CULTURE AND MOVEMENT-COUNTERMOVEMENT DYNAMICS:
THE STRUGGLE OVER GAY, LESBIAN, AND BISEXUAL RIGHTS

DISSERTATION

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By

Kimberly Beth Dugan, M.A.

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The Ohio State University
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Dissertation Committee:

Professor Verta Taylor, Advisor
Professor J. Craig Jenkins
Professor Townsend Price-Spratlen

Approved by

Verta G. Taylor
Advisor
Department of Sociology
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1999
ABSTRACT

In November 1993 voters in Cincinnati, Ohio passed Issue 3, an amendment to the City Charter eliminating gay, lesbian and bisexual persons' legal protection against discrimination and prohibiting their recognition as a group or class. This Christian right initiative emerged largely in response to the inclusion of 'sexual orientation' in the City's newly enacted Human Rights Ordinance just one year earlier. The Christian right did not operate in isolation in their struggle to pass Issue 3. Rather, the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement engaged with the right in efforts to thwart the initiative. At different times during the campaign, each side influenced the other in terms of cultural opportunities, framing, collective identity and related strategies. Using qualitative data, in this study I capture the dynamics and interdependence of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement and the Christian right as they engaged in conflict over Cincinnati, Ohio's Issue 3 by focusing on cultural factors relevant to movement mobilization, strategies, and success.

I found that movements are afforded cultural opportunities when they interpret—events, especially suddenly imposed grievances, as contradictory to their core beliefs; opponent movements as weakened; and existing master frames as available for appropriation. The gay rights movement affected the opportunities available to the Christian right. Further, I discovered that while both movements
maintained task orientations in devising and deploying campaign claims and images, the Christian right claims more successfully resonated with the public. I argue that the relative success of the right-wing created an imperative for the gay rights movement to systematically respond by re-framing their claims.

The Christian right mobilized tightly around their salient Christian identity. The gay rights movement experienced identity disputes resulting in the privileging of assimilationist goals over liberationist. I describe the ways in which the Christian right influenced that process. This study has implications for understanding the dynamics between opposing social movements and the role of culture in movement mobilization and strategy.
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VITA

October 17, 1964 ......................... Born – Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

1988 ......................... M.A. Sociology, Kent State University

1986 ......................... B.A. Sociology, Kent State University

1998 ......................... Instructor, Elmhurst College
                         Elmhurst, Illinois

1992-1998 ......................... Graduate Teaching Associate,
                             The Ohio State University

1990-1992 ......................... Research Specialist, Department of
                             Medical Education, University of Illinois,
                             Chicago.

1988-1990 ......................... Research Associate, Decision Research
                             Corporation, Cleveland, Ohio.

1986-1987 ......................... Graduate Research and Administrative
                             Assistant, Kent State University

PUBLICATIONS

   "Challenges to the Authority of Graduate Teaching Assistants." The Journal of
   Graduate Teaching Assistant Development., 4:63-70.

   School Classrooms: Consequences for Students and Faculty.," 10:330-350.
   Gender and Society.

FIELDS OF STUDY

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               Social Movements, Gender, Political Sociology.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vita</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapters:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1. History of the Opposing Movements</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1 Origins of the Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Movement</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.2 Origins of the Christian Right</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.3 The Contemporary Movements</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.4 Anti-Gay Rights Initiatives: The Test Cases in Colorado and Oregon</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2. Cincinnati and the History of Issue</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1 Current Status of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Rights in Cincinnati</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3. Theoretical Considerations</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.1 Conceptualizing Opposing Social Movements</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.2 Resource Mobilization Theory, Political Process, and Political Opportunities</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.3 Culture and Movements: Opportunities, Framing, and Collective Identity</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.3.1 Cultural Opportunity Structure</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.3.2 Cultural Strategies: Framing</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.3.3 New Social Movement Theory and Collective Identity</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4. Conclusion</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Data and Methods</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1. The Data</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2. Data Analysis</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3. Limitations of the Study</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Cultural Opportunities and Movement Mobilization</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1. Cultural Opportunities and Movement Mobilization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2. Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.1. Political and Cultural Opportunity Structures ........................................... 50
  3.1.1. Operationalizing Cultural Opportunity Structure .......................... 52
    3.1.1.1. Ideological or Cultural Contradictions ............................ 52
    3.1.1.2. Suddenly Imposed Grievance ..................................... 53
    3.1.1.3. Opponent Vulnerability ........................................ 54
    3.1.1.4. Master Protest Frame ........................................... 54
  3.2. Analysis of Cultural Opportunity in the Issue 3 Campaign ................. 56
    3.2.1. Cultural Beliefs and Practical Contradictions ...................... 56
      3.2.1.1. Cultural Beliefs ............................................. 56
      3.2.1.2. Practices and Contradictions ................................ 58
    3.2.2. Suddenly Imposed Grievance ....................................... 62
    3.2.3. Dramatization of Opponent Weakness ................................ 65
    3.2.4. Accessibility of Master Protest Frames ............................. 71
  3.3 Summary and Conclusion .......................................................... 75

4. The Framing of Issue 3 ...................................................................... 85
  4.1. Framing and Social Movements ................................................... 86
  4.2. Deconstructing the Frame Task Formula ..................................... 88
    4.2.1. Identifying Injustice Frames ........................................ 89
      4.2.1.1. Issue 3 Proponents ............................................. 89
        4.2.1.1.1. Rights-Based Discourse Strategy ....................... 90
          4.2.1.1.1.1. Immutability or Unchangeable Characteristics .... 90
        4.2.1.1.2. Financial Discrimination ............................... 92
        4.2.1.1.3. Political Weakness ...................................... 93
      4.2.1.2. Issue 3 Opponents ............................................. 94
      4.2.1.2.1. Anti-Discrimination Strategy .............................. 97
    4.2.2. Framing Agency .................................................................. 102
      4.2.2.1. Issue 3 Proponents ............................................. 102
      4.2.2.2. Issue 3 Opponents ............................................. 104
    4.2.3. Framing Identity ................................................................ 106
      Issue 3 Proponents ......................................................... 107
      Issue 3 Opponents ......................................................... 109
  4.3. Conceptualizing Frame Resonance .............................................. 113
    4.3.1. Connecting Frames to Beliefs ......................................... 113
      4.3.1.1. Issue 3 Proponents ............................................. 114
        4.3.1.1.2. Special Rights/Affirmative Action Frame Resonance .... 115
        4.3.1.1.3. The Resonance of the Three Criteria for Minority Classification .... 118
      4.3.1.2. Issue 3 Opponents ............................................. 121
    4.3.2. Understanding Frame Resonance in Everyday Life ................... 123
      4.3.2.1. Empirical Credibility ......................................... 124
      4.3.2.1.1. Issue 3 Proponents ........................................ 124
4.3.2.1.2. Issue 3 Opponents.......................... 127
4.3.2.2. Experiential Commensurability............. 129
   4.3.2.2.1. Issue 3 Proponents..................... 129
   4.3.2.2.2. Issue 3 Opponents..................... 131

4.3.2. Effectiveness: The Challenger’s Imperative to
      Counter.......................................... 133

5. Collective Identity and Movement Strategy.............. 146

   5.1. Collective Identity and Movements.................. 147

   5.2. Issue 3 Movements and Identity.................... 149
       5.2.1. Christian Right: Social Movement Organizational Development
               And Leadership.................................. 149

       5.2.2. Inter-Racial Christian Alliance................. 151

       5.2.3. Unified Identity and Cooperative Strategy in the Christian
               Right........................................... 152

       5.2.4. Strange Bedfellows: The Identity “Glue” of the White-Black
               Christian Alliance.................................. 155

       5.2.5. Collective Identity Disputes Among the Gay, Lesbian, and
               Bisexual Movement.................................. 159

       5.2.6. Gay Rights Movement: Organizational Development and
               Leadership....................................... 160

       5.2.7. Gay Identity Disputes Manifested................. 164
               5.2.7.1. Early Conflict Around Campaign Planning
                       And Inclusivity.................................. 164

               5.2.7.2. Resignation of Stonewall Executive
                       Director......................................... 167

               5.2.7.3. To Boycott or Not to Boycott................ 170

5.3. Identity and Strategy: Opposing Movement Interface.... 176

6. Conclusion............................................. 186

   6.1. The Venue Shift and the Influence of Opposing Movements...... 187

   6.2. Cultural Opportunities and Opposing Movement Dynamics....... 189

   6.3. Frames and Opposing Movement Dynamics.................... 193

   6.4. Collective Identity and Opposing Movement Dynamics.......... 196

Bibliography.................................................. 199
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

In November 1993 voters in Cincinnati, Ohio passed Issue 3, an amendment to the City Charter eliminating gay, lesbian and bisexual persons’ legal protection against discrimination and prohibiting their recognition as a group or class. This Christian right initiative emerged largely in response to the inclusion of ‘sexual orientation’ in the City’s newly enacted Human Rights Ordinance (HRO). A majority vote (7-2) by Cincinnati City Councilmembers had made the Ordinance law just one year prior to the Issue 3 ballot measure. Falling immediately on the heels of two statewide anti-gay initiatives¹, Cincinnati was among the first cities to face such a challenge over gay, lesbian, and bisexual rights.

Social movements, such as the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement and the Christian right, have long been recognized for their contributions to social and political change. However, movements for social change do not operate in isolation. Social movements exist within a larger political and cultural environment that may be favorable or unfavorable to their goals and tactics (Zald and Useem 1987; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; Gamson and Meyer 1996; Bernstein 1997;1996). Using the case of Cincinnati’s Issue 3, I explore and expand upon existing theory regarding the ways in which movement strategies and claims are affected by cultural opportunities, collective identity, and their opponent movement. Given the alternating movement victories and the heavily contested
nature of gay rights in Cincinnati, Issue 3 is a viable case for the study of opposing movement dynamics.

The data for this study are qualitative. I use interviews with key informants, newspapers and other print and visual media, and organizational documents. The primary theoretical aim of this dissertation is to test and develop upon existing notions of the effects that opposing movements have on each other. I also empirically examine and expound theory on cultural opportunities and their impact on movement mobilization. I argue that studies of movement opportunities must account for the affects of culture. Furthermore, I address the role of opposing movements in collective action framing. Heretofore such studies tended to focus narrowly on solitary movement framing. Finally, I address the influence of collective identity on non-framing strategies and tactics. The issue of identity disputes or cohesiveness is considered highly relevant for mobilization and the development of unified strategies. I submit that analyses of social movements must account for the influence of a contending movement. Guided by these theoretical constructs, I provide a detailed accounting of the Christian right and the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movements in the campaign over Issue 3.

Next, I contextualize the case of Cincinnati's Issue 3 by providing a brief description of the histories of the right-wing and gay rights movements followed by a discussion of the Issue 3 conflict itself. Here I also discuss the Cincinnati landscape, as it was critical to what emerged with the anti-gay initiative. I then introduce the theoretical frameworks for the study. Finally, I provide a sketch of the chapters located herein.
HISTORY OF THE OPPOSING MOVEMENTS

Origins of the Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Movement

The gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement consists of those individuals and organizations advocating for the personal and legal rights and freedoms of gays, lesbians, bisexual and transgendered persons. The Stonewall Riots are widely considered to be the birthplace of the contemporary gay and lesbian rights movement (D’Emilio 1983; Adam 1987; Duberman 1993; Cruikshank 1992). In 1969 police raided the Greenwich Village gay bar, the Stonewall Inn. Invasions such as these were common to gay and lesbian bars all across the country (Adam 1987:76; D’Emilio 1983; see also Epstein 1999; Duberman 1993). While vice raids had become a feature of gay life in the 1960s and earlier, Friday night the 27th of June, 1969 has since stood as a symbol to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people as the spark that prompted the modern gay “liberation” movement (Adam 1987; D’Emilio 1983). On that night, the police incursion resulted in substantial physical resistance from bar patrons and outsiders marshaled by “drag queens, dykes, street people, and bar boys” (Adam 1987:75). An entire weekend of rioting ensued in this New York area.

Prior to ‘Stonewall,’ a gay and lesbian movement or the “homophile” movement had been active for years (see Epstein 1999). However, the events that weekend in June shifted the movement into a new phase henceforth altered in both breadth and depth. What once stood as a “small, thinly spread reform effort suddenly grew into a large, grassroots movement for liberation” (D’Emilio 1983:239). D’Emilio wrote, “Stonewall thus marked a critical divide in the politics of consciousness of homosexuals and lesbians.”
To illustrate the significant change consider that the number of gay and lesbian political groups and organizations changed from about fifty at the time of Stonewall to more than eight hundred by 1973 (Button, Rienzo and Wald 1997:25). Stonewall signified a new zeitgeist for gays and lesbians.

The following decade was ripe with gay and lesbian movement victories. For instance, one landmark success was the American Psychiatric Association 1973 decision to remove ‘homosexuality’ as a disorder from its diagnostic manual. Because of the efforts of the liberation movement, no longer would same-sex sexuality be considered a sickness by the medical establishment. Likewise during that time period the gay and lesbian movement was victorious in a number of locations in its push for inclusion of sexual orientation in human rights ordinances and other policies (Button, Rienzo and Wald 1997).

Adam discussed, however, “the irony of the 1970s” which involved the “ease with which gay and lesbian aspirations were assimilated, contained, and overcome by the societies in which they originated” (1987:100-101). The 1970s were a time of both victories and challenges. The gay and lesbian movement would, as it turns out, “fall prey” in the late 1970s to what Adam referred to as “a reorganized enemy [of] conservative forces in the United States [which] formed the New Right” (Adam 1987:101).

Origins of the Christian Right

The Christian right is defined as a “broad coalition of pro-family organizations and individuals who have come together to struggle for a conservative Christian vision in the political realm” (Herman 1997:9). The Christian right, with its anti-gay rights focus emerged alongside of and with the “technical assistance and encouragement from the
secular right” (Diamond 1995:165). Some scholars conflate the “New,” with the “Christian” right, as both were mobilized in the 1970s, overlapped in membership, and shared some of the same concerns (Petchesky 1981). The New right is said to have arisen early that decade out of the former, more materialist right wing politic that dominated for decades (Offe 1985; see also Inglehart 1987; Flanagan 1987; Petchesky 1981). Unlike their older, conservative predecessors, the New right became concerned with issues of identity rather than its former strict focus on capital, the welfare state, militarism and security (Offe 1985; see also Adam 1987). Petchesky argued that the “new-ness” of these right-wing forces was in its “tendency to locate sexual, reproductive, and family issues at the center of its political program” (1981:207).

While the New right is largely considered an altered, more moralistic version of the older counterpart, some scholars further delineate between these contemporary forces and that of the Christian right. Indeed, Sara Diamond stated that “the secular New Right represented a new phase in fusionism’s blend of anticommunist militarism, moral traditionalism, and economic libertarianism” (1995:102). Furthermore, she argued that “as moral issues rose to the top of the national agenda, and because evangelicals constituted a large segment of the population, it was no wonder that New Right leaders sought to foster the new Christian Right” (pp. 162; see also Diamond 1989). Scholars began to draw a line between the “relatively secular economic right” and such “social conservatives” as the Christian right with their antigay focus (Herman 1997:9-10; see also Klatch 1987).
The 1977 landmark antigay crusade in Florida signified this right-wing shift into engaging in the politics over gay rights. Led by Christian fundamentalist Anita Bryant and her organization, "Save our Children," the Christian right successfully moved voters to repeal a Dade County Florida law protecting gays and lesbians from discrimination that had just been passed (Button, Rienzo and Wald 1997:26; Adam 1987; see also Epstein 1999). That next year gay rights laws in St. Paul, Minnesota, Eugene, Oregon, and Wichita, Kansas met with similar fates at the hands of these conservative forces (Button, Rienzo, and Wald 1997). Save Our Children took their energy and resources to California in 1978 to support the State’s antigay “Proposition 6” promoted by State Representative, John Briggs. This failed initiative, had it passed, would have banned openly gay or lesbian people from teaching in California’s public schools (Diamond 1995: 171; see also Adam 1987).

The Contemporary Movements

The gay and lesbian movement continued to grow and gain in both cultural visibility and legislative clout throughout the 1980s. The AIDS epidemic played a significant role in thrusting gay concerns into the public eye. Organizations such as ACT UP and Queer Nation formed around AIDS and other gay-related issues, gays and lesbians "came-out" all across the country, "out" lesbian and gay candidates ran for and were elected to public offices, and more than a half-million people marched on Washington in support of gay and lesbian rights (Button, Rienzo, and Wald 1997:27; See also Epstein 1999). At the same time that gay and lesbian visibility and political strength grew immeasurably, the opposition was making substantial progress with its agenda opposing
gay rights. In 1986, the Christian right celebrated the landmark decision in the case of *Bowers V. Hardwick* (1986) where the U.S. Supreme court ruled in favor of Georgia's anti-sodomy law (Button, Rienzo, and Wald 1997:26; see also Hunter 1995a; 1995b). The implications of the case which denied privacy rights to consenting same sex partners would remain critical for the decade to follow (see Hunter 1995a; 1995b).

The political and cultural landscape entering into and throughout the early 1990s was mixed for each of the movements' gay agendas. According to Button, Rienzo, and Wald, by 1993 gays and lesbians were protected by laws or policies in over a hundred cities and counties and in eight of the United States (1997:27). These and other gay rights victories served to mobilize conservative opposition, particularly in their efforts to repeal existing ordinances or altogether prohibit any legal recourse for lesbian, gay, and bisexual people. The case of Oregon Measure 9 and Colorado Amendment 2 are two, now very well-known examples of Christian right antigay mobilization and in many ways are the "parents" of Cincinnati's Issue 3.

**Anti-Gay Rights Initiatives: The Test Cases in Colorado and Oregon**

In the fall of 1992, voters in both the State of Oregon and Colorado were faced with ballot decisions on the fate of legislation designed to eliminate legal protection against discrimination for gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. Oregon's Measure 9 was the Christian right's failed attempt to not only repeal several cities' existing ordinances granting legal protection to gay, lesbian, and bisexual residents, but also to draft law explicitly equating homosexuality with pedophilia, sadism, and masochism (Herman 1997:145).
The other “test market” case was in Colorado (Bull and Gallagher 1995:40). Colorado’s 1992 Initiative, Amendment 2, was narrowly passed by voters 53% to 47% (see Herman 1997; Gaybeat 1995:5; People For the American Way 1993). Amendment 2 was a statewide voter initiative passed in 1992 prohibiting legal protection to gay men, lesbians, and bisexual persons. However, it was only a temporary Christian victory. In 1996, the United States Supreme Court ruled to overturn the discriminatory Amendment 2 (Lowe 1996; Greenhouse 1996; Mauro 1996; Barrett 1996; see also Epstein 1999).

The Oregon and Colorado cases preceded Cincinnati’s Issue 3 by just one year. They were among the first states to have citizens vote on anti-gay initiatives. While the right-wing lost its fight in Oregon, it had won not only in Colorado, but also at the citywide level with a ballot measure in Tampa, Florida that same year (People For the American Way 1993:1). The People for the American Way (PFAW) argued that the right was “encouraged by their success in Colorado and Tampa, the anti-gay rights movement has expanded their efforts, launching anti-gay initiatives in nine states and nine localities in the 1993-1994 election cycle” (PFAW 1993:1). Among the first of those localities was Cincinnati, Ohio with the Issue 3 Charter Amendment.

CINCINNATI AND THE HISTORY OF ISSUE 3

Cincinnati, Ohio has long been known for its conservatism. Considered a “polite” city, Cincinnati has had a unique profile of Christian anti-“obscenity” and “pro-family” activism. In the 1980s the right-wing organized to eliminate the sale of pornographic materials and the business of strip clubs. In 1990 conservatives fought to close down the display of homoerotic photographs at the City’s art museum (discussed further in Chapter
3). Despite its reputation, in 1991 a new policy took effect allowing Cincinnati City employees protection against discrimination in the workplace. In 1992, just one year later City Council enacted the Human Rights Ordinance. These gay and progressive victories were short-lived as Issue 3 emerged on the scene in 1993 threatening to roll back pro-gay policy changes and to further prohibit protective legislation.

Issue 3 was a ballot initiative to Amend the Cincinnati Charter to prevent them from:

Enacting, adopting, enforcing or administering any ordinance, regulation, rule or policy which provides that homosexual, lesbian, or bisexual orientation, status, conduct, or relationship constitutes, entitles, or otherwise provides a person with the basis to have any claim of minority or protected status, quota preference or other preferential treatment. 7

Issue 3 was passed by a comfortable, 62% to 38% margin of voters. This right-wing initiative was also considered a “test case” for the status of gay rights nationally (Bettman 1997; Nakagawa 1993; Goldberg 1993).

Cincinnati’s anti-gay campaign was prompted by the pro-gay Human Rights Ordinance (HRO). The first of its kind in the city, the Human Rights Ordinance protected Cincinnatians from discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodations on the basis of, among other commonly protected categories, sexual orientation. 8 The Ordinance did not provide any form of affirmative action extensions on the basis of the categories therein, nor did it require compliance from religious organizations or associations. 9 Along with the other protected classes 10 , the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement fought long and hard, under heavy controversy, to win this anti-discrimination legislation. In the wake of the deliberations over the Ordinance, and nearly six months
before its enactment, Christian right opponents began forming their counterattack in anticipation of the new law.\textsuperscript{11} Their plans rapidly turned to reality as Christian counter-forces culled support from established networks, coalesced existing organizations, and formed new social movement organizations that culminated in an effective petition drive and a highly successful ballot campaign with Issue 3.

As mentioned, antigay ballot initiatives such as Issue 3, and the Colorado and Oregon initiatives emerged in response to the gains that the gay, lesbian and bisexual movement had made in promoting human rights ordinances and other related policies that assured legal protections against discrimination. Indeed, gays, lesbians, and bisexuals had been successful in changing laws and creating policy all across the country. In addition, the gay rights movement was victorious in meeting other cultural and legislative goals in the early 1990s, including the fact that “television, film, media, education, and religious institutions all became terrains of struggle and, in many cases...began to act as agents of normalization” (Herman 1997:3).

Button and his colleagues surveyed each of the communities with anti-discrimination protection and found that 35 of the 126 or roughly one-fourth “reported local or state efforts to overturn it” (1996:174). Further, as they pointed out, “this figure significantly underestimates the magnitude of opposition” because these numbers reflect only those with policies in effect at the time of their study. Additionally, it doesn’t:

Count the number of communities that have chosen deliberately not to implement equal protection policies, often after acrimonious debate, nor does it consider the nearly thirty communities that have passed resolutions condemning the principle of protecting sexual orientation (Button, Rienzo, and Wald 1996:174).
However, the Christian right is not simply a reactionary movement. Generally speaking, both the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement and the right-wing had their own agenda and world views which they sought to promote, and both reacted to the other at different times during the early 1990s (see Hunter 1991). Historically, the Christian right as well as the gay rights movement had labored to promote their own issues and attain their own goals irrespective of the opponents’ tactics. This seems clear as right-wing organizing took place not only in response to the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement but also around issues of obscenity and pornography. Likewise, gays and lesbians spent years lobbying to promote the Human Rights Ordinance. Along these lines, Herman argued that while their opposition to gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement strides was an apparent force in the 1970s, “by the 1980s,... the CR [Christian Right] had made antigay activity central to its political practice and social vision” (1997:4-5).

Current Status of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Rights in Cincinnati

Once passed, Issue 3 then faced a number of court challenges. At the time of this writing, Issue 3 stands as law. However, full legal enactment of the Amendment had been stalled for nearly five years. Immediately following the issue’s passage, a district court judge ruled it unconstitutional. The Christian right’s main campaign organization, Equal Rights Not Special Rights (ERNSR), and the city of Cincinnati appealed the decision to the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. This panel of judges determined that indeed the initiative was constitutional. Equality Cincinnati (e.g. “Equality”) and other Issue 3 opponents appealed to the United States Supreme Court on the matter. At that time, the
U.S. Supreme Court was already reviewing the comparable, yet farther reaching Colorado case or *Romer v. Evans*. When the Court ruled the Colorado Amendment 2 case unconstitutional, they concurrently remanded Issue 3 back to the same Federal Appeals court that had just let it stand. The panel of three judges of the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals again considered the arguments for the case and in October 1997 ruled that "Cincinnati voters have a right to reject anti-discrimination protections for gay, lesbians and bi-sexuals [sic]." In light of this second Federal Court ruling, the gay rights movement was determined to move the case back to the United States Supreme Court.  

In October 1998, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear arguments about the case. The denial to even consider the arguments in the case, in effect, was a decision to let Issue 3 remain as law. Issue 3 is in full effect. The city is legally prohibited from passing any protection legislation on behalf of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. The only way to change this new law is through voter referendum. Gay rights activists and supporters are considering a ballot initiative to repeal Issue 3.

Despite the fact that Issue 3 was an oppositional strategy to the Human Rights Ordinance, Issue 3 would not and did not "officially" repeal the original Human Rights Ordinance. The language of the measure prevented any legal action on behalf of gay men, lesbians and bisexuals as members of those 'statuses,' rather than a simple repeal. In 1995, with personnel changes in City Council, and influenced by the early legal battles that followed the passage of the Issue, the Cincinnati City Council independently acted to repeal the section of the Human Rights Ordinance that included sexual orientation. The remaining protected classes were left intact on the Ordinance. Cincinnati's gays, lesbians,
and bisexuals were left with no legal recourse against discrimination because of the repeal. These shifting outcomes illustrate the significance of opposing social movements for policy outcomes pertaining to the status of gay, lesbian, and bisexual people. Additionally, Cincinnati's unique policy history makes it a viable site for examining the dynamics between opposing movements.

Next, I turn to a discussion of the theoretical framework guiding these analyses. First, I discuss existing theory on opposing social movements. This is followed by a brief review of the conceptions of political opportunity structures. I then provide a sketch of the theory on culture and movements by looking at cultural opportunities, collective action frames, and collective identity. Finally, I outline the chapters that comprise this dissertation.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The main goal of this study is to examine the ways in which these two opposing movements—the Christian right and the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement--affected one another's strategies, opportunities, and success. I identify the different strategies utilized by each side and discuss how they were influenced by the other, particularly in the creation of cultural opportunities, the framing of each of the campaigns, and the movements' collective identities and subsequent strategies. To date, no study comprehensively examines the interdependence of contending social movements in the domain of culture. In efforts to fully understand social movements' strategic choices, opportunities for success, and outcomes, I argue that consideration must be afforded to movements engaged in interaction with one another. This study makes empirical and
theoretical contributions to the literature on movement-countermovement interplay, cultural opportunities, framing, and collective identity. The case of Cincinnati is valuable as it exemplifies the dynamics and interdependence of two movements in opposition to one another. The implications of these analyses are suggestive for similar movement-countermovement conflicts.

Conceptualizing Opposing Social Movements

Countermovements have only recently been viewed as more than simply movements mobilized to "resist or reverse social change" (Mottl 1980:620; see also Lo 1982). Scholars have begun to conceive of countermovements as actively working to effect social change, as organized actors engaged in interaction with the movement(s) they oppose, and as critically linked to the larger political and cultural environment (Zald and Useem 1987; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; Gamson and Meyer 1996; McAdam 1994). In addition to conceptualizing countermovements in more purposeful and dynamics terms, recent scholarship deconstructs and questions the viability of the term "countermovement." The notion of a countermovement is, in and of itself, a temporal one (see Zald and Useem 1987; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; Bernstein 1995). It is cumbersome to determine which movement is countering which, particularly for those movements engaged in elongated conflict such as the pro-life and pro-choice movement, and the Christian right and the gay, lesbian, bisexual movement. Regardless of which movement first initiates collective action, both movements in a contest influence each other in terms of mobilization, strategies, tactics, and success (Zald and Useem 1987; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; Staggenborg 1991; Bernstein 1995). One social
movement's success heightens the mobilization of its opposing social movement
(Staggenborg 1991; see also Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; Lo 1982; Mottl 1980).
Historically in Cincinnati, at different times one side mobilized in response to the other's
activities.

Opposing social movements\(^{17}\) are closely coupled in their tactics, claims, and
venues (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; Zald and Useem 1987). While scholars argue that
opposing movements are entangled, one critical question remains. To what extent does
one social movement influence the claims, strategies and tactics, and ultimately success of
its' contending movement opponent? While a few scholars have seriously considered the
opposition as a critical player in movement success, in terms of feminism (Taylor 1983;
Himmelstein 1986), abortion (Staggenborg 1991; Luker 1984; Ginsburg 1989), women's
suffrage and the ERA (Chafetz and Dworkin 1987; Marshall 1985, 1986), in the conflicts
over gay rights (especially see Bernstein 1997, 1996, 1995; Herman 1997, 1995; Johnston
1994; Bull and Gallagher 1996; Currah 1997; Button, Rienzo, and Wald 1997; Cicchino,
Deming, and Nicholson 1995; Carabine 1995; Adam 1987), no one has comprehensively
and systematically tested the various effects that opposing movements have on each
other. Scant empirical evidence exists focusing on the specific effects that opposing
movements have on one another's tactics and strategies (however, see Bernstein 1997,
1996, 1995; See also Ginsburg 1989).

To address this gap in the literature, I examine the Christian right and the gay,
lesbian, and bisexual movements' influences on one another in terms of cultural
opportunities for collective action, strategic choices made to promote particular claims
and images, and the decisions made to strategically represent one salient collective identity over another. For instance, I show how gay rights movement gains and losses influenced the right-wing’s opportunity for mobilization (see also McAdam 1994). Locally, the Human Rights Ordinance victory, and the City’s EEO policy success, in part, contributed to the Christian right’s mobilization in the Issue 3 initiative.

I reveal the ways in which the right had an impact on the gay rights movement claim strategy. I argue that in light of the Christian right and the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement’s framing efforts that the gay rights movement held an imperative to counter Christian claims. As I show, however, no systematic re-framing took place. In addition, I explore the influence that the right-wing had on the gay rights movement’s framing and non-framing strategy. By the mere choice of language utilized in the Ballot initiative, for instance, mainstream gays, lesbians, and bisexuals’ ideology and activities were granted primacy over other alternatives.

Using the case of Issue 3, I examine the effects that opposing movements have on each other in terms of the strategies, tactics and claims. I center this inquiry on the three specific aspects of culture pursued—cultural opportunities, movement framing, and collective identity and related strategy. I submit that analyses of movements in contention must attend to the opponent movement to fully understand mobilization, strategy, and success.

Resource Mobilization Theory, Political Process, and Political Opportunities

Resource mobilization theorists have convincingly argued that resources are central for social movement collective action and policy success (McCarthy and Zald
Resource mobilization theory emerged in response to the overly psychological bias of the Classical approach (McAdam 1982). Unlike Classical theory, resource mobilization theory is a structural theory that assumes the rationality of movement actors, downplays the role of grievances in mobilization, and recognizes the importance of organizations and resources available to a social movement. Resources valuable to movements include money, facilities, labor (McCarthy and Zald 1977; McAdam 1982; Oberschall 1973), existing infrastructure and social ties (McAdam 1982). Non-material resources such as skills, trust, and friendship are also considered critical to movements (Oberschall 1973; See also McAdam 1982:32). Morris summarized the resource mobilization theory as one that:

Predicts that social actors who have access to resources and who are well integrated within the institutions of a community are more likely to engage in protest than individuals who are marginal and uprooted. The more developed those institutions and resources, the greater the probability a particular group will engage in social movement activity. (Morris 1984:279-280).

Despite the strides made with the resource mobilization theory, some gaps remained.

To begin to address limitations of the resource mobilization theory and classical approach, McAdam (1982) introduced the Political Process Model as an “alternative.” He argued that movements are, in themselves, political phenomena with a full lifespan – from emergence to decline (1982:36). Political process model combines benefits of the resource mobilization and classical perspectives by recognizing the importance of rational action, organizational resources, and the more social-psychological factor, consciousness (McAdam 1982; See also Morris 1992). Perhaps the most significant contribution of the
political process model is the consideration of "political opportunity structure." (McAdam 1982; Eisenger 1973).

Political opportunities refer to "the political alignment of groups within the larger political environment" (McAdam 1982:40). Opportunities are points of access that facilitate movement mobilization. Such openings "vary greatly over time" (McAdam 1982:40). Scholars have devoted considerable attention to the notion of political opportunities as facilitators of movement success operationalized in various ways including alliances, alignments, and general polity openness (McAdam 1982; see also Kitschelt 1986; Gale 1986; Tarrow 1989; Kriesi 1995, 1989; Jenkins and Perrow 1977).

