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Gay American Gothic: A Movement Returns to Its Past

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Gay American Gothic: A Movement Returns to Its Past

by

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Dedication

"An ideal life is lived as its own."

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Gay American Gothic: A Movement Returns to Its Past

by

José Andrés Araiza, PhD
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This discourse analysis seeks to understand how depictions of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer) people within news coverage changed over the past 60 years and what those depictions mean for the future of a group of individuals who still face violence and bigotry and struggle to gain equal access to laws and rights. News stories are a salient tool to translate the unknown to known. This research approaches news stories as social constructions, which often times reflect existing power structures and shape social reality. Through the qualitative analysis of news coverage from four historically significant moments in Austin, Texas, this research demonstrates the path that gay and lesbian people experienced in the media—from being portrayed as sexual deviants to a homonormative monolith in the form of patriotic, domesticated, depoliticized, and desexualized couples. The news discourse over the past five decades demonstrated how stories slowly shed all radical politics from the gay liberationist past and adopted an assimilationist orientation. Bisexuals, transgender people, individuals who suffered from and died because of AIDS, and all other queer people who don't adhere to the homonormative construct have been symbolically annihilated throughout history and continue to be. Journalists from mainstream, collegiate and alternative publications continue to utilize reporting practices that marginalize and delegitimize

LGBTQ people. Nearly 70 years after making their first appearance in the mainstream press, framed as perverts and deviants, LGBTQ people continue to be subjected to homophobic discourse. By understanding changing news frames through the past six decades, this analysis attempts to weave an explanation of how the depictions may have and may continue to perpetuate false perceptions of LGBTQ people. This research interrogates the very power of the press, as an institution of power in society, to reflect hegemonic values, not challenge them.

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INTRODUCTION

On June 26, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage across the country. Newspapers flooded the public sphere with pictures and articles of individuals celebrating in the streets, in the church pews, and in front of altars. In Austin, Texas, the mainstream daily newspaper, *Austin American-Statesman*, ran a rare afternoon edition that featured on the front page a large color photograph of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people and their allies celebrating in front of the U.S. Supreme Court, waving rainbow flags and carrying red balloons. The activists were cheering, smiling, and clapping. Under that picture was the headline "SAME-SEX MARRIAGE IS A RIGHT, COURT RULES."[1] This depiction of gays, lesbians, and their allies celebrating a Supreme Court ruling in their favor, in full public view, without fear of violence and unobstructed by police harassment, is a photograph that would have been inconceivable 60 years ago.

In the 1950s, gay people were disparaged, demonized, and delegitimized in the mainstream press as they began appearing in the first significant news stories within the country's leading newspapers. These articles reflected, rather than challenged, prevailing negative attitudes and opinions about gay people (Gross, 2001; Streitmatter, 2009). The anticommunist hysteria in the middle of the 20th century fed society's fear of the gay man, who was loathed within the mainstream press and was "collapsed into the commie-queer bogeyman" (Gross, 2001, p. 21). Newspapers didn't bother masking their disgust of gay people and utilized overtly disparaging and hostile discourse. In 1950, *New York World-Telegram* wrote that "perverts routinely fondle children" and the *New York Post* wrote about how "sexual deviates find themselves so compulsively drawn to homosexual practice that they seduce and abuse boys" (Streitmatter, 2009, p. 14). The nation's leading newspapers also targeted homosexual bureaucrats who, the *New York Post* described, as being "a menace in the government" (Miller, 1995, p. 261).

The gay and lesbian identity and the public discourse about it have rapidly evolved over the past century, and that evolution is captured within the country's newspapers. It's clear from the academic scholarship that the worst of times are over for gays and lesbians in terms of media portrayals. Overtly disparaging and hostile coverage of gays and lesbians within the mainstream press is no longer the norm (Gross, 2001; Streitmatter, 2009; Walters, 2001). The main focus of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) movement organizations' media advocacy efforts is not *if* the media will cover their issues but *how* to control the media's framing of stories (Moscowitz, 2013). For a certain segment of the LGBTQ movement, invisibility is no longer an obstacle. Stories that concern White, middle class, domesticated gay and lesbian people and the issues important to them abound. The increased media visibility only shines a spotlight on a small segment of what some consider the larger LGBTQ community.

While media *invisibility* is no longer a concern (Becker, 2006; Gross, 2001; Streitmatter, 2009), media *visibility* poses a new set of problems, as "media saturation of a previously invisibly group can perpetuate a new set of pernicious fictions, subduing dissent by touting visibility as the equivalence to knowledge" (Walters, 2001, p. 12). Media visibility does not always translate into successful gains within legislative or judicial efforts. Increased depictions of LGBTQ people within media content don't guarantee those individuals equal treatment under the law or the elimination of discrimination, bias, and violence. In addition, increased positive portrayals for other minority groups have largely failed to translate into successful social, political, and economic gains:

> Women's visibility in popular culture has clearly not 'led' to real political or social power, although surely it has been a part of the changes wrought by the women's movement. African Americans are no longer depicted simply as smiling servants or brutal gangsters, yet impoverishment and disenfranchisement continues [*sic*] to grow. (Walters, 2001, p. 12)

News stories are salient tools "for translating the unknown into the known, the abstruse into the understood, and the strange into the familiar" (Mander, 1999, p. 3). This research approaches news stories as social constructions, which oftentimes reflect existing power structures and shape social reality (Gans, 1979; Gitlin, 1980; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Wilson et al., 2014). This discourse analysis sought to understand how depictions of LGBTQ individuals within news coverage changed over the past 60 years and what those depictions mean for the future of a group of individuals who still face violence and bigotry and struggle to gain equal access to laws. Through the analysis of four case studies from historically significant moments in Austin, Texas, this research demonstrated how journalists from progressive, mainstream, and collegiate newspapers framed gays and lesbians, and how those portrayals changed over time. By understanding changing frames throughout the past six decades, this analysis attempted to weave an explanation of how the depictions may have perpetuated, and may continue to perpetuate, "pernicious fictions" (Walters, 2001, p. 12) about LGBTQ people.

Queer Identities Reflected in the Media

This discourse analysis was also guided by theoretical concepts within queer theory, which provides a useful framework to understand how discourse, both text and images, shapes reality and how sexual orientation as a discursive unit has a "far greater potential for rearrangement, ambiguity, and representation doubleness" (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 34). By understanding the hegemonic forces supporting the dominant social order, as disseminated by news discourse, queer theory provides a useful vehicle to undermine hegemony and envision new methods to create meaning. For those who assume a nonheterosexual identity in the form of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, or any other label that casts them outside the heterosexual identity, notions of their identities were traditionally constructed for them (Foucault, 1978; Sedgwick, 1990). The sense of who we are, our subjectivity, is manufactured through the discourse we deploy to describe our sense of self. Foucault (1978) sheds light on the constructivist notion of the intersection and interaction between identity and discourse, as "it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together" (Foucault, 1978, p. 100). Our discourse is shaped by dominant power structures within our own lives. This research interrogated the very power of the press, as an institution of power in society, to reflect hegemonic values (Lang, 2013) when reporting on LGBTQ people and their associated movement organizations that historically challenged authority. When an individual begins "coming out," he or she will search those cultural institutions to gain the discourse and the knowledge to understand his or her same-sex sexual feelings. The media also affects the formation of identities for gays and lesbians by disseminating society's evolving discourse utilized to describe same-sex sexual attraction and desire (Alwood, 1996; Becker, 2006; Fejes & Petrich, 1993; Moscowitz, 2010; Streitmatter, 1995; Warner, 1999). In the process of coming out, closeted individuals often "search both the interpersonal and media environments for clues to understand their feelings and sense of differences" (Fejes & Petrick, 1993, p. 396). For the purposes of this research, the discourse disseminated by media institutions to describe and portray LGBTQ people and the power of those words to shape identities and reality was further examined to understand the mechanism supporting the cultivation of an individual's sense of self.

Historical Accounting Through News Discourse

Archival newspaper articles provide an avenue to both understand the past political activities of gays and lesbians and how journalists reported on their efforts. This qualitative analysis sought to address voids in the line of literature that document the evolving portrayal of gay and lesbian people in the press, while at the same time answering larger questions about how journalists marginalize those challenging authority. This research examined the media coverage of events that are of historical value but remain unstudied by communication scholars. While anthologies of gay and lesbian histories discuss how radical gay liberation groups were forming in major cities of the world immediately after the 1969 Stonewall riots (Miller, 1995), these historical accountings ignore what was happening in midsized cities like Austin that historical evidence suggests were equally engaged. How journalists in Austin covered LGBTQ people from post-Stonewall radicalism through contemporary times remains virtually unexamined. While scholars have demonstrated how the mainstream media portrayed gay and lesbian people during the past 60 years, these bodies of research generally focused on publications from major metropolitan areas in the U.S. How the media were covering gay and lesbian people in smaller U.S. cities, especially in the Southern region of the U.S., remains unexplored. Researchers have yet to examine how college newspapers covered gay and lesbian people. Did collegiate journalists' coverage resemble mainstream press practices, or did it mirror the advocacy of the alternative press? Finally, the results of this research will be utilized to critically examine the role of corporatized LGBTQ movement organizations that, as scholars demonstrated, exerted enormous efforts to shape the mass audience's perceptions (Duggan, 2004; Moscowitz, 2013; Warner, 1999).

The discourse analysis was guided by the theoretical concept of framing and the framing typology known as *protest paradigm*. Analyzing the different frames deployed by mainstream, collegiate, and alternative publications will yield insight into professional norms and ideological underpinnings among different types of newspapers. Scholars also have yet to understand the role of the collegiate press in portraying the gay and lesbian movement compared with mainstream and alternative publications. Analyzing news story frames provides a method to "account for the lack of neutrality in news" (Zelizer, 2004, p. 140) at a time when some journalists fail to see their profession as constituting a set of practices and routines that inherently disenfranchise some. Framing research helps scholars see "beyond the discontinuous episodes" and "force recognition of the systematically constructed nature of journalistic work" (Zelizer, 2004, p. 142). Framing analysis has yielded important findings that show how "powerful political elites attempt to create and promote frames that advance their purposes" (Coombs, 2014, p. 4).

Texas Gay and Lesbians

The history of gay and lesbian people in the Southern region of the U.S., pre- and post-Stonewall remains vastly understudied, as many activists and academics believed "the South was irrelevant to the contemporary lesbian and gay movement" (Sears, 1997,

p. 1). As this research will demonstrate, Austin began witnessing the formation of a thriving gay and lesbian activist community just under a year after the 1969 Stonewall riots. Austin's GLF chapter first public meeting was held in April 1970, and it singled the birth of a public gay movement in Austin (Ganther, 1990). The efforts of those activists coincide with the blossoming of other minority movements in Texas, which attempted to challenge the dominant social order. For years, Southern politicians successfully thwarted efforts by liberals "to pass anything that would alleviate the inequalities and injustices of Jim Crow-ism in the eleven former confederate states" (Graham, 2011, p. 85). Institutional discrimination could be found in all arenas of state and local government. Racial and ethnic apartheid, lynching and "extralegal law enforcement" strategies all combined to create a hostile political environment to those challenging who weren't straight White men and women (Guzmán, 2015; Rivas-Rodriguez, 2015). Within this hostile political environment, gay and lesbian people in Austin began mobilizing to ignite political change. In Austin, they found a unique political environment. Progressives considered Austin as having one of the most open political climates in the Southern part of the U.S. (Hank, 2011), as "radicals sometime call Austin the (rest and relaxation) center of this area" (Founding Story, 1970). The city also had an established underground newspaper that was operating in direct opposition to the well-known local newspaper and collegiate press. All of these factors provide a rich opportunity to further communication scholarship about the evolving portrayal of gay and lesbian people among mainstream, collegiate, and progressive publications.

The researcher generated data for the discourse analysis through a search of newspaper articles from Austin's mainstream daily newspaper (*Austin American-*

Statesman), the University of Texas at Austin's student newspaper (*Daily Texan*), and three alternative newspapers. In order to understand how the portrayal of gay and lesbian people evolved over time, the researcher conducted a discourse analysis of newspaper coverage from four moments that are of historic value to Austin's gay and lesbian community. The historical moments coincided with different phases of the gay and lesbian movement, as the movement phases often reflected in the media's coverage.

The first case study includes newspaper articles about the formation of the University of Texas at Austin's (UT) first gay and lesbian student group, the Gay Liberation Front (GLF). Beginning in 1970, the GLF fought to gain official campus recognition. UT administrators denied GLF's application. Their efforts were marked by significant and public battles with UT's administration that, at one time, led to the arrest of GLF leaders. After filing a federal lawsuit, the group won official campus recognition in 1974. GLF's efforts were unfolding as a new gay radicalism was spreading across the country after the 1969 Stonewall riots. The riots signaled a shift in consciousness that ignited a new militancy within the gay and lesbian movement, in the form of gay liberationists' ideology (D'Emilio, 2002, p. 30). Gay liberationists adopted "strategies that highlighted differences from the straight majority, seeing themselves as the embodiment of the liberation potential" (Bernstein, 1997, p 546). Gay liberationists viewed sexism and homophobia as the very heart of their struggle. They challenged hegemonic concepts of sexual identity and "they politicized everything, including sexual behavior and sexual relationships (D'Emilio, 2002, p. 54). During this time period, as gays and lesbians were aggressively advocating for political change, the media adopted a skeptical and hostile attitude towards them. The visibility of gay people in the media increased after the riots. However, news coverage continued to reflect the prevailing prejudices, rather than challenge the rampant homophobia in society. In 1969, *Time* reported how "[m]ost straight Americans still regard the invert with mixture of revulsion and apprehension" (Klarman, 2013, p. 13). News reporters used the term "pervert" less frequently but continued to disparage gay people with terms such as "queens, fags, and queers" (Streitmatter, 2009, p. 64). Mainstream media institutions continued to portray homosexuality "as a sickness, perversion or crime" (Fejes & Petrick, 1993, p. 402).

The second case study focuses on a proposal by Texas health officials in 1985 to quarantine "recalcitrant" AIDS patients. The Texas Health Commissioner's proposal to quarantine "incorrigible" AIDS victims came at a time when panic was spreading across the nation. Texas health officials sought to criminalize the sexual behavior of some AIDS patients and quarantine them within hospital wards or confine them to jail long enough to die within a state cell. The quarantine was targeted towards AIDS victims who officials believed were refusing to cease sexual activity. Texas health officials announced the drastic proposal to combat the further spread of AIDS. This proposal was among the first in the U.S. and was a result of stories in the media of some gay men who had AIDS refusing to abstain from sexual behavior. The proposed quarantine generated a substantial amount of coverage and ignited hysteria among the populace. After three months of public debate, Texas officials eventually abandoned the idea.

The quarantine proposal came at a time when the country witnessed the rise of social conservatism and neoliberalism, embodied by the election of President Ronald Reagan, who was "critical of most gay and lesbian rights initiatives and generally did not support strong and effective AIDS policy responses" (Stein, 2012, p. 145). The gay and lesbian movement, during this time, was mainly focused on forcing federal, state, and local governments to properly respond to the epidemic, but the movement also continued to pursue policies that decriminalized homosexual conduct and demedicalized homosexuality in general (Stone & Ward, 2011). For the gay community, the AIDS epidemic marked the end of invisibility in the mass media. However, the mass media's coverage of the epidemic was deeply problematic, as the reporting stigmatized gay men (Gross, 2001). When mainstream reporters covered the crisis, early reporting was sensational, riddled with inaccuracies, and framed around how the virus could affect the "general population" (Gross, 2001, p. 97). While mainstream media organizations perpetuated stereotypes that sought to shame gay sex, movement organizations challenged mainstream notions that stigmatized "those who had sex, to blame them for the virus that was killing them, to use their sex as an excuse to let them die" (Warner, 1999, p. 51). Mainstream news coverage of the epidemic in the early years was characterized by an absence of stories from the perspectives of those who had AIDS, their lovers, friends, and family members. While there was an unprecedented amount of news coverage, the stories shed no light on the lives behind AIDS, as the press relied on official sources and doctors to discuss the unfolding crisis (Kinsella, 1989).

The third case study examines newspaper coverage from the 1991 special election for Texas State Representative District 51—an Austin-based district—that was won by Glen Maxey, the first openly gay state lawmaker in Texas history. In a press release announcing his candidacy, Maxey touted his experience as a teacher, a legislative aide, and "as Director of the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby."[2] Maxey's race generated a substantial amount of media coverage, as more than a dozen candidates ran for the seat being vacated by Lena Guerrero. Guerrero held the post for six years and left her position after Texas Governor Ann Richards appointed her to the Texas Railroad Commission.

Maxey's election came at a time when gay men and women were being elected to public office at unprecedented rates (Yeager, 1999). Scholars described the 1990s as a point in time when journalists "mainstreamed" coverage of gay and lesbian people (Gross, 2001). Journalists weaved sexual identity issues "into the fabric of what was deemed newsworthy" (D'Emilio, 2002, p. 87). Journalists moved beyond focusing solely on gay men and AIDS and featured a variety of articles that ranged from stories about the inequalities between homosexual and heterosexual couples to simple wedding announcements, to including gay and lesbian families (Gross, 2001). One indication of the gay and lesbian movement's mainstream status was the race for the U.S. Presidency. In 1992, the five Democratic candidates for president courted "the gay vote" (Becker, 2006, p. 40) like at no other time in history.

The 1990s marked a time period when large-scale LGBT movement organizations completely abandoned gay liberationist ideology. Instead of revolutionizing society on all fronts, "gays and lesbians were fighting to be included in them" (Becker, 2006, p. 43). Movement organizations adopted assimilationist strategies that sought to overcome stigma by winning "acceptance by the dominant culture, rather than to change the self-understanding of that culture" (Warner, 1999, p. 50). These movement organizations also reorganized into corporate structures managed by an elite board of directors, thus becoming "the lobbying, legal and public relations firms for an increasingly narrow gay, moneyed elite" (Duggan, 2004, p. 45).

The fourth case study includes news coverage from the first legally recognized same-sex marriage in Texas history through the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that legalized same-sex marriages across the country. Texas witnessed its first legally recognized same-sex marriage months before the June 2015 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Obergefell et al. v. Hodges, Director, Ohio Department of Health et al.* On February 17, 2015, a Travis County probate judge found Texas' ban on same-sex marriages discriminatory and overturned it.[3] Following the ruling, another Travis County judge, in a separate, unrelated matter, ordered the local county clerk to issue a marriage certificate to Sarah Goodfriend and Suzanne Bryant. On February 19, 2015, the Travis County clerk issued a marriage license to Goodfriend and Bryant. A Jewish rabbi immediately married the couple, thus becoming the first legally recognized same-sex couple in Texas history.[4] That marriage ceremony happened as Texas lawmakers were convened for the 84th Session of the Texas Legislature. The legislative backlash against Goodfriend and Bryant's marriage was almost immediate. This qualitative analysis studied the news reporting that was generated immediately after Goodfriend and Bryant's wedding, the subsequent legislative backlash of their marriage, and the news coverage of the *Obergefell* decision. Texas' first same-sex marriage and the *Obergefell* decision provide communication scholars another avenue to further scholarship to understand the changing media portrayal of LGBTQ people.

Movement Implications

Achieving "marriage equality" was the goal of large-scale LGBTQ movement organizations. Organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign and Equality Texas placed "marriage equality" as their number one goal in the hopes that, extending the right to marry, same-sex couples would normalize all LGBTQ people and finally end homophobic and transphobic politics (Moscowitz, 2013). The current strategy of major LGBTQ movement organizations is far from the gay liberationist ideology that sought to revolutionize society on all fronts (Becker, 2006). These organizations have been criticized for pursuing an assimilationist agenda (Becker, 2006) that sought to overcome stigma by winning "acceptance by the dominant culture, rather than to change the self-understanding of that culture" (Warner, 1999, p. 50). The drive to be seen as "normal" may have may have perpetuated, in the words of Walters (2001), as "pernicious fictions" because assimilationist tactics accept heteronormativity for a group that is anything but heterosexual. The "normalizing" strategy required gay people to position themselves as not challenging heteronormativity, but advocating for inclusion in the paradigm which privileges "heterosexual desire, dating, marriage, reproduction, childrearing, and home life" as "not only valuable to themselves, but the bedrock on which every other value in the world rests" (Warner, 1999, p. 47). Such tactical actions sought to mute the differences and realities of LGBTQ life for straight audiences in order to shape a palatable imagery of queer life. These tactics aren't new. Normalizing strategies were first deployed by the homophile movement in the 1950s, a time when the forebears of the contemporary LGBTQ movement "hoped to achieve acceptance through a conciliatory approach to society and by conforming to the dictates of the dominant social order" (Streitmatter, 1995, p. 20). A key goal of the homophiles was for homosexuals to "lead well-adjusted, wholesome, and socially productive lives once ignorance and prejudice against them is successfully combated" (Bronski, 2011, p. 180). The homophiles worked "through *e*volution rather than *rev*olution" (Streitmatter, 1995, p. 20) by encouraging gay men and women to conform to mainstream society “by minimizing the differences between homosexuality and heterosexuality” (D’Emilio, 1983, p. 109).

Including discussions of the LGBTQ movement in both a historical and contemporary context is important in contextualizing the changing portrayals of gay people. The researcher situated the findings of the discourse analysis within the existing scholarship which indicates that large-scale, corporatized LGBTQ movement organizations and leaders made a concerted effort to assimilate queer people into heteronormative culture and deradicalize their goals in order to gain political rights (Duggan, 2004; Moscowitz, 2013; Warner, 1999). The researcher attempted to address larger questions about how the movement’s assimilationist tactics manifested in news coverage and how such efforts to unqueer a queer group of individuals may have actually undermined activists’ goals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Changing Media Portrayals of Gay and Lesbian People

Prior to the 1950s, gay and lesbian people were largely invisible in the mass media within the United States (Gross, 2001; Streitmatter, 2009). The visibility and portrayal of gay and lesbian people in the U.S. media has radically transformed during the past six decades. This section of the dissertation will map the changing media depictions of gay and lesbian people from the 1950s through contemporary times. The changing depictions generally reflected a nexus of influencers, including the discourse regarding the formation of the gay and lesbian identity, the political climate, prevailing attitudes and prejudices, and the evolving gay and lesbian movement itself. It is a path punctuated by radical advocacy, the death of thousands of men, and assimilationist politics.

Perverts and deviants dominate news coverage. In the 1950s, the country's leading newspapers published their first significant stories about homosexuals, which reflected rather than challenged prevailing negative attitudes and opinions (Gross, 2001; Streitmatter, 2009). For a gay man especially, the 1950s were a regressive time in U.S. history, as he was "collapsed into the commie-queer bogeyman" (Gross, 2001, p. 21). The words "perverts" and "deviants" were frequently used to describe homosexuals, characterizations supported by opinions from the medical community. According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Mental Disorders (DSM-I)*, published by the American Psychiatric Association (APA), homosexuals were classified as suffering from a mental disorder, a classification that remained in place until 1973 (Miller, 1995). In 1950, *New York World-Telegram* wrote that "perverts routinely fondle children" and the *New York Post* wrote about how "sexual deviates find themselves so compulsively drawn to homosexual practice that they seduce and abuse boys" (Streitmatter, 2009, p. 14). The nation's newspapers turned the public's attention to homosexual bureaucrats who were, as the *New York Post* described, "a menace in the government" (Miller, 1995, p. 261). News accounts did very little to highlight the personal plight of gay and lesbian people. Names, photographs, and details that would shed light on personal histories and stories of gay men and women were virtually absent from news accounts. When gay men were covered, news articles portrayed them either as a menace to society or as "emotionally unstable, morally corrupt, obsessed with sex, and afflicted with a reprehensible disease" (Streitmatter, 2009, p. 15). A 1966 *Time* article noted how homosexuals were afflicted with a "pernicious sickness" (Klarman, 2013, p. 9). A *Coronet* article reported that "[p]sychiatric case histories bear eloquent testimony to the thousands of warped lives that follow in the wake of associations with perverts" (Streitmatter, 2009, p. 15).

In this hostile media environment, a semblance of a gay and lesbian identity was beginning to form, following large-scale changes in U.S. society that allowed a gay subculture to flourish. World War II disrupted the conventional, heterosexual married households: "Wartime conditions produced social systems appealing to homosexuals. Single-sex environments encouraged homosocial relationships. Lesbians who were economically and socially independent of men found the military a haven. Homosexual men could now avoid their family's heterosexual expectations." (Bronski, 2011, p. 158)

Following the massive demobilization after the conclusion of WWII, men and women who experienced sexual liberation during battle carried their feelings and existing homosexual bonds into peacetime (Engel, 2001). A distinct gay and lesbian community began to take shape as homosexual men and women formed networks with other like-minded individuals and gravitated towards sites where they could safely engage (relative to that time period) with other homosexuals (Engel, 2001). In urban environments, homosexuals coalesced within enclaves, which provided social spaces like coffeehouses, parks, bars, and restaurants to socialize with similarly situated individuals (Bronski, 2011).

Homophile activism began to take on a recognizable form with the founding of the Mattachine Society in 1951. The Mattachine Society was founded in Los Angeles to create "an ethical homosexual culture… paralleling the emerging cultures of our fellow-minorities—the Negro, Mexican, and Jewish Peoples" (Miller, 1995, p. 334). The term homophile was coined both "to protect individuals involved in the movement from automatically being labeled *homosexual*," which was a crime at the time, and "to encompass homosexuals as well as heterosexuals who were 'interested in the study and/or support of homosexuality'" (Streitmatter, 1995, p. 21). Homophiles were "characterized by a deliberately low profile and an emphasis on education and the backing of 'experts'" (Miller, 1995, p. 537). In 1955, Daughters of Bilitis (DOB) was founded in San Francisco to promote the assimilation of the "variant" into society (Miller, 1995). The founders of DOB included the word "daughters" in the group's name because it "sounded respectable (like Daughters of American Revolution)" (Bronski, 2011, p. 181). Both organizations promoted assimilationist tactics by initially straying away from direct political intervention with the state. Some of the political work that homophiles undertook included challenging state criminalization of sex between consenting adults, freedom from police surveillance, and entrapment (Duggan, 2004). While the founding of the Mattachine Society marks the beginning "of an unbroken history of homosexual and lesbian organizing that continues until this day" (D'Emilio, 1983, p. 58), it was not the first homosexual emancipation group in the U.S. That distinction goes to The Society for Human Rights, founded in Chicago in 1924 (D'Emilio, 1983). The organization ceased operating after one year because of the stifling homophobic environment of the time. In the early- to mid-20th century, simply labeling oneself or associating with homosexuals "was tantamount to an invitation of criminal prosecution" (Schlager, 1998, p. 31).

While homophile groups like DOB and the Mattachine Society adopted what scholars now consider a conservative political approach, the organizations inspired individuals to adopt a cohesive identity that encompassed a common set of politics, similar goals, and a distinct culture (Bronski, 2011, p. 179). However, homophiles promoted an identity rooted in efforts to assimilate into the dominant social order, rather than to revolutionize society. In order to assimilate into society, homophile leaders often promulgated the prevailing prejudice that same-sex sexual desires were pathological and inferior, and they offered individual counseling services to combat the problem (Altman, 1971). The Mattachine Society "hoped to achieve acceptance through a conciliatory approach to society and by conforming to the dictates of the dominant social order" (Streitmatter, 1995, p. 20). A key goal of the Society was for homosexuals to "lead well-adjusted, wholesome, and socially productive lives once ignorance and prejudice against them is successfully combated" (Bronski, 2011, p. 180). Warner (1999) described the homophile political orientation as one rooted in "identity ambivalence and the lure of the normal" (Warner, 1999, p. 61). While these groups provided a framework for similarly situated individuals to begin negotiating their identities, the Mattachine Society adopted an "indignity of sex" orientation, as Warner (1999) described, "[s]ex and sexuality are disavowed as 'irrelevant' in an attempt to fight stigma. But the disavowal itself expresses the same stigma" (p. 46). Rather than reimagine "that heterosexuality might be irrelevant to the normative organization of the world," the Mattachine Society built "a movement of homosexuals without sex" (Warner, 1999, p. 48) and reified an orientation that persists to this day in which "heterosexual desire, dating, marriage, reproduction, childrearing and home life" are situated as "the bedrock on which every other value in the world rests" (Warner, 1999, p. 47).

STONEWALL CHANGES COVERAGE

News coverage of gays and lesbians began shifting after the New York City Stonewall riots on June 28, 1969. The riots were a response to a police raid after bar patrons, tired of continuous police harassment and extortion, began protesting as police raided the Stonewall Inn, a gay club in Greenwich Village. While the riots were historically significant as one of the earliest examples of gays and lesbians, as a group, directly and publically confronting police abuse, the *New York Times (NY Times)* buried the event on page 33 (Gross, 2001). Other local newspapers ignored it. The *Village Voice* framed the protests as "the forces of faggotry" (Gross, 2001, p. 41) challenging police authority. Historical accounts of the Stonewall riots later documented how drag queens and transgender people played an important role (Carter, 2004; Miller, 1995). However, press reports framed those who didn't conform to existing rigid gender roles as objects to ridicule. The *New York Daily News* described the drag queens "as standing 'bra strap to bra strap' and 'blowing kisses and waving to the crowd' as the 'proceedings took on the aura of a homosexual academy awards night'" (Streitmatter, 2009, p. 25).

New York's *Village Voice* was one publication that recognized the riot's importance as it described the event as "the first public eruption of the gay rights movement" (Klarman, 2013, p. 17). Stonewall did not ignite, begin, or start the gay and lesbian civil rights movement. Gays and lesbians were organizing to effect change at least two decades prior to the riots. D'Emilio (2002) makes the argument "that a street riot in New York led to the flowering of a gay and liberation movement precisely because the soil had been fertilized and the seeds planted by the preceding generation" (pp. 149–150). However, the riots did change how the movement pursued its goals—through radical new strategies that sought to directly challenge state oppression and seek major changes to the dominant social order. Aside from understanding the importance of the media's coverage of the riots, it's also important to note how the protests provided "crucial cognitive liberation" that helped coalesce a disparate group of individuals into what is now known as the modern day gay and lesbian civil rights movement (Engel, 2001). The riots were an ignition point that, according to Della Porta and Diani (2006), transformed individual actions into a social movement when "single episodes of collective action are perceived as components of a longer-lasting action" (p. 23). The Stonewall riots were a "symbolic shift that had been in the making for a number of years" (D'Emilio, 2002, p. 30), and ignited a new militancy within the gay and lesbian movement. Gay and lesbian people organized on an unprecedented scale after the rioting, "[r]ather than wait for the police to come to them and provide another outburst of anger, they formed organizations in order to engage in sustained activism" (D'Emilio, 2002, p. 150).

The Gay Liberation Front (GLF) was founded in New York City days after the riots. The GLF was a repudiation of the homophile movement—a "change in consciousness" and "advocated nothing less than the complete transformation of society" (Miller, 1995, p. 369). Despite the newfound fervor within the movement, a split between gay men and gay women began to form. Women involved with the GLF in the spring of 1970 "began to conclude that lesbian oppression and gay male oppression had less in common than they had originally believed" (Miller, 1995, p. 375). Women began forming lesbian-feminist groups because gay men couldn't separate themselves from their patriarchal upbringing (Bronski, 2011). This separation between gay men and gay women also manifested in the gay press, as newspapers were formed that catered exclusively to either men or women (Streitmatter, 1995). From the very foundations of the modern gay and lesbian movement, it was not a monolith.

The politics of the gay and lesbian movement immediately after Stonewall were radically different compared with homophile and contemporary activism, as the GLF and other similar groups attempted to establish connections among preexisting New Left movement organizations (Stone & Ward, 2011). Organizers abandoned efforts to cultivate a heteronormative and patriotic image. Bland was out; blatant was in (Miller, 1995). The queer politics of the 1970s "became a struggle not simply to win acceptance for a class of people, homosexuals, but to topple the gendered foundations of American society" (D'Emilio, 2002, p. 54). New York activists in the 1970s "consistently privileged strategies that challenged dominant cultural values over those that would maximize the likelihood of policy success…" [thus choosing] "…strategies that highlighted differences from the straight majority, seeing themselves as the embodiment of the liberation potential" (Bernstein, 1997, p. 546). Rather than advocate for state recognition of same-sex marriage, early activists supported banning employment and housing discrimination, removing homosexuality as a mental disorder from the *DSM-II*, and continuing to build community networks (Klarman, 2013; Stone & Ward, 2011). Gay activists in the 1970s "embraced slogans such as 'Smash the Nuclear Family' and 'Smash Monogamy.'" (Klarman, 2013, p. 22). The National Coalition of Gay Organizations in 1972 advocated for a wholesale revision of marriage by repealing "all legislative provisions that restrict the sex or number of persons entering into a marriage unit and extension of legal benefits of marriage to all persons who cohabit regardless of sex or numbers" (Warner, 1999, p. 90). Advocating for heteronormative same-sex marriage was the antithesis of the movement's goal: the liberation of sexuality from state regulation (Moscowitz, 2013). Duggan (2004) describes the gay liberationists as negotiating "a rapidly shifting scene of context over the meanings of public and private, and the related meanings of democracy and autonomy in collective and personal life" (p. 52).

While gays and lesbians were professing a politics of difference, they benefited from preexisting frames, strategies, and organization strength, not only in the form of DOB and the Mattachine Society, but, more importantly, from groups associated with the emerging New Left (feminist, student, and civil rights struggle). While some members of the New Left shunned gay and lesbian people, Melucci (1996) described how the gay and lesbian movement rooted "itself in memory and symbols of the past" (p. 101). Recognizing how the Black and women's movement succeeded in gaining civil rights protections by proving "they had experienced longstanding political and economic discrimination and that their status was immutable or unchangeable" (Stone & Ward, 2011, p. 610), gays and lesbians constructed "like race" arguments in order to convince governmental bodies to extend to them status as a protected class (Stone & Ward, 2011).

The visibility of gay people in the media increased after the Stonewall riots. However, news coverage continued to reflect the prevailing prejudices, rather than challenge the rampant homophobia in the society. In 1969, *Time* reported how "Most straight Americans still regard the invert with a mixture of revulsion and apprehension" (Klarman, 2013, p. 13). News reporters used the term "pervert" less frequently but continued to disparage gay people with terms such as "queens, fags, and queers" (Streitmatter, 2009, p. 64). Mainstream media institutions continued to portray homosexuality "as a sickness, perversion or crime" (Fejes & Petrich, 1993, p. 402). Even *NY Times* was criticized for ignoring gay people and killing columns supporting gay rights in the late 1970s (Pierson, 1982). Despite the fact that gays and lesbians were constructing narratives to articulate their oppression and challenge their oppressors, journalists were skeptical and coverage was negative. Campaigns were organized to challenge the media's damaging portrayals, but those efforts were extremely limited in success (Gross, 2001).

AIDS changes coverage of a community. Coverage of gays changed dramatically during the 1980s with the onset of the AIDS epidemic. After more than a decade of enjoying a semblance of sexual liberation, the gay and lesbian movement found itself facing the specter of thousands of men, young and old, suddenly dying. AIDS reinvigorated the movement and redirected its efforts. Because of the efforts in the preceding decade to build community coalitions, the movement had a foundation to build upon. However, the gay and lesbian movement was experiencing a change in context. The rise of social conservatism and neoliberalism, embodied by the election of Ronald Reagan, led to barriers in the federal government's response to AIDS, as the administration was "critical of most gay and lesbian rights initiatives and generally did not support strong and effective AIDS policy responses" (Stein, 2012, p. 145). While efforts were concentrated on forcing federal, state, and local governments to properly respond to the epidemic, gay and lesbian movement organizations continued to pursue the "decriminalization and demedicalization of homosexuality" (Stone & Ward, 2011, p. 608) with the help of allied, left-leaning organizations that were predominately heterosexual (Stein, 2012). For the gay community, this period marked the end of invisibility in the mass media. However, mass media's coverage of the epidemic was deeply problematic, as the reporting stigmatized gay men. Oftentimes, gay newspapers were the only site for individuals to receive in-depth and accurate information about the epidemic, but some of those publications were criticized for failing to aggressively report on the virus.

During the summer of 1981, the first cursory media reports began appearing in the mainstream media—*Associated Press (AP)*, *Los Angeles Times (LA Times)*, and *San Francisco Chronicle*—describing how healthy homosexual men were suffering from a deadly unknown and unnamed illness (Kinsella, 1989; Streitmatter, 2009). With the disease quickly spreading, mainstream journalists generally ignored the crisis. A *Wall Street Journal* reporter was shocked when his editors in 1981 refused to run an article in the paper about the virus (Streitmatter, 2009). Between 1981 and 1982, *NY Times* ran a total of 10 stories discussing AIDS, all of them buried within the newspaper. During the same time, *NY Times* ran 62 stories about Legionnaires' disease—an illness that originally affected 29 middle-aged and elderly White men (Gross, 2001; Kinsella, 1989). The lack of coverage in *NY Times* and other papers was attributed to various factors, including ingrained homophobia within the newsroom management that saw AIDS victims as distasteful for the mass audience (Gross, 2001; Kinsella, 1989; Streitmatter, 2009).

When mainstream reporters did cover the crisis, early reporting was sensational, riddled with inaccuracies, and framed around how the virus could affect the "general population" (Gross, 2001, p. 97). For example, in the fall of 1982, when reports surfaced of the first diagnosis of the virus in children, *AP's* lead paragraph reported that children may contract the disease from their families, which "could mean that the general population is at greater risk" (Kinsella, 1989, p. 57). Hysteria broke out in the media, as *NY Times* reported that "routine contact" could transmit AIDS (Streitmatter, 2009). Panic continued to produce coverage that framed gay men as both "victim and villain" (Gross, 2001, p. 103). Journalists' coverage defined "the disease as a malady spread by certain types of people rather than certain types of behavior" (Kinsella, 1989, p. 75). In June 1982, NBC News' first story about AIDS reported "that the lifestyle of some male homosexuals has triggered an epidemic of a rare form of cancer" (Gross, 2001, p. 97). The intense focus on gay men's connection to AIDS permeated mainstream media, despite the medical community, as early as 1982, reporting that the disease strikes "hemophiliacs, Haitians, and intravenous drug users" (Kinsella, 1989, p. 54). Kinsella (1989) argued that:

> … gays were almost always the focus largely because these men were accessible. Unlike i.v. drug users, they did not have to be sought out in unpleasant neighborhoods. And, important especially for TV and radio, they were often articulate and willing to talk. (p. 75)

Misleading information was largely left unchallenged in the mainstream media, as governmental agencies like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) “held no press conferences, neither to put out information nor to attract attention to the crisis” (Kinsella, 1989, p. 14). In the early ’80s, the CDC was heavily influenced by the conservative political environment under the Reagan Administration, for which “any explicit educational material, even basic sex education in schools, was suspect” (Kinsella, 1989, p. 20).

Throughout the ’80s, the mainstream media utilized imprecise, confusing language to cover the story. Media coverage condemned queer sex “as unhealthy, irresponsible, immature, and, in short, threatening to home, church and state” (Warner, 1999, p. 50). Stories omitted reporting of who else might be susceptible to the disease, such as the lovers of intravenous drug users, unborn children who were in the wombs of AIDS victims, and married men who identify as straight but occasionally engage in anal sex with another man (Kinsella, 1989). The media, reflecting a conservative and prudish point of view, refused to use exact anatomical language (e.g., oral sex, anal sex, penis, vagina, rectum, and semen), which were essential to explaining AIDS transmission (Gross, 2001; Kinsella, 1989; Streitmatter, 1995), and failed to engage in full discussions about safer sex practices, which were “the best and healthiest and most ethical solution to the crisis of prevention” (Warner, 1999, p. 51). Some journalists reported that “AIDS seems to be spread through male sexual contact" (Kinsella, 1989, p. 75). An ABC News' report in 1983 inaccurately described how "the disease can be spread by contact between heterosexuals—and there's no cure in sight" (Kinsella, 1989, p. 122). By omitting precise, anatomical language describing sexual activity, a reader could be fooled into thinking that all types of contact—kissing, hugging, mutual masturbation, oral sex, etc.—could spread the virus. Few journalists attempted "to clear up the potential confusion by using explicit language to describe how the disease could be spread" (Kinsella, 1989, p. 75). While mainstream media organizations perpetuated stereotypes that sought to shame gay sex, ACT UP and other political groups were formed to challenge mainstream notions that stigmatized "those who had sex, to blame them for the virus that was killing them, to use their sex as an excuse to let them die" (Warner, 1999, p. 51).

