

New Boston marriages : news representations, respectability, and the politics of same-sex marriage

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Boston College
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NEW BOSTON MARRIAGES: NEWS REPRESENTATIONS, RESPECTABILITY,
AND THE POLITICS OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

a dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

In 2006, Mariane Valverde announced the birth of what she called, “a new type in the history of sexuality” (155), the Respectable Same-Sex Couple. This work analyzes newspaper coverage of same-sex couples during the Massachusetts campaign for marriage equality to explore the content of and contours around that new socio-sexual category. The processes involved in the incorporation of lesbians and gay men into the governing relations of American society are used to explain the development of this type, and its replacement of the pathological Homosexual. The manufacture of respectability by movement activists is explored via the selection of “public face couples” as a framing strategy that links the lives of these couples to marriage itself and the hardships they suffer due to their inability to marry. The respectability of these couples and their incorporation as economic citizens is also linked to representations of professional status, upward mobility, economic success, and the creation of identity-based markets through entrepreneurial and consumptive practices. Boundaries around this respectability are evident in stories of failure, either to remain together as couples or to act in accordance with marital normative standards, while the boundaries between Heterosexuality and Homosexuality, and among and between same-sex and different-sex couples, are also being re-drawn as marriage becomes available. The broader historical transformation of lesbian and gay life is discussed in the development of new life-scripts becoming available. While these transformations have led to greater possibilities for the living of gay and lesbian lives, the absorption of these lives into governing relations also erases and expels other queer life practices and reinforces other forms of social inequality and injustice.

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It has become both cliché and truism that even the most individual of practices is inherently social. Such is the case with writing a dissertation. The number of mornings I resisted getting out of bed, and instead lay there twitching with nervous energy, are innumerable, and rarely have I felt so alone. However, it is also the support—and occasional butt-kicking—of a number of people who kept me writing even when I wanted to just give up.

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about my career, and about life. The chats we had over emails and, more importantly, over meals were invaluable in getting me through this process. I will still dispute some of the compliments they may have given me—the upper Midwesterner in me dies hard—but their support, friendship, and caring gave me a sense that the completion of this project was possible in ways that I didn't always see. Char and Eve's friendship meant more than I can express.

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Although I am critical of the movement for equal marriage rights, I also feel like I owe them a debt of gratitude. While I am not overly fond of many of the mainstreaming activities in which they engage, I must also recognize that, as a part of the larger history of gay and lesbian movement activity, they have expanded the opportunities for many lesbians and gay men, and bisexual and transgender people, to live their lives openly. Indeed, in my pre-academic life I was an organizer within this movement in Minnesota, so I recognize the difficult balancing act that many of these activists are engaging in. While I may often disagree with strategies or goals, I also recognize the work that we all share in changing American society to become more accepting and welcoming of sexual minorities.

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Introduction

The New Bostonians: Social Typification and Sexual Citizenship

During the nineteenth century the Western world witnessed the birth of a wide variety of new sexual species, including the Invert, Urning, Peadophile, Heterosexual, and Homosexual¹. Also coming into being during this period was an entity known as the Boston Marriage, the name of which was drawn from the Henry James novel, *The Bostonians* (1886), and given to certain romantic domestic relationships between women. These bourgeois couplings appear to have been widespread and “[in] New England the longevity and the erotic undertones of relations between women appears to have been widely accepted, for so-called ‘Boston marriages’ were commonplace in literary circles” (Vicinus 1993: 442) and other artistic and academic *milieux*. These “marriages” provided “a socially sanctioned space for at least some privileged white women,” (McCullough 1997: 68) to pursue romantic and erotic intimacy with each other, and a rare opportunity for them live independently of men. Because of their class locations, the support provided by these relationships also often provided a site from which to challenge some of the exclusions of women from public life. The term, “Boston Marriage,” as it circulated through the newspapers in which *The Bostonians* was originally published in serial form, the novel itself, conversations about and reviews of it, other novels, and various other forms of writing and talking about the female intimacy described therein produced a new

¹ On the rise of these new sexual types, see, for example, Foucault (1990); Weeks (1981, 1985); Greenberg (1988: Ch. 9-10); Chauncey (1989); Katz (1995). On the issue of Boston Marriages specifically, see Faderman (1981: 189-223); Horowitz (1984); McCullough (1997); Vicinus (1993); Rothblum and Brehony (1993).

model of domesticity and gave a new name to a way of living. The term described a particular type of romantic and erotic relationship.

I chose to title this work “A Boston Marriage” because I was feeling a little silly and playful, and I enjoyed the idea of that old social model being juxtaposed with the legal marriages taking place in Boston while I was undertaking this work². Even without that sense of play, though, the issue I would like to bring to the fore in using the term is that we are dealing with a *model* of female same-sex intimacy and domesticity. Not every romantic relationship between women fell under this descriptor. The romantic couplings of “mannish lesbians” and “normal girls” were also well known, but weren’t “Boston marriages.” This particular term came to describe, and be understood as, representing a certain *type* of real-world relationship.

As times change so do our social models. In this work I explore some of the transformations in lesbian and gay life that have occurred since the time Henry James named these lesbian relationships. Many of the New Bostonians—and Cantabridgians and P-Towners and other Bay Staters³—marrying throughout Massachusetts since May 17, 2004 are examples of a new social type that Mariane Valverde (2006: 155) has called the “Respectable Same-Sex Couple.” In the work that follows I describe the processes through which this new sexual species has come to be, and how it is constituted in newspaper reporting about and around the Massachusetts campaign for equal marriage rights for same-sex couples.

² Note that I am not working to “reclaim” the term, as Rothblum and Brehoney (1993) have done. Their work uses “Boston Marriage” to signify asexual romantic lesbian relationships more akin to “romantic friendships.” While not stripping all of the erotic content from the category, they do purge sexual activity from it.

³ “Bay Staters” has been established in Massachusetts law as the official designation of the Commonwealth’s residents (M.G.L. Ch. 2, §35).

On the night of May 16, 2004, I was standing on the lawn in front of Cambridge City Hall with upwards of 10,000 people (Abraham, Yvonne and Rick Klein. 2004. “Free to marry: Massachusetts becomes first state to allow gay marriage.” *Boston Globe*, May 17, A1). Almost all of us were there to celebrate the first legal same-sex marriages in the United States, even though none would actually take place that night. It was truly an amazing experience. In talking to friends and family afterwards, I would often remark, struggling to find exactly the right words, “It was just so...*HAPPY!*” The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court’s (SJC) decision in *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health* (2003) had established the next day as when same-sex couples would be allowed to enter into civil marriage contracts. The “People’s Republic” of Cambridge had declared it would open City Hall that Sunday evening and accept applications for the Notice of Intent to Marry at midnight instead of waiting until its usual 9:00am opening time⁴. This ballooned into a planned public event, both inside and outside City Hall. The festive mood on the lawn lent itself to a New Year’s Eve–like countdown to midnight, and periodic cheers erupted for several hours as couples ran into and out of the. Driving back to my Somerville apartment at something like 2:30 that morning, it was more than a little strange to hear the BBC World Service reporting about the event I had just attended.

This celebration was global news.

⁴ In Massachusetts, people do not automatically get a marriage license. The process for marrying is as follows: First, the couple must file a “Notice of Intention to Marry,” which is the application for a marriage license. After three days, the couple returns to the office where they filed their Notice—the city or town’s clerk or registrar. This three-day waiting period may be waived by a local court. Once the license has been picked up from the appropriate local authority, the couple has 60 days to hold a marriage ceremony. The person performing the marriage ceremony, must sign the license and return it to the local authority who issued it, and who will register the marriage with the state, establishing the couple as legally married. (See Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 207.)

The overwhelming majority of people living in Cambridge—and in Somerville, and Boston—were not at City Hall that night. Many would hear about the events from those who were in attendance; I was certainly busy telling people I knew about what had happened for the next several days. Beyond these personal contacts, though, mass media sources would be much more central in informing people about what had happened. Additionally, even most of us who were in attendance at those events only “met” Susan Shepherd and Marcia Hams or Hillary and Julie Goodridge or David Wilson and Robert Compton, and witnessed their wedding celebrations, through mass media outlets. I cheered the people running in and out of Cambridge City Hall that night, and also watched and cheered others queuing in front of Boston City Hall the next morning. However, I wasn’t privy to what was occurring inside. Those events I had to watch on the news. I have known or met a few of the couples who appeared in the news during that period, and I know people who know other couples presented in the media. But for the most part I, like the overwhelming majority of Americans, have never met and will never meet these people whose private lives were placed under public scrutiny.

I am concerned in this study with whom it is we are getting to know. Not the people themselves, but mass-mediated representations of them. The news we watch and read is not what happened, but a *telling* of what happened. The wedding stories and tales of life printed for and broadcast to us are not those lives or events, but re-presentations of them, and partial ones at that. The newspaper stories at the heart of this study are mediated through the routine practices of news gathering, writing, editing and publishing. The texts we read—the information included in them and how it is presented—shape how we understand events and the people involved in them. These representations circulate

through newspapers, television reports, blog posts, emails, and personal conversations. In these circulatory networks we see one aspect of the ongoing (re)production and transformation of discourses about lesbian and gay life in America.

Sexual Identities and Social Typification

In a recent article, as I noted above, Foucaultian sociologist Marian Valverde announced the birth of “a new type in the History of Sexuality” that she called the “Respectable Same-Sex Couple” (2006: 155). We might ask, “What are the qualities that make them respectable, and what makes this new?” I am treating respectability as the actions or qualities demonstrating adherence to and excellence in the meeting of normative standards associated with specific social roles. The ability of lesbians and gay men to meet such standards is itself new in a society that until recently defined such normativity as necessarily and inherently excluding Homosexuality. The warm May evening on which we merry thousands gathered in Cambridge came less than a year after the United States Supreme Court ruled that it was no longer constitutional to jail lesbians and gay men for making love (*Lawrence v. Texas*). Marital conjugality now included Homosexual sodomy. The couples marrying that night, and subsequently, were having their relationships legitimated and supported by the state. That is no small change.

I can still remember standing in a friend’s apartment as an undergraduate at Iowa State University and saying, “We won’t see gay marriage in my lifetime.” This was the early 1990s and we were still in the midst of an intense anti-gay backlash in which state and society were basically telling gay men, in particular, “just go die already.” During that period, however, we were also beginning see more widespread changes in the

conditions of gay and lesbian life. The closet was crumbling and more “positive” representations of lesbians and gay men were increasingly appearing in the media⁵. That isn’t to say that gay and lesbian lives have necessarily become easy, or that all lesbian and gay people have equal opportunities to live openly and free from harassment and violence. However, there have been massive changes within the 15 years or so since I made that comment, and even greater ones since the mid-century anti-gay *kulturkampf* (Eskridge 1999) that produced the institutional closet.

In the opening paragraph, I mentioned the birth of the Homosexual and Heterosexual⁶ during the nineteenth century. Within the sociological study of sexualities, such a comment is fairly uncontroversial, as constructivist positions are mainstream within this field. However, in some segments of society, especially many gay and lesbian publics, such a statement often arouses suspicion and, occasionally, hostility. “To say that lesbian and gay identities have a history, have not always existed and may not always exist, does not mean that they are not important. Nor should it necessarily be taken to imply that homosexual proclivities are not deeply rooted” (Weeks 1995: 7). While sociologists like me may speak of these categories as socially produced, lesbians and gay men often experience them as states of *being*. Indeed, my own identities as a gay man and a queer are very important to me. However, I also recognize these forms of self to be historically contingent. Although they have taken on an essentialized status in the late

⁵ On changes in the mass media during the 1990s, in particular, see Seidman (2002); Alwood (1996); Becker (2005).

⁶ Through the rest of this work, I will be using the following convention: Heterosexual and Homosexual, and terms derived from them, will be capitalized when referring to the specific social types, identities, and modes of organization arising during this historical era. They will be written with lower-case initial letters (even when starting a sentence) to generically refer to other- or same-sex desire or activity.

Twentieth Century, lesbian and gay identities are not universal even if same-sex behaviors and even desires are. And, as is often neglected in such discussions, the same holds true for Heterosexual identities and different-sex erotic desires and behaviors.

As Weeks notes, it may be true that there is some deeply rooted, even biological, aspect to sexual desire and the gender of object choice⁷. It is certainly true that our bodies react to some stimuli and not others, our brains processing signals to and from our sense and sex organs. The sights and smells and tastes of other people can arouse and repulse. Touches can stimulate or nauseate. There are biological processes at work in these bodily reactions. That is undeniable. However, responses of lubrication or repulsion are mediated and shaped by life histories and social experience. And, it isn't only other bodies that can arouse. Such things as rubber suits, "furry" outfits, or lace handkerchiefs also produce embodied responses. Somehow, though, I doubt that Rousseau's hankie fetish was the result of *in utero* hormone levels or that Senator David Vitter's love for diapers flows from a genetic allele.

Sexual desire is constructed through lifetimes of experience, and sexual identity even more so. The meanings attached to erotic activities and yearnings are socially organized, which has been done in widely different ways in various socio-historical locations (Greenberg 1988). I am working within a theory of Sexuality—of society, really—that treats gay and lesbian, and "*straight*," identities not as "natural" phenomena inhering in individuals as the direct external expressions of internal states of desire, but instead as ongoing social productions. The identification and categorization of *kinds of people* who are defined by the gender of the object of their erotic desires is relatively new

⁷ For an interesting, and surprisingly sociological, take on the relationship between biology and sexuality see: Fausto-Sterling (2000). See also: Hamer and Copland (1996).

in human history. Only over the past century and a half or so has sexual desire of these particular forms come to mark one as a specific type of human. Only recently has it meant something to *be* a Homosexual or a Heterosexual.

The work of French social historian Michel Foucault has been particularly influential in this field of intellectual production. His work (1973, 1977, 1978, 1980) may be read as telling this story (among others): Over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, operations of social power underwent radical transformations. In particular, alongside and within the development of the modern nation-state and the rationalization of production and capitalist accumulation, the rise of new forms of disciplinary knowledge produced society itself—as well as, and perhaps more importantly, at least for Foucault’s analysis, the nation’s subjectified citizens—as an object of understanding and manipulation.

“Disciplinary” is used in two ways here. The first refers to fields of professional activity. It is common to speak of particular fields of knowledge, such as psychology or medicine, as disciplines. It is more than knowledge that comprises these fields, though. It is also the entire set of social practices that are involved in producing that knowledge. Definitions of mental illness, for example, have been developed through the various practices in which psychologists, psychiatrists and psychoanalysts engage. Among the medical doctors who were first producing Homosexuals as types of people, individual case studies tended to be the predominant form of knowledge production. These doctors, working with individual patients, would write up their notes about the discussions they had with their clients, the various “treatments that were undertaken, and the results that flowed from these practices. Of course, this wasn’t only done with Homosexuals.