While the examination of available political context variables has received much warranted attention, it too has limitations. Perhaps the most notable gap in the studies of opportunity, is the lack of recognition of the independent contribution of culture in providing movements openings for mobilization and success (however, see McAdam 1994; Gamson and Meyer 1996). Only recently have scholars begun to address cultural opportunities as a viable site of analysis. However, to date, such attention has remained theoretical.

Culture and Movements: Opportunities, Framing, and Collective Identity

Movements operate within a given culture defined largely by the prevailing values and sentiments of the dominant members of the population (Gamson 1992). McAdam (1996) argued that, broadly speaking, culture can affect movements mobilization efforts. He delineated three ways in which movements may be affected by culture: one, successful framing efforts accomplished by the appropriation of culture; two, through the existence

18
of subcultures from which movements can mobilize membership; and, three through the expansion of expansion of "cultural opportunities" (McAdam 1994:37-44).

Next, I turn to a discussion of the factors that comprise cultural opportunity structure followed by an explication of framing. I then briefly discuss collective identity as it emerges from existing activist subcultures or communities to guide movement strategies. To contextualize the notion of collective identity, I sketch its embeddedness in the new social movement theory.

**Cultural Opportunity Structure**

McAdam (1994:39) earlier defined this last effect of culture, 'cultural opportunities,' as "specific events or processes that are likely to stimulate... collective framing efforts" capable of generating protest. Derived from analyses of the history of social movements, McAdam distinguished four "types of expanding cultural opportunities (1994:39)." First, movements are provided opportunities for collective action as a result of those events that expose a contradiction between extant cultural values and normative or institutionalized practices (1994:40). For instance, various legislative and cultural gains by the gay rights movement stood in direct contradiction to Christian right beliefs. Strong views that homosexuality was a 'sin' were being challenged by newly enacted policy and the perception of widespread visibility of homosexuality. Christian interpretation that gay victories represented the deterioration of Christian values and the offense against God provided the right with an opening to challenge the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement at the ballot box.
Second, opportunities may be opened by the presence of “suddenly imposed grievances” (Walsh 1981). Suddenly imposed grievances are typically surprises and may take the form of election results or important court decisions. Such grievances are granted widespread attention and evoke opposition (McAdam 1994:40). In Cincinnati, for instance, the Issue 3 campaign arose out of the controversial, well publicized, City Council decision to invoke the Human Rights Ordinance. The inclusion of sexual orientation in the new Ordinance represented the antitheses of all that the Christians believed in and thus, served as an opening to mobilize constituents.

Third, is what McAdam referred to as “dramatizations of system vulnerability” (42). As McAdam pointed out, it is the perceived fallibility of the institutional or political opponent that opens avenues for movements. This factor illustrates to a movement that its opponent, be it the political system or as I argue the opposing movement, is in a fragile position. For instance, right-wing proponents of Issue 3 had evidence that the gay rights movement was not infallible. Prior conservative victories in Cincinnati and Colorado in particular, served to punctuate the weakness of the gay opponent and the strengths of the right in charting a course to eliminate gay legal classification and discrimination protection. Such an interpretation on the part of the Christian right provided a critical opportunity to mobilize the Issue 3 campaign.

Finally, McAdam drew upon Snow and Benford’s (1988) notion of “master protest frames” as a factor in providing cultural opportunities for movement gain. Historically successful, yet currently resonant frames afford movements the opportunity to ‘piggy back’ onto or re-invoke that same frame(s) to meet their aims (McAdam 1994:42).
For example, like other post-1960s movements, the Christian right and the gay, lesbian, bisexual movement in Cincinnati appropriated the “civil rights frame.” According to McAdam,

Successful framing efforts are almost certain to inspire other groups to reinterpret their situation in light of the available master frame and to mobilize based on their understanding of themselves and the world around them... [and] ...the presence of such a frame constitutes another cultural or ideological resource that facilitates movement emergence” (1994:42-43).

In this initiative, the Christian right utilized the master frame from the civil rights movement by delineating the difference between Blacks legitimate status as deserving of such protections compared to gays and lesbians who do not qualify as a minority. Gays, lesbians, and bisexuals were considered as already having the same rights as the general population and therefore were seeking special rights under the law. The gay rights movement invoked the civil rights master frame in the Issue 3 contest as they had done for many years. In the Human Rights Ordinance gays, lesbians, and bisexuals were granted protections as a class. The gay rights movement argued that Issue 3 was discrimination as it not only threatened to eliminate such a classification but also prevented other rights from being enacted protecting gay, lesbian, and bisexual people. The availability of the civil rights master frame provided an opportunity for the Issue 3 movement to mobilize using an already recognized and accepted set of messages.

Guided by these recent directions, I analyze the case of Cincinnati Issue 3 to empirically test and expand upon the theoretical notions of cultural opportunity structure (McAdam 1994). I explore each of the various forms that cultural opportunities take, the necessary degree to which they must be present and available, and the impact they have on
movement strategies and subsequent gains. Again, I examine the role and impact of extant contractions between the public values and routine practices. "suddenly imposed grievances" such as the Human Rights Ordinance, vulnerability of the opponent, and "master protest frames," like the oft utilized civil rights frame (McAdam 1994; Walsh 1981). I begin to disentangle the notions of political and cultural opportunity by testing the cultural opportunity structural variables and highlighting the independent role that interpretation plays in providing movement opportunities.

**Cultural Strategies: Framing**

While the cultural opportunity structure can facilitate or constrain movements, movements are not passive entities. Rather, movements actively alter their strategies, and frame and reframe claims in order to maximize public acceptance and the likelihood of success. Snow and Benford (1992:137) defined "collective action frames" as "an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the 'world out there' by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one's present or past environment." In a more recent piece, McAdam argued that framing is a critical mechanism under movements' control. He stated:

> The principal weapon available to the movement is its strategic use of framing process. That is, in trying to attract and shape media coverage, win the support of bystander publics, constrain movement opponents, and influence state authorities, insurgents depend first and foremost on various forms of signifying work (1996:340).

Simply put, the process of framing is a movement strategy where movements attempt to "package" their claims and "sell" them to particular audiences who maintain some control of producing the required policy outcome (Snow and Benford 1988). Indeed framing
occurs at a number of different junctures and is directed toward different audiences for distinct, typically strategic ends. For instance, as movements attempt to recruit new members or mobilize existing members, garner general public support or raise moneys from elites, they invoke framing strategies designed to elicit high resonance with their claims and thus the most favorable responses from their target audience.

McCarthy, Smith, and Zald (1996) conceptualize the targets of movements’ collective action frames as residing in one of several “arenas” including the “media” and “public” (see also Rucht 1996). There are issues that the mass media draws attention to which differ from those in the “mass or narrower publics” (McCarthy, Smith, and Zald 1996:293). In each of these arenas, social movement actors face competition (potentially from other movements) for attention, recognition, and support from “gatekeepers” and the “audience” (305). These authors also point to the media as a frequent intervening entity between a movement and the other targets, such as the general public. The very nature and structure of each arena, in effect, sets the agenda of movements.

In the case of Cincinnati Issue 3 the media was a primary venue for manipulation of frames targeted primarily at the voting public. Each of the opposing movements purchased airtime and newspaper space to publicize their advertisements on television and in other local media. Likewise, Cincinnati media held the Issue 3 campaign as very newsworthy and afforded movements many free opportunities to voice their claims. Both movements strategically framed their grievances into neatly packaged ‘sound-bites’ as customary for mass media. For example, the title of the main Christian right campaign organization, Equal Rights Not Special Rights was an easy, well packaged slogan ready
for use in free and paid media, soliciting high resonance with Cincinnatians. Likewise, the opponent’s “no discrimination” message was market ready for the mass media and the public.

While the ability to configure frames rests in the hands of the movements who employ them, the field of signifiers from which to draw and the likelihood of resonance with the targeted audience, are largely external and impinging forces on such movement action. McCarthy, Smith, and Zald highlighted the connections between framing and the social and political environments wherein frames are employed. They argued that

Framing efforts are embedded in broader political and social contexts and that these contexts expand, limit, and shape the opportunities for movement activists to gain attention to the issues that most concern them (McCarthy, Smith, and Zald 1996:292).

The cultural and political environments figure prominently in movements frame strategies—be it in the creation of appropriate frames, the potential for frame resonance, or in the specificity or generality of deployment or targeting of frames.

There are two general elements to collective action framing. First, is the substantive content of the claims and messages. Second, are the ways in which the targeted groups receive frames. The content of movement frames can be deconstructed into three central components that include injustice, agency, and identity (Gamson 1992:7-8). Movements are compelled to inform their audiences about the “injustice” or the nature and cause of the problem and the role they themselves, can play in effecting solutions or have “agency.” With ‘identity,’ social movements must also convey to members and
potential supporters the critical differences between the movement membership and the ‘other’ (Gamson 1992: see also Taylor and Whittier 1992 on collective identity).

In Cincinnati, as I mentioned, the media was the main mechanism used by both movements to get their message out and to mobilize public support. Opposing movements, like both Issue 3 movements, compete at "‘naming’ grievances, connecting them to other grievances and constructing larger frames of meaning that will resonate with a population’s cultural predispositions and communicate a uniform message" (Tarrow 1994:122; see also Snow and Benford 1992:130). For example, the well-funded Christian right produced television advertisements portraying gays, lesbians, and bisexuals as seeking "special rights" from government and business, as a threat to black American’s civil rights, to ‘The family’, and as sexual deviants seeking power. By contrast, in their television advertisements and billboards, gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals portrayed themselves as potential victims of atrocities, calling upon images of Adolph Hitler, the Ku Klux Klan, and Senator Joe McCarthy.

The second element to framing, ‘how the public receives the messages,’ rests not only in the hands of the targeted population, but is also within the control of movements themselves. For frames to resonate with desired groups, movements must develop and cultivate messages out of existing cultural beliefs and individuals’ experiences (Snow and Benford 1988). Furthermore, when movements provide supporting information to substantiate claims they are more likely to connect with targeted individuals (Snow and Benford 1988).
Issue 3 proponents ‘Equal Rights Not Special Rights” theme built upon attitudes and beliefs about equality and affirmative action. The Gay rights movement’s “No Discrimination” also rang with voters. However, the three images presented of Hitler, the Klan, and Joe McCarthy were much less palatable. Cincinnatians’ experiences with and beliefs about their conservative neighbors did not ‘line up’ with these three figures responsible for horrible atrocities.

In this study, I give careful examination to the various elements of framing. Guided by theory on framing, I deconstruct and analyze each of the movements’ frames. Further, I explore different aspects of frame resonance. I assess the connection between the frames provided and the meanings received. I also consider the influence of the opposing movement on one another’s framing efforts.

New Social Movement Theory and Collective Identity

Movements mobilize out of existing communities and subcultures (see McAdam 1994; see also Buechler 1990). Collective identities emerge from those communities of similarly aggrieved populations. To understand the contribution of the conception of collective identity it is important to trace the theoretical perspective in which it is embedded, new social movement theory. Unlike more structural perspectives like resource mobilization theory, new social movement theory (NSM) allows for the existence and relevance of culture to social movements.

New social movement theory emerged to explain the transition to and existence of so called “new” social movements that began to develop in the 1970s. These “New” movements are distinguished from "old movements (generally characterized as labor
movements) in values, action forms, and constituency" (Klandermans and Tarrow 1988:7).

While scholars have differed in their explanations about the so called "newness" of these social movements, common themes have emerged to characterize them (see Johnston, Laraña, and Gusfield 1994; Buechler 1995; Plotke 1990; but see also Offe 1985, 1990; Klandermans and Tarrow 1988; Dalton and Kuechler 1990; Touraine 1985, Melucci 1985; Habermas 1981).

Scholars seem to agree that new social movements' "organizations tend to be segmented, diffuse, and decentralized." The movements themselves "often involve the emergence of new or formerly weak dimensions of identity," and they tend to center around "personal and intimate aspects of human life" (Johnston, Laraña, and Gusfield 1994:7-9). Furthermore, instead of older, more class-based struggles, new social movements "signify a shift" to more "issue-based cleavages that identify only communities of like-minded people" (Dalton, Kuechler, and Bürklin 1990:12; Offe 1985). It is also a shift towards "self-expression, 'belonging', and the quality of the physical and social environment" (Inglehart 1977:456).

New social movements' tactics and constituencies are also factors differentiating new movements from older movements. New social movements are said to make "extensive use of unconventional forms of action" (Klandermans and Tarrow, 1988:7). New values and nontraditional tactics are central to the development and maintenance of a movement's collective identity. Brought together because of shared interests, beliefs, and experiences, a group of people united by a common collective identity in turn share various encounters, desires, and a sense of loyalty and commitment that further connects
members (Taylor and Whittier 1992:105; See also Melucci 1989; 1995; see review in Laraña, Johnson, and Gusfield 1994). It is from collective identity, that movement strategies and tactics develop and are sustained (Rupp and Taylor 1991; Epstein 1999; see also Taylor and Whittier 1992; Buechler 1990).

I examine the collective identities of both the Christian right and gay, lesbian, and bisexual movements mobilized around Cincinnati’s Issue 3. The right- wing drew upon the beliefs and values of Christian faith. A diverse group of Christians set differences aside to promote Issue 3. As a self-selected group of Christians mobilized by their salient identity and desire to promote their worldview, Issue 3 proponents’ cohesively strategized and campaigned. At the same time, the Gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement encountered identity disputes and factionalism in their strategies and tactics.

CONCLUSION

A major theoretical aim of this study is to expand notions of political opportunity theory to account for cultural variation and its effects. Guided by recent conceptions of cultural opportunities, I explore the different openings available to initiators of Issue 3. Movements are not just passive entities at the mercy of opportunities. Rather movements actively and strategically appropriate culture to their own ends (Taylor and Whittier 1995). Further, I identify ways in which the opposing gay rights movement affected the opportunities of the Christian right.

Another way that movements take an active role in attaining their goals is through the framing of movement messages. In this study, I analyze the frames of each of the
movements and the ways in which the public received the messages. I also specify the impact of the opponent movement in the process of framing.

The final aspect of culture that I explore is collective identity. A salient collective identity holds the potential of uniting movement members in collective action as with the Christian right. The gay rights movement experienced identity disputes not uncommon to the movement in other locations in the Country. I examine the different collective identities represented in the two movements. I pay particular attention to the ways in which identity conflict influences movement strategy and practices. I explore the role that the Christian right played in privileging one gay identity over another.

In sum, in this study I explore the various effects that Christian right and the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement had on each other in terms of the strategies, tactics and claims in the contest over Issue 3. I examine three distinct elements of culture which include cultural opportunities, movement framing, and collective identity. I explore the influence of the contending movements in each of the areas of culture explored. I argue that opposing social movements interface and affect the strategies, opportunities, and outcomes of the movements they oppose.

Chapter Outline

Following this introduction, I discuss the sources and methods of analysis for this study. I also review issues I encountered in gaining access to participants and documentary data. Chapter Three outlines existing conceptions of cultural opportunities. I begin to disentangle notions of political and cultural opportunities by empirically testing existing cultural concepts and describing the different openings accessible to the Christian
right. I argue that movement interpretation is critical in differentiating between political and cultural opportunities. Further, I highlight the ways in which the gay rights movement influenced the right’s opportunities. Chapter Four concerns the collective action framing of each of the movements. In this section, I also describe movement, and public reactions and receptivity. I argue that as the ‘underdog,’ the gay rights movement was compelled to re-tool and re-package their messages in light of the successes of the Christian media. In Chapter Five I describe the collective identities visible in the Issue 3 conflict. I discuss the unity of the right-wing movement and the identity conflict that troubled the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement. Further, I describe the ways in which the two movements mediated between identity and strategy for their opponent. In particular, I highlight the subtle and overt influences that the two movements had on each other’s identities. In chapter six, I summarize the findings of this study and discuss the major theoretical contributions that this study offers to the literature on culture and movements and on the social movement-countermovement interface.
ENDNOTES

1 Comparable to Issue 3, voters passed Colorado’s anti-gay Amendment 2 in 1992. That same year, Oregon voters rejected measure 9. Measure 9 was disparate in ballot language but both held the potential to be detrimental to gay rights.

2 The explicit inclusion of both ‘bisexual’ and ‘transgendered’ or transidentified persons is a more recent phenomenon. However, bisexual identified individuals and those who transcend traditional gender boundaries have long participated in the fight for rights and freedoms alongside their gay and lesbian identified compatriots.

3 Throughout this manuscript I interchangeably use the terms gay, gay rights, or gay and lesbian to refer to the entire gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement. The word transgendered is not included in the name of the movement in order to be true to wording of the Charter Amendment and the ways in which movement leaders and organizations, themselves, conceptualized the movement at that time. Likewise, unless I am explicitly addressing the identity and internal community differences between the gay and lesbian rights movement and the queer movement, ‘queers’ are considered part of the larger gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement.

4 I follow the lead of Didi Herman (1997) by primarily using the term Christian right (CR) rather than religious right. She argued: “while conservative Moslems and Jews have joined with the CR in specific struggles... in relation to antigay politics, there is no general “religious right,” per se. In the United States the opposition to gay rights is led, invigorated, and inspired by Christians, and the Christian faith.” Throughout this study I utilize the terms Christian right, right, Christians, and right-wing to refer to the Christian right. On occasion I use “Religious right” but with the knowledge that this refers to the Christian right movement.

5 When AIDS initially hit the scene it was reported as a ‘gay’ disease. Despite the eventual realization that AIDS affects all people, there was considerable focus on the gay and lesbian movement largely due to overwhelming media attention (see Button, Rienzo, and Wald 1997; Shilts 1987; Adam 1987).

6 Interview no. 2.


Categories covered in the Human Rights Ordinance are as follows: race, gender, age, color, religion, disability status, marital status, ethnic, national or Appalachian origin, and sexual orientation (Human Services Division, Office of Consumer Services. 1992. "The Cincinnati Human Rights Ordinance." City Hall Room 126, 801 Plum Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202).


S. Arthur Spiegel, United States District Judge ruled on August 9, 1994 in favor of the plaintiff, Equality Foundation of Greater Cincinnati, Inc. et al, in their complaint against The City of Cincinnati. Presiding over the United States District Court, Southern District of Ohio, Western Division, Judge Spiegel granted a permanent injunction on the Issue (United States District Court, Southern District of Ohio, Western Division, 1993, C-1-93-773).


Cincinnati Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Community Meeting, October 1998; Author correspondence with community member 1999.

Following Bernstein's (1995) lead, I largely refer to such conflicting movements as opposing movements. While I do use the term countermovement in this text, it is with full consciousness that the term holds no long-term temporal connotations.
CHAPTER 2
DATA AND METHODS

This research addresses theoretical and substantive questions about the interplay and interdependence of Cincinnati, Ohio's Christian right and the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement as well the impact of cultural context on movement strategies and outcomes. The data for this study are qualitative. Through qualitative analysis, I test and expand upon existing notions of opposing movement dynamics, cultural opportunity structures, collective action framing, and collective identity and movement strategy. There are three main sources for the study: 1) intensive interviews with Issue 3 movement proponents, opponents, political and civic leaders, and community members, 2) print and other media including a comprehensive collection of articles from the two leading City papers, all paid television advertisements for the campaign, documentary video, and national magazine and movement organization articles and reports, 3) organizational documents from the two campaign organizations, as well as institutionalized conservative and gay and queer organizations. These sources provide insight into the beliefs and perceptions, activities, and experiences of right-wing and gay rights movement members and leaders, Cincinnati officials, and community supporters and observers.

The study of Cincinnati's Issue 3 is important and useful for several reasons. First, little research exists examining the dynamics of opposing social movements. Cincinnati is
an excellent site for exploring such interplay since movement outcomes have shifted hands over time. That is, the Christian right was victorious in passing the anti-gay amendment as well as in other conservative contests in prior years. Likewise, the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement triumphed in the fight for the City’s Equal Employment Opportunity policy and the Human Rights Ordinance that immediately preceded the Issue 3 campaign. Second, to date no empirical study exists exploring the effects of cultural context on opposing social movements. This case is especially viable since it allows for the examination of the opportunities which influenced two movements and the ways that contending movements shape the cultural landscape for their opponent. Third, the case of Cincinnati’s Issue 3, with its highly public media campaign, lends itself well to an analysis of collective action framing. Unlike other examinations of movement’s frames, this study allowed for the analysis of the influence of one movement’s framing on the contending movement. Finally, this study contributes to the literature on the effects of collective identity on movement strategies.

THE DATA

The first source of data is in-depth interviews with twenty-four key informants consisting of movement leaders, activists, and supporters, political and civic officials, and professionals associated with the Issue campaign and/or movements. Interviews are treated as key informants about the movements’ identities, strategies, and tactics (Tremblay 1957). Interviews were conducted during the period of June 1996 through July 1997, with the majority of interviews taking place during the summer and fall of 1996.
Informants were identified in two main ways--through snowball sampling and newspaper reports. I contacted initial interviews in April 1995 at the "Issue 3 Panel and Debate" at the Queer Coalitions: The 6th Annual National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transidentified Graduate Student Conference held at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. At the conference, several leaders from the gay, lesbian and bisexual movement's anti-issue 3 campaign were panelists along with the then Executive Director of Stonewall Cincinnati. Following the 'Issue 3' presentations, I spoke with each panelist and requested their participation in interviews.

In addition to the conference contacts, I obtained the names of key movement leaders, activists, and politicians associated with both sides of the Issue by reading local and some national newspaper coverage. Cold call letters were sent first, followed by telephone requests for interviews. Nearly all known major movement leaders from both sides agreed to participate in this research.

From initial interviews with the more public, visible figures came referrals to other lesser known or lesser publicized leaders, activists, and supporters. I sought to interview leaders of Equality Cincinnati, Stonewall Cincinnati, Gay & Lesbian March Association/Aids Coalition to Unleash Power (GLMA/ACT UP) on the anti-Issue 3 side, and Take Back Cincinnati, Equal Rights Not Special Rights, and Citizens for Community Values of the pro-Issue 3 camp. I also set out to interview select members of city council knowledgeable about the original Human Rights Ordinance and the processes involved in its enactment. Through newspapers and interviews I was able to discern which of those
councilmembers still remaining on council after the few years had passed, would be able to speak about such events and processes.

I conducted face-to-face interviews with all but two of the informants or twenty-two of the twenty-four informants. In-person interviews were between thirty minutes and three hours in duration, with most interviews lasting about one and one-half hours. One face-to-face interview was less than thirty minutes in duration. This interview was conducted with a leading political official with a tight schedule who generously allowed our meeting to last about twenty-five minutes. I conducted interviews at a variety of separate locations depending on the informant’s preference and convenience. Not being a resident of the Cincinnati area, interview sites included public spaces such as coffee shops, restaurants, bars, as well as informants private offices or in offices belonging to one of the movement organizations.

Two of the twenty-four interviews were conducted over the phone. These interviews each lasted less than thirty minutes. Phone interviews replaced the preferred in-person method only when informant scheduling or transportation was impossible to arrange. Neither of the phone informants were central figures in the movements. Both clearly advocated a ‘side’ in the conflict but were not decision-makers in the campaigns.

A nearly even number of leaders and representatives from each of the movements as well as non-movement members were interviewed. About one third of the informants or seven of the twenty-four identified as proponents of Issue 3. Five of these seven informants were in some leadership or central activist role in the campaign. The remaining two were minor activists or movement supporters.
Nine of the twenty-four were activists or leaders in the gay rights movement oppositional campaign. Of the nine, five informants played central roles in Equality Cincinnati, the main campaign organization. The remaining four were gay rights activists either involved in direct action campaigning as leaders or as general movement activists. In addition to the nine gay rights informants, one leader was included in the interviews but who had not been involved in the Cincinnati gay community during the campaign. This informant provided insight into the after campaign strategies including the boycott and boycott (see Chapter 5).

The remaining seven informants included elected leaders, civic officials, journalists, and an interpersonal communication expert. I was afforded interviews with three political figures who had been on City Council at the time of the Issue 3 contest. Four of the informants observed the Issue 3 campaign from their well-placed positions in journalism and other communications, and civic operations or leadership. Generally speaking, non-movement, non-political informants tended to ‘side’ with the gay rights movement.

Overall, twenty-two of the twenty-four interviewees are white and two are African-American. Ten informants are female and fourteen are male. All Issue 3 proponents interviewed are male. Of the nine informants active in the anti-Issue 3 campaign, five are female and three are male. Three of the Christian informants were clergy members whereas none of the gay rights movement informants were religious leaders. Interviewees ranged in age from mid-twenties to late sixties, with most informants estimated to be in their thirties or forties. The main leaders on the right were slightly older than their gay rights counterparts.
Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide. Interview guides were constructed to suit the targeted groups. For instance, different questions were relevant when speaking with an Issue 3 proponent compared to an elected political official. Movement leaders had particular experiences offering insight into campaign strategies and so forth, while politicians could offer their experience with the original Human Rights Ordinance and their perspective on the movements, the community vibe, and political leaders support to the different sides in the campaign.

A second source of data was print and visual media. I relied heavily on two City newspapers, *The Cincinnati Enquirer* and *The Cincinnati Post*. The Cincinnati Public Library maintains these newspapers on CD-ROM allowing for computerized searching. I systematically searched both *The Cincinnati Enquirer* and *The Cincinnati Post* for the years 1991 through 1996 using the keyword terms: Issue 3, Human Rights Ordinance (HRO), and Issue 3 NOT HRO (Issue 3 excluding those articles that also included the HRO) yielding hundreds of pages of relevant articles. Naturally, for years prior to 1993, I searched for Human Rights Ordinance or HRO but not for the then non-existent Issue 3. Articles in years prior to the 1993 election provided useful in contextualizing the initiative. News stories after the election offered information about the campaign aftermath and subsequent court battles. For the last quarter of 1995 through 1996, I obtained articles from the *Cincinnati Post* but not the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. I relied most heavily on articles from the years 1992 and 1993 in both papers. They proved to be the most useful in providing insight and information into the ways in which opposing movements affect each other in terms of movement framing, cultural opportunities, subcultures and identity.
I acquired all paid television advertisements aired during the Issue 3 campaign. I collected the six Equal Rights Not Special Rights spots and one Equality Cincinnati television advertisement aired prior to the November 1993 election. I also utilized the two videos that were used by the Christian right in Cincinnati, Gay Rights/Special Rights (1993) and The Gay Agenda (1992).

To further contextualize the Issue campaign, I collected articles, reports, magazines, and newsletters from national movement organizations, movement organizations in other states, and from movement sympathetic periodicals. From the right-wing, I collected a wealth of articles from the American Family Association’s Journal for the years 1991 through 1997, with a complete collection of monthly submissions for 1993. In addition, I obtained the Traditional Values Report, a magazine produced by the conservative Traditional Values Coalition. I accessed half of the issues disseminated in 1992 and 1993 and three issues from 1995. I collected newsletters from Citizen’s for Community Values’ sister organization, Colorado For Family Values. Most of these newsletters were from the years 1994 through 1995. I also obtained supplementary solicitation material from Colorado’s Equal Rights Not Special Rights anti-gay campaign organization in their contest for Amendment 2. In addition, I searched magazine indexes for articles from Christian and conservative periodical related to the issue of homosexuality and rights. Articles were obtained from Christianity Today, Christian Century, New Statesman & Society, Commonweal, National Catholic Reporter, and National Review.

A third source of data was organizational documents and newsletters. I utilized five organizational document collections in the analysis including Equal Rights Not Special Rights (ERNSR)-Take Back Cincinnati² combined, and Citizens for Community Values on the Christian right side and Equality Cincinnati, Gay & Lesbian March Activists/Aids Coalition To Unleash Power (GLMA/ACTUP), and Stonewall Cincinnati on the side of gay rights. I collected Equal Rights Not Special Rights Public Speaking Material, a Political Action Committee Finance Report; and from both Equal Rights Not Special Rights and Take Back Cincinnati I acquired solicitation letters. I also obtained documents
from the mainstay conservative organization, Citizens for Community Values, including Newsletters, letters, resource information, and other conservative materials.

Equality Cincinnati provided me with a wealth of documentation including speaking material, talking points, solicitation letters, mailers and postcards, information sheets, event flyers, and yard signs. The GLMA/ACTUP document collection includes press releases, event flyers, news clippings, information sheets, and letters. The Stonewall Cincinnati documentation is extensive and includes meeting minutes, newsletters, mailers, letters, event flyers, internal correspondence and notes.

In addition to these three data sources, information on Issue 3 is supplemented by a transcription of the “Issue 3 Panel and Debate” at the Queer Coalitions Conference (1995), existing policy and other legal documentation including the original Human Rights Ordinance, Issue 3 ballot language, and the post-Issue 3 court appeal and decision. I also continued to acquire newspaper and Internet articles regarding the legal aftermath of the Issue 3 initiative.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis for this study was qualitative. To address the questions about opposing movements and various aspects of culture, I utilized both deductive and inductive methodologies. Analyses were guided by theory on movement-countermovement dynamics, political and cultural opportunity structures, collective action framing, and collective identity. In addition, as analyses progressed, themes and categories emerged inductively from the data.
All but three interviews were tape-recorded. One in-person interview and the two phone interviews were not taped. However, I took comprehensive notes during the two phone interviews and immediately following the face-to-face interview, I tape-recorded my notes. All taped interviews were transcribed, as were the written notes from the non-recorded sessions. Interview data was managed and analyzed using QSR Nud.ist or Non-Numeric Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing software program. The Nud.ist software allowed for thematic coding at a number of levels and also permitted data searches based on terms or phrases.

Likewise, newspaper articles from the two Cincinnati papers were maintained and analyzed using the QSR Nud.ist software as well as word-processing software. Using the QSR Nud.ist program to analyze interview data and to a lesser extent the data from the Enquirer and Post, I coded data into themes and categories relevant to the research questions. For example, I constructed categories related to ‘Christian right movement grievance and perception of the catalyst,’ ‘gay rights movement perception of the problem and the cause,’ ‘civil rights master frame,’ and ‘Human Rights Ordinance.’ In addition, I utilized conventional analysis techniques to analyze all organizational documents, video and television advertisements. Television advertisements were also transcribed for ready analysis. I sorted through the different codes and categories to pursue themes and address the questions raised.

Interviewees were assured confidentiality. Most of those interviewed indicated that given their public positions they did not require or desire confidentiality. Regardless, for consistency sake, I have not identified any informant by name. I have also chosen not
to reveal certain information that might easily be attributable to a particular individual. Most names reported publicly in the newspaper or in public documentation have been omitted from this analysis in order to retain confidentiality of those interviewed.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In this research I explore the dynamics between the Christian right and the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement and the cultural influences on each movement. I examine ways in which culture provided opportunities to either movement, the ways that each movement framed their claims and messages around the campaign, and the influence of collective identity on movement strategies. Interviews with members of both movements and other well-placed observers and supporters, newspaper and other media, and organizational documents allowed for a comprehensive analysis of culture and social movements and the interplay between two contending movements.

There are some limitations to the data and research. First, gaining access to the Christian right became increasingly difficult as I proceeded beyond the official spokespeople. That is, while leaders of the Issue 3 movement were largely receptive to interviews, a few of those that I approached that were not ‘officially’ designated to deal with media or those who were aware that I had already talked with the lead spokespeople, declined interviews. For instance, one statewide conservative leader explained his reasons for refusing to be interviewed as suspicion of such research. He generously shared that he had become cynical as a result of what he viewed as slanted journalism that had, in his opinion, too often distorted the truth in favor of a liberal perspective. Access beyond the specified right-wing ‘point’ people was challenging and thus, slightly fewer Christian
movement leaders were interviewed than were gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement leaders.

