual conceptualizations of lesbians, and thus individual identity played a larger role, as some felt more strongly aligned with either their experiences as women or as homosexuals, something which was not a prominent issue within the organization previously. As a result, many members began to feel that they had to choose one over the other, particularly when the organization itself, at least in terms of its goals and existing purpose, still maintained that both were significant. Thus, this final conflict shows that when debating issues directly related to members' interests, infighting will influence organizational failure when proximate fields emerge with an interpretive frame that resonates with some, but not all, members of the organization. In other words, infighting no longer functioned as a mechanism that helped clarify this component of the identity of the group. Instead, the development of other fields and the inability to compromise led to the dissolution of the group.

In sum, changes in the sociopolitical environment broadly and in proximate fields (here, the rise of Second Wave Feminism) meant that the social category of women, as a group discriminated against was becoming more prominent. Alternatively, the Civil Rights movement as a proximate field did not create a division largely because its frame did not highlight a social category that was for many in contrast with that of the Homophile Movement, the SAF in which DOB was embedded. Thus, proximate fields have the potential to affect a given SAF both positively and negatively. When repertoires from a proximate field are compatible with the SAF, they can encourage it to adapt. When repertoires from a proximate field highlight an existing conflict within the SAF, they can lead to dissolution, as members will be divided over the appropriateness or relevance of the repertoire.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE HOMOPHILE MOVEMENT

“More and more in our midst we are finding a growing awareness of the need for open and frank discussion of the problems which face that loosely knit minority group referred to as the homophile community” (Undated document distributed by the Society for Individual Rights).⁵³

The previous two chapters provided a close up look at two of the first homophile organizations in the United States: the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis. They showed how fields shape the narratives used by individual actors as they debate organizational identity. This infighting was both destructive (in the case of Mattachine) and adaptive (in the case of the Daughters of Bilitis). An additional affect of the infighting, however, is that it creates the foundation for a larger movement. As the organizations struggled to address questions of identity internally, they were building a broader network of individuals interested in creating social change. Even when individual members became frustrated with direction that Mattachine and DOB were going, they maintained involvement in what was to become the homophile movement, often creating new organizations or changing the focus of local chapters to align with the needs or goals with different regions within the United States.

The current chapter will explore this process in greater detail, explaining how infighting creates an opportunity for social movement emergence. In particular, I examine the homophile movement in two different periods. The first, which spans from 1950 to 1961, represents a period during which the social space was uncoordinated. During this time frame, there were three primary homophile organizations, all based in California. Although the relationship between the groups was often contentious, they did meet regularly as they sought to generate a frame that could bring more order to the field.

⁵³ Untitled SIR document, Box 3, folder 35, ONE Incorporated Records, Coll2011-001, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

The early 1960s saw a rapid expansion of homophile groups on the coasts. The tactics deemed legitimate were broadened and the organizations formalized their coalitions. The Homophile Movement solidified during this period, as the groups diversified and were able to mobilize a larger group of constituents. This chapter argues that infighting within and among groups was largely responsible for the expansion of a network of activists who contributed to an understanding about what was at stake in the field, what tactics were deemed legitimate, and what was an appropriate frame for the movement. In other words, infighting encourages movement emergence by creating a larger base of actors necessary for a social movement.

THE HOMOPHILE MOVEMENT

Homophile Organizing, 1950-1961

The earliest organizing efforts that would lead to the homophile movement occurred with the founding of the Mattachine Society in 1950. As shown in Chapter 2, however, the Mattachine Society struggled to generate a shared understanding or framework that others could use to make sense of the field. Hay and the other founders sought to make it clear that homosexuals were being isolated, oppressed, and targeted. Thus, what was at stake in this first period was that the American government (“encroaching American fascism”) and a corrupt police department were intentionally isolating minorities and targeting them through violations of the Fifth Amendment. This is what the Mattachine Society was created to resist and change. The idea of a homosexual minority, however, was not shared by all members of the organization.

Additionally the appropriate forms of actions were hotly debated at the 1953 constitutional convention. During this period, the founders of the Mattachine Society focused on unifying homosexuals and integrating the minority into society through education. In Hay’s

1948/1950 prospectus, he argued that homosexuals were attacked because of misinformation and ignorance. The solution, he claimed, was presenting social analyses from professionals in various fields.⁵⁴ Similarly, in the 1951 “Missions and Purposes,” the tactics the organization would utilize were unification and education. Additionally, however, they proposed “political action to erase...the discriminatory and oppressive legislation” that targeted homosexuals.⁵⁵ Though these were the tactics proposed, they were not all agreed upon, as demonstrated in Chapter 2. Although most agreed to some level about the importance of integration, members were divided over the more political tactics. Thus, while there were suggested forms of action, not all were seen as legitimate or meaningful.

Finally, a shared understanding in terms of a “broad interpretive frame [used] to make sense of what others within the strategic action field are doing” is required for the emergence of a field (Fligstein & McAdam 2012:89). The first frame in this period linked the plight of homosexuals with that of communists. Although Hay brought his proposal to “fellow travelers,” this was not a frame that resonated with many others. The second frame was stripped of references to communism, but pitted homosexuals against society. Although more individuals joined the Mattachine Society once the issues were reframed, few people were willing to admit they were homosexual and most did not believe their conditions would change. In the final frame, however, the “Call to Arms” conceptualized the field as one in which the primary issue was corruption within the police department. Anybody, they claimed, was at risk of being arrested for police entrapment and could be blackmailed. They identified themselves as an organization that wanted to expose the police conspiracy and protect everyone’s Fifth

⁵⁴ “Preliminary Concepts,” Box 1, folder 21, Mattachine Society Project Collection, Coll2008-016, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

⁵⁵ “Missions and Purposes” Box 1, folder 5, Mattachine Society Project Collection, Coll2008-016, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

Amendment rights. Moreover, because of the Dale Jennings mistrial, and because he publically admitted to being a homosexual, the organization argued that collective action would not necessarily result in increased repression. Inaction, however, could cost people money or worse, friends, family, and jobs through police blackmail. Thus, while it was a useful mobilizing frame, it was not one that would enable a field to emerge.

Infighting may have led to the dissolution of the original Mattachine Society in 1953, but it also fostered the interests of more activists who sought to expand rights for homosexuals. The idea for a homosexual publication, later to become *ONE Magazine*, came out of a Mattachine discussion group October 15, 1952. Those that were interested continued to meet regularly, independently of the Mattachine groups, over the next several weeks. On November 29, 1952, the group met to incorporate the organization. The three individuals who led the organization—Martin Block, Don Slater, and Dale Jennings—were all active in the Mattachine Society, though they saw this work as separate. Moreover, once leadership of Mattachine changed hands in 1953 and that organization began to struggle, many members left and joined ONE, which had incorporated in February of 1953. The relationship between the two organizations became, at times, contentious.

