

TAKE HOME EXAM#3

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There is no clear cut, written ideology in the gay liberation movement. Because the movement is de-centralized, different organizations within it have differing ideologies. For example, some organizations have issued manifestos proclaiming their goals as well as their own ideologies. The contrast of these ideologies ranges from radical, non-sexist and Marxist ideas to simple reform oriented programs aimed at legislative change. However, as R.E.L. Masters, author of The Homosexual Revolution, states:

"Most basically-and most obviously, what homosexuals want is to be regarded as ordinary citizens who differ from the rest of the population only in terms of their sex object orientation (which they would wish to have regarded as for them, natural), and they would wish to be accepted on the basis of their worth as individuals (apart from their sexual inclinations and behaviors). Almost equally basically, and perhaps prerequisite to social acceptance, they want to be freed from the laws that brand them as criminals, even though, as is usually the case, their prohibited sex acts occur between consenting and responsible adults."

As was defined in class, ideology is a set of beliefs about the social world and how it operates, containing statements about the rightness of certain social arrangements, and what action would be taken in light of those statements. For many years, homosexuals have lived in fear of society, because in all the western world, the dominant sexual ideology has been heterosexually oriented. Using Rude's concept of inherent ideology, or those ideas that come from tradition and experience, homosexuals have in the past survived by being very quiet and discreet about their sexual orientation and values. The majority of them never openly admitted to being gay, but still they somehow survived. Their inherent ideology, in a sense then, was that if one was careful and did not rock the boat, then one could live as a homosexual, but



of course, not openly. Rude's concept of derived ideology can be applied to the contemporary gay liberation movement. Gays took many of the radical ideas of other movements of the sixties and used them in proclaiming their liberation. New terms and concepts such as sexism, androgyny, homophobia, and coming out became valuable ideological weapons used by organizers and theorists in their critiques of society's values and norms regarding sex and sexuality. Many gays came out of their closets and proudly proclaimed their orientation in open defiance of traditional American morality. The contrast between the movement ideology and the hegemonic ideology is very clear cut and very evident in America today. Basically, the gay liberation movement proclaims that homosexuality is not a sexual aberration or a sickness, but a healthy, alternative, and normal way of life, whereas the hegemonic ideology proclaims that sex must occur only between men and women, and nothing more. By ignoring homosexuality in the media, society is denying many the possibility of seeing that gay people are by all means functional and normal human beings. Society further perpetuates negative stereotypes of gays by focusing mainly on the eccentricities of a relatively small proportion of the gay population, and ignoring these gays who are ordinary citizens, leading healthy, productive lives.

It is very difficult describing the recruitment process in the gay liberation movement. Because it is still very much negatively sanctioned in our society, homosexuality is very problematic for the individual. Recruitment to the movement is difficult because one must first accept his/her sexual orientation, and that is a very personal and crucial process and experience in a person's life. In a sense, one must first become committed to being gay.

*interesting point*



The commitment process, according to Gerlach and Heine, involves a seven stage process. However, although coming out may involve some of these steps, it does not necessarily mean that the person is committed to the movement. Coming out is analogous to Gerlach and Heine's concepts of the identity altering experience and the bridge burning act. In doing so, the gay person affirms his/her homosexuality and usually lets other people know about it. It is usually after this experience that the individual comes into contact with other gay people and with the various organizations within the movement. The main places of social contact with other gay people are in gay bars. However, this is not necessarily the case in the larger cities around the country. Many different types of people can be found in gay bars and coffeehouses, and thus exposure to the various aspects of the movement may take place. Either the person meets other gays involved in various organizations or he/she reads about various movement activities in gay publications. Commitment to the gay liberation movement, more so than some other movements, involves very strong conviction and dedication to human civil liberties and rights, because the risks of being identified and ill treated are very strong. As recently as five years ago, a gay man was killed outside a local gay bar by a group of teenage boys, who were later set free on the grounds that they were only out for some kicks. Queer bashing seems to be something that young men can do and get away with with relatively little trouble. Gay people are increasingly being beat up, robbed, and chastised in this era of moral backlash. Members of the gay liberation movement therefore must have a strong sense of confidence and support in order to exist as gay people, let alone as members of the movement. In the early stages of the movement, there