Another limitation with the interview process was the lack of a shared meaningful collective identity between the Christian right and myself. This obstacle manifest in my appearance and manner, and less so, in my speech. For instance, while I dressed and carried myself in a professional way for every interview and meeting, at that time, I wore my hair short, and I was adorned with several earrings. I did not a wedding ring as do many women my age, and with the exception of one interview, I did not wear a dress. In addition, I did not speak of a husband nor did I discuss any affinity to Christianity. While this portrait is not uncommon for women in the mid-to-late 1990s, it also did not expedite the process of establishing rapport. Cultural symbols such as earrings, rings, hair style and clothing serve as a component of collective identity and cue others to ones identity (see Taylor and Whittier 1992). If anything, I ‘appeared’ more liberal or progressive and quite similar to those with whom the right conflicted—participants and supporters of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual side of the campaign. Since I was unable to speak about an alliance either religiously or politically with conservative informants and I could not rely on cueing commonality through symbols, establishing rapport was more of a challenge.

For most of the Christian interviews I do not believe that this was a barrier to communication. In fact, I did engage in a few relevant discussions and practices about religion and values. For example, one informant asked me about my religious conviction during an interview. Once I told him about my religious affiliation, the conversation progressed freely. In another instance, a minister asked me to pray with him at the end of
an interview. I obliged. Developing rapport took longer than it would have, had I articulated or otherwise conveyed a common salient identity with Christian informants and thus, may have been a limitation of the study. Overall, I believe that this barrier was overcome in the majority of the interviews.

I faced another obstacle in acquiring interviews. Given that I began interviewing two to three years after the Issue passed, I had difficulty locating some potential informants. While I was able to secure interviews with the majority of key players in the campaign, some desired interviewees had moved away from Cincinnati. Those no longer living in the Cincinnati area were all representative of the No On 3 campaign, of whom I had many leaders to choose from still in residence. I was welcomed into the community and had the opportunity to interview numbers of people. I decided to pursue only those informants who resided within a few hour radius of Cincinnati. The one exception to this was a pro-gay minister and community leader who I traced to another state. Unfortunately, by the time I was able to track him, he had just passed away.

There are also some limitations to the organizational document collection. I relied upon documents that organizations themselves maintained or were selectively donated to me and thus, my collection may be incomplete. Out of the five Cincinnati organizations from which I acquired documentation, only one organization allowed me to autonomously spend time in their office going through their files and photocopying materials at my discretion. Stonewall Cincinnati allowed me this freedom. I spent several afternoons going through their boxes of files and copying all that I could. Despite this open access, there are limitations to these data. First, the boxes and their contents were not very well
organized. There were some gaps in the dates on meeting notes and memorandum.

Second, and common to all of the organizations, was that I had access to only some of the documents. The document collection I perused at Stonewall was incomplete. Likewise, the documents supplied to me by the other organizations were also incomplete. At the one extreme, as I mentioned was the few opportunities I had to peruse organizational files unfettered and reproduce documents at my discretion. At the other end, Equal Rights Not Special Rights supplied me with two binders full of documents including “Speaking Materials” used at all public presentations. However, several of the organizations had in their possession materials from one or more of the other organizations including the opposing social movement. These supplemental materials helped to fill in gaps in the collections.

In the next chapter, I explore the cultural opportunities available to the Christian right in their Issue 3 mobilization. I begin by discussing the theory on political and cultural opportunities. I then examine specific cultural opportunity factors. I explore the ways that the gay rights movement influenced its contender’s opportunities.
ENDNOTES

1 The Stonewall Executive Director was hired immediately following the passing of Issue 3. She was not a resident of Cincinnati until after the November 1993 election.

2 Take Back Cincinnati dismantled once the issue was approved for the November 1993 ballot. Equal Rights Not Special Rights took over as the campaign organization.

3 While I speak of the organizations separately throughout this monograph, I did combine two organizations into one document collection. That is, because Take Back Cincinnati was short-lived and transformed into Equal Rights Not Special Rights, the collections are considered as one for the purposes of citation.
CHAPTER 3
CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES AND MOVEMENT MOBILIZATION

The movement to promote Issue 3 did not simply appear out of thin air. The Christian right movement existed prior to the campaign at both national and various local levels, including Cincinnati, Ohio. As important, a national climate and Cincinnati landmark events such as the enactment of pro-gay legislation created fertile soil from which the Christian right mobilized the Issue 3 campaign. Part of this landscape of opportunity was created by actions and successes of both the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement and the Christian right in Cincinnati and elsewhere in the country.

Scholars interested in examining opportunities for movement emergence have tended to focus attention solely on the political climate. Recently, however, attention has turned to the independent role that cultural factors play in creating opportunities for movement emergence (McAdam 1994; see also Gamson and Meyer 1996; see also Brand 1990). McAdam developed a theoretical framework for analyzing what he called, "expanding cultural opportunities" or those distinct elements of culture that stimulate collective action (McAdam 1994:39). In general, these factors include an examination of the beliefs and practices of the culture, the impact of grievances that are "suddenly imposed," perceptions about the vulnerability of the political system for challenges, and the availability of master frames that movements can borrow and manipulate for their own purposes (McAdam 1994:39-45).
Such recent theorizing has begun to move our understandings of opportunities into the realm of culture. However, several problems or gaps remain. First, separating the political from the cultural factors becomes a sticky issue for the examination of the independent role of culture. Since interpretation and cultural beliefs both precede and follow structural political change, distinguishing the interpretive from the actual structural change is a necessary challenge for social movement analysts. Second, to date no explicit empirical work has attempted to test these new conceptions to determine their usefulness in social movement analysis. Third, and finally, while McAdam’s work begins to move the literature into the realm of culture, it neglected to consider the added, dynamic role of an opposing movement with whom a movement struggles for social or political change. In this chapter, I address these problems by clarifying, testing, and expanding on existing notions of cultural opportunities.

To address the three problems or gaps, in this chapter I examine the cultural context from which Cincinnati’s Christian right mobilized to promote Issue 3. Because issue 3 was a right-wing initiative, and they initiated this wave of the opposing movement conflict, I consider cultural opportunities primarily from the perspective of Christian right mobilization. It is necessary then, to also consider the role that the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement played in the pro-Issue 3 mobilization.

Next, I turn to a brief review of the theory on political opportunity structures available for movement mobilization. I then move into a discussion of the recent theorizing on cultural opportunities. Here I begin to disentangle these two intertwined notions of opportunities for mobilization. Guided by the recent conceptions of cultural
opportunities, I turn to an analysis of the Christian right's Issue 3 campaign paying particular attention to those factors that allowed for movement emergence. I use the case of Issue 3's Christian right to test these newly developed constructs of cultural opportunities. Finally, I address the influence of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement opponent in facilitating Christian right mobilization. I argue for the importance of examining the role of opposing social movements in the analysis of opportunities.

POLITICAL AND CULTURAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES

In efforts to identify factors that lead to opportunities for social movement policy success, scholars have tended toward the examination of political context variables or "political opportunity structure" (Eisengen 1973). Political opportunity structure has been defined as the "receptivity or vulnerability of the political system to organized protest by a given challenging group" (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1988:699; Tarrow 1983). When political opportunities are favorable they can provide needed resources for movements and can facilitate movement success (see Jenkins 1983; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Kriesi 1995, 1989; Tarrow 1989; Gale 1986; Kitschelt 1986). Additionally, social movement strategies and tactics, and successes and failures can effectively alter political opportunities making subsequent gains more or less feasible (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). Opposing social movements exist within and are affected by the larger political environment (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; but see also Taylor 1989; Rupp and Taylor 1991). Scholars have operationalized political opportunity factors in various, yet structurally similar ways. Kitschelt considered the structure of political opportunities as the "specific configurations of resources, institutional arrangements and historical precedents for social
mobilizations, which facilitate the development of protest movements in some instances and constrain them in others” (1986:58). Tarrow (1989, 1994) and Gale (1986) highlighted the importance of political alliances or alignments and polity openness. Such alliances formed between social movements and members of the political structure are key to social movement success (Jenkins 1983:546; Tarrow 1994). Likewise, the degree of access or openness to the polity and political institutions is critical to movements’ opportunities for success. Polity openness or closure is affected by historical or temporal context. That is, different historical factors such as elections can alter the amount of openness of the polity to social movement concerns (Tarrow 1989:34-35). Others have examined the effects of political party strength, configuration, and fragmentation (Amenta and Zylan 1991; Kriesi 1989).

While illuminating, social movement scholars recognize that existing conceptualizations of the "political opportunity structure" are too broad and need to be more clearly specified (Gamson and Meyer 1996; McAdam 1994; Taylor 1996). Meyer and Minkoff (1997) recently urged scholars to provide “more systematic attention to questions of operationalization and measurement” (1997:2, emphasis in original). Gamson and Meyer discussed the problematic nature of political opportunity as a “catch-all category” that encompasses a range of variables from the more “stable” variables such as the strength of state institutions, political parties and social cleavages to the more “volatile” factors including shifts in alliances, and elections (1996:277-283; see also Tarrow 1988; McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996). Not only are conceptions of political
opportunity structure limited by their breadth, they also lack a necessary recognition of the role of culture in effecting movement opportunities.

**Operationalizing Cultural Opportunity Structure**

Scholars have recently begun to recognize the limitations in the conceptions of political opportunity structures. As such, attention has turned to the examination of culture. Culture is defined as “the shared belief and understandings, mediated by and constituted by symbols and language, of a group or society” (Zald 1996:262; see also Swidler 1986). McAdam argued for the importance of cultural factors in effecting movement opportunities for emergence; for the creation of specific ‘social movement cultures’; and in the outcomes that movements pursue or inadvertently achieve (McAdam 1994:37). One primary way that culture affects movement development is through “expanding cultural opportunities” (1994:39). This notion of cultural opportunities essentially represents specified cultural factors that foster or inhibit movement emergence. McAdam delineated four factors which included (1) “ideological or cultural contradictions”; (2) “suddenly imposed grievances”; (3) “dramatizations of system vulnerability”; (4) “availability of master frames” (1994:39-45).

**Ideological or Cultural Contradictions**

The first cultural factor likely to promote movement emergence, referred to as “ideological or cultural contradictions” encompasses the contradictions between “salient values and conventional practices” (McAdam 1994:39). Such discrepancies between core values and common social practices can be exposed by a single event or any number of events. Along these lines, Zald similarly argued:
Cultural opportunities occur and lead into mobilization when two or more cultural themes that are potentially contradictory are brought into active contradiction by the force of events, or when the realities of behavior are seen to be substantially different than the ideological justifications for the movement (Zald 1996:268).

To illustrate this opportunity variable, McAdam shared the contradiction that was exposed during the abolitionist movement in the U.S. Despite beliefs and supporting rhetoric of egalitarianism, sexism was prevalent in the movement. Such hypocrisy was considered to be a catalyst for the women’s movement of the time (1994:40). Clashes that emerge out of the direct contradiction of practices and held values or beliefs provide opportunities for movements to mobilize.

Suddenly Imposed Grievance

Second, borrowing from Walsh (1981), McAdam introduces the conception of “suddenly imposed grievance” as a cultural opportunity factor. Grievances that are imposed suddenly are “those dramatic, highly publicized, and general unexpected events” including “major court decisions...that increase public awareness of and opposition to previously accepted societal conditions” (McAdam 1994:40). Unlike McAdam’s separate conceptions, Zald directly linked cultural contradictions or clashes, such as those discussed above, to events like suddenly imposed grievances. That is, in and of itself, a suddenly imposed grievance may expose discrepancies in belief and values and practices. The imposed event “changes perceptions and calls attention to, and crystallizes opinion on, moral and political matters that had been dormant or ambiguous” (Zald 1996:268).
Opponent Vulnerability

Third, cultural opportunities are also created when the “political opponent” is perceived as weakened as a result of some event, group of events or other related processes (McAdam 1994:41). Such “events or processes highlight the vulnerability” of the system (McAdam 1994:41). To illustrate this type of cultural opportunity structure, McAdam offers the example of the classic case of Brown v. Board of Education. This 1954 desegregation decision highlighted the existence of an opening in the oppressive segregation system that had long held down African Americans. While the opponent to which McAdam referred was the political system itself, I argue that the political target varies depending on the nature of the claim and thus, includes an opponent social movement with whom a movement contends.

Master Protest Frame

The fourth type of cultural opportunity that McAdam theorized is the existence of a viable ‘master protest frame’ (see Snow and Benford 1992). A movement may use the “ideological understandings and cultural symbols [of one struggle] as the ideational basis [for] their own” (1994:42). Master frames provide a linkage between movement’s interpretation of the situation or event(s) with people’s ideology. Since social movements often “cluster in time and space” (1994:41), they may make use of the same master frames, particularly if such frames have successfully resonated with movement targets (see Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). McAdam argued that when a master frame is available movements are afforded an additional cultural opportunity (1994:41-43). I argue that further specification is necessary to assess the role of opposing movements in altering the
opportunities created by extant master frames. When a movement stands in direct challenge with an opposing movement, the ways in which available master frames are appropriated and the extent to which opportunities are opened required added attention.

In some way, each of the first three types of cultural opportunities provide that mobilization is stimulated by an event, set of events, or related processes. For ‘ideological contradictions,’ opportunities arise when events highlight contradictions between beliefs or values and social practices. Likewise, ‘suddenly imposed grievances’ are brought about by a specific event or events that make people both cognizant of and oppositional to the clash such practices reveal, giving way for movement development. For the third type of cultural opportunity, events serve to expose the weaknesses of the movement’s opponent. Exposure affords a movement viable openings for mobilization against such challenging movements.

Unlike these event-spawned opportunities, the fourth type of cultural opportunity relates more broadly to the existence and availability of master frames (Snow and Benford 1988) to the movement. Master protest frames “provide the ideational or interpretive anchoring” for movements (Snow and Benford 1988:212). When master frames are readily accessible, movements can utilize and alter such frames for their own pursuits.

Notions of political and cultural opportunities are overlapping and, thus, difficult to disentangle. However, it becomes clearer from this model that it is the values and interpretation of structural political change that create opportunities for movement emergence. The critical delineation then, between the traditional notions of political opportunities and the recent conceptions of cultural opportunities is the ways in which
culture informs interpretation of external, structural action and change. While political opportunities may exist, Gamson and Meyer argued that “opportunities are subject to interpretation” (1996:276).

Using this new theoretical framework as a guide, I now turn to an analysis of Cincinnati’s Christian right mobilization around Issue 3. I examine the fruitfulness of the conceptions of event-spawned opportunities as well as the notion of accessible master frames which are said to aid movements in mobilization and framing efforts. Through these analyses, I highlight the role of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual opposing movement in the opportunities that were available to the Christian right movement’s Issue 3 contest.

ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL OPPORTUNITY IN THE ISSUE 3 CAMPAIGN

Cultural Beliefs and Practical Contradictions

Movements are afforded opportunities when existing cultural values and beliefs stand in contradiction with social activities, practices, and events. It is the perception that hypocrisy exists, and the interpretation that such incongruity provides opportunities that compel movements to mobilize. I first explore the cultural beliefs prevalent among Cincinnati’s Christian right and then examine the activities or practices that challenged those basic views.

Cultural Beliefs

To the Christian right there is a fundamental Christian biblical condemnation against homosexuality. Homosexuality is considered a sin before God. Like their predecessors elsewhere, Cincinnati’s Christian right overwhelmingly cited biblical prohibitions against homosexuality as their primary reason for developing and rallying
around the Issue 3 initiative. One interviewee articulated this view by saying that “the Bible speaks in both the Old and the New Testament, speaks very strongly about homosexuality as a sin...the real sin that the Lord thinks that homosexuality is.”

Furthermore, this informant emphasized that “every major religion in the world has a fundamental tenet that homosexuality is a sin.” Another leader in this right-wing initiative summarized the group’s reasoning for the Issue by saying “we oppose homosexuality because we believe what the Bible teaches.” He further articulated that “most persons I work with were religiously, spiritually opposed to gay rights because of what they read in Bibles.” This view has widespread support among the right-wing. As an article in Christianity Today, the popular Christian magazine, summarized, “the Christian vision for sexuality and marriage is our foundational reason for rejecting homosexual action as a legitimate moral option” (Jones 1993:22). The “Christian vision” is rooted in the Biblical interpretation of procreative prescription and homosexual prohibition.

Many of the Christian right movement members interviewed cited “sin” as a reason for promoting Issue 3. Several of the interviewees were careful to distinguish between personhood and homosexual behavior. Indeed, the Bible would require a distinction that separates the sin from the sinner. An early right-wing fundraising and information mailer clarified this delineation by saying: “For the record, Take Back Cincinnati is not anti-gay or anti-homosexual. Being anti-gay or anti-homosexual implies being anti-person. We are not anti-person or anti-people.” This separation between sin and sinner implies behavior that is chosen. One Issue 3 advocate more explicitly articulated this twist:
There [is] no such thing as homosexuals....everyone is heterosexual. Homosexuality is an act that a heterosexual performs. Much like any other sex act, or whatever they choose to do. Even former homosexuals that we have right here in Cincinnati, in fact all over the country... keep saying this over and over again that there is no such thing as a homosexual.⁶

Arguments about homosexuality being a choice were central to the Issue 3 campaign and are further discussed in Chapter 4. This was a long held belief of movement members.

**Practices and Contradictions**

The specific practices or events that stood out among the Christian movement members I interviewed were various but included the protective discrimination policies in place in Cincinnati and elsewhere; the 1993 March on Washington for Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Equal Rights and Liberation; nudity and specific ‘offending’ behaviors in the San Francisco Gay Pride March; the growing close relationship between elected officials and candidates for office and gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement organizations, lobbyists, and members; the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement’s demand to lower the age of consent for sexual activity; the teaching of homosexuality in schools; and, the more recent promotion of same-sex marriage⁷. For instance, one leader in the Issue 3 campaign stated:

> It's part of their sixty-two demands that they made in Washington in 1993, I mean, it's all right there. Lowering the age of consent, you know, for children to have sex. I mean, I bet the average person didn't read it all. And now they [the general public] are starting to look and say, 'I didn't know they want this. I didn't know they want that. I thought they just wanted to be left alone.' You know, they want...[to] push for their agenda.⁸

This same leader discussed the contradiction of “faith” belief or values and the practice of homosexuality being shared with children. He stated that:

> The people of faith are saying, 'Why are you forcing homosexuality into a classroom? Why are you bringing in homosexuals to teach my child that it's a
normal lifestyle with Heather has two Mommies and Daddy's Roommate, when it violates my faith and what I believe? Who do you think you are?"\(^9\) Gay, lesbian and bisexual visibility accomplished through various events, legislation, and other social practices stood in contradiction to the deeply held views of the Christians involved in the Issue 3 movement. One movement supporter and Cincinnati minister shared his perspective on gay successes. After reading some unspecified studies, this informant was under the firm belief that because of the power of gays and lesbians "in San Francisco, you could suffer persecution for speaking out against the homosexuals". He illustrated his point by saying that "there is a Pastor out there who, when he spoke out against the homosexuals, had his home firebombed."\(^10\) He was troubled by this study on San Francisco. It seemed to him, like a model of what could happen if the homosexual agenda succeeded and homosexuals were the powerholders in Cincinnati as well. Visibility equaled gay strength and power and Christian fear for personal safety.

Likewise, visibility also meant obscenity and offense to Christian right members. Along with one campaign leader, Equal Rights Not Special Rights Public Speaking Material commented on the widely distributed film, The Gay Agenda which portrayed "obscene" footage of people in gay pride parades and protests\(^11\) The selected material shown in the film fostered the perception that gays, lesbians, and bisexuals widely used "violence, vulgar language, intimidation and public nudity."\(^12\) This film was also shown to military officials during the time when President Clinton and the Military were negotiating a new policy for gays in the military.\(^13\) Thus, the film itself was used as a tool to exhibit the clash between values and beliefs and the practices of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. In
effect, various events and practices were viewed as fundamentally at odds with these Christians' beliefs. Homosexuality was receiving recognition and legitimation, and thus, not only was in direct contradiction to their salient belief but was also a threat to the Christian notions of family and sexuality, of right and wrong.

Meyer and Staggenborg (1996:1635) argued that "movements that show signs of succeeding, either by putting their issues on the public agenda or by influencing public policy, are the most likely to provoke countermovements." Indeed this appears to have been a prime factor in Cincinnati's Christian right mobilization. The visibility of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals, demonstrated by the support they were receiving from mainstream leaders, and their legislative and institutional successes stood in direct contradiction to the Christian right's values and beliefs. An early mailer exclaimed that "this debate is about homosexuals forcing their values on you." Part of the concern was stated in Equal Rights Not Special Rights speaking material: "If sexual orientation is actually a matter of choice...we can expect more of our youth will try homosexuality the more that it is tolerated and encouraged"

Just as McAdam (1994:40) noted that the practice of sexism stood at odds with the notions of equality in the abolitionist movement, the increased acceptance of homosexuality and bisexuality stood at odds with these Christians' belief. As Christian interviewees suggested, this fundamental disjuncture between their core values and the actions supporting gays, lesbians, and bisexuals was a critical factor in their mobilization. Nearly all of the events or practices cited were created or catalyzed by the opposing gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement. That is, gains made by the gay, lesbian, and bisexual
movement with political and cultural changes fostered an environment ripe for right-wing contest. Indeed as Meyer and Staggenborg argued, “for issues such as...gay liberation, it would seem much more difficult, if not impossible to avoid arousing opposition insofar as the behavior in question itself offends the values of existing groups” (1996:1641). However, it wasn’t simply the events alone that caused Christian right mobilization, it was the interpretation that these new practices meant acceptance of homosexuality and the deterioration of their Christian way of life. For instance the support from Cincinnati City Council, the City’s Human Rights Ordinance, and, nationally the ‘gays in the military’ debate and changes in the ban on gays and lesbians highlighted the incongruity between these Christians’ beliefs and values and political practices. Likewise, the enormous rise in cultural visibility of gay and lesbian lives in the early 1990s through books, media, and marches facilitated the perception that the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movements’ activities stood in direct contradiction to the fundamental tenets of the Christian right movement’s deeply held values. Opposing movement successes directly contributed to opportunities for right-wing mobilization. Indeed, the most documented event or reason for mobilization around Issue 3 that interviewees shared was in direct response to the 1992 Human Rights Ordinance that protected gays, lesbians, and bisexuals against discrimination.

Suddenly Imposed Grievance

When events occur that are prominent in the media or public domain and are unexpected they are dubbed, ‘suddenly imposed grievance.’ One such suddenly imposed grievance, the Human Rights Ordinance, appeared on the Cincinnati scene and prompted
outrage by the Christian right. The City Council enactment of Cincinnati's 1992 Human Rights Ordinance was the oft most cited reason or event that served as the impetus for Christian right mobilization. While the 1991 Equal Employment Opportunity policy protecting City employees became law and received attention and opposition, it really was not until the Human Rights Ordinance was being debated that the Christian right mobilized rapidly. As Zald suggested, we may want to view the suddenly imposed grievance or in this case, the Ordinance as an extension of the "ideological or cultural contradiction factor," discussed above. In effect, the Human Rights Ordinance was the event or 'straw that broke the camels back.' Scholars have earlier noted such a trend. That is, the gains or successes of one social movement tend to propel collective action from its' opponent movement (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996:1647; see also Staggenborg 1991). Indeed, as one Issue 3 proponent stated, "I don't like to be in a reactive mode. But Issue 3 for us was reactive." Another leader shared:

In November of '92 City Council came out with a Human Rights Ordinance which gave homosexuals and bisexuals along with other groups, blacks, handicaps, [and] Appalachians protected status. And we saw it really as a ploy to really give protective status for homosexuals and bisexuals. So in '92, a gentleman started a movement called Take Back Cincinnati. Another activist for the Issue 3 campaign concurred by saying "we responded to the Human Rights Ordinance, we didn't come to council first and say, stop this human rights bill. We responded to what they did. That's all we've been doing is responding." Likewise, one campaign leader argued that the Ordinance "is about acceptance... and the only way that they're going to gain acceptance through their lives is to force people by codifying in the law their behavior and acceptance." Furthermore, this activist shared
that the talks which culminated in the Human Rights Ordinance passage created an awareness that homosexuality was becoming legitimized and thus, required immediate and active opposition. Early Christian right solicitation material illustrated by raising the question to potential supporters: “Do you believe Cincinnati City Council should pass a law giving a small group of persons “special” legal rights based on who they choose to have sex with?”

Some local television reports concurred with the Christian right view that the Ordinance was a call for special rights. In fact, just days before the election one news reporter explained that “the issue calls for amending Cincinnati’s Human Rights Ordinance to exclude gays. As it stands now, the law includes gays as a minority that deserve special protection from discrimination.”

In addition to being viewed as a mechanism for granting credibility to lesbian, bisexual, and gay people, the Human Rights Ordinance was seen as anti-Christian. One proponent outlined the way in which the Ordinance could be seen as an anti-religious law:

If you are an employer, if you are a landlord and you discriminate, you will be punished. In other words, government is not staying neutral. Government is now taking a position and that position is to punish people who hold certain religious beliefs. That's what the Human Rights Ordinance said. What the liberals are promoting is active punishment of people who dearly hold religious beliefs that homosexuality is a sin.  

Another Issue 3 advocate expressed his views in more general terms:

This issue is much bigger than the special rights the homosexual community is seeking. Their agenda is an assault on the Judeo-Christian values this country was founded on and which have been the foundation of our civilization and moral character for 220 years..... A society that dismisses its values and has no moral absolutes will be dominated by its sexual appetites.
This Christian right movement emerged around the impending enactment of the Human Rights Ordinance. The Ordinance talks began to surface publicly around the 1991 elections. Lobbyists working on behalf of gay, lesbian and bisexual people had worked arduously to promote pro-gay candidates for City Council. Prior to the Human Rights Ordinance decision, the nine member city council was leaning in favor of such a rights policy inclusive of gay, lesbian, and bisexual men and women. Indeed, Christian right emergence began just after the 1991 election when passage of the Human Rights Ordinance then seemed imminent. A longtime conservative leader declared that:

"Homosexuality and Issue 3...wasn't even on the radar scope for us until 1991, when the homosexuals started celebrating about the fact that they had won and taken over city council." Another Issue 3 activist concurred that "when they won so many seats in the '91 council elections, they were all excited, the homosexual community was all excited and they began pushing the council to pass this law." One leader shared that this 'final straw' had been in process for some time. The gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement had:

endorsed candidates. They had a...voter's guide...they put out of endorsed candidates, as they've been doing for ten years, and I didn't even know anything about it. And, then we found out that...these candidates had made these promises that they were going to do certain things. And one of them was to include sexual orientation into the Human Rights Ordinance."

Without a doubt, analyses glaringly point to the Human Rights Ordinance and all that led to it, as the primary impetus for the Christian right's Issue 3 mobilization. The Ordinance was a concrete local victory for the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement. The Human Rights Ordinance itself was a change in the political structure through policy. But, it was not simply the structural change that prompted right-wing mobilization. The Ordinance
stood as a clear example of a gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement success, a significant event that challenged and offended the Christian right's values and beliefs. It was the interpretation that the Human Rights Ordinance translated into further acceptance of homosexuality that created a stir among conservatives. This example of acceptance directly contradicted all that these Christian's believed in. Thus, this suddenly imposed grievance or the Human Rights Ordinance, a political gain for the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement, evoked an interpretation of outrage that propelled the organized opposition into action.

Dramatization of Opponent Weakness

Social movements that view their opponent, whomever that opponent may be, as weak or vulnerable, are given an opening to launch a challenge. Often, such weaknesses are exposed by different events or related activities. At the same time, when a movement views an opponent as vulnerable, they tend to view themselves in more powerful terms as strong enough to mobilize for change. In the case of Issue 3 the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement was the opponent shown to be fragile in the arena of the voting public. Prior to the actual enactment of the Human Rights Ordinance, members of the right-wing made some attempts to alter the course of the legislation within the arena of City Council. At that point, the Christian right "organized only in terms of going to city hall and speaking against it."27 Thanks to the efforts of one conservative clergyman28, consciousness, interest, and organizing began to take shape opposing the Ordinance.29 The Christian right recognized the likelihood of a victory for the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement and thus, mobilized in an attempt to preempt the passage of the change in
policy. However, their efforts proved unsuccessful. Once the Human Rights Ordinance was law, the Christian right bypassed this legislative body to take on the opposing movement within the public arena at the voting booth. Meyer and Staggenborg would have predicted such an action. They argued that "once a movement enters a particular venue, if there is the possibility of contest, an opposing movement is virtually forced to act in the same arena" (1996:1649). In the face of defeat with the Ordinance, this Christian movement shifted venues and reinitiated collective action (see Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). At this point, it came down to a choice of fighting to repeal the Human Rights Ordinance itself or have the voters amend the City Charter. In either case, it was the voters who would hold the decision-making power. The Christian right recognized their potential strength in the public arena and thus, shifted the venue in the direction most amenable to their cause. The legal counselor and political advisor for the right-wing explained the options:

[A] referendum is just a repeal of the law. A charter amendment [is] like an amendment to the constitution of the city. So, the charter amendment has...much more permanency. You actually prevent the council from passing such law in the future. ...A referendum also has a shorter fuse. You only have 30 days to collect all your signatures to get a referendum on the ballot." 36

For Issue 3 proponents, sizing up the potential weakness of the opponent meant appraising evidence of vulnerability in the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement exposed through events elsewhere, as well as assessing the fragility revealed by Cincinnati's own history. In the case of an existing movement such as Cincinnati's Christian right, I argue that some of the evaluation of gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement's vulnerability was actually an assessment of the right's own strength suggesting the potential for victory.
That is, determining another group’s weakness occurs simultaneously with evaluating one’s own strength.

Specifically instructive, then, were the two different 1992 statewide Christian right campaigns and Cincinnati’s own Christian right event history. First, as discussed in Chapter 1, in Colorado in 1992, voters passed a statewide amendment prohibiting discrimination protection to gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals (see Herman 1997; Bransford 1994). Oregon voters rejected a similar initiative that same year (see Bull and Gallagher 1996). The main distinctions between the right-wing victory in Colorado with Amendment 2 and failure in Oregon with Measure 9 was in the ballot language and related campaign discourse. Amendment 2 asked voters to eliminate legal protection on the basis of “orientation, conduct, practices or relationship” while Measure 9 was an attempt to draft into law a state position that homosexuality was “abnormal, wrong, unnatural, and perverse” (Herman 1997:145). The former with its predominantly rights-based rhetorical strategy was the successful of the two approaches. Cincinnati’s Christian right not only was aware of these two contests, but communicated with and borrowed materials and strategies from their counterparts in Colorado and took lessons from the Oregon defeat. Cincinnati adopted a Colorado style rights-based discursive strategy in the Issue 3 campaign. By itself, the Oregon measure would not have done much to expose opponent weakness rather it may have evidenced their power. However, because the two campaigns utilized very different strategies, Colorado was shown to be more instructive. Coupled together, the two campaigns provided a strategic roadmap for the Christian right
to expose and conquer gay, lesbian, and bisexual vulnerability. Alone, the Colorado victory revealed the fallibility of the opposing movement.

That Cincinnati’s right-wing modeled itself after Colorado lends support to the argument that Cincinnati considered the Colorado case illuminating of gay and lesbian movement vulnerability. Indeed, from the start of the Issue 3 campaign to the election and beyond, Colorado played an important role with the Cincinnati Christians (explored in more detail in Chapter 5). One leader shared:

When I wrote the language I went and got a copy of the Colorado language. I amended it and it went back and forth. I worked with the lawyers from National Legal Foundation, who helped in the defense of the Colorado amendment.”

Not only was the language shared between these two campaigns, but so too was expertise and financial support. Another Issue 3 pioneer shared that the emergence of Equal Rights Not Special Rights was directly informed and assisted by Colorado forces: “So, we created this new organization called ‘Equal Rights Not Special Rights’ which was separate from Citizens for Community Values. And I went out to Colorado to see what had happened out there.”

In July of 1993, Take Back Cincinnati hosted Colorado for Family Values Chair and spokesperson, Mr. Will Perkins. The invitation professed that “Colorado for Family Values was the organization that caused the public to vote to amend the Colorado Constitution, prohibiting passage of laws based on ‘sexual orientation.”

Furthermore, as reported over and again in Cincinnati’s newspapers was the fact that Equal Rights Not Special Right’s counterpart in Colorado provided financial support as well. As one news article read, “the huge campaign fund of the pro-Issue 3 forces - the biggest ever in a local issue campaign - was bolstered by $390,000 contributed by
Colorado for Family Values. The Colorado Amendment 2 case, supplemented by the Oregon loss, proved as a resource of information and support for Cincinnati’s Christian right. Cincinnati forces benefited from the gains made and the lessons learned in Colorado and the mistakes made in Oregon. Likewise, the backing from the Colorado Christian right in particular, exposed the strength of the Cincinnati movement. Victory over the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement elsewhere clearly illuminated such possibilities closer to home.