While ONE challenged the status quo more directly than the new Mattachine (Pettis 2008), they, too, focused largely on social integration (White 2009:43). The stated purposes of the organization were laid out in its Articles of Incorporation, which stated, “The specific and primary purposes for which this corporation was formed are to publish and disseminate a magazine dealing primarily with homosexuality from the scientific, historical and critical point of view, and to aid in the social integration and rehabilitation of the sexual variant.”⁵⁶

⁵⁶ ONE, Incorporated. Articles of Incorporation & By-Laws 1953, Box 8, folder 3, ONE Incorporated Records, Coll2011-001, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

Additionally, there were six general purposes:

- “1. To publish and disseminate [documents] concerned with medical, social, pathological, psychological, and therapeutic research of every kind and description pertaining to socio-sexual behavior.
2. To sponsor, supervise and conduct educational programs, lectures and concerts for the aid and benefit of all social and emotional variants and to promote among the general public an interest, knowledge and understanding of the problems of such persons.
3. To stimulate, sponsor, aid, supervise and conduct research of every kind and description pertaining to socio-sexual behavior.
4. To promote the integration into society of such persons whose behavior varies from current moral and social standards and to aid the development of social and moral responsibility in all such persons.
5. To lease, purchase, hold, have, use and take possession of and enjoy any personal or real property necessary for the uses and purposes of the corporation...
6. To do any and all other acts, things business or business in any manner...to promote the interest of the corporation.”⁵⁷

Although *ONE* did emphasize social integration, the organization was not as staunchly assimilationist to the degree of the Mattachine Society. Most issues of assimilation, as they were discussed in the pages of *ONE*, involved appropriate mannerisms and whom the group should represent. Dale Jennings and Don Slater, for example, “lacked the respect for ‘swishes,’ [and thought] their nelly behavior was a bizarre affectation, not a legitimate and natural signifier of an innately felt identity” (White 2009:39).

⁵⁷ *ibid*

On issues of assimilation, many members of ONE dismissed the notion of a cultural minority at the heart of the original Mattachine Society. In a review of where Mattachine stood at the start of 1954, Dale Jennings, who never agreed with the minority stance, wrote, “there is one thing that homosexuals do share most definitely. That is the denial of their civil rights. They are victimized by society more than any other single group. The legal and religious prejudice against them is as ancient as man himself. But when this prejudice goes, homosexuals will cease to be a group...The only reason that they should and must organize is to fight cases of entrapment, lobby against unjust laws and to educate.”⁵⁸

While the article denied the existence of a homosexual minority, a position shared by the new Mattachine Society, Jennings was simultaneously denouncing the new the Mattachine. In particular, Jennings, using the pseudonym Jeff Winters, made the case that the new leadership was afraid and unwilling to stand up to injustices faced by homosexuals. Instead, the new Mattachine was “only a social club, ignoring its reason for existence.” Jennings concludes by stating, “the leadership must stop being afraid... They must either give over the reins to braver, more capable hands – or stand up and fight. There is no other choice.”⁵⁹

Much of ONE’s work focuses explicitly on educating homosexuals, much like the original Mattachine Society. The new Mattachine, however, took a more conservative stance. In their newsletter, they explained to their membership that, “reference to ‘homosexual’ in the preamble was ill-advised and incorrect, because the Society is not an organization of homosexuals, but rather a group interested in the problem of the homosexual and the sex

⁵⁸ *ONE Magazine*, January 1954:6-7, Box 11, ONE Incorporated Records, Coll2011-001, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, USC Library, University of Southern California.

⁵⁹ *ibid*

variant.”⁶⁰ For the next two years, ONE and the Mattachine Society continued their contentious relationship. ONE made a point, however, of printing different opinions, including those from the leadership of the Mattachine Society as some sought to “conciliate and unify.”⁶¹

Despite the conflict presented in the pages of *ONE Magazine*, the two groups did utilize many of the same tactics. Both sought to publish studies by various professionals. ONE, however, “held firmly to the position that homosexuals and lesbians were the only real authorities on gay life” (D’Emilio 1983:88). To that end, on October 15, 1956, an educational branch of ONE set up the ONE Institute of Homophile Studies. The Institute sponsored educational programs, organized public conferences, facilitated research projects, and published scholarly work. Although ONE, Incorporated continued to publish *ONE Magazine*, by 1957 the focus had shifted to education. In the 1957 Annual Report, the board wrote, “The sexual variant needs education about himself and his place in society, if he is to become a happy and productive citizen” (as quoted in White 2009:85). From this point on, ONE, Incorporated put its time, money, and energy into education.

In January of 1955, ONE, Inc. organized its first Midwinter Institute. The event began with a general business meeting of the organization and continued with lectures by three professionals: Howard Russell, a psychologist who spoke about “The Sexual Psychopath” in state hospitals; Dr. G. Th. Kempe, a criminologist and sociologist who read a paper on “The

⁶⁰ PREAMBLE TO CONSTITUTION CHANGED OVER OBJECTION OF SOME MEMBERS from the Mattachine Newsletter for 17 December 1953, reprinted in *ONE Magazine*, January 1954:9, Box 11, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, USC Library, University of Southern California.

⁶¹ *ONE Magazine*, February 1953, Box 11, ONE Incorporated Records, Coll2011-001, Box 11, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, USC Library, University of Southern California.

Homophile in Society;” and Blanche M. Baker, who presented a talk on, “A Psychiatric Evaluation of Homosexuality; Causative Factors and Therapeutic Suggestions.”⁶²

Members of ONE, Inc., the Mattachine Society, and the Daughters of Bilitis came together at the institute, which was held annually through 1963. The Midwinter Institutes would continue sporadically, with events in 1966, 1969, 1972, 1978, and 1980. Each meeting incorporated lectures and roundtables that included members of the three organizations, and as interest grew in the Institute for Homophile Studies, many of the panels and lectures at the meetings served as pilot programs for courses they would offer. Additionally, there were guest lectures from professionals in various fields. For example, in 1957, Dr. Eason Monroe, Secretary of the Southern California American Civil Liberties Union, spoke about “Censorship and Civil Liberties.” This was followed by a talk by Dr. Albert Ellis, a psychologist, on the topic of “How Homosexuals can Combat Anti-Homosexuality.” The following year, an anthropologist, Don Rifle, led a roundtable on the subject of, “Do Homosexuals Have Community Responsibilities?”

In 1959, the theme of the Midwinter Institute was “Mental Health and Homosexuality.” The first session was titled, “Homophile Movements in the United States Today.” Del Martin, President of DOB’s San Francisco Chapter, Rick Hooper, Chairman of the Mattachine Society in San Francisco, and James (Jim) Kepner, Vice Chairman of ONE, Incorporated, all provided progress reports. Despite some disagreements over the state of the movement broadly, Dorr Legg (Legg 1994:33) recalled that, “attendances were large, discussions lively,” and the overall mood was positive. Although Harry Hay had referred to a Mattachine Movement before exiting the organization, references to a Homophile Movement became frequent at the Midwinter Institutes,

⁶² 1955 Midwinter Institute. Letter of announcement and invitation, (ONE’s Baker Memorial Library & Archives, printed in Legg 1994:346).

particularly as all three major homophile organizations would use these annual meetings to discuss their work.