Freud's "Dora" is a famous example of constructing "normal" Heterosexuality (Katz 1995: Chapter 4). In other cases, such things as survey instruments may be the dominant form of knowledge production. Multiple individuals may be given the same "test," and these results are analyzed to see if any trends are evident that might be generalizable to a wider populations. In either situation, researchers will elicit responses from their patients and respondents—following the particular interview and research practices that dominate their particular field—and interpret them through analytic structures institutionalized within that field's writing and publishing practices. They may be written up in specialized journals or books, and occasionally reported in news media, which will circulate through a variety of reading publics. This field of social activity in which these discourses are produced via institutionalized techniques is the first meaning of the term "discipline."

The second use of that term refers the application of these discourses to human bodies, activities, selves, and thoughts. These fields of knowledge are simultaneously fields of power. Thus, the psychologists using and producing the knowledge circulating within these fields of social activity apply it in such ways as to discipline people's thoughts and behaviors. For example, during the years when pathological models of Homosexuality reigned, behaviorist approaches utilized "aversive therapies" such as electroconvulsion to alter the desire-response relationship (see, for example, Bancroft 1969). Similarly psychometricians developed screening questions to identify Homosexuals for exclusion from military service (Bérubé 1990: 9-33). Both sets of practitioners applied the knowledge of their field in the disciplining of human bodies and activities. They were involved in "fixing" Homosexual selves. The institutionalization of these disciplinary practices and definitions within the state was used to remove those

“pathological” beings from the mainstream of social life lest they pollute the national body. The application of various techniques of measurement and observation are connected to specific practices by which such knowledge can be applied to human subjects, disciplining them in such ways as to mold their selves and activities to fit within the society in which they live, and which is comprised by them. This “governmentality” is a technology of power through which the state and institutions of control mold citizens to do the work of policing themselves for social ends (Foucault 1997).

A central part of these broad historical processes involved the production of new subjects and subjectivities. In particular, there was an explosion of discourses surrounding matters sexual, which produced the aforementioned menagerie of sexual species and returns us to the point with which I opened.

There is no question that the appearance in nineteenth-century psychiatry, jurisprudence, and literature of a whole series of discourses on the species and subspecies of homosexuality, inversion, pederasty, and “psychic hermaphroditism” made possible a strong advance of social controls into this area of “perversity”; but it also made possible the formation of a “reverse” discourse: homosexuality began to speak in its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or “naturalness” be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified (Foucault [1978] 1990: 101).

“The Homosexual” (as well as “The Heterosexual”) came to be known and to know itself as a specific *type of human* in this period. It became a category of *being*. The imposition of disciplining categories onto the forms of life—and the people living them—being described and policed within these newly developing discourses also produced opportunities for “talking back.” They produced new selves, new positions from which to speak, and new sites of social control and resistance. At its birth, The Homosexual was a deviant being. So was the Heterosexual, who would shortly become

normal (Katz 1995). Eventually, some of the same institutional processes that created the pathological Homosexual led to its eclipse by the “Normal Lesbian/Gay” (Seidman 2002) and, eventually, as we are witness, the birth of the “Respectable Same-Sex Couple.” The psychologists who were once using aversive and talking cures to “fix” Homosexuals are now largely working to help them integrate such identities into their lives in positive ways (see, for example, Jordan and Deluty 1995). What was once condemned came to be tolerated and is now celebrated.

Producing the Normal Citizen

A central issue within the heterogeneous politics of sexuality over the past couple decades has been the idea of “normalization.”⁸ When I discuss this term with my students the first definition that comes to mind—which also tends to be the one I often see invoked by opponents of lesbian and gay equality—is that of removing the boundary that separates same-sex erotic activity, and gay and lesbian identities and lifestyles, from a conflated majoritarian and moral notion of “normality.” In this sense, normalization involves de-stigmatization.

The word “normal” is a messy little thing. It is ubiquitous, which can sometimes make its meaning somewhat vague and hard to pin down. In general, I think it is safe to assume that many people take it to mean such things as “everyday”, “expected”, “not out of the ordinary”, or “average.” It is to this last term I would like to turn because, as I am using it, “normalization” does have a strong relationship to “average,” both in its everyday use and statistical sense. In statistics—especially those subfields that rely on

⁸ On the issue of normalization, see Warner (1993, 1999, 2005), Warner and Berlant (1998), Seidman (2002), Halperin (2003).

probabilistic approaches—there is a general working assumption that random selection processes will produce a “normal distribution” of results. For example, if we randomly select people for height from the entire population, we would expect those we select to cluster around the middle range, with fewer very tall or very short people being selected. In other cases, the data can be transformed so that their distribution more closely resembles that (in)famous bell curve. In other words, we can manipulate the data to produce the desired distribution. It is that productive process of normalization with which I am concerned here. It is not only data, however, that can be manipulated.

One of the great innovations in the techniques of power in the eighteenth century was the emergence of “population” as an economic and political problem: population as wealth, population as manpower or labor capacity, population balanced between its own growth and the resources it commanded (Foucault 1990: 25)

Population became an object of manipulation. Rationalized techniques of observation, measurement, training, and policing became tools for shaping the social body. States act on and through populations. Over the course of time, state actors became social planners, and self-conscious national publics became “societies.” Both came to “know” population as something malleable.

This brings me to the second form of “normal” with which I am concerned, that in which it is equivalent to “preferred” or “appropriate.” It is the moral sense in which we refer to normative boundaries between right or wrong. During the same era in which the terms and categories “Heterosexual” and “Homosexual” were coming into use and being integrated into various institutional discourses and practices, statistical research techniques were also becoming more prominent in the human and natural sciences. Those developing and drawing upon this newly developing discipline “thought they were discovering natural laws... [in which] normal came to mean right, proper, healthy. What

most people are, the new wisdom went, is what people should be” (Warner 1999: 57). Statistical normality is transformed into mathematical unity, which becomes moral (or social) necessity. “Gay men as a group tend to have more sexual partners than straight men as a group” becomes “gay men have more sexual partners than straight men” which is transformed into “gay men have too many sexual partners.”

The state and other public agencies may then turn to pedagogical techniques stressing the health benefits of fewer sexual partners such as pamphlets placed in doctors’ offices, social marketing campaigns in gay media or other places where men meet for sex. It may involve safer-sex education workshops. Whichever forms they enact, the experts and authorities creating these programs are attempting to shape the behavior of gay men or other “men who have sex with men” such that these men will limit the number of partners they have. They are encouraging and training these men in practices of sexual self-regulation.

There may also be forms of surveillance included in such efforts to shape the social body. They may be present in something so simple as asking questions about sexual behavior at a routine physical or HIV test, or in the deployment of more complicated survey research programs, to determine how effective programmatic efforts at shaping behavior are. These can then be used to attempt new interventions to shape the behaviors and selves of these men.

These are attempts by the state, and various disciplines, to shape the social body, to act on the populace and normalize the nation. It isn’t just that the state is attempting to mold behaviors, though. It is also working to produce a preferred population. The state and political publics have worked, and still do, to produce a Heterosexual nation. There

are a number of ways in which this is and was done. Here I focus briefly on two examples of this, immigration and education.

For most of the twentieth century, it was illegal for Homosexuals to enter the United States (Eskridge 1999: 36-39). Naturalized citizenship was technically unavailable to them. During the early parts of the 1900s, these exclusions were generally based upon such things as violations of “anti-sodomy” laws. In other words, policies were based on the exclusion of those who violated behavioral norms. As the century progressed, definitions of “congenital Homosexuality” moved from the medical and psychological disciplines and into state discourses. Homosexuals, as a *type of people* instead of as those who had engaged in certain *types of behavior*, were barred from entry. This exclusion was finally lifted in 1990. However, even though Homosexuals are no longer specifically barred from entry, we can still see how the state acts to create a straight society in the granting of favorable status to Heterosexuals through spousal preferences and other family privileges that are denied to lesbians and gay men because of the refusal to recognize their relationships. Even when those relationships are registered with other nation-states, they are refused recognition by the United States. At least one married Canadian couple was denied entry to the United States until they changed their customs documents in such a way as to indicate they were not married. (Krauss, Clifford. 2003. “Married gay Canadian couple barred from U.S.” *New York Times*, September 19. A4.)

Currently, there are six nations that allow same-sex couples to marry: Belgium, Canada, the Netherlands, South Africa, Spain and Norway. A number of other nations provide other kinds of recognition and benefits to same-sex couples. However, none of these families are recognized by the United States as families for immigration purposes.

The spouses of lesbian and gay people who come from those countries and wish to immigrate to the United States will not be given the same kinds of favorable treatment that the spouses of their Heterosexual counterparts. Indeed, I am personally aware (as I am sure others are) of gay and lesbian Americans who have entered into different-sex marriages with foreign nationals in order to gain favorable immigration status for those legal spouses even while they are involved in committed same-sex relationships. All of this while the same-sex partners of American citizens are treated as legal strangers. The straight state remains hard at work.

Education provides another arena in which the state works to (re)produce a Heterosexual nation. Anyone who has seen such hygiene films as *Boys Beware* (Sid Davis Productions 1961) or *Girls Beware* (Sid Davis Productions 1961) can see how the state and mass media were involved in mid-Twentieth Century attempts to stigmatize Homosexuals as threats to children, and to train those children to become Heterosexuals (see also Adams 1997). While the state may have moved away from such associations of Homosexuality with pedophilia and threats to children, it is no less involved in attempting to mold Heterosexual citizens. In 1996, Congress first acted to require that any state desiring federal funds for sex education programs *must* provide abstinence-only “education.” These regulations remain in place today, and the Department of Health and Human services has established guidelines for eligibility. There are eight requirements for such programs, two of which I highlight here:

- “The curriculum must have a clear message regarding the importance of student abstinence from sexual activity until marriage and must emphasize that the best life outcomes are more likely obtained if an individual abstains until marriage.
- Throughout the entire curriculum, the term "marriage" must be defined as "only a legal union between one man and one woman as a husband and

wife, and the word 'spouse' refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife." (Consistent with Federal law)" (Department of Health and Human Services 2007).

Congressional investigators have criticized these programs on the basis of such things as their blatantly anti-gay bias, overt religious proselytizing, and provision of misinformation to students regarding contraception and the efficacy of condoms (House Oversight Committee 2004). However, what we see in these regulations are, again, attempts to create a Heterosexual social body. The state is working to *produce* "straight" citizens. These students are being trained in the practices of self-discipline so that they will act in accordance with the preferred normative standard of marital Heterosexuality.

While Heterosexuality is still dominant as both a system of organization and favored status, it has become possible for lesbians and gay men to be "good sexual citizens" (Seidman 2002: 150-9) in ways that were impossible a mere two decades ago. We are no longer categorically criminal, though many of us remain outsiders, some willingly but most not. So long as sex is tied to monogamy and intimacy, romantic love and marriage, it is "good" sex (at least for citizenship purposes). Erotic activity for pleasure alone, be it rough or non-monogamous, is still stigmatized even if widely practiced. Procreative sex is valued so long as it is not a welfare mother engaging in it (Smith 2007). Different types of sexual activity have become "acceptable" legally, but many may still lie outside the bounds of morally normative practices. The Valverdean "Respectable Same-Sex Couples" I introduced above are engaged in the practice of good sexual citizenship. The normalization of lesbian and gay citizens involves the reinforcement of heteronormative standards of citizenship (Warner 1999; Richardson 2000; Seidman 2002). The integration of gay and lesbian types into the disciplining

discourses of various institutions of control may involve not only the devaluation of queer difference but also the ongoing stigmatization of non-heteronormative lifestyles and selves and the (re)production of inequalities facing non-marital families. The Respectable Same-Sex Couple, as a social type, is a model of good sexual citizenship so long as it aspires to and engages in the self-governing practices that maintain and uphold dominant normative standards.

Outline of the work

In the beginning (of this chapter) was the Boston Marriage, a *model* of same-sex intimacy among certain bourgeois women. While these relationships were well-known and sometimes tolerated, they also arose in an era when same-sex desires were increasingly coming to define people as types and being more heavily policed. I am concerned in this work with the development of such socio-sexual types and the processes through which they are constructed. The path from the Boston Marriage to the Respectable Same-Sex Couple, which in many cases *might* be seen as New Boston Marriages, is one that involves the incorporation of certain lesbian and gay lives and selves, *into* the disciplinary and governing relations of American social life.

The development of Heterosexuals and Homosexuals as types of people in an organized system of Heterosexual domination serves as the basis for Chapter One. In that chapter I trace the institutionalization of the Heterosexual/Homosexual binary as a primary axis of social organization in American society. In particular, I am concerned with how these two medical categories of “deviants” became primary social categories of being in American society. I begin by looking at how both Heterosexuals and

Homosexuals were included among non-normative sexual categories, and the institutional practices that established Heterosexuality as normal, and Homosexuality as a primary marker of sexual deviance, by looking at gender crises in the white middle classes.

I also discuss how that distinction between the “normal Heterosexual” and “pathological Homosexual” was institutionalized within state discourses in the middle decades of the Twentieth Century. It was in the interwar years that the federal government, in particular, began to take notice of the Homosexual *qua* Homosexual. In the aftermath of the war, state repression of lesbians and gay men intensified. Witch hunts inside and outside of government agencies and the enactment of policies targeting Homosexuals produced the conditions for the solidification of the institutional closet. They also produced potential sites of resistance

During the 1950s, these potential spaces of resistance became a site of social movement activity. During this era, we see the development and growth of lesbian and gay literary and political publics, and the birth of the Homophile movement. The increased circulation of gay and lesbian novels—even “trashy” pulp books—and the birth of a movement press, along with the publication of Kinsey’s work (1948, 1953) and a growing if still small number of people willing to speak openly *as* Homosexuals had the effect of spreading new forms of Homosexual identity, and the growth of a political movement. The institutional closet was growing in strength but also being challenged. Homosexual identity categories were being solidified in the processes of targeting, repression and resistance. One effect of the intensification of the mid-century anti-lesbian and anti-gay *kulturkampf* was the production of sites of challenge and targets for social movement activity.

These challenges serve as the starting for Chapter Two, in which I look at the overthrow of the pathological Homosexual by the Normal Lesbian/Gay, and the ongoing integration of this latter type into the institutional patterns of American life. I utilize, here, what I am calling a “cycle of incorporation” to explain these transformations. This cycle involves three broad phases of social activity: challenges to policies and practices of exclusion; the enactment of negative policies of incorporation, which protect lesbians and gay men from exclusion; and the enactment of positive policies of incorporation, which provide social, legal, cultural, and material supports for the living of certain lesbian and gay lives.

In developing this cycle, I look at the growth and institutionalization of the legal sector of lesbian and gay social movement activity. As more social spaces become available for people to live openly lesbian and gay lives, more people take advantage of those opportunities and they increasingly contribute resources to organizations in this legal movement sector. This, in turn, allows those organizations to continue their work and open up more spaces into which lesbians and gay men can integrate their lives. This expanding cycle leads to a greater incorporation of lesbian and gay lives in the institutional patterns and practices of American life.