Second, and equally revealing, were the events that happened in Cincinnati in previous years. That is, prior successes of the right-wing in Cincinnati involving issues related to sexuality and/or ‘morality’ helped to illuminate ways in which the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement may be weakened for Christian right challenge. It also illustrated the strength of this Christian movement historically in this widely considered, conservative City. An organization known as Citizens for Community Values (CCV) appeared on the Cincinnati scene in the early 1980s with the mission of fighting pornography. They later served as the springboard organization from which Take Back Cincinnati and Equal Rights Not Special Rights were able to easily mobilize a mass base of support (see Chapter 5). Citizens for Community Values became a major behind the scenes player in the Issue 3 campaign.

Beginning in the 1980s, Citizens for Community Values waged a massive anti-pornography campaign throughout the city. CCV was joined by the vigilant pornography foe, then County Sheriff Simon Leis. Together these forces rid the city of the sale of
much of the pornographic print and video materials and closed the city’s strip clubs. As one leader in the Issue 3 movement shared:

Cincinnati is what Cincinnati is because of things like Issue 3. Because we take a stand on issues. I mean, I challenge you to drive anywhere in Hamilton County and find a strip bar, a pornography store, you know, anything like that at all. You know, a dirty movie theater. They don't exist. And, it's not like they're hidden somewhere or you don't generally drive on that part of town. They don't exist. And the vibrancy of the Cincinnati economy is due in part to that clean image that we've created.

The success of Cincinnati's conservative forces in enforcing anti-pornography statutes and obscenity laws was interpreted as a base of support and strength for the Christian right.

Another, more recent set of events revealed to Cincinnati's right-wing that they were capable of championing causes and fighting against the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement and other liberal forces. As discussed in Chapter 1, in 1990 the Robert Mapplethorpe photograph exhibit was on display at the Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center. This showing set off a swell of protest over six of the photographs that were explicitly homoerotic in nature. Pornography opponents, led by Citizens for Community Values and local law enforcement successfully forced the closing of the art exhibit and the arrest of the museum director on “pandering and obscenity” charges. Ultimately the director was acquitted but the city became the focus of national controversy and even ridicule from some, resulting in the label “Censornatti.”

One Christian right advocate explained the parallels between the Mapplethorpe protest and the Issue 3 campaign: “there happens to be a very strong constituency of conservatives in this town ...that will engage on the issue....whether it's the Ku Klux Klan or whether its Mapplethorpe or whether it's Issue 3” Another leader in the Issue 3
movement concurred: “All of those things-- Issue 3, the anti-pornography efforts and all that, play into…and create a successful community as a whole”\textsuperscript{43} Additionally, one advocate in the campaign summarized the overall Christian strength by saying simply-- “we're morally driven.”\textsuperscript{44}

These Cincinnati events dramatized to the right that not only was their opponent vulnerable for defeat, but that they themselves were a strong enough social force to mobilize for social change more in line with their values. The gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement’s mistakes and failures revealed viable strike zones or weakness of the movement. Thus, the opponent movement affected the other not only in its successes such as the Human Rights Ordinance, but also in its losses such as in Colorado, which exposed movement vulnerability. However, it was not simply the outcome of these various events that caused such a perception. Rather, it was the Christian right movement’s interpretation of both the actions and successes of their conservative predecessors and the actions and losses of their opponent that prompted the view that they were was equipped and ready to take on the gay rights movement in the issue 3 campaign.

\textbf{Accessibility of Master Protest Frames}

Master frames afford movements a link between the public’s beliefs and the movement’s position on an issue. The existence and availability of a master protest frame can be viewed as an opportunity for movements to mobilize. Along with the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement opposing them, Cincinnati’s Christian right capitalized on the ‘civil rights’ master protest frame. This popular frame originated with the Black civil rights movement in the 1960s (see Morris 1984 on the civil rights movement). The “ideological
understandings and cultural symbols” utilized and presented were appropriated by a number of different movements during the same time frame and decades beyond (McAdam 1994:42). The gay rights movement is among those movements that capitalized on the ideological imprint of the civil rights movement (McAdam 1994:42; see also Epstein 1999). And, in the case of Issue 3, so too did the Christian right.

Recall that the event impetus for Christian right mobilization was the enactment of the City’s Human Rights Ordinance. This anti-discrimination ordinance amounted to a form of civil rights protections for various categories of people including gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. The gay rights movement more traditionally adopted the civil rights protest frame as they pleaded with Cincinnatians to ‘stop discrimination.’ As one Issue 3 proponent pointed out, the gay rights movement had already been borrowing from the civil rights movement. He shared that at the March on Washington, for example, in the tradition of Martin Luther King, one nationally known gay rights activist declared that “I hope the day will come that my children won’t be judged by the color of their skin or by their sexual orientation.”

So when the Christian right entered into the anti-gay rights contest, the civil rights master frame had already been deployed by the lesbian, gay, and bisexual movement supporters. One Issue 3 proponent argued that Cincinnati’s gay rights movement not only utilized the master frame but had “admitted that they modeled the gay rights movement after the civil rights movement.” To the Christian right, however, rights extended on the basis of sexual orientation bastardized the civil rights protections guaranteed African Americans. Arguing that gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals did not have immutable
characteristics as do African Americans, civil rights requests equated with ‘special rights’ (see Chapter 4). The strength of the right in framing was in calling in a standard of civil rights that would draw the line between those legitimate groups of people and the undeserving homosexuals. One anti-Issue 3 activist argued that:

They [the people of Cincinnati] all bought into the line that gays and lesbians were seeking special rights, and they don’t think that gays and lesbians should have special rights. And, you know, I tried, I tried to educate them that they’re not asking for special rights, they’re [gay, lesbians, and bisexuals] just asking for the same rights that everybody else has.47

Another anti-Issue 3 activist summarized the main Christian right campaign message by sarcastically saying “the gay community is … powerful and very wealthy. And here is the poor black community that’s struggled for years for civil rights. How dare they.” Furthermore, s/he shared that the right-wing “battle cry was special rights…[and the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement] didn’t successfully counter that.”48

The appropriation of the civil rights master protest frame was an active and strategic choice on the part of Issue 3 proponents. One leader shared: “we basically tried to keep it on civil rights issues. Our commercials were based on civil rights issues. And, [we] tried not to get into the very emotional aspects of the issue.”49 Interestingly, the right-wing usage of the civil rights frame didn’t emerge anew with the Issue 3 campaign. Beginning more than a decade prior to the Issue 3 contest, “the New Right attempted to re-frame debate and take control over the language of civil rights, to become a pro-active movement instead of a reactive one [and] … they began presenting themselves as defenders of the moral order…”50 The two leaders of the League of Women Voters in
Cincinnati articulated the League's view of the Issue 3 campaign as a civil rights issue when they said:

The League believes strongly that no person or group should suffer legal, economic or administrative discrimination. We see Issue 3 as a civil-rights issue. Every citizen has the right to a job and a place to live. When those rights are being threatened, that citizen should also have the right to the protection of his government. That is why we oppose Issue 3.\textsuperscript{51}

Recognizing the parallels between Issue 3 and the civil rights movement, one leader in the Cincinnati gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement said that "If we had voted on Civil Rights for African Americans, we would still have separate water fountains. That's not an issue to be voted upon."\textsuperscript{52}

The Cincinnati gay rights movement was the first of the two opposing movements to invoke the civil rights master frame. They had appropriated this frame in their activism and lobbying activities promoting the Human Rights Ordinance and other earlier activities. Then the Christian right responded by adopting and altering the frame for their own gain. Social movement scholars have recognized the relation of the larger gay rights movement to the civil rights movement master frame (see McAdam 1994; but see also Tarrow 1994:9-10). However, analyses of opposing movements require that the researcher identify the site from which the master frame comes. That is, in the case of Issue 3, the right adopted a master frame already materialized by their opponent rather than from prior movements facing different challenges. In Didi Herman's (1997) study of the larger Christian right movement, she documented the ways in which the Christian right shifted its older rhetoric of disease and sin to adopt a new discursive strategy based on civil rights. The right-wing followed the lead of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement who had
been relatively fortuitous in their use of the civil rights master frame. In general, the movement viewed the presence of the civil rights master frame and the gay rights movement’s successes using the frame as an opportunity for themselves to likewise profit from its use. Cincinnati’s conservatives mirrored their counterparts elsewhere by adhering to a new rights-based rhetorical strategy and largely attempting to avoid the discourse that homosexuality was perverse, sinful, and/or criminal (see Chapter 4).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have demonstrated the utility of exploring various factors that create cultural opportunities for movements. I addressed three problems or gaps in the study of opportunities for movements including the stickiness of separating cultural from political opportunities, the absence of empirical tests of existing conceptions of factors that provide movements opportunities, and the lack of attention to the role of opposing social movements as agents who alter the opportunities for their opponent.

The first problem is the entangled nature of political opportunity structures and that of cultural opportunities. I have shown that the critical distinction between political and cultural opportunities is interpretation on the part of movement leaders and/or members. Structural change is linked to movement opportunities. However, it is the movement’s cultural values and beliefs that drive the perceptions of a(n) event(s) or master frame(s) as openings for movement mobilization. Interpretation intervenes between political opportunity and mobilization (see also Meyer and Gamson 1996; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). Cultural opportunities, however, are not simply intervening

75
variables. Culture independently provides opportunities more directly to movements for mobilization.

Visibility, a cultural outcome of movement collective action, can also provide movement opportunities. It is also the disjuncture between movement culture and social change that allows for the perception of openings for mobilization. In the case of Issue 3, for example, religious values conflicted not only with political and policy change, but also with cultural advances evident in Cincinnati and elsewhere in the U.S. The perception of widespread acceptance of homosexuality, for instance, evidenced through such things as the use of pro-gay children’s books in schools and libraries, the strength of the vast numbers of participants in the 1993 March on Washington, and the non-normative display of sexuality and gender at gay pride parades in cities like San Francisco, afforded the right opportunities for mobilization. Discrepancies between values and practices, while rooted in interpretation, simultaneously originate in culture as well as structure. It is the perceptions of movement activists that ultimately translate into opportunities for mobilization. While the two types of opportunities remain entangled, this research begins to isolate the independent role that culture makes in activating movements.

I also addressed the second issue, the lack of research on the cultural opportunities, and the third gap, the neglect of opposing movements in the theorizing on distinct cultural factors. In this chapter, I empirically tested existing theory on cultural opportunities by examining each of the four specific cultural factors (McAdam 1994). These cultural opportunity factors include contradictions between beliefs and practices, the effects of suddenly imposed grievances, opponent vulnerability or weakness, and the
accessibility of master frames. This study illuminates the utility of the model for analyzing the ways in which culture influences movement mobilization. However, I argue for the clarification and expansion of these conceptions and for the inclusion of the opposing movement contender.

These data suggest that the first two constructs, cultural contradictions and suddenly imposed grievances, overlap considerably. It was the clash of Christian right beliefs with both the conventional practices such as policy changes, cultural visibility, and alliances with leadership as well as a suddenly imposed grievance. It is difficult to know for sure whether alone the Human Rights Ordinance would have prompted such organized opposition. Likewise, in the absence of the Ordinance, the question remains whether or not other events and increased visibility would have commanded this type of response. Nevertheless, the combined effect is notable. That is, a series of events and practices first drew attention, visibility, and the perception of acceptance of homosexuality; and, then the ‘final straw’ of the Human Rights Ordinance that provided a cumulative picture to the Christian right forces, ultimately afforded the Christians with clear opportunities for mobilization.

Likewise, these data suggest that the opposing gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement played a role in providing the right with such an opportunity. Various highly visible events, alliances, and policy dialogue and changes were the result of the successes of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement. It is the gains made by the opposing movement that served to mobilize the challenging movement (see Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). However, it is important to clarify that victory alone does not mobilize. It was
the perception or interpretation by the right-wing movement of those successes that matter. That is, the Christian right interpreted gay gains as acceptance of homosexuality and/or erosion of their cultural belief that prompted their mobilization. It was both the gay, lesbian, and bisexual opposing movement victory and the interpretation of those successes that altered the opportunity structure for the Christian right.

Related to this, the next opportunity factor explored was the dramatization of opponent weakness. Given the nature of this study, I first extended this theoretical conception to include an opposing movement rather than the polity as the opponent. This study begs for the recognition of the critical role that an opposing movement plays in affecting their opponent's strategies, tactics, and claims, and in altering opportunities. These data highlight the importance of examining various historical and contemporary events and actions that illuminate the vulnerabilities of one's opponent.

Similar contests in other locations such as that in Colorado and Oregon, and various episodes of collective action in Cincinnati in previous years stood to demonstrate to the Christians the ways in which the gay rights movement was vulnerable. Conversely, analysis of the data indicate that it is not only an assessment of the weaknesses of the opponent that matter, but also the perception of their own movement's strength that provide mobilizing opportunities. The combination of these evaluations—external weakness and internal control or strength—provides a movement the opportunity to mobilize. In addition, movements may be offered a roadmap pointing to the specific areas of an opponent's weaknesses and one's own strong points. The movement is thus offered a potential--"in," to play to its strengths. Here again, an opposing movement affects the
other’s opportunities simply by its prior activism—victories and losses. Alone however, such gains and defeats are meaningless to a movement. It is the interpretation of the vulnerabilities of the opponent as well as the assessment of ones’ own capacity that foster opportunities.

The final cultural opportunity structure factor discussed was that of the master protest frames. Like their gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement rival, the right capitalized on the extant civil rights protest frame. Christian right forces adopted a framing strategy (see also Chapter 4) which promoted equal rights for all, civil rights for the deserved, and no special rights for gays. It was the gay rights movement who first utilized the civil rights master frame in the contest between the two. These data suggest that this cultural opportunity was both influenced by the mere existence and availability of the civil rights master frame and by the fact that the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement was already employing this master protest frame. The existence and accessibility of the civil rights master frame was an opportunity or opening for the right. However, the utilization of the master frame by the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement may have on the one hand revealed the cultural opening for the right-wing to mobilize, while on the other hand may have actually served as a form of a constraint compelling them to adopt the same master frame. The right may have been limited to utilizing the very master frame as their opponent rather than adopting another.

In sum, the Christian right, as a religious based social movement is a clear example of a movement rooted in a distinctive culture. Social movements can be characterized as operating within a particular culture with its own values and beliefs (see Buechler 1990).
The salient values and views of movements lay the foundation for their members to interpret the external environment around them. Changes in the cultural and political landscape are subject to movement’s interpretations and perspective. Thus, political and cultural changes are interpreted by movements as opportunities or constraints to mobilization. At the same time, opposing movements influence the actual or perceived openings available to their contender. In part, it is the gains of one movement that alter the environment for its opponent. I contend that the study of social movement mobilization must account for the cultural opportunities available to movements, the impact of the opposing movement, and, in particular, the perception or interpretation of events or practices that make them opportunities.

In the next chapter, I examine the ways in which the two opposing movements framed Issue 3. I first provide a brief discussion of the theory on collective action frames. Then, I explore the public’s receptivity to movement claims and message. I conclude by examining the ways in which the Christian right and Gay rights movement had influence on the other movements framing strategy.
ENDNOTES

1 Interview no.12.

2 Ibid.

3 Interview no. 9.

4 Ibid.


6 Interview no. 6.

7 Interview no. 6 and Interview no. 24 ; Equal Rights Not Special Rights/Take Back Cincinnati Document Collection. Equal Rights Not Special Rights, Public Speaking Material. 1993., Binder no. 1 and Binder no. 2.; Note that specific issue of same-sex marriage is largely a post 1993 agenda item.

8 Interview no. 6.

9 Ibid.

10 Interview no. 18.


Interview no. 6.

Interview no. 9.

Ibid.

Interview no. 6.


Interview no. 12.


Interview no. 6.

Interview no. 12.

Interview no. 6.

Interview no. 8.

Soon thereafter, this initiator was elected for political office.

Interview no. 8.

Interview no. 12.

Ibid.

Interview no. 6.

Colorado for Family Values is a Christian right organization based in Colorado. This organization was at the helm of the Amendment 2 campaign in 1992 legalizing discrimination against gays, lesbians, and bisexuals.


38 Interview no. 12.

39 Interview no. 6 and interview no. 20.


42 Interview no.6.

43 Interview no.12.

44 Interview no. 22.

45 Interview no. 9.

46 Ibid.
Interview no.11.

Interview no. 2.

Interview no.8.


Interview no.1.
CHAPTER 4

THE FRAMING OF ISSUE 3

Much of the battle over Cincinnati's Issue 3 was waged through the media and public discourse. Both the Christian right and the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movements relied on television advertisements, billboards, leaflets, mailers, newspapers, radio and in-person public speaking engagements. The movements each actively and strategically framed and to some extent, reframed their claims to ensure mass support of their position. The two movements' frames centered around notions of equal rights. Issue proponents conveyed the message that gays and lesbians already possess equal rights and do not qualify for minority status. The opposing gay rights movement posited the idea that Issue 3 was discrimination and would thus, eliminate equality.

Framing, a concept first introduced by Goffinan (1974), refers to the ways in which social movements "assign meaning to and interpret, relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists" (Snow and Benford 1998:198). As Benford noted, "frames are crucial to social movement dynamics because they serve to guide individual and collective action"(1993:678). Proffering claims and images that engage targeted individuals and populations is of primary concern to movements in competition. Opposing movements vie for resonance of and support for their frames.
While scholars have examined the various aspects of framing for a solitary social movement, little attention has been paid to opposing movements in the framing process. In this chapter, I explore both the Christian right and gay, lesbian, and bisexual movements' media messages and images to assess the differences in effectiveness of framing and public support when two movements compete for the popular vote. I found that Issue 3 proponents successfully deployed frames that struck a chord with Cincinnati citizens while opponents messages fell short in some critical ways.

In addition, I analyze the ways in which movements appropriate cultural values and beliefs and draw upon individuals' experiences to have their frame(s) connect with the public. Both movements' messages tapped into salient beliefs. However, gay rights movement claims did not cultivate values as thoroughly as did their Christian counterparts. Finally, I explore the extent to which the effectiveness of one movement's claims and images affects the other movement's framing strategies, compelling opponents to re-tool and/or explicitly counter their opponents' frames. I found that the opposing movements influenced each other in terms of frame strategies, claims, and the ways in which voters received movement claims. Particularly poignant, I discovered that the gay rights movement was affected by the conservative's gains. The movement held an imperative to counter the Christian right but did not systematically respond.

FRAMING AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Snow and his colleagues (1986; 1988; 1992; 1994) discussed "collective action frames" as "action oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate social movement activities and campaigns." For frames to be successful in garnering public
support they must 'resonate' with people (see Snow and Benford 1988). Movement frames need to "strike a chord" with individual's lifeworld experience and their overall beliefs and values (Snow and Benford 1988). When messages connect with targeted individuals then a movement can expect support at the voting booth. Clearly, a central strategic goal of movements is to work to garner popular support through the production and dissemination of particular claims and images. To begin to assess the different ways in which movement messages are effectively conveyed and how they relate to the public, I follow an existing framework that aids in the deconstruction of frames into separate "tasks" and into different modes of resonance with the desired populations (Snow and Benford 1988).

In this analysis of the components of framing, I am guided by Gamson's framework but also borrow from Snow and Benford's conceptions of movements' tasks in the framing of grievances and protagonists. Gamson delineated 'framing' into three components that movements fulfill to mobilize people for collective action including 'injustice,' 'agency,' and 'identity' (1992). Simply, these tasks set the "story line" by addressing the questions: "What is the Issue?", "Who is responsible?", and "What is the Solution?" (Ryan 1991:57). The degree to which movement frames fulfill these three tasks help to determine whether they echo with the public, thereby facilitating mobilization around or support for movement aims.

First, I deconstruct both movements' claims and images into distinct tasks and evaluate their potency. Second, I analyze the various ways in which movement frames did
and did not strike a chord with the desired targets. Finally, I examine the ways in which social movements' frames are shaped by and influence the outcome for their opponent.

DECONSTRUCTING THE FRAME TASK FORMULA

Framing is very much like the marketing or packaging of ideas. The right-wing and gay rights movements both wanted people to support them and thus, they developed strategies in advertisements and the like and in public speaking engagements that they believed would best resonate with potential supporters. As such, their claims and images conformed to three central themes. The first of these is what Gamson called "injustice," refers to "moral indignation." That is, the task is to convey the message that some wrong doing has occurred (or will occur) and that such wrong doing should stimulate action for those with whom the message resonates. According to Gamson, this component requires that constituents have the ability to identify those who cause the "harm or suffering (32)."

Not only must movements identify the protagonist in framing, but as Snow and Benford articulated, they must also provide messages about the nature and extent of the problem (1988).

Second, what Gamson refers to as "the agency component." is that framing aspect that informs people that change can occur and that they have agency to foster such change. Movements, who actively shape the messages they promote, have the distinct task of not only informing constituents "that something can be done but that "we" can do something" (Gamson 1992:7). Relatedly, the third aspect Gamson emphasized is "identity," which allows people to identify themselves and, like the injustice component, the opponent. It sets up the contenders-- who is the 'us' versus who is the 'them.' He
argued that it is important to set up a concrete opponent responsible for "policies or practices" rather than an opponent like hunger which is "likely to remain an abstraction" (1992:7-8). Likewise, defining a "we' who will bring the change about" is also a requirement for framing (8). The task at hand is to ensure that "individuals see themselves as part of a group when some shared characteristic becomes salient and is defined as important" (Taylor and Whittier 1992:110; See also Melucci 1989; 1995; see review in Laraña, Johnson, and Gusfield 1994), as well as identify the adversary against whom they organize. I now turn to an analysis of the frame tasks employed by each of the opposing sides in the conflict over Issue 3.

**Identifying Issue 3 Injustice Frames**

**Issue 3 Proponents.** Both the Christian right proponents of Issue 3 and the opposing gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement attempted to have injustice claims strike a chord with potential movement participants and voters. Christian messages identified both the problem and the protagonist. The problem, as defined by Issue 3 proponents, was that gays, lesbians and bisexuals are not minorities, do not deserve to be considered as such in the Human Rights Ordinance which protects from discrimination or any other policy, and thus, are unjustly seeking "special rights." In addition to the rights-based frames, Issue proponents early in the campaign made use of an older rhetoric of homosexuals as sinners, sick individuals, and predators. For the most part, however, their claims conformed to a rights approach focused on the necessary criteria for minority classification.
Rights-Based Discourse Strategy

The primary frame promoted throughout the Issue 3 campaign was that gay and lesbian people or "homosexuals" are not a minority. Equal Rights Not Special Rights designed a media strategy that relied heavily on a nationally distributed video called Gay Rights/Special Rights: Inside the Homosexual Agenda.¹ As one Issue 3 leader shared:

This video... stuck really to the most part to the civil rights issue... so it was a nice, it was [a] ... good presentation film... We just decided anybody who calls in we would make a presentation to them and everybody and their mother called.²

In the video, the pro-Issue 3 campaign literature, billboards, and local television advertisements, advocates promoted the claim that, unlike African Americans, homosexuals do not conform to the criteria set by the U.S. Supreme Court for minority status. The three criteria or themes that were presented and subsequently refuted by Cincinnati’s right-wing were: (1) Minorities must have immutable or unchangeable characteristics, (2) Minorities must suffer from economic discrimination, and (3) Minorities must be politically powerless.³

Immutability or Unchangeable Characteristics

The first theme promoted was immutability. Generally speaking, the Christian right rejects arguments that being gay like being straight, is an essential, natural, inborn quality that some people have. Rather, they take a social constructionist position and reduce gays, lesbians, and bisexuals to what they consider the main distinction, sexual behavior. Vera Whisman recently noted that "the claim of 'no choice' is to a pro-gay stance as the claim of 'choice' is to an anti-gay one: a foundational argument" (Whisman 1996:3). As such, the claim by Issue 3 proponents was that unlike African Americans who are a
legitimate minority, gays, lesbians, and bisexuals choose their behavior and therefore, are not a minority. In the Gay Rights/Special Rights video different spokespeople of color along with some white people—including politicians and psychological "experts"—argued that homosexuality is behavior, and thus chosen and controllable, while skin color and ethnicity are not. In one-third of the Yes on Issue 3 local television advertisement spots produced and aired in Cincinnati (2 of the 6 ads), African American spokeswomen refuted the comparison between being African American with homosexual behavior. For instance, one of the advertisements was quite explicit in this regard:

    Some people say that homosexual behavior is the same as being black. Does anyone really believe that? This makes no sense to me. We need to stop this in Cincinnati. I am voting yes on Issue 3.4

The protagonists are those who "illegitimately" claim to hold minority status and therefore deserve civil rights and its' benefits (see Herman 1997). Immutability was pursued largely by counter positioning gays and lesbians against African Americans. Along these lines, Currah (1994:57) argued that:

    Because race has served as a foundational categorizing of civil rights discourse in general, and of anti-discrimination law in particular, both the popular and legal discourses on these issues are always mediated, either directly or indirectly, through an analogy with race- and in the popular and legal vernacular of rights discourse it is a truism that race is an immutable characteristic.

Likewise, Herman (1997:113) argued that "in order to represent one group as "counterfeit," others must be constructed as "authentic." Ultimately, this strategy, she argued—"has proved problematic [for] CR [Christian right] politics—particularly for its race politics [given the group's] antipathy to [CR] groups of all kinds."
Financial Discrimination

The second minority status criteria offered by Issue 3 proponents was financial discrimination. Here again, attempts were made to construct gays and lesbians in opposition to 'true' minorities. In both the videotape and in the local television advertisements, right-wing proponents used survey statistics to highlight disparities between "homosexuals" and the "average" American in income, and homosexuals and African Americans in income level, education, numbers of persons in managerial position, and more. For instance, in one television advertisement homosexual income was presented at $55,430 compared to the average American income reported at $32,144. In a letter sent to Cincinnati residents, Take Back Cincinnati compared homosexuals to the national average, to Hispanics with 1-3 years of high school, and to blacks with 1-3 years of high school. In their print literature, the income figures of homosexuals ($55,430) were compared to "disadvantaged" African-Americans, also referred to as "blacks with 1-3 years of high school," who reportedly earned just over 12 thousand a year ($12,166).7

The injustice claim is that gays, who reportedly earn well above the average person and over four times that of "disadvantaged" African Americans, are seeking "special rights" or privileges. Indeed, several of the television promotional advertisements pursued the "special rights" theme. For instance, in the "Equal Rights" television advertisement spot8, the narrator reported:

The U.S. Constitution gives homosexuals equal rights. Now they're demanding special rights. And, that's not right. What makes them so special? Shouldn't we stop this in Cincinnati? Yessiree, vote yes on Issue 3.
A critical part of this injustice message and others throughout the campaign was that "special rights" meant affirmative action. According to Equal Rights Not Special Rights logic, gays do not qualify for minority status because they have substantially higher incomes than others and thus, they are seeking "special rights" from government and from business. According to Equal Rights Not Special Rights, 'special rights' referred to economic assurances such as affirmative action quotas and job preferences.

Political Weakness

To address the third criteria for minority status classification, political weakness, Issue 3 proponents again directly utilized the Gay Rights/Special Rights video and borrowed segments of it for their own local advertisements. In one advertisement aired prior the November 1993 election, the narrator asked the question: "Are homosexuals really powerless?" at the same time footage is shown of the U.S. Supreme courthouse and of thousands of people marching in the 1993 Gay and Lesbian March on Washington.

The narrator points out that gays themselves claimed to have donated 3.4 million dollars to Bill Clinton's presidential election campaign. The video continues by showing additional footage of the '93 March, as well as cover stories and news articles about gays and lesbians, such as that of the well publicized

Newsweek cover story on Lesbians/Lesbian Chic (1993). They also cite the appointment of openly lesbian Roberta Achtenberg to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as evidence that gays, lesbians, and bisexuals actually hold political power. They include interviews conducted with gay and lesbian activists at the March who themselves extol the political power that gays and lesbians have managed to
acquire. One prominent spokesman for Issue 3 said that he thought the videotape was particularly powerful since gays themselves did their own talking about holding power.\textsuperscript{11} To further document gay and lesbian political strength, at numerous public events Equal Rights Not Special Rights spokespeople exclaimed that "for the first time in Cincinnati history, City Council is controlled by those who have a pro-homosexual agenda."\textsuperscript{12} The images and messages were designed to convey the message that gays not only fail to meet the political weakness criteria for minority status, but rather homosexuals wield more than their fair share of political power.

The Equal Rights Not Special Rights frames focused chiefly on both the "condition of homosexuality" as immutable and relatively privileged and on the agenda of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement (see Herman 1997:69). One campaign leader shared this explicit strategy:

\begin{quote}
We decided on what strategy we wanted to take for the campaign. We basically decided to keep it totally civil rights, and not get into the personal issues .... [like] AIDS, or health, or San Francisco's behavior or anything like that. We wanted to keep it strictly on civil rights. That was a committee consensus, obviously there was varying opinions, but that's what the committee eventually decided and that's what we pretty much stuck to the whole time.\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

This rhetorical strategy was believed to be the most effective way to fight gay rights.

\textbf{Sin, Sick, and Predator}

Despite the fact that most of the campaign advertisements and other media adhered to issues surrounding equal and civil rights, Issue 3 proponents also invoked the more traditional rhetoric of sin and sickness in their depiction of the 'problem-maker' as
they focused on the behavior of homosexuals (see Herman 1997). Though only one advertisement spot mentions the behavior of gays and lesbians, as follows:

African Americans fought long and hard for civil rights in this country. We were fighting and some died for equal rights. And not for the choice of someone's bed partner. We need to stop this in Cincinnati. I'm voting yes on issue 3.14

However, this was a common theme in their Public Speaking Materials. They presented information such as that which came from pamphlets on homosexual relations produced by the Family Research Institute, Inc. and its' chairman, discredited Dr. Paul Cameron where they highlight the relationship between homosexuality (usually male) and child molestation, and the transmission of sexual transmitted diseases including HIV and AIDS. To promote the argument about child molestation, they asserted that the "North American Man Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) is an accepted member of the homosexual community."16 They also reported the prevalence of such specific non- normative acts including "urine sex," "torture sex," and "eating feces."17 In a fund solicitation letter sent by Take Back Cincinnati, the organization at the root of the petition drive, they informed "Cincinnati Residents...[that] this debate is about homosexuals forcing their values on you... it is about having you pay the medical bills when they become ill as a result of their unsafe, high risk sexual practices."18 They elaborated on such "high risk sexual practices" by providing percentages of estimated sexual partners and percentages who engage in anal sex, which they then report "spreads disease."19 Furthermore they declared that there is a truncated lifespan of lesbians and homosexuals who, according to their literature, die on average at the ages of 45 and 42 respectively.20 Similar themes are presented in the less utilized, but widely available, film The Gay Agenda (1992). Furthermore, Take Back
Cincinnati declared that gays and lesbians "want the children" and said that this and others like it were demands specified "in the homosexual's own written agenda." While the Equal Rights Not Special Rights campaign leadership consciously decided to avoid same-sex sexual conduct as a primary theme in the initial petition drive they afforded it distinct attention and it remained part of Equal Rights Not Special Rights' speaking packet. Despite these claims which were promoted more at the onset, the campaign frames focused primarily on the rights-based issues of gay immutability, economic privilege and political power. Along these lines, in Didi Herman's analysis of the comparable Colorado Initiative, she talked of two traditional discourses that were invoked by the Christian Right---"Biblical injunction and a rhetoric of disease and seduction" (1997:113). Increasingly more prominent in their discourse strategy, however, is what she referred to as "rights pragmatists (112)." She argued that rights pragmatists advocate "secular arguments rooted within traditions of mainstream rights discourse" (113). Furthermore, they "fight the gay movement on liberal democratic turf (115)." As such, in the 1992 campaign in Colorado, the main orchestrator of the anti-gay initiative is quoted as saying that: "demolishing the presumption that gays are an 'oppressed minority' [is] the only means by which gay militants' political power can be destroyed at its roots (Tony Marco cited in Herman 1997:113-114, emphasis in original)."