those who participated in the marches and the riots were innovators in that they openly displayed their power in numbers collectively for the first time. Thus, because of their collective activity, it may have been easier to come out. Also, because the ice had finally been broken, those who wanted to see some social change take place could channel their energies into something new and exciting. Environment plays an importantly large part in the recruitment and commitment processes in the gay liberation movement. In cities like Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York City, it is much easier to be openly gay, simply because there exist in these cities more gay people and gay organizations. There is much more social support and more things to do. Presently in Tucson, there are very few organizations that one can join. Also, the social environment here is not very conducive to alternative lifestyles. This is in part due to the size of the city, but it is also due to a lack of any unifying kinds of leadership within the gay community that does live here.

Mobilization, according to Oberschall, is the process of forming groups, associations or organizations for the pursuit of collective goals. It involves bringing people and resources together to work for those common goals. There exist different segments of the population that are affected by mobilization. One group is the base constituency, those already involved directly in the movement. Another group constitutes the secondary constituency, or those people in the population that are uncommitted or indifferent to the movement. A third segment of the population consists of the opposition to the movement. Ganssen distinguishes the target of influence from the target of mobilization. The target of mobilization consists of those sets of individuals whose



readiness to participate in collective action can be mobilized. This includes the core constituency and the secondary constituency. The target of benefits is usually the above two groups also, but it may not necessarily always be so.

In discussing mobilization of the gay community, I shall use as an example a demonstration that recently took place in Tucson protesting Jerry Falwell's recent visit. Presently, there exist only a handful of gay organizations in Tucson. One of them is the Gay Students Organization, and another is Gay Community Services. Politically, these organizations are not very active. However, each group had tremendous success in mobilizing the gay community for the above demonstration. Ads were placed in the local gay newspaper and flyers were distributed in bars and on store windows. Many gay people showed up, some with signs that read Gay And Proud. (Of course, there were also other organizations present, such as the local atheist group, and several women's organizations. They naturally added to the success of the demonstration, which showed if nothing else, that Tucson is not totally backward.) An interesting problem in the gay community of Tucson is that there is nothing happening politically to unite gay people. Tucson has a city ordinance protecting gays from discrimination in housing and employment, and gays here for the most part seem content with that. Another problem in the community is that the men and women in the community don't get along very well with each other. The women complain that they are victims of sexism in the community and the men in turn complain that the women want to take over and run everything themselves. Recently, this argument practically immobilized the leadership of the community in organizing the annual gay pride picnic. Women at the Falwell demonstration seemed much more



cohesive than the men. For one thing, there were a lot more of them there. It's interesting to note that the lesbian community is more unified in terms of friendship bonds and ties than the men in the community. There are bars and coffeehouses, for example, that cater solely to the women, and there are more leading figures within the women's community. Overall, the women in the gay community seem to be more ready and willing to mobilize when necessary, because of their unity.

*This unity a result of mobilization, or a resource to be developed. W; the R.M. liberative this issue quite problematic*

The tactics used by the various organizations within the movement vary. Usually, legal, legitimate, and non-violent tactics are used, in contrast to illegal, illegitimate and violent ones. For example, one organization in Phoenix called Citizens For Constitutional Rights uses lobbying in the state capitol to pressure the state legislature. Other groups use non-violent, peaceful demonstrations to make themselves heard. Legitimacy is an interesting concept when applied to the gay liberation movement, because it is rather subjective. Many people perceive homosexuality as illegitimate in itself, and therefore any kind of tactic used by gays is also illegitimate. Sometimes, violent tactics are used by gays. For example, when Harvey Milk was shot and his murderer later released, gay people in San Francisco rioted. However, these tactics are largely reactionary and spontaneous.