I discuss two issues in the exploration of this expanding incorporative cycle. The first involves lesbian mothering. Since the days of Homophile organizing, lesbians have struggled to maintain custody of children from Heterosexual relationships. This first phase of exclusion from parenting has been replaced by policies and practices in which states like Massachusetts have incorporated lesbians as mothers into state policy through such things as second-parent adoption and inclusion within foster systems. The other

area involves HIV/AIDS and, particularly, the incorporation of gay men as clients of the social welfare state via the absorption of social service agencies in state funding streams, research mechanisms, and service provision. Through these mainstreaming processes we see how lesbian and gay lives have moved from outsiders to citizens.

In Chapter Three, I introduce the newspaper representations at the heart of this study. I am drawing on coverage of same-sex couples in the *Boston Globe* and *Boston Herald*, as well as a sample of national newspapers, during the Massachusetts campaign for marriage equality. My focus in this chapter is a specific set of couples, those who I am calling “public face couples,” and whom others have called “poster couples” (Javors 2001). These are the seven couples selected by Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders to sue the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the couple chosen by the Cambridge Lavender Alliance to be first in line on the night when marriage became available. In particular, I am interested in how these couples came to be chosen and why they appear so often in news coverage.

To explore these issues I discuss the relationship between the routine practices of news gathering and reporting and the activities of social movement activists in choosing the couples. I am treating these selection practices as “framing processes,” attempts by movement actors to mold and shape the message transmitted to various public audiences. In particular, I look at two areas of framing activity. The first, injustice framing (Gamson, Fireman, and Rytina 1982) involves communicative activity linking the hardships suffered by same-sex couples to their inability to marry. The second area, what I am calling “family values framing,” highlights the issues of respectability I have been discussing. I am treating respectability as *actions or qualities demonstrating adherence to*

and excellence in the meeting of normative standards associated with specific social roles. In this section I describe how these couples uphold the values associated with marriage. These news representations of them produce them as respectable in reporting of their statements and life narratives.

There is one other group of couples that I discuss in this chapter. These include people who are public officials. In particular, here, I am interested in members of the legislature and their role in the constitutional convention of 2004. While these couples are relatively rare, and while their statements are similar to those of the public face couples, I argue that their presence is important because it provides an opportunity to tell their life stories in a setting in which they would not otherwise be heard.

In Chapter Four, I turn my attention to the couples, and the individuals comprising them, as economic actors. A common stereotype holds lesbians and gay men to be privileged economically. Media representations, including those produced in this news coverage, often reinforce those stereotypes. When economic activity is reported, it tends to be undertaken by upwardly mobile, successful middle-to-upper-class professionals. Those representations containing more information tended to be of people living higher up the income scale. These news stories tend to involve representations of relatively privileged same-sex couples. Paradoxically, it is these stereotypes of wealth that are also produced in the manufacturing of respectability.

One area of these couples' success and integration lies in relations between consumption and entrepreneurship. These couples are shown to be economically productive. Many business owners are shown, a number of whom cater to lesbian and gay consumers. In addition, the availability of marriage creates a new social location for the

incorporation of lesbians and gay men as consumptive citizens. These representations of economically productive and successful professionals who are also consummate consumers reproduce cultures of consumer capitalism.

In Chapter Five, I discuss the role of these news representations in the transformation and reproduction of social boundaries. A primary area of boundary work involves the shifting border between Heterosexuality and Homosexuality as it is being reshaped around the border between married and unmarried same-sex couples. While the primary focus of the study is the movement for marriage, there are other articles dealing with same-sex couples published during this period. Some of these, particularly those dealing with couples who have broken up provide us with an opportunity to see how the regulation of unmarried same-sex couples establishes similarities between their lives and those of unmarried different-sex couples, and how the incorporation of marriage into lesbian and gay lives reinforces certain similarities between Heterosexual and Homosexual life while producing boundaries between married and unmarried same-sex couples.

Additionally, I use the break-up of couples to discuss another boundary being established. This is the border around “respectability” which I am placing in the area of failure. This may be the failure of the couple to stay a couple or to break-up well, but either way it is a failure to uphold the normative standards associated with married life—or of couplehood. However, I also place planning for failure *within* the category of respectability. Within a society that places risk onto family life and privatizes responsibility, planning for and avoiding such failure is a signifier of respectability.

Chapter Six returns to the broader processes of change I have been discussing. In particular, I focus on how the news represents these broader changes. Massachusetts was the first state to allow same-sex couples to legally marry. The victory there was historic in American lesbian and gay history. That was not lost in this coverage. Overall, the change narrative produced in these news representations is one highlighting a move away from the bad old days of life in the closet and into a new era of openness and equality. The news is producing a progressive narrative of lesbian and gay life. It is the issue of narratives that lie at the heart of this chapter.

The narratives I discuss are not only those dealing with the telling of what has happened in life. These news representations are also showing how lesbian and gay life scripts, possible tales of the future, are changing. As gay men and lesbians are incorporated into mainstream institutions of society, the repression and exclusion that once defined gay life is increasingly replaced with support and inclusion. Their lives are coming to more closely mirror that of their Heterosexual counterparts. This is throwing some aspects of lesbian and gay life into flux as people work to make sense of the forms of life they have created and the new possibilities that are becoming available. These news stories are a cultural location where these new life scripts for lesbians and gay men are being publicly negotiated.

Finally, in Chapter Seven, I return to the themes I developed in this Introduction, the cycle of incorporation from Chapter Two, and the representations we saw in Chapter Three through Six. In particular, my own ambivalence about the politics of marriage comes through in that chapter. I am concerned with a movement and a politics that asks lesbians and gay men, and other queers, to leave behind certain cultural practices as they

are integrated into an unjust society that provides protections for a limited range of families in an increasingly risk-based world. While I recognize the joy that many people experience at being able to marry, and also the fact that this incorporation is replacing an inhuman system of repression, I worry about a politics that upholds normative standards in such ways as to re-stigmatize non-marital families and other forms of queer life. All politics involve trade-offs. However, I wonder which trade-offs we are being asked to make in a politics that emphasizes a fight for the right to be the same.

Chapter 1

The Birth of Homosexuality and the Rise of the Heterosexual Domination

In 2004 the Massachusetts legislature met on four days over the course of February and March to debate a series of proposed constitutional amendments that would bar same-sex couples from entering into civil marriage contracts. This was not the first time that the General Court, as the Commonwealth's legislature is officially known, dealt with such amendments. A citizen-initiated petition to amend the world's oldest still-operational written Constitution had come before the legislature in 2002. However, Senate President Thomas Birmingham accepted a motion to adjourn, which was quickly approved by the body, before any vote on the amendment was taken (Abraham and Klein, 2002).

The 2002 and 2004 conventions were held under very different circumstances. Between them, in November of 2003, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court had ruled that the Commonwealth's constitution forbade the exclusion of same-sex couples from civil marriage. The 2002 amendment was aimed at preventing the entry of same-sex couples into the relationship, while the various amendments proposed in 2004 were attempts to take away those couples' newly won marriage rights. On March 29 of that year, an amendment rescinding the ability to marry and creating Civil Unions in the Commonwealth passed by a vote of 105-92. It was not approved, however, in the next legislative session. Subsequent efforts to restrict marriage rights have also failed, and same-sex couples have been marrying in the Bay State since May 17, 2004.

Time and again during the 2004 constitutional convention, legislators invoked the legacy of President John Adams, author of the state's constitution, which was originally

ratified in 1780. Supporters of the marriage rights of same-sex couples pointed to Article I, and its declaration that “All people are born free and equal⁹” to argue that the taking away of rights violated the document’s spirit. The founding of the Commonwealth on principles of equality and liberty, they argued, required opposition to any of the marriage-exclusion efforts.

Supporters of the various amendments argued that there was no way Adams would ever have envisioned something so crazy as Adam and Steve or Lilith and Eve marrying each other. They were, quite honestly, probably right on that point. There are two primary reasons for this. First, marriage itself was a very different thing in Adams’s time. Not only would a marriage between two men or two women have been unthinkable, but even the idea of two social equals marrying would have been foreign to the Founders. The system of marriage regulation that reigned at that time was based on the Common Law model of *coverture*¹⁰, which “turned the married pair legally into one person—the husband” (Cott 2000: 11). The male, as head of household, was representative of the family in legal, economic, and political life. This unitary family was built on very specific gender-based roles. The contemporary model of marriage as an association of equal individuals, each with their own rights and interests, would have been outside the realm of intelligibility for Adams and most of his contemporaries.

The second issue of concern here is that there was no gay and lesbian-identified social minority during the period in which Massachusetts—along with the twelve other

⁹ As Adams wrote it, perhaps not surprisingly given his response to Abigail Adams plea to “remember the ladies” during the drafting of the United States Constitution, Article I of the Commonwealth’s founding document opened, “All men are created free and equal.” It was amended to use the gender-neutral “people” in 1976.

¹⁰ Regarding *coverture* marriage, see McIntyre (1995) Cott (2000: Chapters 1-2), Salmon (2001: 41-43), Coontz (2005: Chapter 8).

colonies—was attempting to throw off British colonial rule. It is also worth noting that no Heterosexually-identified majority existed at that time either. In the urban centers of Europe during that era, proto-homosexual subcultures were becoming more widespread and publicly visible. The cosmopolitan Adams may have known something about these from his travels to European capitals, but at the turn of the Nineteenth Century, the sexual identities we take for granted today, and the forms of life organized around them, quite simply did not exist in the new United States.

“[H]omosexuality” is a relatively recent invention, distinct from earlier forms of same-sex love and lust. “Homosexuality” could only emerge when European scientific knowledges began to peer into—and construct—an inner “self,” a personal identity that the Nineteenth Century saw as a matter of physiology and that the Twentieth Century regarded as fundamentally psychological (Valverde 2006: 155).

This brings me to the topic of this chapter: the development of Heterosexuality and Homosexuality in conjunction with and opposition to each other. Just as Adams would not have recognized Homosexuals as a type of person, he wouldn't have identified as a Heterosexual. These identity categories were beginning to gestate at the turn of the Nineteenth Century. In discussing the birth and development of these types, I first look the growth of scientific, particularly medical, discourses. Although, these categories may have originally been formulated in European medical discourses, my focus on American social life. These disciplinary (and disciplining) experts were located in a middle class that was becoming more powerful and prominent in American society, and gender relations within these newly developing economic relations also serve as a central theme in the development of these new forms of socio-sexual organization.

Next I turn to the rise of Heterosexual domination and the institutional closet. As the object-oriented desires established in medical discourses came to predominate as the

primary mode of sexual organization in American society, Homosexuals were increasingly targeted as a type of person. The incorporation of the medical and psychological models of pathological Homosexuality into, particularly, state practices led to the development of the institutional closet. Lesbians and gay men increasingly had to live double lives over the middle decades of the Twentieth Century. Their lives and selves had to remain hidden lest their life in the “straight world” be destroyed. The potential destruction of the lives of gay and lesbian people flowed from the possibility of exposure of their gay and lesbian identities.

The increased targeting of these selves for repression also served to solidify their status as types of people. It also provided a subject position from which to challenge that repression. I conclude this chapter with the rise of the “Homophile” movement and its political and cultural efforts of resisting Heterosexual domination. Their challenges to the exclusion of Homosexuals from categories of “normal” and “citizen,” and of their voices from public discourse, were some of the initial stages of what I am calling a “cycle of incorporation,” to which I turn in the next chapter.

The Birth and Development of Heterosexuals and Homosexuals

Today, there is a strong tendency to view Heterosexuals and Homosexuals as self-evident and “naturally occurring” kinds of people. However, this hasn’t always been the case. They were once both in the same cluster of pathological sexual species (Katz 1995: 19-21). Since their birth in the mid-to-late Nineteenth Century, they have and moved away from their position as sexual outcasts and minor players on the socio-sexual stage in differing but always related trajectories. They have become primary identities whose supposedly exclusive character constitutes a major axis of social organization. In this section, I discuss the rise of this axis within systems of disciplinary knowledge and the eventual institutionalization of these types. I begin with a discussion of the development of “normal Heterosexuality.” This may seem like a strange starting point, particularly in a work about the changing social types associated with same-sex eroticism, but we cannot understand the transformations in the meaning of “Homosexuality” without placing them in relation to what has become the dominant mode of organizing sexual life.

“The Heterosexual,” like its Homosexual cousin, was originally conceived of as a deviant species. Both of them were born in Europe before immigrating to the United States. It first appeared in this country in an 1892 medical journal article written by a Dr. James Kiernan. His work, which he claimed was based on Richard Krafft-Ebbing’s classic 1886 tome *Psychopathia Sexualis*, defined Heterosexuals as deviant because they: 1) were capable of erotic attraction to members of either sex (*hetero-* taken to mean multiple targets of erotic desire); and 2) engaged in sexual activity for reasons of erotic pleasure and not procreation (Katz 1995: 19-21). However, this creature’s life as a moral outcast was short-lived. A year after the publication of Kiernan’s article, *Psychopathia Sexualis* was released the United States and Heterosexuality was first deployed in this country as a descriptor of normal sexuality *in specific opposition to* Homosexuality. Krafft-Ebbing’s “use of the term heterosexual began to move his sex test [for normality] away from the Victorian reproductive ideal toward the modern different-sex erotic norm” (Katz 1995: 28). Procreation was being removed as *the* reason for sex, and being relegated to *a* reason. Normal was becoming Heterosexual, and it was developing through the exclusion of Homosexuality¹¹.

Kiernan’s article and the American publication of *Psychopathia Sexualis* were part of much larger Nineteenth Century trends in the organization of sexual activities and desires, particularly among the white American middle classes. Sexual activity was being linked more directly to an emotional connection between partners. The Victorian era wasn’t one in which sexuality was being erased, as is so often imagined. Instead, this age

¹¹ On the changes in nineteenth-century sexuality, away from the reproductive ideal and toward a more romantic and emotional basis, see D’Emilio and Friedman (1988: Chapter 4); Lystra (1989); Seidman (1991); Katz (1995); Coontz (2005: Chapters 9-11).

saw the proliferation of new discourses and forms of control, based in disciplinary expertise, stressing the use of sexual activity for new ends. The “dangers” of masturbation, for example, were inveighed against in publications as disparate as advice columns and medical textbooks. Knowledge about how to control this “vice” was deployed in such areas as childhood education and architectural design (Foucault 1990: 28-9. See also: Lacquer 2003). Marriage remained the legitimating site of sexual activity, and penile-vaginal intercourse was its sole acceptable form, but it was no longer being tied exclusively to procreation. Baby-making remained its primary purpose, but sex was also becoming something that could “contribute to individual health, marital intimacy, and even spiritual joy” (D’Emilio and Freedman 1997: 72). The basis of this activity, though, was increasingly linked to the “spiritual connection” of “true love.”