At the Institute held in 1961, when the theme was “A Homosexual Bill of Rights,” the organizations disagreed over the broad goal of the movement as it was identified by ONE, Inc. During the first session, members of the Daughters of Bilitis introduced, “a motion to cancel the program” (Gannet and Percy III 2002:130). Although that motion failed, the banquet ended with a discussion after the attendees had been broken into committees to discuss various elements of the proposed Homosexual Bill of Rights, from religious and scientific to social. After a representative from each committee reported back to the group, several members were offered the opportunity to respond. In her response, Del Martin of the Daughters of Bilitis expressed her disapproval of the whole notion. As she stated,

“I wrote an editorial entitled, ‘How Far Out Can We Go’ as a protest against this meeting to draft a homosexual bill of rights on the grounds that such a bill is unnecessary, irrelevant, and likely to set the homophile movement back... Those of us who were extremely opposed to the bill as such did intend to make an attempt to change the format so that we could find a framework within which we could work... How can you help write a document in which you have no faith and without any knowledge as to the use to which the document will be put?”⁶³

After explaining that she sought further explanation from various members of ONE, she was told that the homosexual bill of rights represented “a group participation project in homophile education... I would suggest that rather it should be called a group participation project in contradiction, confusion, and organized, deliberate deception. Talk about entrapment.

⁶³ Transcribed by the author from: Panel discussion, “A Homosexual Bill of Rights,” Los Angeles 1961. ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, ONE Incorporated Records, Coll2011-001, filename: one_arr0146.

We've been had." Her comment was met with great applause and, as she pointed out in her remarks, although the Daughters of Bilitis had been led to believe that they were in the minority as a group opposed to such a bill, they were, in fact in the majority. For example, both the committee on religion and the scientific theories drafting committee, represented by Alan Hart and Bill Baker, respectively, began their reports denouncing the title "A Homosexual Bill of Rights." Similarly, in his response to the committees, Hal Call, representing the *Mattachine Review*, the Mattachine Society's primary publication, stated, "We wonder if we have a right to ask for a bill of rights... It seems to me that the, the [sic] careful and the, uh, dispassionate requests that have been made or demands that have been made are significant. I don't think there's any evidence of special privileges being sought."⁶⁴

Although the conflict was largely tempered at the Midwinter Institute in 1961, and Dorr Legg, the representative from ONE who oversaw the panel, thanked all members for the fruitful discussion, the tides were shifting in the homophile movement. That same year, Jim Kepner would leave ONE, Inc., and, the Mattachine Society had once again restructured and dissolved its national organization. Up until this point, Legg claimed, "the homophile group [referring to the three present] seems to have been afraid to think of itself and its problems in an objective even controversial way, if necessary."⁶⁵ Instead, this was a time characterized by organizing. Even if unintentional, these attempts by ONE, Mattachine, and DOB to collaborate and identify common goals were seen by many as too conservative to advance rights for homosexuality. These early efforts, however, created a foundation for increased activism and mobilization. Beginning in the early 1960s, however, the younger groups, particularly those on the east coast,

⁶⁴ *ibid*

⁶⁵ *ibid*

did not shy away from controversy or direct confrontation. Moreover, there was a concerted effort to reach out to heterosexuals, as the early movement was criticized for talking to itself.

Homophile activism, 1961-1969

Although the goals of assimilation and education dominated homophile organizing in 1953-1961, this expanded in the 1960s, as the number of organizations and activists exploded. As such, even though many dismiss the homophile movement for its conservatism, conflicts led to the development of new organizations and a diversification of goals and strategies. Moreover, the concept of a homosexual minority would return to the forefront yet again and become a central tenet of the homophile movement of the 1960s.

Although there were chapters of the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis outside of San Francisco and Los Angeles, the geographic centrality of those organizations, along with ONE, meant that most homophile organizing prior to 1961 was based in California. There was a great deal of conflict between local chapters of Mattachine and DOB and their national offices. The Mattachine Society recognized the problems and decided to revoke area council charters. As the Board of Directors pointed out,

“Former Area Councils can now truly become working units... They will not be hindered in their work by the necessity of having to answer for all their actions to a Corporation, which in many cases is thousands of miles away. Many persons have never been able to realize that the California Corporation (Board of Directors) is held responsible at all times for any and all actions of its agents and representatives (Area Councils and Members). This is state law and supersedes anything which may be contained in a Constitution and By-Laws which might

state otherwise... Each area must work within the framework of laws applicable in its own state.”⁶⁶

As the national offices of the organizations began to play less of a role, the local chapters began to engage in work that reflected regional differences in organizing goals and tactics, not just because of legal differences within each state. After Mattachine’s restructuring in 1961, “groups in New York and Washington, D.C., operated autonomously, as did later Mattachine groups in Chicago, Florida, and Philadelphia.” (Stein 2012:65). The newly independent New York chapter of the Mattachine Society, for example, “crusaded against police abuses throughout the late 1960s” (Pettis 2008:4). The Mattachine Society, Inc. of NY continued to engage in “research in the behavioral sciences,” but also sought “to protect persons with sex behavioral problems from discrimination.”⁶⁷ One of the primary activities of the society in the early 1960s was serving as a “referral service consisting of lawyers, ministers and psychologists for homosexuals in need.”⁶⁸

The D.C. chapter, on the other hand, was considered far more radical from the start. Franklin “Frank” Kameny founded the Mattachine Society, D.C. Chapter in 1961. He argued that due to its location, the organization’s focus “would be the federal government and the policies of the federal government with respect to gays.” (Kameny quoted in Marcus 2002:84). Some of the early activities of the group included:

⁶⁶ “Directive to All Area Councils of the Mattachine Society, Inc. from the Board of Directors,” Box 1, folder 48, ONE Incorporated Records, Coll2011-001, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

⁶⁷ ECHO pamphlet, Box 12, folder 2, Daughters of Bilitis Records (Collection 1946), UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young, Research Library, UCLA.

⁶⁸ *ibid*

“An extensive continuing program of communication and negotiation with officials throughout the Federal Government in an attempt to bring about a reconsideration of present policies toward homosexuals.

“A conference at the Pentagon on Security clearance for homosexuals.

“Issuance and wide distribution of a statement on employment discrimination.

“Establishment of a working relationship with the National Capital Area Civil Liberties Unions...

“A meeting A meeting with Lewis B. Hershey, General Director of the Selective Secret Service System, on problems relating to the homosexual in the armed forces.

“Testifying at a hearing before the House Committee on the District of Columbia in order [to] protest a bill aimed at curbing the activities of the Mattachine Society of Washington.”⁶⁹

Thus, while different goals caused conflict within the Mattachine Society prior to the dissolution of the national chapter, the newly granted independence of the local chapters enabled diversification within the movement.

The Daughters of Bilitis in New York similarly engaged in more radical work than the west coast chapters of the organization. Unlike Mattachine, however, the DOB chapters were still expected to work within the framework created by the national organization. As explained in the organization’s policies, “A chapter has complete autonomy in its area within the provision of the National Policies and Corporate By-Laws accepted by the General Assembly.”⁷⁰ Thus, while

⁶⁹ ECHO pamphlet, Box 12, folder 2, Daughters of Bilitis Records (Collection 1946), UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young, Research Library, UCLA.

⁷⁰ “Basic Policy Relating to Chapters of The Daughters of Bilitis as ratified by Governing Board Nov. 5, 1967,” Box 1, folder 4, Daughters of Bilitis Records (Collection 1946), UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young, Research Library, UCLA.

this chapter did not engage in research, as was the focus of much of the early work of DOB, they did work with more radical east coast organizations, like the Mattachine Society of New York and Washington, D.C.