It was a liberal rights strategy that fueled the Issue 3 campaign as well. Along with the Gay Rights/Special Rights video, the video-inspired television advertisements, billboards, print literature, and public speaking engagements, Issue 3 proponents' frames drove home the messages that--gays choose their lifestyle, gays are wealthy (and greedy),

96
highly educated, and politically powerful (even conspiratorial), and are seeking preferences in the job market and in the workplace. At the same time they promoted the view that gays are white and male (as they cited only gay males in their statistics), and that there were no gay and lesbian people of color. Finally, the rights discourse was not the only claim strategy employed. Early in the campaign, in particular, Christian activists invoked messages regarding the sinfulness and sickness of homosexuality.

Next, I turn to a discussion of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement’s injustice framing. The gay rights movement produced a narrower media campaign focused primarily around the message that Issue 3 is discrimination. To convey their claim, challengers invoked images of atrocious historical figures meant to illuminate the extreme nature of the Issue.

**Issue 3 Opponents.** While opponents of Issue 3 had substantially fewer resources translating into significantly less variation in media frames, they produced a campaign frame depicting both the problem and the protagonist. With the expertise of a local advertising executive, Equality Cincinnati the organization at the helm of the No On Issue 3 campaign developed and disseminated print literature, billboards, yard signs and a single television advertisements designed to show the injustice of discrimination.

**Anti-Discrimination Strategy**

The central image promoted was that of "the three faces of evil," namely Adolph Hitler, a hooded Ku Klux Klansman, and Senator Joe McCarthy. These three historical figures in the media campaign. The television advertisement showed old black and white film footage of Hitler speaking before a crowd, a Klan group walking with a youth also
adorned in the ceremonious hood and robe, and Senator Joseph McCarthy speaking at
what appears to be a court proceeding. The short slogan associated with the television
advertisement and the print material was 'Vote No Never Again On Issue 3.' The full
television script is narrated and also printed on the screen conveying both the problem and
the culprit:

There is a large group of fervent Cincinnati citizens drawn together by a common
belief they know what is best for the rest of us. They promote a kind of
discrimination that comes from another time and another place. We must not let
their hate and prejudice start again. We must stand up to them 15 and preserve
rights that belong to all of us. Vote No Never Again On Issue 3. 22

Yard signs and billboards similarly displayed the three villains. In the center of the
display there were three separate black and white photographs one of Hitler, a
Klansmember, and Joe McCarthy. The words above the pictures read "Vote No Never
Again" and on the bottom, "On Issue 3" was printed. In the solicitation letters and drop
literature pieces No On 3 not only presented the images of Hitler, the Klan, and
McCarthy, but they also more comprehensively discussed the implications and
consequences of Issue 3. Much of the print literature begins by introducing the initiative
as detrimentally affecting all Cincinnatians.23 Illustrative of this design, for example, is an
Equality Cincinnati/No On 324 mailer which begins as follows:

Discrimination has been with us for a long time. The faces have changed, but the
meaning stays the same. Each time discrimination occurs we wish we had done
something to stop it. Now is the time to say NO. Issue 3 is Discrimination.' On
November, 2nd, Cincinnatians will vote on Issue 3. The issue proposes making a
permanent change to our City's charter -- our constitution. Approving Issue 3
would prohibit the City from enforcing the law of equal opportunity for all of its
citizens. It will permanently prevent the City from passing laws to provide equality
for all. Specifically, Issue 3 promotes discrimination against gay, lesbian, and
bisexual people. No group should ever be singled out for discrimination.
The primary message communicated in the print media was essentially the same as that which aired on TV, although more information and education was provided in leaflets, flyers, and mailers. Equality Cincinnati enhanced the basic slogan to read- “Issue 3 is discrimination. Discrimination is wrong. We will not tolerate discrimination in our city. And we are voting No, Never again on Issue 3.”

Equality Cincinnati utilized different media to convey their anti-discrimination message. However, how such discrimination actually occurs and in particular, upon whom discrimination would be enacted with the passage of Issue 3, remained obscured in their injustice frame. Despite the fact that the Issue was specifically aimed at gays, lesbians and bisexuals and that the mobilization effort against Issue 3 was lead by gay rights advocates, nowhere in the television advertisement are lesbians or gay men mentioned.

In the print literature, however, discrimination against gays, lesbians, and bisexuals was discussed. Although gays were not mentioned in the lead sentences in these materials and they were seldom highlighted in the print literature. In keeping with a wide-appeal anti-discrimination strategy, the predominance of the Equality Cincinnati print literature did not specifically highlight any actual people or the inevitable real life effects of Issue 3 (see Chapter 5). One notable exception to this was a literature drop that specifically discusses consequences as follows:

Issue 3 would make it legal for an employer to fire a good worker, solely because of his or her sexual orientation. Issue 3 would make it legal for a landlord to evict a good, paying tenant solely because of his or her sexual orientation.  

One activist in the gay community was herself under the impression that “the words gay
and lesbian were never used" in any of the No On 3 advertisements. One of the campaign leaders shared the rationale behind the advertisements:

We decided in doing this campaign ... that a warm, fuzzy gay people are your friends was not going to work on this campaign. We thought we had to get out there and say this is dangerous. Wake up Cincinnati.... This kind of discrimination and prejudice is the same sort of thing that happened in Nazi Germany, with the Klan, and with Joe McCarthy. Let's not let this happen in Cincinnati. And that was the message we wanted to convey.  

Indeed, to appeal to a wider audience, the Equality organizers wanted to downplay gayness. According to a campaign decision-maker, activists thought the campaign would be more palatable if they promoted "a straight appearance." One campaign leader shared: "I think that the theory was that the campaign should have a straight appearance. And we also thought that female spokespeople would be much less threatening to the general community than men, particularly gay men". Another campaign leader shared similar views:

We devised a strategy that said we're not going to let them control the debate. We're going to control the debate. And the only thing that we're going to talk about is discrimination. We're not to address, we can't, on our budget possibly address all of the anti-gay stereotypes that they're going to bring up. So, we're going to focus on discrimination.

Thus, the gay rights movement intentionally steered the focus of dialogue away from the experiences of gay, lesbian, and bisexual lives.

A major component to the injustice frame was the depiction of the protagonist. A significant portion of the messages conveyed in all of their media efforts were the images of Hitler, the Klan, and Joe McCarthy. It was hardly mistakable that from the images and slogan alone--"Vote NO. Never Again." -- that the likenesses portrayed were meant to
draw a link between Issue 3 proponents and these three faces of evil. In a letter written to the Cincinnati Enquirer,32 one anti-Issue 3 activist voiced a defense of the 'three faces of evil' frame strategy:

Those of us who belong to that segment of the population know about the Ku Klux Klan's recent pledges to terrorize queers. We remember Sen. Joseph McCarthy's witch hunts, in which hundreds of 'perverts' lost their livelihoods, and we recall that Hitler sent tens of thousands of homosexuals to the gas chambers. The KKK chiefly targets African Americans; McCarthy was notorious for hunting Communists; most of Hitler's victims were Jews. But if you examine any of these monsters' laundry lists of people to be purged, you always find queers, too. We just don't see a big step between eliminating our rights and eliminating us.

Likewise, one campaign decision-maker told a conference audience that "this kind of discrimination and prejudice is the same sort of thing that happened in Nazi Germany, with the Klan, and with Joe McCarthy ... that is the message we wanted to convey."33 As such, much of the No On 3 print literature referred to issue 3 proponents as "extremists"34 or "extremist right,"35 and as a "hate group."36 Equality Cincinnati's Public Speaking Guidelines (1993) clearly convey their framing choice in the ad campaign:

The images were utilized because they represent people, and discrimination, who have gone too far. The wording says that there is a group of citizens drawn together by the common belief that they know what's right for the rest of us. The tag line 'Vote No, Never Again, On Issue 3' suggests that the voters have the ability to control whether or not more discrimination will occur. The ad does not say that our opponents are as bad as Hitler or the Klan, only that discrimination can go too far.37

The gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement produced "brilliant"38 and "powerful"39 media particularly in the way in which they characterized the opponent as evil. While they were limited to producing and airing only one television advertisement, they also utilized other forms of media to promote their frame. Along with Issue proponents, the gay rights
movement successfully identified the problem and catalyst as they saw it. The right clearly had more variation in their proffered injustice frames while opponents stuck more narrowly with one central theme throughout the campaign. Both attempted to construct the other as a villain trying to promote a broader, detrimental agenda. As discussed later in this section, the gay rights movement was less successful in constructing injustice than was their right-wing counterpart.

**Framing Agency**

While the injustice component of collective action frames identifies the problem, the agency component is that aspect which informs people that they can do something about "it," whatever "it" happens to be (Gamson 1992). As Gamson stated, collective action frames "empower people by defining them as potential agents of their own history" (1992:7). The task is not only to convey "how" to make change, but to instill in selected segments of the populations a sense of "we-ness" in that process. Next, I consider the ways in which each of the two opposing movements fulfilled the task of framing agency in the Issue 3 campaign. Both of the movements instructed voters on the various ways they could participate in making a difference.

**Issue 3 Proponents.** Both sides suggested that the solution to the stated problems was to vote and each side proceeded to inform the public which voting choice was correct. In their television advertisements, the Christian right urged voters to "Stop this in Cincinnati...". Their television spots urged Cincinnatians to vote for the issue as they melodiously declared, "Yessiree, vote yes on issue 3." The agency component was most
evident as Christian right forces reiterated to the public that they can readily make a
difference to stop "special rights" by voting for Issue 3.

Prior to the actual election campaign, proponents of Issue 3 instilled a sense of
agency in Cincinnatians with the initial petition drive. Early on, Take Back Cincinnati
sought the assistance of the citizenry to distribute and sign petitions. They asked
Cincinnatians who agreed with their claims that gays are seeking special rights to "draw
the line, then do three things," including actively getting involved in soliciting signatures
and having them notarized, joining the organization for fifteen dollars, and mailing both
the notarized petitions and the donation promptly back to Take Back Cincinnati.41 From
its inception, many like-minded Cincinnatians were informed of the ways in which they
had agency to fight the problem and stop the problem-maker, gays and lesbians.

The Christian right appear to have also impressed upon supporters a sense of or
common purpose in the ways in which they appealed for action. For instance, in a June
1993 solicitation letter,42 Take Back Cincinnati proclaimed that "the goal" of the
organization and the ballot drive was so that "We, the People," can voice our opinion at
the ballot box."

Issue 3 proponents also attempted to instill a sense of agency and "we-ness" with
particular groups--Christians (white and black) and other religious groups, and African-
Americans (Christian or not) by showing each the ways in which gay rights posed a threat
to them specifically. For instance, the "special rights" rhetoric with which African-
Americans were targeted highlighted that gay rights were detract from the civil rights that
African-Americans have fought so long to accomplish. For instance, of this is in an early
Take Back Cincinnati letter addressed to Cincinnati Residents and also later in Equal Rights Not Special Rights' Public Speaking Material where they proclaimed that the "Cincinnati City Council has dangerously weakened the rights of true minorities." To further this argument, Equal Rights Not Special Rights created linkages between the Human Rights Ordinance and the inclusion of sexual orientation into the 1964 Civil Rights Act "where the losers will be the real minorities who can prove a history of discrimination; the very people for whom special status laws were created." Similarly, Christian clergy, both black and white, were provided with material that explored gay rights' "threat to Churches." Take Back Cincinnati addressed a mid-summer letter "Dear Pastor" which read: "we seek your daily prayer support and the prayer support of your church family to undergird this very important endeavor." A number of "real life" vignettes were also presented to illustrate the ways in which gays threaten the church including the well-known 1989 incident where " 'AIDS activists' invaded a Roman Catholic mass at New York City's St. Patrick's Cathedral, shouting obscenities and defiling Communion elements." Issue 3 proponents met the task of framing agency by articulating both how to effect change and who must rise to the occasion.

**Issue 3 Opponents.** On the opposing side, the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement's "agency" theme also simply asked Cincinnatians to vote; to vote against discrimination. One literature drop piece for example stated, "Discrimination is wrong. Vote NO on Issue 3." Another piece of literature exclaimed that "it is time to stand up and protect the rights that belong to everyone. We must vote NO on Issue 3." Likewise, in an October 1993 letter sent to Cincinnati's psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers, Equality
Cincinnati agents pleaded to "please, vote NO on Issue 3, Tuesday, November 2." The television advertisement also urged viewers to "vote no never again." Cincinnatians were also called upon to support the cause by financially donating to Equality Cincinnati and the No On 3 campaign and by volunteering time and energy. This plea for help also served to impart a sense of collective agency. For instance, one Equality Cincinnati information sheet proclaimed: "With the generous help of all those who believe in equality, we will prevent this deterioration in Cincinnati's quality of life." In at least one of their mailers, Equality Cincinnati enclosed return envelopes that read "Count me in!" and listed thirteen different jobs that needed volunteer aid including distributors of literature and yard signs, presenters for speakers bureau, and staffers for phone banks. The "we" in their statements, as with the Issue proponents, emphasized a sense of common purpose and thus, contributed to a sense of collective identity for like-minded readers.

Through their advertisements and other correspondences, Issue 3 opponents consistently informed residents what to do to protect Cincinnatians against discrimination. Directions to vote "no" on Issue 3 were provided on all their ads-television, yardsigns, billboards, and nearly all mailers and leaflets. Further, like-minded individuals were encouraged to act within the campaign as donors and volunteers. A sense of common purpose was also imparted simply by the language they used to frame the contest and through their efforts to recruit workers and financial supporters.

Both movements successfully showed Cincinnatians the ways in which they had agency. They were shown what action was necessary for them to do, particularly by
emphasizing each individuals' power to vote. However, interviewees from both sides discussed the confusion over what a yes or no vote meant in terms of the ballot language. One No On 3 leader discussed this confusion and the way in which Equal Rights Not Special Rights capitalized on the problem:

People were confused as to what the issues were. And, so what they [Christian right] did was they just had a sample of the ballot... They did ads that were in every section of the newspaper, sometimes several sections for the newspaper for over a week. I mean, you could not open the paper without seeing their ad .... And what they did, is they used a very similar [thick red and white striped background] graphic to what we used in our campaign. 55

One Issue 3 proponent discussed the language problem as follows:

We were encountering confusion on what yes and no meant. I'm against... special rights. I'm gonna vote no... you know .... not the right answer. So that's why at the very end we did the ballot ads to emphasize that you had to vote yes even though you are doing a negative. 56

Despite ballot language confusion which caused voter uncertainty about whether or not a yes vote was for or against gay rights, both movements consistently articulated throughout the campaign the ways in which voters were empowered to act to remedy the problem.

Framing Identity

As discussed earlier, the Christian right depicted gays and lesbians primarily as a group of privileged people seeking special rights on the basis of behavior. While they also conveyed messages about the "immoral" conduct that 'homosexuals' purportedly engage in, the main framing strategy followed a rights-based approach. To a lesser extent, the Christian right promoted claims that the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement were "extremist." 57 Conversely, the gay rights movement largely depicted Issue 3 proponents in extreme terms and likened them to such infamous figures as Adolph Hitler, the Ku Klux
Klan, and Senator Joseph McCarthy. Both portrayed themselves as victims of the other's agenda and, in some ways, as defenders of equal rights. Bill Gamson pointed out that "a collective action frame must be adversarial" (1992:85). To Gamson, the identity component "is about the process of defining... 'we,' typically in opposition to some 'they' who have different interests or values" (84). This analysis reveals the overlap of the components of framing where the depiction of the antagonist is interlinked with the messages of injustice and with that of agency where a sense of we-ness is conveyed.

**Issue 3 Proponents.** Though differently, both movements attended to the task of pulling together diverse categories of people into an 'us' through their framing strategies. The identity component deployed set those who support civil rights for African-Americans against those who allegedly seek to erode those extant rights and benefits. Likewise, the framing strategy appealed to both people who oppose affirmative action and some of those who have traditionally stood to benefit from it. The "we" generally intended included (the non-mutually exclusive categories) heterosexuals, Christians and Catholics, and black and white people.

To accomplish what I call a diverse "us," the right-wing media included images of both white and black, men and women. The Christian right is well known to be a white and Christian movement (see Herman 1997). Thus, the incorporation of African-Americans in a full third of the television advertisements, on all of the billboards, in several newspaper editorials, and in local Christian organizational newsletters was striking. Similarly, in the Gay Rights/Special Rights video aired during the campaign and widely distributed in Cincinnati, different people of color argued the distinctions between being
African-American and homosexual behavior. In addition, the strategy of presenting black/white racial diversity was intentionally utilized as a means of targeting groups for support. They also varied their use of men and women to accomplish diversity. Equal Rights Not Special Rights decided to specifically aim their messages to African Americans and to Catholics.\(^58\) One key decision-maker involved in Equal Rights Not Special Rights explicitly shared this:

A major strategy of the Yes On 3 campaign was to target their advertising campaign to African Americans and to Catholics. The committee identified two voting blocs that we targeted: Black and Catholic. We felt we already had the white males. So our specific target was to win the Black community and the Catholic community. That’s why we worked very hard, I worked very hard to get the Archbishop’s endorsement. I did not end up getting that. And, I worked very hard in the Black community and the black Baptist Ministers Association to get their endorsement, which I did get.\(^59\)

Despite their two target-group strategy, the intended targeting of Cincinnati’s Catholic population was not actively pursued in the frames, but through other strategies (see Chapter 5). Indeed, the explicit strategy of aiming their messages to Catholics appears to have been dropped once the Archbishop declined his support.\(^60\) However, the amount and variety of images and messages that included a prominent local African-American Minister and other people of color, lent credibility to the claim of difference between African Americans and Gays.\(^61\) Interviewees on both sides commented on the noticeable and poignant symbolism conveyed by the inclusion of African Americans in what is commonly considered a white social movement.

Issue 3 researcher, Charlene Allen (1995:16), summarized the unique duality of the "us" aspect of the identity frame and its' effects, as she stated:
One of the most interesting aspects of the... battle over Issue 3 is the way that those who support a conservative Christian interpretation of gay rights are able to use uniform languages to convey separate and distinct messages to very different audiences—black and white voters. [she argues]—that a 'duplicitous signaling' tactic of the CR[Christian right] allows it to communicate multiple, conflicting and contradictory messages to different audiences.

Despite their generally white constituency, the Christian right successfully portrayed the Issue 3 campaign in a more diverse light sending the message that blacks, not just whites, are against "special rights." The "us" was all who support African American's civil rights against (them) the gays, those seeking to tear down those gains.

A second identity component was also promoted specifically aimed at African Americans. To proponents, without the legislative protection of Issue 3, whites could gain affirmative action preference over blacks. As one supporter of Black affirmative action and a leader in the Issue 3 campaign summarized the issue:

If homosexuals receive a minority status, you can have white men as minorities. And it's like, man, they become the new minority and we're on 'the back of the bus again. And so employers could easily hire a white man, white woman over a black man, black woman and say, well, we hire minorities. So they become the new minority.\(^{62}\)

Therefore in this identity component, the 'us' are African Americans and the 'them,' are whites, despite the fact that both groups were drawn together in alliance within this Christian right movement.

**Issue 3 Opponents.** For Issue 3 opponents the injustice frame chosen also dictated a diverse "us" and pointed to a hate-motivated them. As earlier discussed, media and other advertisements utilizing the 'three faces of evil' were designed to tap at the sentiment that pits humanity against the inhumane. Therefore, the images and claims simply implied that
any decent human being would do whatever possible to fight such forces of evil. This message allowed Equality Cincinnati to strive for diverse support through print literature, televised advertisement, and at public speaking and other events. As such, Equality Cincinnati described itself and the No on 3 campaign in some of its print literature as:

A diverse coalition of people and groups committed to fairness in our city. We are from every political party, every religious denomination, and every ethnic background. We are men and women, gay and straight, people of all colors, young and old, rich and poor, able-bodied and disabled, labor and management, and everyone in between. We are business people, clergy, students, homemakers, and retirees.63

The only thing separating the two distinct groups is a commitment to fairness, making a broad coalition potentially possible.

To facilitate wider audience appeal, the Equality organizers also wanted to promote images of diversity while playing down the gay nature of the Human Rights Ordinance and the attack on gay human rights. Indeed, at least one of the lead organizers and spokespersons was a known heterosexual. All of the visible leaders of the No On 3 campaign were white. As such, they generally did not appeal to a racially diverse audience through the choice of spokespersons.64 For the most part, the No ON 3 campaign maintained the antidiscrimination stance and the potential impact of discrimination on "all people in Cincinnati."65 To promote a sense of unity in diversity, for instance, an Equality Cincinnati/No On 3 postcard mailed out before the election displayed the ‘3 faces of evil’ on one side and on the other the famous saying by Lutheran Minister, Martin Niemöller (1945) which read:

In Germany, the Nazis came for the Communists and I didn't speak up because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the Jews and I didn't speak up because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the trade Unionists and I didn't speak up
because I wasn't a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Catholics and I was a
Protestant so I didn't speak up. Then they came for me ... by that time there was
no one to speak up for anyone.66

As indicated earlier, there was a perception among some that gay and lesbians were not
included in the frames. While clearly that was not the case, the perception of it not being a
gay campaign is significant. The rejection of a rigid gay-only boundary around Issue 3
was an effort to promote a broader sense of collective identity, broader support, and
desired victory. The No On 3 campaign also sought to achieve this broad coalition
through its endorsements and though less so, through speaking engagements.

The NO On 3 campaign sought well-publicized endorsements from a wide range of
organizations. They had at least 75 endorsements from leading local and regional
organizations representing various categories of people.67 Along with a number of queer
and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered organizations, the list of "organizations
saying no to Issue 3" were the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Greater Cincinnati Region of the
National Conference of Christian and Jews, Black Lawyers Association of Cincinnati,
Greater Cincinnati Appalachian PAC, the Presbytery of Cincinnati, and the Jewish
Community Relations Council of Cincinnati.68 Print literature distributed by Equality
Cincinnati publicizing the broad reaching list of organizational support served to promote
the image of a highly diverse group opposing the Issue.

Despite the wide range of coalitional support through endorsements and the
participation at events, the majority of in-person appearances by the campaign consisted
of a few white women (at least one heterosexual) and one white gay man. However,
Equality Cincinnati did work to bring together people of diverse backgrounds to speak
about the issue at public events. On at least a few occasions, the No On 3 campaign was successful in promoting events where racial and ethnic diversity was in evidence. For instance, one event involved a worship service led by black and white clergy of various affiliations,\textsuperscript{69} while another speaking engagement included an Appalachian\textsuperscript{70} activist protesting the initiative.

"Diversity" was discussed as a goal for the campaign. Ironically, one Equality Cincinnati activist discussed this strategy as an impediment to the campaign. This interviewee said:

In retrospect, a mistake we made, in the beginning [was that] Equality spent way too much time trying to be diverse. You know, men, women, straight, gay, Appalachian, African American. ...I mean, when we were in that diversity mode.... we should have just, you know... go[ne] for it... [we tried] to cast the biggest net possible.\textsuperscript{71}

Despite this sentiment, Equality Cincinnati leadership supported the effort to become a more diverse movement and present a unified, racially diverse image. However, they were criticized for their lack of true diversity behind the diverse "us" portrayed and for the extreme depiction of their opponent.

Gamson's framework involves three critical frame tasks-- injustice, agency, and identity. Evidence shows that both the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement and the Christians fulfilled each task as part of their frame strategies. However, there were variations in the depth and breadth with which each were pursued. Compared to its counterpart, the Christian right more comprehensively tackled the outlined aspects framing. The movements' frames were variously received by the public. In cases such as this, a challenging movement may be forced to re-frame to respond or otherwise counter
the other movement's claims. Before considering these dynamics, an analysis of how messages were received by Cincinnati voters is warranted.

CONCEPTUALIZING FRAME RESONANCE

Framing is a dynamic process. For claims and images to connect with desired populations, they must be developed out of extant cultural beliefs and values and they must make sense in terms of individual's everyday life world experience (Snow and Benford 1988). Analyses of frames requires not only an examination of the packaging of the campaigns, but also a look at the ways in which potential voters interpreted and responded to the competing claims. Next I turn to a discussion of the existing beliefs and values that fertilized each movement's messages followed by an analysis of the extent to which proffered claims and images made sense with people's life world experience.

Connecting Frames to Cultural Beliefs

Both the Christian and the gay rights movements capitalized on salient extant cultural values and beliefs. Each of the opposing movements developed upon the same fundamental cultural value, equal rights. Snow and Benford (1988) argued that existing beliefs form a constraint that affects the "substance, appeal and mobilizing potency" of movement frames (205). To analyze this "belief constraint" or "dilemma," they posited two key dimensions that warrant attention. The first, is "Centrality' or the degree of salience of the movement's stated values in the "larger belief system" (1988:205-206). When the value promoted is not as important as other existing values, it is incumbent on the movements to provide further information and education in their campaigning. The second element of belief is twofold and includes both "the range of the central ideational
elements or the domains of life they encompass," and "the degree of interrelatedness of
frames or various ideational elements within the belief system" (1988: 205-206). More
simply, frames that connect merely to one central value or belief, like the widely held belief
that discrimination is wrong, are considered more "vulnerable to being discounted if that
value ... is called into question or if its hierarchical salience diminishes within the entire
belief system" (206).

Issue 3 proponents. The Christian right tapped into voters' views on equal rights and
special rights, and moral beliefs about homosexuality. Pro-Issue 3 framing may have also
linked into extant prejudicial views towards gay, lesbian, and bisexual people. Proponents
were able to interrelate these different ideational elements by tapping into a broader range
of extant values garnering wider popular support. The Christian right strategy,
particularly early on in the petition drive, packaged the issue to tap into the negative
attitudes or moral opposition to homosexuality. However, views on homosexuality vary
depending upon the particular phrasing and meaning of questions posed to the general
public in survey formats. Around the same time as the Issue 3 campaign, just less than
half (46%) of the U.S. general public "agreed that homosexual relations between
consenting adults should be legal" (Currah 1994:56; see also NYTirnes/CBS Feb 1993).
Although framing efforts were explicitly targeted to African-American voters in the Issue
3 campaign, Blacks were no more likely to hold negative attitudes about homosexuality
than their white counterparts (Herek and Capitanio 1995). Indeed, "negative attitudes
toward homosexuality are widespread but do not appear to be more prevalent among
Blacks than among Whites" (Herek and Capitanio 1995:95). Though the general public
tends to disapprove of homosexuality, in 1993 a clear majority of people (65%) supported action to "ensure equal rights for gays" (Button, Rienzo and Wald 1997: 61). Over three-fourths (78%) of U.S. respondents "agreed that homosexuals should have equal rights in terms of job opportunities" (Currin 1994: 56; see also Button, Rienzo and Wald 1997). This is important because the general public in 1993 was erroneously under the impression that "gays and lesbians are already granted protection by existing federal law" and therefore a full one-half (50%) were opposed to "extending current civil rights laws to cover gays" (Button, Rienzo, and Wald 1997: 61).

Special Rights/Affirmative Action Frame Resonance

Beliefs about special rights and affirmative action were played upon by right-wing activists in their media and other materials promoting Issue 3. For instance, a board member of Cincinnati's conservative Citizens for Community Values, explained that "under the U.S. Constitution, homosexuals have the same rights as all other Americans."72 Likewise, one Issue 3 leader stated that:

Everyone has Constitutional rights, and they're pretty much stated right in there. I think that's why 'Equal Rights Not Special Rights' was a very good title for the campaign. Because we do believe in equal rights.73

Issue 3 proponents promoted the connection between special rights and affirmative action preferences and quotas. Most of the affirmative action messages were transmitted by campaign spokespersons at various assemblies to groups such as the local Young Republicans and the Women's Club of Cincinnati. Issue leaders also participated in radio interviews and debates, aired both locally and in other cities such as Washington, DC and San Francisco.74 While the television advertisements conveyed the soundbite "no special
rights," public appearances allowed proponents to make explicit and further cultivate the argument that these rights symbolically represented affirmative action and related benefits. For instance, Equal Rights Not Special Rights speaking materials raised the question, "What is this all about?" The top answer provided is--"It is about affirmative action which leads to quotas."\textsuperscript{75} One of the campaign leaders confirmed the use of this frame. "We were strongly opposed to giving homosexuals protected class status at all, [Be]cause that raises ...affirmative action, quotas, [and] all that Stuff."\textsuperscript{76} Other interviewees also shared this special rights/affirmative action link. One Issue 3 supporter shared his views that gays and lesbians "were a 'third gender' seeking "special privileges and protection by the government".\textsuperscript{77} Another central activist explained that "if gays prove they have been discriminated against, we will begin to see such things as affirmative action for gays and all the same things that are in place for blacks, will be in place for gays."\textsuperscript{78} Thus, the injustice was extended to include gays and lesbians push for "affirmative action." Issue 3 leaders were able to present the Affirmative Action theme in a guest column in one of the two leading City newspapers, The Cincinnati Enquirer. In the article, they listed a number of demands that gays and lesbians were said to have drafted for the 1993 March on Washington. Among those listed, was "Affirmative action for homosexuals and lesbians."\textsuperscript{79} However, just one week before the election, The Cincinnati Enquirer provided information attempting to dispute the myth that the Human Rights Ordinance ensured affirmative action.\textsuperscript{80} Despite this announcement, the frames conveyed both during and prior to the campaign, portrayed the original Human Rights Ordinance as the road to affirmative action, quotas, and preferences and Issue 3 as a stop measure.
The affirmative action/special rights link was an organizing theme from early on in the campaign. In their attempts to prevent Issue 3 from being placed on the ballot, Equality Cincinnati, along with the League of Women Voters argued that the ballot initiative was "a result of misleading statements to the people who signed the initiative petitions." According to legal counsel for Issue 3 opponents, the "CEO of Take Back Cincinnati" who himself collected more than one-thousand signatures promoting the ballot initiative "agreed that he claimed that 'special rights' include quotas and affirmative action." Despite the fact that it was "never told [to] those signing [to get the issue on the ballot] that the Human Rights Ordinance [itself] prohibits affirmative action for gays" promoters of the initiative capitalized on the general belief that such special rights were or would soon become available.

Affirmative action was originally created to level the playing field for African Americans who have long suffered the consequences of institutional and individual discrimination. The right developed upon the existing American value of "individual rights" and relatedly affirmative action, by simultaneously resonating with both those holding anti-affirmative action positions and those supporting affirmative action for "deserved" or legitimated minorities (see Herman 1997:128-136; see also Allen 1995). Unlike gays who were portrayed as illegitimately special rights seeking, the Christians conveyed the message that African Americans really deserved special rights because they hold a 'legitimate' disadvantage (see also Herman 1997).

Affirmative action for Blacks is also a contested terrain (see Gamson and Modigliani 1987; Steeh and Krysan 1996; see also Lipset 1992; Lipset and Snyder 1978).
Any suggestion of preference or selection out for special treatment raises opposition. The ways that questions about affirmative action are phrased determine the level of support that it receives (Gamson and Modigliani 1987). The ideal of equal opportunity appears to garner more support than the programs designed to facilitate this value (see Steeh and Krysan 1996; Schuman in Fine 1992; Fine 1992; see also Lipset 1992; Lipset and Snyder 1978). If the general public is ambiguous about simply leveling the playing field between blacks and whites, how could we expect much support for gays and lesbians when the frame suggests that gays are seeking "special rights"? Even supporters of affirmative action for blacks may oppose gay equal rights when gay equal rights are considered parallel to special rights or preferences and are explicitly framed as detracting from benefits received for black Americans.

The "duplicitous signaling" framing strategy (see Allen 1995) allowed for resonance with segments of both black and white populations. The Equal Rights Not Special Rights slogan and related campaign frames clearly capitalized on the multiple views that gays deserved equal rights, gays and lesbians already had equal rights, and therefore, gays, lesbians, and bisexuals sought special rights through the passage of the Human Rights Ordinance. The special rights argument was a logical extension of these views. I now turn to a discussion of the ways in which the other right-wing frames deployed resonated with the public.