Mainstream news coverage of the epidemic in the early years was also characterized by an absence of stories from the perspective of AIDS victims, their lovers, friends, and family members. The press "was watching the tragedy unfold from the papers of the medical journals" (Kinsella, 1989, p. 52), as reporters quoted doctors but not infected patients. News consumers would have found such perspectives within the pages of the gay and lesbian press, as it was often the site for the most personalized, accurate, and in-depth information about the epidemic. The *New York Native*, a small biweekly tabloid that covered the gay community in New York City, was the first publication to run a story about AIDS, beating out publishing giants like *NY Times*, *LA Times*, and *AP* (Gross, 2001; Kinsella, 1989; Streitmatter, 1995). The *Washington Blade*, a small newspaper that covered the gay community in the nation's capital, was known for producing stories from government sources, scooping the mainstream press (Streitmatter, 1995). However, some major publications in the gay press were criticized for ignoring the epidemic—placing profits over the health of readers. The country's largest gay publication, *The Advocate*, ran its first story about AIDS in 1983. The *Bay Area Reporter*, based in San Francisco:

> … downplayed the spread of the epidemic in the bathhouses, partly because it saw any attempt to ban sexual activity as a setback for gay liberation and partly because it did not want to lose the revenue it received from bathhouse ads. (Streitmatter, 1995, p. 274)

A major turning point in the coverage of the AIDS crisis came on July 25, 1985, when a spokesperson for Rock Hudson—"the face of the quintessential all-American male"—confirmed that the famous actor was dying of AIDS. Hudson's announcement was considered "the most important agenda-setter of all" (Kinsella, 1989, p. 145). On that day, the television networks devoted a significant amount of airtime to the news that Hudson was suffering from AIDS. Kinsella (1989) explained how Hudson's diagnosis and ultimate death seemed to touch all newsmakers "in a direct, personal way" as journalists realized "AIDS is not a 'gay plague,' but everyone's problem" (p. 145). Hudson's death on October 2, 1985, produced a surge of coverage that caught the attention of major political reporters who questioned President Reagan's silence on the epidemic and lack of government research funding to find a cure (Kinsella, 1989).

During this time period, the AIDS crisis and gay men were the only topics on which mainstream journalists reported in relation to the gay and lesbian community—an extremely limited and narrow view of gay people in general. Lesbians were left out of most news stories. AIDS-related stories seemed to exhaust "the media's limited interest in gay people, as lesbians became even less visible" (Gross, 2001 p. 103).

There were also some positive developments. Press reports no longer framed homosexuals as mentally ill. As the press featured real names, photographs, and in-depth stories of individuals infected with the virus and those affected by the loss of a loved one, audience members for the first time were finally reading three-dimensional stories about gay people—an important milestone for the mass audience, as many of them had never known an openly gay person (Streitmatter, 2009). Through the mid- to late-1980s, major national publications like *LA Times*, *Newsweek*, and *NY Times*, following the lead of gay publications, were finally contextualizing the epidemic by featuring victims' stories and how the epidemic was affecting the larger gay community (Kinsella, 1989).

Lesbian and gays dive into the mainstream. Scholars described the 1990s as a point in time when journalists "mainstreamed" coverage of gay and lesbian people (Gross, 2001), which coincides with the movement increasingly aligning with neoliberal values (Duggan, 2004). D'Emilio (2002) described this phase as journalists weaving sexual identity issues "into the fabric of what was deemed newsworthy" (p. 87). Journalists moved beyond solely focusing on gay men and AIDS. From Los Angeles to New York, major daily newspapers were featuring a variety of articles that ranged from stories about the inequalities between homosexual and heterosexual couples to simple wedding announcements including gay and lesbian families (Gross, 2001). Gay men and women entered politics at unprecedented rates (Yeager, 1999). In 1961, José Sarria became the first openly gay person to run for public office when he sought a seat on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. Sarria lost the race. By 1990, there were a total of

50 openly gay public officials. By 1998, that number increased to 146 (Haider-Markel, 2010). While the visibility of gay people in the news dramatically increased in the 1990s, substantial news coverage failed to translate that into widespread success for increasingly corporatized gay and lesbian movement organizations that sought access to military service, same-sex marriage, and expanded federal civil rights protections. During this time period, large-scale gay and lesbian movement organizations gravitated away from management structures that reflected a broad base of community members; instead, the organizations adopted elite corporate-style management structures. Similar to an American business corporation, the new corporatized movement organizations were managed by an elite board of directors and chief executive officer, thus becoming "the lobbying, legal and public relations firms for an increasingly narrow gay, moneyed elite" (Duggan, 2004, p. 45). The leaders of the corporatized gay and lesbian movement organizations situated themselves as representatives of the entire broad base and diverse community, despite the fact that activist and radical political voices were intentionally excluded in an attempt to build alliances with multinational corporations to coordinate political strategies (Duggan, 2004; Warner, 1999).

One indication of the gay and lesbian movement's mainstream status was the race for the U.S. Presidency. In 1992, five Democratic candidates for president courted "the gay vote" (Becker, 2006, p. 40). President Bill Clinton, a neoliberal Democrat, promised to include them in his vision for the country by lifting the ban on openly gay men and women serving in the military (Miller, 1995). Clinton, along with other neoliberal politicians and organizations, began "the task of separating themselves from the moral conservatism of the religious right, as well as from the 'failed' policies of 'old' tax-andspend liberals" (Duggan, 2004, p. 53). During President Clinton's first years in office, the press focused a great deal of attention on his efforts to repeal the military ban, and media organizations were criticized for reinforcing negative stereotypes of gay men as sexual predators (Becker, 2006; Walters, 2001). Television networks, such as ABC, CBS, and CNN, were running video of half-naked soldiers showering so as to question the presence of gay men in the military. *LA Times* accused the television networks of perpetuating stereotypes that were "feeding wild, irrational fears and panic about straights and gays serving together" (Streitmatter, 2009, p. 67). The panic manifested in conservative lawmakers and special interest groups pressuring President Clinton to abandon his efforts to fully repeal the ban. In the end, President Clinton signed a policy known as "Don't ask, don't tell," which effectively banned homosexual conduct in the military but allowed closeted men and women to continue serving (Becker, 2006). While President Clinton failed at ending the ban, he did appoint a record number of openly gay and lesbian people to positions within the executive branch (Haider-Markel, 2010).

The intense effort by gay and lesbian groups to gain access to military service was a clear indication that the movement had abandoned its radical ideology from the 1970s, which, as "the stepchild of all the radical social and political movements" (Miller, 1995, p. 368), incorporated ideas from the Black Panthers, the New Left, radical feminism, and the antiwar movement. By the 1990s, the gay and lesbian movement failed to radically transform society, as indicated by the strategic goals adopted by corporatized movement organizations: military service, same-sex marriage, and expanded civil rights protections. After the 1993 March on Washington, some in the gay movement sought entry into state-sanctioned marriage. To veterans of the movement, same-sex marriage seemed

> … less urgent and less agreed upon than such items as HIV and health care, AIDS prevention, the repeal of sodomy laws, antigay violence, job discrimination, immigration, media coverage, military antigay policy, sex inequality, and the saturation of everyday life by heterosexual privilege. (Warner, 1999, p. 84)

Instead of revolutionizing the capitalistic state apparatus by challenging patriarchy, redefining romantic relationships, and ending warfare, “gays and lesbians were fighting to be included in them” (Becker, 2006, p. 43). The assimilationist strategy coincided with movement organizations distancing their goals from other minority groups, instead focusing “towards an emphasis on concrete examples of gay and lesbian discrimination” (Stone & Ward, 2011, p. 616). Warner (1999) argues that, in the 1990s, the gay movement utilized a normalizing orientation through attempts to overcome stigma by winning “acceptance by the dominant culture, rather than to change the self-understanding of that culture” (p. 50). The normalizing strategy, which sought to position gays similar to everyone else, had the effect of throwing “shame on those who stand farther down the ladder of respectability” (Warner, 1999, p. 60). Those gays and lesbians who appear to conform to normative standards stand at the top of the hierarchy of normalcy. White gay men are most comfortable in the privileged position of normalcy, as the country privileges their personhood, while women and queer people of color continue to be disenfranchised.

Despite some of the negative stereotypes in the media, lesbians and gays began appearing on all pages of the country’s newspapers. Some newspapers began running wedding announcements for same-sex couples (Gross, 2001). Other newspaper editors hid behind the norms of objectivity and neutrality and refused to run wedding announcements of same-sex couples to avoid the appearance of condoning the practice (Jensen, 1996). *NY Times* ran articles that ranged in topics from gay men and gay women organizing in local neighborhoods, to religious choices for gay people (Gross, 2001). The "mainstreaming" of gay stories occurred as major advertisers began courting the gay and lesbian market. As advertisers began viewing gay people (especially White gay men) as a viable market, publishers started producing content that would attract gays and lesbians, not repel them (Fejes & Petrich, 1993). The rise of "gay visibility, political power and social inclusion" are all tied to money (Walters, 2001). For example, there is evidence that suggests that the *NY Times*' decision to expand coverage of gay and lesbian people was partly a business decision, as the paper's readership was declining among a "straight, white, middle-aged, upper middle class and increasingly suburban population" (Gross, 2001, p. 121). The decision to increase coverage of gays and lesbians was not simply a moral one; it was a good, solid business practice.

The supreme ally. When looking back at the first 15 years of the 21st century, one institution has played an outsized role in the expansion of gay and lesbian civil rights: The U.S. Supreme Court. The court released two landmark rulings in 2003 and 2015 that led to surges in media visibility for gay and lesbian people. LGBT people are currently experiencing an unprecedented increase in media visibility. Interviews, stories, and pictures of LGBT people in the media are now ubiquitous to a point that it's almost easy to miss. Gone are the days of gay people overtly and consistently depicted as deviants, perverts, and mentally ill. Mainstream journalists' interest in covering LGBT people is reflected in how gay movement organizations no longer fight for media coverage. The main focus of LGBT movement organizations' media advocacy efforts is not *if* the media will cover their issues but *how* to control the media's framing of stories (Moscowitz, 2013). One might assume that an unprecedented amount of news stories covering LGBT people would expose the world to the infinite complexities of queer life (e.g., transgender issues, nonmonogamous pair bonding, androgyny, drag culture, etc.). That's simply not the case. Emerging research suggests that coverage of LGBT people—a movement that once celebrated its diversity—is almost universally dominated by discussions of same-sex marriage, which could have the effect of forcing "gay and lesbian identity into a rigid box from which it cannot easily escape" (Moscowitz, 2013, p. 52).

In 2003, the LGBT movement was invigorated by a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Lawrence v. Texas* that struck down Texas' antigay sodomy law. The 6-3 ruling determined that "a majority can't use laws to regulate or stigmatize behavior simply because it deems that behavior immoral" (Becker, 2006, p. 215). Almost immediately, opponents and supporters turned their attention to the issue of same-sex marriages, "*Lawrence* probably would have been an uncontroversial ruling were it not for the extent to which gay marriage was emerging as a salient issue by 2003" (Klarman, 2013, p. 86). The switch in attention from *Lawrence* to same-sex marriage was swift—less than five months. In November 2003, the Massachusetts Supreme Court released a ruling in *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health* that declared "the state constitutional provision declaring that all persons are born 'free and equal' barred the state from excluding same-sex couples from marriage" (Klarman, 2013, p. 90). The ruling paved the way for same-sex marriages to begin in Massachusetts. The *Lawrence* and *Goodridge* rulings ignited a nationwide backlash that affected the 2004 U.S. Presidential Election where "gay marriage replaced abortion as 'the most volatile social issue'" (Moscowitz, 2013, p. 3). President George W. Bush won the election partly based on a platform that called for passage of an amendment to the U.S. Constitution barring same-sex marriage.

Despite failed efforts to amend the constitution, opponents of same-sex marriage were much more successful at the state level. Between 2004 and 2009, voters in 20 states took to the ballot box to approve bans on same-sex marriage (Wolf, 2015). During the time when states debated the same-sex marriage ban, McFarland (2011) found a diversity in the media's framing of the marriage question to include discussions about "morality, government, rights, marriage, children, harm, and distraction" (p. 274). Voters, at the time, overwhelmingly disapproved of same-sex marriage. However, mainstream journalists were critiqued for going out of their way "to put a positive spin on their stories" that "gay Americans are mature, stable and highly responsible citizens who are involved in long-term, committed relationships" (Streitmatter, 2009, p. 168). In fact, the ombudsman for the *Washington Post* stated that the newspaper needed more balance in the topic's coverage (Streitmatter, 2009).

While journalists may have attempted to present a positive image of same-sex marriage, the straight audience grew anxious, as marriage became "the last line of difference for those uneasy about the unstable, scientific, moral and cultural distinctions between homo- and hetero-sexuality" (Becker, 2006, p. 217). Scholars have noted how the media's visual depiction of same-sex weddings created a paradox. While politicians were declaring that the inclusion of gay people in marriage was a radical revision to "traditional notions" of men and women exchanging matrimonial vows, the visual narrative of two men or two women donning traditional wedding attire, exchanging marriage vows, and walking down a church isle was anything but radical (Becker, 2006; Moscowitz, 2013). Journalists could have utilized stories about same-sex marriage to begin deeper discussions about an institution “rooted in retrograde ideas about reproduction and hegemonic gender roles” (Moscowitz, 2013, p. 129). Communication scholarship indicates that journalists failed to challenge heteronormativity, following the lead of gay activists who intentionally distanced themselves from political discourse that challenged the normative foundations of marriage (Moscowitz, 2013).

As was the case in the debate in the 1990s surrounding military service, corporatized gay and lesbian movement organizations continued their assimilationist strategies through the June 2015 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Obergefell et al. v. Hodges, Director, Ohio Department of Health et al.* (*Obergefell v. Hodges*) that legalized same-sex marriage across the country. The gay movement organizers who received the most attention in the media focused their discourse on “equality” and “race-neutral or multicultural messages aimed directly at maximizing voter support” (Stone & Ward, 2011, p. 620). The assimilationist approach sought to normalize “gay identity for straight audiences rather than embarking on a more radical and systematic critique of embedded cultural homophobia” (Moscowitz, 2013, p. 52).

Corporatized LGBT movement organizations made a concerted effort to control the image and narrative, and reporters acquiesced by framing stories about same-sex marriage around couples who adhered to “conventional ideological norms and often heterosexist notions of partnering, monogamy, marriage, family and parenting” (Moscowitz, 2013, p. 62). Those couples “whose sex is least threatening, along with those whose gender profiles seem least queer, are put forward as the good and acceptable face of the movement" (Warner, 1999, p. 66). Instead of revolutionizing society, the media portrays "the respectable same-sex couple" as presenting an ideal that adheres

> … to normative gender conventions (read: no men in dresses) and voices narratives of family and finances, bridging the gap between same-sex and different sex couples with recourse to the common challenges couples of all composition face. Missing from these couples is any clear reference to sex—they are respectable, hiding their non-normative sexual practices from a general audience. (Kimport, 2014, p. 10)

As D'Emilio (2002) pointed out, "[t]here may be consensus that gay family relationships ought to be recognized, but for some this means the right to marry, and for others it means broadening our understanding of what constitutes a family" (p. 93).

While gay couples—usually White—were visually present in the stories, "the debate was dominated by conventionally 'straight' perspectives, continuing to grant power and prominence to traditionally authoritative (often oppositional) sources" (Moscowitz, 2010, p. 36). By focusing on elites (e.g., political and religious leaders, nonprofit activists, and celebrities), the stories "tacitly delegitimizing the lived experiences of members of the LGBTQ community" (Rodriguez & Blumell, 2014, p. 36). When same-sex marriage opponents were featured in media coverage, journalists prominently highlighted their opinions, which had the effect of framing them as "legitimate and honorable, not bigoted and homophobic. Marriage segregationists are never spoken of as that, in the way we might now expect reporting about unreconstructed Southerners who rail against intermarriage or 'the mixing of the races.'" (Walters, 2001, p. 182).

The media's focus on elites—those against and those for same-sex marriage—constructed a narrow debate, framing the entire gay movement as universally supporting same-sex marriage. Advocating for same-sex marriage is not a universal value. Gay organizations sought "formal equality before the law," based on removing a procedural bar to access state-recognized marriage, forgoing any attempt by queer scholars to revolutionize the institution by making it sex-neutral, thus eliminating the "sexual domination, making possible a democratic cultivation of alternative sexualities" (Warner, 1999, p. 90). Queer scholars view the expansion of marriage to same-sex couples, not as a revolution, but as an expansion of "the central legitimating institution by which the state regulates and permeates people's most intimate lives; it is the zone of privacy outside of which sex is unprotected" (Warner, 1999, p. 96).

While the *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision expanded access to a civil right, some scholars argued that the media coverage reinforced deeply entrenched heteronormativity, as the discussion of marriage never called into question the existence of the institution itself and the dominance of heteronormative ideals. U.S. society privileges heterosexuality. We are assumed to be heterosexual, until we declare otherwise. Situating heterosexuality "as universal and natural renders the benefits that accrue to heterosexuals—and the punishment of nonheterosexuals—invisible or, even worse, normal" (Kimport, 2014, p. 8). As a result, heterosexuality transforms into heteronormativity. Heteronormativity situates heterosexual sexuality as the only normal and natural sexual activity and reproduces an overbearing "social structure that produces specific behaviors and identities" (Kimport, 2014, p. 15). What's clear from the existing media scholarship is that the media left the heteronormative construction of marriage unchallenged. The media coverage also framed the gay and lesbian community as universally supportive of the continued expansion of state-sanctioned marriage. Instead of portraying a diversity of opinions in the debate around same-sex marriage, media institutions narrowed the discussion between those who support marriage equality and those who are against it. The audience was thus presented with a socially constructed narrative and image of same-sex couples as domesticated, monogamous, and wanting to simply fold into the heteronormative institution of marriage.

"Bicoastal Bias" in Gay and Lesbian History

Much of our understanding of gay and lesbian history stems from what happens to White people in large U.S. cities. Gay and lesbian history books exhibit a "bicoastal bias" (Sears, 1997). While scholars have documented how the media's representation of gay and lesbian people has radically changed in the past 60 years, much of that knowledge stems from analyses of publications in major metropolitan areas of Los Angeles, San Francisco and New York, which leads to an overarching question: how did media institutions in smaller U.S. cities portray gay and lesbian people? It may be expected that journalists in Austin covered the gay and lesbian movement in a different fashion compared with journalists from larger newspapers, as existing evidence suggests newspapers from different-sized cities differ in practices and standards (Garfrerick, 2010; Gladney, 1990; Harry, 2001).

The Southern bloc, as a political and cultural unit, encompasses the 11 former Confederate states, which includes Texas (Graham, 2011). This region encompass a unique cultural tradition, shrouded in a "legacy of gentility." From colonial times through the 20th century (and some would argue in contemporary times as well), White, Protestant, racist and sexist values pervaded Southern culture (Stokes, 2005). For example, cultural dictates expect the “ideal Southern women” to embrace the values of being "modest, chaste, godly, and compassionate" (Wolfe, 1995, p. 3). Sears (1997) wrote that Southerner’s collective memory is one “of an idyllic past captured in Gothic architecture, mythic history, and romance literature” (p. 5). However, the South isn’t a monolith, “[j]ust as queer Southerners don’t fit neatly into the master (or meta-) narrative of American lesbian and gay history, neither do all queer Southerners fit neatly together into a cohesive group” (Howard, 1997, p. 5). Texas exhibited a unique cultural “chauvinism” (Graham, 2011, p. 125) that set it apart from the 10 other Southern states. Graham (2011) described the Texas cultural tradition, as exhibited in its literature, as an idealized amalgamation of “cattle, cactus and cowboys” (Graham, 2011, p. 40). White Texans thrived in this cowboy environment. However, racial and ethnic minorities suffered extreme hardships. Institutional racism was perpetuated by “Jim Crow laws, or state-sanctioned racial apartheid, extralegal law enforcement in the form of lynchings, a bias within the criminal justice system that led to” (Guzmán, 2015, p. 6) mass incarcerations of Black Texans. Mexican-Americans also faced “tremendous oppression” as “inequality was woven into the system” (Rivas-Rodriguez, 2015, p. 1). The gulf between White Texans and Black and Brown Texans was enormous. Schools and public accommodations were widely segregated (Guzmán, 2015; Rivas-Rodriguez, 2015). Methods to curtail minority voter registration “through the use of such tactics such as violence, intimidation, poll taxes, the grandfather clauses, and literacy tests” (Guzmán, 2015, p. 6) guaranteed that Texas politics were dictated by White, heterosexual men. For years, Southern politicians "successfully thwarted all efforts by Northern liberals to pass anything that would alleviate the inequalities and injustices of Jim Crow-ism in the eleven former confederate states" (Graham, 2011, p. 85). Within this oppressive cultural environment in Texas, the historic lived experiences of queer individuals remain a vastly understudied field. Understanding those unique lived experiences is an important avenue for scholars because cities in the South, such as Austin, Texas, had organized groups of gay and lesbian activists at the same time as groups in major cities were mobilizing. However, activists' efforts in smaller U.S. cities and the corresponding media coverage remain absent from the chronologies of U.S. gay and lesbian history.

In the immediate aftermath of Stonewall, the GLF was founded in New York City. This group "advocated nothing less than the complete transformation of society" (Miller, 1995, p. 369). Just a year after the 1969 Stonewall riots, gay and lesbian activists were busy in Austin, Texas, despite activists in the major U.S. cities believing "that gays and lesbians didn't stay in what we call the hinterlands" (Sears, 1997, p. ix). In 1970, a chapter of the GLF became active at the University of Texas at Austin (UT). The activists wrote how Austin was an outlier in the South, not representative of Southern politics: "[t]he political atmosphere is less repressive here than elsewhere in the Southwest, and radicals sometime call Austin the (rest and relaxation) center of this area" (Founding Story, 1970). The formation of the Austin GLF chapter was the "birth of the gay movement in Austin" (Ganther, 1990, p. 30). Prior to GLF's first public meeting in April 28, 1970, "Austin had an established underground network of socially active homosexuals who met at the bars and at each other's homes" (p. 30). The GLF meetings were the first known instances of gays and lesbians publicly meeting to influence political change (Ganther, 1990). Bronski (2011) claims that GLF chapters in larger cities fell apart as early as 1972.

However, that progressive political atmosphere may not have applied to media organizations in Austin. As scholars have noted, the press reflect prevailing attitudes and opinions (Gans, 1979; Gitlin, 1980; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Wilson et al., 2014). As late as the 1990s, scholars have noted how smaller community newspapers were still holding on to homophobic practices (Salamon, 1991). For example, the *Houston Post*, based in Houston, Texas, fired a columnist in 1991 for wanting to announce his sexuality in his column (Suro, 1991). As late as the 1990s, Austin's mainstream daily newspaper was criticized by one of its own former gay staff members for underreporting issues important to the gay and lesbian community (Lee, 2007).

A White Monolith

A substantial amount of scholarship traces the history and portrayal of people of color and women within U.S. media coverage. At some point in time, all racial, ethnic, and gender minorities have been unfairly portrayed in press reports. While communication scholars have documented a distinct classification of the phases of coverage of minorities, little research has been conducted to understand how people of color were situated within the context of gay and lesbian media coverage. What is known at this point is people of color have historically been excluded from coverage in major and local newspapers. If journalists did report on people of color, up until recently, the coverage was overtly hostile. A mid-19th century Texas newspaper named *Bastrop Advertiser* wrote "There is hardly a good feature in the Mexican character" (González &

Torres, 2011, p. 85). In that same era, the *Rocky Mountain News*, based in the Colorado territory, reported stories of U.S. Army victories over Native Americans and celebrated the "needed whipping of the 'red skins'" (Gonzáles & Torres, 2011, p. 143) without mentioning how service members slaughtered innocent women and children. *Citizen*, *Arizonan*, and *Arizona*, all newspapers based in Arizona in the 1870s, proudly encouraged violence against Native Americans and proclaimed "dead Indians should be called 'good Indians'" (Gonzáles & Torres, 2011, p. 144). A hundred years later, in the mid-20th century, social scientists linked negative news coverage within *LA Times* of Mexican Americans with the incitement of White violence against local Latinos, thus igniting the Zoot Suit Riots (Wilson, Gutierrez, & Chao, 2014).

Similar to how journalists report on gay and lesbian people, news media institutions no longer deploy overtly disparaging discourse to describe U.S. Latinos and other minorities. Wilson et al. (2014) wrote how journalists have moved away from covering gays, lesbians, and people of color in a threatening or confrontational manner. However, the portrayals and representations of minorities remain problematic. Wilson et al. (2014) described journalists' contemporary coverage of minorities as a stereotypical selection process: "Information items that conform to existing Anglo American attitudes towards other groups are then selected for inclusion in news media and given repeated emphasis until they reach thematic proportions" (p. 134).

Latinos are an excellent example to describe the stereotypical selection phase. Despite being the fastest growing demographic in the U.S., which has grown 50 percent since 2000 (Brown, 2014), their representation in the media is extremely narrow. As congressional leaders debate how to handle unauthorized immigrants and their children, studies show the media's framing of the issue can affect the public's perception of the group. Latinos are overrepresented within network and cable newscasts as law-breaking, undocumented immigrants (Dixon & Williams, 2015). Discussions about immigration are nearly solely focused on Latinos (Santa Ana, 2013). Some major news organizations, such as *LA Times* and *AP*, discontinued the negative phrase "illegal immigrant," as the term "lacked precision and broadly labeled a large group" (Pew Research Center, 2013b). However, the phrase remains the dominant choice for journalists to describe foreigners who live in the U.S. without the proper immigration authorization (Pew Research Center, 2013b), and those foreigners are generally featured as Latinos (Santa Ana, 2013). Mastro, Tukachinsky, Behm-Moraqitz, and Blecha et al. (2014) found that the media's use of abstract language, such as "illegal immigrant," in news reports involving immigration "appears to promote broad-based stereotyping about U.S. Latinos" (p. 150). The intense focus on immigration means that political coverage of Latinos is usually framed around horserace campaign tactics, instead of delving into important issues like education and healthcare (Subervi-Vélez, 2008).

The media's framing of Latinos and other minorities serves to perpetuate stereotypes that people of color are "problem people," reinforcing ideas "about who commits crime (people of color), where most crimes occur (communities of color), and where crime should not occur (White, affluent neighborhoods)" (Heider, 2000, p. 43). Scholars attribute the problematic representation of minorities in the media to the fact that minorities remain well outside positions of power within newsrooms, as they comprise only 10 percent of supervisors (Pew Research Center, 2013a). Rivas-Rodriguez (2007) noted how "the white-male dominated newsroom culture" determines "who gets hired, what is news, what deserves coverage, and who gets assignments and promotions" (p. 322). Until minorities of all types (racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual orientation) are equally and fairly represented in newsrooms and within positions of power within news organizations, problematic portrayals of disenfranchised individuals will persist (Wilson et al., 2014).

Journalists Paint a Skewed Picture

Mainstream media's homophobic coverage of gay and lesbian people and activists during the movement's formative years can be understood through Gitlin (1980) who observed how media adopted an ideologically driven position that "marginalized and disparaged" (p. 140) those challenging authority. Major media institutions during the 1960s antiwar demonstrations "proceeded to muckrake the movement as if the movement, not the war, were the scandal" (Gitlin, 1980, p. 94). Journalists' unfair reporting of antiwar demonstrators can be understood through Zelizer (2004) who described journalists as an interpretive community. The author pointed out how journalists envision their role as mirroring "events rather than reflecting the acts of negotiation, power brokering, and resource management that typify newsroom practices" (Zelizer, 2004, p. 14). However, journalists often choose to feature a certain group in prominent positions while relegating others to marginal or no coverage; this selection is in fact a demonstration of how one's bias affects news coverage (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). And the bias in mainstream media has been widely criticized for protecting the status quo, relegating those challenging authority to the sidelines (Gans, 1979; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Tuchman, 1978).

Journalists' ideological positions, which reflect the dominant culture and power structure, can spell trouble for marginalized groups like gay and lesbian people who were not often covered by the media. While journalists believe they cover the news objectively by excluding their opinions, their bias seeps into news coverage through their selection of certain facts and relegating other details to the sidelines, which is known as framing. Goffman's (1974) seminal writing on the issue describes framing as an "organization of experience" and how "the view that one person has of what is going on is likely to be quite different from that of another" (p. 8). Story framing is a subjective process, one in which Gitlin (1980) described as a cognitive shortcut to help journalists categorize large amounts of information. How one journalist frames a story can be quite different from that of a colleague. Adopting a particular frame makes certain "aspects of a perceived reality… more salient in a communicating text" (Entman, 1993, p. 52). The sorting of information results in some data being excluded from the story, while other information is included. The information that survives the editing process in a particular story then ultimately increases in salience for the individual consuming the story.

News stories are a social construction. Stories are assembled by journalists who don't live in a vacuum but are influenced by a variety of factors. A constructivist viewpoint sees the resulting narrative structure of a story as socially constructed through deliberate action affected by the ideological leanings of the profession and the individual journalists. Communication scholars have recently applied the theoretical concept of framing to coverage of same-sex marriage. Xigen and Xudong (2010) found five major U.S. newspapers that mostly provided fair and balanced coverage of the topic. Journalists are also deploying more nuanced frames, including stories that normalize gay couples' ability to parent (Rodriguez & Blumell, 2014). The studies reinforce the concept that a story's frame ultimately wields enormous power "because [the stories] influence how we make sense of the world" (Kendall, 2005, p. 5).

Protest Paradigm. One particular framing typology that could be applied to mainstream media's treatment of lesbian and gay activist history is the *protest paradigm*. Chan and Lee (1984) found patterns of media coverage that treated protest groups in a negative fashion. One of the most common characteristics of the paradigm is the application of marginalizing frames, which focus on the protesters' perceived deviancy and how those individuals pose a threat to society (McLeod & Hertog, 1999). The marginalization of news subjects who are challenging authority demonstrates journalists' ideological, status quo leanings that enforce hegemonic—dominant—values and routines. By focusing on the individual news subject of a protester who may be picketing or conducting some sort of exercise in civil disobedience, the journalist produces superficial news coverage that perpetuates dominant narratives, rather than exposes the issues at the heart of the protest (Gitlin, 1980). Another aspect of the protest paradigm is delegitimization, which is characterized as journalists excluding direct quotes from protesters—instead, relying on official sources and definitions to frame the story (McLeod & Hertog, 1999). When covering protests, journalists often rely on quotes from official sources in the form of politicians or police authority. By focusing on the viewpoints of officials, the status quo and the hegemonic values are maintained within news stories because the protesters' voices, and the issues important to them, are rarely heard by the mass audience.

There are numerous examples of communication scholars applying the protest paradigm to real-world news events. During the 1968 Democratic National Convention, reporting by *NY Times* and *Chicago Tribune* marginalized anti-Vietnam war protesters by focusing on the battle between officers and protesters rather than on the issues at the heart of the protests—ending the war in Vietnam. The social disorder theme was embedded throughout the coverage as protesters were framed as outsiders, lawbreakers, and vagrants (Brasted, 2005). Harlow and Johnston (2011) found marginalizing frames in tweets and articles of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, as nearly half of all content employed a "spectacle frame that hyped up violence and drama far more" (p. 1367) than reporting about the injustices that protesters suffered. Weaver and Scacco (2013) applied the protest paradigm to analyze network coverage of right-leaning movement groups. They found that left-leaning MSNBC marginalized right-leaning Tea Party groups—framing them as "idiots"—while FOX News did not marginalize the group (Weaver & Scacco, 2013). While the paradigm has been utilized to study the media coverage of various ideological groups, it could also help shed light on the historic coverage of gay and lesbian people from the movement's formative years to contemporary times.

This research utilized the protest paradigm to guide the discourse analysis of historical events in Austin history. By analyzing the media coverage around four discrete moments, the researcher attempted to add more data to the growing scholarship that explores how LGBT people have been portrayed in the media.

As there is a dearth of research documenting how news institutions in the southern region of the U.S. were covering gay and lesbian people, the researcher poses the following research question:

RQ1: How did newspaper journalists frame gay and lesbian people in Austin during four discrete, historical moments: 1) the formation of the first GLF chapter at UT, 2) Texas' proposed AIDS quarantine, 3) the election of Texas' first openly gay state lawmaker, and 4) Texas' first same-sex marriages?

Alternative Press Challenges Status Quo

Habermas' (1991) notion of a singular public sphere for the masses to engage in debate about the larger power structure proved to be problematic for minority groups such as LGBT people. Fraser (1990) identified *subaltern counterpublics* as: "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinate social groups invent and circulate counter discourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (p. 67). These arenas expand discourse and "stand in a contestatory relation to dominant publics" (Fraser, 1990, p. 70). A key characteristic of subaltern counterpublics is the expansion of "discursive space," which can take numerous forms, including but not limited to, journals, bookstores, films, conferences, and festivals (Fraser, 1990). Since marginalized communities were rejected and ignored by the larger public sphere (i.e., mainstream media institutions), they constructed their own presses in the 20th century to form their own discursive arenas. Alternative publications separate themselves from mainstream newspapers by providing mobilization information for readers to engage in the political process (Stanfield & Lemert, 1987). These alternative newspapers provided a forum for the counterculture to express unhappiness with society and government oppression and were circulated via street vendors, either by word-of-mouth or hand-to-hand (Anderson, 2007). Harcup (2011) found that the alternative press provided a group of British miners, who were on strike in the early 80s, a site to counter the "propaganda assault" (p. 34) from mainstream publications.

During the Black civil rights movement, the Black press in the South was a medium that publishers utilized to unify and mobilize their readers into action (Bullock, 2011). The publisher of the Spanish language newspaper, *El Espectador*, encouraged boycotts against establishments in San Gabriel Valley near Los Angeles that denied services to Mexican Americans (Rodriguez, 1999). While the gay and lesbian press was often the only site for gay people to read coverage that was not homophobic, a fully functional press for gay people—especially in smaller to midsized cities—simply didn't exist in the 1960s and early 1970s (Gross, 2001; Streitmatter, 1995). Without a viable gay and lesbian press in Austin, the alternative press provided another avenue for gays and lesbians to receive news and information pertinent to their lives. The *Rag* (*Rag*) was an alternative weekly newspaper in Austin that published articles about the city's fledgling gay and lesbian movement. However, communication scholars have not undertaken an examination of how *Rag* covered the gay and lesbian community.

Collegiate press: Challenging or reflecting status quo? In addition to alternative publications, gay people in Austin could turn to the student-operated newspaper at the University of Texas at Austin named *The Daily Texan*. Researching collegiate media is an important avenue for communication inquiry, as university newspapers are training grounds for future journalists. Understanding the norms within university newsrooms can shed light on how journalists' practices are cultivated and carried on through to the professional world. Scholars have extensively studied college newspapers through a variety of avenues. The scholarship varies from emotional burnout suffered by student editors (Filak & Reinardy, 2011) to more recent studies on how the digital revolution has left smaller newspapers, like the ones on college campuses, struggling to adapt (Burnham, 2012; Tennant & Chyi, 2014; Clare, 2014). Scholars have also examined how most college newspapers have failed to reach racial parity with campus demographics (Hardin & Sims, 2008). However, the scholarship is devoid of analyses that trace the representation of gay and lesbian people in college newspapers. Academic studies do indicate that collegiate publications were often sites that challenged societal norms and adopted political positions that were far more progressive than the mainstream environment surrounding the university. As early as the 1920s and 1930s, university newspapers were "increasingly self-conscious" (Cain, 2012, p. 27). College students were taking positions counter to the university's leadership, which ultimately lead to censorship (Cain, 2012). As early as 1938, student journalists at the University of Missouri supported the unpopular notion at that time that Black students should study alongside White students (Edmondson & Perry, 2010). *The Daily Texan* (*Texan*) was supporting civil rights as early as the 1940s, with editorial warnings against the false logic behind White supremacist ideology (Copp & Rodgers, 1999). An anthology entitled "The Daily Texan: The First 100 Years" documented how the *Texan* was supporting integration efforts far ahead of the campus administration; however, the book fails to mention efforts by the GLF to gain campus recognition between 1970 and 1974. In fact, the first mention of gay men was in the context of the AIDS crisis in the '80s (Copp & Rodgers, 1999).

As scholars have noted, ideology heavily influences the production of news stories. Journalists select pieces of information, not in a vacuum, but surrounded by a cosmos of influencers (e.g., existing political inclinations, long-standing newsroom policies and practices, source selection, etc.). Furthering the Marxist notion of "false consciousness," Nealson and Giroux (2012) define ideology as "a discourse that always misrepresents concrete conditions and specific causes, trading concrete realities for murky, vague, metaphysical explanations" (p. 94). By examining the differences among the stories in collegiate, alternative, and mainstream publications, this analysis will shed light on the ideological underpinnings of each institution and how each newspaper either conformed to or departed from traditional understandings of how journalists—alternative, collegiate, and mainstream—framed protest groups. This inquiry will allow scholars to see how some journalists may have relied on false or misleading notions when covering gay people. While it can be expected that alternative publications were more liberal and more favorable towards gay and lesbian civil rights in the early years and mainstream newspapers were homophobic, the role of university newspapers in the gay and lesbian civil rights movement has yet to be examined. Therefore, this research seeks to answer the following question:

RQ2: What was the nature of coverage of gay and lesbian people in Austin by various media entities—mainstream, collegiate, and alternative newspapers?

Queer Theory: Identity as a Constitutive Concept

Media institutions wield enormous power to define what's inside and outside the bounds of normalcy. Through the selection of stories, sources, and images, journalists shape perceptions of reality by focusing audience members' attention on salient issues. "When society faces a problem, the media suggest a proper response" (Alwood, 1996, p.

6). The suggested “proper response” is formed when news organizations present certain sources as legitimate, delegitimize others, or exclude some. For a certain segment of gay and lesbian people, invisibility is no longer an obstacle. Stories that concern White, middle class, domesticated gay and lesbian people and the issues important to them abound. Battles and Hilton-Morrow (2002) heralded the visibility of gay and lesbian people as the entry “into a dominant discourse that marks the boundaries of normalcy—which in contemporary U.S. society means hetero-normalcy” (p. 101). It’s clear that contemporary coverage of gays and lesbians has improved. The images are overwhelmingly *not* negative. Communication scholars are no longer concerned with wholesale media invisibility; they’re now interrogating the “ideologies underlying these representations, processes of normalization, and politics of media images in the larger heteronormative cultural landscape” (Yep & Elia, 2012, pp. 893–894). The increased media visibility only shines a spotlight on a small segment of what some consider the larger LGBT community. In drawing the bounds of normalcy, queer people of color, transgender individuals, and those who don’t fit the “good gay” stereotype have been symbolically annihilated from news coverage. What remains? The *homonormativity* that dominates contemporary portrayals of gay and lesbian people leaves all critical examinations of neoliberalism off the table.

The media’s depiction of a “normal” gay is an important concept to further interrogate because news institutions play a critical role in “the complex processes, meanings and politics” (Becker, 2006, p. 225) of gay people. Media institutions often provided audience members with their first exposures to gay and lesbian life. The media also plays a significant role in the formation of identities for gays and lesbians by disseminating society's evolving discourse utilized to describe same-sex sexual attraction and desire (Alwood, 1996; Becker, 2006; Fejes & Petrich, 1993; Moscowitz, 2010; Streitmatter, 1995; Warner, 1999). In the process of coming out, closeted individuals often "search both the interpersonal and media environments for clues to understand their feelings and sense of differences" (Fejes & Petrich, 1993, p. 396). The sense of who we are, our subjectivity, is manufactured through the discourse we deploy to describe our sense of self. This research will interrogate the very power of the press, as an institution of power in society, to reflect hegemonic values when reporting on a social movement that challenges authority, as "mass communication [is] controlled by large companies; large companies are controlled by rich and influential members of society; and therefore, the large companies controlled the expression, the thought, and the opinions expressed over the mass media" (Lang, 2013, p. 16). Through analyzing mass media messages, this research will shed light on the epistemology of knowledge because "much if not all of our understanding relies on language" (Krippendorff, 2003, p. 20). Language is fluid and rooted in social practices. It changes over time. And words, as tools of language, comprise the bulk of newspaper stories.