This was part of a longer Nineteenth Century transformation of American sexual activity and ideology that accompanied other changes in the organization of social life. In addition to the rise of this disciplinary expertise around the use and abuse of sexual activity, the Nineteenth Century witnessed the expansion of an ideology of separate of masculine and feminine spheres of activity within white middle class families. While the actual separation of these spheres was never quite so sever as some of its proponents may have wished, the expansion of capitalist relations of production and accumulation, and the breakdown of economies of household production, created a masculine sphere of professional employment and feminine sphere of domesticity (D’Emilio and Freedman 1988: 57-58; Coontz 1988: Chapters 5-6). The “Cult of True Womanhood’s” purity-based ideology purged sexual desire and pleasure from the lives of women, who were increasingly responsible for the moral regulation of the family that had once been

invested in the husband. Male sexuality, identified as “baser,” was something to be controlled through self-regulation flowing from a love-based respect for the newly asexual wife. Sex could bring couples closer together, but it was their self-disciplining application of expert knowledge that would allow them to use it for the ends noted above.

This new propriety was used by the middle class to

[distinguish] itself from the allegedly promiscuous upper class and animalistic lower class. Those lust-ridden lower classes included a supposedly vicious foreign element (often Irish, Italian, and Asian) and a supposedly sensual dark-skinned racial group shipped to America from Africa as slaves (Katz 1995: 44)

While procreation remained the *primary* purpose of sexual activity for the middle class, the increasing attachment of eroticism to affection was creating fissures in those legitimating linkages. In the later Nineteenth Century, these emotional ideals would make pre-marital erotic activity more acceptable, but only if it occurred within a couple that was to be married and flowed from these affectional and spiritual sources. Desire was becoming a more important aspect of the organization of white middle class sexual life. Even women’s desire was returning from the purgatory to which it had been consigned earlier in the century. Middle-class sexual propriety was being defined by self-control in adherence to this developing love-based erotic ethos and the deployment of technical expertise in its appropriate use.

These alterations in middle class sexuality were, at least in part, being driven by changes in the organization of American life flowing from urbanization and the rise of industrial capitalism. However, changes in the marital bedroom were not the only socio-sexual alterations occurring. The proto-gay worlds John Adams may have seen in Paris or London were also starting to develop in the rapidly urbanizing America. The socialization of wage labor in capitalist relations of production that was taking place in

the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries helped to produce the conditions for the changes being described. A “free labor” system came to supplant household manufacturing, particularly in urban settings. This system of production, where people had to support themselves through wages tied to their own labor power, allowed some people, particularly men, to more easily create lives independent of traditional family structures (D’Emilio 1993). Many, freed from the expectations and obligations of family formation, sought out sexual activities with members of the same-sex, and created social and geographic spaces in America’s growing cities in which they could pursue these relationships.

Additionally, the (im)migration associated with this industrial urbanization brought masses of people—again, particularly young men—into these increasingly densely populated cities. Concentrations of unmarried men led to the development of public cultures of same-sex erotic behavior. In early Nineteenth Century New York, for example, “[there] were recognized cruising grounds and, from the 1830s on, all-male social clubs” (Greenberg 1988: 355). Even though new proto-Homosexual spaces were developing, we don’t yet see the widespread adoption of the types of gay identities we see today. Many people were starting to see themselves as a type, but many of the men who were part of these urban subcultures would eventually marry, and much of the same-sex erotic activity in which they were engaging was highly gendered. “Real men” could still engage in sexual activity with other men so long as they took the insertive role. Even beyond this, “normal men” were freer to express emotional affection for their fellows than they are today. The organization of friendship, desire and activity was a different thing than we see today. However, there were also social processes moving it in toward

the system we currently take for granted. More people in these spaces were developing senses of self based in their same-sex erotic desires, even if social authorities had yet to catch on.

While we might expect these proto-Homosexual spaces to be heavily policed they were not severely repressed, as they would be a century later. Even the occasional attempts by local media to stir up public outrage were largely unsuccessful (Greenberg 1988: 356). That is not to say, however, that same-sex eroticism was widely *accepted* or that such desires and activities were not stigmatized. Christian morality and the reproductive imperative still served as normative bases for sexual regulation, and every state at that time had anti-sodomy laws on the books. Even after colonial statutes mandating death for violation of the statutes were amended, the penalties remained quite onerous. In Massachusetts, for example, the punishment was 20 years in prison, while in New York it was “only” ten years. North and South Carolina did not remove their death penalties until after the Civil War. Despite the severity of the penalties, violations of these laws were rarely prosecuted, in part because of the difficulty of proving anal intercourse, and when they were it tended to be for intergenerational rape, attacks on women, or violations of the white supremacist racial order (Greenberg 1988: 354-5; Eskridge 2002: 19; Eskridge 2008: Chapter 1).

As the century progressed, however, certain forms of sexuality became more heavily policed by the state. For example, in the later Nineteenth Century, many states amended their sex laws so as to make oral sex a crime. Prosecutions increased dramatically after these changes, even controlling for changes in population (Eskridge 1999: 25, 374). There were also more arrests and prosecutions of female prostitutes

under these changed laws. As the century wore on, the state was becoming more directly involved in the policing of sexual activity and using new rationales for doing so. For example, the targeting of prostitutes wasn't driven fully by the perceived immorality of such activity. It also resulted from the state's attempts to intervene for reasons of "public health." Prostitution was associated with the spread of diseases, like syphilis, and these health problems were coming to be understood as social problems that state intervention could help to solve (D'Emilio and Freedman 1988: 149-156).

This increased policing is related to the disciplinary expertise that was training married couples in the appropriate use of sex, and that was developing the theories that produced Heterosexuals and Homosexuals as types of people. The promiscuous mingling of politics and expert knowledge is what Foucault (1990: 140-1) referred to as "biopower." State actors were attempting to shape the population through the deployment of expert knowledge. The various disciplinary knowledges developing in this era were put to work in the lives of citizens, particularly in areas related to sexuality, in order to shape the health and composition of national bodies. For example, while marriage was still stressed as a central locus of sexual activity, and as a signifier of good citizenship, the second half of the Nineteenth Century witnessed state actors increasing restrictions on who could marry (Mintz 2001: 20). This was undertaken for a number of reasons. For example, eugenics movements were becoming increasingly popular at the turn of the century and were able to engage state actors in the enactment of more restrictive marriage laws (Lindsay 1998). This was in addition to the more widely known movement toward sterilization of the "feeble minded" (Reilly 1991; Carey 1998).

Similarly, states were involved in the racial regulation of marriage. The practice of arranged “proxy marriages” was likened to prostitution by advocates of Japanese exclusion in advancing “yellow peril” arguments (See Thompson 1978: 37-8; Takaki 1994: 247-51). Also, in the Reconstruction period through the early Twentieth Century, anti-miscegenation statutes were increasingly enacted in order to restrict interracial marriages and protect white supremacy (Cott 2000: 198-204). While we think of these laws as banning interracial marriage, they were more often put into place to ban the marriage of whites with members of other races. In each of these cases, we can see the state and political movements using marriage law and the regulation of sexuality to shape the racial composition of the nation as well as its “health.”

My goal here is not to give a full accounting of the ways that state actors were increasingly intervening in the intimate lives of Americans. Instead, I want to note how the broader Nineteenth and Twentieth Century processes of somaticizing social problems within medical knowledge, as well as the development of expert knowledge in other disciplines, was increasingly incorporated in state policy-making activity. The birth and development of Heterosexuals and Homosexuals as types of people were part of these broader processes. Recall from above how these terms were first introduced to America by a medical doctor, and were based on the work of a European doctor. Krafft-Ebbing’s theories defined Homosexuality as a form of congenital degeneracy. The school of thought of which he was a member didn’t see this “defect” as inherited, but as an epiphenomenon of other biologically heritable flaws. Other medical experts formulated it in terms of “inversion,” where male Homosexuality was the result of having a female

brain and female Homosexuality a male brain. Whichever etiological theories of same-sex desire these medical experts utilized, they located its roots in the body¹².

The increasing control applied to sexual activity, be it through state policing or medical intervention, wasn't only about the moral, physical, or racial "health" of the nation. It was also about the enforcement of gender roles. I previously noted the gendered separation of spheres of social activity that accompanied the rise of the white middle classes. As the Nineteenth Century wore on, the men of these new professional and managerial classes—including our medical experts—experienced what we might consider a masculinity crisis.

If middle-class men exerted power over the lives of workingmen (and claimed a degree of superiority) because they worked with their heads, not their hands, they recognized, as well, that the very physicality of workingmen's labor afforded them a seemingly elemental basis for establishing their manliness (Chauncey 1994: 112)

This transformation of male labor "emasculated" middle class men, and produced the need for new definitions of manhood, new axes of organization. There was a model of effeminate "masculinity" in the cities in which these doctors and other bourgeois professionals were working: the Fairie or Queer. As I noted above, these (proto-)Homosexual men had, over the course of the Nineteenth Century, laid claim to a variety of urban spaces, such as parks, boarding houses, bars, restaurants, public restrooms, and bathhouses. In these areas they were developing new gay cultural practices, such as camp and cruising, and building communal sites of identity formation. Their presence was well known, and the comparison between their effeminacy and the refined manners of middle-class professional men produced more than a little anxiety. One response to this was the

¹² On these biological theories of homosexuality see: Greenberg (1988: 411-15); Chauncey (1989); Katz (1995: Chapter 2); LaVey (1996: Chapter 1)

production a new basis for manhood. A new line of demarcation between normal and deviant masculinity was produced along the axis of sexual object choice.

“Normal” men only became “heterosexual” men in the late Nineteenth Century, when they began to make their “normalcy” contingent on their renunciation of such [sexual] intimacies with men. They became heterosexuals, that is, only when they defined themselves and organized their affective and physical relations to exclude any sentiments or behavior that might be marked as homosexual (Chauncey 1994: 120-121).

In the late Nineteenth Century, then, we see Heterosexuality becoming normal sexuality. Other-sex eroticism, even apart from its procreative potential, was being established as a line of demarcation from abnormality. At the same time, though, Homosexual communities were continuing to develop and expand. They were even enjoying some forms of tolerance and notoriety as the Nineteenth Century turned over into the first couple decades of the Twentieth Century. In New York, for example, Greenwich Village and Chelsea were developing as gay enclaves by the 1920s. They were publicly known spaces, and even the drag balls held in these areas, and in Harlem, were public spectacles that were even advertised as “the thing to see” in travelogues (Chauncey 1994: Chapter 11).

However, as these gay and lesbian communities grew, they also found themselves increasingly targeted by state authorities and disciplinary experts. Social movements, like the eugenicists and Anthony Comstock’s “decency movement,” (Biesel 1997) were pushing the state for greater policing of sexual activity, including Homosexuality. Over the course of the last two decades of the Nineteenth Century and the first two decades of the Twentieth Century, both sexual freedom and sexual regulation increased, for the newly established Heterosexual and Homosexual alike. The economic crises of the 1930s, however, saw the onset of what Eskridge (1994: 294-5) has termed an “anti-

homosexual *kulturkampf* throughout the cosmopolitan core of the global capitalist system. This increasingly repressive state activity and the rise of the institutional closet in the United States would destroy many thousands of lives.

The Rise of the Institutional Closet

Part of the broader contraction of sexual freedom accompanying the economic crises of 1930s was an increase in the targeting of same-sex eroticism for state repression. Heterosexuality was now normal, and it was being produced, as I noted above, through explicit attempts to elimination of Homosexuality (Sedgwick 1985: 186; Fuss 1991: 1-8). This was accomplished not only through the expulsion, attempted if not always successful, of same-sex erotic desires and activities from the lives of individuals, but also through the exclusion of Homosexuals from the nation. Immigration restrictions, for example, had included sexual outsiders, like prostitutes, since the immediate post-Civil War years. In the early decades of the Twentieth Century Homosexuality was incorporated into these regulations as a reason to keep people out of the country (Eskridge 1999: 35-6). Such exclusions were incorporated into other area of social policy and law via an expanding process of from penalizing not only homosexual activity but also a targeting of Homosexual selves in order to create a “straight” society. The national body and identity was becoming a Heterosexual body and identity.

Dominant theories of the “causes” of Homosexuality were also shifting over the course of the Twentieth Century’s early decades. No longer did models of heritable degeneracy or neurological inversion hold sway. Instead, psychological models of flawed development moved into dominance. Freudian psychoanalytic theories gained

prominence and popularity among the educated middle and upper classes, while other forms of psychology were able to gain institutional footholds via the development of such things as psychometric testing that, they argued, could be used in the biopolitical shaping of the social body I noted above (Gould 1996 Chapter 5).

This process of incorporating disciplinary psychology intensified in the buildup to World War II, particularly as it became clearer that America would likely enter the war.

Prompted by a growing sense of urgency, and pursuing their agenda of showing how psychiatry could contribute to the war effort, leading American psychiatrists set out to persuade the Selective Service System to give psychiatric as well as physical examinations to selectees (Berube 1990: 9).

These attempts were aimed at building better soldiers by screening out those with potential “mental problems.” During WWI, the problem of “shell shock,” what we would likely call PTSD, left many soldiers unable to function *as soldiers* on the war front due to traumas they experienced. Psychologists were developing these screening procedures in order to exclude people who might be particularly susceptible to such distressed reactions. The initial proposal these doctors produced contained no mentions of homosexuality. However, when the Department of Defense prepared draft comments on the policy, they had added it to the list of disqualifying “deviations” (Berube 1990: 11-12). Through this institutionalization of psychological disciplinary tools, the United States government began to specifically target Homosexuals *as a type of people* on a more thoroughgoing society-wide basis.

Because the need for personnel was so great in the early and middle war years, military exclusions for Homosexuality were relatively rare. However, among those people who had some sense of a Homosexual identity, or an awareness of same-sex

desires, these regulations likely contributed to the solidification of that sense of gay or lesbian self. Recruits were not only asked about their sexual activities, but also about their desires. A part of their person was being targeted by the state and made more central to the social definition of who they were. This targeting of the self had the effect of consolidating it by specifying and focusing attention upon it. Indeed, for many people, these processes likely contributed to the adoption of Homosexual identities, as their desires were being given a name. Conscriptees were increasingly aware of the possibility of exclusion (and of the stigmatizing mark it would produce) and acted in self-conscious ways to conceal that identity. In this hiding due to stigmatizing and penalizing institutional practices we see the rise of the closet.

These anti-Homosexual regulations and screening tools were but one part of the broader process by which the massive wartime mobilization of American society worked to spread and solidify lesbian and gay identities. Millions of people were being concentrated in gender-segregated settings. Large numbers of men, in particular, were placed in single-sex military environments where same-sex erotic activity could be more easily obtained than in many of their home communities. While the military mobilization of women was much smaller, the Women's Army Corps also provided a single-sex environment in which lesbian activities took place and identities were strengthened (Faderman 1991: Chapter 5). The vast numbers of American citizens brought into military service and the specification of Homosexuals as types of people within military regulations created increasing avenues for the discovery and production of gay and lesbian selves.