According to class lectures and the readings, leadership usually falls into three categories or functions. First, there exists the ideological function. Leaders of this type make up the ideology or program for the movement. This is a very important role, for this leader defines the goals and the ideology of the movement, and sometimes the processes to attain those goals. Secondly, there exists the administrative leader. This person



keeps the organization alive by doing such things as raising funds and organizing the membership. Thirdly, there is the agitator. This person is largely responsible for mobilizing the people. He is, in a sense, the torch carrier and is often characterized as a charismatic figure. What these different types of leaders do, in essence, is wield power, either through force or through legitimacy. In general, they tend to be better educated than their followers and economically better off than them too.

It is again difficult to pinpoint the leadership within the gay community. Some leaders, such as the late Harvey Milk, are lawyers, with knowledge of the legal system, and people with more power than the average citizen. Other leaders play a more social and ideological role. People like Rita Mae Brown, Kate Millet, and Arthur Bell, are writers, whose ideas have a very strong impact on ideology. Presently, there are no strongly charismatic leaders within the movement. *Does this bear a relationship to goals + ideology?* Because gay rights leaders are mostly concerned today with legislation in Congress, most of them are involved in the political and legal systems. Thus, they fulfill primarily ideological and administrative functions. It is interesting to note that there has never really been a single charismatic-agitator type leader within the gay liberation movement who has succeeded in uniting all factions of the movement. Only when large scale demonstrations and marches are held, does one find representatives of most organizations present and united.

The organization of the gay liberation movement is very decentralized. Different organizations within the movement have different power structures, different leaders, and varying ideologies. According to class lecture, informal organizations are distinguished from formal organizations. The components of a formal organi-



zations are as follows;

- 1) There is a clear cut, well defined goal; or sets of goals.
- 2) There is some level of task differentiation aimed at fulfilling those goals .
- 3) There is some hierarchy of authority within the organization.
- 4) There are formal, written rules in the organization.
- 5) There is a clear cut membership.

Some organizations, such as the Gay Rights National Lobby do follow the above pattern of organization. Other groups such as the Gay Students Organization, however, do not, but are very informally structured. Clearly, the goals of the two groups, to use them as an example, are different. GRNL has specific legal goals, whereas GSO serves more of a social and consciousness raising function primarily for college students. Both types of organizations play important roles in the movement. The concept turbulent environment, applies to the gay liberation movement. Gay people have to deal with a very rough environment ranging from uncomfortable tolerance to outright hatred by society. There are a multitude of issues that need to be addressed and therefore a multitude of organizations within the movement exist to address them. It follows, then, that leadership and ideology, among other variables differ when one looks at the various organizations within the movement.

Routinization of a movement means that the authority within the organizations of the movement turn into beurocracies with hierarchical structures. Applying this to the gay liberation movement is also difficult. Here , one must distinguish between rights and liberation, terms I have been using interchangeably until now. Gay rights is only a part of gay liberation. Also in terms of liberation, there is no one organization whose goal is total liberation, because it is such an all-encompassing term, and also be-



cause liberation is largely a personal, sort of transformational type of process that takes place within the individual. However, in terms of gay rights, organizations within that part of the movement may very well be or become routinized. In particular, gay lobby groups in Washington and in different state capitols may succumb to routinization, but to the extent that they do become formalized hierarchical organizations, one would have to look at the internal structure of each organization. However, on a broader level, one could argue that gay rights has become routinized, simply because not everyone can be a member of a lobby, and only certain people have access to senators and representatives in Washington. In this sense, there are people who have more influence and power within the movement.

Gay rights and gay liberation are far from being dead issues. In fact, activism has resurged within the movement in the past year. Personally, I think that gay liberation will continue to be sought for a very long time. This is so because homosexuality has yet to be met with honesty or acceptance by the major institutions and by the majority of the population in this country and others. Only until the rights of the individual to his/her personal freedom are granted, will the quest for gay liberation cease as a movement and an issue.

- a bit weak on routinization theories  
- a bit weak on theories of organization

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