This is not to say, however, that changes were only occurring on the east coast. In San Francisco as well, new organizations were emerging that focused on a variety of issues. In 1962, for example, the Tavern Guild was founded in San Francisco. This group provided legal help for patrons who were arrested in police raids. Additionally, in 1964, four men created the Society for Individual Rights (SIR), which was a social and political group. SIR was “an organization formed from within the community, working for the community.”⁷¹ “The founders recognized that homosexuals were more likely to get involved in a political-educational organization if the organization met their social needs. This formula worked well. SIR rapidly became the largest homosexual organization in the country” (Armstrong 2002:51). Soon after they began, SIR published the first issue of their monthly magazine, *Vector*, and two years later they opened a community center in San Francisco for gay men.

Much of SIR’s work occurred in the community and through their projects, they reached out to other local homophile organizations. For example, in a document produced by the group, they recognized, “More and more in our midst we are finding a growing awareness of the need for open and frank discussion of the problems which face that loosely knit minority group referred [sic] to as the homophile community.”⁷² SIR sought to keep homosexuals informed of the work that they were doing, as well as the work of other organizations, including organizations

⁷¹ SIR information sheet, written and signed by William Beardemphl and Mark Forrester, Box 3, folder 35, ONE Incorporated Records, Coll2011-001, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

⁷² SIR document, undated, Box 3, folder 35, ONE Incorporated Records, Coll2011-001, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

like the ACLU, and coalitions like the East Coast Homophile Organizations. Well aware of the conflict between organizations, SIR's information sheet declared, "While we are still dedicated to a spirit of free competition, eventually we hope to achieve the coordination of all organizations working on behalf of the homosexual."⁷³

This desire for more collaborative work was shared by many homophile organizations and as more organizations were developed, many began to focus on building coalitions. One of the first and most prominent coalitions to form was the East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO). ECHO brought together the Mattachine Society D.C., the Mattachine Society of New York, the Janus Society (formerly the Mattachine Society of Philadelphia) and the Daughters of Bilitis New York Chapter. In January of 1963, Frank Kameny convened the first meeting of ECHO. Kameny pushed the idea that there was nothing wrong with homosexuality, or what had been termed 'the variant.' The problem, he said, was with society and he pushed for this to be a major tenet of ECHO (Gallo 2006:86). They met monthly to develop strategies that focused largely on political goals and direct action.

ECHO was responsible for the earliest protests and gay rights demonstrations. In 1965, ECHO members picketed at a slew of government buildings. On May 29, a group protested in front of "the White House to protest the Federal Government's policies of discrimination against its homosexual American citizens." On June 26, a group picketed in front of the U.S. Civil Service Commission building "to protest the Commission's policies of discrimination against homosexual American citizens – policies which deny to this large group of citizens the equality of opportunity which is rightfully theirs." On July 4, ECHO held a protest at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, which was meant to show that "the homosexual American citizen finds himself

⁷³ SIR information sheet, written and signed by William Beardemphl and Mark Forrester, Box 3, folder 35, ONE Incorporated Records, Coll2011-001, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

denied many of the basic rights guaranteed by the Declaration of Independence, and whose setting forth is celebrated on July 4.” Later that month, on July 31, another demonstration occurred in front of the Pentagon “to protest the discriminatory and harshly punitive policies of the Armed Services toward homosexual American citizens.” On August 28, a group picketed the State Department “to protest State Department policies in regard to the employment of homosexual American citizens.” In the final protest of the year, on October 23, the group returned to the White House “to protest the Federal Government’s policies of discrimination and hostility against its homosexual American Citizens.”⁷⁴

ECHO’s official purposes were to facilitate “closer communication among homophile member groups [and] sponsoring public convention on the problems of homosexuality.”⁷⁵ It was the prominent use of direct action, however, that set ECHO and the Mattachine Society of Washington, in particular, apart from the other coalitions that were developing. This focus on more direct action was a reflection of Frank Kameny’s belief that the homophile movement’s focus on education and research had been unsuccessful. Thus, he supported a legislative approach and protests, such as those above.⁷⁶ Other coalitions, however, had different goals.

The idea for the Council on Religion and the Homosexual (CRH) came about in 1964 at a meeting at Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon’s house. Several of the daughters lamented that they missed going to church, because they could not go as couples. An informal survey of San

⁷⁴ All quotes in this paragraph are from a series of press releases distributed by the Mattachine Society of Washington. Box 9, folder 44, ONE Incorporated Records, Coll2011-011, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, ONE Incorporated Records, Los Angeles, California.

⁷⁵ ECHO pamphlet, Box 12, folder 2, Daughters of Bilitis Records (Collection 1946), UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

⁷⁶ Letter from Barbara Gittings to Members of the Governing Board, August 29, 1964, Box 1, folder 12, Daughters of Bilitis Records (Collection 1946), UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

Francisco members showed that most had stopped attending church services (Marcus 2002). Members of DOB and the Mattachine Society, San Francisco began to write to ministers of different faiths and received responses from Episcopalians, the Quakers, and the Baptists (Marcus 2002:94). Among those who responded was a representative of Glide Memorial Methodist Church. They “had long been a presence...in the Tenderloin District” (Pettis 2008:5). Two years earlier, they had worked with several San Francisco-based homophile groups to engage in outreach with young gay street hustlers.

A three-day conference was held to bring all of the respondents together with members of several organizations. Billye Talmadge of the DOB recalled, “the communication was just marvelous” (Marcus 2002:95). Most of the ministers had not felt qualified to talk about issues of sex and this was the first time many had met homosexuals. This weekend conference resulted in the formation of CRH, which included members of DOB, the Mattachine Society, Glide Methodist Church, SIR, and the Tavern Guild. Although the group originally focused on building a sense of unity between homosexuals and various church organizations, its focus grew. After police attempted to raise a fundraising New Year’s event at the end of 1964, “the CRH initiated a major study of local law enforcement practices” (D’Emilio 1983:202). In 1965, CRH helped a group of activists form the Citizens Alert, which provided assistance to victims of police harassment and brutality. Thus, organizations and coalitions were receptive to changing and adapting to the needs of the communities they served.

Although most ECHO and CRH activities were focused on the east and west coasts, respectively, many sought broader coalitions. At a 1965 meeting of ECHO, William Beardemphl, president of SIR, advocated a national homosexual organizations conference. Leaders of 12 homophile groups agreed that such a conference was “of utmost importance to all

homosexuals.”⁷⁷ Out of this idea came the National Planning Conference of Homosexual Organizations (NPCHO), which first met in Kansas City, MO in February of 1966. The conference included representatives from Citizens News (San Francisco), Council on Religion and the Homosexual (San Francisco), Daughters of Bilitis (with representatives from San Francisco, Chicago, and New York), The Janus Society (Philadelphia), Mattachine Society of Florida, Mattachine Midwest (Chicago), Mattachine Society of Philadelphia, the Mattachine Society, Inc., of New York, the Mattachine Society Inc., of Washington (D.C.), One, Inc. (Los Angeles), One in Kansas City, Tangents (Los Angeles), Society for Individual Rights (San Francisco), and the Tavern Guild (San Francisco).

NPCHO represented the first collaborative effort to bring together all homophile organizations at a national meeting. It encouraged common projects, worked on fundraising, organized demonstrations, and engaged in several studies involving homosexuals and the law as well as workplace discrimination. Thus, NPCHO largely incorporated many of the goals and tactics used by organizations throughout the U.S.