In addition to the war-time military mobilization, there was also a massive movement of other citizens to urban centers to participate in industrial production and other war-related activities. In addition to men who were not part of the military, actually living Riveting Rosies were moving into industrial and transportation centers in very large numbers. This contributed to the development of larger lesbian and gay communities. The individuals moving to these spaces for work were joined by many of the people who had been excluded or expelled from military service due to their homosexuality. Many of these people stayed in these places at the end of the War, as did thousands of people leaving the military after the war. Just as earlier urbanization had increased opportunities for the development of Homosexual subcultures, this round also created opportunities for the further consolidation of those communities and identities.¹³

Policies mandating the exclusion of homosexuals were ignored by many draft board examiners for much of the war. Even military policies mandating their expulsion were ignored while there was a great need for personnel. As the war wound down and the need for bodies subsided, however, the military became more aggressive in the enforcement of its anti-Homosexual policies. Screening tests were but one way to exclude people from service. Investigative services became more persistent in their efforts to seek out and expel lesbian and gay service members. Which hunts and purges became far more frequent. The need to hide also intensified¹⁴.

¹³ Regarding the role of war-time mobilization and the development of gay and lesbian identities and communities, see: D'Emilio (1983: Chapter 2); Berube (1990); Faderman (1991: Chapter 5); Kennedy and Davis (1994: Chapter 2).

¹⁴ On military investigations of Homosexuality, see Bérubé (1990: Chapter 8). For the postwar era, see Shilts (1995: Chapters 34-5)

We also see the continuation of the processes of producing Homosexuals as kinds of people here. As the institutional repression of lesbians and gay men in the military increased as the war wound down, there was also a transformation in what was being targeted. While sodomy remained a criminal offense, Homosexuals, when not dishonorably discharged, were increasingly “hospitalized” rather than jailed when they were caught in the increasingly frequent purges and witch-hunts, reflecting the decreasing focus on homosexual acts and the move to targeting Homosexual selves.

This shift in how lesbians and gay men were treated, which might be seen as somewhat more “humane,” did not signal any kind of growing institutional acceptance. Instead, it shows a shift from the penal to the psychological in which discipline was being called upon to control Homosexuals in military settings. There was often very little difference in treatment between these forms of incarceration. It is also worth recalling that even the liberation of German death camps was part of this increasing anti-Homosexual activity within the American military. The men in those camps who were marked with pink triangles—the Nazi signifier for Homosexuality—were re-imprisoned rather than freed (Plant 1986: 181). The post-war era would witness an even greater intensification of American targeting of Homosexuality. However, this would not be concentrated in the military, but would occur on a society-wide basis.

If the end of WWII saw the defeat of Japanese Imperialism, German National Socialism and Italian Fascism, it also saw Soviet Communism arise as the dominant threat to American global hegemony. The nuclear destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the announcement that the Soviets had developed such annihilative technologies, and the new Cold War produced an anxious society behind Ward Cleaver

and Jim Anderson's calming façades. If the American state discovered a new target in Homosexuals in the Depression and War years, it wasted little time in focusing its gaze and repressive machinery on them during and after military demobilization.

Homosexuals were produced as the Communists' anti-American co-conspirators.

Lesbians and gay men became enemies of the state (D'Emilio 1983: Chapter 3; Faderman 1991: Chapter 6; Johnson 2004).

In 1950, the Senate authorized an investigation of the presence of Homosexuals in the government, and in 1953 President Eisenhower issued Executive Order 10,450, which declared that gay and lesbian people, among other "sexual deviants," were threats to the nation and barred from any government jobs requiring security clearances. This ban became a *de facto* exclusion from most federal employment. The military continued and intensified the investigations and purges it initiated in the closing years of the war. Lest people think I am being overly dramatic with regard to Homosexuals being state enemies, it is worth recalling that more people were purged from the federal government for being lesbian and gay than for Communist Party affiliation or sympathy during the McCarthy Era's notorious witch-hunts and purges.

The hunt for homosexuals and lesbians extended far beyond a search for those in the military and the federal bureaucracy. The obsessive concern with national security spurred the growth of an immense system of tests and standards to determine the suitability of employees. More than 12,600,000 workers, or slightly more than 20 percent of the labor force, faced loyalty-security investigations. States and municipalities followed the lead of the federal government in demanding from their personnel not only loyalty but traditional moral probity as well (D'Emilio 1983: 46).

States and localities also increased their enforcement and enactment of laws and policies targeting Homosexuals for exclusion from society. Employment restrictions were one area of activity, and the targeting of places where lesbians and gay men was

another prominent site of repression. Homosexuals were officially barred gathering in public or being served alcohol in some places. The use of older laws mandating the wearing of gender-appropriate clothing or banning people from dancing with members of the same sex were increasingly used to target gay and lesbian people who congregated in bars and clubs, which were often controlled by organized crime and subject to violence and harassment, especially from the police. Extortion, entrapment and vice raids were common. The thousands of individuals caught in these anti-Homosexual sweeps, which often occurred during political campaigns, could expect their names to be published by the local media. Employment policies meant that such arrests would very often result in the loss of a job. Primary social relationships with family and friends could also be threatened by the exposures of gay lives¹⁵.

There were also cultural activities targeting Homosexuality for exclusion and stigmatization. “[In] the early and middle 1950s, the invisibility of homosexuality was enforced with an almost fanatical paranoia” (Russo 1987: 98). On the few occasions gay men and lesbians did appear in film, though, they were presented in such ways as to highlight the pathology of Homosexuality. They often died somewhere in the film, and were represented as miserable creatures who threatened family and society. Even hygiene films shown in public schools reinforced the idea that Homosexuals were a threat. In short, there was a society-wide anti-Homosexual mobilization in the post-War United States.

This anti-gay and lesbian activity, connected as it was to anti-Communism, was also related to broader efforts to shore up a certain gender order. Women who had moved

¹⁵ In addition to the previously cited texts on the post-War era, see: Cain (2000: 77-86); Eskridge 1993: 27-9; 44-46)

into industrial employment during the War were fired to make room for men who returning from it. The government and mass media published a wide variety of products encouraging women to “return” to the domestic sphere and to make their husbands “feel like real men” by ceding the sphere of economic production to him. The superiority of the nuclear male-provider family was constantly extolled. The gender crises flowing from military and social mobilization and demobilization caused ripples in what Butler (1990: Chapter 2) has called the Heterosexual matrix. This web of ideas and language comprises the system of gender and sexual meaning and emphasizes penile-vaginal intercourse as the primary form legitimate sexual activity due to its role in reproduction. As I discussed above, normal sexuality was once *solely* procreative. But, over the course of the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries there was a shift toward normality being redefined according to desire and the gender of sexual object choice. Despite the shift away from the reproductive imperative and toward different-sex erotic attraction, however, the normative centrality of penile-vaginal intercourse remained intact. The mid-century period, particularly from the 1930s through the 1950s, was one in which the dominance of Heterosexual normalcy was fortified in a variety of social institutions via the exclusion of Homosexuality.

The increasing repression of Homosexuals *qua* Homosexuals was accomplished through a wide variety of attempts to reinforce certain arrangements within the Heterosexual matrix. Relationships between Heterosexuality and moral goodness, particularly within marriage, were being strengthened, as were connections between Homosexuality and pathology. The shoring up of male-headed marriage in post-war demobilization, the production of pedagogical tools training new generations of

Heterosexuals, increasing police harassment of gay and lesbian bars, and the exclusion of Homosexuals from employment were all part of this process. This repression of Homosexuality was a central mechanism for the patriotic protection of an embattled patriarchal Heterosexuality.

Although the social actors engaged in this activity argued they were protecting society from “threats” produced by the presence of Homosexuals, they were actually engaged in practices that *produced* those very threats. Consider, for example, one of the central arguments used to justify the ban on the employment of Homosexuals in positions of national security: blackmail. Proponents of such exclusions argued that gay and lesbian people could be targeted by foreign, usually communist, nations via the threat of exposing their sexuality. However, such revelations only really mattered because of the institutional practices that made hiding necessary. The repression of Homosexuality was what produced the threats associated with exposure. Were there no risk of being fired for being gay, there would have been no reason to hide a Homosexual identity, and any possibility of blackmail would have disappeared. The institutions of American society were producing the necessity of hiding. They were requiring the double life that constitutes the closet.

People living within that increasingly oppressive institution recognized themselves to *be* lesbian or gay, but organized their lives around concealing that identity. Any life-practices associated with these selves had to be rigidly segregated from the view of non-Homosexual others, as there were very real risks associated with such publicity. I noted above that newspapers would often report the names of people who were arrested in anti-Homosexual raids, and how this publication would often result in the loss of

employment or the severing of significant personal relationships. Even employment screening procedures required concealing lives and selves, lest people be left unable to economically sustain themselves. Such threats were, and are, central to the maintenance of the double life of the closet. In the middle decades of the Twentieth Century the power of the closet intensified and reached its apex.

An example of the developing strength of the closet and its prominence in lesbian and gay life can be seen by looking at changes in the metaphor of “coming out.” During these middle decades, that phrase came to be associated with the exposure of something hidden; thus naming of this repressive institution as “the closet.” To come out was to open the door to reveal something hidden, to make it visible. However, that use of the phrase was a new one. In the early Twentieth Century, “coming out” had a different connotation.

Like much of campy gay terminology, “coming out” was an arch play on the language of women’s culture—in this case the expression used to refer to the ritual of a debutante’s being formally introduced to, or “coming out” into, the society of her cultural peers (Chauncey 1994: 7).

The change in this metaphor away from entry into the gay world toward emergence from a dark and hidden space illustrates the changing ways lesbian and gay life was experienced over the course of the Twentieth Century. Within gay and lesbian cultures, being “in the life” was transformed from finding gay and lesbian community into hiding one’s Homosexual life and self.

Opening the door

While state repression of Homosexuality and the cultural and ideological retreat to the male-headed family was intensifying during the “long decade of the 1950s”

(Coontz 2005: 229), there were also cracks developing in the gender and sexual order. Alfred Kinsey published his classic works *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* in 1948 and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* in 1953. These books, simultaneously hailed and demonized, demonstrated that underneath the ideological image of the nuclear family, Americans were kinkier than they were letting on. They were engaging in a much wider variety of sexual practices than their neighbors, disciplinary experts, or the state were seemingly willing to allow.

In addition to straight America publicizing its freakier side, small groups of Homosexuals were beginning to organize and resist the intensifying forces of Heterosexual domination. Even as the power of the closet was being consolidated, greater numbers of people were identifying as lesbian and gay and seeking out others like them. A perverse effect of the institutional targeting of Homosexuality for repression is that it became a central feature of more people's lives. In trying to eliminate Homosexuals from the nation, the state probably helped to produce more people with gay and lesbian identities. As more was written about Homosexuals, more people with same-sex erotic desires came to know more about them, and to frame their own desires and identities in such terms. And, as they came to read and hear about others who were "like them," they increasingly sought such people out. Even though the bars were often seedy, violent spaces in which Homosexuals were subject to harassment and entrapment, the publication of raids could lead to more people knowing about and going to these places. Bars were spaces to find lovers and friends. They became sites for the development of new selves and, sometimes, resistive identities. The common experience of violent

Heterosexual domination strengthened social bonds, and provided a collective sense of grievance.

We can think of this process in terms of what the French historian and social theorist Michel Foucault called a “reverse discourse” (1990: 100-2). By naming Homosexuality a problem, by focusing so many resources on defining it and seeking its causes, and by specifying and enacting more and more ways to control it, the institutions of society created a political and social subject position from which to speak, and from which this social repression could be resisted. Homosexuals began to speak on their own behalf, to break through some of the silences surrounding their lives, and to demand an end to their exclusion and oppression.

In 1951, in Los Angeles, Harry Hay, Bob Hull and Scott Rowland initiated an organizing effort that would lead to the development of the Mattachine Society, which is generally recognized as the first gay rights organization in the United States to have any kind of political impact¹⁶. A few years later, In San Francisco, Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon would begin their lifelong work of organizing for social justice with the founding of the Daughters of Bilitis. These groups didn’t have an easy time getting going, though. Hay went to known gay areas to try to recruit members, but was often rebuffed. The internalization of social controls of homosexuality, of the risks associated with being found out, was often too great to consider taking part in a political organization devoted to upending the oppression of gay men and lesbians. During the first meetings of Daughters of Bilitis the curtains were drawn shut lest anyone see inside the apartment

¹⁶ There is some evidence of an earlier organization, founded by Henry Gerber in 1920s Chicago. However, it lasted a very short time (Gerber was arrested) and had no lasting political effects (Greenberg 1988: 459).

where six lesbian couples were holding a discussion group. Both organizations allowed for various levels of anonymity and secrecy. Despite allowing members to remain anonymous, both organizations also went public. They began publishing regular newsletters devoted to discussing lesbian and gay issues in ways that challenged rather than accepted the oppression of Homosexuals¹⁷.

These groups were initiating what I am calling a “cycle of incorporation.” I discuss this cycle in more depth in the next chapter, but it will suffice here to note that the first stage within it is challenging the practices that exclude Homosexuals. This may be exclusion from citizenship, as with immigration restrictions. It might also involve exclusion from definitions of “normal” or “mentally healthy.” By publishing newsletters, these organizations were challenging the invisibility and exclusion of gay and lesbian perspectives in the public sphere. When issues surrounding Homosexuality were discussed in public, it was the social experts who were pathologizing lesbian and gay men who were asked to comment. Psychiatrists and psychologists who insisted that homosexuality was a mental illness, police officials justifying their repeated targeting of gay bars and other meeting places, and political and governmental who stressed the necessity of purging Homosexuals from the national body were the people whose voices were included. Lesbians and gay men were largely absent. They could sometimes be found in pulp novels devoured by lesbians and gay men, but usually titillating written by and for heterosexuals. When it came to political and social debate, lesbians and gay men were excluded from commenting, even on their own lives.

¹⁷ On Mattachine and Daughters of Bilitis, see: D’Emilio (1983: Chapters 4-6); Faderman (1991: 148-50; 190-3); Hay and Roscoe (1996: 60-174); Gallo (2007)

Mattachine and Daughters of Bilitis began to challenge these exclusions. Mattachine's organizational publication, *One*, would incorporate separately and eventually become an independent magazine. It would also sue the United States Postal Service for access to the mail system, as I discuss in the next chapter. Supreme Court jurisprudence of this time was also making other sexual materials, like Alan Ginsburg's poem *Howl* (2001), available to wider publics. In addition to the Kinsey reports on American sexuality, Edward Sagarin published *The Homosexual in America* in 1951 under the pseudonym Donald Webster Cory. This was the first book published in this country analyzing the structures of Heterosexual domination from a gay perspective and arguing for the tolerance of gay and lesbian people in American social life.