Queer theory provides a useful framework to understand how discourse, both text and images, shapes reality and how sexual orientation, as a discursive unit, has a "far greater potential for rearrangement, ambiguity, and representation doubleness" (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 34). For gays and lesbians, notions of their identities were constructed for them, not by them. Foucault (1978) sheds light on the constructivist notion of the intersection and interaction between identity and discourse, as "it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together" (Foucault, 1978, p. 100). The relationship between identity and discourse is multifaceted and multidirectional. Those in power form discursive categories (i.e., identity categories) in order to construct a hierarchy; "identities are reflective and constitutive of systems of oppression. Racism requires white privilege. Sexism requires male privilege. Homophobia requires heterosexual privilege" (Carbado, 2005, p. 191). Recognizing the privilege that is sustained through the deployment of identity categories allows subjugated individuals to destabilize the discursive units.

Privilege, intersectionality, and power. An individual's subjectivity is rooted "through an internalization of discursive categories and the interests and biases they reflect" (Hall, 2003, p. 65). As the meaning behind a particular discourse changes over time, thus changing discursive categories, the power of discourse to transmit and produce power remains constant. In order to mark someone as not normal, a baseline must be established. White men stand in the center of a nexus of privilege:

> A white heterosexual man lives on the white side of race, the male side of gender, and the straight side of sexual orientation. He is, in essence, the norm. Mankind. The baseline. He is our reference. We are all defined with him in mind. We are the same as or different from him. (Carbado, 2005, p. 192)

The gay identity sits at a complex intersection of other salient identities and evolving discourse. In order to understand how the media portrayal of gay and lesbian people has changed, one must understand the evolving discourse utilized to describe same-sex sexual attraction. Terms used to describe "sexuality" rest on shifting sands, as the word "sexuality" itself "connotes the never-ending constellation of factors that inform how people understand their sexual desires and actions" (Bronski, 2011, p. xviii). The modern-day discourse surrounding human sexuality and its connection to identity is traced to 17th century Victorian attitudes towards sex, which was intended to "subjugate it at the level of language, control its free circulation in speech, expunge it from the things that were said, and extinguish the words that rendered it too visibly present" (Foucault, 1978, p. 17). The homosexual act (i.e., two people of the same-sex engaging in sexual activity) was transformed into "a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and a morphology" (Foucault, 1978, p. 43). The Victorian discourse regarding homosexuality was intended to diagnose, treat, and suppress the individual—an act of social control. Heterosexual privilege led to the creation of the word "homosexual." Karl-Maria Kertbeny, an Austrian-born Hungarian, "invented the word 'homosexual' in 1869 to help him construct a narrative around a person defined by his or her same-sex sexual desires and actions" (Bronski, 2011, p. xvii). By casting an individual as a homosexual, Victorian "doctors" would prescribe a series of "treatments" to attempt to expunge the homosexual desires out of the individual. "Lesbian" was first used in 1897, a reference to the Isle of Lesbos, home of the famous Greek lyric poet Sappho, who wrote about her affections for females. The term lesbian remains very much in vogue today. As early as the 1930s, terms such as "queer," "faggot," "dyke," and "gay" were utilized in the United States as negative labels but were later appropriated and transformed to represent an affirming identity (Bronski, 2011). During this time period, labeling oneself as a homosexual "was tantamount to an invitation of criminal prosecution" (Schlager, 1998, p. 31).

In the 1960s and 1970s, assuming a homosexual identity continued to be "heavily stigmatized by the overwhelming weight of cultural opinion" (D'Emilio, 2002, p. 33).

However, gay liberation challenged the cultural shame behind embracing one's same-sex sexual attraction. The term homosexual grew out of fashion, as it was tied to the view that homosexual desires were somehow pathological and required medical intervention. In 1970, students at the National Gay Liberation Front Student Conference in San Francisco embraced the term gay as a rejection of the term homosexual:

> … Gay has come to mean (by street usage) a life style in which we are not just sex machines…. We are whole entities…. Gay is a life-style. It is how we live. It is our oppression. It is our Tiffany lamps and our guns. Gay is our history and the history we are just beginning to become. (Miller, 1995, p. 370)

Activists reappropriated the term "queer" in the 1990s (Bronski, 2011). Academics and activists have proposed numerous definitions to describe queer orientations. Ng (2013) deployed the word to describe individuals intentionally attempting to "destabilize received identities and seek to disrupt dominant ideologies and practices" (p. 262). Warner (1999) described queer individuals as those who "find themselves at odds with straight culture" (p. 38).

The contemporary discourse around the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or queer identities (LGBTQ) generally no longer seeks to expunge it from the individual. By the 1990s, cultural stigma behind the identity was beginning to wane, but homosexual sex remained a crime in some states. In contemporary times, the specter of two adults engaging in homosexual conduct is no longer a crime but remains deeply stigmatized in certain conservative political and religious institutions. With the exclusion of right-leaning political and religious institutions, same-sex sexual desire is treated as an innate feature of humanity. However, the recognition of the desire's naturalness is not an indication of its privilege. Most LGBTQ people are seen as *not normal* because they stand on the nonheterosexual side of sexual orientation. However, within the gay identity, privilege persists. The privilege of males over females and Whites over all other racial and ethnic categories is a phenomenon very much alive within the gay identity. As Bronski (2011) pointed out "[s]exuality and race are about bodies" (p. 57), and the discourse around our desires and our bodies shifts with time. Categories of race have always been "disrupted by the shifting lines between indentured servant and slave and between slave and freeman, and by the children of interracial couples" (Bronski, 2011, p. 57). While racial, ethnic, and sexual identities, as a discursive unit, change over time, the power of racism and sexism continues to exert enormous influence within the intersectionality of sexual orientation (D'Emilio, 2002). This shouldn't be all that surprising, as in contemporary times, neoliberalism plays a significant role in determining privilege, as "class and racial hierarchies, gender and sexual institutions, and religious and ethnic boundaries are the channels through which money, political power, cultural resources, and social organization flow" (Duggan, 2004, p. xiv). White gay men continue to experience "unjust enrichment" because their privileged status is closer to the *norm*, and they lack the experience of contesting nonnormativity (Carbado, 2005). Those who hold privileged identities reinforce and perpetuate that privilege unless they "expose and challenge them" (Carbado, 2005, p. 191). However, in a heteronormative society, LGBTQ people will remain outside the norm, as their sexual activity and desires are not the ideal.

While discourse historically has and continues to reinforce power and privilege, it also provides the ability to undermine and expose power. As Foucault (1978) observed, discursive categories and the personage that is subsequently created can all be rearranged. In short, understanding how a society discusses and constructs identity categories reveals avenues to destabilize and deconstruct subjectivity (Foucault, 1978). In the process of constructing the homosexual in order to suppress it, a "reverse discourse" manifested, which allowed the homosexual to begin speaking on "its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or 'naturality' be acknowledged" (Foucault, 1978, p. 101). Now that the homosexual was transformed into "a personage," that individual could utilize the dominant discourse to encourage others who were similarly situated, to act in unison and demand recognition, not as a deviant, but as an equal. Discourse around the homosexual was thus utilized "both [as] an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy" (Foucault, 1978, p. 101).

Rather than "arguing for the singular legitimacy of one particular mode of categorization" (Hall, 2003, p. 70), or "naturality," as Foucault (1978) argued, queer theorists utilize "reverse discourse" as an instrument to understand "the structuring, the mechanisms, and the immense consequences of the incoherent dispensation under which we now live" (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 91). By recognizing the power that shapes discursive categories and the fluidity of those units of categorization, queer theorists, such as Butler (1993) and Sedgwick (1990), call into question normative and constraining notions within identity constructs. Sedgwick (1990) described the essentialism around the male/female and heterosexual/homosexual dichotomies as performative aspects of our identities, fundamentally resting on shaky ground. In the process of learning how to perform gender, Butler (1993) highlights the vulnerability of heteronormativity:

> That there is a need for a repetition at all is a sign that identity is not self-identical. It requires to be instituted again and again, which is to say that it runs the risk of becoming *de*-instituted at every interval. (p. 315)

Every performance of gender, every lesson from a parent to her child on how to perform gender provides an opportunity for individuals to queer what it means to be a boy or a girl. The queering concept can be applied to all identity categories. For example, how one learns to perform one's race opens up an opportunity for that individual to redefine the category. How one performs one's sexual orientation provides new concepts of expression. However, powerful forces have taken hold to keep the definition of normality rather narrow.

Changes in movement strategy. In the immediate post-Stonewall era, gay activists adopted a new militancy that sought to challenge the heteronormative, patriarchal, sexist, and racist foundations of American society. Gay liberationists adopted "strategies that highlighted differences from the straight majority, seeing themselves as the embodiment of the liberation potential" (Bernstein, 1997, p 546). D'Emilio (2002) described the four elements of the gay liberationists' ideology: (1) gay liberationists claimed a revolutionary political ideology; (2) they saw the battle against sexism as the very heart of their struggle; (3) they broke decisively with hegemonic conceptions of homosexuality and of sexual identity more generally; and (4) they politicized everything, including sexual behavior and sexual relationships (p. 54).

During this time period, mainstream media institutions antagonized gay people by portraying them as deviants and troublemakers (Fejes & Petrich, 1993; Gross, 2001; Klarman, 2013; Streitmatter, 2009). With the onslaught of the AIDS epidemic, gay men were framed in the media as "victim and villain" (Gross, 2001, p. 103). A new round of militancy emerged as political groups were formed to challenge normative discourse that stigmatized "those who had sex, to blame them for the virus that was killing them" (Warner, 1999, p. 51). However, in the 1990s, the LGBT movement experienced a radical reorientation that sought to engage the neoliberal state. By engaging with the state, rather than seeking to revolutionize it, the LGBT movement, as embodied by corporatized movement organizations, abandoned "antiquated liberationism" (Warner, 1999, p. 90). "Normalizing" was the new approach, as corporatized LGBT movement organizations, such as the Human Rights Campaign, made military service and same-sex marriage significant goals. This required the movement organizations to situate LGBT people, not as advocating for a revolution in the fundamental values of society, rather the movement sought to present gays as wanting equal acceptance into the heteronormative culture. Critiques of capitalism, sexism, racism, and patriarchy all took a back seat. The focus on marriage placed the gay movement within direct contrast to progressive organizations that sought to eliminate racism, as attaining familial recognition was "a status long embodied by Whites and denied Blacks in the United States" (Stone & Ward, 2011, p. 621). The new orientation to seek entry into conservative state institutions heralded a realignment that remains a prominent feature of the LGBT movement.

In order to evolve from perverts and deviants to respectable citizens, an assimilationist approach required "the muting of a group's distinctive coloring" (Gross, 2001, p. xvi) by positioning gay people as "mature, stable and highly responsible citizens who are involved in long-term, committed relationships" (Streitmatter, 2009, p. 168). The "normalizing" strategy required gay people to position themselves as not challenging heteronormativity, but as advocating for inclusion in the paradigm which privileges "heterosexual desire, dating, marriage, reproduction, childrearing, and home life" as "not only valuable to themselves, but the bedrock on which every other value in the world rests" (Warner, 1999, p. 47). Those who express their sexuality within the context of a heterosexual, committed marriage and adhere to the strict gender binary, including the narrow division of labor between men and women, sit at the hierarchy of normalcy, and by failing to challenge such an institution, professionalized gay movement organizations reinforced it. Acceptance of heteronormativity bypasses any critique of the fundamental nature of the family environment that creates "the inequalities of access and recognition that produce this sense of shame" for queers (Warner, 1999, p. 8).

Situated as universal in nature, heteronormativity "produces specific behaviors and identities" (Kimport, 2014, p. 15), and often yields enormous hardships for queer people. In a heteronormative environment, individuals are presumed straight until declared otherwise, which causes conflict for queers who feel "a profound and nameless estrangement, a sense of inner secrets and hidden shame" (Warner, 1999, p. 8). Encouraging individuals to "come out," rather than challenge the constraining effects of heteronormativity, places "a special burden of disclosure" on the queer reinforcing the notion that the individual was somehow concealing a dirty little secret, thus continuing "the shaming effects of isolation" (Warner, 1999, p. 8).

Annihilating radicals. Inner-group social control works in favor of silencing heteronormative critiques. This is an unintended consequence of the formation of a gay and lesbian identity. The opportunity for marginalized groups to create counter-heteronormative discourse, a "reverse discourse" as Foucault (1978) explained, opens the possibly of an inner-group mechanism of social control. As gays and lesbians are demanding that their "legitimacy or 'naturality' be acknowledged" (Foucault, 1978, p. 101), the very notion of "naturality" generates a discourse that reifies normative notions of what it means to be part of the "gay and lesbian community." By advocating for recognition, a group of individuals must now define the characteristics of inclusion. By the act of defining membership, a marginalized community exerts, intentionally or not, another layer of social control: "We operated as disciplining agents on each other and ourselves through our expectations of 'normal' behavior and our sometimes subtle, sometimes overt, communications of disapproval" (Hall, 2003, p. 65). The group therefore constructs and enforces a discursive unit to draw the boundaries of inclusion.

The boundaries of inclusion are then reinforced by individuals within the group and institutions of power (e.g., government, education, and mass media, to name a few). Large-scale professionalized and corporatized LGBT advocacy organizations now dominate the movement. Through the normalization of LGBT politics, as perpetuated by large-scale organizations, Duggan (2004) argues that the movement has adopted neoliberal ideals by becoming "the lobbying, legal and public relations firms for an increasingly narrow gay, moneyed elite" (p. 45). Groups like the Human Rights Campaign and Equality Texas now adhere to corporate management structures and focus on building alliances with multinational corporations to coordinate political strategies. These corporatized organizations largely leave patriarchy, capitalism, racism, and sexism unchallenged. Through wholesale exclusion, radical voices have been symbolically annihilated from the movement and associated media coverage. The leaders of the corporatized LGBT organizations situate themselves as representatives of the entire "gay and lesbian community" and are "enthralled by respectability" (Warner, 1999, p. 25). The movement has been neutered. It's been desexualized altogether. As Warner (1999) argues, national LGBTQ organizations shun messy queerness by constructing a hierarchy to free gays and lesbians from sex altogether:

> In the right social quarters, if you behave yourself, you can have a decent life as a normal homo—at least, up to a point. Those with the biggest fig leaves stand, always, at the top of the hierarchy. The only price they pay is the price of contradiction. They must claim that, though defined by sexuality, they are beyond it. (p. 40)

A disavowal of the stigma of sex makes some sense. It's a pleasant thought that a society might exist where one is freed from sexual activity as a discursive identity unit. "But since that utopia exists nowhere in *this* culture's near future, the idea reads as wishfulness, or even self-contradiction" (Warner, 1999, p. 46).

A New Homonormativity

A hallmark of contemporary national LGBT organizations is the wholesale abandonment of the politics of the progressive-left movements of the 1960s and 1970s that sought to "level hierarchies and redistribute *down*—redistribute money, political power, cultural capital, pleasure and freedom" (Duggan, 2004, p. xvii). Corporatized LGBT advocacy organizations reflect a *new homonormativity*, which is defined as "a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption" (Duggan, 2004, p. 50).

The homonormative construct leaves critical issues, such as capitalism, sexism, patriarchy, and racism unchallenged. Yep and Elia (2012) argue that a key characteristic of the new homonormativity is an absence of any discussions surrounding racism, which supports the hegemonic "myth that racism is a thing of the past" (p. 898). The privilege maintained by White gay males remains unchallenged and intact, as he negotiates his surroundings, locked in a false reality that his struggle against oppression is the same as the oppressive forces experienced by a queer person of color (Yep & Elia, 2012).

While gays and lesbians may have generated a "reverse discourse" in the movement's early years, the emerging research suggests that reverse discourse has in fact reverted and conformed to homonormativity. Left out of the homonormative discourse are all the "untidy" aspects:

> The others, the queers who have sex in public toilets, who don't "come out" as happily gay, the sex workers, the lesbians who are too vocal about a taste for dildos or S/M, the boys who flaunt it as pansies or as leathermen, the androgynes, the trannies or transgendered whose gender deviance makes them unassimilable to the menu of sexual orientations, the clones in the so-called gay ghetto, the fist-fuckers and popper-snorters, the ones who actually like pornography—all these flaming creates are told in an earnestness that betrays no glimmer of its own grotesque comedy, that their great moment of liberation and acceptance will come later. (Warner, 1999, p. 66)

The neoliberal, homonormative orientation among corporatized LGBT organizations has led to a boom in media visibility within an institution that also supports the dominant social order. Moscowitz (2013) drew attention to the fact that increased media "visibility comes at a price, and that is often sorely mistaken for cultural acceptance and inclusive citizenship" (p. 15). Ubiquitous mass media portrayals of gays and lesbians pacifies and cultivates an aura of normalcy that gay people are accepted and belonging to the "wider world" (Warner, 1999, p. 70), despite the fact that the mass audience still views gays through their "deviant" sexual activity. The ubiquitous media portrayals of LGBTQ people may lull gays into believing the right for equal rights and cultural acceptance has been won, when in fact many powerful conservative politicians and religious institutions remain firmly opposed to the inclusion of LGBTQ people in public life.

Scholars have applied the concept of homonormativity to a variety of communication and sociological phenomena. Kimport (2014) interrogated the institution of marriage as a site where "homonormativity would complement heteronormativity, enabling its continued ubiquity, and demobilize advocates for more radical social change. It would not simply fail to contest heteronormativity, it would reify it" (p. 11). In the media, homonormativity manifests by presenting "homosexuality as normal, unremarkable, and possible, and may also suggest that other sexualities are aberrant or distinctive" (Papacharissi & Fernback, 2008, p. 354). Ng (2013) interrogated LOGO television channel's attempt to mainstream LGBT people, also known as "gaystreaming," that is "designed to draw in a larger general audience, particularly heterosexual women, and have occurred as gay and lesbian media, print and online, as well as bookstores and bars, have been shuttering in the United States" (p. 259). The new strategy produced "a homonormativity predicated on discourses of consumerism, progress, and integration" (Ng, 2013, p. 258). Papacharissi and Fernback (2008) found that the makeover reality show, *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, presented homonormativity as reinforcing a "cultural encouraging consumption" and apolitical because the gay hosts "are never provided with the power to renegotiate their status and social position" (p. 365).

While communication scholars have applied the concept of homonormativity to social movements, pop culture media texts, and family structure, scholars have yet to analyze and trace the influence of homonormativity on news discourse over the past 45 years. As the existing literature demonstrated, corporatized LGBT advocacy organizations made an effort to present a particular picture of gay life to media institutions in order to more effectively interact with a neoliberal state. Coverage of the U.S. Supreme Court case legalizing same-sex marriage provides a unique opportunity to understand how homonormativity, as promulgated by the mainstream LGBT movement, manifests in news coverage. Journalists like to believe they play an objective role in society. They like to believe they mirror reality, rather than shape it. However, ideological constructs within the profession of journalism and the journalist's own ideological leanings affect news coverage. Journalists are also influenced by the actors within their stories. One of the main actors in the coverage of gays and lesbians over the past half of a century are the movement organizations that claim to represent them, and these organizations made efforts to shape perceptions. Therefore, this research poses the following question:

RQ3: What might news discourse of the four case studies say about the influence of homonormativity on coverage of same-sex marriage?

By answering the above question, this analysis will provide a historical accounting of important moments for gay and lesbian people. It will also shed light on the costs associated with achieving access to state-sanctioned marriage.

RESEARCH STRATEGY

This qualitative analysis will undertake to answer the following research questions:

- RQ1: How did newspaper journalists frame gay and lesbian people in Austin during four discrete, historical moments—the formation of the first GLF chapter at UT, Texas' proposed AIDS quarantine, the election of Texas' first openly gay state lawmaker, and Texas' first same-sex marriages?
- RQ2: What was the nature of coverage of gay and lesbian people in Austin by various media entities—mainstream, collegiate, and alternative newspapers?
- RQ3: What does news discourse of the four case studies say about the influence of homonormativity on coverage of same-sex marriage?

In this section of the dissertation, the researcher will enumerate the terminology utilized during the discourse analysis, the theoretical foundations of the research strategy, and the methodology.

Terminology

For the purposes of this research, the discourse analysis mainly focused on gay and lesbian individuals, as the labels "transgender," "bisexual," "queer," and "pansexual" were rarely, if ever, utilized in the data within the news discourse. "Gay and lesbian movement" or "lesbian and gay movement" are terms that will be utilized to describe the movement prior to 1990. Reflecting Stein's (2012) observations, for descriptions about the lesbian and gay movement after 1991, the umbrella phrase "LGBT movement" will be utilized. After 2000, "queer" became more fashionable and was included in the larger movement acronym as "LGBTQ." "Queer" will be specifically deployed when referring to individuals, concepts, or situations that present "a radical alternative to 'gay and lesbian,' which many activists and academics now regard as too assimilationist, conservative, and normative, and too bound up with fixed gender and sexual identities" (Stein, 2012, p. 184).

Theoretical Foundations for a Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative methods are well suited for the purposes of this research, which attempt to provide insight into the world, society, and mass media. Gitlin (1978) recognized weaknesses in the dominant paradigm in communication research—quantitative scholars' search for media effects—for posing questions that avoid examining the mass media's role "to define normal and abnormal social and political activity, to say what is politically real and legitimate and what is not" (p. 205). A discourse analysis of communication texts is one method to examine how the mass media, as agents of social control, shape social reality. Discourse analysis is grounded in a constructivist point of view, which acknowledges the examinations of texts as one avenue to "explore how the socially produced ideas and objects that populate the world were created in the first place and how they are maintained and held in place over time" (Phillips, 2002, p. 6). An ontological perspective further situates communication texts as socially constructed. News stories are not only meaningful to an audience; the text also makes meaning (Phillips, 2002). Journalists select certain words to construct a news story. Those selected words, in turn, construct a reality for audience members, as the words that comprise a story are located within a “historical and social context” (Phillips, 2002, p. 4).

The bias in mainstream media has been widely criticized for protecting the status quo and relegating those challenging authority to the sidelines (Gans, 1979; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Tuchman, 1978).While journalists envision their role as mirroring “events rather than reflecting the acts of negotiation, power brokering, and resource management that typify newsroom practices” (Zelizer, 2004, p. 14), Gitlin (1980) observed how media adopted an ideologically driven position that “marginalized and disparaged” (p. 140) those challenging authority. Individuals challenging authority are marginalized and disparaged in media coverage by how journalists frame stories. Journalists choose to feature certain groups in prominent positions while relegating others to marginal or no coverage. Journalists frame stories through the selection of certain facts and images over others. Media frames are an “organization of experience” that privilege how a few individuals view the world (Goffman, 1974). This privileging of certain content over others reflects the journalist’s own bias (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996), as framing is a subjective process. Gitlin (1980) described framing as a cognitive shortcut to help journalists categorize large amounts of information, but the effect is one in which certain “aspects of a perceived reality” become “more salient in a communicating text” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). The information that survives the editing process in a particular story ultimately increases in salience for the individual consuming the story. A story’s frame ultimately wields enormous power "because [the stories] influence how we make sense of the world" (Kendall, 2005, p. 5).

Communication scholars developed the *protest paradigm* as a framing typology that can be applied to groups actively challenging state authority (Chan & Lee, 1984). The paradigm recognizes distinct patterns of media coverage that portray activist groups in a negative fashion. A common characteristic of the paradigm is the application of marginalizing frames, which focus on the protesters' perceived deviancy and how those individuals pose a threat to society. And in that choice, journalists' ideological status quo leanings enforce hegemony. Journalists delegitimize protest groups by excluding direct quotes from protesters; instead, relying on official sources and definitions to frame the story (McLeod & Hertog, 1999). This research interrogates the power of the press to reflect hegemonic values when reporting on a social movement that challenges authority. As Lang (2013) noted, qualitative methodologies are grounded in the recognition that

> … mass communication is seen as arising not only from individuals but also from institutions of power in the society… mass communication [is] controlled by large companies; large companies are controlled by rich and influential members of society; and therefore, the large companies controlled the expression, the thought, and the opinions expressed over the mass media. (p. 16)

Through analyzing mass media messages, this research will critically examine the cycle of knowledge production by helping scholars understand how the mass media constructs messages, how those texts are communicated to the audience, and how that knowledge shapes social reality.

A quantitative approach for the purposes of this research is not appropriate, as this researcher is attempting to explore the constitutive nature of communication texts. While a quantitative approach through a content analysis allows researchers to understand how many times a phenomenon appears in a text, it doesn't answer questions about how certain categories came to be and why those were replicated over time. A content analysis or survey may be helpful to scholars to compare results to preexisting categories and offer generalizable claims in relation to the categories. However, this research is entering an area of the scholarship where concrete categories have yet to be formed. An emic approach, as proposed for this study, encourages new findings to emerge from the data, rather than forcing the data into predetermined categories through an etic approach.

Communication scholars have deployed qualitative methods to examine news stories and journalism practice. Lule's (1995) qualitative analysis of media coverage of rape allegations against former boxer Mike Tyson documented how mainstream journalists perpetuated racist stereotypes by framing him as a savage. Tuchman (1978) and Gans (1979) shed light onto the ideological leanings of mainstream media. Zelizer's (2004) qualitative analysis challenged journalists' notions of merely mirroring events. Bock and Araiza's (2014) qualitative study further strengthened Zelizer's (2004) findings by utilized observational fieldwork, discourse analysis, and in-depth interviews in order to find that journalists covering a criminal trial produced bias coverage that favored police authority and marginalized the defendant.[1]

Method

RQ1. In order to answer RQ1 (How did newspaper journalists frame gay and lesbian people in Austin during four discrete, historical moments—the formation of the first GLF chapter at UT, Texas' proposal to quarantine AIDS patients, the election of Texas' first openly gay state lawmaker, and Texas' first same-sex marriages), this researcher conducted a discourse analysis of newspaper articles and associated photographs from the four moments. The units of analysis for RQ1 are the individual articles and photographs. The time periods of the historical moments were purposively selected to coincide with phases of coverage identified by the seminal writings of Gross (2001) and Streitmatter (2009). In order to answer RQ1, the researcher analyzed each case study as a discrete unit. At this point in the research, the researcher did not analyze the changes from case study to case study. In other words, the researcher avoided viewing the case studies as representing changes over a continuum of time.

This discourse analysis sought to understand how journalists presented gay and lesbian people to Austin newspaper readers. The goal of a frame analysis is to dissect

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[1] On a reflexive note, the researcher not only has a decade's worth of experience as a television journalist, he is also actively involved in the Texas equality movement. The research is currently the chairman of the board of directors for Equality Texas Foundation. The researcher was present and served as witness when the first legally recognized same-sex marriage was performed in February 2015. And when the U.S. Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage in June 2015, the researcher was present and served as witness to many of Texas' first same-sex marriages. It's important to acknowledge those experiences because, as with any research utilizing grounded theory, the findings will be influenced by the researcher's perspective.

how a particular news subject is defined and presented to the public. Understanding the framing of news stories has a rich history in communication scholarship. Goffman (1974) sought to deconstruct the "organization of experience" through a frame analysis that unraveled how social situations are "built up" and the "subjective involvement in them" (p. 10). Gitlin (1980) more precisely defined media frames as "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual" (p. 7). Scholars continue to analyze the framing of news stories in order to examine a wide variety of subjects, such as journalists' framing of campaign coverage (Pedersen, 2014), journalists' framing of biofuels (Delshad & Raymond, 2013), and media framing of international conflicts (Evans & Kaynak, 2015), to name a few. However, some communication scholars describe framing research as suspended in a "state of conceptual confusion" (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2014) because the "operationalizations of media frames" vary from study to study (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Goffman (1974) acknowledged such challenges when he wrote how frames should not be viewed as a "linear presentation" with a clearly defined genesis and static endpoint. Instead, frames are a "circular affair," where each analysis yields new and different findings that could shift the very foundation of a particular line of research, thus revealing new knowledge (Goffman, 1974). Despite the shifting sands that framing research rests upon, analyzing news story frames provides a method to "account for the lack of neutrality in news" (Zelizer, 2004, p. 140) at a time when some journalists fail to see their profession as constituting a set of practices and routines that inherently disenfranchise some. Zelizer (2004) argues that framing research helps scholars see "beyond the discontinuous episodes" and "force recognition of the systematically constructed nature of journalistic work" (p. 142). Framing analysis has yielded important findings that show how "powerful political elites attempt to create and promote frames that advance their purposes" (Coombs, 2014, p. 4). News stories are a salient tool "for translating the unknown into the known, the abstruse into the understood, and the strange into the familiar" (Mander, 1999, p. 3). The framing of gay and lesbian people in the media, especially during the movement's formative years, is important for scholars to understand, as many audiences first came to learn of gay people through news stories.

The researcher utilized both deductive and inductive approaches during the discourse analysis of news stories. Through a deductive approach, the researcher compared the newspaper stories to McLeod and Hertog's (1999) protest paradigm typology. In addition, the researcher compared how the news stories either conform to or differ from the phases of coverage and frames identified by Gross (2001) and Streitmatter (1995). To allow for new themes to emerge from the content, the researcher utilized an inductive approach. The researcher chose such an emic avenue to allow salient issues to emerge from the texts that may have previously been unknown (Tracy, 2012).

RQ2. In order to answer RQ2 (What was the nature of coverage of gay and lesbian people in Austin by various media entities—mainstream, collegiate, and alternative newspapers?), this researcher utilized the results of RQ1 to see changes over the past 45 years. The units of analysis were the results from each case study as a purposive representation of news coverage from the corresponding time period. While framing analysis in discrete time periods have yielded important findings to account for journalists' reporting that reflected "status quo" orientation (Gans, 1979), a comparison of news coverage over the span of half a century will allow communication scholars to see how "beyond the discontinuous episodes" of news coverage of a minority group and to "force recognition of the systematically constructed nature of journalistic work" (Zelizer, 2004, p. 142) that has affected a segment of the population. During this portion of the research, the researcher utilized a deductive approach through the application of the *protest paradigm* to understand how the nature of coverage changed over time. In addition, the researcher utilized the notion of *subaltern counterpublics* to critically examine the role of the alternative and collegiate press as "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinate social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses" (Fraser, 1990, p. 67).

RQ3. In order to answer RQ3 (What might news discourse of the four case studies say about the influence of homonormativity on coverage of same-sex marriage?), the researcher focused on the results of the four case studies to understand how homonormativity evolved to dominate coverage of same-sex marriage. The researcher drew upon queer theoretical concepts to interrogate the power of discourse to shape reality. Corporatized LGBT movement organizations exerted enormous efforts to shape perceptions of gay and lesbian people by presenting them as "respectable individuals." As existing research demonstrated, corporatized LGBT advocacy organizations reflect a *new homonormativity*, which is defined as "a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption" (Duggan, 2004,

p. 50). The homonormative construct leaves critical issues, such as capitalism, sexism, patriarchy, and racism unchallenged.

Recognizing the constructivist notion of communication texts, specifically news stories, this research is further informed by theoretical concepts within the queer theory. Queer theory recognizes how discourse as a communication phenomenon fuses "power and knowledge" (Foucault, 1978, p. 100). Discourse, both in the form of texts and images, shapes reality, and sexual orientation as a discursive unit has a "far greater potential for rearrangement, ambiguity, and representation doubleness" (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 34). Those in power hold sway over the discourse deployed that forms discursive categories which privilege some over others. The effect is discourse reinforces power and privilege. Once the central structures of power are exposed, those subjugated by the dominant social order may find avenues to undermine and expose the power behind discursive categories. Understanding how a society discusses and constructs identity categories reveals avenues to destabilize and deconstruct subjectivity by generating new modes, and associated discourse, of living (Foucault, 1978).

While gays and lesbians utilized a "reverse discourse" in the movement's early years to challenge heteronormativity, the emerging research suggests that the "reverse discourse" has in fact reverted and conformed to homonormativity. The researcher utilized a metaphor comparing the news discourse analyzed in this study to the painting, *American Gothic*, in order to draw parallels between the dominant discourse surrounding the painting and gays and lesbians and how both sets of ideological constructs omit the infinite combinations of lived experiences. Queer theory was applied to the *American Gothic* painting to understand how a society discusses and constructs identity categories and to reveal avenues to destabilize and deconstruct subjectivity (Foucault, 1978). By generating a reverse discourse about *American Gothic*, the researcher attempted to shed light on the individuals who have been symbolically annihilated from news discourse.

Publication selection. The researcher analyzed news articles from Austin's mainstream daily newspaper, *Austin American-Statesman*; the University of Texas at Austin's student newspaper *Daily Texan*; and three alternative newspapers.

Austin American-Statesman, according to the latest publicly available data, has a daily circulation that at times reaches more than 500,000 readers (Audit Bureau, 2010). Historians traced *Austin American-Statesman*'s roots to the *Democratic Statesman*, which began publishing July 1871 ("Austin American-Statesman," n.d.). During the early 20th century, the paper's title evolved to several names. In 1916, after consolidating with other papers, it was renamed *Evening Statesman* and was published in the afternoon. In 1914, a new paper, named the *Austin American*, emerged ("Austin American-Statesman," n.d.). After 1924, Charles E. Marsh and E. S. Fentress purchased both papers. The publications were consolidated into one company; however, the papers operated independently of each other. The *Austin American* published in the morning. Its Sunday edition was named *Sunday American-Statesman*. The *Evening Statesman* was published only in the afternoon. In 1973, all paper titles were merged to form *Austin American-Statesman*, which published four daily editions. Cox Enterprises purchased the paper in 1976. In April 1987, the paper's publication schedule was reduced from several times a day to mornings only ("Austin American-Statesman," n.d.). For the purpose of this research, all articles published under the four titles (*Austin American*, *Sunday American-Statesman*, *Evening Statesman*, and *Austin American-Statesman*) were grouped under the *Austin*

American-Statesman. The articles analyzed for case studies one, two, and three were collected from microfilm housed at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin. The stories for case study four were collected from the newspaper's website.

The Daily Texan was founded in 1900 as a weekly newspaper (Daily Texan, n.d.), originally named the *Texan* (Copp & Rogers, 1999). In 1913, students voted overwhelmingly to "have the first college daily in the South" and renamed the paper *The Daily Texan* (Copp & Rogers, 1999). During the summers, the paper was published under the title the *Summer Texan*; it was eliminated in 1973 (Copp & Rogers, 1999). For the purposes of this research, both titles, the *Summer Texan* and *The Daily Texan*, are combined under the name *The Daily Texan*. Currently in the summer, *The Daily Texan* is published as a weekly tabloid. The latest publicly available information indicates *The Daily Texan* has a daily circulation of approximately 12,000 (The Daily Texan Editorial, 2013). *The Daily Texan* articles analyzed for case studies one, two, and three were collected from microfilm rolls housed at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin. The stories for case study four were collected from *The Daily Texan*'s website.

The researcher relied on three alternative publications for data regarding the four case studies. The *Texas Observer* (*Observer*) is one of the longest operating alternative publications in Austin. An exploratory examination of *Observer*'s online archives found that the paper did not report on case studies one, two, and three. However, *Observer* journalists generated extensive articles regarding case study four. *Observer* was founded in 1954 to cover issues "ignored by the state's daily newspapers: race and class and the lives of working people" ("About the Observer," n.d). *Observer* celebrates its independent and muckraking history. Eventually, the paper's ownership was transferred in 1994 from a private company to the Texas Democracy Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. *Observer* historically printed at least two editions a month but now it only publishes a monthly print edition ("About the Observer," n.d). News stories are constantly published on the paper's website. News stories from the *Observer* will be analyzed for case study four only.

In order to find articles from an alternative publication that circulated in Austin regarding case studies one, two, and three, the researcher turned to other sources. One of those sources was the *Austin Chronicle*, an independently owned and operated weekly newspaper in Austin. It was founded in 1981 to primarily cover the city's growing music scene (Powell & Freeman, 2011). While the *Austin Chronicle* was publishing during the time periods of case studies two, three, and four, the researcher excluded the publication from this analysis, as it's a paper that primarily focuses on music and lifestyle issues in Austin (Powell & Freeman, 2011).

Data for case study one was gathered from the *Rag* (*Rag*), an underground newspaper published in Austin from 1966–1977 (Hank, 2011). *Rag* was assembled by a group of volunteers, one of whom described their efforts as, "[w]e not only wrote about the news; we were making the news. We would organize a demonstration. We'd be at the demonstration, then we'd come back and write about the demonstration" (Hank, 2011). *Rag* advocated for social and political change. *Rag* journalists professed a political ideology that supported participatory democracy. Those who published *Rag* viewed themselves as working in direct opposition to the city's mainstream newspapers and UT's student newspaper (Hank, 2011). *Rag* published numerous articles regarding case study one but ceased regular operations during the time periods that cover case studies two, three, and four. *Rag*'s articles were obtained from microfilm rolls housed at the Perry Castañeda Library at the University of Texas at Austin.

In order to locate news stories for case studies two and three, the researcher turned to *This Week in Texas*, which "was ***<u>THE</u>*** publication with regard to the gay community in Texas" (Houston LGBT, n.d.). *This Week in Texas*, also known as *TWT*, circulated all over Texas between 1975 and 2013. The publication was at first touted as the "Complimentary GAY BUSINESS GUIDE for TEXAS." However, that was dropped as the publication began including more and more news articles. It was a weekly newspaper that had news staff members stationed in all the state's major cities, including Austin. It had a statewide distribution network that extended both Texas' largest cities and smaller cities such as El Paso, South Padre Island and Amarillo (Lee, 2007). An exploratory search of *TWT* newspapers, available online, did locate numerous articles regarding case studies two and three.

Case study one: Gay Liberation Front takes a stand at the University of Texas at Austin.

The first case study includes newspaper coverage of the formation of the University of Texas' first gay and lesbian student group, a local chapter of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF), as it battled to gain official recognition on the campus between 1970 and 1974. This time period coincides with the surge in visibility of gay and lesbian people in the media that followed the 1969 Stonewall riots. Scholars noted how the increased media coverage was still negative and hostile towards gays and lesbians (Fejes & Petrick, 1993; Gross, 2001; Streitmatter, 2009).

During the formative years of the gay and lesbian movement in Austin, the members of GLF relied on the press to attract attention to their cause ("Founding Story," 1970). In documents produced by GLF members, they indicated that their formation signaled to the UT community that "a bunch of 'queers'… are coming out of their closets, stating publicly that they are gay and they are proud of it."[2] At that time, three publications in Austin provided coverage of the movement. This analysis did not focus on the quantity of content from each publication since the three publications had a dissimilar publishing pattern. News articles were analyzed from *Statesman*, *Rag*, and *Texan*.

GLF's historic efforts are not widely known outside the members who founded the group. While protest groups have been the subject of extensive research, very little literature exists documenting the efforts of gay and lesbian groups in Texas that battled the status quo to gain recognition. In fact, no academic articles have been published about GLF's efforts in Austin, nor any media coverage surrounding its efforts. Data for the discourse analysis was primarily obtained from microfilm. A total of 56 articles were analyzed for this study. A complete inventory of those articles can be found in Table 1.

TABLE 1: AN INVENTORY OF GLF ARTICLES

	GLF Sought Campus Recognition	**GLF Denied Campus Recognition**	**GLF-Hosted Convention and Pride Event**	**Gay Women's Liberation**	**GLF Confronted Authority**	**GLF Won Official Recognition**

[2] "Gay Lib, Austin," Tucson Gay Museum, 1970.

	May 7 – Nov. 2, 1970	Dec. 2, 1970 – Jan. 17, 1971	Feb. 16 – Jun. 27, 1971	Jun. 21 – Aug. 30, 1971	Jun. 29, 1971 – Mar. 14, 1972	Mar. 9, 1972 – Mar. 26, 1974
Total Articles in Statesman	0	6	2	0	7	5
Total Articles in Texan	2	7	4	0	3	3
Total Articles in Rag	3	0	5	2	5	2

Case study two: Texas officials attempt to quarantine "incorrigible" AIDS patients.