Additionally, however, it also sought to unify what had become a fragmented movement. Several prominent leaders were asked to present their thoughts on what could be done to further the Homophile Movement. Shirley Willer, then president of DOB, drew the conference attendees’ attention to the divide between the men and women of the homophile movement. As she wrote, “Lesbians have agreed (with reservations) to join in common cause with the male homosexual... her role in society has been one of mediator between the male homosexual and society... We show our willingness to assist the male homosexual in seeking to alleviate [sic] the

⁷⁷ Letter to the Daughters of Bilitis from W. Beardemphl, January 18, 1866, Box 12, folder 7, Daughters of Bilitis Records (Collection 1946), UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

problems our society has inflicted on him.” She further noted that, “There has been little evidence, however, that the male homosexual has any intention of making common cause with us.” Emphasizing the importance of finding common ground, Willer went on to state, “THE MORE WAYS WE CAN GET MORE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE GREATEST VARIETY OF APPROACHES TO THE WIDEST POSSIBLE CONFIGURATION OF THE PROBLEMS RELATED TO HOMOSEXUALITY...THE MORE LIKELY WE ARE TO ACHIEVE SOME MEASURE OF SUCCESS.”⁷⁸

Willer continued by laying out several concrete steps to achieve some degree of success. The first, she said, was “To affirm as a goal of such a conference... to be as concerned about womens [sic] civil rights.. [sic] homosexual’s civil liberties.” Second, she suggested that, “homosexual men attempt to appreciate the value of women as PEOPLE in the movement, respect their abilities as individuals and not seek them out as simple ‘show-Pieces’.” Third, she stated, “That those philosophical factors of homosexuality that engage both sexes be basic to our concepts of reform.” The fourth concrete step was, “sex not be a determine factor in decisions of policy, but that a consideration of all arguments be heard, and to that CONCENSUS [sic] be the goal of the conference.” She concludes by remarking that, “insofar as we do find trust and value in the male-oriented homophile organizations...we will find common ground upon which to work.”⁷⁹

Consensus became a theme of the conference and in the statements on ways to further the movement. Not all agreed, however, on what that should look like. Frank Kameny, for example, had long argued that the issues that affect homosexual men and women were one in the same. In

⁷⁸ “What Further Steps Can be Taken to Further the Homophile Movement, S. Willer, President, D.O.B., Inc.” Box 12, folder 7, Daughters of Bilitis Records (Collection 1946), UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA, emphasis in original.

⁷⁹ *ibid*, emphasis in original

contrast to Willer's statement, which accentuated the role of women and the lack of attention paid to issues that affect them, Kameny wrote, "the purpose of the movement, if it is to achieve any real, lasting, meaningful success, should be to look after the interests of homosexuals in the aggregate, rather than [sic] to minister to the needs of the homosexual individually." Where he did argue for consensus, however, was in the public image of the movement. Concerned that it appeared fragmented, he argued that, "there is absolutely no excuse for an attack in any movement publication generally available, by one homophile organization against another or against any of its personnel."⁸⁰ Conference attendees did acknowledge it was okay to disagree privately. There was a shared recognition, however, that any public conflict could damage the movement as a whole.

In August of 1966, NPCHO met again to discuss the state of the movement. The conference began by recognizing,

"the early involvement in the homophile movement of nine leaders, allof [sic] whom were present at the conference session. They were as follows (approximate dates of their first involvement, as announced, are in parentheses): Henry Hay (Mattachine Society and now the Circle of Loving Companionship) and W. Dorr Legg (One, Inc.) (1950); Don Slater (One, Inc, and now publisher of Tangents magazine) (1952); Don Lucas (Mattachine Society and now Council on Religion and the Homosexual, San Francisco, Calif.) and Harold L. Call (Mattachine Society) (1953); James Kepner (One, Inc. and

⁸⁰ "WHAT CONCRETE STEPS I BELIEVE CAN AND MUST BE TAKEN TO FURTHER THE HOMOPHILE MOVEMENT." Dr. Franklin E. Kameny, Box 12, folder 7, Daughters of Bilitis Records (Collection 1946), UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

now publisher of Pursuit & Symposium magazine) (1953); Del Martin, Phyllis Lyon, and Helen Sanders (all of Daughters of Bilitis) (1955).”⁸¹

The recognition of these leaders points to two important elements of the homophile movement. First, it shows that in 1966, there was an active movement and those involved recognized that it was the result of organizing as far back as 1950. Additionally, it shows that even those who had been engaged in conflict within organizations early on were still active in the movement but had created or joined other groups. Thus, the conflict within organizations was not detrimental to the movement and in many ways allowed for the diversification that many, like Shirley Willer, were championing.

This diversification can be seen in the general frameworks that guided the different organizations that were at times complimentary and at others, competing (Stein 2012:69-71). The Mattachine Society in San Francisco and the Daughters of Bilitis espoused the traditional goals associated with earlier organizing. For the most part, these groups focused on public education and social services, deferred to professionals, and were cautious about direct political action. Additionally, however, the DOB sought to incorporate lesbian issues and women’s rights.

Another framework came from groups like the Mattachine Society, D.C. and the Mattachine Society of New York. These organizations had more political goals and forcefully attacked sexual prejudice and discrimination. Mattachine D.C., for example, declared a resolution that, “homosexuality is not a sickness, disturbance, or other pathology in any sense, but is merely a preference, orientation, or propensity, or on par with, and no different in kind from, heterosexuality” (Mattachine Society of Washington policy statement, 4 March 1965 quoted in Stein 2012:70). Other organizations, like SIR and PRIDE, utilized direct action tactics

⁸¹ NPCHO Preliminary Summary 8/25-27/66, page 3, Box 12, folder 6, Daughters of Bilitis Records (Collection 1946), UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

like these Mattachine chapters, but they sought to orient themselves “more strongly to the gay and lesbian community. Activists who supported this tendency believed that bars and other places where gays and lesbians congregated should be defended and politicized by the movement” (Stein 2012:70).

Stein (2012) argues that organizations like the Janus Society in Philadelphia similarly sought to engage in the gay community, but its goals emphasized sexual liberation. Janus, like the other organizations, continued to sponsor public lectures and cooperate in studies concerning homosexuality.⁸² Additionally, however, they sought to directly confront the sexuality of homosexuality, an element that had previously been silenced in the homophile movement.

This expansion of new organizations and frameworks were supplemented by a diversification of tactics as well. In the 1960s, several groups began lobbying government officials and were effective at the state and local levels. They also became more involved in electoral politics, reporting on the positions of candidates and encouraging members to vote. Homophile organizations engaged in voter registration drives and began endorsing candidates. At the same time, others were utilizing court-based strategies, often with the help of other organizations like the ACLU. In addition to engaging in political and legal work, many organizations gained visibility through their direct action strategies, like protests and sit-ins.

What this period represents, then, is a period of diversification. Groups shared certain beliefs about the field (e.g., that homosexuals should gain acceptance in society). The focuses of each organization, however, were different. Thus, early conflict around some of these issues led to more groups, which encouraged the mobilization of more individuals, as they were able to find a group that shared their beliefs. This diversification also expanded the dimensions of

⁸² ECHO pamphlet, Box 12, folder 2, Daughters of Bilitis Records (Collection 1946), UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

identity around which the organizations mobilized. In other words, organizations were no longer strictly defined by dominant social categories (i.e., homosexual/heterosexual and male/female). Instead, organizations specified different goals, tactics, and experiences that required members to have more in common than just their sexuality, as had been the case throughout the 1950s.