Cory's text accepted a dominant practice that was upholding Heterosexual dominance. He did not challenge the exclusion of gay and lesbian people from the category of "healthy." Indeed, much early Homophile organizing accepted that lesbians and gay men were mentally ill. Many lesbians and gay men accepted the definitions provided by the society in which they lived, and those definitions held them to be sick and broken people. Within these discursive traditions, the key was not to challenge definitions but to work to alter social practices and policies in such ways that these "afflictions" could be accommodated.

These entries into the public sphere had numerous effects. One of the most important was the dissemination of forms of lesbian and gay identity that did not accept exclusion from social life. While there were often vituperative debates, within and between organizations, over what policies and practices should be challenged, they were beginning to resist more strenuously their own oppression. In 1961, José Sarria, a

bartender at San Francisco's Black Cat bar, became the first openly gay candidate to run for public office as part of an ongoing conflict between a consortium of local bar owners and the city of San Francisco over continuing police harassment and city attempts to close the bar. He only received 6,000 votes in his run for the Board of Examiners, but an openly gay man was running for public office (D'Emilio 1983: 187-8). This had never happened before.

Other activists around the country were also engaging more directly. In 1957, geographer Franklin Kameny was fired from the U.S. Army map service for being a Homosexual. Rather than quietly accept his dismissal, as thousands of other people had, Kameny fought it. He worked through the regular channels of government bureaucracy, writing letters to anyone who had power, including the President. He also filed suit, taking his case all the way to the Supreme Court. He lost at every level, but in the process he became a gay activist, and organized a chapter of Mattachine in Washington, DC. Barbara Gittings organized a New York chapter of Daughters of Bilitis, and also served as the editor of the organization's newsletter, *The Ladder*. Gittings and Kameny would bring a more militant and confrontational style into Homophile activism, organizing the first openly gay and lesbian protests in the United States. In 1965, they and small groups of men and women dressed in suits and dresses picketed for an end to employment discrimination in front of Independence Hall in Philadelphia, and the Pentagon and White House in Washington, DC. By the time of the fabled Stonewall riots there were approximately 50 lesbian and gay political organizations in the United States.

That may seem extremely small by today's standards, but only 20 years earlier there had been zero¹⁸.

The power of the closet reached its high point during the "long decade" of the 1950s. However, the intensity of this repression also provided something for people who were experiencing it to resist. While many people accepted their lot and conceded that life as a lesbian or gay man in America meant a miserable life of hiding, growing numbers of people resisted being consigned to such an existence. These early challenges did realize some political victories. *One's* lawsuit made it possible for gay and lesbian materials to be sent through the U.S. Post, which made these lesbian and gay voices more accessible to growing numbers of people, as well as providing access to other publications. Mattachine's organizers put Dr. Evelyn Hooker in touch with gay men who were living stable and successful lives, which led to her groundbreaking research (1957). Those articles laid the groundwork for challenging the exclusion of Homosexuals from definitions of mentally healthy. The rise of Heterosexual domination in the specification of Homosexuality as something to be controlled, repressed, and excluded also established sites from which those same practices could be challenged. Increasingly, people took on those challenges. They rarely won in those early days, but those small bands of "homophile" activists established a ground on which later activists would stand.

¹⁸ On the move toward a more confrontational stance in Homophile organizing, particularly the work of Kameny and Gittings, see Marotta (1981: Chapters 2-3); D'Emilio (1983: Chapter 9) Duberman (1993: Parts 4-5).

Chapter 2 Incorporating Lesbians and Gay Men as Normal Citizens

Marriage became fully Heterosexual in 1965 when the Supreme Court, in *Griswold v. Connecticut*, established a fundamental, if still controversial, “right to privacy” in constitutional jurisprudence while, more importantly for the discussion here, severing the procreative imperative from marital conjugality. No longer was legitimate sexual activity *necessarily* tied to reproduction. The work begun by Richard von Krafft-Ebbing, John Kiernan and the other middle-class doctors and professionals who were establishing different-sex erotic desire as the basis for “normal” sexuality was completed when the Supreme Court declared that married couples had a right to obtain and use contraceptive devices without state interference. Non-procreative sexual activity was now constitutionally protected. Eros claimed matrimony in Heterosexuality’s triumph. That decision may also represent the zenith of Heterosexual domination. In the previous chapter, I described the institutionalization of that system as the primary form of socio-sexual organization in American society. From the late Nineteenth Century through the time *Griswold* was decided, the institutions of American society established policies and practices intended to exclude Homosexuality from mainstream American life and to repress expressions of it. Heterosexuality was established as the basis for normality, even for citizenship. This different-sexed desire was increasingly de-linked from reproductive drives and normalized through the exclusion of same-sex erotic desires and activities. A wide variety of social institutions undertook the efforts necessary to *enforce* Heterosexuality as the sole legitimate form of sexual identity and activity. However, even as Heterosexuality’s dominance was being more deeply entrenched, Homosexuals were

increasingly resisting their oppression. Less than a decade after *Griswold*, two gay men in Minneapolis would sue for access to marriage (*Baker v. Nelson* 291 Minn. 310 (1971)). Their suit and the few others filed in the 1970s were unsuccessful. However, the “love revolution” within marriage (Coontz 2005) and *Griswold*’s removal of the procreative imperative from it established new sexual bases for the relationship. Forty years after Heterosexuality’s triumph, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court would declare same-sex couples eligible for civil marriage licenses (*Goodridge v. Dept. of Public Health*, 798 N.E. 2d 941. Mass. 2003).

In this chapter, I use what I am calling a *cycle of incorporation* to explore the broad social transformations that have allowed gay men and lesbians to move away from the outsider status imposed on them during the institutionalization of Heterosexual domination and into new positions as, increasingly, equal members of society. This cycle is an ongoing and expanding process in which the exclusion of lesbian and gay communities, selves, and practices is replaced by the incorporation of those phenomena within the governing relations and institutional patterns of American life. It proceeds in three broad phases, the first of which is the *challenging of exclusion*.

I introduced some of these challenges in the closing section of the last chapter. The Homophile Movement that arose in the 1950s and 1960s began its political organizing by challenging the exclusion of Homosexuality from a variety of institutional settings. One example can be seen in a lawsuit filed by the publishers of the movement newsmagazine *One* (*One, Inc. v. Oleson* , 355 U. S. 371 1958). The U.S. Postal Service, under Comstock-era “decency” laws, defined Homosexual content as “obscene” and denied publications containing such content access to the mail. In a one-sentence 1958

per curiam decision¹⁹, the United States Supreme Court used the more permissive obscenity standards it had established a year earlier in *Roth v. United States* 354 U.S. 476 (1957) to overturn the Postal Service's regulation. Homosexual content was no longer obscene. (Eskridge 1994: 96).

Successful challenges to exclusion, like the victory in *One, Inc v. Oleson* (1958), can open new social spaces for the possible inclusion of lesbian and gay lives and practices. Because of this particular victory, more lesbian and gay-themed materials could be circulated through the mail. Freed from an automatic attachment of "obscene" to Homosexual content, publishers could distribute their materials more widely, and more lesbians and gay men could potentially access such information. Among the publications taking advantage of this increasing openness, erotic muscle magazines were becoming more popular among gay men. Four years after the victory in *One, Inc.*, the Supreme Court would open the mails to more explicitly erotic gay publications in *MANual Enterprises v. Day* (1962).

There are two auxiliary processes occurring here, both occurring in each phase of the cycle. The first involves the aforementioned opening of social spaces that flows from victory. As exclusions are lifted, more people are able move into the sites from which they were previously excluded, bringing gay and lesbian life practices into those spaces. These victories *expand* opportunities for the living of openly lesbian and gay lives. A small number of people may move in to take early advantage of these opportunities, but these spaces may expand as greater numbers of people follow. As individuals see, for

¹⁹ A *per curiam* decision is a ruling by the Court that does not establish authorship by any given judge/justice for a decision, but instead in which the court is acting as a unanimous body.

instance, that nothing bad befalls a co-worker who comes out at work, more people may view that as a viable option for themselves. As a postal restriction on lesbian and gay content was lifted, publishers attempted to produce and distribute wider varieties of such content. So, the first auxiliary process involves the *expansion* of opportunities for living gay and lesbian lives within various social settings.

We can also see the second auxiliary process in the *cyclical* movement of these broader processes of incorporation. More publications were allowed to circulate through the mail because of the successful challenge pursued by the publishers of *One*. Some of those publications, like the more explicitly erotic magazines published by MANual Enterprises, ran up against other exclusionary policies and practices. Political challenges always involve conflict around boundaries, and in both *One, Inc.* and *MANual Enterprises*, the boundaries surrounding obscenity and what types of materials could be excluded from the mails were under dispute. A gay loss in one of those cases would have left the Postal Service's regulations in place, reinforcing them as potential sites of challenge. However, the victories obtained in both cases led to the drawing of new boundaries around the category "obscene," and around the category "Homosexual." After *One, Inc.*, the Postal Service attempted to create a line excluding Homoerotic publications from the mail. The owners of MANual Enterprises "restarted" the cycle of incorporation with their lawsuit's introduction of a new exclusion-challenging phase. If victories in one challenge expand the possibility of living lesbian and gay lives, they may also expand the cycle by producing new possible sites of contention. These processes consistently "cycle back" onto themselves, "repeating" these phases of incorporation.

The removal of practices and policies of exclusion is not the same as enacting policies that ban exclusion. That type of actions represent the next phase in this incorporative cycle, the pursuit and enactment of “*negative*” *policies of incorporation*²⁰. The use of the term, “negative,” may be slightly confusing at first, but such policies are those that incorporate lesbians and gay men through the banning of their exclusion. Non-discrimination policies are the most obvious examples. The first of these sorts of policies were enacted in 1972, in Ann Arbor and East Lansing, Michigan, and San Francisco, California. During that decade, lesbian and gay political activity tended to focus on such “negative” policies. Since gay and lesbian movement at that time was still almost exclusively local, efforts to implement such policies were pursued primarily at the municipal level, particularly in major urban areas and smaller cities dominated by universities and colleges (Button, Rienzo, and Wald 1997). Wisconsin became the first state to enact such a law in 1982. As of 2008, over 100 cities and counties prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation *and* gender identity (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force 2008a)²¹, and fifteen states include sexual orientation in their own non-discrimination laws. An additional ten states have enacted such protections, often through gubernatorial order, for state employees (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

²⁰ The use of “negative” policies here, and “positive” below, is similar to the formulation of negative and positive forms of liberty established by Isaiah Berlin (1969). The distinction in his work is that “negative liberty” involves a lack of policies that inhibit the ability to engage in certain activities or make certain choices, where as “positive liberty” involves the ability to act, the agency and control to be able to take action. There may be policies put in place that remove restriction, but there may also be social policies put in place that contribute to a person’s ability to make choices.

²¹ A larger number of jurisdictions also include nondiscrimination policies only on the basis of sexual orientation.

2008b). In each decade since 1970s, increasing numbers of cities and states have enacted such negative policies of incorporation.

So, the first phase of the cycle of incorporation involved attempts to remove policies and practices that exclude lesbian and gay lives, selves, and practices. The second phase, the pursuit and enactment of policies that ban the exclusion of lesbians and gay men, has one similar effect to the first. Both phases increase the number of social spaces in which people can live openly as lesbian and gay. In localities where discrimination is banned, individuals may feel more comfortable being open about their identity or relationships in workplace settings, knowing that they cannot be fired and that they have recourse against harassment or discrimination.

The final phase of the cycle is the pursuit and enactment of *“positive” policies of incorporation*. These policies and practices provide active support for the living of lesbian and gay lives. For example, some companies and municipalities have adopted policies that provide benefits, like access to health insurance, for the partners of same-sex employees. These institutions are providing material support for these couples, they are facilitating the living of certain forms of lesbian and gay life. In the past decade, an increasing number of states have enacted some kind of policy recognizing and providing social, legal, and material benefits for same-sex couples. “Civil Unions” and near equivalent “Domestic Partnerships” are in effect in New Jersey, Vermont, New Hampshire, Washington, Oregon and California. The states of Maryland, Maine, and Hawaii provide less expansive relationship rights, while Massachusetts and Connecticut allow same-sex couples to marry (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force 2008c). To varying degrees, couples in these states are incorporated into institutional relationships in

ways that move beyond simply allowing them to live as couples. Instead, these different institutions are *facilitating* the living of life within same-sex couples. The distribution of social resources assists the living of certain forms of lesbian and gay life. The inclusion of relationship recognition policies, the creation of college scholarships for lesbian or gay students, and municipal funding for lesbian and gay community and health centers are all examples of such positive practices of incorporation.

This cycle of incorporation, then, is comprised of three primary phases. The first is the challenging of policies and practices of exclusion. The enactment of negative policies and practices of incorporation, which bar the exclusion of lesbians and gay men, comprises the second phase in this cycle. The third involves the enactment of positive policies and practices of incorporation, which provide institutional supports for the living of (certain forms of) lesbian and gay life. Different phases of the cycle may occur simultaneously in the same political or social community, depending upon which issues and areas of life are involved. Each of the changes wrought in the cycle's different phases can open more social spaces, and create opportunities for more people in these different social sites, for the living of openly lesbian and gay lives. They may go to a state-funded gay and lesbian health clinic or stand in front of a justice-of-the-peace reciting wedding vows, but as the various phases move forward, gay and lesbian people's lives are increasingly incorporated into the routine patterns and governing relations of American society.

Although the general trajectory of these cycles has been in the direction of greater inclusion of lesbian and gay lives, it is important to remember that it need not proceed in a single direction or along a uniform path. During each phase, there will likely be

resistance to the changes being sought. State actors and other authorities may work against policies that remove restrictions or enact protections. When President Bill Clinton proposed rescinding the ban on Homosexuals serving in the armed services, Congressional and military leadership mobilized to resist those changes (Rimmerman 2002: 46-9). Clinton's attempts to remove exclusionary military policies were met with resistance from those occupying other positions of institutional authority. The ban was not lifted, and open lesbians and gay men are still officially excluded from military service. This policy remains as a site of challenge (see also: Frank 2009).

Resistance may also flow from counter-movement activity. If the 1970s saw the first enactments of anti-discrimination policies, they also witnessed the rise of a specifically anti-gay counter-movement. The most prominent early example of this is likely a 1977 campaign in Dade County, Florida. The county's governing board had enacted a statute banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. A group of conservative religious and political organizations came together in the coalition, "Save Our Children," in an attempt to overturn this negative policy of incorporation. They enlisted former Miss America runner-up and the face of Florida orange juice, Anita Bryant, as their public spokesperson. The initiative to repeal the statute they placed on the ballot was approved by voters by a greater than 2-to-1 margin. Other successful grassroots efforts to rescind such protections followed in Topeka, Kansas and St. Paul, Minnesota (see Clendenin and Nagourney 1999: Chapters 22-3). Anti-gay counter-movements working to resist and roll back the changes sought by lesbian and gay activists have grown in power and influence since these campaigns. The presence of this anti-gay countermovement must be noted in any discussion of the various phases

comprising the larger cycle of incorporation (see also: Gallagher and Bull 1996; Herman 2000).