In October 1985, Texas health officials announced a proposal to combat the further spread of AIDS: quarantine "recalcitrant patients" who officials believed were uncontrollable. This proposal was a first in the U.S. and a result of stories in the media of some gay men who were infected with AIDS and refused to abstain from sexual behavior. Officials in San Antonio notified 17 AIDS patients that "could face criminal prosecution if they do not refrain from sexual activities."[3] The proposal to quarantine some gay men who suffered from AIDS generated a substantial amount of news coverage. In February 1986, after three months of debate, Texas officials eventually withdrew the proposal. During the time period covered in this case study, *Rag* no longer published on a regular basis. In order to obtain material from a counterculture publication, the researcher analyzed news articles from *This Week in Texas* (*TWT*). The researcher conducted a discourse analysis of all available newspaper stories covering the quarantine proposal in *TWT*, *Texan*, and *Statesman* from the point at which Texas health officials announced the proposal on October 21, 1985, until February 1, 1986—the date

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[3] From staff and wire reports. (1985, October 22). AIDS quarantines recommended for victims endangering public. *Austin American-Statesman*, p. 1.

newspapers announced that the proposal had been officially withdrawn. *TWT*'s articles were obtained from an online website maintained by JD Doyle Archives based in Houston, Texas, that contains digital copies of nearly all issues of *TWT*.[4] *Statesman* and *Texan* articles were obtained from microfilm. A total of 23 articles were analyzed for case study two. A complete inventory of those articles can be found in Table 2.

TABLE 2: AN INVENTORY OF QUARANTINE ARTICLES

	Texas Fought AIDS with Confinement	**Statesman Found a New Villain**	**Texas Took Initial Step to Quarantine "Incorrigibles"**	**Texas Dropped Quarantine Proposal**
	Oct. 22 – Nov. 7, 1985	Nov. 13 – Nov. 15, 1985	Nov. 26 – Nov. 20, 1985	Jan. 10 – Feb. 1, 1986
Total Articles in Statesman	2	2	4	4
Total Articles in Texan	3	0	1	2
Total Articles in TWT	0	0	2	3

Case study three: Austin voters elect first openly gay state lawmaker.

The third case study included newspaper coverage from the 1991 special election for Texas State Representative District 51—an Austin-based district—that was won by the first openly gay state lawmaker in Texas history. This time period coincides with what Gross (2001) described as the "mainstreaming" of gay and lesbian people in news coverage. On January 3, 1991, Glen Maxey announced his candidacy for a special election to fill the vacant seat. In a press release, Maxey touted his experience as a teacher, a legislative aide, and "as Director of the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby."[5] Maxey's race generated a substantial amount of media coverage, as numerous candidates ran for

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[4] The website is available here: http://www.houstonlgbthistory.org/twt77.html.
[5] "MAXEY," Austin History Center, 1991.

the seat being vacated by Lena Guerrero, who vacated her position after Texas Governor Ann Richards appointed her to the Texas Railroad Commission. Maxey's election came at a time when gay men and women were being elected to public office at unprecedented rates (Yeager, 1999). Maxey's election came nearly two decades after Elaine Noble became the first openly gay candidate elected to public office. Noble was elected in 1974 to serve in the Massachusetts House of Representatives (Yeager, 1999).

The researcher conducted a discourse analysis of all available newspaper stories covering the special election for the Texas House of Representatives District 51 seat in *TWT*, *Texan*, and *Statesman* from the moment Maxey announced his candidacy on January 3, 1991, to his swearing-in ceremony on March 7, 1991. The analysis did not focus on the quantity of content from each publication since the three publications had dissimilar publishing patterns. A total of 54 articles were analyzed for case study three. A complete inventory of those articles can be found in Table 3.

TABLE 3: AN INVENTORY OF MAXEY ARTICLES

	Field of Candidates Ballooned	**Special Election Round One**	**Special Election Round Runoff**	**"There's nothing to fear" as History Was Made**
	Jan. 4 – Jan. 25, 1991	Jan. 28 – Feb. 18, 1991	Feb. 19 – Mar. 1, 1991	Mar. 3 – Mar. 8, 1991
Total Articles in Statesman	9	6	8	4
Total Articles in Texan	8	7	6	2
Total Articles in TWT	1	1	1	1

Case study Four: First same-sex marriages in Texas.

The fourth time period includes news coverage from the first legally recognized same-sex marriage in Texas history on February 19, 2015, through the U.S. Supreme

Court decision on June 26, 2015, in *Obergefell v. Hodges* that legalized same-sex marriage in all states and territories. The flood of same-sex marriages across the U.S. ignited a backlash among conservative politicians who sought to prevent LGBT people from gaining more legal rights. Analyzing the media coverage surrounding same-sex marriage as the marriages became legalized provides a new avenue for communication scholars to understand the discourse of this controversial topic.

Texas witnessed its first legally recognized same-sex marriage months before the June 2015 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges*. On February 17, 2015, a Travis County judge found Texas' ban on same-sex marriages discriminatory and overturned it.[5] Following the ruling, another Travis County judge, in a separate, unrelated matter, ordered the local county clerk to issue a marriage certificate to Sarah Goodfriend and Suzanne Bryant. On February 19, 2015, the Travis County clerk issued a marriage license to Goodfriend and Bryant. A Jewish rabbi immediately married the couple—the first legally recognized same-sex couple in Texas' history.[6] That marriage ceremony happened as Texas lawmakers were convened for the 84th Session of the Texas Legislature. The legislative backlash against Goodfriend and Bryant's marriage was almost immediate. Texas lawmakers filed a record number of anti-LGBT bills, and LGBT activist organizations mobilized to fight the backlash (Wright, 2015). As the 84th Session of the Texas Legislature closed without passage of any significant anti-LGBT bills ("Unprecedented Anti-gay," 2015), marriage equality opponents and advocates turned their attention to the U.S. Supreme Court. On June 26, 2015, the Supreme Court issued a ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which overturned state bans on same-sex marriages. Between the first same-sex marriage in Texas and *Obergefell v. Hodges*'

Supreme Court ruling, an enormous amount of media coverage was generated in the *Statesman* and *Texan* regarding same-sex marriage. However, *Rag* and *TWT* were no longer in circulation. As a result, the researcher analyzed stories from *Observer*. The analysis does not focus on the quantity of content from *Statesman*, *Texan*, and *Observer* since the three publications had dissimilar publishing patterns. A total of 40 articles were analyzed for case study four. A complete inventory of those articles can be found in Table 4.

TABLE 4: AN INVENTORY OF MARRIAGE ARTICLES

	Texas' First Same-Sex Couple to Legally Marry	**The Battle "for the soul of Texas has begun"**	**"NOT JUST GAY… ECSTATIC!": Supreme Court Legalized Same-Sex Marriage**
	Jan. 19 – Feb. 24, 2015	Feb. 24 – May 28, 2015	Jun. 26 – Jun. 29, 2015
Total Articles in Statesman	3	13	7
Total Articles in Texan	3	1	1
Total Articles in Observer	1	10	1

CASE STUDY ONE FINDINGS: GAY LIBERATION DESCENDED UPON AUSTIN

The coverage centered on six clusters:

1) GLF sought campus recognition,

2) GLF denied campus recognition,

3) GLF hosted convention and pride event,

4) Gay Women's Liberation,

5) GLF confronted authority, and

6) GLF won official recognition.

GLF Sought Campus Recognition.

The first cluster of stories centered on GLF's early efforts to gain campus recognition. Between May 7 and November 2, 1970, five stories were published among *Rag*, *Texan*, and *Statesman*. On May 7, 1970, *Texan* was first to run an article covering GLF's efforts. The short, six-paragraph article was framed around details from GLF's second official meeting when members decided to attempt to gain status as an official UT student organization. In the lead, the reporter described GLF as a group which meets "to discuss mutual problems."[7] The article contains no quotes from GLF members, despite the fact that the reporter attended a meeting. One of the first articles concerning GLF from *Rag* published on May 18, 1970, stated: "Since it looks like Austin's homosexuals are deciding to come out, it seems to be a good idea to know something about what's going on in gay lib in other cities."[8] The article spanned an entire page and framed the coverage around an in-depth history of the gay movement. The article encouraged "people to come out and get together."[9]

On October 30, 1970, *Texan* ran another short, six-paragraph article that was framed around UT's Assistant Dean of Students Edwin Price's denial of GLF's bid to be recognized as an official student group. Dean Price stated that the organization "would encourage persons to accept homosexuality rather than to seek professional assistance."[10] After the administration denied GLF's official recognition for the second time, *Rag* published an article on November 2, 1970, authored by a GLF member who wrote, "If we are on campus, we can more effectively stimulate people to ask questions about their sexuality and about all those Judaeo-Christian [*sic*] sexual myths."[11] The article challenged the medical opinion that same-sex attraction was considered a "malady:"

> We think that physical attraction to members of one's own sex is a natural component of any human being, just as attraction to the opposite sex is. Both are potentially healthy and beautiful, and in a healthy culture both will find expression without shame or guilt.[12]

GLF Denied Campus Recognition.

The second cluster of stories centered on the activities leading up to UT's third rejection of GLF's status as a student organization. Between December 3, 1970, and January 17, 1971, a total of 13 stories were published. On December 3, 1970, the *Texan* ran a 14-paragraph story on the front page, which framed the coverage around details of a hearing in front of the Committee on Student Organization (CSO). CSO took up the case after GLF appealed the October 29th decision by the dean of students to deny the group's application. *Texan*'s article prominently featured quotes from university officials who testified against recognizing GLF. Dean Price repeated his claim that recognizing GLF "would encourage persons to accept homosexuality rather than to seek professional assistance."[13] University doctors were also concerned about allowing the group on campus, claiming GLF "would have an adverse effect on the sexually undecided."[14] The last paragraph of the story featured the only quote from a GLF member, Neal Parker:

> First, Gay Liberation people have a different idea about homosexuality and we would like an opportunity to present this idea to the public. We feel prejudice will go away if reason is used. Second, we wish to make this view known to homosexual people so that they may deal more effectively with the hostile environment.[15]

The *Statesman*'s CSO hearing coverage on December 3, 1970, mirrored the reporting from *Texan* in that the story was framed around "medical opinion" from campus doctors that "registration of gay liberation would discourage some people—especially the young and immature, such as new students—who may need counseling concerning their sexual identity or problems from seeking that professional help."[16] Parker's opinion was buried towards the bottom of the story as well. Parker was paraphrased as saying:

> …the atmosphere in Gay Lib meetings is not as sexual as it is in the gay bars. He said the meetings offer the only place homosexuals can meet people as people for conversation or friendship without the feelings of fear and repression society directs towards 'gays.'[17]

A *Texan* front-page article on December 9, 1970, proclaimed "Gay Lib Registration Won."[18] The group gained the ability to obtain a permit to operate a booth on campus after CSO agreed to recognize GLF. This article in *Texan* also featured the first photograph of GLF members. It was a picture of a male GLF member sitting at a table with a female leaning over the table signing a paper. The article prominently featured quotes from a variety of sources, including a GLF member.[19] On December 8, 1970, *Statesman* ran an article reporting how the CSO voted 7-2 to grant GLF status as a campus organization because CSO found no evidence supporting the administration's claim that GLF would be "detrimental" to student welfare. The article featured no direct quotes from GLF members involved in the case.[20]

After enjoying official recognition for a little more than 24 hours, on December 10, 1970, an in-depth story published in *Texan* reported how UT's President Ad Interim Bryce Jordan reversed CSO's ruling because he couldn't "give tacit approval" to an activity that would "bring discredit to the institution in the eyes of most of those interested in the University, including the taxpaying public."[21] This was "the third rebuke of Gay Liberation by the University administration."[22] *Texan*'s article prominently featured official sources excluding a direct quote from GLF. However, CSO's statement was partially included, which claimed that recognizing GLF as a student organization would have allowed those with "a predominately homosexual life style" to participate in group meetings where they can "reduce their sense of isolation and alienation."[23] *Statesman* also published an article that focused on Dr. Jordan's decision to overrule CSO's decision—denying GLF recognition for the third time. Again, the article has no direct quotes from GLF members—only quoting the attorney representing the students. And once again, the article was framed around the prevailing medical opinion from campus officials that GLF would be detrimental "to the normal development of some of its students, and is certain to bring discredit to the institution in the eyes of most of those interested in the university, including the taxpaying public."[24]

GLF Hosted Convention and Pride Event

The third cluster of coverage centered on GLF hosting two historic events: the National Gay Liberation Conference entitled "Who Are We?" and "Gay Pride Week."

Both events, a national conference of LGBT people and pride week, were a first in Texas history. Between February 16 and June 27, 1971, 11 stories were published.

The National Gay Liberation Conference was held in Austin March 25–28, 1971. *Rag*'s coverage of the conference included a first-person description, authored by a GLF member and published March 15, 1971, of the specific activities planned for the conference, which featured topics from sexism to law and educational reforms. *Rag* reported that the conference was "planned by and for gays," because "gay people cannot adequately deal with the vital questions affecting their lives in brief caucuses associated with other conventions."[25] The article acknowledged that, "Only a few women are active in Austin Gay Liberation; if very many Lesbians come, and we hope that they will, they will stay with movement women."[26] *Texan* also covered the planning stages of the conference, which included descriptions of how organizers hoped 500 gay people from all over the country would attend. The article included quotes from GLF member Parker who said the purpose of the conference was to "form a collective brotherhood."[27]

Texan's framing of the conference took on a different tone. In a March 28, 1971, article with the headline "Gay gathering similar to other conventions," the story was framed in a such a manner as to cast the conference as an oddity, as reflected in the lead: "Austin weathered its first national homosexual conference Thursday through Sunday that was, by observation, no different from the many conferences that meet here every month."[28] The article detailed how 200 people attended the conference to discuss identity, sexism, and war. GLF organizers and attendees were quoted in the story as were GLF members, including Jim Denny. Denny said, "Just getting together with people from all over the country and discussing the gay world is a fantastic success."[29] The article also reported on efforts of some members of GLF who wanted "to exclude nongay people"[30] from the meeting. That motion failed by Denny, the chairman of the meeting, who "requested that all straights leave voluntarily"[31] because their presence at the meeting was causing friction to develop.

Rag devoted an entire edition to Austin's first Gay Pride Week. The front page of the June 21, 1971, edition featured a drawing of two women holding hands and twirling—announcing a "Rally, Picnic and Gay Frolic."[32] Inside the edition, a nude male and female were pictured breaking handcuffs with the slogan: "Gay Brothers and Sisters Unite! Free Ourselves. Smash Sexism."[33] A detailed article featured specific details about the week's events. In addition, the article framed Pride Week as commemorating the Stonewall riots of June 28, 1969. The writer stated that "Gay pride thus indicates a whole new response of gay people to our oppression. It is both the result and the basis of our collective strength."[34] The article also announced the group's intention to march to the Texas State Capitol to "confront the government with our demands for an end to police harassment, for an end to the harassment of gay workers and GI's, for the repeal of the sodomy law and for the immediate release of all gay prisoners."[35]

On June 24, 1971, *Texan* published an article after GLF held a press conference to announce the state's first Gay Pride celebrations. The article reported that the pride celebrations would include a picnic, dance, and march and rally to the Texas State Capitol. GLF's intentions were clearly stated: end to police harassment, repeal of sodomy law, and release of gay prisoners. Similar to *Rag*, the article framed the event in the larger context of the burgeoning gay and lesbian rights movement by tying the event to the 1969 Stonewall riots.[36]

Statesman provided no coverage of the National Gay Liberation Conference but the newspaper did publish articles about Gay Pride Week. The day after GLF members marched to the Capitol, the newspaper ran an article with the headline "Texas Sodomy Laws Target of Gay Lib at Capitol Rally."[37] The article reported that 100 people attended the rally, "[c]arrying signs and chanting, the group called for the repeal of sodomy laws now enforced in Texas."[38] The article was framed around the repeal of the sodomy laws, not the other issues at the heart of the rally, as indicated by *Rag* and *Texan*. The article also reported "Neal Parker of 1620 W. 20th St., as one of the one of the principal speakers at Saturday's rally."[39] Another GLF organizer was identified and quoted in the story, but the individual's home address was not revealed. The article didn't connect the rally to the larger gay and lesbian civil rights movement.

Gay Women's Liberation

Two short stories encompass the fourth cluster. On June 21, 1971, and August 30, 1971, *Rag* published two stories about lesbians forming a subgroup within the larger Austin GLF. In the June article, the author announced the Gay Women's Liberation. The group's goal was to "create a bond of sisterhood. Because of the male dominance and unintentional male chauvinism of Austin's Gay Liberation, we felt the need to form a separate organization which would fulfill the unique needs of Gay women."[40] The group would meet with the GLF group and then separate themselves to conduct their own meeting. "Not only do we need Gay pride, but we need Lesbian pride." Two months later, another article was published that described "the experience one might encounter as a lesbian."[41] The article critiqued patriarchy and the pressure of "images from the straight male world. She encounters male oppression everywhere, a condition made worse by alienation from her heterosexual sisters."[42] The article promoted the Gay Women's Liberation as a means for men and women, both heterosexual and homosexual, "to be liberated from the social indoctrination of earning money, marrying, keeping the wife at home and making babies."[43]

GLF Confronted Authority

The fifth cluster of stories centered on what was supposed to be a GLF fundraiser to fund its federal lawsuit against UT to force the university to officially recognize the group. But what unfolded was a direct confrontation between GLF members and UT officials. Between June 29, 1971 , and March 14, 1972, a total of 15 articles were published.

On June 29, 1971, *Texan* was the first to announce GLF's intentions "to sue the University for damages in response to the University's refusal to recognize the organization on campus."[44] The newspaper reported that the GLF was raising funds to pay for an attorney and expected to file the lawsuit later in the year. On December 2, 1971, *Statesman* published an article when GLF filed suit in federal court "charging school officials abridged the homosexual group's rights to freedom of speech and assembly by refusing to register the group as a campus organization."[45]

In order to fund that legal defense, GLF partnered with UT's Student Government to host a fundraiser dance at the Texas Union Main Ballroom Friday, February 25, 1972. *Statesman* provided coverage leading up to the dance. On November 11, 1971, one of the first articles about the dance, with the headline "Gay Libs' UT Dance in Doubt," focused on how allowing the dance would violate UT's Chancellor Charles LeMaistre's "ruling denying gay lib status as a registered student organization."[46] The short article had quotes only from university officials and Student Body President Bob Binder. No GLF members were quoted, and the article didn't mention the group's assertion they had a constitutional right to access a student facility.

A week before the dance, *Rag* published an announcement encouraging individuals to attend Friday's event to "fight for the right to relate to one another as human beings rather than as outcasts of a corrupt system."[47] The dance was described as "a 'first' in Texas history."[48] A *Texan* article on February 25, 1972, featured numerous quotes from GLF organizers indicating they have a constitutional right to host the benefit. The article also anticipated a potential showdown between officials and students when the article quoted Student Body President Binder, "As long as the doors are open, unless they have campus police there, we're going in."[49] One volunteer was quoted saying, "If we get as far as the decorating and are asked to leave, we will not leave. We will refuse to go out."[50]

Statesman also anticipated a showdown between students and officials when, in an article on February 25, 1972, Binder was quoted, "If the ballroom is open, we'll have the dance there. If the doors are closed, we won't try to break them down. We'll move out to the Union Patio."[51]

The day after the dance, *Statesman* ran an article with the headline "Gay Libs Denied Ballroom; Five Arrested in Dispute."[52] The article reported that 100 students were at the scene. However, "[o]nly five remained after Assistant Chief William Purse notified the crowd it had 10 minutes to leave."[53] The five students were arrested and "charged with disrupting campus activity."[54] *Statesman* published the full names, ages, and home addresses of four of the students. The article offered a detailed explanation from UT's administration about why they canceled the event. Dean Duncan was quoted as claiming that "a series of speakers to include a testimonial from a Baptist minister's wife who would speak to her son's gayness and the crowning of a queen"[55] were reasons why the university canceled the event. These claims were disputed by GLF members.[6] The article only quoted university officials. A paraphrase was included from Student Body President Binder. No GLF voices were included. The article didn't assert GLF's constitutional claims. The article doesn't question police assertions. After the police removed the students from the ballroom, GLF held a dance at 10 p.m. on the patio of the Texas Union. The newspaper reported that "police estimated the crowd at between 300 and 100 persons."[56] Even though this may have been one of the earliest-known examples of gays and lesbians holding a public dance in Texas history, that information was relegated to the last paragraph of the article and not fully contextualized. No quotes from individuals who attended the dance were included.

On February 28, 1971, *Texan* ran a front-page article and picture. The article reported on the clash between officers and GLF members at the ballroom. The picture depicted two GLF members arrested by university police officers in a nearly empty ballroom. One GLF member appeared to be dragged by an officer. The other officer was depicted in the process of arresting another GLF member who was holding onto the hand of the GLF member on the ground. Other officers were standing around the scene watching the arrests unfold. "A 'Disruptive Activity'"[57] was the caption under the picture. The caption indicated that the pictured individual and "four other persons were arrested and charged with 'disruptive activity' when they refused to vacate the ballroom as ordered by officers."[58] The article listed the full names of all five individuals arrested in the protest. The article further proceeded to list the ages and addresses of four of the individuals. The fifth person's address was not listed because it wasn't available.

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[6] On February 28, 1972, in the article "Binder Blasts Cancellation," a *Texan* reporter paraphrased a GLF member's assertions that the allegations were false.

On February 28, 1972, *Rag* featured a front-page picture of two men happily dancing in what appears to be the Texas Union patio. Inside the publication, a GLF member wrote a first-person perspective titled "GLF Boogies Despite Arrests."[59] At 10 p.m., an impromptu dance proceeded outside on the Texas Union patio with "the Kampus Kops [*sic*] keeping a paternal watch on the Ballroom."[60] The article provided details from the GLF perspective. For example, the article reported how many individuals left the ballroom because they heard that campus police officers were arriving at 6 p.m.:

> … so people left to get things to eat, etc. and the campus cops did a very smart thing: when there were only a few of us left, they locked the doors and gave us 10 minutes to get out. We were told we were breaking a regents rule: disruptive activity or other.[61]

According to the articles, GLF members contemplated who was going to get arrested: "[w]e talked about reasons not to get arrested like the court case and all of us left but 5 who decided to get arrested."[62] The article reported how the five GLF members who were arrested were greeted by cheers as officers led them away. The article framed the arrests as a badge of honor: "I hope the crowd in the patio remembers the five folks who didn't make the boogie. And that the student body will rally to the support of five brave voices for student control of the 'Student' union."[63] Three photographs accompanied the article. Two of the photographs depicted campus officers arresting two GLF members, dragging one by his arms. A third photograph depicted five GLF members "before the bust." They were sitting in a circle within the ballroom. All appeared happy and smiling. Two of the members were waiving to the camera.[64]

Two weeks after the dance, *Rag* published an extensive first-hand account of the Texas Union confrontation—describing the situation as a "symbolic sacrifice of five men."[65] The article celebrated how GLF achieved its dance, outside instead of inside:

> At the dance that Friday night I felt alive and happy because I did not have to stand in some smokey [*sic*] bar of enclosed oppressive permission, because I could be in the open air and dance with my male friends, because I could kiss Joe on his lips and he could put his arms around me with straight people watching and seeing that this was me.[66]

The writer remarked how this well-attended public dance was a historic occasion that placed GLF "far head of the defunct Gay Lib East Coast and Gay Lib West Coast."[67] This dance was one of earliest public dances for the group that indicated to them that a real gay culture existed in Austin. Five photographs accompanied the article and were the only photographic coverage of the outside dance. All of the photographs depicted GLF members in various stages of dancing and standing around in a large crowd. One photograph depicted two men shirtless, dressed in loin cloths.[68]

GLF Won Official Recognition

This cluster of stories detailed the culmination of four years' worth of GLF legal and political efforts to gain official status. Between March 9 and March 26, 1974, ten stories were published. On March 23, 1974, *Statesman* ran an article with the headline "Gay Liberation Okayed as Organization at UT."[69] The article reported that U.S. District Judge Jack Roberts "ordered that the group of homosexuals be allowed to register as an official organization, 'subject to all the rules and regulations of the university'… as applied to all other registered organizations on campus."[70] The article never situated this moment in the context of gay and lesbian history—recognizing that this was the first gay student organization to be allowed on UT's campus. The article didn't mention whether or not UT officials admitted wrongdoing, although the judge ordered UT officials to pay the modest court costs. The short article contained information from GLF attorneys but no quotes from GLF members. UT officials were quoted in the story, explaining why they initially refused GLF recognition. On March 25, 1974, *Texan* published a similar article but included quotes from GLF member Parker, who at that time was a UT staff member. Parker said the members agreed to cease seeking monetary damages as "the American Civil Liberties Union picked up the case and provided the lawyers."[71] Three days later, *Texan* and *Statesman* reporters were on hand as GLF members officially submitted their organization's application to Dean Price. The article contains no quotes from GLF members. *Statesman*'s article was accompanied by a photograph that depicted two GLF officers, one of whom had a painted face, presenting their application. *Texan* only ran a picture on the front page that depicted a student leaning over a counter. This caption accompanied the photograph, "With his face painted red, white and blue to symbolize the American flag, Gay Liberation member Wendell Jones discusses the group's application to register as a campus organization Monday with Edwin Price, assistant dean of students."[72]

Summary

GLF started as a small group of individuals who came together to gain recognition from UT's administration. Early on, all three publications provided coverage as GLF hosted two historic events in Texas' history: the first national GLF conference and the first Pride celebrations in the state. The media coverage reflected the struggles that the group members faced, and many of those battles were in fact very public. When GLF appeared before the CSO hearing, *Texan* and *Statesman* provided extensive coverage of both the committee hearing details and the university president's subsequent rejection of the committee's findings. The denial of official recognition to GLF by UT's president set the stage for a confrontation at the Texas Union Main Ballroom, as the group attempted to host a fundraising dance. The press provided both extensive written and visual coverage that documented a historic moment for gay and lesbian people. Ultimately, GLF filed suit and a federal judge forced UT to officially recognize the group.

Case Study One Discussion

The media coverage surrounding GLF's path as a group that successfully struggled to gain equal access to UT as an officially recognized student group provides a rich corpus of archival newspaper stories that sheds light on how the mainstream and collegiate press participated in coverage that often marginalized and delegitimized the group of gay and lesbian students. The findings of this textual analysis helped paint a fuller picture of the efforts of the men and women who laid the foundation of the modern LGBT civil rights struggle. Not only are the findings of this research important in a historical context, but this qualitative analysis strengthens and expands the protest paradigm into the realm of gay and lesbian politics. The findings also support a new notion that collegiate journalists reflected similar reporting tactics compared with mainstream journalists. One unique finding suggests that mainstream journalists engaged in conduct that could be interpreted as "journalistic lynching."

Rag as advocate. From *Rag*'s first in-depth coverage of GLF, the coverage can best be described as direct advocacy, as demonstrated by this excerpt from May 18, 1970: "Here in the hypermasculine [*sic*] and hyperrepressive [*sic*] Texas environment, gay lib can serve as a forceful and effective element of radical change."[73] *Rag*'s reporting was mostly authored by journalists who identified themselves as GLF members and reflected a gay liberationist ideology of attempting to radically alter society. This textual analysis demonstrated that *Rag* provided LGBT people with in-depth historical information that situated GLF within the larger, burgeoning LGBT civil rights movement born out of the 1969 Stonewall riots. One example of this in-depth information is from a May 18, 1970, article. The lead read: "Since it looks like Austin's homosexuals are deciding to come out, it seems to be a good idea to know something about what's going on in gay lib in other cities."[74] The article spanned an entire page and framed the coverage around an in-depth history of the gay movement—information that was probably unavailable in most publications of the time.

As Streitmatter (1995) noted, the LGBT press was often times the only affirming source of information for LGBT people. However, in Austin in the early 70s, an LGBT press simply didn't exist. While *Texan* and *Statesman* and *Texan* circulated discourse that framed same-sex desire as a mental illness, *Rag* provided a countercultural narrative that affirmed homosexual feelings as "a natural component of any human being" and in a healthy culture both homosexual and heterosexual desires "will find expression without shame or guilt."[75] Since Austin's gay and lesbian community was excluded from the larger public sphere (Araiza, 2014), they relied on subaltern counterpublics—"parallel discursive arenas" (Fraser, 1990, p. 67)—such as *Rag* to gain a deeper understanding of themselves and a historical contextualization of the larger gay and lesbian civil rights movement. As this research demonstrated, *Rag* was a conduit for GLF to spread its own narrative, which reflected a gay liberationist ideology. *Rag* editors supported GLF as the group constructed counterdiscourses that challenged authority and allowed GLF members to circulate those discussions through the liberal magazine. After GLF members held the first public dance on UT's campus, a *Rag* journalist wrote on March 6, 1972:

> At the dance that Friday night I felt alive and happy because I did not have to stand in some smokey [*sic*] bar of enclosed oppressive permission, because I could be in the open air and dance with my male friends.[76]

University police arrested five students at the dance. While *Texan* framed the arrest of the five GLF members as a "disruptive activity,"[77] *Rag* framed them as heroes who were engaged in "symbolic sacrifice,"[78] an act of civil disobedience to further the gay liberationist cause. *Rag*'s photographic coverage of the Texas Union ballroom arrests also provided a more complex view of the situation. While *Texan*'s photographic coverage only depicted the students arrested, framing them as troublemakers, *Rag* showed similar photographs but added another perspective. A third photograph within *Rag*'s coverage captured the moment before officers arrested the five GLF members. The photograph depicted the five, sitting around the ballroom in a circle, smiling and waving to the camera. By the inclusion of this photograph, *Rag,* intentionally or not, refuted *Texan*'s framing of GLF members as deviant troublemakers. In this unique photograph, GLF members were presented as passive and happy students, seemingly enjoying each other's company, before campus officers arrested them and dragged them out of the ballroom.

***Statesman* protecting status quo.** The findings of this research strengthened the notion that mainstream media institutions protect the "status quo" (Gans, 1979) and adopt positions that marginalize and disparage protest groups (Gitlin, 1980). This textual analysis also extended the protest paradigm into the coverage of gay and lesbian people. One of the most shocking findings was that both *Texan* and *Statesman* appeared to have participated in a journalism practice that has been labeled "journalistic lynching" (Alwood, 1996).

Statesman marginalized GLF by framing group members as sexual deviants, which strengthen Fejes and Petrick's (1993) findings that mainstream media institutions framed homosexuality as an illness and perversion. McLeod and Hertog (1999) describe how mainstream media marginalized protest groups by accentuating "the deviance of protesters from the mainstream public" (p. 319). One example is how *Statesman*'s first GLF story on December 3, 1970, framed the issue around medical testimony from university doctors who described GLF as detrimental to the "sexually undecided"[79] students. The reporter also included a quote from a GLF leader who said "the atmosphere in Gay Lib meetings is not as sexual as it is in the gay bars."[80] Rather than focus on how GLF offered an opportunity to stimulate discussions about sexuality and religious "sexual myths" and to circulate "different ideas about homosexuality" in the hopes that "prejudice will go away if reason is used,"[81] the reporter chose to sexualize the group. GLF was further framed as deviant during *Statesman*'s coverage of the first Gay Pride celebrations in Texas history. GLF protesters marched to the Texas Capitol in June 1971. *Rag* and *Texan* both published the intentions of GLF protesters—an end to police harassment, the elimination of workplace discrimination, release of gay prisoners, and repeal of the state's sodomy law. Instead of focusing on the list of GLF demands, *Statesman* wrote an article with the headline: "Texas Sodomy Laws Target of Gay Lib at Capitol Rally."[82] Nowhere in the article were the GLF protesters' full demands stated. By excluding positions that could probably be shared by readers (McLeod & Hertog, 1999) (e.g., fairness in the workplace and elimination of police harassment), the journalists choose to frame the story around a sexual act—further marginalizing GLF and thus placing the group farther outside the bounds of the mainstream. Instead of representing the interests of an oppressed minority group, *Statesman* journalists' coverage, as demonstrated by this analysis, reflected the "powerful interests in society" (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 224) that at the time believed LGBT people were sexual deviants.

Statesman also delegitimized GLF by neglecting to feature the opinions of gays and lesbians as being on equal footing with UT administrators. McLeod and Hertog (1999) wrote that "a group seeking social change must establish itself as a legitimate voice in public discourse" (p. 319). One means to accomplish legitimacy is for journalists to directly quote protest leaders in stories. Much of the time, *Statesman* omitted direct quotes from GLF members. A March 1974 article exemplifies this type of coverage. As the student group won the right to be on campus, *Statesman* never included direct quotes from GLF members. Instead, the newspaper continued to run quotes and paraphrases from university officials justifying their exclusion of GLF because it would negatively affect the "sexually undecided."[83] *Statesman*'s coverage universally omitted quotes and information from GLF members that would have situated GLF's efforts in context of the burgeoning gay liberationist ideology ignited after the 1969 Stonewall riots. *Rag* provided historical context, while *Texan* had little of it. By not situating GLF in historical context, it could have appeared to the mainstream audience in Austin that GLF was simply a local anomaly, with no connection to a national movement. For example, as GLF was engaging in the first Gay Pride march in Texas history, *Statesman* failed to provide any historical context, instead focusing on the group's efforts to repeal a sodomy law. Also, after university police shut down the GLF dance at the Union Ballroom, the students proceeded to move to the Union's patio to hold their dance. In addition, *Statesman* buried details of the event towards the bottom of a February 26, 1972, article and wrote that 400 people attended the dance. This event appears to be the first gay and lesbian public dance in Texas history ("Side by side," n.d.). However, *Statesman* did not include quotes, nor does the publication situate the dance in historical context**.**

***Texan* and *Statesman* engaging in "journalistic lynching."** One of GLF's demands was an end to police and employer harassment. GLF members lived at a time when assuming a homosexual identity continued to be "heavily stigmatized by the overwhelming weight of cultural opinion" (D'Emilio, 2002, p. 33). Violence against gays and lesbians was common and oftentimes condoned by authorities (Streitmatter, 1995). Despite the hostile and homophobic environment, *Texan* and *Statesman* published the names and street addresses of GLF members**.** On February 28, 1971, *Texan* ran a front-page article and picture reporting the clash between officers and GLF members as they attempted to hold a dance at the Texas Union. The article listed the full names of all five individuals arrested in the protest. The article further proceeded to list the ages and addresses of four of the individuals. *Statesman* also reported the home address of a GLF organizer who organized a protest at the steps of the Texas State Capitol on June 27, 1971. GLF members were protesting the harassment and discrimination from police officers, government officials, and employers. While this research found only a few examples of this practice, it raises the question, were the reporters trying to intimidate or elicit community harassment of the GLF leaders? Alwood (1996) discussed mainstream journalists' practice of publishing the home addresses of gay and lesbian leaders. As police in major metropolitan areas in the 1950s were rounding up suspected homosexuals, mainstream journalists

> … fed the antigay hysteria by publishing the names of the men arrested, along with their addresses and the names of their employers, which in some cases

amounted to journalist lynching. The publicity cost many of them their jobs and in some cases their homes. (Alwood, 1996, p. 26)

While *Texan* and *Statesman* articles did not publish the activist's employment information, it was clear that employers could easily identify the men. A brief review of articles of *Texan* and *Statesman*'s coverage of other campus protest groups does not indicate that the newspaper routinely published the full names and addresses of protest leaders.

***Texan* reflecting the mainstream.** While existing research suggests that university newspapers were historically "self-conscious" (Cain, 2012, p. 27) by supporting ideas counter to campus administrators, such as desegregation (Edmondson & Perry, 2010), this research demonstrated that *Texan*'s coverage at times aligned with *Statesman*'s treatment of GLF.

The early GLF coverage in *Texan* mostly included information that framed the group as deviants. One example can be found in the first article published on May 7, 1970, describing the group's meetings as a venue "to discuss mutual problems,"[84] perpetuating the stereotype that gays were somehow troubled and suffering from a mental illness. *Texan* omitted information that could have portrayed the group as individuals who are mobilizing together to fight institutionalized discrimination. *Texan* continued the marginalization coverage when GLF held their first national conference in Austin. The reporter covering the conference reported on March 28, 1971, that "Austin weathered its first national homosexual conference Thursday through Sunday."[85] This article highlighted the "deviance" of the conference attendees and offered further proof that the coverage aligned with the protest paradigm. The article utilized a metaphor to describe how the city of Austin dodged "a potential natural disaster," through the use of the phrase "weathered its first national homosexual conference."[86] Another example of marginalization tactics was found in *Texan*'s stories about the CSO hearing. A December 3, 1970, article was framed around the campus doctor's testimony about how the GLF group would negatively affect students "who are still concerned with their sexuality"[87]—similar to *Statesman*'s article about the same event. Furthermore, *Texan* never questioned police tactics of forcibly removing students from the Union Ballroom, instead, highlighting GLF's behavior as "disruptive activity."[88] *Texan* also never situated the Union dance in a larger context: Has the university ever denied access to another student organization? How does this one issue connect to a larger struggle for gay civil rights? *Texan*'s coverage of the ballroom dance casts the event as an isolated incident—rather than a larger struggle among gay and lesbian people to gain equal access to public accommodations and, at the same time, challenge the status quo.

Texan's coverage did not completely align with *Statesman*'s reporting, as it didn't entirely delegitimize GLF members by excluding their quotes. Articles leading up to the Texas Union dance contained quotes from individuals affiliated with GFL. While covering the same topic, *Statesman* wholly omitted quotes from GLF members. However, when GLF quotes were included in *Texan*, oftentimes the information was buried near the end of the story. During coverage of the CSO hearing, *Texan* featured numerous quotes from the administration and doctors who claimed GLF would harm students. Out of the 14-paragraph article, the only quote from a GLF member was included in the very last paragraph. The GLF articles also placed the group within a historic context. For example, in June 1971, *Texan* published an article about GLF's first Gay Pride celebrations. The article, similar to *Rag*'s coverage, placed Austin's event in the larger context of the burgeoning gay and lesbian rights movement by tying the event to the historical significance of the 1969 Stonewall riots.

Conclusion. Both *Texan* and *Statesman* participated in coverage that marginalized GLF's early efforts. The newspapers framed the group in terms of medical testimony that suggested gays and lesbians were mentally ill and deviant. This research documented how the collegiate press conformed to disparaging reporting tactics reflected in the mainstream press, despite the fact that existing research suggested that college newspapers took a stance on issues that were against the mainstream. Also, *Texan* and *Statesman* engaged in reporting tactics that could be interpreted as harassment by publishing the names and home addresses of some GLF members. This analysis also strengthened the protest paradigm by illustrating how gay and lesbians were treated in a similar fashion to other groups that were battling the status quo

CASE STUDY TWO FINDINGS: TEXAS' PROPOSAL TO QUARANTINE "INCORRIGIBLE" AIDS VICTIMS

The coverage of the Texas quarantine proposal centered on four clusters:

1) Texas fought AIDS with confinement,

2) *Statesman* found a new villain,

3) Texas took initial step to quarantine "incorrigibles," and

4) Texas dropped quarantine proposal.

5) Texas Fought AIDS With Confinement

Texas Fought AIDS with Confinement

This cluster of stories detailed how Texas Health Commissioner Robert Bernstein planned to slow the growing number of individuals becoming infected with AIDS. Between October 22 and November 15, 1985, a total of five stories were published. On October 22, 1985, *Texan* and *Statesman* were first to publish stories about Commissioner Bernstein's proposal to quarantine AIDS victims who "pose a health threat to the community."[89] *Statesman* reported that Commissioner Bernstein was seeking approval from the Texas Board of Health, which had the power to list diseases that warrant quarantine. At that time, those diseases included "diphtheria, cholera, plague and syphilis," to name a few.[90] Both articles were nearly identical, as the byline indicated that the articles were compiled from an *AP* report. The article omitted information on how some people with AIDS, in fact, posed a threat—until the last half of the story where a line described how state officials "have wrestled with how to handle AIDS suffers who refuse to refrain from sexual activities that can spread the disease."[91] What exactly were those sexual activities? Both articles contained information about how officials in San

Antonio, Texas, issued warnings to 17 men with AIDS that "they could face criminal prosecution if they don't refrain"[92] from sexual activity. Who were those men? What activity were they participating in? The articles never fully explained. However, *Texan* included additional information that Houston "officials recently had trouble with an AIDS victim who, for a time, defied orders to avoid sexual contact."[93] Who exactly was this person in Houston? Once again, the article failed to provide more information. *Statesman*'s article reported that the disease "is most likely to strike homosexuals, abusers of injectable drugs and hemophiliacs. It apparently can be spread by sexual contact, contaminated needles and blood transfusions."[94] The phrase "sexual contact" was never fully explained.