While diversification was an effect of internal conflict, it also came about in part because of changes in the broad sociopolitical environment during the 1960s and as the homophile movement began interacting with proximate fields (i.e., other social movements).

Antihomosexual initiatives expanded during the transition to the 1960s, as “Military exclusions and discharges increased [and] Government employment restrictions continued... [Additionally, antihomosexual] police practices continued to have devastating effects” (Stein 2012:65). There was, however, a decline in the support of police harassment by the general public at this time (Armstrong 2002:52). This change in public sentiment may have been a side effect of the increase in support for the Civil Rights Movement that enabled further mobilization of homosexuals throughout the United States.

Although changing public sentiment may have had an indirect effect on the Homophile Movement, there were direct effects of the Civil Rights Movement as well. In the mid-1960s, many individuals in the homophile movement were watching the shifting stance of the Civil Rights movement. “As black movements rejected integrationist politics in favor of more separatist agendas, homophile tensions between assimilationist and minority group positions resolved in favor of a minority group position” (Armstrong 2002:52-53).

This shift to a minority group position also included a “new focus on the psychological well-being of black individuals... In June 1968, homophile activist Franklin Kameny described his reaction to Stokely Carmichael’s position and what he thought this meant for homosexuals:

We must instill in the homosexual community a sense of worth of the individual homosexual. A sense of high self-esteem. We must counteract the inferiority which ALL society inculcates into him in regard to his homosexuality....The other day, on television, I saw Stokely Carmichael before a group of Negroes chanting: 'Black is Beautiful.' To a Negro, living in a society in which 'white,' 'snow,' 'purity,' and 'good' are all equated together, and 'black,' 'evil,' 'darkness,' 'dirt,' and ugliness' are all equated together, Carmichael's tactic, is understandable—and necessary, and desirable. Within our somewhat different framework, we need the same kind of thing (quoted from Marotta 1981).

This statement by Kameny shows the explicit ways in which the Homophile Movement was affected by other movements. Thus, while conflict may have led to diversification of organizations and the expansion of the movement, it was simultaneously being shaped by external elements. In sum, internal conflict contributed to the emergence of the field and interaction with other fields influenced its shape.

CONCLUSION

This chapter showed how a movement or strategic action field can emerge out of uncoordinated social space. In particular, the process begins with conflict. Although there were other attempts to organize homosexuals prior to Harry Hay's 1948 idea for a homosexual organization, none were able to attract as many members as Mattachine, nor did they have the same ripple effect in which those who did not agree with the ideology of the group (either at the start or after the 1953 convention) left, but remained active. Former members or people who attended one or two discussion groups joined other organizations or created new organizations (e.g., ONE). Over

time, the organizations started interacting, developing coalitions, and working to identify common goals. Thus, this chapter shows that infighting encourages movement emergence by creating a base of actors necessary for a sustained social movement.

The early attempts to mobilize homosexuals in the late 1940s and early 1950s served to build a foundation for the movement by bringing awareness to the presence of organizational efforts. Many who did not support the frame or goals of the early Mattachine Society became involved later. A network was forming. Throughout the 1950s, Mattachine and the Daughters of Bilitis focused on mobilization to a degree, but this resulted in only modest recruitment. Alternatively publications and the dissemination of information from these organizations and ONE, Inc. dominated this period of organizing.

At the start of the 1960s, the homophile movement was recognized as such. Moreover, it reflected what can be conceptualized as a strategic action field. As the movement emerged, there was a shared sense that homosexuals could actively improve their standing in society. By the mid-1960s, there were dozens of organizations interacting, building coalitions, and confronting the status quo. Although the organizations did not always agree on specific goals and tactics, publications and coalitions allowed them to share their work and continue to mobilize. The tactics deemed legitimate expanded, as some groups focused on working directly with homosexuals in their communities and others engaged in direct action and had legal and political goals. Finally, the framework of the homophile movement evolved from one that focused strictly on assimilation to one that allowed for individual expression and acceptance of homosexuality through the notion that “gay is good.”

CONCLUSION

The homophile movement emerged during one of the most repressive periods for homosexuals in American history. Its slow development was a reflection of the sociopolitical climate that required much of the early organizing to occur in private. Over time, as the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis sought to bring together an isolated homosexual population, many organizers realized that the only thing the members had in common was their sexuality. Thus, conflict, and infighting specifically, were prominent in both organizations. Although the Mattachine Society largely folded after three years, the Daughters of Bilitis survived the duration of the movement. The infighting within these groups, along with others that would later join them, also influenced the emergence of a new movement. The early history of the homophile movement therefore presents the opportunity to explore how infighting influences organizations and movements.

This dissertation explored how infighting can lead to the survival or dissolution of an organization and the way in which it encouraged the movement itself to diversify and expand. Using organizational documents, I examined the earliest gay and lesbian organizations and emphasized how other movements, conceptualized as fields, influenced the way individual members discussed issues related to the organizations' identities.

In Chapter 2, I showed how infighting ultimately led to the dissolution of the Mattachine Society to the extent that only a handful of members remained by the end of 1953 and the organization resembled the original group in name only. Because the repertoires available to the organization's founders were limited (Clemens 1997), the influence of a distal field (i.e., the American Communist Party) shaped individual members' disparate beliefs about the

organizations. In other words, some supported the use of a structure, tactics, and ideology linked to communism while others were drastically opposed.

Alternatively, in Chapter 3, I examined how infighting enabled members to share their different views about themselves (Ghaziani 2008) and thus influenced the adaptation and survival of the Daughters of Bilitis, though there was a limit to its usefulness. Moreover, although the influence of a distant field proved fatal for the Mattachine Society, the expansion of the Homophile Movement and the influence of the Civil Rights Movement and Second Wave Feminism were more complicated when it came to the DOB.

Finally, Chapter 4 described the emergence of the homophile movement. It showed that even without a strong base of activists or organizations, a social movement could emerge. In particular, it emphasized the way that infighting within organizations created a larger network of activists and, over time, a diversification of tactics and goals. This is counter to the long-standing notion that movements typically arise from existing organizations (Armstrong 2002; Zald & Ash 1966), other movements (McAdam 1995; Meyer & Whittier 1994), or established fields (Buechler 1990; Staggenborg 1988).

At the start of the dissertation, I presented three propositions, based in the reviewed literature and illustrated within the empirical chapters that followed. These propositions sought to explain how infighting influenced organizational survival and adaptation. Additionally, they suggest how external factors—specifically, the state of the field in which the organizations are embedded and the presence of distant and proximate fields—played a role in shaping infighting and thus, organizational outcomes. Each proposition will be reviewed below.

Infighting and Organizations

The dissertation examined the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis independently largely so that a narrative could be constructed separately for the organizations. Instead of creating a direct comparison of the organizations, however, it provided the opportunity to understand different dimensions of infighting. In other words, it is not the case that there is a simple explanation for why Mattachine declined and DOB survived. Instead, the two organizations both experienced infighting, and there were some issues that could have been (and in DOB's case were) resolved without the failure of the organization. Other issues, however, proved fatal for both organizations.