A more recent example of resistance to these processes of incorporation can be seen in the successful attempts to reinforce the exclusion of same-sex couples from marriage and other relationship recognition policies. In 2004, the same year that same-sex couples started marrying in Massachusetts, voters in 13 states approved constitutional amendments to exclude those couples from marrying in their states (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force 2008d). Some of those amendments enacted more expansive relationship recognition restrictions. Michigan's for example, resulted in domestic partner benefits, like access to health insurance, being taken away from same-sex partners (Bello, 2007). These votes put in place new forms of explicit exclusion, which call for a "restart" of the cycle. New challenges will be required to gain access to family protections in the states that have enacted exclusion statutes and amendments. The overall trajectory of this cycle of incorporation may be toward the institutionalization of greater positive support for living lesbian and gay lives, but it moves in fits and starts as different forms of exclusion are overturned, reinforced, and introduced. Varied forms of resistance to this incorporation may arise in counter-movements and among institutional actors. These resistances and the resultant conflicts are a major reason that this cycle of incorporation moves in contradictory directions and at widely varying velocities.

Within this broader cycle of incorporation, I am interested in the role of social movement activity, particularly the legal sector of this activity (see Cain 2000; Brewer, Kaib, and O'Connor 2000). The Homophile movement I introduced in the previous chapter initiated what has been almost 60 years of sustained and organized gay and

lesbian mobilization. This movement activity has followed a variety of trajectories, and engaged in widely varying forms of activity, ranging from the founding of community centers to direct action civil disobedience to legislative lobbying. Several commentators have noted two primary trajectories in this activity (see esp. D'Emilio 2002: Chapter 5; Seidman 2002: Chapter 5). The first, a radical wing, has tended to involve more confrontational protest aimed at interruption and transformation of social life, while the other trajectory, involving an integrationist wing of action, has tended to focus on incorporation into the governing relations of society.

Although I discuss some of the difference between radical and integrationist forms of mobilization, my primary focus is on the latter. The growth of an institutional movement, particular an organized legal sector, was facilitated by the incorporation of lesbian and gay lives into economic activity. As more people lived identified politically as lesbian and gay, more resources were available for movement organizations. These organizations continued to work on expanding opportunities for gay life, and received more resources as gay life was increasingly incorporated.

Making claims on behalf of a constituency while simultaneously trying to mobilize those people creates a number of challenges for activists. One of these involves the balancing of their strategic focus with the desires of their constituents. The pursuit of marriage is explored by looking at these relationships within the broader processes of incorporation. Prior incorporation of gay men and lesbians into the patterns of life is part of what made marriage a possibility in Massachusetts (Bonauto 2005).

One area in which this prior incorporation took place involves lesbian mothering. The issue of parenting has been a central feature of lesbian organizing since the days

when the Daughters of Bilitis were organizing (Polikoff 2008: 19). The abilities to keep children from different-sex relationships and obtain children within same-sex relationships have been central areas of conflict. I return to the development of a legal sector of lesbian and gay movement and the central role that parenting played in the development of this sector. I also look at the various ways that lesbian mothers have been incorporated within family law, ranging from second-parent adoption to certification as foster parents. Within these various practices, lesbians were being incorporated into state regulations *as mothers* in greater numbers. Lesbian parenting was being normalized.

The other area I use to discuss these incorporative processes involves HIV/AIDS. “AIDS confronted a generation of gay men with the fact that their relationships had no legal standing in the most ordinary, and profoundly consequential, was” (Chauncey 2004: 96). The inability to make medical and funerary decisions for sick and dying partners, the denial of hospital visitation rights, and restrictions on the ability to inherit property from a deceased partner all demonstrated the vulnerability of gay relationships. Although legal movement work has also focused on these areas of family life—which involve different areas of life than those involved in issues of lesbian parenting—I turn my attention to another area of movement activity and the incorporation of gay life. This involves the integration of lesbians and gay men into governing practices that are related to the provision of services by the social welfare state. Gay men and lesbians have been forming social service agencies for several decades now. The rise of agencies providing services to gay men, and other people, living with HIV/AIDS was a prominent feature of movement organizing in the 1980s and 1990s. These agencies were often integrated into

the state, albeit as proxies for the state itself, through such things as funding mechanisms for the provision of social services or public health research. Although the AIDS crisis highlighted the exclusion of gay men from full citizenship the political struggles the resulted also ended up incorporating these men into the governing practices of American life as clients of the welfare state, as claimants of the “social rights” associated with citizenship (see Marshall 1950).

These two areas demonstrate elaborate several aspects of the broader cycle of incorporation. Both lesbian mothering and the AIDS crisis eventually involved a greater incorporation of gay men and lesbians within family law and the welfare state. However, they also show how this cycle moves in closely related fields of practice. Research in psychological and other disciplines provided increasing support for lesbian mothers. The absorption of grassroots social service organizations incorporated gay men as clients of the welfare state. Although it may operate in different areas of social life, the expanding cycle of incorporation has had a tendency to move in the direction of incorporating gay and lesbian life in increasing social locations.

Movement and Incorporation

The psychiatric definition of Homosexuality as a mental illness provided support for the intensification of state repression of Homosexuality for about the first two-thirds of the Twentieth Century. While some people in the field were perhaps more tolerant of Homosexuals than others, the state of disciplinary knowledge was such that the “condition” of Homosexuality was a personality defect. Practitioners were widely involved with practices aimed at the exclusion of Homosexuality, ranging from the

creation of aversive therapies for “curing” gay and lesbian patients to the development of screening tests for the weeding out of lesbian and gay people from employment pools. These experts were producing Homosexuality as pathological. The various sites of this production and enforcement also become potential sites of resistance. During the 1950s and 60s, Homophile activists worked with sympathetic psychiatric professionals by providing “healthy” subjects for study, which was particularly important since most of the research that existed was produced through studies of people who were distressed about being gay or lesbian. These activists’ goal was the production of research showing that Homosexuality was not an inherent impediment to living a successful, well-integrated life. The accumulation of such research would, they hoped, lead to changes in the field. So, they sought out sympathetic professionals with whom to work in the expert production of new knowledge.

An important aspect of this work was the shifting of discourses within these disciplines. Some of the research published because of these collaborations, particularly that of Evelyn Hooker (1957), helped to set the stage for changes *within* psychotherapeutic disciplines. Non-pathological definitions began to take hold as more research was published. The links between Homosexuality and mental illness were increasingly called into question. Although it was by no means universal, there was a strong enough shift within disciplinary opinion that the challenges made by Gay Liberation activists in 1973-4 were intelligible to many psychological professionals in ways they likely wouldn’t have been twenty years earlier. Gay Liberationists forced the issue to the front of the APA’s agenda through disruptive protest (Clendenin and Nagourney 1999: Chapter 14). They may have pressured the organization to declassify Homosexuality as a mental

illness sooner than it might otherwise have, but the state of knowledge within the field had also undergone enough of a transformation that such a change was palatable to the majority of those responsible for making these decisions.

These different forms of interactions between gay and lesbian mobilization and psycho-therapeutic professionals provide small examples of the difference between radical and integrationist approaches to challenge. Homophile activists worked within established channels to pursue change. The Gay Liberationists who supplanted them preferred to confront those institutions rather than work within them. Both of these approaches played a role in severing the dominant disciplinary link between Homosexuality and mental illness.

The 1969 uprising at Stonewall is often cited as the birth of Gay Liberation. The riots on those hot summer nights did not so much start the movement as signify the foment already occurring in that moment. This isn't to say the riots weren't important, but to note that they didn't "birth" a movement in the ways they are often credited with in the public imagination. Activists like Franklin Kameny and Barbara Gittings had urged Homophile organizations to engage in more direct action for several years, and demonstrations had already occurred in several cities. Although not yet calling themselves Liberationists, younger activists were also changing the movement that existed. In some cases, like the 1967 creation of the Homophile Student Union at Columbia, they created their own organizations (Cain 2000: 93). Other younger activists were moving into existing Homophile organizations from their earlier homes in the New Left (Valocchi 2001). They brought with them a more radical and resistive orientation, and occasionally forced more conservative Homophiles activists out of leadership

positions. There isn't one moment that produced a new movement. Instead, we are dealing with a period of time in which Gay Liberation supplanted Homophile movement.

Despite the presence of a loose national network of local organizations, there really was no national infrastructure at that time (see D'Emilio 1983: Chapter 11). Most of what we are discussing is local mobilization, and the activity in New York those nights had very little impact on activities in Los Angeles or San Francisco. A riot in a gay bar wasn't national news. And, despite a growing gay news media, it still had a relatively limited audience. However, at the time of those three nights of gay rioting in 1969, there were about 50 lesbian and gay organizations in the country. Four years later, there would be over 800 (D'Emilio 1983: 238). Lesbian and gay people were mobilizing in greater and greater numbers, both *as* gay men and lesbians and within other movements of the New Left. Stonewall did play a role in some of this, particularly for people living in New York. However, the central role often attributed to it may be overstated. It was one episode in a period of broader social agitation involving students, feminists, anti-war protesters, black nationalists, and gay liberationists, and it may perhaps better understood as a symbol of the moment instead of an initiating event. A transformation of lesbian and gay mobilization was already underway, and it was taking place in the context of broad social upheaval.

At the time of the riots, lesbians and gay men were still official outlaws. Only one state, Illinois, had decriminalized sodomy, and Homosexuality was still defined as a mental illness. Not only sick, lesbians and gay men were also morally unfit, making them ineligible for government employment and work in a number of other fields. They were even barred from entering the United States. The exclusion of Homosexuality

defined, at least partially, normal Heterosexual life. Stonewall was an explosive challenge the repressive state policing of gay and lesbian life. In that sense, it was very much connected to earlier forms of homophile organizing, much of which was oriented toward challenging the harassment and entrapment of patrons in lesbian and gay meeting spaces. This was especially true for organizations dominated by men, whose bars and public cruising areas were policed at higher levels than were those of women²².

Mattachine made changing police practices a priority, as did San Francisco's Society for Individual Rights, which was founded in 1961. Homophile activists attempted to secure meetings with municipal officials to pursue policy changes. They found lawyers willing to represent the few men who might want to challenge police entrapment. They attempted to work within systems to produce social change. Their work in connecting "healthy" research subjects with psychological researchers, which I mentioned above, is another example of this. Rather than confront these professionals or authorities, these activists attempted to produce change from the inside.

Gay Liberationists took a more confrontational approach. Moving beyond public demonstrations, like the peaceful picketing of the State Department in 1965, Liberationists sought to disrupt. At the 1973 American Psychological Association convention, for example, activists interrupted several sessions, leveling accusations of torture at the professionals in attendance (Alwood 1996: 125-30; Clendenin and

²² A large part of this is likely due to the fact that there were more bars and public spaces available for men. D'Emilio (1983: 98) notes: "The world of lesbian bars never assumed the proportions of its male equivalent. In medium-sized cities and towns, where the lesbian population was too small to support its own taverns, gay women and men mingled in mixed establishments. Even in the biggest metropolitan areas, the number of lesbian bars remained small. In Boston, for instance, about two dozen male homosexual taverns appeared in the course of the 1950s, but throughout the decade one bar served an all-female clientele."

Nagourney 1999: 200-203). In New York City, they publicly confronted the police commissioner over harassment and entrapment. They also engaged in other disruptive “zaps” at media events. The interruption of institutional practices took precedence over integrating into them (Marotta 1981: Chapters 7-8; Clendenin and Nagourney 1999: Chapter 4).

These two different approaches to challenging something like the harsh policing of gay spaces represent what many have discussed as the two primary historical forms of gay and lesbian mobilization²³. The first is the integrationist tendency with which I am primarily concerned. People engaged in this form of mobilization *tend* to view themselves as a member of an oppressed or excluded minority. Solutions to that oppression are to be found in the removal of discriminatory barriers, leading to participatory inclusion within the routine patterns of social life. The other trajectory, we’ll call it radical, has tended to involve questioning and challenging the systems that produce the minority and majority groups in the first place. The key insight driving this approach is that it is the entirety of society that is indicted in producing these categories in relations of domination. Transforming social life rather than integrating into the routine patterns of society is the primary approach. Often this is pursued through the creation of social spaces in which experimentation with forms of life can be fostered.

The groups adhering to these different ideological approaches also tend to organize their activity differently, although it should be noted that there has often been an overlap of the social networks connecting people in different these movement forms to

²³ My thinking about these two forms of mobilization, their ideology, and organizational forms has particularly been shaped by Seidman (2002), Vaid (1995), Warner (2005), Marotta (1981), Duberman (1995), Clendenin and Nagourney (1999), D’Emilio (1983; 2002); Gamson (1995)

each other, and to various forms of community life. The more radical forms of association have tended to be more decentralized, and to institute democratic decision-making practices in efforts to enact the organizational practices they were attempting to institute more broadly in their “re-imagining” of social relationships. Movement activity following this trajectory has been particularly prominent in two historical periods. The first is the explosion of Gay Liberation in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The second is the ACT-UP/Queer Nation wave of mobilization in the late 1980s and early 1990s. There are other moments in which protest pops up, but it tends not to be the dominant form of mobilization. Additionally, as Michael Warner has noted (2005: Ch. 6), even though radical mobilizations tends not to dominate, they have come to exist in parallel to the more mainstream trends and movement organizations. Even as same-sex couples are seeking marriage, some of them are also taking part in radical sex cultures.

The dominant integrationist approach has tended to involve the creation of professionally staffed organizations that operate within dominant social institutions. The entrepreneurial model of movement development offered by McCarthy and Zald (1977) provides a useful conceptualization of the processes involved. During periods of mobilization, activists will form organizations to meet the perceived needs of the movement. For many civil rights movements, this has included the development of legal strategies. The collaborative efforts in which the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund and Howard University School of Law came together to develop a legal arm of civil rights activism have served as a model for legal activists in other movements (Cain 2000: 18-21). Within lesbian and gay movement, a number of such organizations have been established. Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD) is a Boston-based

organization that was founded in 1978 to pursue legal strategies to end police harassment and violence against gay men (Bonauto 2005). In 1972, a group of New York lawyers attempted to incorporate an organization they called Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund. Their stated mission was to defend the civil rights of lesbians and gay men, but they first had to sue the state for recognition of their charter (Cain 2000: 59-60). Homosexuality was still an officially disqualifying moral defect when it came to practicing the law in New York.