Both *Texan* and *Statesman* published a story on November 8, 1985, reporting that Texas Governor Mark White supported the quarantine. *Texan* framed the story around Governor White's comments delivered during his weekly news conference. Governor White said, "[t]o the extent that any disease causes imminent threat to the spread of that disease to other persons, I think that quarantine would be appropriate."[95] However, halfway through the story, the reporter included: "[m]ost scientists say AIDS cannot be transmitted through casual contact but only though the exchange of bodily fluids, such as by sexual contact, sharing needles and blood transfusion."[96] "Bodily fluids" and "sexual contact" were never contextualized. The article repeated the state's justification, "San Antonio and Houston health officials recently have had problems with AIDS sufferers who refused to stop having sex."[97] The article attempted to strike a balance by including a quote from the legal director of the Texas Civil Liberties Union who opposed the plan. No quotes from AIDS victims were included.

Statesman's story was solely framed around Governor White's support of the quarantine. The article echoed White's "imminent threat" assertion. *Statesman* omitted quotes from organizations and individuals who opposed the quarantine, despite the fact that those opposing views were included in a previously published article. Unlike *Texan*, which included information to further describe AIDS transmission, Statesman omitted that information altogether. Statesman continued the general claim that AIDS "most likely" strikes homosexuals and is "spread by sexual contact."[98] In the final paragraph, the story included "[s]o far, about 700 cases of AIDS have been reported in Texas."[99]

***Statesman* Found a New Villain**

Two *Statesman* stories centered on introducing a new threat to the public. Approximately five days after Governor White held a press conference where he announced his support of the quarantine, *Statesman* ran two stories that highlighted how state officials planned to handle children who were suffering from AIDS. The first story, published on November 13, 1985, was framed around the beliefs of both Commissioner Bernstein and Education Commissioner William Kirby that there was "little danger"[100] in allowing children with AIDS into public schools. However, Bernstein and Kirby recommended "that children be kept out of the classroom if they lack proper toilet training, have open sores or have exhibited aggressive behavior like biting."[101] Within the story, *Statesman* included how "the illness cannot be transmitted through casual contact and that it is spread only by intimate sexual relations or blood contact."[102] What were those "sexual relations"? What was the process by which "blood contact" occurred? The article failed to contextualize this.

Statesman did acknowledge that "No cases of AIDS or conditions associated with the disease have been reported in any school-aged children in Texas."[103] The newspaper reported that "six children in Texas, all under the age of 13 are known to have contracted the disease."[104] Instead of focusing on the extreme unlikelihood of a child spreading AIDS within a school environment, *Statesman* normalized and justified the state's fear of AIDS transmitted through school environments by reporting how a school district in Indiana prohibited an AIDS-positive child from attending public school. The story further justified the state's guidelines by reporting how state officials were concerned with "a recent case in Houston, where a male prostitute with AIDS threatened to continue engaging in sexual activities with strangers."[105] No opinions from opposing sides were included in this article.

Two days later on November 15, 1985, *Statesman* published an *AP* story with the headline "AIDS testing okayed for delinquents housed by Youth Commission."[106] The story reported that "two youths in custody of the youth commission have been determined to be carriers of a virus that often develops into AIDS."[107] State officials announced that "any youth found to suffer from AIDS would be allowed to remain in regular programs unless the child became a threat, such as a child who was an aggressive homosexual."[108] What exactly was an "aggressive homosexual?" The story failed to contextualize this negative phrase. The article used vague language to describe how children were spreading the illness, "[t]he policy, unanimously approved by the commission, is aimed at testing wards who have engaged in activities linked to acquired immune deficiency syndrome. Doctors say AIDS can be spread by homosexual activity or sharing needles used to inject drugs."[109] What exactly is "homosexual activity?" The article failed to provide context. The article did include information that may lead the reader to understand the remote nature of AIDS in youths. The story detailed how across the country "68 AIDS cases have been confirmed among males age 13-19… One is in

Texas, and that person is not in custody of the Texas Youth Commission."[110] No quotes from those who might have opposed the new rules were included.

Texas Took Initial Steps to Quarantine "Incorrigibles"

This cluster of stories detailed the state's initial activities and public meetings to begin implementing the quarantine proposal. Between November 26 and December 20, 1985, a total of seven stories were published. On November 26, 1985, *Statesman* framed a story around how Commissioner Bernstein planned to meet with "leaders of gay organizations from across the state"[111] to discuss the quarantine. The article only contained quotes from Bernstein, who said the meeting's intention was to describe how the quarantine would be used in unique situations "and without a lot of abuse of civil rights."[112] The short story provided no quotes or information from leaders of those gay organizations.

The next day, November 27, 1985, *Texan* and *Statesman* reported on the meeting but omitted quotes from the gay leaders who attended the meeting. *Texan*'s article described how state officials met with gay community leaders to explain how "incorrigible"[113] AIDS patients would be isolated in hospitals. AIDS patients who were not sick and "behaving irresponsibly"[114] were to be jailed. A violation of the quarantine would have resulted in an AIDS victim facing a "third degree felony, punishable by a $5,000 fine and up to 10 years in prison"[115]—a time period that was substantially longer than the average life span of an AIDS patient at the time. *Texan* reported that "[g]ay community leaders who attended Tuesday's meeting supported isolating 'incorrigible' AIDS victims."[116] However, that assertion was attributed to Bernstein, not gay community leaders, as the newspaper reported that "[g]ay community leaders who attended the meeting were unavailable for comment."[117] *Statesman*'s article omitted quotes or opinions from the "25 gay leaders."[118] The only reference to gay leaders' opinions was filtered through Bernstein, who said none of the gay leaders expressed "any real opposition to the idea of the isolation power."[119]

This Week in Texas (*TWT*) ran its first story about the quarantine in the December 6, 1985 issue. The reporter actually covered the story from the perspective of someone who attended the meeting, as "*TWT* News was privileged to be among those invited to a special two-hour closed-door meeting."[120] While *Statesman* reported that Bernstein said he met with 25 "gay leaders," *TWT* reported that "[a]bout 40 gay leaders, doctors and public health officials"[121] attended the meeting. *TWT* reported information that portrayed the Texas gay and lesbian community working in unison to stop the state from instituting the quarantine. *TWT*'s story indicated that when discussing the quarantine "[a]ll gay leaders strongly urged the state health department to avoid such emotional action."[122] *TWT* reported that the quarantine "would drive the gay community underground in their search for confidential medical treatment."[123]

On December 15, 1985, *Statesman* covered the Texas Board of Health's first vote to support the plan "to isolate AIDS patients whose 'incorrigible' behavior might spread infection."[124] This vote was the first step in approving the policy, which required a second vote a month later following a public comment period. This story featured the first photograph associated with the quarantine topic—a small black-and-white photograph of Bernstein who appeared to be testifying in front of the committee. The reporter framed the majority of the story around Bernstein's justification for proposing the quarantine. Opinions of "gay leaders" or the "gay community" were omitted from the story. However, the reporter included a quote from Dr. Phil Richardson of Austin who didn't agree with the policy, claiming that "isolating AIDS patients would cause persons… not to seek medical treatment" because they were "desperately frightened of being exposed publically" and "proper education about the way to prevent the transmission of AIDS"[125] would better stop the spread of it.

TWT covered the same hearing. Instead of using the term "incorrigibles" to describe those who were the target of the quarantine, *TWT* used "those individuals who remain promiscuous in spite of the fact that they"[126] tested positive for AIDS. The story provided a more detailed example of the individuals who Bernstein believed were a threat to public safety; "[h]e cited a Fort Worth man who had syphilis seven times and also was positive to the AIDS virus test. The man said he still wanted to frequent gay bathhouses and remains sexually active."[127] This story also added the perspective of the Lesbian Gay Rights Advocates (LGRA) who lobbied against the quarantine proposal. The story indicated that gay leaders "are not opposed to isolating those persons who refuse to stop having sex and spreading the disease."[128] However, the article quoted a member of LGRA who said "[w]e are very concerned about the possible abuses. We want this rule to be very tightly drawn so that everyone understands when it can be used and why it should be used."[129] Gay and lesbian lobbyists expressed concern that local authorities "have no understanding on where to draw the line on AIDS unless there is to be some very explicit education programs."[130] The article was the first instance in this analysis where the exact details of a gay Houston prostitute's story was revealed. The story reported that "Houston health authorities found they did not have the authority to quarantine AIDS patient Fabian Bridges after he refused to refrain from alleged prostitution on the streets of Montrose. He later died of the disease and was buried at the local government's expense."[131]

In an article that preceded *TWT*'s coverage of the Texas Board of Health's first vote to support the quarantine, the newspaper published an associated story that provided a numeric accounting of the AIDS epidemic in Texas and drew comparisons to San Francisco. The article's headline read "AIDS LEVELS OFF IN TEXAS."[132] The article reported that "To date, Texas accounts for less than 5% of all AIDS cases—a figure that has not grown in the past year" and "the dramatic expansion of the AIDS epidemic among gay men has ended."[133] The article featured a chart that reported there were 125 new cases of AIDS in Texas in 1983. In 1984, health officials reported 314 new cases of AIDS in Texas. By 1985, the new cases totaled 352.[134] The article omitted the total number of AIDS cases in Texas.

Texas Dropped Quarantine Proposal.

Commissioner Bernstein had one more step to take before the proposal could have been adopted as an official state policy. Bernstein and the state Board of Health were required to hear public comments. That public hearing was held on January 13, 1986. Between January 10 and February 1, 1986, a total of nine stories were published. TWT ran a story on January 10, 1986, previewing the hearing. The article was framed around the concerted efforts of "statewide gay leaders"[135] who organized various advocates (including doctors, policy experts, and lawyers) to speak against the proposal. While TWT's article situated the effort as an indication of the gay community working together to address an issue, Statesman ran a similar preview that omitted references to statewide mobilization efforts. Statesman's article from January 12, 1989, had the headline "Professionals to speak against AIDS isolation."[136] The lead describes how gay activists assembled "a group of doctors, lawyers and AIDS counselors to protest efforts by"[137] the state health commission. The article omits any quotes from gay activists and the doctors and lawyers on their side. There are two quotes within the story. Both were from Commissioner Bernstein.

On January 14, 1986, Texan ran a story covering the public hearing. The headline read: "AIDS quarantine defended as 'last resort.'"[138] This article featured a small black-and-white picture of Bernstein situated in front of several microphones. While the headline focused on Bernstein's position, the article contained several direct quotes from quarantine opponents who encouraged the Board of Health to launch a public education campaign to inform adults how to avoid contracting AIDS, instead of confining "'incorrigible' AIDS patients."[139] Statesman covered the same hearing and published a similar article. Despite the article acknowledging that "two dozen doctors, lawyers and gay activists"[140] attended the public hearing, the only gay activist quoted was included in the last paragraph of the story. Within Statesman's article, it was reported that "[a]bout 90 percent of the 16,000 cases in the U.S. involve gay males and intravenous drug users."[141]

Three days later, on January 17, 1986, Texan and Statesman ran articles announcing how Bernstein asked the Board of Health to abandon the quarantine proposal. Texan ran a front-page article that was framed around Bernstein's justification for dropping the plan: "[w]e consider the relationship between this department and the gay community important—vital—in attempting to influence AIDS in the proper direction… That relationship would suffer out of all proportion to the value gained."[142] A quote from a member of the Austin AIDS Project was included in the last paragraph of the story. The spokesperson was pleased that "Commissioner Bernstein has seen fit to refer this to the Texas Department of Health's AIDS Task Force."[143] Statesman's article also ran on the front page and featured a picture of Commissioner Bernstein. Similar to Texan, Statesman buried quotes from "homosexuals" in the last section of the story.

On the same day that Texan and Statesman published stories announcing Bernstein withdrawing his quarantine plan, TWT published an out-of-date story about the public hearing from the previous week. TWT's story was notable, as it was framed around the subheadline "Opposition to Quarantining AIDS Patients is Increasing."[144] Unlike Texan and Statesman, TWT's coverage featured quotes only from individuals opposed to the plan.

After tentatively approving the plan and conducting a public hearing to gather input, the Texas Board of Health agreed with Commissioner Bernstein by voting unanimously on January 31, 1986, to abandon the quarantine. TWT ran a story celebrating the decision and framing the moment as a major victory for the gay community: "TEXAS WON'T QUARANTINE AIDS/ ISOLATION PLAN MEETS ROADBLOCK/ Gay Community's Loud Lobby Effort Pays Off Handsomely."[145] The story took a celebratory tone as the reporter stated, "Obviously, all the hard work put in by this state's gay leaders, the letters of protest written by anti-quarantine experts, the trips to the state Capitol to testify at the hearings and the overwhelming outcry of doctors resulted in the plan being dumped."[146] The story alerted readers to Bernstein's feelings that the state still "needed to control irresponsible AIDS patients"[147] somehow. Statesman's story was entirely framed around Bernstein's justification to no longer pursue the policy. Statesman also included how Bernstein "might ask the 1987 legislature to approve an 'omnibus-type public health threat' law that would allow health officials to quickly isolate 'incorrigible' victims of contagious, dangerous diseases such as AIDS."[148]

Summary. Health Commissioner Bernstein's proposal to quarantine some "incorrigible" AIDS victims came at a time when panic was spreading across the nation. As the country debated how to stop the spread of AIDS, Texas health officials sought to criminalize the sexual behavior of some AIDS patients and quarantine them within hospital wards or confine them to jail long enough to die within a state cell. While state officials attempted to convince the public to support their stance and opponents of the quarantine tried to fight the quarantine, the debate sparked a large amount of press attention. The Texas quarantine issue hit the headlines, as the media was beginning to ramp up coverage of AIDS in the wake of Rock Hudson's death from the virus. Ultimately, Commissioner Bernstein withdrew the quarantine proposal. While the quarantine was debated in later years, it was never codified into state law or policy.

Case Study Two Discussion

The qualitative analysis of media coverage around Texas health officials' proposal to criminalize the sexual behavior of some AIDS patients and quarantine them within hospital wards or confine them to jail long enough to die within a state cell extends the protest paradigm into the realm of one of the deadliest time periods for gay men. Texan and Statesman continued to engage in a pattern of coverage that marginalized and delegitimized gay men who were infected with AIDS. This case study strengthens the notion that mainstream media institutions and, to a certain extent, a collegiate newspaper protect the "status quo" and adopt positions that are hostile to groups protesting authority. However, unlike the previous case study, TWT did not provide a full counternarrative that would have informed readers about the plight of AIDS patients. TWT significantly lagged behind the mainstream media and disseminated out-of-date information. However, TWT remained an important avenue for opponents of the quarantine to disseminate their perspective and provide context to the growth of the epidemic.

***TWT:* Excluding victims and late to the debate.** *TWT* stories about the quarantine were never framed around how the seclusion or jailing of some AIDS victims would affect those individuals. *TWT*'s stories about the quarantine omitted opinions, quotes, names, and photographs of those who were infected with the virus, a finding that mirrors *Texan* and *Statesman*'s coverage. However, there's an important difference among all three publications. *TWT*'s stories were situated within a gay magazine. The quarantine stories were surrounded by other stories that were usually targeted towards gay men—women were generally omitted from the articles. In essence, *TWT* readers could consume a variety of stories about gay men, while *Texan* and *Statesman* readers read about gay men only within any coverage of AIDS.

While this textual analysis focused only on articles about the AIDS quarantine, the researcher searched *TWT* to learn about other content that readers would have encountered to gain a deeper understanding of how AIDS victims were included or omitted. The topics within *TWT* ranged from news to erotica—similar to other gay publications from across the country. The researcher could not locate any in-depth stories that featured photographs, names, and/or personal stories of individuals living with AIDS. This is a striking finding as Streitmatter (1995) noted how the gay and lesbian press "had always defined itself as a form of journalism committed to personalizing the news" (p. 263). Newspapers like *New York Native* and *San Francisco Sentinel* were at the forefront of AIDS coverage by offering in-depth stories that introduced readers to individuals who were infected with the virus (Streitmatter, 1995). While this analysis was not exhaustive by any means, readers who consumed only selected *TWT* newspapers saw a constructed reality that omitted the perspective and the pain and suffering from AIDS victims. *TWT* did provide a wide variety of stories about AIDS—from the latest medical advancements to information about funeral homes that discriminated against AIDS victims. In all these stories, the perspective of AIDS patients was absent. For example, when *TWT* reported on the latest medical advancements, the story only included quotes and information from doctors. *TWT*'s coverage mirrored the practices of mainstream journalists who "were talking to the doctors, not to their patients, who had the disease" (Kinsella, 1989, p. 52).

While it's clear from this analysis that *TWT*'s stories were framed around the perspective of gay people, the publication was an unreliable source of information. The first story published in *TWT* regarding the quarantine was more than a month after *Texan* and *Statesman* broke the news. In addition, readers could not turn to *TWT* for the most up-to-date information. On January 17, 1986, *Texan* and *Statesman* ran stories announcing Commissioner Bernstein's plan to drop the quarantine proposal. On that same day, *TWT* published a story describing the Board of Health hearing from the previous week, instead of Bernstein abandoning his proposal. This finding is interesting within the context of Streitmatter's (1995) findings that some gay publications were at the forefront of reporting on AIDS by scooping the mainstream press, providing audience members with the most up-to-date and accurate information. In terms of the reporting on the quarantine, *TWT* significantly lagged behind *Texan* and *Statesman*, never scooping mainstream media. As communication scholars have previously noted, the alternative press was often utilized by members of the community to circulate information to mobilize political action (Anderson, 2007; Bullock, 2011). However, if Texas gay community leaders relied on *TWT* as a primary source to provide accurate and up-to-date information to coordinate a statewide campaign, their campaign would have suffered.

***TWT:* Contextualizing the epidemic.** While the larger public sphere in the form of the mainstream media participated in practices that marginalized and demonized gay people, the findings of this research strengthened the notion that gay publications were "parallel discursive arenas" (Fraser, 1990, p. 67) that fostered an environment where gay people could obtain a deeper understanding of the larger lesbian and gay civil rights movement and, in respect to this case study, the AIDS epidemic. *TWT* indeed conforms to Streitmatter's (1995) findings that gay publications from across the U.S. provided an affirming source of information to gay and lesbian people. *TWT* generally framed stories around the perspective of gay community leaders. When Commissioner Bernstein called a meeting in December 1985 to meet with members of the gay community, *Texan* and *Statesman* delegitimized gay voices by omitting quotes and opinions from those gay community members, despite the fact that the story was supposed to be about gays meeting with Commissioner Bernstein to discuss the quarantine. In fact, *Texan* and *Statesman* suggested that gay community leaders actually supported the quarantine proposal—a fact both publications directly attributed to Commissioner Bernstein's interpretation of the meeting. However, *TWT* informed its readers, contrary to *Texan* and *Statesman*, that "[a]ll gay leaders strongly urged the state health department to avoid such emotional action."[149]

TWT provided readers with information that situated the opposition within a historical context. Throughout the time period of this case study, *TWT*'s coverage referenced the Texas gay community as coordinating a lobbying effort that eventually succeeded in stopping the quarantine. *TWT*'s framing gave the readers an indication that there was actually a community of gay people attempting to assert themselves to influence policy change. *Texan* and *Statesman*'s coverage omitted references to gay organizations successfully working in unison to oppose the quarantine, framing the opposition as a disconnected group of organizations. The exclusion of frames highlighting the gay community's mobilization efforts marginalized the movement by downplaying "the size and effectiveness" (McLeod & Hertog, 1999, p. 319) of the protest group. By failing to situate the gay community's statewide mobilization effort to beat the quarantine, it could have reinforced audience member's perception that gay people were deviants, unable to fully participate in society.

TWT also provided reporting that countered the hysteria within mainstream media by providing numerical information to contextualize the AIDS epidemic in Texas. On December 20, 1985, *TWT* reported that Texas accounted "for less than 5% of all AIDS cases—a figure that has not grown in the past year"[150] and was apparently leveling off. The article featured a chart to indicate that in 1985 the new cases totaled 352, but it did exclude the total number of existing AIDS cases.[151] *Texan* and *Statesman* generally failed to consistently include reporting on numeric descriptions of AIDS cases in Texas. Within the data for this case study, both *Texan* and *Statesman* generally omitted reporting that would have informed the mass audience about the scope of the AIDS epidemic. Instead, *Statesman* chose to feature information that indicated "[a]bout 90 percent of the 16,000 cases in the U.S. involve gay males and intravenous drug users."[152] Reporting such a large number, without any contextual information specified for Texas, could leave the reader with the impression that thousands of new AIDS cases were being identified in Texas—feeding the hysteria sweeping across the U.S.

***Texan* and *Statesman*: Delegitimizing and demonizing AIDS victims.** *Statesman* provided the most up-to-date coverage of the quarantine proposal as the issue was debated by policy makers and protested by the gay community. However, the publication's coverage was deeply problematic. It delegitimized and demonized people with AIDS. The newspaper even resurrected a common stereotype from the 1950s. The findings strengthened and added to Gross' (2001) finding that the AIDS epidemic "reinvigorated the two major mass media 'roles' for gay people: victim and villain" (p. 103). This research found a new category of AIDS villain: the "aggressive homosexual" child. While findings of this research strengthened the notion that mainstream media institutions protect the "status quo" (Gans, 1979) and adopt positions that marginalize and disparage protest groups (Gitlin, 1980), this research demonstrated that *Statesman* may have engaged in reporting that went beyond demonizing AIDS victims. The mainstream publication failed to report information that could have delegitimized the state's plans altogether.

While *Texan* did not match the quantity of stories as compared with *Statesman*, the coverage from the university's newspaper closely resembled the city's mainstream publication. While existing research suggests that university newspapers were historically "self-conscious" (Cain, 2012, p. 27) by supporting ideas counter to campus administrators, such as desegregation (Edmondson & Perry, 2010), this research demonstrated that *Texan*'s reporting—when it came to AIDS victims—was anything but progressive.

This analysis found that *Texan* and *Statesman* framed AIDS patients as deviants by repeating Commissioner Bernstein's labeling of some AIDS patients as "incorrigible." Who were these "incorrigible AIDS patients?" *Texan* and *Statesman* produced stories that utilized language to indict an entire class of people as culprits behind the spread of AIDS, despite the fact that health officials were targeting a very specific individual. The use of the word "incorrigible" is deeply problematic, as, according to Webster's dictionary, the word means one who is "not reformable." Synonyms include "depraved" and "delinquent." Instead of using "incorrigible," *TWT* chose "promiscuous" to describe AIDS patients who refused to stop having sex after being diagnosed with the virus. It's debatable if the use of "promiscuous" over "incorrigible" was a better selection because both words condemned men who were engaging in a basic biological function—sex. However, "promiscuous" carries a tone that directly connotes one's sexual activity as problematic. Whereas, "incorrigible" seems to indict an entire class of person as problematic. This finding demonstrates how both papers marginalized AIDS victims by framing group members as sexual deviants, which strengthen Fejes and Petrich's (1993) findings that mainstream media institutions framed gay people as a having a perversion. McLeod and Hertog (1999) described how mainstream media marginalized protest groups by accentuating "the deviance of protesters from the mainstream public" (p. 319).

Texan and *Statesman* utilized discourse that demonized individuals with AIDS by repeating the same vague information, like "[i]n Houston, officials recently had trouble with an AIDS victim who, for a time, defied orders to avoid sexual contact."[153] Subsequent articles in both publications continued using these vague characterizations by health officials who were attempting to control "AIDS sufferers who refused to stop having sex."[154] By printing these ambiguous phrases (e.g., "AIDS sufferers who refuse to stop having sex") within news stories that generally buried or omitted opponents of the quarantine, the newspapers spread hysteria by leaving readers with the impression that dozens of uncontrollable, hypersexual men were intentionally engaging in unprotected sex and spreading AIDS to “innocent people.” This impression was later revealed to be false. This focus on “AIDS sufferers” intimated blame on an entire class of individual for spreading the virus, not on the activity or behavior of one specific person. By lumping “AIDS sufferers” into a category of people who threatened society, journalists painted a human target for the reader to fear. An entire class of individual, AIDS victims, were framed as posing a danger to society, when, in fact, state officials were proposing the quarantine to handle a specific individual who engaged in a distinct activity: male prostitutes. A month after the proposal was issued, *Statesman* finally revealed that one of the “incorrigibles” was a male prostitute from Houston. In December 1985, *TWT* reported more details about the prostitute:

> Houston health authorities found they did not have the authority to quarantine AIDS patient, Fabian Bridges after he refused to refrain from alleged prostitution on the streets of Montrose. He later died of the disease and was buried at the local government’s expense.[155]

This level of specificity about the “incorrigible” was generally omitted in *Texan* and *Statesman*’s coverage. By failing to contextualize that these “incorrigibles” were actually individuals who engaged in male prostitution, *Texan* and *Statesman* demonized all AIDS victims. By *TWT*’s account, the “incorrigible” AIDS patient was actually no longer a problem as he already died. That information, if circulated to the mainstream audience via *Texan* and *Statesman*, could have alleviated fear and anxiety by illustrating the isolated nature of these “incorrigibles.” The quarantine was proposed to handle not the average AIDS victim, but male prostitutes who were AIDS-positive and refusing to engage in safe sex practices or ceasing sexual activity altogether. Instead, both *Texan* and *Statesman* continued to publish information insinuating that all AIDS victims were potential “incorrigibles” who were an active threat. While the media’s blaming of gay men’s sexual activities as culprits behind the spread of AIDS is well documented in existing literature (Alwood, 1996; Gross, 2001; Streitmatter, 2009), the extent to which *Texan* and *Statesman* perpetuated a false threat was simply striking.

Texan and *Statesman* continued to frame gay men as deviants by labeling “homosexual activity” as the culprit behind the spread of AIDS. Without including specifics about what type of sexual activity can spread the virus (e.g., anal and vaginal intercourse), a reader was left with the impression that two men simply hugging, kissing, or engaging in oral sex (sexual activity to some) could spread the virus. Both publications’ reporting conforms to Gross (2001) who found that the media, reflecting a conservation and squeamish attitude towards sex, were unwilling to utilize terminology to specifically describe AIDS transmission. However, the findings of this research shed light on the extremely conservative approach by both *Texan* and *Statesman*. There were examples of *Texan* publishing more specific details about the transmission of AIDS, as compared with *Statesman*, but none of the stories actually contained the words “anus, penis, vagina, semen”—important words to accurately describe AIDS transmission. And none of the stories matched how in April 1983 *LA Times* described AIDS transmission: “‘is associated with passive (receptive) anal intercourse’ because of the ‘presence of the agent in the semen of the active partner’” (Gross, 2001, p. 100). This research demonstrated how both publications lagged behind publications like the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, which were credited with utilizing more detailed language as early as 1985 when reporting on AIDS transmission (Alwood, 1996).

Ignore the dying and bury the opposition. *Texan* and *Statesman*’s articles about the quarantine never included quotes, paraphrases, or photographs of individuals who would have been directly affected by the quarantine. The researcher is not claiming that AIDS victims were omitted from *Texan* and *Statesman* altogether; however, if a reader only consumed the quarantine stories, the perspective of AIDS victims would have been a mystery. Both publications situated the AIDS victim between Gerbner's (1972) dichotomy: "[r]epresentation in the fictional world signifies social existence; absence means symbolic annihilation" (p. 44). Within the articles analyzed for this research, the voices and stories of individuals who contracted the virus or died from it were never fully represented, nor were they absent. The articles were entirely about those suffering from AIDS. All the sources were debating how to stop the spread of AIDS. Everyone was talking *about* people who had AIDS but no reporter apparently talked *to* them. While some publications within the gay and lesbian press were introducing readers to people with AIDS by providing in-depth stories and pictures in the early '80s (Streitmatter, 1995), within the data for this case study, those who had AIDS remained an invisible, nameless, and voiceless ghost that haunted every article analyzed for this research. This finding is striking and shows that all three publications lagged behind other mainstream newspapers that were running features from the perspective of the gay community as early as 1982 (Kinsella, 1989).

In Austin, Texas, in the mid-80s, the findings of this research indicated that AIDS victims remained a ghostly specter—unseen but described through the lens of public officials. The effect of framing AIDS victims as ghostly specters could have compounded the fears and anxieties of Texans. A nameless and faceless adversary is easier to hate and fear. An adversary with a name and face could in fact become an ally. If the media had ignored AIDS victims, then readers could have existed in blissful ignorance. If the media had introduced readers to AIDS victims, then readers could have had a better understanding of the exact behaviors, not individuals, associated with AIDS transmission and how the virus affected various demographics differently.

This textual analysis found significant examples of how *Statesman* stories were framed around official sources that delegitimized AIDS victims and gay people in general. The framing of stories around official sources has the effect of absorbing "the officials' definitions of the situation" (Gitlin, 2003, p. 28), thus reflecting the "powerful interests in society" (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 224). Nearly every *Texan* and *Statesman* article analyzed included quotes and/or paraphrases within the story from state officials, usually in prominent positions. The same can't be said about gay people and victims of AIDS. Journalists further legitimize sources within a story by including quotes, paraphrases, or photographs of the individual. While *Texan* and *Statesman* journalists did not universally exclude quotes and information from gay people, as compared with GLF coverage, the reporters generally buried quotes from gay advocates and/or utilized experts to speak for them. *Texan* and *Statesman*'s coverage fluctuated between partly to wholly delegitimizing those opposing the quarantine—an actual improvement from GLF coverage. As McLeod and Hertog (1999) noted, there are various levels of legitimacy. Journalists can reduce the legitimacy of a protester by reducing his or her opinion to paraphrases, rather than direct quotes. In the most extreme case, journalists completely delegitimize protesters by disregarding protesters' views altogether (McLeod & Hertog, 1999). The first stories in October 1985 from the *Texan* and *Statesman* reporting on Commissioner Bernstein's quarantine plan provide an excellent example of how the newspapers delegitimized opponents. The articles featured quotes from "an Austin homosexual organization" in the final paragraphs, beneath official sources. In November 1985, both publications omitted quotes from gay people, despite the fact that the stories were framed around state officials meeting with the gay community. *Texan* reported that "[g]ay community leaders who attended the meeting were unavailable for comment."[156] While *TWT* covered the same meeting and reported that gay community leaders opposed the plan, *Texan* and *Statesman* reported the exact opposite. However, *Texan* did include a quote from Texas Civil Liberties Union, a group that opposed the quarantine. This is an example of how *Texan*, at times, diverged from *Statesman*. When *Texan* did not include a quote from a gay person, the journalist would generally include information from an allied organization or a doctor who also opposed the plan.

The "Aggressive Homosexual" Child

This textual analysis found a new category of AIDS coverage within *Statesman*'s reporting: the aggressive AIDS-infected child. Since 1982, children were included in reporting about AIDS. The first stories about AIDS and children framed them as victimized by the virus when medical professionals feared children were infected through "routine close contact" (Kinsella, 1989, p. 57). However, there was a turning point around 1985 when children with AIDS were transformed in the media from victim to villain, as parents "around the country were understandably skittish about allowing their children to share a classroom with a carrier of a fatal and contagious malady" (Kinsella, 1989, p. 187). That transition coincided with the publication of a series of stories in the fall of 1985 about 13-year-old Ryan White who was the first child to be barred from attending public school because he was infected with AIDS. As a hemophiliac, Ryan received tainted blood product.

The *Statesman* framed some children with AIDS as villains when journalists reported that AIDS testing was approved for incarcerated "delinquents." The story reported how "aggressive homosexual"[157] child inmates were to be segregated from the entire incarcerated population because officials feared that they could spread the virus among other individuals. By using the negative phrase, *Statesman* reinvigorated a stereotype of gays that was common in the 1950s: lustful perverts (Streitmatter, 2009). The utilization of the "aggressive homosexual" phrase stigmatized an entire class of people and distracted from the actual physical activities that contribute to the spread of AIDS. This finding is striking, as the research is void of any reference of mainstream publications utilizing a 1950s stereotype to demonize children infected with AIDS. Such media framing was generally utilized to describe gay men.

In a story published two days before, *Statesman* reported how state health officials recommended that school-aged children who were infected with AIDS be isolated if they exhibited "aggressive behavior like biting."[158] *Statesman* did acknowledge that no Texas school children were infected with the virus, and the disease can't spread through casual contact. Instead of further contextualizing and alleviating the public's fear of children spreading AIDS in schools, *Statesman* normalized and justified the state's guidelines by connecting Texas state officials' concerns about the "fear of AIDS in schools… was brought to light"[159] through the Ryan White case.

The Ryan White stories published around the same time in other national publications featured interviews and photographs of White. Audience members were exposed to a real person who struggled with the illness. The coverage of White's story was, at times, deeply personal, and some of it was sympathetic to White's struggle to gain access to school (Kinsella, 1989). However, readers of the *Statesman* during the time period of this case study would have found that these two stories completely lacked the perspective of and photographs of children who were infected with AIDS. While the

November 13, 1985, story reported that only six children were known to have contracted the virus, the absence of their stories left their lives as an object of mystery.

Conclusion. Both *Texan* and *Statesman* marginalized and demonized AIDS victims and gay people. The publications framed some AIDS victims as deviants by labeling them "incorrigibles" and indicted all homosexual behavior as the main reason why AIDS was spreading. This research documented how the collegiate press continued to conform to disparaging reporting tactics that aligned with mainstream press practices, despite existing research that suggested collegiate journalists may have been more progressive on some social issues. This research also documented how *Statesman* perpetuated a stereotype that was unseen since the 1950s: gays as sexual predators. While existing research suggests that the gay press was often a site that published the most accurate, up-to-date, and in-depth information about the AIDS epidemic, this analysis demonstrated that, in Texas, *TWT* significantly lagged behind the mainstream and collegiate press and disseminated out-of-date information. All publications included in this analysis symbolically annihilated those who would have been subjected to the quarantine, AIDS victims. Within the articles analyzed for this research, the AIDS victim was never fully represented, nor was the victim ever fully absent. The articles were entirely about AIDS victims. All the sources were debating how to stop the spread of AIDS that afflicted the victims' lives. Everyone was talking *about* AIDS victims but no reporter apparently talked *to* them

CASE STUDY THREE FINDINGS: TEXAS' FIRST OPENLY GAY STATE LAWMAKER ELECTED

The coverage of the special election for Texas House of Representatives District 51 centered on four time periods:

1) Field of candidates ballooned,
2) Special election round one,
3) Special election runoff, and
4) "There's nothing to fear" as history was made.

Field of Candidates Ballooned

On the front page of the state and local section on January 4, 1991, *Statesman* ran the headline, "Gay lobbyist begins campaign for Guerrero's seat in House."[160] This story begins the first cluster. Between January 4 and January 25, 1991, a total of 18 stories were published. *Statesman* published the first story announcing Maxey's candidacy to replace Texas State Representative Lena Guerrero, who represented District 51 in Austin. Guerrero, a Democrat, vacated her position because Texas Governor Ann Richards nominated her to the Texas Railroad Commission. The governor was required to call a special election to fill Guerrero's seat. *Statesman*'s story was accompanied by a black-and-white photograph of Maxey wearing a business suit and smiling.[161] The article was framed around Maxey's candidacy as "one of the first openly gay people to seek state office in Texas."[162] To contextualize the historic nature of Maxey's run, the journalist utilized an unnamed source to report, "a longtime capital [*sic*] insider and a former legislative aide say there have been homosexuals in the Texas Legislature for decades but that they have not publically disclosed their sexual preference."[163] Maxey's sole quote was included in the middle of the story. It was devoid of any policy discussion. Maxey was quoted as saying, "This race is not about a gay candidate."[164] Mention of Maxey's politician platform was buried towards the end of the story. The article characterized Maxey as a moderate figure during the mid-1980s' "tense public and background debates" around AIDS-related issues, "[w]hile some gays dressed in skeleton costumes and stood on Capitol stairways during the 1989 session to dramatize the need for increased funding to fight AIDS, Maxey testified before legislative committees or talked directly to members."[165] *Statesman* published a second story on January 8, 1991, reporting that a second candidate, Paul Ruiz, announced his candidacy for District 51. The story omitted reporting on Ruiz's sexual orientation. Instead, the story was framed around Ruiz's platform that "stronger ethics legislation"[166] was needed. Within the article, Ruiz was also quoted comparing himself with Maxey, "I believe that this district needs someone who does not come at this job from a specific faction of the community, someone who is not a one-issue candidate."[167]

Texan's first story about the District 51 race was published on January 11, 1991. The article featured a small black-and-white photograph of Maxey and Ruiz, both of whom wore business suits. The story was framed around campaign issues, as illustrated by the article's lead, "Public and higher education issues will lead the list of campaign priorities for Democrats Paul Ruiz and Glen Maxey, who along with two others are seeking election to the Texas House of Representatives seat vacated by Lena Guerrero, D-Austin."[168] The article detailed how "Ruiz and Maxey, both former teachers, share an emphasis on strengthening the teacher's role in making decisions concerning education."[169]

TWT's first story about Maxey's campaign was also published on January 11, 1991. The story featured a black-and-white photograph of Maxey standing in front of the Texas Capitol, dressed in a business suit. The story never directly reported Maxey's sexual orientation but the secondary headline indicated "LGRL (Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby) Lobbyist to Run for House Seat Vacated by Guerrero."[170] This textual analysis found evidence that the *TWT* journalist who wrote the article plagiarized directly from *Statesman*'s first article. *TWT* quoted Maxey as saying, "The race is not about a gay candidate,"[171] an identical quote included in *Statesman*. In the final paragraph, *TWT* reported that Maxey was a moderate political force: "While some gays dressed in skeleton costumes and stood on Capitol stairways during the 1989 session to dramatize the need for increased funding for AIDS, Maxey testified before legislative committees or talked directly to members"[172]—the verbatim was found in *Statesman*'s first article as well. The article did not attribute information to *Statesman*.

Between January 11 and 25, 1991, a flurry of articles (11) was published in *Statesman* (4) and *Texan* (5) as a total of 14 individuals announced their candidacy—setting a new record at the time. Aside from the previously analyzed *TWT* article, the gay-oriented publication did not publish another story during this time period. One candidate was eventually disqualified from running. As the field of candidates swelled, *Texan* and *Statesman* ran articles featuring the newest candidate, which had the effect of minimizing reporting on Maxey and Ruiz during this time period.

Special Election Round One

The next cluster of stories centered on the first round of voting. Between January 28 and February 28, 1991, a total of 14 stories were published. As voting began on January 28, 1991, *Texan* and *Statesman* began framing Maxey as facing an uphill battle in a district that was primarily heterosexual and Hispanic. For example, *Texan* published an article on February 8, 1991, framed around the headline “District 51 hopefuls outline platforms.”[173] The article provided a one-paragraph synopsis of biographical information and the policy stances of each of the 13 candidates. While space in the article was used to describe the policy positions for all of the other candidates, the paragraph on Maxey generally focused on his identity:

> Maxey, director of the Austin Lesbian/Gay Political Caucus, said he supports forming a statewide ethics commission with a citizen member. To those who expressed concern over a Hispanic retaining District 51 representation, he said it was not an issue of the Hispanic community losing a seat, but rather the Gay and Lesbian sector gaining one.[174]

More than a week later on February 10, 1991, *Statesman* reported that the special election was heading to a runoff election, as no candidate received more than 50 percent of the vote. In the third paragraph of the story, *Statesman* reported, Maxey “who would be the first publically acknowledged gay legislator in Texas history,” received the most votes, 25.6 percent, or 1,634 votes.[175] However, his opponent in the runoff election was undecided, as two candidates David Rodriguez and Marisa Luisa “Lulu” Flores tied for second place. Both received 18.3 percent, or 1,170 votes. Under Texas election law, voters must decide between *only* two candidates in a runoff election. While the first portion of the article focused on the unique two-way tie between Rodriguez and Flores, the second portion of the article continued to frame Maxey as facing “an uphill battle because of the number of Hispanics in the district,”[176] despite receiving the most votes. The story reported that “Many think that the district, which has more Hispanics than any other in the county, should be represented by a Hispanic.”[177] The reporter cited, as proof, that "Maxey did well in traditional liberal precincts dominated by white voters."[178] *Texan* also reported the historic results, adding that "[s]ince election law does not allow for a three-way runoff, Rodriguez and Flores have until 5 p.m. Thursday to request a recount of ballots."[179] Similarly to *Statesman*, *Texan* framed Maxey as facing an uphill battle, citing a political expert who said "whoever ended up against Maxey in the runoff would win the seat because Maxey would not be able to pull any of the other candidates' votes in the Hispanic community."[180] However, unlike *Statesman*, *Texan* omitted references to Maxey's sexual orientation.