Infighting and Organizational Decline

There are elements that reflect the core of an organization, and are thus more difficult to change. Because the social movement organization's identity is largely based on the common interests and experiences of members (Taylor & Whittier 1995), infighting encourages organizational failure when members debate issues of directly related to individual members' interests (Diogo et al. 2015). In other words, members are likely to resist change because their own interests are incorporated into the organization and their actions are dependent upon the organization. This project showed that the components that were detrimental to the organizations were those that were central to their ideologies and that were more central to the individual identities of the organization members. It is important to note, however, that the relevance of a given ideology was shaped by external factors.

In an unorganized social space, infighting leads to failure when a repertoire from a distant field does not resonate with members and is not malleable. In the case of the Mattachine Society,

it was the belief that homosexuals represented a cultural minority that caused the greatest strife within the organization. Members in both factions—that is, those who supported the minority notion and those who did not—connected the minority conceptualization to communism. What this meant for the different groups, however, differed. Those members who had been involved in the communist party, and thus used that familiar repertoire to shape early organizing, were drawn to the idea because it created a sense of unity and, as one prominent member pointed out, the need for a theory.

Those in the anti-minority faction, on the other hand, were driven by a desire to assimilate and be seen in the same way as anyone else. Moreover this group was dominated by individuals who were adamantly opposed to communism and anything that they saw as a reflection of it. Thus, the cultural minority ideology, drawn from a distant field, was directly related to individual members' experiences and interests. As a result, there was no room for compromise and the organization ultimately dissolved.

Alternatively, in an emerging field, infighting leads to dissolution when repertoires from the emerging field and a proximate field conflict. This occurs because members become divided and cannot agree on an appropriate repertoire for the organization. In the Daughters of Bilitis, a central ideology and prominent characteristic of the organization was the social category with which the members identified. By the mid-1960s, the Homophile Movement had expanded, but was dominated by men. Moreover, Second Wave Feminism was on the rise, emphasizing the lower status of women in the United States. Thus, although the organization was explicitly founded as an organization for women (one in which men could not be members), the changing nature of these two fields (the homophile movement itself and the emergence of Second Wave Feminism) pulled the organization in different directions.

As Shirley Willer noted at a meeting of NPCHO, the role of women was not only being ignored as they struggled to support homosexual men, but the differential treatment of female homosexuals was erased by the men. There were many members of DOB, however, who felt that they had never been treated any worse because they were women, only because they were homosexual. Thus, this core feature of the women's identities created an ideological difference for which there seemed no middle ground. Prior to the growth of the Homophile Movement and Second Wave Feminism, however, there was no discussion, let alone conflict, around this issue. This shows the extent to which external elements influence internal conflict. In particular, this conflict within the Daughters of Bilitis illustrates the finding that when debating issues directly related to a core component of members' identities, infighting will influence organizational decline when proximate fields emerge with an interpretive frame that resonates with some, but not all, members of the organization.

Infighting and Organizational Adaptation

Although the previous section showed that infighting over issues central to individuals and organizations can lead to the decline of an organization, there are certain components of organizations that are flexible. These components tend to be those that are more peripheral to an organization, such as its structure and tactics (Powell 1991). In such cases, this dissertation showed infighting can be adaptive, though it will be shaped by the external environment.

In an unorganized social space, infighting leads to adaptation when a repertoire from a distant field does not resonate with members, but is malleable and can be changed. Although the Mattachine Society ultimately dissolved, Chapter 2 showed that the organization and its members were more flexible as they debated the organization's structure, which was the first

major disagreement within the group. Some members of the first order were concerned that the people running the group were anonymous. These dissenting members were convinced that the anonymity was in place because the organization was run by communists. While that was not entirely untrue, by the time this became an issue within the group, all members had left the communist party. The founders themselves even agreed that a democratic and open structure would be more appropriate as the organization grew.

This is consistent with organizational studies, which have emphasized that elements of an organization that are peripheral to its identity (e.g., structure) are more likely to change successfully. While the dissertation does not present a counterfactual, the organizational documents show that if it was simply a matter of changing the structure of the organization, it may have survived. In particular, Chuck Rowland pointed out to Harry Hay that their work had created a “qualitatively new situation.” Moreover, he noted that professionals could not join a secret group, but they could “join an organization of individuals.”⁸³ Thus, infighting or debates of this nature are structured by external elements, but do not necessarily lead to failure. This case shows that when debating issues of organizational strategy, infighting encourages adaptation when members acknowledge that repertoires adopted from distant fields are no longer useful in an emerging field.

What is important to note, however, is that the structure of the organization was directly tied to the issue of safety and was chosen to ensure the anonymity of the members. By changing the structure, members of Mattachine recognized that the environment that required the secret, cell-like structure was not only unnecessary, but was becoming problematic for the organization. Not all issues related to strategy were so cut and dry, however. Additionally, members of

⁸³ Letter from Chuck Rowland to Harry Hay, March 11, 1953, Box 1, folder 10, Mattachine Society Project Collection, Coll2008-016, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

Mattachine disagreed about the tactics that were appropriate for the organization. In particular, both factions agreed that research could improve the state of homosexuals largely by changing the perception the public held of homosexuality. The group that consisted of the founders believed that the organization should be involved in the research, as homosexuals were the true authority on homosexuality. The assimilationist faction, however, believed that research should be left up to professionals. Thus, there was an element in the infighting that brought out personal beliefs about homosexuality that were central to the members and, as noted in the section above, issues directly related to members interests are more difficult to change (Diogo et al. 2015).

An additional tactic debated by the Mattachine Society involved political activism. While the founders sought to engage in political work to attain equality, akin with what other minority groups had done previously, the assimilationist faction did not want to enter the political arena. Instead, they primarily wanted to be anonymous, “regular” members of society. Engaging in politics, they believed was unnecessary and would only draw attention to them as homosexuals. This project argues that the primary reason why infighting over tactical issues was not adaptive in the case of the Mattachine Society was because it was intertwined tightly with the ideology of the group, and core features of an organization and an individual are much more difficult to change (i.e., they are less malleable).

In an emerging field, on the other hand, infighting leads to adaptation when repertoires from the emerging field and proximate field are not in conflict and resonate with members. In the Daughters of Bilitis infighting over tactics was adaptive and largely a reflection of what was happening in the emerging field of the Homophile Movement as well as the proximate field of the Civil Rights Movement. Thus, this case is consistent with Proposition 2a, which states that when debating issues of organizational strategy, infighting encourages adaptation when members

utilize forms of action from proximate fields that are relevant to the broader aims of the emerging field. When DOB began, social science research was being used to classify homosexuals as perverted, open to sabotage, and generally undesirable. Similarly, research was being used to justify why women should stay at home, raise a family, and be passive. As such, research was a central task that the organization engaged in from the start. Moreover, although the homophile movement itself had not yet solidified, the other two homophile groups were publishing research to educate homosexuals and the community. This was seen as a respected and legitimate tactic.

Over time, however, many believed that the research was not effectively countering the negative view of homosexuals nor was it having any effect on creating equal status for homosexuals. As a result, many in the Daughters of Bilitis wanted to engage in direct action, particularly as the 1960s began. As Chapter 3 showed, this was both a reflection of the homophile movement—organizing on the east coast began to emphasize protests and picketing—and a proximate field—the Civil Rights movement had shown the effectiveness of protest. While the members of the Mattachine Society did not have any external experiences that resonated with the group as a whole, the Daughters of Bilitis were able to use the infighting to expand their tactics. Thus, the debates enabled the group to change with shape of influential fields.