**The Resonance of the Three Criteria for Minority Classification**

As discussed earlier, three major themes were pursued to support the Equal Rights Not Special Rights motto: homosexuality is chosen, homosexuals are not economically
disadvantaged nor are they politically powerless. The immutability issue is a pivotal issue in public opinion towards homosexuality and was perhaps the most critical of all beliefs that the Christian right played off of. For instance, one Issue 3 television advertisement earlier mentioned, illuminated discrepancies between the life and death fight for African Americans' civil rights and the request for minority status of homosexuals who are merely defined by their "choice" of "bed partner." As such, the desire for equal rights on the part of gay, lesbian, and bisexual people is reduced to a level of mere choice of sexual partners.

Researchers concur that a major determining factor in public support or opposition of "gay civil rights protections is beliefs about the origin of sexual orientation" (Button, Rienzo, and Wald 1997:61; see also Herek and Capitanio 1995:95). People believing that homosexuality is an inborn trait rather than a choice are more likely to support rights protections for gays and lesbians (Button, Rienzo and Wald 1997:61; Herek and Capitanio 1995:95; Whisman 1996; New York Times -1993). Herek and Capitanio's research showed that the trend of supporting gay rights when being gay is viewed as beyond an individual's control is true for whites and blacks alike (95). For example, while there is significant public support for equality in employment, a majority still view homosexuality disapprovingly. According to a 1993 poll the public is near evenly split in whether or not they view homosexuality as "something people choose to be...or... something they cannot change" with 44% reporting it as a choice, 43% as unchangeable, and 13% conceding that they "don't know" (New York Times 1993 cited in Whisman 1996:5).
To promote the special rights arguments, proponents argued that gays and lesbians are economically and politically well off. Issue proponents both distributed and aired the video, *Gay Rights/Special Rights: Inside the Homosexual Agenda* and borrowed from it to highlight glaring disparities between gays and Blacks. Statistical disparities were presented for percent of college graduates, presence in managerial position, and a few other similar 'wealth' indicators. To a lesser degree, the champions of Issue 3, much like that of the proponents of the Colorado Initiative, publicly presented and included in their mail literature comparisons of Black Americans to homosexuals in what they referred to as "historically accepted evidences [sic] of discrimination." In several mailers, they raised questions about the two groups' experiences - with legal oppression: "ever been denied the right to vote," "faced legal segregation," "denied access by law to public drinking fountains, restrooms," "denied access by law to businesses, restaurants, barber shops, etc.?" For each of these questions, the answer was "no" for gays and lesbians but a resounding "yes" for African Americans thereby lending credence to the right-wing argument of the illegitimacy of the gay and lesbian claim for minority status. They employed strategies that effectively took what many would agree is a group disadvantaged in a variety of ways, and argued instead that the group is actually privileged.

Economically speaking gays, lesbians, and bisexuals were also constructed as greedy and politically as conspiratorial. Prejudicial beliefs about homosexuals may have been intentionally or unintentionally promoted through these media frames in order to engage with particular Cincinnatians. The advertisements that showed the higher gay income figures compared to other groups, at minimum, implied that gays were seeking
more than their fair share. In terms of political power, Equal Rights Not Special Rights and its predecessor, Take Back Cincinnati articulated in public speaking engagements that they wanted "the voters of this city to understand that secret promises and deals were made before the November 1991 election" which led to gay affirmative councilmembers who passed the 1992 Human Rights Ordinance. The right systematically developed the case for Issue 3 by building upon the value of equal opportunity and equal rights in the U.S. Proponents covered nearly 'all of the bases' by extending a frame asserting that gays and lesbians are at least equal in economic and political position, and purportedly choose to be deviant, even immoral.

**Issue 3 Opponents.** Like the Christian right, the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement developed upon the existing base cultural value of individualism. For the gay rights movement, individual rights translated into freedom from discrimination. Button, Rienzo, and Wald pointed out that there is a "strong public perception that gays and lesbians face discrimination and that most such discrimination is wrong" (1997: 61). Issue 3 opponents tapped into this salient American value. However, for the most part, the campaign narrowly focused on this single anti-discrimination theme, making the campaign more "vulnerable' (Snow and Benford 1988:206). While the No On 3 campaign consistently developed upon the 'no discrimination' theme, the fact that they neglected to simultaneously pursue frames connecting to other core values may have been detrimental to the process of frame resonance and, ultimately, may have been a factor in their failed attempt to stop the initiative. Given general beliefs of discrimination and despite moral and individual rights reasons for supporting Issue 3, the lesbian and gay movement fell
short in relating their frames to public. Some indicated that though they liked the No On 3 theme, in retrospect they felt more education and information would have assisted the cause. Snow and Benford argued that if a movement's frame taps into a value of lesser importance, such movements are required to fulfill the essential task of furthering educational and informational campaigning (1988:205-206). One campaign leader concurred:

I did like the fact that it was very in-your-face, really heavy. But, I...and some other folks I've talked to in retrospect, sort of indicated some semblance of this: that there wasn't enough in-between to bridge it to that abstract level.90

Another leader shared similar sentiment by saying that "in retrospect,...I would have done more of an educational piece."91 Some of the interviewees92 pointed out that actual everyday life discrimination faced by gays and lesbians in the workplace and elsewhere was not fully conveyed in movement frames. In one literature drop piece, however, Equality Cincinnati informed citizens that Issue 3 would permit the firing or eviction of person based simply on their sexual orientation.93 Despite this one illustration, very little was done to extend the framing.

To deal with the limitation of so narrowly focusing on one salient value, Snow and Benford argued that "movements may extend the boundaries of their primary framework by incorporating values that were initially incidental to its central objectives" (206). However, this was not the path chosen by the No On 3 campaign. Indeed, in hindsight, one interviewee reflected on what she would have done differently in the campaign framing:

I think that I would have been more vocal about what the campaign was really about. I think the whole issues of special rights should have been talked about
openly and explained. I think the campaign should have been less homophobic. I think the words gay and lesbian should have been used.  

The gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement tapped into an extant salient value, that of opposition to discrimination. The message promoted was clearly but narrowly focused and did little to interrelate with other ideational elements. In addition, the frame that was promoted was considered abstract to the point where activists shared that they would indeed have provided more information and more education if they had the chance to do it over. The data and literature indicate that a key part of this information sharing could easily have begun by developing upon the values that exist supporting discrimination protection to gays. Likewise, tapping into views about the immutability of gayness, as Issue 3 proponents had, may have served the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement in garnering support, since those who believe homosexuality inborn are more likely to support it. Overall, the gay rights movement did not systematically respond to the Christian right frames. Issue 3 opponents shared that the essential element of countering claims was lacking and was detrimental to frame resonance. As one leader reflected, "I would have reserved some money so that we could've reacted to the opposite side ... And we didn't do that."  

Understanding Frame Resonance in Everyday Life

Another set of constraints that affect the resonancy of movement frames with specified publics are what Snow and Benford refer to as "phenomenological constraints" (1988:207). The issue here involves the linkage between the proffered claims and images and targeted individuals' everyday life world experience. Again, the simple fulfillment of
tasks alone is ineffective if the frames promoted don’t strike a chord with individuals’ own experience (Snow and Benford 1988). Such constraints include: “empirical credibility” and “experiential commensurability.” Empirical credibility essentially begs the question as to whether or not evidence exists to support the claims (208). I extend this framework by also asking whether or not the movements themselves provided evidence in their frames to substantiate their claims. The logic here is that if movements benefit simply from the testability of their frames, then actually providing substantiating evidence would have an even greater impact in terms of mobilizing support. Similarly, experiential commensurability calls attention to the extent to which proposed solutions are grounded or “is the framing too abstract and distant from the everyday experiences of potential participants” (208). Snow and Benford argued that the presence of “at least one” of resonance factors “is a necessary condition for consensus mobilization and therefore enhances the probability of action mobilization” (1988:211). These constraints are critical in how frames are received by the public (Snow and Benford 1988).

**Empirical Credibility**

**Issue 3 Proponents.** To understand the essence of “empirical credibility,” the authors raise the directing questions- “Is the framing testable? Can it be subjected to verification?” (Snow and Benford 1988:208). The Christian themes were more complex and raised more issues than that of their opponent. As discussed earlier, the main conservative claim was that gays are seeking special rights. Issue 3 proponents defined “special rights” as “special laws passed based on behavior such as sexual orientation and is not a qualifier for minority class status.” To begin to expose the validity of their claims proponents
explicitly laid out the definition of a minority as specified by the U.S. Supreme Court to include immutable characteristics, economic discrimination, and political weakness. On the face of it, each of these criteria are empirically testable. To facilitate the potency of their arguments, Issue 3 proponents provided their own evidence for the economic and political criteria in all forms of media supporting arguments that homosexuality is a choice, that homosexuals are not economically or politically powerless but rather privileged are a group.

To deconstruct gay and lesbian identity down to chosen behavior, Christian right activists repeatedly and consistently promoted the view that homosexuality is behavior. For the most part, explicit evidence about the immutability issue were not presented for the Issue 3 campaign. In the oft used Gay Rights/Special Rights video famous "reparative therapist," Joseph Nicolosi is presented as an authority providing information that gays and lesbians can change their behavior. In the video, Nicolosi states, "Now some people will say well they are born this way. There is no evidence, there is no conclusive evidence that homosexuality is predetermined." Former Homosexuals are also shown on the video touting their message that gays can be transformed to heterosexuality. Indeed, they even have a "Lesbian Youth Counselor" interviewed at the March On Washington who concurs that being a lesbian was a choice she made. Furthermore, Equal Rights Not Special Rights' Public Speaking Materials contained "educational pamphlets" produced by the right-wing Family Research Institute that provides data from research studies on the nature of gayness and choice.
In other venues, the right simply promoted the assumption that homosexuality is behavior rather than giving clear evidence. At public speaking engagements, for instance, issue spokespeople asked--“what, exactly, is a homosexual?...how many homosexual sex acts does it take to become a homosexual?...how does a person prove they are, indeed, homosexual?”

Take Back Cincinnati letter sent out during the ballot petition drive explicitly states: "Being a true minority means what you are - not what you do in your bedroom."  

The economic and political criteria Equal Rights Not Special Rights presented as part of the Supreme Court minority status litmus test were not only testable theses, but also were accompanied by evidence. In various campaign media and print material, proponents argued that gays and lesbians are economically well off and wield considerable political power preventing them from qualifying for minority status. As discussed above, homosexuals were compared to average Americans and to "disadvantaged" African Americans in terms of income, education, and other similar measures. Likewise, African Americans and gays were compared to each other in terms of such traditionally agreed upon evidence of systematic discrimination including being "denied the right to vote?" and "denied access by law to public drinking fountains"  

Similarly, general evidence was presented in attempts to portray gays and lesbians as wielding political power rather than having a lack of political access as the stated minority status criteria require. In addition to citing specific national examples of political association described earlier, Equal Rights Not Special Rights suggested that gays and lesbians "control" Cincinnati City Council. At speaking engagements, they stated that City
Council had made private arrangements with gays and lesbians and that public debates about the Human Rights Ordinance were "a hoax and the time spent speaking before City Council was nothing more than a show." The enactment of the Ordinance itself was presented as evidence that gays and lesbians hold and exercise power in local politics.

**Issue 3 Opponents.** Issue 3 opponents utilized verifiable frames as well. The gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement's primary mobilizing frame was the anti-discrimination frame. Indeed, the presence of discrimination perpetrated against gays is empirically testable to the extent that such episodes are reported to authorities or other data collection entities. To further examine this component of resonance in the fight against Issue 3, two factors beg consideration.

First, it is important to recall that discrimination against gays was not highlighted in No On 3 media frames. Despite the lack of focus on gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals as targets of Issue 3, it is important to note that with the Issue 3 charter measure, only sexual orientation was 'revoked' from the protections against discrimination guaranteed by the Human Rights Ordinance. All other statuses were left intact on the Ordinance. Gays, lesbians, and bisexuals were not mentioned at all in the television advertisement spot and only somewhat secondarily in the print literature. However, at public speaking engagements and in print literature, discrimination against gay, lesbian, and bisexual people was explicitly discussed. But, the frame that 'discrimination is wrong' was reiterated over and again as the primary theme promoted in their television advertisement, billboards and print literature without further education and information. Likewise, as one leader indicated, "any time we spoke publicly, we got that message across. Issue 3 was
discrimination and discrimination was wrong.” As earlier mentioned, Equality Cincinnati mailed out postcards and widely distributed one literature drop piece that explicitly informed about the negative consequences of Issue 3 on gay, lesbian, and bisexual people. Here they informed Cincinnatians that Issue 3 would legally permit “good workers” to lose their jobs and “good, paying tenant[s]” to be evicted from their homes simply because they are gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

Second, while the existence of a city employees Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policy protecting gays, lesbians, and bisexuals from discrimination lent empirical support for the need for protection, the evidence accumulated about the Human Rights Ordinance may have actually been a hindrance. Recall that the Ordinance had been enacted just one year prior to the 1993 Issue 3 vote and had only been legally enforced since January that same year. As of mid-November 1993, only five complaints had been filed under this section of the Human Rights Ordinance. Thus, the evidence seemed to work against their claims.

Whether or not, and to what extent discrimination occurs is empirically testable. The gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement campaign against Issue 3 effectively selected and promoted a frame that could easily have been supported with evidence. While there were only a handful of official complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation under the newly enacted Ordinance, evidence about gay and lesbian discrimination was available locally through individual testimonies and the cases filed, and nationally through the collection of data for the Hate Crimes Statistics Act of 1990 as well as other sources (see Jenness and Broad 1997). Such evidence was not shared with the general public. I argue
that not only must movements have empirically testable frames, but in the face of an opposing movement with whom they compete, movements provide themselves more opportunities for success when the pathways to the evidence or the data itself is made available.

Snow and Benford (1988) suggest that documentable frames offer more in mobilizing potential (1988:211). Social movements in direct competition with an opposing movement have an added weight with which to contend. These data suggest that, in the case of opposing movements, frames need not only be, but also must incorporate evidence to garner public support. In the case of Issue 3, the fact that the gay rights movement provided little accompanying evidence to support their seemingly verifiable claims did not bode as well as for their struggle as the right-wing frame strategy. Issue proponents provided evidence\(^ {109} \) to back up their anti-minority status claims. One theoretical caveat is that if the evidence provided is weak or too vulnerable for attack, an opposing movement may not be advantaged by the added evidentiary frames.

**Experiential Commensurability**

The second aspect of what Snow and Benford refer to as phenomenological constraints is experiential commensurability. It is here that an inquiry occurs about the extent to which proposed solutions are grounded or if “the framing [is] too abstract and distant from the everyday experiences of potential participants (208).” The question requires analysis of the link between individual experience and common sense with the proffered messages.
**Issue 3 Proponents.** In some respects each movement’s frames resonated at the level of individual experience. The Christian right’s “no special rights” strategy appears to have hit a responsive chord with the majority of Cincinnati’s public. Respondents from both sides of the Issue expressed that the Equal Rights Not Special Rights framing was effective. As one Equality Cincinnati activist shared: “they all bought into the line that gays and lesbians were seeking special rights, and they don’t think that gays and lesbians should have special rights.” The point of the claims was articulated by one Christian activist as wanting “to show these people as radical, extremists, pushing a special rights agenda, which is very unpopular.” One influential observer indicated that the Equal Rights Not Special Rights “had a better slogan. The same way ‘Right-to-Life’ is a great slogan, Equal Rights Not Special Rights is a good one.”

Interviewees noted that it was not solely the slogan that echoed with voters, but the ways in which the comparisons were made between African-Americans and homosexuality. As one observer noted:

They ran much more effective campaign...it was very effective. Number one...the Christian right people were basically white, middle-class people and they said, well, we need allies in this thing. So they went...to appeal to black voters. The appeal was...your people struggled for ...years for civil rights and for protections.... These people were never in chains or never enslaved, and they want special rights. They want extra rights. More than what you’ve worked for. That was a really effective thing and it mobilized black voters to support this thing.

On the other hand, despite the view that the campaign had potency because of the comparison of homosexuals with African-Americans, data indicate that the Issue was not as successful in Black communities as it was in White or predominately white areas.
While the slogan itself and the comparisons packed a punch and seem to have hit a chord on the everyday life level, it wasn’t just verbiage alone that facilitated voter support. Equal Rights Not Special Rights had substantially more funding to promote their different television advertisements, buy airtime for the video, display billboards, and send out mailings. In fact, Equal Rights Not Special Rights outspent Equality Cincinnati by more than 2-to-1, with proponents spending $505,526 and opponents doling out $198,362.\textsuperscript{115}

While most interviewees regarded the inequities in resources as a key factor in the Christian right success, it appears unlikely that resources alone decided this campaign.\textsuperscript{116}

**Issue 3 Opponents.** While activists agreed that additional resources would have well served the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement’s campaign against Issue 3, money was not the only issue. The anti-Issue 3 frame was considered far more abstract in its depiction of injustice—and of the antagonist, in particular, than that of their counterparts. Activists, officials, and observers alike indicated that some people did not readily ‘get’ the connections between Hitler, the Klan, and McCarthy, the antidiscrimination message, and advocates of Issue 3. Movement activists from both sides talked about the ‘problems’ or the lack of resonancy with the anti-Issue 3 framing strategy. To begin with, one well-informed observer shared that “people didn’t recognize two out of the three figures...Hitler and Joe McCarthy.”\textsuperscript{117} A leading gay rights activist concurred by saying “people started feeling like our ad wasn’t working, that people didn’t know who Joe McCarthy was [and] they felt the Klan... [looked] like a baby Casper or something”\textsuperscript{118}

Beyond the elusiveness of the images, leaders and activists from each of the movements and bystander interviewees agreed that the depiction of Issue 3 proponents as
comparable to Hitler, the Klan, and Joe McCarthy was detrimental to the opposition’s collective action frame. One Christian right activist said:

The other side did this anti-Hitler thing that just didn't quite grab people's imaginations. It was brilliant...at the time, I thought...they really did a good job...painting us as the evil people. But I think it backfired. People thought, you know, come on, I mean, just if somebody doesn't want to hire a homosexual, that doesn't make him like Adolph Hitler.\textsuperscript{115}

Another observer shared his perspective on resonance: “they looked at it and then they looked at their next door neighbor who might be, you know, a Christian Coalition person, [and thought] you know, he's pretty nice guy, he's not Hitler.”\textsuperscript{120} One Equal Rights Not Special Rights leader shared similar views:

I think they could have done better. I think that equating us to the Klan and to Hitler and to Joseph McCarthy really made the people look at them like—'come on!' I think they probably could have come up with something less polarizing. I think they helped us. I think they had a polarizing campaign. And I was grateful. And I don't think any of us in the Equal Rights Not Special Rights were Nazis. I mean, there's not one person that I know in the group that would have said 'We should kill homosexuals' or 'We should lock them up' or you know, ‘Put them in a state all their own.'\textsuperscript{121}

Not only was the depiction of Issue 3 proponents seen as extreme, but it was also considered offensive by some Cincinnatians. Several interviewees themselves expressed that they themselves were affronted by the images while others mentioned that members of the Jewish community, Holocaust survivors in particular, were “offended” by the images and the comparison.

Despite wide agreement about the frame problems, most also found the images powerful and thought-provoking, though they also indicated that more education would have helped facilitate wider public understanding. One observer noted the “real powerful
commercials were real well done by [advertising executive named], but it, it didn’t have a very good reaction from people."122 One gay, lesbian, bisexual movement activist reflected about the framing strategy: “it was a good first step, but we didn’t have the follow through because we didn’t have the money.”123 The lack of adequate resources was consistently cited by gay, lesbian, and bisexual activists as a barrier to promoting the claims more fully. In retrospect, leaders themselves said that, if they were able to do the campaign over, they would have spent more of their resources educating the public to buttress the existing media frames.

The data indicate that Equality Cincinnati’s frames were potent, but they also were very abstract and even offensive to some. People had a difficult time seeing their conservative neighbor in the same light as the heinous figures portrayed in the advertisements. The public was not afforded the opportunity to associate real stories of discrimination against gays and lesbians with the anti-discrimination frame.

EFFECTIVENESS: THE CHALLENGER’S IMPERATIVE TO COUNTER

To some extent, each of the opposing movements followed a frame task formula by articulating the problem and its cause, instilling a sense of agency in and depicting a sense of common cause among the different constituencies. Frames were developed from existing cultural values. In fact, both tapped into the highly salient value of individualism and individual equal rights. On a ‘real’ life level, each of the opposing movements managed to meet one of the resonance variables outlined by Snow and Benford (1988). We can begin to understand the outcomes of this struggle by understanding the extent to
which each movement successfully employed this frame task formula to take advantage of
the cultural opportunities available to them.

Interviewees articulated several problems with the gay, lesbian, and bisexual
movement frames. The No On 3 movement’s catalyst—likened to Hitler, the Klan, and
Joe McCarthy—fell short in its goal of depicting a believable “other.” On an experiential
level, some voters reportedly took offense, while others’ imaginations were stretched to
envision their conservative neighbors as comparable to such heinous perpetrators. While
the frame was empirically testable, evidence was not provided. Additionally, rightly or
wrongly, the campaign did not have a ‘gay’ face attached. These data suggest that frames
are more effective if they are not only verifiable but also when clear data or quality
information supporting the frames is provided. This was not the case for the gay rights
movement, though it was true for the right-wing campaign. The Christians
comprehensively adhered to the tasks. Their frames drew from different salient U.S.
beliefs. On an everyday level, the Christian right frames connected with different people
who hold diverging views or as Charlene Allen (1995) stated, were “strange bedfellows.”
Issue 3 opponents were the ‘underdog’ in the campaign. Indeed, drawing on a sport
metaphor, they were in the defense position. Yet, their defensive strategy was sorely
lacking.

The framework guiding this analysis, while originally proposed for a solitary social
movement, serves as a baseline for analyzing the dynamics between opposing social
movements’ regarding collective action frames. Unlike a single social movement engaged
with the public or the state, a movement engaged in a contest against another movement
must actively contend with its opponent. Direct opposing movement contentions are magnified when one of the movements is more vulnerable, as was the gay rights movement in this conflict.

Guided by the work on collective action frames (Gamson 1990; Snow and Benford 1988), on countermovements (Mottl 1980), and on recent opposing movement scholarship (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; see also Zald and Useem 1989), the case of Issue 3 suggests the following arguments about opposing social movements. Since opposing movements are first and foremost individual social movements, they have the imperative to complete the frame tasks, develop upon extant cultural values, and connect with the experiences of segments of populations. If one movement in opposition falls short in the fulfillment of the tasks, neglects to draw from cultural values or everyday life experience, I argue that that movement is compelled to “counter” or respond to the claims of the other.

Early theorizing on countermovements proposed that “specific tactics (lobbying, letter-writing, boycotts, sit-ins)...respond to the range of tactics employed by the initial movement, and the countermovement may even adopt elements of the movement’s program (Turner and Killian 1972:409, cited in Mottl 1980:624). Such tactics may be extended to include the micro level components of opposing movement collective action frames. In the case where one social movement is the clear challenger, the imperative is upon them to re-frame to counter the claims and frames of their opponent.

Along these lines, interviewees remarked that the Christian rights’ ‘no special rights’ rhetoric was not challenged and this neglect was considered a problem in the effort to stop Issue 3. While there were some documented instances where the gay
rights movement responded to Christian right claims in newspaper articles late in the campaign, at public speaking events, and somewhat in print literature, countering was not systematically pursued.

Evidence suggests that had there been direct countering to the Christian right frames, the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movements’ campaign may have had higher levels of support. Based on these data, I contend that a movement lacking in frame task completion and/or necessary frame resonance has what I call an ‘imperative to counter.’ Other factors being equal, such responsive efforts may facilitate movement success. The movement that fulfills frame tasks and strikes a chord with the desired populations holds no such imperative. In some ways, this movement is afforded the luxury of waiting for challenges and resting on its already effective frame strategy.

I would argue that the situation changes when two opposing movement are more parallel in their completion of tasks and the comprehensiveness and resonancy of frames. However, these data do not directly speak to this situation but call attention to the need for further research (however see Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). I do surmise that the more parallel movements are in their framing strategies, the more necessary it becomes for each movement to actively counter opposing movements frames, shifting frames, and/or frame venues.

Next, in Chapter 5, I examine the collective identities of the Christian right and the lesbian, gay, and bisexual movement. I begin by introducing recent conceptions of collective identity. I then describe the salient identity of the Issue 3 proponents. This is followed by an examination of the situations and events where gay identity disputes
manifested. I conclude with a discussion of the influence that the movements had on one another's identit(ies) and related strategy.
ENDNOTES


2  Interview no. 8.


7  Interestingly, in the videotape the same figure was reported as the average for African Americans in general without the " 1 -3 years of High School qualifier.


Interview no. 9.


Interview no. 8.


Cameron was "thrown out of the American Psychological Association for violating ethical principles, and repudiated by the American Sociological Association for posing as a sociologist, Cameron and his research have been widely discredited by mainstream science" (Herman 1997:77).


The Family Research Institute, Inc., Dr. Paul Cameron, Chairman. 1993. “Medical Consequences of [sic]: What Homosexuals Do” Family Research Institute, Washington, DC. In Equal Rights Not Special Rights/Take Back Cincinnati Document Collection, Binder no. 2.


Interview no. 3.


Ibid.

Interview no. 1.

Interview no. 2.


no. 1.

38 Interview no. 12

39 Interview no. 8 and Interview no. 21.

40 Equal Rights Not Special Rights/Take Back Cincinnati Document Collection.
no. 5. October 9.; “Some People Say” Equal Rights Not Special Rights Television
Advertisement no. 1. October 9.; “Civil Rights” Equal Rights Not Special Rights
Television Advertisement no. 2. October 9.; “Equal Rights” ” Equal Rights Not Special
Rights Television Advertisement no. 3. October 9.; “Income” Equal Rights Not Special
Rights Television Advertisement no. 6. October 9.

41 Equal Rights Not Special Rights/Take Back Cincinnati Document Collection.

42 Ibid..

43 Equal Rights Not Special Rights/Take Back Cincinnati Document Collection.
Material Pp. 5, Binder no. 1.

44 Equal Rights Not Special Rights/Take Back Cincinnati Document Collection.

45 Equal Rights Not Special Rights/Take Back Cincinnati Document Collection.

46 Equal Rights Not Special Rights/Take Back Cincinnati Document Collection.

47 Equal Rights Not Special Rights/Take Back Cincinnati Document Collection.

no. 1.


Health Workers,’ File no. 1.


Interview no. 1.

Interview no. 8.


Interview no. 8.; see also Allen 1995.

Interview no. 8.


Interview no. 9.

Interview no. 24.


The 1992 Human Rights Ordinance also included protection from discrimination for people of Appalachian descent.

Interview no. 11.


Interview no. 22.

Interview no. 8.


Interview no. 9.

Interview no. 23.

Interview no. 9.


Ibid.

Ibid.


Gay rights activists have argued that these "homosexual" income statistics themselves are flawed in that the sample from which the estimate was drawn represents neither the entire gay, lesbian and bisexual population, nor does it represent the gay male population alone. Furthermore, comparing such an "average" income for a sample of the population such as homosexuals to a specified sub-sample "disadvantaged" African Americans income figure is clearly an unequal comparison (see Herman 1997). The same figure of $12,166 was presented for both African Americans and for African Americans with 1-3 years of high school.

Such a problematic, "fat cat" portrayal has long been used to support discrimination and oppression against Jewish people and has now been extended to gays and lesbians (see Herman 1997). Likewise, in terms of the political power argument gays, lesbians, and bisexuals are constructed as the "antagonist" in similar terms as that historically used against the Jews. The "Conspiracy theme" common in anti-Semitic rhetoric "is also evident in the CR [Christian right] antigay genre" (Herman 1997:127; see also Davis 1971; and Johnson 1983 cited in Herman 1997:127).

Interview no. 7.

Interview no. 1.

Interview no. 3 and Interview no. 10.

Equality Cincinnati Document Collection. 1993. Literature Drop Piece no. 1, 'File no. 1.'

Interview no. 3.

Interview no. 1.

An additional component proposed by Snow and Benford is narrative fidelity. These data suggest the primacy of experiential commensurability and empirical credibility. Since they do not speak directly to this third factor, I do not introduce this concept for analysis.


Ibid.

Ibid.


Interview no. 1.


Although the evidence was considered questionable in terms of validity and reliability.

Interview no. 11.

Interview no. 12.

Interview no. 20.

Interview no. 21.

Interview no. 2; see also Allen 1995.


For instance, in a comparable 1998 campaign in the state of Maine, the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement outspent the Christian right by a large proportion and were still unable to stop the antigay Christian right forces (NY Times Feb 11, 1998).

Interview no. 20.

Interview no. 7.

Interview no. 12.

Interview no. 21.

Interview no. 22.

Interview no. 21.

Interview no. 2.
CHAPTER 5

COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AND MOVEMENT STRATEGY

Both the Christian right and the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movements are rooted in distinctive subcultures with their own collective identities. It is from collective identit(ies) that movements devise workable strategies and tactics for collective action. (Epstein1999:33). In Cincinnati, the Christian right and its supporters drew upon a stable, salient collective identity. Fueled by their shared religious beliefs, Cincinnati’s right-wing movement devised a highly unified strategy for Issue 3. At the other end of the Issue 3 conflict, the opposing movement was based out of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual community and subculture. However, underlying community differences in ideology and collective identity in Cincinnati resulted in a bifurcated collective identity and disputes over strategy. That is, disagreement existed within the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement as to the overarching goals and the requisite strategies necessary to launch an effective campaign fight against Issue 3. In this chapter, I again draw attention to identity but rather than focus on the ways in which identity is activated in movement frames (see Chapter 4), I look at the ways in which collective identity serves as a springboard from which campaign strategies are shaped and executed.

Epstein recently argued that “we can understand the strategies and tactics of specific groups, organizations, and movements by analyzing how activists
debate...questions of identity...” (1999: 33). The choice of strategies and tactics emerges from movement subculture(s) and collective identit(ies) (see Bernstein 1997; Taylor and Whittier 1991). In previous chapters I examined the ways in which culture affects movements in terms of opportunities for emergence and in framing. In my analysis of framing, I deconstructed both the Christian right and the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement frames into three distinct elements including the framing of identity. Identity is an essential component deployed in effective framing. While others have examined the ways in which movement identities are themselves strategically deployed (Bernstein 1997), in this work I specify the ways that collective identities inform the use of particular tactics and non-framing strategies.

COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AND MOVEMENTS

Collective identities are formed around various quality of life issues. Taylor and Whittier have further operationalized Melucci’s (1989) conception of collective identity in their study on lesbian feminist social movement communities (1992; see also Melucci 1995). They defined ‘collective identity’ as "...the shared definition of a group that derives from its members' common interests, experiences, and solidarity" (Taylor and Whittier 1992:105; See also Melucci 1989; 1995; see review in Laraña, Johnson, and Gusfield 1994). Their schema for analyzing collective identity is useful not only for Left oriented new social movements like the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement but also for movements such as those on the right. A “salient” collective identity holds the power to unite movement members in developing cohesive plans of action (Reger 1997; see also
Taylor and Whittier 1992; Staggenborg 1995). Under certain conditions, such a prominent identity takes precedence over other identities held dear to movement members. In their conception of the process of building collective identity, Taylor and Whittier (1992) delineated three interconnected components: "boundaries", "consciousness", and "negotiation". First, boundaries refer to the ways that a social movement or 'challenging group' separates itself from the 'dominant group'. Though conceived as operative for challenging groups, this concept can be extended to include opposing movements who engage with the state as well as with another social movement. As Taylor and Whittier define it, “boundaries mark the social territories of group relations by highlighting differences between activists and the web of others in the contested social world” (1992:111). Social movements must distinguish themselves from those with whom they contest. Second, consciousness represents "the interpretive frameworks that emerge from a group’s struggle to define and realize members’ common interests in opposition to the dominant order" (1992:114). These are the processes in operation within social movements as members identify the issues and attribute the causes of their discontent. Third, in the process of constructing collective identity, negotiation is that aspect whereby movement’s adopt symbols of their culture, exhibit resistance against the opposition, and work to change the systems which they oppose and view as dominant.

Analyses of movement’s collective identity have informed the literature on processes of developing and sustaining movement’s in hostile climates (Rupp and Taylor 1991) and in our understandings of movements’ cultural as well as political goals (Taylor and Whittier 1992: see also McAdam 1994). Scholars have also examined the influence of
political climate, movement opponents, and organizational structure in the strategic
deployment of particular movement identities over others (Bernstein 1997). Epstein
(1999:77) recently summarized the literature on collective identity by saying that
“collective identities are rarely stable and that shows how they may be as much the
product as the prerequisite of movement activism.”