TWT ran one story during this cluster. On February 15, 1991, the article's headline read "LGRL Director Finishes First in District 51 Special Election; Tie for Second Place."[181] The article framed Maxey as the "first publicly acknowledged gay legislator in Texas history if he wins the runoff."[182] Maxey was framed as facing a difficult time winning the election: "[i]n the opinion of some political observers here, Maxey faces an uphill battle in the runoff because the district has more Hispanics than any other in Travis County, and the second-place finishers are both Hispanic."[183] This cluster of articles concluded with an article reporting how Rodriguez requested a recount. According to *Texan*, Rodriguez won a spot in the runoff after the recount confirmed Maxey as receiving the most votes and Rodriguez obtaining eight more votes than Flores. Governor Richards set the runoff election to be held on March 2, 1991.[184]

Special Election Runoff

The next cluster of articles was centered on the runoff for District 51 and the financial troubles that plagued Rodriguez. Between February 19 and March 1, 1991, 15 stories were published. While *Texan* generally omitted reporting on Maxey's sexual orientation, *Statesman* continued making Maxey's identity a salient aspect in its reporting as both candidates began trading accusations.

Texan and *Statesman* both published articles on February 21, 1991, that would set the tone for the rest of the runoff. *Texan*'s headline read, "Maxey moves in on Rodriguez."[185] The article reported how Maxey publicly questioned Rodriguez's eligibility to run for District 51: "[c]ounty records have suggested that Rodriguez may not have established his residency in the district before the legal deadline to file his candidacy."[186] Maxey declined to challenge the issue in court saying "I don't think it's worth the time and money in clogging up the courts on a lawsuit that we can settle at the ballot box."[187] Maxey also challenged Rodriguez to publicly release his federal income tax returns. *Statesman*'s article echoed similar allegations against Rodriguez, adding that he "failed to pay some federal taxes as far back as 1984, and the IRS put liens on his home."[188]

In the final days of the abbreviated runoff, *Texan* and *Statesman* continued to publish articles highlighting Rodriguez's financial troubles. On February 23, 1991, a headline in the *Statesman* read "Rodriguez borrows $6,000 to fund race."[189] On February 28, 1991, a front-page article in the *Texan* had the headline "Questions of debt plague Rodriguez."[190] The same day, *Statesman* ran an article about Rodriguez purchasing television advertisement that accused Maxey "of running a 'vicious smear campaign' by focusing on his [Rodriguez's] marital and financial problems."[191] Earlier in the week, Maxey's own television advertisement highlighted Rodriguez's failure "to pay child support, income taxes and property taxes."[192] In the midst of the mudslinging, *Statesman* returned to focus on Maxey's identity. On February 24, 1991, *Statesman* reported that the race "initially promised to highlight the divisions among three solidly

Democratic constituencies: Hispanics, homosexuals and White liberals."[193] Instead, as the article noted, much of the campaign focused on Rodriguez's financial troubles. Despite the article acknowledging that "no issue has emerged to throw the two candidates into sharp relief against one another," journalists wrote that "Maxey also is trying to assure potential Hispanic voters that, if elected, he would be diligent about their interests."[194] Maxey was quoted, "I can't change my skin color any more than I can change my sexual orientation, or my sex."[195]

"There's Nothing to Fear" as History Was Made

On March 3, 1991, *Statesman* reported on the front page that Maxey won 54.1 percent of the vote, "becoming the first openly homosexual legislator in state history."[196] Between March 3 and March 8, 1991, seven stories were published. *Statesman*'s article quoted sources that indicated Maxey's victory was "a setback to the Hispanic community" and "Maxey's homosexuality made hardly a ripple in the special election campaign."[197] Despite *Statesman* acknowledging that Maxey's sexual orientation was a nonissue in the race, the newspaper continued to report that "House Speaker Gib Lewis has said he does not think Maxey's sexual orientation will impair his ability to work with other legislators."[198] Maxey was quoted, "There's nothing to fear. Other legislators are going to find me very vocal on issues which concern me and very vocal on issues which concern them as well."[199] The next day, *Texan* also ran a front-page article. The lead read that "Democrat Glen Maxey will be the first openly gay legislator in Texas history, after defeating his opponent."[200] This article focused on how Maxey called into question Rodriguez's finances and eligibility to run for office. It never mentioned how Maxey's sexual orientation could have affected his ability to legislate.

All three publications reported on Maxey's official swearing-in ceremony on March 6, 1991. The swearing-in ceremony was held on the floor of the Texas House of Representatives. *Texan* simply ran a picture and a caption at the top of the State and Local section. The photograph depicted Maxey shaking the hand of Governor Richards. The caption read, "Gov. Ann Richards congratulates District 51 winner Glen Maxey in the Texas House of Representatives Chambers after his swearing-in ceremony. Behind them, Maxey's mother proudly witnessed the ceremony Wednesday."[201] *Statesman* ran a photograph and article on the front page of the local section. The photograph depicted Maxey standing at the front of the chamber, speaking from a podium. The article reported that "[l]obbyist and former school teacher Glen Maxey became the first openly gay legislator in Texas history."[202] While the article initially focused on Maxey's speech that featured "progressive themes such as help for the poor, sick and disabled,"[203] it switched to reporting about his sexual orientation. *Statesman* reported that Maxey "embraced his homosexuality, wearing a pink triangle in remembrance of Allan Calkin, a leading Dallas gay activist who died in 1989."[204] The article continued to focus on how his sexual orientation would negatively affect his ability to legislate:

> Maxey's swearing-in, presided over by state Supreme Court Justice Oscar Mauzy, was unmarred by rumors that five state representatives who have switched their seats in the past week did so because Maxey is gay. Rep. Kevin Brady, R-The Woodlands, said a small number of lawmakers have voiced concern about Maxey being gay.[205]

Statesman quoted State Representative Brady who said that lawmakers who were not comfortable with Maxey's sexual orientation were engaging in "hallway humor"[206] when discussing him.

TWT ran an article on March 8, 1991, reporting that "Easy Win Makes LGRL Lobbyist First Openly Gay Elected Official in Texas History." The article featured a small photograph of Maxey standing in front of the Texas Capitol. No pictures of his swearing-in ceremony were included. The short article reported that, "[a]lthough the fact that Maxey is gay never became a campaign issue, the last few days of the race did take on a nasty tinge as the two candidates traded charges and countercharges."[207] The article omitted information from the swearing-in ceremony.

Summary

Maxey's candidacy for District 51 came at a time when more and more newspapers were "mainstreaming" coverage of gay and lesbian people. The abbreviated special election generated a substantial amount of coverage in *Texan* and *Statesman*. The race for District 51 had numerous historical aspects. First, Maxey's openness about his sexual orientation made him the first openly gay Texas State lawmaker. Second, the special election featured 13 candidates—the most candidates at that time in a single race. Third, the election headed to a runoff with two candidates tying for second place. Ultimately, Maxey succeeded in the race and was sworn in while accompanied by Texas Governor Ann Richards.

Case Study Three Discussion

As Glen Maxey launched his historic race for the Texas House of Representatives, this qualitative analysis found a distinct pattern in the media coverage. All three publications framed Maxey as facing an uphill battle in a district dominated by Hispanic and heterosexual voters. *TWT* ceased being a reliable source of countercultural information, as much of its content mirrored and, at times, plagiarized *Statesman*'s reporting. Elements of the protest paradigm were found in *Statesman*'s coverage of Maxey. While *Statesman* avoided delegitimizing Maxey, the publication did marginalize him by focusing on his sexual orientation. *Statesman* made Maxey's sexual orientation a salient aspect in its coverage, and attempted to scandalize it as well. This analysis found that *Texan* diverged from *Statesman*'s reporting practices by focusing on Maxey's policy positions, rather than making his sexual orientation a salient aspect of the race. *Texan* generally buried reporting about Maxey's sexual orientation, instead focusing on political issues in the race.

***TWT:* A disservice to lesbian and gay people.** *TWT*'s coverage of Maxey's campaign was exceptional by the fact that it produced the most sporadic, unoriginal, and unethical news coverage out of the three publications. Maxey's candidacy and win was clearly historically important to gay and lesbian Texans. At no other time in history had an openly gay candidate won a position within the Texas Legislature, but that historical moment was not well documented within the pages of *TWT*. The newspaper published a total of four short articles about the race, and none of those articles focused on issues specifically concerning gay and lesbian people. In 1991, there were a host of issues of concern to gay and lesbian Texans. People were still dying from AIDS. Homosexual sex remained a crime. Same-sex marriage was illegal. Individuals could have been fired from their jobs based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. *TWT*, along with *Texan* and *Statesman*, produced zero stories covering how Maxey would address these topics.

Further proof of *TWT*'s unoriginal content was found in how *TWT* mirrored information from *Texan* and *Statesman*. As a weekly publication, *TWT*'s stories generally ran a week after *Texan* and *Statesman*. Rather than develop content that would have been original to its readers (e.g., in-depth interviews and profiles of Maxey, reporting on how

Maxey planned to address lesbian and gay issues in the legislature, or a history of gay- and lesbian-elected leaders in Texas), *TWT* content mirrored information that was published a week earlier in *Texan* and *Statesman*. For example, on February 15, 1991, *TWT* reported that Maxey was facing an uphill battle in the runoff because District 51 "has more Hispanics than any other in Travis County, and the second-place finishers are both Hispanic."[208] Five days earlier, *Statesman* also reported that Maxey was facing "an uphill battle because of the number of Hispanics in the district."[209]

This research found evidence that *TWT* appeared to have directly plagiarized two portions from the *Statesman*'s story published on January 4, 1991. On January 11, 1991, *TWT* published an article with the headline "Maxey Seeks House Seat."[210] Within that article, the researcher found a direct quote that was also featured in *Statesman*'s January 4th article, "The race is not about a gay candidate."[211] Repeating quotes is not necessarily direct evidence of plagiarism, as Maxey could have made identical statements to both *TWT* and *Statesman* journalists. However, within the same *TWT* story, the most direct evidence of plagiarism was found in the final sentence of the story, "While some gays dressed in skeleton costumes and stood on Capitol stairways during the 1989 session to dramatize the need for increased funding for AIDS, Maxey testified before legislative committees or talked directly to members."[212] The verbatim of the preceding sentence was also found in the final sentence in *Statesman*'s article that was published seven days earlier.

The photography that accompanied articles about Maxey also indicated the lack of resources *TWT* devoted to covering Maxey's campaign. *TWT* utilized the same photograph to accompany three out of the four articles—a small black-and-white photograph of Maxey in a business suit, standing in front of the Texas Capitol. An argument can be made that *TWT*, a relatively small newspaper with significantly fewer resources compared with *Texan* and *Statesman*, didn't have the time or staff to sufficiently cover Maxey's campaign. There's also an argument to be made that Maxey's campaign was simply not "sexy" enough to devote a full-time reporter and photographer to cover. However, there was one event that was truly the most historic and provided the best opportunity to obtain photographs—Maxey's swearing-in. Governor Richards attended the event. The ceremony was presided over by a sitting state Supreme Court justice and held within the regal chambers of the Texas House of Representatives. The ceremony represented the moment when candidate Maxey transformed to Texas State Representative Glenn Maxey. One would assume that the newspaper that advertised itself as a significant source of gay news would want to visually share the historic moment with its readers. Not only did *TWT* not publish photographs of the ceremony, the newspaper failed to generate original content to commemorate the historical moment. The article omitted quotes from Maxey or any other individuals. It was basically a brief summation of facts from previously published articles.

Existing literature suggests that gay and lesbian publications in the 1990s adopted a more conservative tone, as the publications were focused on making money and "no longer dominated by individuals fighting for social change" (Streitmatter, 1995, p. 310). Through the adoption of frames that originated in mainstream media, *TWT* certainly reproduced the ideological leanings of *Texan* and *Statesman* journalists, which isn't a surprising finding. What this textual analysis found that has never been documented is the extent to which a gay publication simply buried a significant, historical event that could have changed the lives of its readers. By having a gay lawmaker within the Texas House of Representatives, *TWT* could have challenged Maxey to address important issues facing gay Texans. However, the data indicates that the newspaper never pressed the candidate to help make the state a more welcoming environment for its readers.

***Statesman*: Scandalizing Maxey by reporting rumors and framing him as an oddity.** Throughout the analysis, *Statesman* provided readers with the most information about the District 51 race. Maxey's candidacy was situated within a phase of coverage when some major newspapers, like *New York Times*, were "mainstreaming" gay people by including them in a variety of stories that didn't directly deal with one's sexuality (Gross, 2001). *Statesman*'s coverage of Maxey was far from what could be described as "mainstreaming." The paper's coverage marginalized Maxey, reflecting the protest paradigm, by casting him as outside the mainstream of society by engaging in a pattern of negative reporting practices that attempted to scandalize his sexual orientation—not only reflecting and reinforcing prevailing homophobic attitudes and opinions, but also representing those negative feelings as valid and legitimate. In essence, *Statesman* positioned itself as the main opponent to Maxey's campaign.

It's clear from this analysis that Maxey was treated in an extraordinary manner. *Statesman*'s journalists made Maxey's sexual orientation salient by framing him as a "gay candidate" and a "homosexual legislator." Out of the 13 candidates for District 51, Maxey was the sole individual whose sexual orientation was discussed. For example, when Maxey announced his candidacy, *Statesman*'s headline read: "Gay lobbyist begins campaign for Guerrero's seat in House." The story was framed around Maxey's sexual orientation, not his experience as a former teacher and lobbyist. Reporting on his policy positions was compressed to a few paragraphs and buried towards the end of the story. The story also featured a paraphrase from an unnamed source in the second paragraph, "a longtime capital [*sic*] insider and a former legislative aide say there have been homosexuals in the Texas Legislature for decades but that they have not publically disclosed their sexual preference." The reader was left with the impression that people like Maxey were cowering, exotic, invisible creatures creeping the halls of the Texas Capitol, not legitimate leaders. It's also important to note that at no other point in this textual analysis did *Statesman* utilize unnamed sources to report on a candidate's identity. Journalists reporting information from anonymous sources is a common practice, as "[a]nonymity, when granted judiciously, can benefit the public interest and be important to the media in fulfilling its watchdog role" (Purvis, 2015, p. 9). However, journalists usually provide an explanation, such as fear of retribution, when granting anonymity (Stenvall, 2008). In this case study, it's hardly a strong argument that the reporter granted "the capital [*sic*] insider" anonymity in the name of investigative journalism, as there was no corruption allegation levied against Maxey. If there have always been gay people in the state Capitol and voters and the other candidates hardly cared about Maxey's sexual orientation, then why did the reporter include unnamed sources to discuss Maxey's identity? If no one wanted to go on the record to discuss their homophobic views, why include those thoughts in the story? The use of unnamed sources continued to drive *Statesman*'s attempts to scandalize Maxey's sexual orientation and cast doubt on his ability to be leader for his constituents. By using unnamed sources, the reporter reinforced the idea that discussions of gay people remain outside the norms of society and, in this case, outside the bounds of power.

The extraordinary attention to Maxey's identity became even more apparent when comparing his coverage with reporting of the second individual who announced his candidacy, Paul Ruiz. *Statesman* omitted all references to Ruiz's sexual orientation. In fact, much of the story was framed around Ruiz's platform to support "stronger ethics legislation." Ruiz's identity was never debated. Connecting this finding with existing literature within communication scholarship is difficult, as media portrayals of openly gay candidates remains vastly understudied. However, opponents of gay candidates have long framed them as single-issue politicians who belong to a certain segment of the population, not as multifaceted individuals who share concerns with the broad electorate (Haider & Markel, 2010). The early 1990s was a time period that saw opponents of gay rights coalescing "into a more potent than ever political force" (D'Emilio, 2002, p. 87). *Statesman*'s incessant reporting on Maxey's sexual orientation casts him as a single-issue politician, which mirrors Haider and Markel's (2010) observation, but the two scholars were describing anti-LGBT activists and politicians, not media institutions.

There is also a close connection between the findings of this research and existing literature on minority candidates. When a minority candidate was in a race with a nonminority candidate, journalists generally increased the salience of a non-White candidate's race and ethnicity (Holt, 2012; McIlwain, 2011; Schwartz, 2011). Caliendo and McIlwain (2006) attributed journalists' fixation on reporting about the race and ethnicity of minority candidates to their "status as comparative newcomers" in U.S. elections. *Statesman* went beyond framing Maxey as a "gay political newcomer." The newspaper went to great lengths to scandalize his candidacy. When Maxey won the race on March 2, 1991, *Statesman* reported that "Maxey's homosexuality made hardly a ripple."[213] However, the reporter attempted to keep the prospect of a scandal alive by reporting, "House Speaker Gib Lewis has said he does not think Maxey's sexual orientation will impair his ability to work with other legislators."[214] Why did *Statesman* include the preceding information if the voters of District 51 and 12 other candidates in the race did not focus on Maxey's sexual orientation? *Statesman* continued to attempt to scandalize Maxey's presence on the floor of the Texas House of Representatives during his swearing-in ceremony. On March 6, 1991, the paper reported that Maxey "embraced his homosexuality" by wearing a pink tringle to his swearing-in ceremony. The ceremony "was unmarred by rumors that five state representatives"[215] switched their seats on the floor of the Texas House of Representatives to avoid being next to an openly gay man. This was the first and only instance of *Statesman* journalists reporting rumors. The article also quoted a lawmaker who claimed that some homophobic lawmakers were engaging in "hallway humor"[216] to describe Maxey's win. Where did the reporter obtain these rumors? What was that humor? And why did the journalist report on the existence of rumors if no one was willing to go on record to discuss them? The article never explained. Despite the fact that no one was brave enough to go on the record to express their homophobic feelings, the reporter carved out a niche for them to do so: through the use of rumors within a news story. This is an extraordinary finding, as no other candidate was subjected to such framing. *Statesman* never reported rumors about the 12 other candidates. When it was revealed that Maxey's opponent faced significant legal and financial troubles, journalists used fully sourced material. Despite the fact that the Texas legislative leadership, voters of District 51, and a dozen candidates didn't express concern about Maxey's sexual orientation, this research documented that *Statesman* went to great lengths to attempt to create a scandal where none actually existed by focusing attention on a characteristic of Maxey that was time and time again demonstrated to be a nonissue. *Statesman*, in essence, became the main opponent to an openly gay individual ascending into the Texas House of Representatives.

***Texan*: Clearly diverging from *Statesman*.** One of the most distinctive aspects of *Texan*'s intermitted coverage was the extent to which the student-operated newspaper diverged from *Statesman*'s coverage. While all three publications (*Texan*, *Statesman*, and *TWT*) framed Maxey as facing an uphill battle because of the dominance of Hispanic voters in District 51, *Texan* framed Maxey as an ordinary politician. The newspaper strayed away from focusing on personal details of Maxey's life. The newspaper downplayed the significance of his sexual orientation by mostly omitting it from much of the paper's coverage.

Comparing *Statesman*'s first and final articles with *Texan*'s coverage provides a clear indication of how the publications diverged. While *Statesman*'s first article about Maxey's candidacy focused the reader's attention on his sexual orientation, *Texan*'s first article omitted direct references to his sexual orientation and framed the story around campaign issues, as illustrated by the article's lead: "Public and higher education issues will lead the list of campaign priorities for Democrats Paul Ruiz and Glen Maxey."[217] The article detailed how "Ruiz and Maxey, both former teachers, share an emphasis on strengthening teachers' role in making decisions concerning education."[218] *Statesman*'s final story of Maxey's swearing-in ceremony was an overt attempt by the reporter to scandalize Maxey's victory by reporting rumors and calling into question how his sexual orientation would affect his ability to legislate. *Texan* took an entirely different approach. *Texan* simply ran a picture and a caption, no article, at the top of the State and Local section. The photograph depicted Maxey shaking the hand of Governor Richards. The caption read: "Gov. Ann Richards congratulates District 51 winner Glen Maxey in the Texas House of Representatives Chambers after his swearing-in ceremony. Behind them, Maxey's mother proudly witnessed the ceremony Wednesday."[219] This finding is the clearest indication that *Texan* may have developed a self-consciousness (Cain, 2012, p.

27) that set it apart from hegemonic forces within the media, state government, and campus institutions.

When Maxey won the election, *Texan*'s front page article reported that he "will be the first openly gay legislator in Texas history."[220] This was one of the few instances that *Texan* directly identified Maxey's sexual orientation. The lack of discussion about Maxey's sexual orientation was not the only significant finding. *Texan* uniformly utilized the word "gay" to describe Maxey, whereas *Statesman* switched among the words "homosexual," "homosexuality," and "gay." The term "homosexuality" was constituted in the late 19th century as a medical term in order to classify and treat the individual "inflicted" with same-sex sexual desires (Foucault, 1978). Immediately after the 1969 Stonewall riots, GLF leaders in New York City began openly and aggressively advocating "a change in consciousness" (Miller, 1995, p. 370). GLF advocates supported the affirmative "gay" term instead of the medical and pathological "homosexual" because the latter term categorized individuals as a sexual group, rather than as a community of individuals with a shared culture and history (Miller, 1995). *New York Times* lifted the ban of the term "gay" in 1987 and allowed reporters to use it as a synonym for "homosexual" (Streitmatter, 2009). An argument can be made that *Statesman*'s use of the term "homosexual" displayed just how far the paper was out of touch with the viewpoints of the gay and lesbian community. By utilizing the term "homosexual" to describe Maxey, *Statesman* situated Maxey as suffering from a pathology, which was also reflected by how the paper framed him as an oddity. In regards to the *Texan*, the student-operated newspaper was far more progressive in its coverage of gay people through the uniform adoption of an affirmative adjective to describe Maxey's sexual orientation.

Conclusion. Maxey's successful run for District 51 Texas State Representative came at a time when some major newspapers were "mainstreaming" coverage of gay and lesbian people. Maxey's candidacy also came at a time when gay and lesbian politics were increasingly receiving more and more attention. This case study demonstrated a divergence between how *Texan* and *Statesman* reported on the race. Despite the facts that no candidate in the race, no leader within Texas State government, and no community groups opposed Maxey because of his sexual orientation, *Statesman* increased the salience of Maxey's sexual orientation by constantly reporting on it. *Statesman* utilized unnamed sources to scandalize Maxey's candidacy and frame him as an oddity at the Texas Capitol. This research demonstrated that *TWT*'s coverage was unoriginal, unreliable, and unethical

CASE STUDY FOUR FINDINGS: SAME-SEX MARRIAGES ARRIVE IN TEXAS

The coverage of the legalization of same-sex marriage in Texas centered on three clusters:

1) Texas' first same-sex couple to legally marry,
2) The battle "for the Soul of Texas has begun," and
3) "NOT JUST GAY… ECSTATIC!": Supreme court legalized same-sex marriage.

Texas' First Same-Sex Couple to Legally Marry

The first cluster of stories focused on the first legally married same-sex couple in Texas history. *Statesman* broke the story of the secret marriage between Sarah Goodfriend and Suzanne Bryant. Between February 19 and February 24, 2015, five extensive stories were published in the three publications. The newspapers framed the marriage as a contested site of state authority, while at the same time, introducing readers to the newlyweds and their family.

On February, 20, 2015, all the publications devoted a significant amount of space to Goodfriend and Bryant's marriage. *Statesman* provided readers with the most reporting, as the women invited a *Statesman* reporter and photographer to be the sole professional journalists to witness the small event that was deliberately kept out of the public eye until completed. *Statesman* reported that Goodfriend and Bryant "have been together almost 31 years."[221] Their relationship, according to the *Observer*, began three decades ago: "at a Kate Clinton concert in North Carolina [and] became a legal marriage today with their teenage daughters Dawn and Ting witnessing the event outside the courthouse."[222] The *Statesman* reported that the short ceremony occurred in front of the Travis County Clerk's office after the women "exchanged their vows before Rabbi Kerry."[223] The article characterized the women as extraordinary brides, who had "pre-wedding jitters"[224] like none other.

While the articles framed their relationship as an uncontested companionship, all the articles framed the marriage as occurring through a complex legal maneuver. The women sued Travis County Clerk Dana DeBeauvoir to force her to issue the license. The women found a legal opportunity two days earlier when, in a separate, unrelated case, Travis County Judge Guy Herman ruled that Texas' ban on same-sex marriage was unconstitutional. *Observer* reported the basis for the lawsuit was that "they faced irreparable harm because they had no way to enforce their right to marry."[225] On February 19, State District Judge David Wahlberg "ordered that Goodfriend and Bryant be issued a marriage license, citing Goodfriend's poor health."[226] Goodfriend was undergoing chemotherapy treatment after battling ovarian cancer.

A *Statesman* journalist reported that the lawsuit and marriage ceremony were deliberately kept out of the spotlight until both were successfully executed, "fearing the state would attempt to step in and enforce the law and constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage."[227] While the women celebrated their marriage, the journalists also reported the vast amount condemnation emanating from Republican state leaders. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton was quoted in *Texan* saying state law "has not changed and will not change due to the whims of any individual judge or county clerk operating on their own capacity anywhere in Texas."[228] *Observer* reported how Attorney General "Paxton asked the Texas Supreme Court to void the marriage and by the end of the day he was claiming it had been done."[229] *Texan*'s article cast doubt on the validity of the marriage because, as *Statesman* reported, the Texas Supreme Court issued "an ambiguous afternoon order that blocked"[230] Judge Wahlberg's ruling.

While *Texan* and *Observer* lacked on-the-ground coverage and photographs of the marriage, all three publications ran photographs of the women in prominent positions within the publications. On *Statesman*'s front page, a photograph depicted Goodfriend and Bryant sitting at the clerk's office completing marriage license paperwork. Bryant was standing over Goodfriend, embracing her and kissing the top of her head. *Observer*'s photographs depicted Goodfriend and Bryant, along with their two daughters, sitting at the head of a large wooden conference room table, where the women held a press conference after their ceremony. *Texan*'s front-page article featured a color photograph of Goodfriend and Bryant wrapping their arms around each other's waists as they stared into each other's eyes and holding up their marriage certificate.

The Battle "for the Soul of Texas has begun"

The backlash against Goodfriend and Bryant's marriage and the expanding number of states granting same-sex marriage rights was unprecedented. Goodfriend and Bryant's historic marriage ceremony occurred at a time when Texas lawmakers were in Austin for the 84th Session of the Texas Legislature. The stories in this cluster generally centered on a series of bills that Republicans claimed would have protected "religious objections to same-sex marriage,"[231] while opponents claimed the bills were intended to give citizens a "license to discriminate"[232] against gay and lesbian people. Between February 24 and May 28, 2015, 26 articles were published among the three publications detailing the legislative backlash.

In the days after Goodfriend and Bryant's marriage, all newspapers published stories about legislative efforts in response to the ceremony and the sense that the U.S.

Supreme Court would invalidate state bans on same-sex marriage. *Texan*'s story was framed around Texas State Senator Charles Perry and Texas State Representative Cecil Bell who filed bills intended to protect marriage as the "the union of one man and one woman."[233] While the legislation ultimately failed to pass, this story set the stage for, as *Statesman* reported, "a fierce battle for the Soul of Texas."[234] *Observer* reported on April 9, 2015, that the 84th Session of the Texas Legislature was the "last meaningful opportunity"[235] for opponents of same-sex marriage to take a legislative stand. More than 20 anti-LGBT bills were filed, a historic amount, which generated a significant amount of news coverage.

Journalists framed much of the coverage during this time period as a marriage between economic interests and the LGBT movement. On February 28, 2015, *Texan* published an article of one professor's opinion that the U.S. Supreme Court will invalidate same-sex marriage bans because of mainstream support, as indicated by American corporations demonstrating "support for gay rights" by opposing laws that allow "businesses to deny service to gay people."[236] On March 5, 2015, *Observer* published an article about how the Texas Association of Business (TAB), "the state's powerful chamber of commerce," opposed "religious freedom"[237] constitutional amendments authored by Texas State Representative Jason Villalba and Texas State Senator Donna Campbell. The constitutional amendments would have restricted the government from interfering with "an individual's or religious organization's freedom of religion or right to act or refuse to act in a manner motivated by a sincerely held religious belief."[7] The journalist framed the story around how TAB, "a conservative business association," joined "progressive groups, including Equality Texas, the ACLU, and the

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[7] Text from Senate Joint Resolution 10. http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/84R/billtext/pdf/SJ00010I.pdf.

Texas Freedom Network"[238] in opposing the legislation. The opinions and voices of individuals who would have been affected by the legislation were omitted. The efforts to allow private businesses to deny services to gay and lesbian people ultimately failed to pass.

Observer and *Statesman* journalists were on hand to witness a moment when both supporters of LGBT civil rights and opponents of same-sex marriage descended on the state's Capitol. On March 23, 2015, opponents of same-sex marriage held a rally on the steps of the Capitol in support of "marriage as proposed by God in the biblical book of Genesis,"[239] while gay and lesbian civil rights advocates were inside the Capitol lobbying lawmakers. *Observer* and *Statesman* covered the event in similar fashion. Both publications framed the story around the main speaker, Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore, who was quoted in *Observer* telling the crowd that "[n]o court has any authority to redefine what God proposed in Genesis."[240] *Observer*'s story included images of Moore and other same-sex marriage opponents imbued with authority by standing in front of a podium. *Observer*'s story also included quotes from a press conference earlier in the day held by the Coalition of African American Pastors. Reverend Bill Owens who "accused the gay community of stealing and hijacking the civil rights movement"[241] was quoted:

> They were never beaten. They were never hung from trees. They were never fired for nothing. They were never treated like we were treated. You don't have a clue how we were treated in the South. You don't have a clue. This is not a civil rights movement. It's a civil wrong movement.[242]

Observer omitted quotes from LGBT advocacy organizations. LGBT individuals were not quoted in the story. Opponents of same-sex marriage dominated *Statesman*'s coverage as well; however, *Statesman* included at least a few quotes from LGBT civil rights activists.

While most stories focused on Republican-led political maneuvers, some of the articles focused questions on the morality of gay and lesbian people. For example, *Observer* on April 9, 2015, reported on a hearing at the State Affairs Committee on a bill that would effectively bar state and local governments from issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples. The story included a quote from Dr. Steve Hotze, president of the Conservative Republicans of Texas, who equated gays and lesbian to deviants:

> If people are involved in an activity that's immoral and wrong, you can love them but you don't respect what they do, and you try to help find a way out. Whether they're alcoholics, whether they're murderers, whether they're adulterers, whether they're perverts or pornographers or what, you want to help them out.[243]

Dr. Hotze's assertion was published unchallenged. The moral judgment against same-sex couples continued in an April 27, 2015, *Statesman* story. The newspaper was previewing oral arguments in the *Obergefell v. Hodges* case before the U.S. Supreme Court. The case ultimately legalized same-sex marriage. The story was framed around opponents of same-sex marriage who acknowledged that they faced "a tough task in trying to persuade the Supreme Court to allow states to limit marriage to a man and a woman."[244] The article included quotes from opponents of gay marriage who claimed same-sex marriage "is a product of the cultural degradation" and is tied to "greater sexual permissiveness, a rise in births to single mothers and liberalized divorce laws."[245]

"NOT JUST GAY… ECSTATIC!": Supreme Court Legalized Same-sex Marriage

Recognizing the historic nature of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges* on June 26, 2015, all three publications devoted a significant amount of space to report on the ruling that overturned state bans on same-sex marriage. The coverage among all three publications generally focused on the expanding access to the right to marry, neglecting to report the other aims of LGBTQ movement. Between June 26 and June 29, 2015, all three publications published a combined total of 10 articles and two photo essays. However, the amount of stories doesn't necessarily capture the vast space devoted to the topic, as many of these stories spanned several pages and included complex graphics to explain the mechanics of the ruling.

After the Supreme Court issued the *Obergefell v. Hodges* ruling, *Statesman* published a special afternoon edition. The front-page story primarily focused on the text of the decision itself and responses from President Obama. *Statesman*'s special edition mirrored the coverage found in *Texan* and *Observer* by placing quotes of the justices and reactions from public officials and leaders of professional LGBT advocacy organizations in prominent positions, while relegating the experiences of everyday LGBT people to the sidelines.

Statesman, *Observer*, and *Texan* continued publishing articles and photography in the days following the ruling. On June 27, 2015, *Statesman* devoted three distinct articles to the ruling. *Statesman* framed the main front-page article around the decision by the "sharply divided U.S. Supreme Court" that touched "off a rush to the altar [*sic*] in Travis County."[246] *Texan* reported that, in a 5-4 decision, the court "ruled same-sex marriage is a right guaranteed by the 14th Amendment" and "mandated states to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples."[247] *Texan* framed its sole story around official sources. The first quote in the *Texan* came from Travis County Clerk Dana DeBeauvoir who called the day "joyous."[248] *Observer*'s story was framed around a celebration that took place inside Austin's Central Presbyterian Church. Austin's Mayor Steve Adler and State Senator

Kirk Watson "joined gay rights activists in speaking to a crowd that came ready with rainbow beads, rainbow flags and posters reading, 'America is Ready for the Freedom to Marry.'"[249]

All publications provided ample editorial space for opponents of same-sex marriage to voice their opinions. One of the three articles from the June 27 *Statesman* edition provided an entirely separate article that was framed around how Texas Republican leaders were "dismayed but defiant."[250] *Statesman* reported how Texas Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick sought "to protect clerks from being forced to provide marriage licenses and judges from having to preside over same-sex marriages that violate their religious beliefs."[251] In *Texan*'s coverage, "Attorney General Paxton asked county clerks to ignore the Supreme Court's ruling and wait for his office to approve the issuance of same-sex marriage licenses."[252] *Observer* quoted Texas Governor Greg Abbot as saying "[a]s I have done in the past, I will continue to defend the religious liberties of all Texans."[253]

The U.S. Supreme Court decision generated an explosion of photographic coverage that generally focused on individuals celebrating the court's decision and couples obtaining marriage licenses and marrying. Most of the photographs lacked racial and ethnic diversity. *Statesman*'s special afternoon edition featured six separate photographs, including a large front-page color photograph that occupied nearly half the page. The front-page photograph depicted a crowd celebrating the ruling in front of the U.S. Supreme Court. The individuals in the foreground held strings attached to four separate balloons that spelled "LOVE."[254] A photo essay was included in the second page of the special edition. The first picture depicted two married women standing in front of the U.S. Supreme Court among a jubilant crowd. One of the women held a sign, which read: “NOT JUST GAY… ECSTATIC!”[255] The *Statesman*’s photographic essay featured the only picture in this cluster of articles depicting active demonstrators voicing their opposition to same-sex marriage. The photograph depicted a man holding a sign with the message: “Marriage = (figure of a man) + (figure of a woman).”[256] A photograph was included of two women kissing after a judge in Pontiac, Michigan, married them. Of the two couples photographed, both were White. No Black, Latino, Asian, or interracial couples were depicted.

The coverage following June 26, 2015, continued to feature a significant amount of photographs. During the summer, *Texan,* publishes on a weekly basis and takes the form of a news magazine. The entire front page of the *Texan* on June 29, 2015, is a photograph of two White women celebrating with a marriage certificate in their hands. The photograph depicted one woman kissing the other’s cheek, while both clench the marriage license. Within the *Texan*, eight other photographs were included. One of the photographs depicted a Latino male marrying his White partner. All the most prominent photographs depicted White couples. Three of the photographs depicted individuals celebrating the ruling at the celebratory event at Central Presbyterian Church in downtown Austin. That same imagery was found within the *Statesman* associated with an article framed around Austin religious leaders responding to the ruling. *Statesman*’s photograph depicted men and women holding up signs that read “America Is Ready For The Freedom to Marry.”[257]

One image dominated the front page of *Statesman*’s June 27th edition. On the front page, *Statesman* featured a photograph of “the first couple to receive a marriage license in Travis County.”[258] The women, who were dressed casually, were depicted in a nearly empty courtroom, embracing and kissing each other on the lips. This was the single, most prominent photograph of two same-sex individuals kissing each other on the lips. The second photograph on page A10 depicted two older men dressed casually standing in front of a judge and embracing each other. Both photographs of couples depicted White individuals. This focus on couples and their families was pronounced in *Observer*'s photographic coverage. Of the 23 pictures included in *Observer*'s coverage, none of the photographs depicted two same-sex couples actually kissing. The vast majority of pictures depicted couples in various stages of obtaining a marriage license and performing the actual wedding ceremony. *Observer*'s photographs did feature several couples of mixed ethnic heritage and one interracial couple.

Summary

Same-sex marriage came to Texas months before the *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision. Seeing a legal opportunity after a Travis County probate judge overturned Texas' ban on same-sex marriage, Goodfriend and Bryant filed a lawsuit against the Travis County Clerk to force her to issue a marriage license. A Travis County Judge issued the order, and the subsequent marriage ignited both a flurry of news coverage and a legislative backlash. All three publications provided significant coverage of the first legal same-sex marriage, the 84th Session of the Texas Legislature, and the *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision. Journalists reporting on the topic framed same-sex marriage as an endless culture war.

Case Study Four Discussion

As Texas witnessed its first same-sex marriage, the written and photographic coverage surged. One of the most prominent features of this coverage was the similarity in framing among all three publications, as the characteristics of the newspapers' reporting of gays and lesbians appear to have converged. It was nearly impossible to find a discernable, categorical difference among *Statesman*, *Texan*, and *Observer*. The media coverage around same-sex marriages reflected elements of the protest paradigm. All three publications engaged in a pattern of coverage that delegitimized the voices of average gay and lesbian people. The reporting generally focused on quotes and opinions from elite sources (e.g., politicians, lawyers, scholars, and professional advocacy organizations). While the publications were no longer overtly hostile to gays and lesbians, the papers provided ample room for opponents of same-sex marriage to voice their prejudices, which had the effect of circulating a discourse that marginalized gay people. Compared with the other three case studies, the amount of photographic coverage of gays and lesbians was unprecedented. While the voices of everyday gays and lesbians were silenced in the textual reporting, same-sex couples were heavily depicted in the photographic coverage. However, all three publications provided a sanitized depiction of same-sex couples celebrating their nuptials.

A Texas-style culture war. From the moment Goodfriend and Bryant married, through the *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision four months later, all three publications produced culture-war coverage with ample space for the opposition to, at times, voice their opinions unchallenged. This finding mirrors McFarland (2011) who found that the public discussion of LGBT rights "reinforced the notion of a culture war by pointing to opposing sides that talk past each other; those in support of LGBT rights frame it in terms of equality while those opposed frame their views as holding with traditional morality" (p. 273). While Goodfriend and Bryant celebrated their marriage as the "ultimate exercise of personal freedom,"[259] *Observer* and the other publications were reporting how state Republican leaders were attempting to "void the marriage."[260] Immediately after

Goodfriend and Bryant's wedding, the news coverage focused on Republican-led legislative efforts to pass a series of bills to protect "religious objections to same-sex marriage,"[261] while others claimed the bills were intended to give citizens a "license to discriminate"[262] against gay and lesbian people. *Texan* reported how conservatives were protecting "marriage as proposed by God in the biblical book of Genesis."[263] *Observer* reported the Texas legislative session was the "last meaningful opportunity"[264] for opponents of same-sex marriage to take a stand. All of these articles framed the stories around two distinct and intractable sides.