One thing that does separate the Mattachine Society from the Daughters of Bilitis is the timing of their emergence and decline. This section incorporated external elements into the infighting that characterized both organizations. It is useful, however, to take a moment to emphasize this difference. Above, I emphasized the way that the content of the debates about the organizations influenced their outcomes. In other words, members were more amenable to

shifting their stance about peripheral components, like the structure. Members were less likely to find common ground, on the other hand, when central components, such as ideology and social categories, were being debated. What these discussion showed, however, was the way that the state of various fields influenced the discussions and the way that both proximate and distant fields are likely to affect the organizations via infighting.

Thus, a proximate field can both encourage adaptation and decline. The outcome, however, depends upon the content of the topic being debated. If a repertoire from a proximate field is compatible with a repertoire in an organization's field, it can be helpful for the organization. Alternatively, if a repertoire from a proximate field conflicts with that of the organization's field, it can increase the intensity of infighting and lead to an organization's decline.

Infighting and Social Movement Emergence

Social movements are said to emerge when there is a base to organize activists and a collective identity to translate individual interests into group interests (Bernstein 1997:539-540). The infighting discussed above largely represents attempts to turn individual interests into group interests. A base of activists, however, is typically said to arise from other movements (McAdam 1995; Meyer & Whittier 1994) or established fields (Buechler 1990; Staggenborg 1988). This project showed, however, that when there is no existing base (or movement or field), it can arise out of conflict. Thus, Chapter 4 illustrated the final implication of the dissertation. Infighting encourages movement emergence by creating a larger base of actors necessary for a sustained social movement.

To clarify, the current project utilized Fligstein and McAdam's (2012) concept of a strategic action field to conceptualize the Homophile Movement. It is useful in that it provides a concrete way to identify a movement. That is, it is said to emerge when there is a shared sense of what is at stake, a set of relatively fixed actors, forms of action viewed as legitimate, and a broad interpretive frame. They argue, however, that a strategic action field emerges from what they term unorganized social space. This project showed, however, that there is typically some degree of organization required to develop a well-defined sense of the field. As such, it is more useful conceptually, and more accurately empirically, to think of the space as moving from unorganized to uncoordinated prior to field emergence.

In the case of the Homophile Movement, there were individuals and organizations broadly interested in coming together as early as 1950. It took many years, however, to figure out what they were organizing around and how they were going to do it. In particular, because there were so few activists at the start and, as the earlier chapters showed, the individuals often had little in common aside from their sexuality, conflict was rampant. The infighting often led individuals to leave early organizations. They may have left a group, but they did not abandon the movement. Infighting between and within organizations created enabled the burgeoning movement to diversify, both in goals and strategies, thus creating a larger network or base of activists around which to organize. Thus, by the mid-1960s, several coalitions had been built and although the organizations may have engaged in different activities, most acknowledged that it was in their best interest to create a public image or frame that would unite them publically.

Contributions

This dissertation expands on Ghaziani's explanation of infighting as a cultural carrier by emphasizing elements external to organizations and movements. Ghaziani (2008:286) writes that, "through infighting, activists converged on a cluster of assumptions, agreements, and meanings that (sometimes unconsciously) structured their future conventions of disputations and deliberation." The members of the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis, too, used infighting as a form of meaning making to clarify social movement identities for each organization. These meanings, however, were largely shaped by what was going on around the organizations. Fields—distant, proximate, and emerging—were influential not only in determining how the organization could function, but also in terms of how individual members viewed themselves.

This project took an explicitly symbolic interactionist approach. The individual and society are intertwined and interdependent. Thus, they changed together. It was not as though the women of the Daughters of Bilitis did not think of themselves as both women and homosexuals, for example. The necessity of emphasizing one above the other, however, was not relevant until the field made it a necessity. Thus, when we think about the way that infighting can unify and annihilate, we must recognize that it does not occur in a vacuum.

In an effort to understand how the external affects the internal, this project utilized Fligstein and McAdam's (2012) concept of a strategic action field. In particular, it is the embeddedness of fields and the way they affect one another that is worth accentuating. Unlike Fligstein and McAdam, however, this project showed that distal fields can be influential when organizations have no proximate fields from which a repertoire can be drawn.

Additionally, this project expanded on the theory of strategic action fields, taking the notion of unorganized social space and emphasizing the need for some degree of organization for

a field to emerge. Instead of moving from unorganized to emerging, this dissertation makes the case for conceptualizing early efforts as uncoordinated. In particular, Fligstein and McAdam (2012) say that to emerge (i.e., moving from unorganized to emerging) at least two organizations must be orienting their actions toward one another. To say that an unorganized space is comprised of multiple organizations confuses the notion of what these groups are doing. If the actions of multiple organizations are oriented toward one another, it would seem that another step is necessary. Thus, this project argues that conceptually, it is useful to think about a middle stage, an uncoordinated field during which existing organizations are beginning to work together.

The period of 1950-1961 largely reflect the move from an uncoordinated social space to emerging homophile movement. Actors were attempting to figure out what was at stake in the field. Was homosexuality a social issue or was it political? There was a set of relatively fixed actors—the Mattachine Society, in both forms, ONE, Inc., and DOB. The groups were attempting to figure out what forms of action were legitimate (were they going to focus on assimilation or were they a cultural minority?). Finally, they were working on generating a shared framework that they could use to make sense of what they wanted to do and what others were doing.

Infighting characterized this stage of organizing, both within the organizations and between them. This conflict, however, led to an increase in activists interested in a broader movement, however, as it led to diversification. In the 1960s, the homophile organization largely came together over their lowest common denominator: their sexuality. In the long run, they came to accept that as an appropriate unifying characteristic. The organizations had different goals and different tactics, but tried to maintain a unified front that they believed would increase their support publically.

The Homophile Movement is often characterized by its internal divisiveness and its external focus on conservatism. Neither is entirely true, however. This dissertation sought to show that in many ways, the internal strife was adaptive. It enabled the movement to diversify and expand. Moreover, although many discuss the Homophile Movement as the conservative predecessor to Stonewall and Gay Liberation, it was far more diverse and radical than most accounts would lead one to believe. Although the period of 1953 to 1961 emphasized assimilation and educating the homosexual to fit into society, the movement had radical bookends.

In particular, the earliest efforts of the Mattachine Society and the later direct action that characterized the east coast organizations were in no way conservative. Harry Hay utilized the notion of a homosexual cultural minority that would not make its return to LGBT activism until several decades later. Additionally, even attempting to organize at a time when homosexuals were being purged from the State Department by the hundreds can hardly be called conservative. Similarly, the dozens of protest as a result of raids (such as that at CRH's New Year's Ball) and political inequality (like those organized by the Mattachine Society of Washington, D.C. and ECHO) were precursors to Stonewall and the ongoing activism in the LGBT community that continues to today.

This dissertation used the case of the Homophile Movement and the early organizations responsible for its rise to examine how infighting is shaped by the external environment and can result in organizational adaptation or failure as well as movement emergence. Equally important, however, it sought to give a voice to a largely understudied movement and the individuals responsible for its rise. Future research in LGBT activism would be remiss to continue to ignore the work of these early activists.

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