The Christian right in Cincinnati, while ideologically non-monoïthic (see Klatch
1987), avoided identity disputes in the movement to promote Issue 3. Rather, the right
pulled together a self-selected group of people foremost committed to the values of literal
Christianity who united in a campaign strategy of rights based politics. Guided by notions
of collective identity, I now turn to an analysis of the ways in which particular privileged
identities informed non-framing processes and strategies.

ISSUE 3 MOVEMENTS AND IDENTITY

Christian Right: Social Movement Organizational Development and Leadership

The Christian right movement promoting Issue 3 was the result of a highly
organized cooperation between established conservative or pro-family and Christian
organizations from the greater Cincinnati area, Ohio, and other states. For the most part,
the groups working together to oppose gay rights, were either based in the Cincinnati area
or in the state of Ohio.¹ The “coalition” was comprised of at least “thirty-one pro-family
leaders” who were all “autonomous” and remained relatively anonymous to the general
public.² Though different organizations were involved, the campaign was run by just one
organization at a time. The glue that held the coalition together was its “salient” collective
identity developed around Christian doctrine and faith.
While the seeds of an initiative had been planted by an earlier group, New Wave 2000\(^3\), it wasn’t until the Executive Directive of a local conservative group, Citizens for Community Values, took control and formed a new campaign organization did the Issue begin to take shape. Citizens for Community Values (CCV), formed in 1983, was created to oppose pornography and its deleterious effects on people’s lives. The organizational goal, more broadly, seeks:

To unite the community in the promotion of traditional Judeo-Christian values which strengthen the moral character of the community and seek to change attitudes and behaviors that are destructive to those values.\(^4\)

The Executive Director, with the approval of the CCV board of directors, formed Take Back Cincinnati to lead the petition drive for Issue 3. Take Back Cincinnati’s stated mission was “to promote debate for the purpose of educating and motivating voters for the November election so ‘We, the People,’ can voice our opinion at the ballot box.\(^5\)

Furthermore, this newly formed organization, Take Back Cincinnati, “sought to have this issue brought to a vote of the people and successfully secured more than enough petition signatures.”\(^6\)

Once Issue 3 was officially approved for the November ballot, the Director of Citizens for Community Values created yet another, separate organization, Equal Rights Not Special Rights (ERNSR) to run the actual campaign. Take Back Cincinnati disappeared and ERNSR emerged anew technically under new leadership. This new ‘official’ chair of Equal Rights Not Special Rights was the owner of radio stations including a local Christian station.\(^7\) Drawing on support from Colorado conservative leaders including Citizens for Community Values’s sister organization Colorado for Family
Values, as well as support from the Ohio Pro-Family Forum and the Cincinnati area coalition of conservative leaders, Equal Rights Not Special Rights led the right-wing movement in Cincinnati. The single organization leadership at the helm of the Issue 3 campaign promoted a salient identity around Christian faith.

Inter-Racial Christian Alliance

To enhance their goal of targeting the campaign to diverse groups (see chapter 4), Equal Rights Not Special Rights intentionally sought to align themselves with leaders in either the African American and/or Catholic communities. One way that Equal Rights Not Special Rights attempted to achieve that goal was to actively recruit spokespersons representative of either or both of these communities. Like the broader conservative movement, the vast majority of the organizations in this pro-family movement coalition, mentioned above, represented white, Protestant constituencies (see also Herman 1997). According to one Christian right campaign leader, the movement was aggressively “looking for high-profile people on our side in either the Catholic or the Black community. Because those we’re our two targets...those were the two targets that we felt we had to win...to win the election.” One leader in the Issue 3 campaign articulated the impetus behind the Christian right’s twofold targeting strategy by sharing that “outside the Black community, the city of Cincinnati is probably a majority Catholic...[and] obviously the Blacks aren’t Catholic...normally.” With only a short time to select a spokesperson, they recruited an African American minister and leader in the community. Despite their efforts to enlist Catholic leaders into the movement, they were not successful in their attempts to
cultivate a supportive relationship with Cincinnati's Catholic Archbishop, who publicly denounced Issue 3.

As indicated, the man selected to be the lead spokesman for Equal Rights Not Special Rights was at the time of the petition drive, the president of the Baptist Ministers Conference. While not comprised solely of African American clergy, the Conference was "the largest African American group in the City." According to the new spokesman, "it was believed that the Issue would be won or lost in the African American community. So, therefore, you know, they needed an African American spokesman, spokesperson [sic]."12 This well-respected African American spokesman also enlisted his wife's assistance as an actor in the campaign advertisements. With the backing of the various organizations and the spokesman and his wife, both African-American Christians, Equal Rights Not Special Rights became a more visibly diverse group of people opposed to extending legal protections to gays, lesbians, and bisexuals in employment, accommodations, and housing.

Unified Identity and Cooperative Strategy in the Christian Right

The data suggests that the Christian right movement in Cincinnati was a cohesive group of people united against gay rights. The committee making decisions for Equal Rights Not Special Rights was comprised largely of businessmen.13 While some disagreements may have occurred behind the scenes with the committee or organizations involved, Equal Rights Not Special Rights was able to promote and support an image of a unified front of movement supporters. While not specifically referring to the social movement organization itself, one activist summarized the pro-Issue 3 community during the election, which also reflects the unity of the movement itself:

152
I was so proud to be a part of this because republicans and democrats, blacks and whites, male and female, everybody came together and voted yes on Issue 3... there was a unifying issue. You know, you talk about issues that divide people, a 65% issue is not an issue that divides people.$^{14}$

Understanding collective identity requires an examination of the ways in which movement members self-identify as a group, realize the object or cause of their dissatisfaction, and work to achieve desired ends. While other strong identities and interests were present among the Issue 3 proponents, the 'salient' collective identity holding the movement together revolved tightly around Christianity and religious faith (see also chapter 4 on beliefs). Clear distinctions were made between Christianity and gay recognition and rights. The root of their discontent was explicit and shared by movement members.

All proponents interviewed cited religious or Biblical reasons for their anti-gay rights activism as the primary basis for their alliance. Activists expressed a range of Christian related motivations—from a simple, yet fundamental belief that homosexuality is a sin to the concern that the “homosexual agenda” was anti-Christian and that Christians were being threatened by it and other sources in the United States and abroad. For instance, one Equal Rights Not Special Rights leader shared the impetus for his involvement:

I'm a Christian, so I don't believe God creates people in that lifestyle. And though I certainly believe everyone has a right to do whatever they want, I wouldn't want to endorse something that I think is going to cause great pain. And I think that's basically why I took part in the campaign, to try to put the genie back in the bottle, and to help people,...[to] make a testimony to the fact that there are absolutes.$^{15}$

Another Issue 3 supporter and member of the clergy shared that after reading about the “homosexual agenda” and what that agenda intended for the schools, he, as a member of
the clergy in the Judeo-Christian tradition was “not in favor of special rights for homosexuals.” Another conservative leader not only mentioned his own faith but believed that his views were representative of the entire U.S. by pointing to the “Judeo-Christian heritage that cannot be denied in this country.” Some Issue proponents considered themselves as champions of a cause shared by the masses who adhered to the Christian faith. Interviewees from the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement, political leaders, and campaign bystanders all believed that the Issue 3 movement was held together in common cause around tenets of Christianity.

While Christian belief formed the salient identity around which pro-Issue 3 movement members organized, there was a split among Cincinnati’s Christians and other religious groups and persons. That is, despite the religious solidarity propelling the Christian right movement campaign, many churches and synagogues and well-respected religious leaders, opposed the Issue 3 campaign. One Equal Rights Not Special Rights leader shared that “I thought the churches would be more on our side [but] the churches were 50-50 against us.” Thus, it was not simply all Christians or religious persons rallying around the Issue. It was, however, the adhesive that held together those like-minded Christians, often Evangelical Christians, who set aside their differences to form a cohesive movement. A particular belief system about homosexuality, rooted in literal Christianity, brought participants together and sustained their solitary focus throughout the campaign. Likeminded movement participants chose to become involved in the campaign.
Strange Bedfellows: The Identity “Glue” of the White-Black Christian Alliance

The salience of the particular Christian collective identity to movement participants can further be understood by examining the “strange bedfellows” who comprised the Issue 3 movement (see Allen 1995; Button, Rienzo, and Wald 1997). While the Christian right formed a working alliance with likeminded African American Christians, one obvious question begs attention: under what conditions can such divergent groups like the traditional white, conservative Christian right and the traditionally liberal, civil rights supporting African American religious leaders and communities coalesce on a project and work cohesively towards it end, as they did in Cincinnati’s CR movement?

Most of the pro-Issue 3 leaders interviewed either referred to themselves as “conservative” or aligned themselves with known right-wing republican political leaders or candidates, or other ‘pro-family’ issues. Unlike the predominance of white Christian right members interviewed, the lead spokesman\(^9\) did not cluster with the white conservative leaders on some other important issues or in terms of party loyalty. The spokesman indicated his lack of political affiliation when he shared:

I didn't see myself on anybody's side. I'm independent. This is what I believe. I'm not conservative. I'm not Republican. I'm not Democrat, liberal. I'm not any of that. You know, there may be some issues that I may support Republicans on, some issues I may support Democrats on. But, I will not label myself as a Democrat or Republican.\(^{20}\)

Despite his lack of verbal allegiance, the walls of his office told another story. Outwardly he appeared to align more with democrats and civil rights supporters. For instance, there were photographs hanging up in his office of himself and a former civil rights leader and another well-known democratic politician. Indeed, the lead spokesman
differed from the white Christian right interviewees in terms of being a 'consistent' conservative. Unlike the others, he rejected the label of conservative or Christian right as a self-descriptor. This also appeared to be the case with many of the African-American Christians who supported Issue 3.

Religious belief, the basis of the right’s salient collective identity was also the primary motivation for the minister to become lead Spokesman for the Issue 3 campaign. His interpretation of the Book of Esther compelled the minister to turn political spokesman. He shared that:

what really happened was a sermon I put [together] from the Book of Esther...[and] when I was the president of the conference and I really didn’t want to get involved [with Issue 3]...I though about what Mordecai said. God really is putting me in a position to thrust down my fist. 21

Not only were his personal reasons religiously inspired but he indicated a sense of camaraderie or shared purpose with the right-wing based tightly around shared Christian values: “we’re Christians and we’re this and we’re going to stand for the Lord.” 22 This one spokesman brought along with him numerous African American supporters committed to the cause based on biblical interpretation.

While Issue 3 proponents coalesced around their shared Christian faith, they united around the defense of African American civil rights as well (see Chapter 4). The Black clergy involved in the initiative expressed their grave concern that gay rights would erode African American civil rights. Most white Christian right leaders voiced the same concern. However, some indicated their lack of support for any civil rights. Had this view been voiced during the campaign it may have seriously altered the alliance between the white
and black Christians. For instance, at the time of some of the interviews\textsuperscript{23}, there was a pending ballot initiative in California, called the California Civil Rights Initiative or CCRI. As one supporter described the California initiative: “It’s just basically says there are no more protective class status... anymore...everyone is treated equal...there shall be no preferences or discrimination for or against any group for any reason.”\textsuperscript{24} This Issue 3 proponent indicated that “everyone on our side is looking...looking...to see what...happens in California this November [with the CCRI].” Furthermore he drew the connections between Issue 3 and the CCRI as a natural progression, as follows:

I mean the whole issue on this...and the one we were against was the protected class status... I mean that was a very specific legal issue that was very difficult to get out in the community....special class status. That’s why we came up with ‘equal rights not special rights’....we want everybody to have same rights, not...we don’t want protected class status....especially of homosexuals. And...so I think we will eventually get there...I don’t know how many years it will take.\textsuperscript{25}

African Americans and women were among the categories of people who had benefited from protected class status in California and thus, would be less likely than their white male counterparts to encourage such a change. In fact, one African American Issue 3 leader called the California Civil Rights Initiative “extreme” because “they are trying to do away with all affirmative action and all that kind of stuff.”\textsuperscript{26} To this leader, maintaining black civil rights to protections was critical in the Issue 3 initiative. The media campaign utilized by the Christian right also supported this view (see Chapter 4). While the CCRI followed the Issue 3 initiative by a few years, it serves to illustrate ideological differences present among the various constituencies in the alliance promoting Issue 3.
This crucial difference between some White conservatives and Black Issue 3 activists could have easily surfaced and prohibited the coalition. However, it appears that either it did not come to light or the salience of the Christian collective identity was so powerful that it subverted other issues of identity. Charlene Allen (1995) argued that "many blacks are not aware of the anti-civil rights activities and issue positions of the CR [Christian right]" (pp. 20; see also Button, Rienzo, and Wald 1997). Furthermore, like scholars of the civil rights movement have pointed out (see for example Morris 1984), Allen commented that "many blacks have strong Christian beliefs and a church-based political tradition and the result is that blacks will concentrate on the religion element of CR politics that they find extremely attractive" (1995:20). The commonality in religious conviction overshadowed other differences between the various constituencies. While this coalition seemed 'strange' to some, a leading observer of religious and political life in Cincinnati shared his lack of surprise at the black-white union on the Issue 3 campaign. He commented:

There was nothing inconsistent about seeing the [African Americans] in the leadership helping Issue 3....I was not one of the people stunned to see [lead spokesman named] or others. Given what they say their biblical beliefs are, and the rest, they believe that the bible proscribes sexual activity outside of heterosexual marriage... Like most clergy, they have long complained about fornicators and adulterers. And, so that was not inconsistent with the beliefs and teachings that they publicly espouse.27

Thus, the salience of literal Christianity to movement members exceeded the weight of other, even potentially conflicting, identities. The symbolic references of Christianity, including the Bible and Jesus, served the movement under this salient identity as well. These well-established symbols were easily transferable to the movement in the name of
upholding such religious principles. Likewise, this unified collective identity fostered a cohesive plan for framing the campaign and carrying out other strategies to promote Issue 3 (see Chapter 4 in particular).

Next, I turn to a discussion of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement and collective identity. Unlike their Christian right counterparts, Cincinnati’s gay rights movement experienced conflicts over identity, which had definite strategic implications for the No On 3 campaign. These identity disputes reflect larger, National debates.

Collective Identity Disputes Among the Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Movement

Throughout the history of the U.S. gay rights movement there has been and continues to be a “fundamental tension” over the “very question of the movement’s collective identity: who is the ‘we’ on behalf of whom activists speak” (Epstein 1999:32)? The national gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement has experienced a schism over assimilationist versus liberationist politics (see Bernstein 1997; Gamson 1995).

Contemporary assimilationist activism, like older politics of identity, frames “homosexuality as an issue of sexuality and minority politics” (Seidman 1993:131: see also Epstein 1999). The crux of assimilationism is that it is a movement’s aim to “normalize” being gay in the eyes of mainstream, heterosexual America (Seidman 1993:135). It is an identity politic much like that of ethnic-identity or interest-group politics struggling to ‘fit in’ to society’s framework by emphasizing that gays are basically the same as everyone else (Seidman 1993; Bernstein 1997).

At the other end, liberation politics are described in opposition to such identity politics or as “anti-identity politics”(Seidman 1993:133). Current liberationism or ‘queer’
activism is defined as operating “largely through the decentralized, local, and often anti-
organizational cultural activism of street postering, parodic and non-conformist self-
presentation, and underground alternate magazines (‘Zines’)” (Gamson 1995:393).
Conflict between the factions arises out of assimilationist positioning of the gay rights
movement as a monolithic group struggling for rights (Duggan 1995:161-162). Queers
are united in their resistance to “disciplining, normalizing social forces” which includes the
politics of assimilation (Seidman 1993:133).

The Cincinnati gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement did not escape these same
identity debates. Disputes over identity manifested in movement strategy. To best
understand how the movement split in the anti-issue 3 campaign, I examine three related
incidents or strategies. First, I turn to a discussion of the organizations and leadership of
the anti-Issue 3 campaign.

**Gay Rights Movement: Organizational Development and Leadership**

The No On 3 movement broadly defined itself as “a diverse coalition” representing
people from every background. However, at least two distinct groups were at odds in
developing a solitary, salient collective identity from which to deploy a unified identity and
Issue 3 campaign strategy. While in many past instances the groups worked together, for
example in the efforts to promote the Human Rights Ordinance, the two existed in conflict
over the Issue 3 campaign. Simplistically, these factions can be identified as ‘queer’ or
liberationist compared to ‘gay rights’ or assimilationist. Most Issue 3 movement activists
identified themselves organizationally, as aligned with either the assimilationist Stonewall
Human Rights Organization of Greater Cincinnati (hereafter Stonewall Cincinnati) and/or
Equality Cincinnati, or liberationist Gay & Lesbian March Activists/Aids Coalition To Unleash Power (GLMA/ACT UP).

Stonewall Cincinnati is the mainstay gay, lesbian, and bisexual rights organization in the city of Cincinnati. One leader called Stonewall the "most visible, queer group in Cincinnati. Other than the Log Cabin Republicans, it's really the only ...queer affiliated political group in town." Stonewall fits the profile of a liberal human rights or assimilationist organization. Epstein described organizations such as Stonewall by saying that they are "durable organizations and community groups that promote a liberal agenda of equal rights and inclusion, premised on a conception that gay men and lesbians...[are a] clearly demarcated social group with a fixed ethniclike identity" (1999:32; but see also Seidman 1993).

While the key player in creating the campaign organization, Equality Cincinnati, Stonewall was not itself officially involved in the opposition campaign. According to movement members, the impetus for 'Equality' was Stonewall. Formed in September 1993, Equality Cincinnati was the political action committee and was legally distinct from its' sister organization Equality Foundation, the financial arm of the campaign. Among other groups, Stonewall was a member of both the PAC and the Foundation. According to an Equality leader, "Stonewall had a number of people from its board and then its first staff person involved in the campaign." Equality relied on Stonewall not only for human resources, but also for office space and equipment. Despite the clear crossover between the campaign organization and Stonewall, Equality was a separate entity, with a unique mission and some new leadership.
While considerably smaller and less institutionalized, the third organization with which some movement members aligned themselves was the Gay & Lesbian March Activists/Aids Coalition to Unleash Power (GLMA/ACT UP). Many of the organized street activists visible and involved in the Issue 3 campaign considered themselves as members of GLMA/ACT UP. Schooled in leftist politics, the 1993 March on Washington (April) organizing, and AIDS activism, what remained of Cincinnati’s GLMA/ACT UP at the time of the Issue 3 campaign consisted of a small but vibrant, direct action group. GLMA/ACT UP were the self-proclaimed “queer” or “street activists.”

Cincinnati’s direct action activists, conform to descriptions of “queer” activists as “...largely against conventional lesbian and gay politics” (Gamson 1995:393). These street activists and participants in the larger gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement defined themselves not only in opposition to establishment politics and the Christian right, but also in contrast to their gay compatriots. GLMA/ACT UP challenged the assimilationist identity and strategies of the mainstream gay rights movement in Cincinnati. As one interviewee articulated:

Who are us? Some people who are, I guess, on the fringe so to speak, politically more left oriented, more social justice oriented, more geared toward being active, you know, in the gay rights movement who are working toward social change, not inclusion; social change, not legitimation.32

These activists were also described as being “more progressive” than their gay counterparts involved in Stonewall, and Equality Cincinnati.33 Another activist characterized GLMA/ACT UP in simple terms as a “go for the jugular kind of organization... [One that] hit them where it counts.”34 One non-movement gay rights
supporter who was astute on the business and outside perceptions of the City to visitors
recalled meeting “two representatives [from] ACT UP.” This interviewee’s impression of
the ACT UP activists revolved around their appearance and their tactics. They were
described as: “pretty radical, pretty militant. [They had] lots of body piercing. And, [they
were] very articulate and very vocal.”

Apparently, the appearance of some of the
GLMA/ACT UP activists symbolically denoted difference from gay opponents as well as
from other gay, lesbian, and bisexual activists.

The “us” involved in the opposition movement were a combination of prominent
organizational activists, queer activists, as well as progressive, non-gay leaders and
activists. But, the “us” making decisions, calling the day-to-day shots, and directing
personnel and volunteers were more mainstream gay rights advocates. Stonewall and
Equality Cincinnati were the organizations whose activities were legitimized by movement
members, political leaders, and Cincinnati citizens. Scholars have noted that
“particularities in the United States have tended to favor the development of, and grant
visibility and legitimacy to, one kind of lesbian and gay politics in the very midst of
diversity” (Epstein 1999:32). One Equality leader recognized the privileging of the
mainstream campaign and the lack of community unity by saying: “Individuals did a lot.
Certain organizations did a lot. But as far as a unified, coordinated effort, it was not as
good as it should be.”

National gay, lesbian, and bisexual community identity disputes were played out
over the Issue 3 conflict. The distinctions between liberationist and assimilationist
ideology, goals, and strategy manifested in conflict surrounding campaign planning and
inclusivity, personnel, and the threat of and actual ‘aftermath’ strategy. Next I illustrate these three main “sites” around which discontentment and conflict ensued between assimilation advocates and queer liberationists. These sites or events involved the issue of inclusion at an early planning meeting, the resignation of Stonewall’s Executive Director, and the conflict over a proposed and eventually realized tourism boycott.

Gay Identity Disputes Manifested

Early Conflict Around Campaign Planning and Inclusivity

From the beginning, queer activists reported feeling left out of the campaign, disregarded, and even placated by mainstream gay rights organizers around the Issue 3 campaign. Activists reported making numerous attempts throughout the campaign to work with the un receptive lead gay rights organizers. They pointed to an early campaign ‘community’ meeting organized by the leaders of Equality Cincinnati. From the time of this meeting on, direct action activists reported feeling segregated in their efforts to fight the right. One GLMA/ACT UP activist explained that once organized, Equality Cincinnati called a meeting of the entire gay, lesbian, and bisexual community. At the meeting, the organizers asked the participants to break into groups. One group was to be devoted specifically to community activism. He described his experience as follows:

So all the people who wanted to do community action things, like street activism, like political theater, like useful entertainment, stuff like that, something that we could send a message out about who we are in the community. Anyone who wanted to do that all gathered over in this one corner. Well, it ended up being a bunch of GLMA/ACT UP people and all of these other artists and the more leftist element. And we thought, well great! I mean, we’ve got a lot of our people we’re used to working with but now we’ve got a bunch of other people that are new to us. So that community action group proceeded to go ahead and start having meetings.38
According to one activist, the leaders of Equality Cincinnati "went through the roof."  

Apparently campaign organizers were "terrified" because of the "image" that this committee of "leftist people" would promote. This activist shared that "Equality Cincinnati was anything but that. It was a text book example of a community participating in white washing itself. [They] put out the most bland image." Another activist shared similar personal perceptions:

  In the beginning, they had a big community meeting and they let people preview the commercial that they made. And then they generated ideas from everybody through breaking up into small groups. They collected all these ideas and then they said, 'We'll call you.' Well, they didn't call anybody.

In general, queer activists described their experience as having been segregated out of the campaign and ignored. In addition, throughout the campaign people of color reported feeling left out (see Chapter 4). White queer activists, along with gay, lesbian, bisexual and queer people of color, voiced concern about the exclusivity of the movement beginning as early as the community meeting and continuing throughout the four to five months of campaigning.

Mainstream organizers shared very different recollections of the early days of the campaign. The community meeting details that they highlighted revolved around the inauguration of the campaign media advertisements and related strategy. They did not focus on the committee assignments and community activism; nor did they speak of the resulting division and dissatisfaction, as did their queer counterparts. The focus of their recollections centered on the campaign media strategy.
One explanation for why the gay rights movement’s leaders were seemingly unaware of the queer activists’ disaffection was that they were too overwhelmed to notice.

It was reported that the campaign leadership was stunned by the ballot initiative, distressed by the campaign planning, and was generally in a state of disorganization. In fact, the established gay and lesbian organizations in the community actually did little to organize a political retaliation until mid-to-late summer. As one prominent activist stated:

I had been at a meeting at the Stonewall Cincinnati offices sometime in late June, early July. And really the amount of political naiveté was startling. ...I went to this meeting and was shocked at how unprepared the leaders in the Queer community were for this...for the radical right...Things were still very much up in the air in the summer of ’93.42

Despite these divergent recollections, Equality leaders did clearly remember discontentment and discord between themselves and the more grassroots activists that surfaced at other points during the campaign. As one leader put it:

The people who were out, I believe some of them who were not affiliated with Stonewall -- saw it as a Stonewall campaign and were not supportive of that. There were a couple of splinter campaigns that were being run simultaneously. We never did get the coordinated effort for the entire gay community.43

One campaign leader acknowledged the conflict within the community yet defended Equality Cincinnati’s position on their decision-making strategy as follows:

There was also the issue within the community. The queer community does a lot of things by consensus. You cannot run a political campaign on consensus. It is called a campaign for a reason. A campaign is a military term. You wage a campaign its part of war... But you can’t make decisions by consensus in a political campaign or you’d have to have your entire group around all the time...You can come up with some broad strategic principles that way, but you can’t make decisions about whether to buy TV as opposed to radio, what goes in the ad, and whether you need print and on what page should the print run and decisions like that. Things that are absolutely part of the day-to-day management of a campaign. You can’t do that by consensus. And, some of the more activist groups, less mainstream queer groups [were] upset with that.44
In summary, from the moment that the issue was officially slated for the November ballot, there were rumblings within the gay, lesbian, bisexual and queer communities. While they united in cause against the Christian right, as a group they were divided from early on. Queer activists believed that their appearance, manner, and non-conventional tactics were unwelcome by the gay rights movement leadership. Whereas, the mainstream leadership was heavily focused, if not blindly, on launching an effective anti-discrimination campaign predicated on notions of an ethnic-like identity. It is evident from the stories about the community meeting that early signs of the assimilationist versus liberationist dispute were coming to light. Given their lesser position in the hierarchy, it is not surprising that the disaffected queer activists were the first to notice identity disputes and to voice their dissatisfaction. As the campaign moved along, more recognition from the mainstream gay rights movement occurred. At the same time, personnel became an issue.

Resignation of Stonewall Executive Director

The second assimilationist-liberationist divide manifested over a personnel matter. This time both groups were well aware of the split as it was happening. The relevance of cultural symbols to the formation of collective identity became a prominent issue when the personal ‘style’ of the Stonewall’s Executive Director appeared to be called into question. Many believed that she was being accused of being “too militant.”

At the conclusion of her three-month probationary period and in the midst of the Issue 3 campaign, on September 2, 1993 the Executive Director (E.D. hereafter) of Stonewall Cincinnati was asked to resign her position. According to a newspaper
article, the Director resigned the “same day” as Stonewall and “other groups rallied to begin their fight with conservatives over Cincinnati’s human-rights ordinance.”47 As reported in the city’s papers and confirmed by many of the queer activists and gay rights leaders interviewed, there was disagreement as to the ‘real’ reason that the Executive Director left her position. The Cincinnati Enquirer newspaper reported that “according to several supporters [of the Executive Director]... she was a too-militant lesbian and activist who didn’t dress or act as ‘corporate’ as Stonewall wanted.”48 Some who were not directly working with/at Stonewall at the time of the resignation, concurred with the report that the Director was asked to leave because she was too “militant.”49 One activist who applauded the Director’s work and was disappointed by her departure, said: “I liked [her]. I think she was one of their best choices at the time for Executive Director. But, the Stonewall Board didn’t like her because she was a big Leather Dyke. And she is, I think a little bit too frightening to them. I liked her.”50 Support for the Director was strongest among queer activists and appeared to be weakest among the mainstream organizers. The issue of militancy in her personal style and appearance were, in effect, being equated with issues of identity and movement strategy.

When asked about the reported militancy, one activist who himself had embraced the “militant” label, described the Executive Director. by saying “she was a little bit more outspoken and plain spoken, you know.” 51 Another supporter responded to the report as follows:

She wasn’t militant. [E.D. named] was a butch Dyke, no way around it... But...her heart lies kind of on the left, with the Bull Daggers and the Queers and all that. Her organizing style wasn’t that way. She’s very middle of the road. And
I think very good at addressing both sides. In fact, I think she's the most even keeled person I have ever seen.\textsuperscript{52} One activist, a former long-term Stonewall board member and supporter of the Director, was quoted in the paper as saying that she was asked to leave because she was “too activist, too open, too out.”\textsuperscript{53} Furthermore, he criticized Stonewall by saying that the organization was ‘middle-of-the-road, like it’s in middle age” and claimed that Stonewall had a “problem with someone who’s too openly gay.” The characterization of the Executive Director revolved around symbols and personal style. The disputes around these features amounted to identity politics.

Stonewall leaders defended their personnel decision to ask the Director to resign, vehemently denied any accusations about charging her with being ‘too militant,’ and interpreted such claims as attacks on the human rights organization. One board member shared that “the board simply was not satisfied with the E.D.’s performance. Specifically the E.D.’s ability to support the work of Equality Cincinnati.”\textsuperscript{54} However, leadership in the organization refused to discuss personnel matters since they are confidential. In terms of the “militant” charge, one member of the Stonewall’s Board responded to the charge simply by saying “every organization like Stonewall has its critics, and believe me, they came out in droves. It was very unfortunate. As far as the militant part…we hired [the Director] to be exactly who [she] was.”\textsuperscript{55}

There was quite a stir created in the general community, among activists and Stonewall supporters over the Director’s resignation. As mentioned, Stonewall activists saw the “militant” claims surrounding the Executive Director’s resignation as an attack on
the organization. For instance, one vocal activist believed that as a result of expressing his views in the newspaper, Stonewall loyalists accused him of trying to "bring down Stonewall." Stonewall denied the accusation. In a personal letter to the activist, one Stonewall leader expressed his concern that identity disputes made public could damage the campaign. He wrote:

> It would be unfortunate if our ‘philosophical differences’ continue to feed factionalism within our community. With the forces of the religious right bearing down on us, our only true chance of success is a strong broad based coalition of progressive individuals, organizations and community leaders. It will be difficult indeed to create that coalition if those outside our community see infighting and the resulting squandering of energy and resources.

The data suggest that the resignation of the Executive Director was a site of identity politics for both the mainstream, assimilationist activists and the challenging, liberationists. The factionalizing drew attention from the general public and the Christian right. A third site of factionalizing occurred over the issue of a boycott of Cincinnati.

**To Boycott or Not to Boycott**

Another division between queer and mainstream activists was the issue of a boycott, if the anti-gay measure passed. Gay & Lesbian March Activists/ACT UP were committed to the idea of launching a boycott in the event of an antigay outcome. Ultimately "Cincinnati’s Convention and Visitor’s Bureau, hospitality industry, Riverfront, and Arts Centers" were all targeted “for boycott and direct action." The campaign powerholders, the gay, lesbian and bisexual movement’s mainstream, never committed to a boycott plan during the campaign, and when Issue 3 passed, they did not officially
support it. Some informants believed that the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement leaders worked against queer activists, against the boycott.⁶⁰

Even before Issue 3 was officially slated for the ballot, the GLMA/ACT UP had already publicized their intent to call a boycott of Cincinnati if the initiative passed.⁶¹ As one leader indicated:

GLMA/ACT UP knew what was coming up and we made it very clear that if the City of Cincinnati was going to pass Issue 3, if the voters were going to do that, then they had to realize that there was implications with that. And we said the boycotts are already proven to be effective and a great way of educating the public because what happens is the only time the public’s going to pay attention to something is when it starts effecting them financially. Then, suddenly, the papers are quoting you, the stations are there following you, and you’ve got the press and you’re getting your message out to the public.⁶²

As early as July 1993, GLMA/ACT UP drafted and publicized a press release urging Cincinnatians “especially business and political leaders” to recognize the severity of the Colorado Boycott and “to do everything possible to prevent passage of Take Back Cincinnati’s proposed charter amendment.⁶³ In this news release in particular, and in others that followed, GLMA/ACT UP continued to produced press releases threatening a boycott and specifying potential damage.⁶⁴

Among other things, GLMA/ACT UP penned that Cincinnati has a “national reputation for extreme conservatism and intolerance” and pointed to the Mapplethorpe affair as supporting evidence (see Chapter 3).⁶⁵ Unlike Colorado, Cincinnati did not have enough revenue from tourism to fall back on in the event of a boycott. As the election drew closer and the campaign was in full swing, the threat of a boycott became more imminent. A leading activist in both GLMA/ACT UP and a local artists’ group.
Community Action for Human Rights, proclaimed in a local newspaper article that “there will be a boycott [if Issue 3 passes]...It’s not a threat; it’s inevitable - bigotry is bad for business.”