The culture-war framing had the effect of limiting discussion of LGBT civil rights. As gay and lesbian people were celebrating a historic win, journalists returned to war framing. The enthusiasm among advocates after Goodfriend and Bryant's marriage and the *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision was not allowed to project onto other salient issues for LGBT people. It was always tempered by journalists who brought oppositional voices into the reporting to demonstrate the powerful forces attempting to halt progress for same-sex marriage advocates. The only sources chosen for the stories were those who supported same-sex marriage and those who opposed it. The focus on that limited range of viewpoints had the effect of limiting discussion of LGBT civil rights *to marriage*. This analysis found no substantive discussions of issues other than marriage. Journalists were blind to larger issues for LGBT people that could have been more difficult to report on and may have been viewed as less "sexy" (domestic violence, suicide rates, HIV/AIDS, income inequality, and race relations, to name a few).

The conflictual nature between opponents and supporters of same-sex marriage generated an ongoing conflagration with enough heated exchanges to fill the papers. While the visibility of gay and lesbian people has certainly increased, so too have their opponents, some of whom hold extreme, homophobic views. An example can be found in the June 27, 2015, *Statesman* coverage of the *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision. *Statesman* provided a separate article that was framed around how Texas Republican leaders were "dismayed but defiant"[265] and planned to halt the advance of same-sex marriage *somehow*. At no point did the researcher find journalists affording LGBT civil rights advocates significant, and nearly uncontested, space to proffer their own ideas about how to advance their rights. This research never found a pattern of coverage that silenced the voices of opponents of LGBT civil rights. While Moscowitz (2013) and McFarland (2011) correctly identified journalists framing the debate as dichotomous, what the researchers failed to note is that opponents of LGBT civil rights, even those with homophobic views, have always played, and apparently will always play, a significant role in news coverage.

Disparaging lesbians and gays. Some negative journalistic practices apparently never die. Nearly six decades after gay and lesbian people first made an appearance in the press as deviants and perverts, this analysis found a small number of articles that disparaged gays and lesbians by including quotes and opinions that cast them as pathological. One key process of the protest paradigm is the marginalization of protest groups by accentuating "the deviance of the protesters from the mainstream public" (McLeod & Hertog, 1999, p. 319). Their "deviance" is further made salient through journalism's standards of neutrality, which requires journalists to cite "dichotomous viewpoints on either side of the debate, unwittingly providing a platform for extreme anti-gay opponent groups" (Moscowitz, 2013, p. 131). For example, *Observer*, the most "liberal" publication, included a quote from Dr. Steve Hotze, president of the Conservative Republicans of Texas, who equated gays and lesbians to alcoholics, adulterers, perverts, and "pornographers."[266] The publication also included a quote from Reverend Bill Owens, founder and president of the Coalition of African American Pastors, who "accused the gay community of stealing and hijacking the civil rights movement," calling gay and lesbian civil rights "a civil wrong movement."[267] *Statesman* reported a claim that children with same-sex parents "don't do well," therefore "why would we want to establish or encourage [same-sex parenting] as a social norm?"[268] All the disparaging assertions were published without a substantive challenge. The association of gays and lesbians with disease and dysfunction was a widespread and overt journalist-framing apparatus used in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and to a lesser extent, the 1980s. However, this analysis found that journalists continued to disparage gay people by associating them "with the demise of the institution, social disorder, pedophilia, and polygamy" (Moscowitz, 2013, p. 131). The effect of positioning the opponents of LGBT civil rights on equal footing with those seeking to expand civil rights situated oppositional opinions as "legitimate and honorable, not bigoted and homophobic" (Walters, 2001, p. 182). The continued inclusion of overtly disparaging opinions of gay and lesbian people is unique to coverage of gay and lesbian people. This type of marginalization isn't typical of coverage of other minority groups. For example, journalists largely exclude the voices of individuals who oppose interracial marriage. When journalists report on the use of race as a factor in college admissions, reporters don't include quotes from White supremacist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. If journalists routinely exclude certain bigoted opinions from reporting about selected minority groups, why isn't the same courtesy extended to LGBT people?

Delegitimizing voices of "everyday" people. This research demonstrated a continued pattern by journalists from the three publications of placing quotes and opinions from elite sources in more prominent positions, relegating the perspectives of everyday LGBT people to the sidelines and/or ignoring their perspectives altogether. For example, in the cluster of stories regarding the legislative backlash, the voices of everyday gays and lesbians were nearly absent. When opponents of same-sex marriage were on the steps of the Texas Capitol celebrating "Biblical marriage"[269] and supporters of same-sex marriage were inside the Capitol lobbying lawmakers, *Observer* and *Statesman* failed to include quotes from a same-sex couple advocating for marriage. In fact, much of the debate during the legislative backlash cluster was centered on lawmakers and, to a lesser extent, spokespeople from professional advocacy organizations. This trend continued immediately after the *Obergefell v. Hodges* ruling. All three publications framed most of their articles around reactions from politicians and professional advocacy organizations. This research demonstrated that, when reporting on political affairs, gays and lesbians were not allowed to speak for themselves. This finding adds to an emerging list of research that found the debate around same-sex marriage is "dominated by conventionally 'straight' perspectives, continuing to grant power and prominence to traditionally authoritative (often oppositional) sources" (Moscowitz, 2010, p. 36), and the focus on elite sources in stories about same-sex marriage, "tacitly delegitimizing the lived experiences of members of the LGBTQ community" (Rodriguez & Blumell, 2014, p. 353). Excluding the opinions of individuals who challenge state authority also conforms to one process of the protest paradigm: delegitimization. As McLeod and Hertog (1999) noted, "a characteristic that connotes legitimacy is whether protesters are allowed to speak through their own voices" (McLeod & Hertog, 1999, p. 319).

A white-washed visual depiction. One of the most prominent features of this cluster of stories was the explosion of photographic coverage. On the whole, journalists generated the most amount of photographs of gays and lesbians in this case study compared with all three other case studies combined. With the exception of a few photographs, depictions of individuals carrying signs to protest same-sex marriage were largely absent. While the voices of same-sex couples were omitted from stories, their visual depictions abounded, especially during Goodfriend and Bryant's marriage and the *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision coverage. The exclusion of same-sex couples' voices in written news stories, but the inclusion of them in visual coverage, lends weight to Moscowitz (2010) who called this journalistic practice "visual ornamentation." Same-sex couples are visually present but unheard. While the amount of visuals increased, the photographic coverage lacked a depiction of one of the cornerstones of the marriage ceremony: the kiss.

During a wedding ceremony, there are a series of symbolic gestures, from verbal to physical, geared towards publicly demonstrating the couples' intentions. The vows are verbal declarations of love and commitment. The exchanging of wedding rings is a material expression. The final act in the ceremony is, for some, the ultimate physical expression of love: the kiss. While these kisses can range from passionate to dispassionate, the final exchange of a kiss symbolizes the conclusion of the ceremony and the emotional bound between the two individuals. The depiction of couples kissing is not isolated to the marriage ceremony. One of the most indelible pictures of the end of World War II is a photograph of the euphoric kiss between a sailor and a nurse in the middle of New York's Times Square on August 14, 1945, the day Japan surrendered to the U.S. The image was captured by photojournalist Alfred Eisenstaedt and published on the cover of *Life* magazine. This image is seared into the collective consciousness for individuals who lived that day, and, arguably, visually captured this country's enthusiasm for the conclusion of the war.

For the *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision, the day thousands of same-sex couples could legally enter into state-sanctioned marriage, an indelible photograph of individuals celebrating their marriage through a euphoric kiss can't be found in the data for this case study. While the photographic coverage of same-sex marriage in Texas was the first instance in this study that the three newspapers published photographs of two same-sex couples displaying affection, the affection was sanitized. Of the 34 photographs of same-sex couples, only two depict two women kissing each other on the lips. None of the photographs show men kissing. *Statesman* was the only publication to publish photographs (two) of two women kissing on the lips. On the front page of the June 27, 2015, edition of the *Statesman*, two women are depicted standing in front of a judge, exchanging a tepid kiss—the women were depicted exchanging a "peck" on the lips, not a euphoric embrace and kiss. Of the 15 pictures of same-sex couples included in *Observer*'s coverage of *Obergefell v. Hodges*, none depicted same-sex couples actually kissing each other on the lips. This is a significant finding, as the affection between couples marrying was generally limited to a light embrace. Since the 1950s through the AIDS epidemic, much of the media coverage of gays, especially men, framed them as perverts, deviants, or oversexed (Streitmatter, 2009). The new frame of gays and lesbians appears to be desexualized altogether. This is an important finding, as emerging research suggests that the new visual representation of gays and lesbians is domesticated. Further proof that the desexualization and domestication of same-sex couples was found in the imagery of individuals celebrating same-sex marriage, especially in the *Obergefell v.*

Hodges decision cluster. Some of the imagery was captured as hundreds filled Austin's Central Presbyterian Church downtown. The mayor and local state senator were present. LGBT people and their allies were shown in the pews, happily holding placards that read "America is Ready for the Freedom to Marry."[270] The photography of gay and lesbian civil rights advocates celebrating in the pews, not the streets, adds to the position of Moscowitz (2010) who found that media framing, shaped by professional advocacy organizations, depicted gays not in "dark, seedy bars; and leather festivals" but "domesticated in typically heteronormative ways" (p. 130).

The visualization is not only desexualized and domesticated, but narrow as well. This case study found no photographic representation of individuals identified as transgender, bisexual, and/or queer. The individuals clearly adhered to the gender binary and did not challenge normative standards of beauty. The lack of racial and ethnic diversity within the photographs was shocking as well. All of the couples depicted in *Statesman*'s coverage of the *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision were White. No interracial or mixed ethnic couples were depicted. *Observer* provided more diversity in its photographic coverage. All of *Texan*'s prominent imagery of couples was exclusively of White individuals.

Conclusion. The coverage of same-sex marriage in Texas increased the media visibility of gays and lesbians. The amount of photographic coverage was stunning. At the same time, the media depictions stopped short of showing same-sex couples cementing their marriages with the final kiss. Another prominent feature of the coverage in this case study was the similarity among all three publications. All three newspapers engaged in a practice that marginalized the voices of average gays and lesbians by continuously framing coverage around elite sources. As the media spotlight shined on same-sex couples, the publications, intentionally or not, provided a venue for opponents of gay and lesbian civil rights to continue to voice their oppositional discourse, some of which was overtly homophobic. Some of the oppositional arguments delegitimized gay people by resurrecting media framing—gays as deviants—that was reminiscent of the 1950s and 1960s. While gay and lesbian voices in the media were historically silenced in earlier years, this research demonstrated that opponents have always had, and will continue to have, a platform in the media to voice their bigoted opinions.

RQ2: THE PATH FROM DIVERGENT TO CONVERGENT COVERAGE

The findings of this research indicated that for LGBTQ people in Texas the alternative press largely failed to serve as an enduring source of counterdiscourses, which “permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests and needs” (Fraser, 1990, p. 67). *Rag* stands as the pinnacle of a countercultural publication, as it clearly diverged from the mainstream and collegiate press by serving as a *subaltern counterpublic*. *Rag* was a site that positively affirmed gay and lesbian existence, provided an avenue for them to circulate information to mobilize for political change, historicized and contextualized their efforts as acting in unison with other similarly situated individuals, and connected their efforts to the New Left. While at first the alternative publication category disseminated unique countercultural discourse, by case study four, it devolved to mirror the content of the mainstream and collegiate newspapers. In order to answer RQ2 (What was the nature of coverage of gay and lesbian people in Austin by various media entities—mainstream, collegiate, and alternative newspapers?), the researcher utilized the results of RQ1 to observe the changes over the past five decades. The units of analyses were the results from each case study, as a purposive representation of news coverage from each of the study’s corresponding time periods. While framing analysis in discrete time periods can yield important findings to account for journalists’ reporting that reflects the “status quo,” a comparison of news coverage over the span of half a century provides a means to gain an understanding of how journalists’ framing of gay and lesbian people evolved over time. The findings of this research indicated that at first the alternative press provided a substantially different picture of the gay and lesbian community compared with the mainstream and alternative press. However, by case study four, all three categories of publications generated news coverage that portrayed gays through a single, similar frame.

Divergence

Rag embodied the nature of the gay liberationist's ideology by "inverting the terms in which homosexuality was understood" (D'Emilio, 2002, p. 57). The publication challenged homophobia, sexism, patriarchy, and heteronormativity, and, more importantly, advocated for individuals to "come out and get together" to challenge state oppression. *Rag* served as a *subaltern counterpublic* "where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses" (Fraser, 1990, p. 67). In stratified societies where members of subordinate groups are excluded from participating in the larger public sphere, subordinate classes withdraw and regroup in "parallel discursive arenas" (Fraser, 1990, p. 68). *Rag* provided such an area by historicizing and contextualizing the gay and lesbian movement and by framing gays in a completely different manner compared with *Statesman* and *Texan*. A reader who consumed only information from *Rag* would have a completely different perspective from someone who read *Statesman* and *Texan*.

While *Statesman* and *Texan* framed gays as sexual deviants who suffered from a mental illness, *Rag* provided a countercultural narrative, both textually and visually, that affirmed homosexual feelings as "a natural component of any human being, just as attraction to the opposite sex is. Both are potentially healthy and beautiful, and in a healthy culture both will find expression without shame or guilt."[271] *Statesman* and *Texan* marginalized gays and lesbians by framing them as troubled sexual deviants. Both publications repeated claims from UT's administration that the group's presence on campus would be "detrimental"[272] to student welfare and would "bring discredit to the institution in the eyes of most of those interested in the University, including the taxpaying public."[273] In the first article to report on the GLF in May 1970, *Texan* characterized the group as a site for members—not to fight state oppression—but "to discuss mutual problems."[274] During Austin's first Gay Pride Week in June 1971, *Statesman* framed GLF members as sexual deviants by focusing on the group's efforts to repeal Texas sodomy laws. *Rag*'s coverage of the same event framed GLF as a burgeoning radical political group fighting state oppression, demanding that state government end police harassment, and working for environments to be free from discrimination, the release of all queer prisoners, AND the repeal of the state's antisodomy laws. *Statesman* and, to a lesser degree, *Texan* delegitimized gays and lesbians by either omitting them as sources or burying their quotes to the bottom of the story.

Rag connected readers visually to the human faces behind the burgeoning gay and lesbian movement through the use of hero frames. When GLF members were arrested for attempting to hold a dance at the Texas Union's main ballroom on February 25, 1972, *Rag* framed the individuals as heroes, while *Texan* characterized them as deviants spreading disorder. *Texan*'s sole photograph from the Union ballroom raid depicted GLF members being taken into custody—one was dragged through the ballroom. *Rag* published a similar photograph, plus other photographs of students sitting in a circle, clam, engaging in an act of civil disobedience. *Rag* also published pictures of GLF celebrating the fact that they held their dance, not in the Union ballroom, but outside on the patio. *Rag* framed GLF as winning the day, while *Texan* and *Statesman* depicted GLF as deviants who failed to hold their dance and, in the process, spread disorder.

The nature of coverage within *Rag* situated gays and lesbians in a historical context—as fighting for a cause in unison with similarly situated individuals across the country. *Rag*'s coverage provided a forum for gays and lesbians to gain an understanding of their burgeoning movement. A May 18, 1970, *Rag* article titled "Other Places" described the evolution of the movement since WWII; the effect of the Kinsey report on gay and lesbian identity; the formation of the Mattachine Society that ran "a 24-hour telephone referral service for physicians, psychologists, and bail service;" and Daughters of Bilitis (DOB) that "practices sex segregation by not allowing men in membership."[275] The author also contextualized Austin's GLF efforts as unique in Texas because "Houston's Promethean Society now seems defunct: the group of people in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area is hard to pen [*sic*] down."[276] It's important to note the extraordinary uniqueness of this article. The author penned the article decades before the widespread circulation of gay and lesbian history books. The author's historical accounting of the gay and lesbian movement, as it relates to ongoing efforts in Austin, was a perspective that couldn't be found in *Statesman* and *Texan*. At that time, the mainstream press wouldn't even consider publishing such an article.

Much of the coverage within *Rag* was dominated by the male perspective. However, *Rag* provided an avenue for females to challenge patriarchy within their own movement. Lesbians at that time—and still today—felt alienated from the gay movement, as they identified "the male dominance and unintentional male chauvinism of Austin's Gay Liberation."[277] An article challenged capitalism, patriarchy, sexism, and heteronormativity by encouraging women to resist "images from the straight male world" and "to be liberated from the social indoctrination of earning money, marrying, keeping the wife at home and making babies."[278] Sexism was also addressed with *Rag*'s artwork.

One depiction illustrated a nude male and female with broken handcuffs dangling on their wrists. The caption read: "Gay Brothers and Sisters Unite! Free Ourselves. Smash Sexism."[279] *Rag* was the only publication to connect the gay movement with larger issues in society.

Rag couldn't be counted on as an enduring site for gays and lesbians to obtain news and information however, as the newspaper ceased publishing in 1977, a few years before the AIDS epidemic hit the gay community. One aspect of counterpublics is the "contestatory relationship to dominant publics" (Fraser, 1990, p. 70), and it's clear from case study one that *Rag* produced unique content that informed readers, advocated for change, and contextualized the movement. If *Rag* is viewed as the baseline for an effective counterpublic by directly contesting the narratives within the mainstream and collegiate press, the subsequent case studies illustrated how the alternative press slowly gravitated away from such an oppositional orientation.

***TWT*, *Statesman*, and *Texan* Initial Converging**

During case study two, the research findings indicated that the alternative publication, in the form of *TWT*, slowly gravitated towards coverage that resembled the mainstream and collegiate press. As Texas officials debated imposing a quarantine for "incorrigible" AIDS victims, *TWT* continued to provide an affirming source of coverage by framing much of its stories around the perspective of "gay leaders." Throughout case study two, *TWT*'s coverage framed the Texas gay community as a cohesive political body challenging the state, working in unison, and launching a lobbying effort that eventually succeeded in stopping the quarantine.

Through the utilization of vague discourse, *Statesman* and *Texan* demonized those with AIDS by framing them as being threats to society. Both publications perpetuated the threatening frame, despite the fact that publicly available information indicated that the actual threat was generated by male prostitutes, not average people who contracted AIDS. The publications included discourse with stories that had the effect of indicting all gay men and all forms of homosexual sexual activity as being the culprits behind the spread of AIDS. While Texas State Health Commissioner Robert Bernstein utilized the word "incorrigibles" to describe "AIDS sufferers who refused to stop having sex,"[280] both publications failed to provide context to vague assertions that gave the reader an impression that all homosexual activity, including kissing, was responsible for the spread of AIDS, and that innocent Texans were in danger of being victimized by hypersexual men who want to spread the virus.

All three publications omitted voices of AIDS victims, symbolically annihilating their lived experiences. It's understandable that most men who had AIDS probably wanted to remain anonymous, fearing they might lose their job, health insurance, or family support. However, *TWT* could have granted anonymity to an AIDS victim in order to protect his identity. Scholars have cited rampant homophobia in the mainstream press as a reason for the poor quality of reporting on the AIDS epidemic; however, *TWT* couldn't hide behind bigotry. *TWT* should have doubled-down on its efforts to present a human face behind the epidemic because the mainstream press was certainly not reaching out to those individuals who suffered from AIDS.

Further convergence. The nature of coverage of Glenn Maxey's campaign for Texas State Representative District 51 was exceptional by the fact that *TWT*, *Statesman*, and *Texan* continued to converge with one notable exception—*Statesman* attempted to scandalize Maxey's sexual orientation, while the other publications did not. *TWT*'s coverage was unoriginal, sporadic, and, at times, unethical. By this point in the discourse analysis, *TWT* ceased to exhibit any ability to contest dominant narratives by inventing and circulating counterdiscourses. The newspaper published a total of four short articles about Maxey's race. None of the articles delved into Maxey's personal life and background as the former lobbyist for LGRL. None of the articles situated Maxey within a historical context. Maxey's race was exceptional by the fact that he was the first openly gay state lawmaker to win. How many other openly gay individuals attempted a similar run? Who were the other openly gay lawmakers around the country? And how did they affect change in their state? *TWT* readers never knew the answers to those questions, as the newspaper produced zero stories that provided a unique perspective.

Among all three categories, none focused on issues specifically concerning gay and lesbian Texans. In 1991, there were a host of significant issues. The AIDS virus remained lethal. Texas law classified homosexual sex as a crime. Same-sex marriage was illegal. *TWT*, along with *Statesman* and *Texan*, produced zero stories covering how Maxey would address these topics. It's plausible that, in order to be perceived as palatable to the majority of his constituents who were straight, Maxey formed a political platform that was devoid of gay and lesbian issues. If that was the case, *TWT* could have provided such contextualization.

TWT, *Statesman*, and *Texan* diverged on one important aspect of Maxey's race, his sexual orientation. All three publications framed Maxey as facing an uphill battle in a district dominated by heterosexuals and Latinos. However, *Statesman*'s coverage framed Maxey as an outsider by characterizing him as a "gay candidate"[281] and a "homosexual legislator."[282] While *Texan* mentioned Maxey's sexual orientation, it framed much of its coverage on public education issues that were part of the platforms of both lead candidates. Throughout the case study, *Statesman* made Maxey's sexual orientation a salient aspect in the race for District 51, despite the fact that the other dozen candidates appeared to never have publicly exhibited concern. None of the other stories about the other candidates addressed their sexual orientation. On the day of Maxey's swearing-in, *Statesman* attempted to scandalize Maxey's sexual orientation by utilizing unnamed sources to report that the ceremony "was unmarred by rumors that five state representatives who have switched their seats in the past week did so because Maxey is gay."[283] That piece of information was reported, despite the fact that four days earlier *Statesman* acknowledged that "Maxey's homosexuality made hardly a ripple"[284] in the campaign and "House Speaker Gib Lewis has said he does not think Maxey's sexual orientation will impair his ability to work with other legislators."[285] *Statesman*'s near-obsession with Maxey's sexual orientation had the effect of keeping his "otherness" in the minds of the newspaper's readers and calling into question how his identity might negatively affect his ability to work with lawmakers.

Complete convergence. By case study four, the volume of coverage of gay and lesbian people and the issues important to them, both textually and photographically, substantially increased. Case study four saw the most amount of coverage in the smallest time period. This case study marked the moment when all three publication categories converged on a single common depiction that permeated the public sphere. The alternative publication abandoned being a subaltern counterpublic, ceasing the publication of counterdiscourses. In fact, alternative publications joined the mainstream and collegiate press by engaging in reporting practices that reflect the *protest paradigm*.

In case study four, among all three publications, the voices from the political and legal elite and professional advocacy organizations were the most prominent within news stories, delegitimizing the lives of average LGBTQ people. The coverage of same-sex marriage in all three publications was framed as a culture war, pitting two sides against each other. Readers were inundated with quotes and opinions of same-sex marriage advocates and opponents making moral conflicting judgments, stating firm policy positions, refusing to negotiate, and, in the end, talking past each other. While conservative politicians and advocates traded barbs in the press with professional gay and lesbian advocates, the lives of LGBTQ Texans remained a mystery. The exclusion of the voices of everyday people and the culture-war framing resulted in a plethora of coverage in which readers from all three publications could consume a vast amount of editorial content, put down their newspapers, and, in the end, know very little about the lives of average LGBTQ individuals.

More than 70 years after gays and lesbians were beginning to make an appearance in the mainstream press as perverts and deviants, contemporary coverage continues to marginalize them, although to a lesser degree compared with previous case studies. The focus of the elites provided ample room for socially accepted prejudices to seep into the public discourse about same-sex marriage. As gays and lesbians were celebrating their right to wed, opponents questioned the morality of gays and situated same-sex couples as an indication of the decay of society at large. While mainstream and collegiate journalists no longer overtly framed gays and lesbians as sexual deviants and threats to society, journalists provided a conduit for conservatives to spread what amounted to socially acceptable bigotry.

Photographic Coverage

Compared with the other three case studies, the amount of photographic coverage of gays and lesbians was unprecedented. In the first three case studies, very few pictures of gays and lesbians were actually published. One of the earliest pictures of gays and lesbians found in this analysis was a photograph published in *Texan* on February 28, 1971. The photograph depicted officers arresting GLF members who were attempting to hold a dance at the Union ballroom. One of the GLF members was photographed being taken into custody and being dragged across the floor. During the AIDS quarantine debate, most of the photographs depicted the Texas State Health Commissioner speaking into a bank of microphones, not AIDS victims or individuals who advocated on their behalf. Most, if not all, the photographs during case study three centered on Maxey and his opponents. During case study four, pictures of gays and lesbians celebrating marriage abound. Their opponents were generally photographed surrounded by the trappings of authority—usually standing in front of a podium or in front of a crowd. However, all three publications provided a narrow range of depictions of couples, both demographically and emotionally. *Texan* and *Observer* stopped short of fully depicting the essence of a marriage ceremony, the moment the couple exchanges “the kiss.” The first photographs of same-sex individuals kissing were found within the last case study. *Statesman* did feature two couples kissing, but the emotions within those photographs were muted. Most of the couples were featured exhibiting a constrained type of affection: a peck on the cheek, side hugging, and holding hands. Compared with the first case study, the photographic depiction of a constrained emotion was not an indication of progress. Forty years earlier in *Rag*, male individuals were also seen on several occasions displaying muted affection, hugging, and embracing each other. The range of individuals depicted in the photography was shockingly narrow as well. No interracial couples, Black couples, or Mexican American couples were depicted. Most of the couples were either White or of mixed ethnic heritage. All of the couples appeared to adhere to the gender binary. No queer couples or transgender couples were identified in the photographs.

Conclusion

The results of the four case studies indicated that mainstream and collegiate journalists have nearly abandoned overtly framing gays and lesbians as sexual deviants and threats to society. However, contemporary coverage framed them as locked in an endless culture war with political forces that oppose the expansion of civil rights for LGBTQ people. Journalists legitimized socially acceptable prejudice to seep into the public sphere by providing ample room for opponents of same-sex marriage to espouse bigoted views. While the data for the final case study substantially increased, a reader of the three publications could consume vast amounts of news material about LGBTQ people without gaining an understanding of the actual lives of queer people because much of the coverage of same-sex marriage was framed around the opinions and quotes of expert and elite sources, relegating the lives of LGBTQ people as a mystery.

At the onset of this analysis, based on the existing literature, one could have expected *Statesman* to marginalize and delegitimize the lives of LGBTQ Texans. There's a long line of literature that demonstrates the predisposition of the mainstream press to protect the "status quo." One of the most significant findings of this research is the simple fact that LGBTQ Texans have never had an enduring site to obtain counterdiscourses that challenge the dominant narratives. LGBTQ Texans could not turn to *Rag*, *TWT*, or *Observer* as an enduring alternative press category. When *Rag* ceased publishing, *TWT* and *Observer* simply failed at serving as "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses" (Fraser, 1990, p. 67).

The findings of this research support the notion that the alternative press must not be viewed as a static monolith. It's clear from the research that different publications provided a varying degree of countercultural narratives. In fact, one of the publications, *Observer*, even ignored gays and lesbians during the movement's formative years. Founded in 1954, *Observer* is one of the longest operating alternative publications in Texas. The paper was founded to cover issues "ignored by the state's daily newspapers: race and class and the lives of working people" ("About the Observer," n.d.). The publication celebrates its independent and muckraking history; however, it appears to have ignored the gay and lesbian community up until recently. As gay and lesbian students at the University of Texas at Austin were deprived of their right to register as an official organization, *Observer* stood silent. As thousands of gay Texans died of AIDS, the newspaper appears to have been silent as well. The first long-form article about AIDS that the researcher could locate was published on May 16, 1986. This was not a news article; rather, it was a book review of "AIDS in the Mind of America" by Dennis Altman. The book discusses the politics around AIDS, advancement of medical research, journalists' unfair coverage of the epidemic, and safe sex, to name a few. After 1987, coverage of AIDS ramps up with more frequent articles and updates about the politics of AIDS. By 2015, *Observer* devoted a significant amount of editorial and photographic space to reporting on the first same-sex marriages in Texas history.

RQ 3: *AMERICAN GOTHIC*: RETURNING TO THE PAST

The findings of this research indicated that gays and lesbians are no longer portrayed as advocating for a revolution in "The American Dream" to be a world free from racist, patriarchal, capitalistic, and heteronormative constructs; instead, they are depicted as reifying a fantasy that is actually a nightmare for some queer people. Led by corporatized advocacy organizations, the "ultimate exercise of personal freedom" now resides in a domesticated, married household. The path of the gay and lesbian people from being characterized as radical deviants to desexualized and domesticated individuals is reflected in changes of the movement's strategy, which played out in each of the case studies. News discourse from the four case studies demonstrated that a multiplicity of discourse about gay and lesbian people was, at one time, a norm. A newspaper reader in Austin, Texas, in the 1970s had greater access to radical political perspectives about gays and lesbians compared with a newspaper consumer in contemporary times. In contemporary times, the depiction of LGBTQ people has substantially narrowed. Within the news stories analyzed for this research, queer radicalism is dead. In order to answer RQ3 (What might news discourse of the four case studies say about the influence of homonormativity on coverage of same-sex marriage?), one must understand how corporatized LGBTQ movement organizations made a concerted effort to control the message and present an idealized and sanitized image to the mainstream, and the findings of this research demonstrated how reporters followed along by framing stories about same-sex marriage around couples who adhered to "conventional ideological norms and often heterosexist notions of partnering, monogamy, marriage, family and parenting" (Moscowitz, 2013, p. 62). Desexualized couples "whose gender profiles seem least queer, are put forward as the good and acceptable face of the movement" (Warner, 1999, p. 66). This research demonstrated that homonormativity evolved—or devolved, depending on one's perspective—to dominate coverage of LGBTQ people by failing to contest heteronormativity, and, in the process, upholding and sustaining the institution "while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption" (Duggan, 2003, p. 50).

As the case studies in this research demonstrated, radical political ideology slowly ceased to manifest in news coverage as the alternative publications conformed to, rather than challenged, homonormativity. The news discourse over the past four case studies illustrated the path that leads to homonormativity. Slowly the queer subjects of the case studies shed their gay liberationist past and adopted an orientation that was more palatable to the mainstream. Some might call this evolution; others could label it devolution. The findings of this research demonstrated that, in terms of same-sex marriage coverage, the portrayal of LGBT people is one in which the 'B,' 'T,' and anyone resembling messy queerness have been symbolically annihilated in media coverage. Gay and lesbian acceptance by the mainstream set them on an avenue that would ultimately lead, intentionally or not, to the "unqueering" of the movement. The contemporary movement exhibits characteristics from its constrained past. In the first section of this chapter, the researcher utilized queer theoretical concepts to explain how the news discourse demonstrated a deradicalization of gay people. In the second section, the researcher offered a metaphor to situate the contemporary imagery of gays and lesbians, and utilize queer theory to explain who has been symbolically annihilated from news coverage.

Queer Theory: Movement Orientations Clash and Cooperate with Power

Gay Liberation Front. The efforts by the GLF to gain official recognition as a student organization was one of the earliest efforts in Austin's history of a gay liberationist group directly confronting the state to fight oppression. Austin gays and lesbians were asserting themselves and, in the process, transforming the homosexual from a mystery to a person. Queer theorists recognize the dualistic nature of asserting socially constructed identity concepts, as they are both "an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy" (Foucault, 1978, p. 101). As Foucault (1978) argued, asserting the legitimacy of the gay and lesbian identity has a two-fold effect. First, the identity construct provided a means for gays and lesbians to utilize the dominant discourse, both as a point of contestation and as a tool of encouragement for other similarly situated individuals to act in unison and demand recognition, not as deviants but as equals. *Rag* generated a countercultural discourse, a reverse discourse that supported GLF's efforts to exert their legitimacy. *Rag*'s coverage situated the gay and lesbian identity as a radical, political person in direct opposition to the hegemonic and homophobic discourse circulating within the public sphere through the mediums of *Statesman* and *Texan*. *Rag* was exerting the gay identity within society, demanding "its legitimacy or 'naturality' be acknowledged" (Foucault, 1978, p. 101).

The second effect stifled the individual. Once the homosexual had been transformed from a being mystery to an actual person, hegemonic institutions had an individual to subjugate. While GLF utilized their identity and discourse as a "starting point for an opposing strategy" (Foucault, 1978, p. 101), *Texan* and *Statesman* colluded with the UT administration, whether intentionally or not, to suppress gays and lesbians from obtaining legitimacy though conferring the group the same status as any other official student organization. For GLF, the legitimacy that accompanied the recognition of their group as an official student organization was paramount. The title of "official student organization" would have defied all dominant institutions. At the time, all mainstream medical, political, governmental, and religious institutions firmly held homophobic prejudices and discounted the ability of the homosexual to live healthy and productive lives. For UT to officially recognize GLF as equal to all other student groups, like the baking club or the book club, would have, in effect, declared GLF's legitimacy to the mainstream. Reflecting the notion that identity constructs are "an instrument and an effect of power" (Foucault, 1978, p. 101), university administration deployed disparaging rhetoric to demean students' efforts. This was GLF's first overt intrusion into the mainstream, and the *Statesman* and *Texan* watchdogs of the "status quo" adopted the administration's rhetoric and framed GLF accordingly. *Statesman* and *Texan* attempted to fuse homophobic discourse with the gay and lesbian identity by framing the individuals as deviants, thus reinforcing the prevailing attitudes and opinions of the time.

Quarantine AIDS victims. By case study two, the research demonstrated that gays and lesbians adopted a new orientation. Instead of directly confronting and battling the state, the gay and lesbian movement attempted to engage the state on a new, "professionalized" level. Texas' plan to quarantine men with AIDS came at a changing political context. Gay and lesbian radicalism was transforming in the face of a resurgence of social conservatism, embodied by the presidency of Ronal Reagan. Federal government leaders "expressed far more concern about the spread of AIDS into the 'general population' than they did about its impact on the communities most severely affected" (Stein, 2012, p. 145). This research demonstrated that that paranoia trickled down from the federal government to the Texas state government, as Texas officials sought to quarantine AIDS patients, rather than provide education to the entire gay community about safe sex practices, condoms, and other intervention measures. Within this resurgent conservative environment, *Rag* ceased operating. By 1977, the publication no longer served as a subaltern counterpublic for gays and lesbian in Austin. Where could gays turn to for information that challenged the "status quo?" *TWT* was a newspaper that targeted the gay Texan. The news discourse of the AIDS quarantine proposal within *TWT* reflected the earliest efforts by the gay and lesbian movement to professionalize their advocacy efforts, and, in the process, shed GLF radicalism.

The mobilization efforts against the quarantine plan benefited from efforts in the 1970s, as GLF and other gay and lesbian groups built a social and cultural foundation through "a decade of sexual liberalization, territorial expansion, economic development, institutional growth and political mobilization" (Stein, 2012, p. 144). This can be seen in news discourse, as professional gay and lesbian organizations, such as the Lesbian-Gay Rights Advocates, were formed to combat the quarantine issue. These professional-sounding groups had the effect of further reinforcing the notion that gay and lesbian identities were in an uncontested discursive category. Rather than taking to the streets to protest, antiquarantine groups engaged with the state through organized lobbying groups. Gays and lesbians were declaring to society: "We're here. We want to work with you. Please, get used to us." That declaration manifested in the news discourse across all three publications, as those groups were legitimized when cited as sources.

TWT, *Statesman*, and *Texan* also engaged in a practice that further solidified the gay identity as an immutable characteristic. Because the coverage lacked a debate around the enduring nature of the homosexual identity; it was taken as a given. The overtly hostile deviant-framing no longer applied to the entire gay and lesbian community. Rather, the debate centered on those infected with AIDS. The news discourse among all three publications also indicated that gays and lesbians shied away from attempting to utilize a queer ideology to subvert discursive categories as discreet units. Instead, the activists in the news coverage reinforced the gay and lesbian identity as fixed and constrained. Queer theorists, such as Butler (1993) and Sedgwick (1990), call into question normative and constraining notions within identity constructs, which bypass any ability to recognize sexual identity categories as fluid. By this point in the research, the news discourse no longer contained queer, radical notions of identity and politics. It's important to note this effect because queer theorists critique the reductive nature of a discursive unit that draws the boundaries of inclusion, thus manifests a layer of inner-group social control: "[w]e operated as disciplining agents on each other and ourselves through our expectations of 'normal' behavior and our sometimes subtle, sometimes overt, communications of disapproval" (Hall, 2003, p. 65). There's no indication within this research that overt actions were taken to exclude individuals with a particular gay radicalism or nonnormative orientation. However, the voices of regular gays and AIDS victims were symbolically annihilated. In their place, "gay leaders," medical professionals, and "official spokespeople" from straight movement organizations (e.g., the Texas Civil Liberties Union) presented arguments against the quarantine plan. Within the context of news discourse, the inclusion of a narrow range of voices that were engaging with the state through direct testimony at public meetings or dialogue within private settings illustrated how gays and lesbians were no longer portrayed as radicals attempting to disrupt hegemonic structures. Instead, they were framed as an organized political body cooperating with the state to professionally contest a particular policy. In essence, we begin to see the movement engaging with, rather than attempting to revolutionize, the heteronormative state.

Texas' first openly gay lawmaker. By the 1990s, it was clear that the movement failed to radically transform society, as indicated by the strategic goals adopted by corporatized LGBT organizations (military service, same-sex marriage, and expanded civil rights protections). Instead of revolutionizing the capitalistic state apparatus by challenging patriarchy, redefining romantic relationships, and ending warfare, "gays and lesbians were fighting to be included in them" (Becker, 2006, p. 43). Also in the 1990s, gay men and women entered politics at unprecedented rates (Yeager, 1999). But to do so, corporatized LGBT movement organizations undertook a normalization strategy, believing "that the way to overcome stigma was to win acceptance by the dominant culture, rather than to change the self-understanding of that culture" (Warner, 1999, p. 50).

During Maxey's race, none of the publications served as a subaltern counterpublic to contest the mainstream discourse. By case study three, *TWT* mirrored *Statesman*'s coverage rather than challenged it. *Statesman* engaged in a pattern of reporting practices that left readers with the impression that people like Maxey were cowering, exotic, invisible creatures creeping the halls of the Texas Capitol, not legitimate leaders. *Statesman* utilized unnamed sources and reported unsubstantiated rumors to cast doubt on Maxey's ability to lead. No site served to disseminate countercultural discourse. Who was left to generate such discourse? It could have been incumbent upon Maxey to challenge heteronormativity as an oppressive structure. However, this discourse analysis found a wholesale exclusion of any challenge to normative and oppressive structures. Instead, there was a near obsession in *Statesman*'s coverage with reporting on Maxey's sexual orientation, which had the effect of solidifying, to the mainstream audience, the gay identity as a discreet discursive unit. In attempting to scandalize his gayness, the newspaper made his sexual orientation an immutable characteristic. Through the lens of queer theory, Maxey could have utilized the dominant discourse to generate his own challenge to the newspaper's attempt to fix his identity into a narrowly drawn discursive unit. Instead of running from it, Maxey embraced it. His embrace of his sexual orientation had two distinguishable characteristics. First, he staked his claim in history as the first openly gay state lawmaker in Texas history. He wanted to wear that mantle. Second, while staking his claim, he distanced himself from being labeled as a representative of the gay community. He situated himself as a gay man with the political acumen to represent a liberal and mostly Hispanic district in Austin. By creating distance between himself and the politics of his sexual orientation, Maxey situated himself not as a radical gay activist, but as a professional leader who formerly served as a lobbyist for the gay and lesbian community. His sexual orientation was highly normalized. His sexual orientation was part of the fabric of America. The news discourse indicated that Maxey bypassed all challenges to heteronormativity. Instead, he was assimilating into it. He was the beginning of a distinct embodied homonormative politician who sought to engage, not revolutionize, the neoliberal state, while his identity conflicted with the hegemonic values of heteronormative state. By the nature of his mere presence at the legislature, yes, some things might change, but Maxey wasn't seeking a wholesale revolution.

Homonormativity is complete. The corporatized LGBT movement in the 1990s through the June 2015 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges* that legalized same-sex marriages continues an assimilationist path. Large-scale LGBTQ movement organizations, such as Human Rights Campaign and Equality Texas, adopted

> ...neoliberal rhetoric and corporate decision-making models. No longer representative of a broad-based progressive movement, many of the dominant national lesbian and gay civil rights groups have become the lobbying, legal, and public relations firms for an increasingly narrow gay, moneyed elite. (Duggan, 2003, p. 45)

Corporatized LGBTQ movement organizations focus on generating a distinct discourse, "race-neutral or multicultural messages aimed directly at maximizing voter support" (Stone & Ward, 2011, p. 620). The assimilationist approach sought to normalize "gay identity for straight audiences rather than embarking on a more radical and systematic critique of embedded cultural homophobia" (Moscowitz, 2013, p. 52). Scholars have conducted studies demonstrating that major LGBTQ organizations successfully controlled the image and narrative around same-sex marriage, and reporters followed along by framing around couples who adhered to "conventional ideological norms and often heterosexist notions of partnering, monogamy, marriage, family and parenting" (Moscowitz, 2013, p. 62). Those couples "whose sex is least threatening, along with those whose gender profiles seem least queer, are put forward as the good and acceptable face of the movement" (Warner, 1999, p. 66).

This research demonstrated that the stories about same-sex marriage reflected homonormativity. LGBTQ people were portrayed as depoliticized. According to the news discourse, their politics began and ended with state-sanctioned marriage. The reporting lacked any meaningful discussions around other issues affecting the LGBTQ community, such as homelessness, HIV/AIDS, violence against transgender individuals, etc.… There were no indications of individuals challenging heteronormativity. Gays and lesbians were wholly detached from critiques involving racism, sexism, and capitalism. No mass protesting in the streets. Instead, professionalized lobbying and advocacy groups were the entities directly engaging with the state.

The couples presented in the stories were domesticated and desexualized. The newlyweds, always two, posed with their children, happy to enter the bliss of marriage. Monogamous pair bonding was a forgone conclusion, as the news coverage omitted any references to how these couples may live in a different fashion from heterosexual married couples. Photographs of meaningful affection between same-sex couples were generally omitted from the coverage. There were simply no discussions around the normalization of sexual activity and no discussions around expanding notions of healthy sex. While audience members saw the couples in news photography, interviews with them were generally buried or omitted. By omitting any discussions about how same-sex couples may actually live their lives in a nonheternormative fashion, the reader was left with the impression that gay couples are just like straight couples. The news discourse bypassed all discussions about the messy queer lives that some of these individuals may actually live. This is exactly the goal of large corporatized LGBTQ movement organizations. They want to scrub gays and lesbians from any notion of deviancy, despite the fact that their identity category is defined by the stigma of their sexual activity. As Warner (1999) points out, failing to acknowledge the sexual activity behind the gay and lesbian identity is "wishfulness, or even self-contradiction," as our society is nowhere near a future where one is defined outside the bounds of sexual activity. All of us are defined by who we sleep with whether we like it or not.

Homophiles return. The new focus on respectability must not be construed as a "coming of age" for the LGBTQ movement. This isn't a moment when the activists can reflect on the past 60 years and say, "Wow. We've come a long way." Instead, the movement should be saying "Wow. We haven't gone far enough." The focus on presenting a respectable image of LGBTQ people that is palatable to the mainstream harkens back to the assimilationist tactics deployed by the homophiles of the 1950s. Homophiles, in the form of movement organizations like Mattachine Society and DOB, sought to eradicate any association with sex by cultivating "an ethnical homosexual culture" (Miller, 1995, p. 334) through demonstrating that "homosexuals were the products of ordinary, average families—that we weren't pariahs" (Streitmatter, 1995, p. 20). They were conscious of public perceptions and sought to present an image of "homosexuals as appropriately 'manly' or 'feminine'—no drag queens or bra-less girls in jeans" (Altman, 1971, p. 107). The homophiles' goal of working "through *e*volution rather than *rev*olution" (Streitmatter, 1995, p. 20), by encouraging gay men and women to conform to mainstream society "by minimizing the differences between homosexuality and heterosexuality" in order to "diffuse social hostility as a prelude to changes in law and public policy" (D'Emilio, 1983, p. 109), mirrors the contemporary movement's efforts, as reflected in the news discourse analyzed for this study. Homophiles pursued an assimilationist agenda that sought to fold homosexuals into heteronormativity by cultivating a "respectable" public image that left the gender binary intact and all messy queerness off the table—a strategy almost identical to contemporary corporatized LGBTQ movement organizations.

It's important to note that contemporary movement organizations substantially differ from homophiles in numerous aspects. First, the Mattachine Society and DOB attempted to positively influence mainstream perceptions of homosexuals by inviting "experts" to their meetings "to demonstrate their own reasonableness and thereby to encourage heterosexual authorities to reassess their own assumptions" (D'Emilio, 1983,

p. 109); however, many of those so-called “experts” still believed that homosexuality was an illness. Homophile leaders didn’t completely abandon the notion that homosexuality was pathologic (Altman, 1971; Miller, 1995). In contemporary times, mainstream activists repudiate such notions. Second, homophiles in the early years shied away from direct-action advocacy because they operated under an extremely homophobic environment that would be alien to most individuals today. Simply being labeled a homosexual, in many parts of the country, was a crime. While homophiles, in the early years, embraced passive and apologist strategies, contemporary LGBTQ movement organizations favor direct and affirming engagement.

A strong similarity exists between homophiles and the contemporary movement in how both groups, despite being separated by more than half a century, pursued the same goal: the comforts of normalcy. This is more than a full-circle moment. The homophile movement laid the ground work for the gay liberationist to repudiate their tactics. Gay liberationists weren’t afraid to be seen as queer, as distinct and different from mainstream society. They challenged the heteronormative, patriarchal, sexist, war mongering, and capitalistic foundations of American society. Now, the contemporary LGBTQ movement, as reflected in news discourse analyzed for this study, has repudiated the radical politics of the liberationist by disowning all queerness. From homophiles through gay liberationists, Duggan (2003) argues that the goals have been relatively consistent: “the expansion of a right to sexual privacy against the intrusive, investigatory labeling powers of the state, and simultaneous expansion of gay public life though institution building and publicity” (p. 51). The corporatized LGBTQ organizations have mostly abandoned those efforts. Instead of expanding sexual privacy, gay people are portrayed as wanting entrance into a constrained notion of family where sex isn’t discussed openly. Instead of rejecting the powers of the state to privilege some relationships over others, LGBTQ people are reifying it. Instead of seeking to build community institutions and building bridges among other social justice groups, LGBTQ people only want access to "equal" personal, individual rights. One of those personal rights, in the form of state-sanctioned marriage, is an institution "rooted in retrograde ideas about reproduction and hegemonic gender roles" (Moscowitz, 2013, p. 129). The movement has been further removed from intersectional social justice issues, as "its outrage is now aimed at those who would deny us the entitlements of normal, hardworking, upwardly-mobile and White citizens: family, privacy, patriotism, respectability" (Stone & Ward, 2011, p. 621). Corporatized LGBTQ advocacy organizations have fallen into a trap set by homophiles. Homophiles were lured by the comfort of normalcy, which required them to accept, not challenge, the dominant social order. Gay people have returned to the homophile ideology that seeks to assimilate them into an oppressive heteronormative social order, which is indeed a very quaint past.

Gay American Gothic: A Metaphor to Understand the Nature of News Coverage

The quest for normalcy requires individuals to swim within the mainstream, not fight the current. Same-sex couples in the news discourse analyzed for this study are depicted not as challenging the institution of marriage, but entering into it as a signifier that they are closer to achieving the figurative "American dream." Same-sex couples are portrayed as **patriotic, domesticated, desexualized, and depoliticized** individuals who see comfort within the fabric of mainstream American life. What does the ideal American life look like? What image comes to mind? The quest of gays and lesbians seeking protections within the fabric of mainstream life brings to mind a painting that when created was intended to symbolize the quintessential American couple, *American Gothic*.

The researcher is offering the *American Gothic* painting as a metaphor, a window to visualize the contemporary nature of news coverage of same-sex marriage.

American Gothic depicts a stoic, White, heterosexual couple dressed in simple clothing standing in front of their two-story Victorian-era home in rural, middle America, "[d]evoid of all expression, showing neither compassion nor melancholy, pain nor pleasure, the man and woman are permanently armed against any conclusive speculation as to what they stand for" (Dennis, 1975, p. 85). The man and woman withhold much information, allowing admirers to view the artwork and project their own story onto the couple, as if the painting itself is a blank canvas for all Americans to see themselves. Even though they are front and center, the farming couple is seen but their life story is unheard.

A viewer's gaze is drawn past the couple to the painting's namesake—a farmhouse built in the architectural style of "American Gothic" (Evans, 201). *American Gothic*, the title of the painting itself, "captions the restrictive standards and sentiments evoked by the architecture of its old house" (Dennis, 1975, p. 86). Understanding the home's architectural style provides a lens to decipher the meaning behind the painting. Utilizing the American Gothic-style home in the painting stands as a declaration that the artist wanted to root the painting to an idealized past. While the Gothic sentiments manifest in art, culture, and literature in architectural form, the farmhouse stands as "singularly expressive of the respect and nostalgia for the past" (Stanton, 1968, p. xviii) and "a revived taste for the medieval" (Bloom, 2010, p. 3). The main feature of the perfectly painted home is the "queer Gothic window" (Evans, 2010, p. 91) that punctuates the otherwise delicate, unadorned home. A simple patterned curtain covers the Gothic arched window—suggesting "a threshold between inside and outside, public and private, real and imaginary, living and dead" (Evans, 2010, p. 92). The artist found the inspiration for the home in Eldon, Iowa. He chose to depict the home as a backdrop for the couple because of the "structural absurdity" of featuring "a Gothic-style window in such a flimsy frame house. That was to be part of the satire in the painting" (Garwood, 1944, p. 119). While the house may be flimsy, together with the rural couple, *American Gothic* made a bold impression about the ideal American and was seared into the country's collective consciousness.

The painting was constructed to transmit a message: "It was dry, perhaps, and solemn, and it suggested a firm reliance on a fixed creed, but there was nothing challenging or hostile about it" (Garwood, 1944, p. 123). The painting debuted in the fall of 1930 at the Art Institute of Chicago. It was crafted as the U.S. was entering the Great Depression, and leaves heteronormativity, monogamy, racism, sexism, capitalism, and American patriotism unchallenged. Heteronormative gender roles are reinforced. The man stares directly at the viewer, clutching his pitchfork. Some see his tool as a devilish symbol, while most assume it's a symbol of labor. The woman stands one small step behind him and stares past the viewer and towards her companion in a sign of feminine deference. The painting idealizes the White heterosexual couple as the embodiment of American values. Monogamous pair bonding is a foregone conclusion. The artist, Grant Wood, intended it to be a positive, patriotic statement about rural American values, "an image of reassurance at a time of great dislocation and disillusionment. The man and woman, in their solid and well-crafted world, with all their strengths and weaknesses, represent survivors" ("About this Artwork," 2013). When the painting was unveiled in Chicago, the *Chicago Evening Post* ran the headline "American Normalcy Displayed in Annual Show; Iowa Farm Folks Hit Highest Spot" (Evans, 2010, p. 104). The artwork was billed as "interesting because it is entirely of us" (Evans, 2010, p. 104), and was heralded as a symbol "of the independent spirit which Americans recognize as peculiarly American" (Garwood, 1944, p. 128).

Perceptions of *American Gothic*'s iconic and heroic qualities attached to the artist himself. Wood came to embody the ideal American. Newspapers described Wood himself as representing "the corn-fed Middle West against the anemic East" who was a homegrown product "safely immunized from the taint of European decadence" (Evans, 2010, p. 104.). Artistry during the early 20th century was viewed by some as a feminine craft. Wood's own father "liked masculine qualities, and regarded history, science, hard work and the proper exercise of authority as masculine; religion, art and light fiction as somehow feminine" (Garwood, 1944, p. 22). To disrupt such a notion, Wood shunned the artist's smock, which summoned "all of the negative associations his period attached to male artists" (Evans, 2010, p. 63), in favor of worker's overalls. His style of clothing rooted him to the Midwest, which is an important fact because he is attributed with developing the artistic category of regionalism. The art form dictates that an artist "should paint the thing he knew best. Reasoning from that point, [Wood] said that a man's experience ordinarily would be rooted in a particular area, which meant that he would do his painting close to home" (Garwood, 1944, p. 182). Wood's home was Iowa. His homeland was the Midwest, and under the concept of regionalism, Wood sought to "to create a design, to heighten effects, to present an idealized version" (Garwood, 1944, p. 183) of his region.

What can be learned from both Wood and *American Gothic* and how can one apply it to the news discourse about LGBTQ? The lesson is <u>dominant discourses disguise truths</u>. The dominant discourse attached to *American Gothic* and Wood disguised numerous truths. First, the iconic status of the painting as reflecting an idealized version of the American couple simply fails to reflect the infinite queered and varied ethnic, racial, gender, and class makeup for millions of other families who also call themselves Americans—who aren't farmers, who aren't Christian, who aren't heterosexual, and who may not be monogamous. *American Gothic* was created to idealize a past, rural form of living, despite the fact that, during the time the artwork was crafted, more and more families were moving to urban centers.

Second, Wood created an artwork that idealized heteronormativity, despite the fact that Wood was what we would now call gay (Evans, 2010). While he was vaulted as the quintessential Americana painter, he was a man "who often bristled at small-town life, belonged to no church, and spent most of his life masking—not always successfully—his homosexuality" (Evans, 2010, p. 4). Evans (2010) documented Wood's numerous homosexual "crushes." The *Des Moines Sunday Register* in 1929 gossiped about the "confirmed bachelors of Cedar Rapids" (Evans, 2010, p. 60). Wood was characterized in the article as one "[who] paints on and on and maintains a discreet silence about marriage" (Evans, 2010, p. 60). Garwood (1944), Wood's original biographer, produced a profile of the artist that described him as a liberal, who affiliated himself with progressive groups and politics. Garwood (1944) documented how Wood struggled with the public perceptions at the time that artistry was regarded "as effeminate." Wood displayed an apathy towards women, "[h]e took girls to parties and on picnics, but seemed uneasy at the prospect of being left alone with them and too deliberate for the pace of events (Garwood, 1944, p. 73). Wood was quoted as declaring that "I guess I'm just not interested in women" (Garwood, 1944, p. 91). Wood married once, late in life, then divorced, and remained childless and died a single man. These aspects of Wood's life have been drowned out of the dominant discourse around *American Gothic* and the artist himself. Similar to the *American Gothic* painting, the contemporary portrayal of same-sex couples and the dominant discourse circulated in the public sphere through news discourse among all three categories of publications presented an idealized version of "the good gays" that grasps to archaic notions of the past and disguises all the complexities of queer life.

Let's now expose the possibilities. Utilizing queer theory, the dominant discourse surrounding the painting provides an avenue to destabilize the socially accepted narrative by acknowledging the archaic and heteronormative underpinnings of the painting. Through analyzing the demarcations of normalcy contained within the painting, one can subvert normalcy itself by rearranging the boundaries of what it means to be normal. Can we queer *American Gothic* by merely switching the male farmer to take the place of the female farmer, and vice versa? If we switch the two, the art now subverts the meaning of the "ideal American couple." The man maintains the home. The woman provides the labor. The man submits. The woman dominates. A male occupies a particular role, while a female occupies another. Is this truly subverting heteronormativity? By switching the couples, are we generating a reverse discourse that provides an avenue to destabilize oppressive power structures such as patriarchy? No. Positioning the couples, as one submitting to the other, does little to overturn traditional notions of power. It merely reinforces the propensity for humans to dominate one another, to draw boundaries between normal and deviant behavior, to constrain each other to abide by acceptable standards of behavior.

How do we truly queer *American Gothic*? I would argue that a Queer American Gothic may position the couple as equals and unconstrained by gender. Instead of standing one behind the other, both may stand side-by-side as equals. Both may have a pitchfork as a sign that each contributes labor to the home. Both could be of the same gender or depicted as adhering to no particular gender at all. The farming couple could be Native American, Black, Mexican American, or interracial. Or there may be three individuals standing in front of a farmhouse to suggest that monogamous pair bonding is not an ideal. Rather than reinforcing traditional notions of power, sex, and love within relationship structures, the Queer American Gothic generates variations that truly challenge homonormativity and, by extension, heteronormativity by queering notions of power within a relationship and forcing the viewer to consider new methods of living. And these types of depictions are exactly what are missing in contemporary media portrayals of LGBTQ people.

Oscar Wilde wrote in an 1889 essay, "Life imitates art far more than art imitates life." In the context of this research, Wilde's words ring true. The contemporary depiction of same-sex couples in news coverage mirrors Wood's *American Gothic* panting in numerous uncanny ways. The title of the painting itself returns the viewer to a Gothic, Victorian past. Contemporary portrayals of gay and lesbian people also attempt to grasp at archaic notions that were first adopted by the homophile movement, which sought to blend into society, rather than revolutionize it. Similar to Wood the artist, journalists, through the selection of certain content over others, have framed their stories to craft an idealized version of how the general public views gays and lesbians. Through the discourse surrounding the four case studies and the corresponding photographs, an image begins to come into focus. It's an idealized version that returns the movement to an assimilationist past and glosses over the infinite and varied life experiences that encompass the individuals who would label themselves as belonging to the LBGTQ community. LGBTQ individuals may look at the media depictions of their community and attempt to imitate those visualizations, and in the process, bypass any opportunity to define and live their lives outside the media's own narrow interpretation.

Similar to *American Gothic*, photographic depictions of gay and lesbian couples place them front and center. The couples are depoliticized. They're holding flowers, embracing each other, and sitting in church pews. There's nothing challenging or hostile to the contemporary imagery of gays and lesbians. They are never quoted as debating other oppressive apparatuses that have historically marginalized gays and lesbians: sexism, patriarchy, homophobia, heteronormativity, and transphobia, to name a few. Rather than advocate for freedom from state-sanctioned war, employment and housing discrimination, domestic violence, and environmental degradation, the individuals depicted in the photographic and textual news stories are patriotic, as they believe engaging in same-sex marriage is the "ultimate exercise of personal freedom." Gone are images of radical deviants confronting police authority and being handcuffed and carted away from a ballroom. Now, gays, lesbians, and their allies are shown in photographs celebrating the *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision—not on the streets, not in a gay bar, but inside the safe and docile confines of a Christian church.

The nature of coverage of gays and lesbians casts them as seen but unheard. In *American Gothic*, the farming couple stands as a "visual ornamentation" of the "ideal American couple." In the coverage of same-sex couples, they too are "visual ornamentation." They are seen in photographic coverage but remain unheard in the text of the news story. Through journalists focusing on elite sources, exchanging barbs, and talking past each other, heterosexual news consumers see same-sex couples, but are no closer to a deeper understanding of how these queer individuals are similar or dissimilar to their own lives. Instead, political and advocacy elites speak on behalf of the LGBTQ community and gloss over the complexity of all the individuals who encompass the L-G-B-T-Q. Since the visualized individuals are seen and unheard, contemporary coverage of gay and lesbian people leaves patriarchy, heteronormativity, and American patriotism unchallenged. The topic of monogamous pair bonding is accepted by the lack of discussion around it.

While the *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision ushered in an explosion of visual depictions of gay people, the range of demographic and emotive depictions is stunningly narrow. The only gay and lesbian individuals allowed to take the spotlight are domesticated, White, gay, or lesbian couples. The couples clearly adhere to gender binaries. Despite the couples being shown in the highly emotive stages of marrying (preparing, marrying, or celebrating), they are desexualized. There's a relative stoicism—similar to *American Gothic*—that permeates the photographic coverage. A slight embrace, a peck on the check, a side glance were the only forms of affection published—not tears, an exuberant embrace, a passionate kiss, or a whimsical exit from the marriage scene.

Juxtaposing *American Gothic* with Wood's life, as described by Evans (2010), one can see how an idealized America, in the form of Americana art, excludes the endless, diverse, lived life experiences, including Wood's own queerness. While the painting attempts to project "true America," Wood's life is excluded by his own creation. Likewise, in a juxtaposition of the media's depiction of gays and lesbians with the real lives of LGBTQ people, one can imagine how the idealized gay, as created by contemporary news coverage, excludes the infinite lived arrangements of individuals within the LGBTQ community. Dominant discourse disguises truths. By glossing over the queerness among LGBTQ people, instead focusing on a narrow range of individuals, a homonormative image begins to take shape. It's an image that may be palatable to the mass audience, but it edits out the infinite lived experiences of queer people. Similar to the "structural absurdity" (Garwood, 2010, p. 91) of featuring a "queer Gothic window" (Evans, 2010, p. 91) on a rural farmhouse in the Midwest, featuring depoliticized, desexualized, and domesticated individuals to the mainstream as representative of the larger LGBT movement and queer people is likewise absurd and perpetuates "pernicious fictions" (Walters, 2001, p. 12) about LGBTQ people. By blurring the complexities of queer life, the corporatized LGBT movement and media institutions bypass all critical examinations of American life. *American Gothic* idealizes a particular life. Large-scale LGBTQ movement organizations and media institutions also engage in the same act of reductionism. Thus, one could stare at photographs of gay couples in the media and easily confuse the journalistic depictions for the real *American Gothic* painting.

DISSERTATION CONCLUSION

This research demonstrated, through a discourse analysis of newspaper coverage of four discrete historical moments in Austin history, the path that gay and lesbian people experienced in the media—from being portrayed as sexual deviants to a homonormative monolith in the form of patriotic, domesticated, depoliticized, and desexualized couples. The news discourse over the past five decades demonstrated how stories slowly shed all messy queerness from the gay liberationist past and adopted an orientation that was more palatable to the mainstream. Bisexuals, transgender people, individuals who suffered from and died because of AIDS, and all other queer people have been symbolically annihilated throughout history and continue to be. News discourse from the four case studies demonstrated that a multiplicity of discourse about gay and lesbian people was, at one time, a norm. A newspaper reader in Austin in the 1970s had greater access to varied political perspectives about gays and lesbians compared with a newspaper consumer in contemporary times. This research demonstrated that gay liberationists were very active in Austin and, indeed, successful at mobilizing to influence positive political change in their environment.

Has the media portrayal improved? It depends on the benchmark. If one measures changes in portrayal from the 1970s when *Statesman* and *Texan* engaged in reporting practices that systematically omitted gays and lesbians from stories about them, engaged in reporting practices that openly harassed gay and lesbian movement organizers and framed them as sexual deviants who are morally corrupt, then it's clear that the portrayal of gay and lesbian people in the mainstream and collegiate press has significantly improved. If the benchmark is one in which a multiplicity of voices and issues is included in the coverage of gays and lesbians that fairly depicts their complex lives without legitimizing homophobic discourse, then the portrayal of gay people in the media hasn't changed all that much. As existing scholarship argued, the portrayal of gay and lesbian people in the media has not only been shaped by journalists, it has also been molded by corporatized advocacy organizations that sought to present queer people to the mainstream as a group of individuals who simply seek to become a piece of Americana.

Evolution or Devolution: News Discourse of Sexual Deviants

As gays and lesbians were beginning to mobilize through the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) in 1970, *Rag* served as a countercultural publication that circulated affirming discourse aimed at further mobilizing gays and lesbians to influence positive change in their community. Case study one demonstrated the divergent nature of coverage of gays and lesbians as *Rag* framed stories around the perspective of GLF leaders who professed a radical ideology, while *Statesman* and *Texan* generally delegitimized the voices of GLF leaders by either omitting their quotes and opinions from stories or burying them towards the end of the articles. *Statesman* and *Texan* framed most of their stories around the perspectives of campus administrators by placing their quotes in prominent positions. *Statesman* and *Texan* perpetuated the frames of gays as sexual deviants who caused social disorder, repeating the administration's claims that GLF would negatively affect "the normal development of some of its students, and is certain to bring discredit to the institution."[286] The findings of this research strengthen existing scholarship, which found that the media framed gays and lesbians as sexual deviants immediately after the Stonewall riots (Fejes & Petrick, 1993; Gross, 2001; Klarman, 2013; Streitmatter, 2009). While existing research suggests that university newspapers were historically "self-conscious" (Cain, 2012, p. 27) by supporting ideas counter to campus administrators, such as desegregation (Edmondson & Perry, 2010), this research demonstrated that *Texan*'s coverage at times aligned with *Statesman*'s treatment of GLF.

This research adds to existing scholarship by demonstrating the extreme journalistic practices utilized by *Statesman* and *Texan* to harass GLF leaders. GLF members were actively and publicly mobilizing for political change (e.g., an end to police harassment and employment discrimination) at a time when adopting a homosexual identity or merely socializing with them was "heavily stigmatized by the overwhelming weight of cultural opinion" (D'Emilio, 2002, p. 33). Despite the hostile and homophobic environment, *Statesman* and *Texan* published the names and street addresses of GLF members. *Texan* ran a front-page article on February 28, 1971, that reported the clash between officers and GLF members as they attempted to hold a dance at the Texas Union. The article listed the full names and home addresses of individuals arrested in the protest. *Statesman* also reported the home address of a GLF organizer who organized a protest at the steps of the Texas State Capitol on June 27, 1971. Alwood (1996) discussed mainstream journalists' practice of publishing the home addresses of gay and lesbian leaders was common in the 1950s, not the 1970s. The scholar labeled such a practice "journalistic lynching," as it cost many homosexuals "their jobs and in some cases their homes" (Alwood, 1996, p. 26). While the *Statesman* and *Texan* articles did not publish the activist's employment information, it was clear that employers could easily identify the individuals.

The sexual-deviant frame continued to manifest in case study two; however, the nature of coverage of gays began to slowly converge among the publications. The Texas Health Commissioner's 1985 proposal to quarantine "incorrigible" AIDS victims came at a time when panic was spreading across the nation. In order to slow the spread of AIDS, Texas health officials sought to criminalize the sexual behavior of some AIDS patients and quarantine them within hospital wards or confine them to jail long enough to die within a state cell. Case study two strengthened existing scholarship that found mainstream reporters disseminated inaccurate and sensational facts, framing much of the coverage around how the virus spread by sexual deviants would affect the "general population" (Gross, 2001, p. 97), instead of addressing the specific sexual behaviors that contributed to the spread of the virus. *Statesman* and *Texan* framed stories with language that marginalized an entire class of people as culprits behind the spread of AIDS. The repeated use of the word "incorrigible" to describe AIDS victims framed infected individuals as sex-crazed men who were preying on innocent straight society. Both publications utilized vague language, despite that fact that *TWT* was reporting that health officials were targeting a very specific type of individual—a few male prostitutes who were infected with the virus but continued to engage in unprotected sex. Instead of fully explaining the specific behaviors associated with those labeled as "incorrigibles" (i.e., male prostitution), the mainstream and collegiate press, reflecting a homophobic orientation, lumped homosexual behavior as equivalent to prostitution.

During the epidemic's early years, the gay and lesbian press was a site for the most personalized, accurate, and in-depth information about the virus (Gross, 2001; Kinsella, 1989; Streitmatter, 1995). However, the findings of this research indicate that *TWT* failed to counter the dominant discourse disseminated by *Statesman* and *Texan*. *TWT* attempted to explore the issue and provide a countercultural narrative. *TWT* framed coverage around the perspective of gay community leaders who were orchestrating a statewide campaign to defeat the measure. However, *TWT* significantly lagged behind the mainstream media and disseminated out-of-date information. *TWT* remained an important avenue for opponents of the quarantine to disseminate their perspective, as the publication contextualized the AIDS epidemic by providing hard numbers and challenged numerous assertions circulated in the public sphere; however, the paper's scant reporting could never fully counter the overwhelming reporting from *Statesman* and *Texan*.

Case study two also demonstrated how all three publications symbolically annihilated the voices of those living and dying because of AIDS. According to Gerbner (1972), "[r]epresentation in the fictional world signifies social existence; absence means symbolic annihilation" (p. 44). The publications omitted quotes and photographs of AIDS victims. Within the articles analyzed for this research, the AIDS victim was never fully represented, nor was the victim ever fully absent. The articles were entirely about AIDS victims. All the sources were debating how to stop the spread of AIDS that afflicted the victims' lives. Everyone was talking *about* AIDS victims but no reporter apparently talked *to* them. All three publications could have challenged dominant prejudices by producing stories to highlight the plight of those struggling with AIDS. Instead, those suffering from AIDS and their loved ones remained invisible, nameless, and voiceless specters.

By the 1990s, gay men and women entered politics at unprecedented rates (Yeager, 1999). The existing literature suggests that the press was mainstreaming gay and lesbian people (Gross, 2001), as journalists weaved sexual identity issues "into the fabric of what was deemed newsworthy" (D'Emilio, 2002, p. 87). However, the *Statesman*'s coverage of Maxey's race for Texas State of Representative District 51 was anything but mainstream, as the newspaper framed the gay candidate as an oddity. In addition, the findings of case study three indicated that *TWT* continued to wane in significance as a source of countercultural discourse

As Glen Maxey launched his historic race for the Texas House of Representatives, the discourse analysis found that all three publications, to various degrees, framed Maxey as a gay candidate who was facing an uphill battle in a predominately Latino district. However, *Statesman* continued to engage in reporting practices that marginalized gay people. While *Statesman* avoided delegitimizing Maxey, the publication utilized reporting tactics that attempted to create a scandal, where none actually existed. *Statesman* frequently framed Maxey as a "gay candidate" and a "homosexual legislator" despite the fact that none of his opponents in the race, nor any other sources were quoted as disagreeing with Maxey's sexual orientation. *Texan*'s coverage diverged from *Statesman* because the collegiate paper generally stuck to reporting on policy issues important to university students. A fully functioning countercultural publication could have generated a reverse discourse to challenge the homophobic news coverage within *Statesman*. By the time of Maxey's race, *TWT* ceased being a reliable source of countercultural information; it mirrored *Statesman*'s reporting and, in a few instances, plagiarized *Statesman*'s coverage.

As Texas witnessed its first same-sex marriage in February 2015, the quantity of news coverage about gays and lesbians substantially increased, which mirrors existing research that indicates the main focus of LGBTQ movement organizations' contemporary media advocacy efforts is not *if* the media will cover their issues but *how* to control the media's framing of stories (Moscowitz, 2013). The findings of this research conformed to existing scholarship that indicates that coverage of same-sex marriage is dominated by culture-war framing (McFarland, 2011), elites talking past each other (Rodriguez & Blumell, 2014), and heteronormative ideals (Moscowitz, 2010; Warner, 1999), in the form of homonormativity (Duggan, 2003).

This discourse analysis found that the vast amount of same-sex marriage failed to include a diversity of opinions. Even though the U.S. Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage, effectively ending a long-fought legal battle, journalists among all three publications continued the culture-war framing. Culture-war framing is "opposing sides that talk past each other; those in support of LGBT rights frame it in terms of equality while those opposed frame their views as holding with traditional morality" (McFarland, 2011, p. 273). By framing their stories *only* around two sets of the same opponents who have historically and continue to hold the same positions, journalists bypassed opportunities to include new voices who may have different opinions and may shed light on other emerging issues among LBGTQ people. While the coverage prominently featured same-sex couples, they served as "visual orientation," as the journalists focused most of their stories around elites talking past each other. For audience members, the explosion of photographic depictions of same-sex couples failed to translate into a greater understanding of the lived experiences of queer individuals. The stories omitted reporting that could have shed light on how the couples were similar to or different from the heterosexual audience. In the absence of in-depth interviews of these couples, the masses were no closer to understanding the infinite lived experiences that encompass nonheterosexual households. The culture-war framing had another distinct effect on the coverage of same-sex couples. Media professionals not only delegitimized the lives of queer individuals by omitting or burying quotes and opinions from them, journalists also allowed homophobic discourse to circulate unchallenged in the public sphere. Journalists frequently quoted sources opposed to LGBTQ civil rights to cast queer individuals as morally corrupt. Nearly 70 years after making their first widespread appearance in the mainstream press, framed as perverts and deviants, LGBTQ people continue to be subjected to homophobic discourse within the press. Within the data of this discourse analysis, journalists framed opponents of same-sex marriage as "legitimate and honorable, not bigoted and homophobic" (Walters, 2001, p. 182).

The couples who were portrayed within the press coverage were completely **patriotic, domesticated, desexualized** and **depoliticized**. The ability to enter into state-sanctioned marriage was the ultimate expression of freedom for gays. The couples who were portrayed were domesticated. Their ultimate expression of happiness resided, not in the streets protesting state oppression or in a leather bar enjoying others from the neighborhood, but within the confines of home, family, and church. The media framed the couples as desexualized individuals. Unlike in prior decades, discussions of their sexual activities are now omitted. The findings of this research demonstrated that journalists also omitted the most meaningful displays of affection, despite the fact that the individuals were getting married, which is generally a highly emotive experience for the participants. Journalists framed the couples as depoliticized as well. Freedom began and ended with marriage, according the media coverage. LGBTQ people were never quoted as discussion challenges to racism, sexism, capitalism, and heteronormativity—all issues that once dominated the gay and lesbian movement.

Contemporary Coverage and Movement Implications

This qualitative analysis documented the evolution, or devolution, of news discourse from a point in time when radical ideology was ingrained within discourse of the gay and lesbian community to the contemporary environment where homonormativity dominates coverage of same-sex marriage. As existing scholarship indicates, large-scale, corporatized LGBTQ movement organizations made a concerted effort to assimilate queer people into heteronormative culture and deradicalize the movement's goals.

Corporatized movement organizations adopted a homonormative orientation, which now manifests in news coverage of gay and lesbian people (Duggan, 2003; Moscowitz, 2013; Warner, 1999). Gays and lesbians have been wholly *unqueered*. All the “untidy” aspects of LGBTQ people were omitted from news coverage. Corporatized LGBTQ movement organizations exerted enormous efforts to shape perceptions and present an idealized and sanitized image to the mainstream. As this discourse analysis found, only a sliver of those who are nonheterosexual are exposed to the mass audience.

The researcher utilized a metaphor to describe the contemporary coverage of same-sex couples. The new portrayal mirrors the famous painting *American Gothic*, which idealized a heterosexual construct wrapped in American patriotism. The mythology around *American Gothic* reinforced a false notion that the ideal American was one tied to the land and heteronormativity, which excludes millions of Americans from diverse class, racial, and ethnic backgrounds and nonheterosexual, queer orientations. The painting perpetuated “pernicious fictions” (Walters, 2001, p. 12) about Americans. Similar to the reductionist view of this country, as reflected in *American Gothic*, the dominant discourse around same-sex marriage, as reflected in the findings of the qualitative analysis, presents a reductionist point of view that portrayed same-sex couples as patriotic, domesticated, desexualized, and depoliticized. The contemporary portrayal eliminates all representation of queer individuals who don’t conform to homonormativity. Dominant discourses disguise truths. Utilizing *American Gothic* as a metaphor for understanding the portrayal of same-sex couples opens up an avenue to critique both the media depictions and the contemporary corporatized LGBTQ movement organizations that attempted to present a sanitized image. Much effort has been exerted to achieve the right to marry because many thought that gaining state-sanctioned marriage would "normalize everything else" and make "it harder to legislate against gay, lesbian and even transgender citizens" (Moscowitz, 2013, p. 132).

Efforts to sanitize the LGBTQ movement, removing all the "untidy" aspects, reflect efforts made by homosexual men and women and their "allies" more than six decades ago. The homophiles in the 1950s and 1960s embraced passive and apologist strategies. The homophiles encouraged gay men and women to conform to mainstream society "by minimizing the differences between homosexuality and heterosexuality" in order to achieve political objectives. Homophile leaders sought to work "through *e*volution rather than *rev*olution" (Streitmatter, 1995, p. 20). They were lured by the comforts of normalcy, of fitting into the dominant social order. Swimming with the mainstream current is, indeed, an easier task than attempting to swim against the rush of water. While the contemporary movement largely abandoned apologist strategies, the similarity in assimilationist tactics between the homophiles and contemporaries brings a question to the researcher's mind: if the gay liberationist ideology prevailed (radically transforming society to embrace all nonheteronormative identities and lived experiences), would the contemporary LGBTQ community be locked in a seemingly endless culture war that targets a single, "new" segment of queer people and utilizes them as political fodder?

As this research demonstrated, the dominant social order, throughout time, in the form of university officials, mainstream press, Texas politicians, and health officials—all framed gays and lesbians as oddities in order to deny them fundamental human rights. UT administrators feared that having the GLF on campus would spread homosexuality by having "an adverse effect on the sexually undecided."[287] The Texas Health Commissioner proposed quarantining sexually uncontrolled AIDS-positive men because it was thought they "posed a health threat to the community."[288] Texas State Representative Glen Maxey was framed as an outsider because it was feared his sexual orientation might impair "his ability to work with other legislators."[289] Conservative politicians and advocates attempted to undermine same-sex marriage rights in the name of "biblical marriage"[290] because "[w]hether they're alcoholics, whether they're murderers, whether they're adulterers, whether they're perverts or pornographers or what, you want to help them out."[291] There's a long history in our country of those in control utilizing minorities as scapegoats. Fear distracts and motivates. Politicians deploy scare tactics in order to deflect their base from considering substantive issues facing society (e.g., income inequality, environmental degradation, climate change, etc.). Fear also motivates individuals to vote.

For those who thought "marriage equality" was the beginning and end of the movement, they were wrong. The 2015 U.S. Supreme Court decision in the *Obergefell v. Hodges* matter ignited a severe backlash. At the time of the writing of this dissertation, transgender people are being utilized by bigoted politicians to motivate their dwindling base to head to the polls, while keeping them distracted from real policy issues that undermine democratic values. It's easy to cast transgender people as perverts and deviants, similar to how gays and lesbians were framed in the '50s, '60s, '70s, and, to a lesser extent, in contemporary times, because most people don't personally know a transgender person. A series of Southern states and municipalities across the U.S. have either passed or contemplated laws determined to legalize discrimination against LGBTQ people in the guise of religious liberty (Merritt, 2016). A host of states and local municipalities, too many to list here, are undertaking "potty policies" to prevent transgender people from utilizing bathrooms according to their gender identity and expression (Merritt, 2016). The lack of firsthand knowledge of transgender people creates a vacuum that can easily be filled with hateful and bigoted ideology. Journalists have the potential to fill the void with accurate information; however, the vacuum was created by the very organizations created to represent LGBTQ people. Corporatized LGBTQ movement organizations, in their efforts to present a homonormative picture, sanitized the community and shoved transgender people in the closet. Transgender individuals were omitted from the news discourse contained within this study.

Academics and activists have numerous questions to ponder in the future. When will homophonic and transphobic discourse finally be eliminated from coverage of LGBTQ people? Transphobia, similar to homophobia, can be expected to decline in severity but will most likely continue to be a seemingly permanent feature in society, similar to how racism, misogyny, and ethnocentrism remain deeply rooted. But when will the culture-war framing of LGBTQ people cease being a facet of media coverage? Are transgender people the final frontier?

Many individuals who adopt nonnormative identities are lumped into the LGBTQ community and omitted from news discourse. What about queers, drag queens, transvestites, pansexuals, leather daddies, otters, radical faeries, lesbian separatists, dykes, fist fuckers, and those who practice polyamory? Where are these individuals within mainstream news discourse? The preceding identities and sexual practices are generally omitted from discussions and don’t conform to any of the identities represented in the “LGBTQ” community. All those complex, “untidy” aspects are ignored by corporatized LGBTQ movement organizations and are excluded from discourse within the larger public sphere, which provides potential ammunition from opponents in the future to utilize as campaign fodder. Would it be smarter in the long run—and maybe more difficult in the short term—to fully expose all nonheterosexual lived experiences to begin normalizing them to the populace, rather than presenting a few homonormative individuals as representative of an entire nonheteronormative community? If the mass audience was shown the infinite lived experiences, instead of an idealized version that represents a fraction of humanity, "pernicious fictions" (Walters, 2001, p. 12), then maybe humans will stop fearing those who are different. Maybe by debunking the myth of normalcy, the new normal will be a world in which infinite variations are embraced rather than feared. Undermining normalcy has the potential to free individuals from the constraints of identity constructs. The radical gay liberationists envisioned such a world, free of constraining notions of identity. They were advocating for a world where transgender people and all those "untidy" aspects of humanity would be embraced. The gay liberationists' ideology failed and was usurped by the homonormative paradigm, which now dominates media coverage. Dominant discourses disguise truths. Activists and journalists could learn from our shared history, instead of running away from it.

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