Almost from the start, disagreement existed as to whether or not a boycott of the city by conventions, business, and tourists would be advantageous and thus, whether or not the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement would support a boycott. One of the Stonewall leaders was reported as saying that "it’s a little premature to talk about boycotts...we don’t think the people of Cincinnati will vote for this ballot issue, but if they do, boycott is something you talk about down the road." Once issue 3 passed, Stonewall Cincinnati and Equality Cincinnati organizers considered whether or not to call their own boycott or endorse the boycott already initiated by GLMA/ACT UP. Indeed some GLMA/ACT UP activists thought that Stonewall/Equality would join them in the Boycott. As one queer activist reported:

I would get really strong indications from some of the members of their committee that they were ready to jump right on board this boycott, and yes, we should go ahead and hit them with the boycott. And then, when push came to shove, they would back down and go along with what everyone else in their group wanted.

As part of the deliberation process, Stonewall commenced negotiations with the Greater Cincinnati Convention and Visitor’s Bureau. Days after the election, representatives from both Stonewall Cincinnati and Equality Cincinnati met with the president of the Visitor’s Bureau to discuss ways to avoid a boycott. Stonewall informed the president that they were “considering an endorsement of the boycott of Cincinnati’s tourist industries, riverfront, and arts centers.” Even though Stonewall seemed to hold
the power of a boycott in their hands, they were also concerned about the possibility of an Issue-3 like initiative threatened for the entire state of Ohio. Stonewall prepared four conditions or demands for the Convention and Visitor's Bureau to meet to keep Stonewall from supporting boycott activities. The four demands included: the inclusion of sexual orientation in the Visitor's Bureau and member organizations' EEO policies; a joint coalition of the Bureau and Stonewall working to create and promote a visibility campaign identifying pro-gay businesses; a public announcement advocating that Issue 3 must be overturned; a public statement opposing a statewide initiative comparable to Issue 3. The Cincinnati's Convention and Visitor's Bureau was given about one week from the time of the initial meeting to meet Stonewall's demands.

The Bureau responded with some concessions but made it explicit that the Greater Cincinnati Convention and Visitor's Bureau will "maintain its 'apolitical' stance on all aspects of the issue." The Bureau's responsiveness to most of Stonewall's demands appeased the leadership and halted their involvement in a tourism boycott. This visibility initiative and boycott substitute eventually came to be termed, "boycott."

Despite mainstream efforts, a boycott was called immediately following the passage of Issue 3. Without the support of Stonewall, Equality Cincinnati, or portions of the assimilationist gay and lesbian community, GLMA/ACT UP managed to pull off a convention and tourism boycott costing the city tens of millions of dollars. Gay & Lesbian March Activists/ACT UP orchestrated the boycott with a volunteer staff of about three primary people.
Not only did the mainstream gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement work closely with the Convention Bureau to prevent a boycott, but from the queer activist perspective Stonewall/Equality tried to garner anti-boycott support from the gay and lesbian community, and they made direct attempts to stop the queer activists from the boycott already in progress. One GLMA activist recalled:

after the boycott was called, people in the community called this big community meeting and I was the only one that went to it from GLMA. [The meeting was intended to] get all of this public sentiment against the boycott [and] to try to get us to retract our boycott.

In addition, the perception was that the Stonewall-Visitor’s Bureau alliance was too assimilationist and internally divisive to the community. However, leaders in the mainstream movement had a different take on the boycott situation. One main organizer shared that Stonewall voted against a boycott believing that such an action would be “ineffective and isolating.” The focus of what they shared was the gay rights strategy of working with and providing information and education to the convention bureau and potential conventioneers and other visitors. Additionally, Stonewall leaders labored to identify pro-gay businesses that deserved community support. Another leader concurred that “there was disagreement on strategy [and] people were talking about it.” But she denied any claims that Stonewall was working against GLMA/ACT UP activists. Furthermore, she shared that while “Stonewall did not support the boycott” they did not encourage conventions to come if they were abiding by the boycott. Stonewall’s position was to “remain neutral on whether organizations bring their conventions here.” They wanted to inform potential convention planners that “there is no guarantees of
protections to their gay and lesbian members if they did come. Contrary to their queer comrades’ strategy to promote a boycott, one leader informed that:

[Stonewall] voted to encourage gay and lesbian conventions to come to town to create visibility. And that we would create a program so that those persons who chose conventions that did choose to come here...how they could support businesses that supported human rights. And that's a boycott. Every one of those decisions was highly controversial within our own community. 

The gay community disagreed on campaign strategies from the onset. The boycott issue, the resignation of Stonewall's executive director, and the early community meeting all illustrate the divisions in identity within the gay, lesbian, bisexual and queer community. The exclusivity of the gay rights movement leadership prompted hostility from various constituencies in the larger movement, including queer activists of color and white (see Ch. IV). While gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement members held a shared interest in stopping Issue 3 and opposing the issue proponents, their differences in identity manifested to prevent unity in strategy and tactics. Stonewall and Equality Cincinnati, adhering to an assimilationist identity politics, attempted to downplay the multiplicities of identities operating within the community and to work with City leadership to effect solutions. At the same time, however, movement leaders articulated their strident efforts to make the movement more diverse along the lines of race, sexual orientation, and religion (see chapter 4). Equality Cincinnati did not set out to contain activists. Rather, leaders articulated that they were singularly focused on waging an effective campaign and not by consensus.

Despite the pains to be more inclusive, queer activists interviewed largely expressed a clear sense of dissatisfaction and disaffiliation from the movement campaign.
Direct action activists were under a firm belief that the gay rights leaders wanted to suppress difference and thus, keep the activists in the background. Queer activists were more interested in using various direct action tactics to challenge conceptions of gayness or queerness and take on the city that would allow such legislation to pass. These activists wanted not only to stop the Christian right, but also wanted to educate and increase visibility about the range of queer identities, views, and appearances. Mainstream leaders viewed street activists’ dissatisfaction as a hindrance to the cause rather than a call to immediate change.

I argue that assimilationist versus liberationist ideology manifested in different strategies. Despite a united consciousness of wanting to stop the Christian right and protect gay rights, the movement failed to coalesce a cohesive “us” (see Rupp and Taylor 1999). The main movement organization’s leaders chose strategies that minimized the differences between gays, lesbians, and bisexuals and everyone else (see Ch. IV). The multiplicities of identity, and more specifically, the failure to recognize, embrace, and cultivate those various identities, divided the movement at a time when the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement needed to coalesce.

IDENTITY AND STRATEGY: OPPOSING MOVEMENT INTERFACE

Typically, analyses of collective identity focus on a solitary social movement (see for example, Taylor and Whittier 1992; Whittier 1995). In addition to studying each movement as a single entity, I also examine the added factor in an opposing movement conflict, the challenging movement (see also Bernstein 1997). I raise the question of both the Christian right and the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement— to what extent did the
opponent movement influence or alter the collective identity and subsequent related strategy of their contender? I first address the issue by looking at the ways in which the right wing may have influenced the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement.

The Christians did affect the collective identity and subsequent strategies of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement, but, they did not alter the identity itself. Rather the right influenced the primacy granted to the assimilationist identity over the liberationist. That is, the Christian right helped to tip the scales favoring a mainstream gay politic over an alternative one. Most importantly the nature of the issue itself as well as the refusal to use terms depicting queer persons and the direct recognition and dealings only with Stonewall and Equality Cincinnati, provide insight into the ways in which the right-wing affected the gay, lesbian, and bisexual identify over queer.

First and most significant, Issue 3 itself was a ballot initiative designed to eliminate any legal protections to gays, lesbians, and bisexuals as a minority class. The right was attempting to stop gay assimilation through the ballot box. Meyer and Staggenborg argued that “once a movement enters a particular venue, if there is the possibility of contest, an opposing movement is virtually forced to act in the same arena” (1996:1649). Indeed, the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement was constrained to act to oppose Issue 3. Its axiomatic then, that since Issue 3 was a rights-based proposal, and the opposing gay rights movement was limited to this same venue of action, that the Christian right influenced the gay rights movement priority given to established, assimilationist organizations ready to fight in the same battle. Challenging movements, such as the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement during Issue 3, have little choice but to respond to attacks
in the venue in which they originate. Other factors notwithstanding, the simple fact that
the ballot initiative was a rights based measure influenced the primary collective identity
highlighted and related strategy chosen by the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement
contender.

Second and less overt, proponents of Issue 3 facilitated the mainstream gay rights
organizations by granting legitimacy only to those individuals and organizations. The
Christian right adhered to the conviction that the campaign be about rights and
requirements for minority status rather than an attack on individuals. In this vein then,
Issue 3 proponents would not use terms that they found offensive in characterizing their
homosexual movement opponent. “Queer” was among those terms. For instance, the
Chair of Equal Rights Not Special Rights, also the media expert for the Christian
campaign and radio station owner explained:

We...I would not allow the "buzz word" to be used .....buzz words on our side
would be the word "queer" or "fag"...I would not...I would not allow anybody
who said that over the air, or if they call in on a talkshow, I'd say...'No, we're not
going to use that word...that's a buzz word...It's an offensive word.' On the other
side, if they called us a "bigot" or a "homophobe"....I would say ...no, that's a buzz
word...I'm not a bigot. And we'd go through the definition of what a bigot was
and why we were not a bigot. and that kind of helped...I think... buzz words just
bring out the emotion and not the content of the issue.82

To this leader, the words queer and fag were comparably offensive as the terms bigot or
homophobe. Many in the Issue 3 opposition embraced the terms as self-descriptors and as
appropriate labels for the community as a whole. Another illustration of non-recognition
of liberationist culture and discourse occurred following the election by a few years.
While this instance occurred much later it does serve as a good example of the ways in
which the Christian right operated during the campaign. Data suggest that campaign leaders refused to associate or debate in a queer context. As one leader in the Issue 3 initiative explained:

I refused to speak at Miami University recently because they called the thing [conference] Queer Nation, or something like that. I said, "I'd like talking to you, ... the homosexuals. They call themselves Queers, you know. I said, 'I'm not going to be a part of this.' I don't even want to be around somebody that calls them Queers. But, that's what they call themselves. And I say, 'Well, count me out.' I don't like that and I don't use that term and I, you know, I think it's degrading. And I think ... to call a person a homosexual is degrading because you're identifying them strictly on how they have sex... I'd rather call them homosexual activists rather than homosexuals."

Historically speaking, the words queer and fag have been used derogatorily against gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. However, in the contemporary scene, the terms are frequently used to depict liberationist gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and even heterosexual persons. Despite their current usage, many in the gay rights movement would still find such terms offensive. The Religious right, intentional or not, supported the assimilationist movement members and organizations by failing to identify this group of individuals with their chosen labels and denying opportunities to debate with them.

In addition, the Christian right dealt primarily just with the mainstream gay rights movement organizations and leaders. Obviously, part of the reason for this was that Equality Cincinnati and Stonewall were the powerholders before and during the campaign. The image was promoted that the gay community stood behind these representative organizations. However, no attempts were made by Issue 3 proponents to initiate debate or contact with Gay & Lesbian March Activist/ACT UP or any alternative opponents to Issue 3. The activities of the gay rights movement predominantly, and that of the
opposing movement in part, affected the ways in which primacy was granted to a collective identity which fostered an assimilationist agenda. The nature of the conservative issue itself necessitated a particular, rights-based response.

The remaining question relates to the impact that the challenging gay, lesbian, and bisexual rights movement had on the Christian right's collective identity and subsequent strategies. These data suggest that the gay rights movement had minimal impact on the identity or related right-wing strategies in the promotion of Issue 3. The influence of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement came in the form of the original Human Rights Ordinance. This rights-based Ordinance in turn, necessitated a rights-based response with the Issue 3 measure.

The collective identity of the Issue 3 proponents centered on their shared Christian values and faith. Indeed, a diverse group of Christians coalesced around Issue 3. The critical difference in identity salience between the two movements involved the very nature of the initiative. For gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and queers, Issue 3 reduced or eliminated their rights. On the other side, Issue 3 proponents were fighting for their world view, not their right to freedom from discrimination in employment, housing, and accommodations. It was a 'bread and butter' issue to gays, not a world view. Thus, Christian involvement was self-selected. Only those committed to the Issue and the way in which the campaign was organized would volunteer to be involved. This increased the likelihood for Issue proponents to hold such a salient collective identity. The 'glue' holding together Issue 3 proponents was honey in that only those attracted to the cause and the campaign would become involved. They chose to participate and play by the rules of the leadership. Any
impact of the gay rights movement in this identity and identity strategies would likely be invisible. Non-conforming Christian right members had the choice to drop out as activists or fall in line in the campaign.

In the next and final chapter, I draw together the findings on opposing movement interaction. I begin by discussing theory on movement-countermovement dynamics. I then present the contributions of this study to our understandings on opposing social movements. I recap the findings from each of the analysis chapters. I conclude by discussing possible directions for extending this research in the future.
ENDNOTES

1 Interestingly, the leadership in the Issue 3 movement were primarily suburban Cincinnati residents and not eligible to vote for the Issue.

2 Interview no. 6.

3 'New Wave 2000' was a group formed by a local African American Minister and a community leader who was later elected to the City Council. This short-lived group was the first to make public motions opposing the expected Human Rights Ordinance enactment. Said to be comprised of a coalition of organizations and individuals, the membership of the group was never publicized. The group faded off with the emergence of the campaign organization promoting Issue 3.


7 Interestingly, many in the general public and in the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement believed, and some right wing documentation concurred that the Director of Citizens for Community Values was the head of Equal Rights Not Special Rights. However, both the Director of Citizens for Community Values and the Chair of Equal Rights Not Special Rights, as well as other leaders and additional documentation confirmed that the official leader was indeed the new Chair. Some of the confusion may have resulted from the Director's continued involvement and visibility.

8 Interview no. 8.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Interview no. 9.

12 Ibid.

13 Interview no. 8.

14 Interview no. 12.
Interview no. 22.

Interview no. 19.

Interview no. 6.

Interview no. 8.

The African-American Minister was the sole identifiable person of color in the leadership of Equal Rights Not Special Rights.

Interview no. 9.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Those interviewed within three months of the November 1996 election (August-November).

Interview no. 8.

Ibid.

Interview no. 9.

Interview no. 20.


Interview no. 13.

Interview no. 1.

Interview no. 13.

Interview no. 3.

Ibid.

Interview no. 10.
Interview no. 17.
Interview no. 1.
Interview no. 10.
Ibid.
Ibid.
Ibid.
Interview no. 3.
Interview no. 13.
Interview no. 1.
Interview no. 13.


Ibid.
Ibid.
Ibid.
Ibid.
Ibid.
Interview no. 10.
Ibid.
Interview no. 5.

Interview no. 2.
Ibid.

Ibid.


Interview no. 3.


Interview no. 10.


Ibid.


Interview no. 7.

Interview no. 10.


Given that the costs are based on moneys not received, the actual figures are not known. Estimates were as high as $35 million dollars in “direct spending” (Peale, Cliff. “Local Visitors’ worth - $2 Billion,” The Cincinnati Post, February 27:6B).
Interview no. 3.

Ibid.

Interview no. 2.

Interview no. 7.

Ibid.

Interview no. 2.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Interview no. 8.

Interview no. 6.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This dissertation examined the opposing social movement conflict between the
gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement and the Christian right over Cincinnati, Ohio’s Issue
3. Passed by voters in 1993, Issue 3 amended the City Charter to prohibit legal
protections to gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons. The findings from this study point to
the importance of the mutual influence that opposing movements have on one another
and to the significant role that culture plays in social movement’s mobilization, claims
and strategies, and policy success. The Christian right did not operate in isolation in their
struggle to pass Issue 3. Rather, the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement engaged with
the right in efforts to thwart the initiative. At different times during the campaign, each
side influenced the other in terms of framing and other strategies and tactics. The gay
rights movement affected the opportunities available for their conservative adversary.
Likewise, the Christian right played a role in the framing and collective identity strategy
of the gay rights movement.

Countermovements were once viewed as reactive defenders of the status quo
engaging narrowly with the state (Mott 1980). Beginning in the 1980s, scholars
expanded their vision to understand countermovements as social movements that not only
react, but also actively pursue their own agenda (Lo 1982; Zald and Useem 1987; Gale
1986; Meyer and Staggenborg 1994). Countermovements and social movements
interface with one another as well as with the state or other actors. Once scholars
recognized that countermovements were virtually the same as ‘regular’ social movements, the term countermovement began to lose its significance (see Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). Each movement in an opposing movement contest brings to the table an agenda of its own and also reacts to its opponent.

The right-wing movement promoting Issue 3 interfaced with the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement as well as with the voting public. In this study, I capture the dynamics and interdependence of two movements in conflict with each other. Using qualitative data from interviews, print and visual media, and organizational documents and newsletters, I have demonstrated the ways in which these opposing social movements affected one another in terms of culture. I explored the different factors that comprise cultural opportunities, framing, and collective identity.

**The Venue Shift and the Influence of Opposing Movements**

Cincinnati’s Christian right did not emerge anew with the Issue 3 campaign. The movement had been active in the City in previous years and more recently, in other states in the U.S. as well. They had been in a less visible and active stage just prior to the Human Rights Ordinance enactment (see Taylor 1989 on abeyance). At the same time, the gay rights movement had just been mobilized for the arduous lobbying tasks involved with the promotion of the Human Rights Ordinance. However, since Issue 3 was a surprise to the gay, lesbian, and bisexual, this new battle against the right-wing required that the movement reorganize to respond to the measure.

The loss experienced by Cincinnati’s right as evidenced by the enactment of the Human Rights Ordinance necessitated that the conservative movement shift to an arena more receptive to it’s concerns. Since the Ordinance passed at the hands of City Council,
the conservatives moved from that domain to the voting public with Issue 3. Just as Meyer and Staggenborg earlier argued, movements “suffering defeats” are likely to “shift targets and arenas to sustain themselves” if such venues are available (1996:1648).

The shift to the public arena was a move for both the Christian right and the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement. Since the City Council had shown its support by passing the Ordinance, this victory could have easily prompted the gay rights movement to continue to pursue its agenda in that same venue. However, because the right mobilized to promote Issue 3, the gay rights movement’s hands were tied. The gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement was basically stuck defending its gain and guarding against the erosion of gay rights by acting responsively with the right. This finding corroborates Meyer and Staggenborg’s theory of coupling dynamics. They argued that “once a movement enters a particular venue, if there is the possibility of contest, an opposing movement is virtually forced to act in the same arena” (1996:1649).

Furthermore, they contended that strong opposition could prevent a movement with recent success and political openings from pursuing other agenda items (1996:1652). Indeed, this was the case in Cincinnati.

The Christian right and the lesbian, gay, and bisexual movement influenced one another in a variety of other ways during the campaign. In this study, I focused primarily on the ways in which these opposing movements affected each other in terms of various aspects of culture—cultural opportunities, framing, and collective identity and related strategies. I demonstrated the effects of cultural opportunities on Christian right mobilization, the importance of comprehensive and resonant collective action frames for
the competing movements, and the dynamics of identity disputes for the gay rights movement and identity salience for the right.

**Cultural Opportunities and Opposing Movement Dynamics**

Studies of movement opportunities have tended to focus solely on the political. In this study, I began the task of separating two highly entangled constructs; political and cultural opportunities. Generally speaking, the critical difference between the two conceptions is interpretation. The interpretation of structural or political change as an opportunity places it in the realm of the cultural. That is, for new legislation or other policy changes to be viewed as opportunities for mobilization, they must first be filtered through movement members’ experiences, beliefs, and understandings. For instance, the Human Rights Ordinance had to be seen as a threat for the Christian right to then mobilize to promote Issue 3. Without such interpretation, policy change is innocuous to movements.

Social movement scholars have advanced four specific variables comprising cultural opportunities however, no research had tested these constructs. In this study, I empirically examined cultural opportunities in terms of four measures; the contradictions between Christian right values and conventional social practices, the suddenly imposed grievance of the Human Rights Ordinance, the vulnerability of the gay rights movement coupled with the perceived strength of the conservative movement, and the availability of the civil rights master protest frame. Since Issue 3 was a Christian right initiative, it is the influence of the gay rights movement on right-wing mobilization that is central in this case.
Different events that contradict beliefs and values provide movements with opportunities to mobilize (McAdam 1994). As this study demonstrates, various visible practices and activities, particularly the suddenly imposed grievance of the Human Rights Ordinance, gave rise to a cultural opportunity for the Christian right. Right-wing forces interpreted this and other policy and social changes as threats to their Christian worldview. I earlier explained how their beliefs and values were challenged by these events.

Briefly, Issue 3 proponents defined homosexuality as a sin as well as a choice. The proponents of Issue 3 follow this with the reasoning that individuals who commit sin can also choose the moral, heterosexual path instead. In addition, Cincinnati’s right-wing perceived homosexuality as obscene and characterized gays as promiscuous and as potential child molesters. Given these beliefs, any political or cultural gains favoring gays, lesbians, and bisexuals, or portraying homosexuality in a positive light were contradictions to their views. Policies and practices that legitimized homosexuality in any way clashed with the Christian right’s value system. The right viewed the enactment of the Human Rights ordinance as legal condonation of objectionable behavior. These clashes provided openings for the right-wing to mobilize to promote and win success for Issue 3.

In this regard, it was the actions of the gay rights movement that altered the Christian right’s opportunities for mobilization. Clearly, it was the gains made by the gay and lesbian movement in both the political and cultural arenas that instigated the conservative mobilization. Victories such as the passing of pro-gay legislation and the visibility of homosexuality enhanced by large gay pride marches and parades challenged
the right's views and prodded them to mobilize. As Meyer and Staggenborg (1996) earlier noted, the successes of one social movement tend to provoke a countermovement into collective action (see also Staggenborg 1991). These data support the conclusion that Christian right mobilization did not develop in isolation but followed the victories of the gay rights movement. That is, gay gains stood as a serious value clash that then served to unite and propel right-wing forces in opposition.

In addition to victories that mobilize, a cultural opportunity can be created by a political opponent's losses (McAdam 1994). I extended this notion to include opposing movements rather than just the polity. I showed how vulnerabilities of the lesbian, gay, and bisexual movement were exposed by defeats that created openings for the Christian right. The gay rights movement failed to stop the comparable Colorado Amendment 2 from passing. Further, prior conservative movement victories in Cincinnati related to sexuality and/or morality may have also fueled the perception that the gay rights movement was vulnerable. For instance, in the case of the Mapplethorpe homoerotic photograph exhibit, the 'loss' of the museum exposition signified weaknesses in the liberal forces including the gay rights movement. I argue that one movement's opportunities are affected by losses as well as gains made by their contending movement. However, I surmise that this is only the case when the vulnerable movement has shown, in some other way, "signs of success" or otherwise threatened the position of the opposing movement (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996:1635). A movement who simply fails to make policy change, for instance, will not likely provoke countermovement response since no threat is posed. But, a successful movement that has already shown
muscle, like the gay rights movement, and then reveals weakness, creates an opportunity for its opponent to identify vulnerable points and strike.

In addition to the vulnerability of one's opponent, I demonstrated that opportunities are further created when a movement perceives itself as strong relative to its opponent. Christian right forces looked to their counterparts in Colorado and to their own local history to judge its own potency. On the Cincinnati front, the conservative movement successfully 'cleaned up' the streets of the City virtually eradicating the sex industry and shutting down the sexually explicit Mapplethorpe photographic exhibit. They effectively established an anti-pornography and anti-obscenity organization that by the time of Issue 3 had become a leader in the pro-family movement. They had proven potency in the City allowing for a confident appeal with this issue. Furthermore, Cincinnati's right-wing studied under Colorado's conservative leadership. Amendment 2 had passed one year prior to the Issue 3 election, and just a few months before Cincinnati's right mobilized the petition drive. Together, the perception of the gay rights movement as weakened, and their own movement as capable and strong, provided the Christian right an opening to mobilize.

The final variable comprising cultural opportunities is the accessibility of master protest frames (McAdam 1994). The long popular civil rights master frame, already employed by the gay contender, was readily available and tried and true. Indeed, most visible movements of the sixties and beyond have appropriated this master frame for their purposes. Likewise, the Christian right successfully cultivated this same master frame to its own ends. The lesbian, gay, and bisexual rights movement may have been a factor in the Christian right's choice of a master protest frame. These data suggest that because
the gay rights movement had already invoked the available and widely used civil rights master frame, the right-wing had a ready opportunity to employ that same frame. Social movement theory suggests that a movement operating in one venue typically compels its opponent to do the same (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). Furthermore, movements in counter-contest tend to couple with each other (Zald and Useem 1987; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). It seems logical, then, that the use of an available master frame by one movement will influence the mobilizing frame utilized by its opponent (see also Zald and Useem 1987).

**Frames and Opposing Movement Dynamics**

Movements use frames to ‘package’ their claims and ‘market’ them to particular audiences and the most effective frames are accomplished through cultural appropriation. To understand the framing employed by the two movements I examined the claims deployed and I explored the public’s receptivity of the messages. I studied three tasks of frames including injustice, agency, and identity (Gamson 1990). Both, the Christian right and the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement developed and publicized claims and images containing each of the three tasks of framing. However, people do not blindly receive or accept messages. Rather, frames are filtered through individuals’ beliefs and experiences. To assess the potency of the frames with the intended voting population, I took a closer look at several dimensions of frame resonance including ‘belief’ and ‘experience.’

On the one side, the right-wing framed the issue as seeking to correct the injustice caused by gays seeking special rights. The right constructed homosexuality as a choice and characterized gays, lesbians, and bisexuals as wealthy and politically powerful. As
such, protective legislation for gays and lesbians equated special rights with affirmative action. In some instances, homosexuals were depicted as having broad and even violent sexual appetites including the proclivity for children. The identity of ‘other’ was also characterized as those who were illegitimately seeking more than their fair share. The right further delineated between “us” and the opponent by positioning themselves as champions of equal rights and civil rights for “authentic” minorities. Additionally, the conservative movement’s claims instructed Cincinnatians that they had agency to vote, to volunteer, and to donate to support the cause.

Overall, the Christian right frames were well received by the public. Issue proponents tapped into broader moral and legal beliefs about homosexuality. They also cultivated their messages based on people’s perceptions of the mutability of homosexuality, and the financial and political position of gays and lesbians. The depiction of gays as already having equal rights fit with public opinion and thus, provided a ready linkage to the claim that lesbians, gays, and bisexual were seeking special rights and affirmative action. The findings also demonstrate the Christian right’s tailoring of its messages to simultaneous appeal to those who support civil rights for African Americans and those who oppose all benefits that would level the playing field for minorities. Furthermore, they provided evidence to support their different claims. Using data to back up their messages lent legitimacy to the Christian right’s frames.

On the opposing side, the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement characterized the injustice of the Issue as discrimination. The gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement used images of Adolph Hitler, a Ku Klux Klansman, and Senator Joe McCarthy to promote the theme that Issue 3 was discrimination, that discrimination is wrong, and that the
individuals behind such discrimination were comparable to these historical figures. While the opponent was characterized as evil, the gay rights movement depicted themselves and their supporters in broad terms to include all those who believe in justice, oppose discrimination and despise the atrocities committed by the ‘three faces of evil.’ Like the right, the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement informed voters that they had agency to make a difference and stop Issue 3 by voting against the initiative, volunteering their time and energy, and donating money to the campaign.

The claims and images were variously received by Cincinnatians. The ‘no discrimination’ theme hit a responsive chord as the gay rights movement tapped into the salient American value of individualism and individual rights. Although the frame was considered by some to be abstract, the movement stuck to this single theme limiting the range of support. Many movement leaders agreed retrospectively that more education and information would have assisted in having the messages resonate with voters. Moreover, the public did not accept the images of the ‘three faces of evil’ as accurate characterizations of Issue promoters. The citizens’ experiences with right-wing Christians largely did not line up with the images of Hitler and the Klan. Finally, for the most part, the gay rights movement did not systematically present empirical support for their anti-discrimination claims. Further, the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement neglected to play off of pro-gay public sentiment among those who believe that homosexuality is ‘natural’ or inborn.

Interplay between the gay rights movement and the right-wing took place over frames. As the initiator of Issue 3 and the wealthier of the two movement campaigns, the right-wing movement held the upper hand in developing and deploying frames that
resonated with Cincinnati voters. Christian messages were multidimensional characterizing the Issue as a gay ploy for ‘special rights.’ The gay rights movement was not as expansive in promoting claims. The themes presented were potent but unidimensional. Due in part to their depiction of the opponent as comparable to Hitler, the Klan, and McCarthy, the gay rights movement failed to capture broad support. As the more powerful and successful of the two, the right-wing claims necessitated active response. Indeed, the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement began to counter the claims of the right in public speaking assemblies and in some newspaper editorials. However, they neglected to systematically respond to the Christian claims in the more visible media.

Christian success with framing influenced the gay claims. In retrospect, most activists and leaders in Cincinnati’s gay rights movement recognized that their failure to reframe in light of the claims of the right and their own messages’ weaknesses was to their detriment. The Christian right mobilized around an issue that directly competed with the goals of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement. Christian claims should have prompted the gay rights movement to retaliate by reframing their messages and refigure their strategies. However, the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement responded tepidly and lost the Issue.

**Collective Identity and Opposing Movement Dynamics**

A final goal of the dissertation was to explore the collective identities of the opposing movements, the extent to which their identities affected movement strategy, and the influence of an opponent movement on identity and related strategy. Collective identity develops out of subcultures and plays a role in informing various strategic and
tactical decisions made by movements. Christian right movement members were united in common purpose around their salient, religious collective identity. Individuals participating in the movement chose to coalesce around the Issue. Had they not adhered to the salient identity, there would have been little reason to maintain a connection to the campaign as activists. That is, for the Christians, Issue 3 was an initiative promoting their agenda and worldview. It did not directly enhance their rights.

The passage of Issue 3 meant the erosion of rights to the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement. Activists worked to stop Issue 3 and defend their rights. The gay rights movement experienced identity disputes comparable to the conflicts that occurred elsewhere with the movement. The gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement privileged assimilationist identity strategies over the queer or liberationist. The decision-makers in the opposition campaign were largely fueled by their rights-based and ‘sameness’ politics. Queer activists reported feeling left out of the leadership and strategizing. Consequently, as I demonstrated, identity disputes manifested over movement strategies. I found three separate events-- an early community meeting, the resignation of Stonewall Cincinnati’s executive director, and the boycott that fostered identity conflicts between mainstream gay movement members and queer activists.

Christian forces again influenced the strategy of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement in two primary ways. First, the fact that the Issue was a rights-based initiative affected the choices available to the gay rights movement to respond. Different collective identities were present among Issue opponents from which to prioritize and draft strategies. Second, anti-Issue 3 members’ collective identity strategy was also affected by the right’s refusal to use liberationist labels and terms and their general neglect of
street activists. I have earlier described the right's adherence to moderate and conservative terms to refer to their opponent including gay, lesbian, and homosexual. That is, they avoided using words such as "queer," "fag" or "dyke." While the right-wing acknowledged some non-assimilationist activists as evidenced in various segments of the documentary's coverage of pride marches in particular, on an everyday life level they failed to engage with the street activists with whom they also contended. Thus, the actions of the Christian right influenced the gay rights movement as it again granted primacy to the assimilationist identity and identity strategy over the alternatives (see also Bernstein 1997).

I have argued here that social movements, to some degree, depend on contending movements to determine the most viable choice of venue to pursue their cause, to provide opportunities for mobilization, and to advance particular frames and other strategies. I submit that analyses of social movements must consider the full context in which a movement operates. The environment need be conceptualized more broadly to include not only the political opportunity structure, but also the cultural openings available to movements for mobilization and the interplay between opposing movements over opportunities, claims, and strategies. Furthermore, analyses of opportunities must also consider the processes involved when two contending movements interface. Accounting for various environmental pressures as well as the influence of opposing movements can only fortify our understanding of social movement mobilization, collective action, and success.
REFERENCES