Today, GLAD and Lambda Legal are part of a national network of professional legal activists and scholars that has been working for about two decades on developing and pursuing strategies and tactics to win protections for gay and lesbian-headed families. The National Center for Lesbian Rights was founded in 1977, and the American Civil Liberties Union's Lesbian and Gay Rights Project was established in 1986. Nan Hunter used her position as director of that ACLU project to gather a group of legal scholars and activists from around the country in a permanent roundtable to develop strategies for the pursuit of marriage (Chambers 2000: 289). During the first years of all these organizations' existence they were largely staffed by volunteers. They have become professionally-staffed organizations with multi-million dollar budgets²⁴.

The founding of these organizations is an example of the rational organization of a movement sector with regard to expertise and division of labor. They also demonstrate the first phase of the cycle of incorporation, the challenging of exclusion. Lambda even had to challenge the official exclusion of gay and lesbian lawyers from the bar. Social movement activists create organizations to pursue particular forms of change. They may

²⁴ On the development of the legal sector of gay and lesbian movement, see: Chambers (2000); Cain (2000); Brewer, Kaib and O'Connor (2000); Bonauto (2005).

focus on monitoring media images or in the use of lawsuits as a technique for social change. While Lambda Legal and GLAD, and the other legal organizations, were organizing and operating within the legal field, other activists were creating such organizations as the Massachusetts Lesbian and Gay Political Caucus and New York's Empire State Pride Agenda to take on responsibility for lobbying in those states' capitals. This entrepreneurial model of movement organization based in expertise has often led to the development of an established movement sector comprised of professionally staffed formal organizations. In order to continue doing their legal work or lobbying activity, these organizations will attempt to establish and maintain a presence within their respective spheres of activity. In particular, these organizations often have to solicit funding in order to maintain their professional activities. Professional lobbyists and lawyers expect paychecks, and fundraising requires fundraisers. The development and institutionalization of a movement infrastructure requires a permanent mobilization of resources.

We can tie the growth of this social movement sector (McCarthy and Zald 1977), particularly its legal wing, to the broader incorporation of gay and lesbian life I have been discussing. In particular, I want to note the importance of the incorporation of gay and lesbian identities and lifestyles into material relations (Evans 1993; Gluckman and Reed 1997). During the 1970s, people were increasingly moving to urban areas in order to live openly as lesbian and gay. While harsh policing wasn't a thing of the past, it was subsiding to varying degrees in different places. Gay enclaves were growing, and more people started opening "gay owned" businesses with an eye toward providing service to gay and lesbian communities. Bookstores, coffee shops, realtors, bars, sex clubs, music

production companies, insurance agencies, and more sprang up as the 1970s turned into the 1980s and beyond. Gay and lesbian consumers increasingly sought out “gay-owned” and “gay-friendly” businesses. The development of these markets, the rise of gay and lesbian identity-based consumption, and the incorporation of these processes within urban economic relations helped to establish a material base for the growth of gay and lesbian communities.

The growing wealth of *segments* of gay and lesbian populations—brought about in part by these incorporative processes—was also reflected in the growth of movement organizations. Although it wasn’t always easy to get large donors (see esp. Vaid 1995: Chapter 8), more people were willing and able to contribute. The base of potential material resources these organizations could draw upon expanded as more people were able to live outside the closet in work and other life settings. Some were becoming more willing to contribute to gay and lesbian organizations. This expanding incorporation of gay and lesbian lives and identities within material relations helped to foster the development of the professional movement and, particularly importantly for this work, its legal wing. It grew because openly gay and lesbian people had more resources—skills and money in particular—to contribute. More people were identifying as gay and lesbian, and doing so in a political ways. The expanding group of people with more resources to contribute provided an expanding resource base that movement organizations could potentially draw on.

The growth and development of gay and lesbian social movement and its legal sector both drives and is driven by the cycle of incorporation. The incorporation of more lesbians and gay men in material relations allowed them to give more money to legal

organizations. These legal organizations are involved in challenging rules of exclusion and working for greater inclusion. The growth of these organizations, in the development of more dense networks of expertise, increasing links to elites, expanded funding from corporate and foundation sources, and their own integration into the institutional relations of American politics have allowed them to open up new social spaces for gay and lesbian people to live their lives. The opening of those spaces creates new boundaries, and new opportunities for lesbians and gay men to live their lives. The increasing numbers of people able to live openly may be able to contribute more resources to the organizations that sued to open those social spaces and this increasing resource base enjoyed by those organizations enables them to engage in further challenge. And so on.

Movements, Constituents, and Challenging

“A social movement is a sustained and self-conscious challenge to authorities or cultural codes by a field of actors (organizations and advocacy networks), some of whom employ extrainstitutional means of influence” (Gamson and Meyer 1996: 283).

Movement activists claim to represent constituencies who are affected by certain social conditions. So, lesbian and gay activists, like those in any movement, make claims on behalf of larger communities. They also challenge those practices or structures they see as responsible for the conditions they seek to change. Both Homophile activists and Gay Liberationists targeted the psychological definitions of Homosexuality as a mental illness. Even though they pursued different strategies of change, activists in both these movement incarnations understood that these definitions were used to support other

forms of anti-gay and lesbian oppression. They knew that changes to these definitions could undercut support for social policies of Homosexual exclusion.

It is good to keep in mind, however, that the views of movement actors may not always be aligned with the views of those they are claiming to represent. They may be pursuing goals, like changing the APA definition, for strategic reasons that aren't always clear to some of their constituents. Many people were not in therapy and may not have seen the definition of mentally illness operating in their everyday lives. One task facing movement actors is the building of legitimacy within the constituency they represent. They are hoping to mobilize constituents to take action, even if—often, especially if—it is only writing a check. They must balance between pursuing the goals favored by their constituents and the goals they see as most valuable and attainable. Some decisions, like the Human Rights Campaign's decision to endorse Republican Senator Alfonse D'Amato over his Democratic Challenger, Representative Charles Schumer (Kirby 1998), may end up costing an organization support and resources. Movement organizations must establish and maintain legitimacy among their constituents. If they fail to do so, they may lose support for their work. Sometimes, they must convince their constituents that the organization's approach is the better one. These are ongoing processes.

Movement actors are constantly juggling tasks. They are seeking to affect social change in the name of a population that may not always agree with what they are doing. They must mobilize that group and the resources it has, and in doing so must convince their constituency a problem exists that their work can solve. They must balance their own analysis of the problems facing the constituency they claim to represent, and the goals, experiences and concerns expressed by those constituencies. This can lead to

conflicts not only with regard to what issues to pursue, but also when they should be pursued. Mary Bonauto, the GLAD attorney who successfully argued for equal relationship recognition rights for same-sex couples in Vermont, Massachusetts, and Connecticut reflected on this in an analysis of the Massachusetts effort.

At times, as a GLAD attorney, I am criticized for being too slow to respond to inequities, and indeed, *I repeatedly turned down requests from couples who wanted to bring marriage cases*. Our reasons have always centered on a mix of factors, including the need to build a base legally, politically, and culturally, before such an effort could be winnable in court or sustainable in public opinion. Much needed to change before the equality and liberty claims of GLBT people could be heard fairly in the context of a marriage case and understood, even if begrudgingly, in the large culture (Bonauto 2005: 27, emphasis added)

We see here an example of Bonauto engaging in these balancing acts involving GLAD's strategic approach to pursuing change and the desires of the population they make claims on behalf of. This can be difficult. Activists not only turned down legal challenges, they were arguing against filing lawsuits seeking marriage. Many saw little chance of success. Following the first mini-wave of unsuccessful marriage lawsuits in the 1970s, legal activists altered their strategies for gaining family protections (Chambers 288-9). They pursued spouse-like protections and parental rights and benefits in a piecemeal fashion. The mixed results of these efforts, with states like Massachusetts being fairly receptive and Missouri more hostile, created a patchwork of legal protections and recognition. However, the limited success of such suits convinced activists that there was little chance they would win full marriage rights. Gay men and lesbians were not yet

incorporated within family policy and law to a degree that their relationships were widely intelligible as marriages²⁵.

While legal activists were increasingly pursuing, and sometimes winning, family rights in this piecemeal manner, more gay and lesbian people were seeking the ability to marry. Within some religious traditions, wedding-like ceremonies of communal blessing had been introduced and incorporated (Lewin 1998). Gay men and lesbians were increasingly creating commitment ceremonies, and providing businesses catering to them. More people were living outside the closet, coupling, and forming families. As more lesbian and gay people formed families, more of them were also seeking public recognition of their relationships. Some of this was for cultural reasons, some for material benefits. While relationship recognition has long been a central feature of gay and lesbian organizing, it was increasingly moving to the center of political activity. Many organizations and activists were pursuing piecemeal family protections while resisting constituent calls to pursue full equality and access to marriage.

This is an area of contention. There was an initial, and unsuccessful, wave of lawsuits for marriage in the 1970s. Movement activists, as I said, were convinced there was little chance of success and resisted taking part in formal challenges. The first lawsuit during the second wave of marriage litigation was filed in Hawaii in 1990. That case, *Baehr v. Lewin*²⁶ (1993) would result in the first court victory for lesbians and gay men seeking equal marriage rights. However, no national legal organization took part in

²⁵ On the history of the movement for marriage, parenting, and other family recognition rights, I am drawing on: Chambers (2000); Polikoff (2000, 2008); Bernstein and Reimann (2001); Eskridge (2002) Chauncey (2004); Wolfson (2004); Bonauto (2005).

²⁶ This case goes by a couple of names because of changes in who occupied the state's Attorney General's office. It started as *Baehr v. Lewin*, became *Baehr v. Miike*

the filing of the suit. Evan Wolfson, the Executive Director of Lambda Legal at that time, was forbidden by the organization's board of directors from taking part in the Hawaii suit, despite his desire to do so. A local attorney agreed to take the case and sue the state, even as gay and lesbian legal movement organizations were resisting the suit and discouraging others like it (Wolfson 2004: 28-32). It wasn't until 1993, when the Hawaii Supreme Court required the state to provide a *compelling* reason to exclude same-sex couples from marriage, a high legal standard, that the national organizations became involved. The national legal movement sector was, in many ways, pushed into taking action earlier than it wanted by constituents who went around them in challenging their exclusion from marriage.

Through the 1990s, we see an increase in gay and lesbian organizing for marriage rights, especially in the rise of networks known as "Freedom to Marry Coalitions (Javors and Reimann 2001). Religious bodies, political lobbyists, labor unions, and civil rights organizations, among others, have come together to build political, cultural, and social support that Bonauto noted as necessary. They have done such things as creating displays of lesbian and gay families for public libraries, sponsored public forums to discuss issues facing same-sex couples, and lobbied legislators. Many of these state groups were likely forced to engage in electoral and legislative action earlier than they would have liked because of the marriage exclusion backlash movement that arose in response to Hawaii.

Recall the role of counter-movements in the cycle of incorporation. Anti-gay movement had been agitating against same-sex marriage for years. I was surprised while conducting research for my master's thesis on the Christian Right in Minnesota to find worries about same-sex marriage used as a reason to oppose AIDS education in public

schools during the 1980s (Langstraat 1998: 54). The Hawaii victory led to an almost immediate backlash mobilization. Utah enacted the first marriage exclusion law in 1995, a year before Congress passed and President Clinton signed the Defense of Marriage Act. The first state constitutional amendments passed in Hawaii and Alaska in 1998. Since then, 27 more constitutional amendments and 39 statutes excluding same-sex couples from marriage have been enacted (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force 2008d). “The battle to win marriage equality through the courts has done something that no other campaign or issue in our movement has done: it has created a vast body of *new* antigay law.” (D’Emilio 2006)

GLAD sued Massachusetts on behalf of seven couples in April of 2001 (Bonauto 2005). The lawsuit, *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health*, was filed in the context of an already existing effort to enact a marriage exclusion amendment in the Commonwealth. Two years earlier, GLAD lawyers won a suit in they had filed in Vermont (*Baker v. Vermont*). That decision resulted in the passage of the nation’s first “Civil Unions” statute (see Moats 2004). The Massachusetts Freedom to Marry Coalition, which GLAD worked with, had been organizing since 1993. Activists like Mary Bonauto believed that they had established within policy and law a solid basis for the allowing same-sex couples access to marriage. On, November 18, 2003, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled that same-sex couples could not be excluded from civil marriage.

Their victory was largely made possible by the Commonwealth’s previous incorporation of lesbians and gay men in law and family policy, and in the broader culture. Massachusetts was the second state to pass non-discrimination legislation

including sexual orientation, which it did in 1989. Four years later, the state enacted a Lesbian and Gay Students' Bill of Rights, providing support resources for school students. Lesbian and gay people were allowed to be adoptive and foster parents. Their already existing incorporation as families within Massachusetts law made the Commonwealth a more likely candidate for success than, say, Utah. I turn now to some of the processes through which same-sex couples underwent this incorporation.

Lesbian Mothering

Marriage didn't just spring up out of nowhere. In Massachusetts, same-sex couples were already recognized as families in a number of settings. Lesbians and gay men in the Commonwealth were more likely to be integrated into mainstream practices than lesbians and gay men in many other states. Their incorporation within the law was one area in which they were being more rapidly integrated. Mothering, in particular, has been central to both lesbian mobilization and to the incorporation of gay men and lesbians as good, or even adequate, parents in the law²⁷.

In the days when the closet reigned, it was very common for people to marry before they came out, if they ever did come out. It was also common for these marriages to produce children. While both gay men and lesbians risked losing their children upon coming out of the closet, and still do in some jurisdictions, the issue has tended to be a higher priority in lesbian organizing. It was discussed in several issues of the Daughters of Bilitis newsletter, *The Ladder*, in the 1950s, and was a central focus of lesbian activity within second-wave feminist movement. Legal efforts to ensure that lesbians, and gay

²⁷ On the legal issues with regard to parenting, I am drawing on: Polikoff (2000; 2008); Cain (2000); Dalton (2001); Bonauto (2005)

men, do not lose custody of their children due to their sexual orientation continue to this day. However, new issues regarding adoption, reproductive technologies, child support, visitation, and custody after the dissolution of same-sex relationships have also arisen. Family regulation has been one area in which lesbian life has been incorporated into law and policy.

The issue of parenting has been very important in the development of the legal sector of lesbian and gay movement. Lambda Legal's first *amicus* brief was filed in 1977 child-custody case. The Lesbian Rights Project in San Francisco was established that year specifically in order to address parenting issues "because no women's, gay, or progressive legal organizations had ever made lesbian custody a priority" (Polikoff 2000: 308). At this time, however, Gay and Lesbian legal movement was in its infancy. There was no national infrastructure and there were very few material resources for the organizations that did exist. The lawyers working with these groups, usually volunteers, were working in a legal culture in which lesbians, while no longer necessarily ill, were still perceived as morally unfit. Indeed, when a mother's lesbianism became a central issue, particularly if it was a *public* issue, she was far more likely to lose custody of her children. In other words, the judiciary was willing to force lesbian mothers into the closet using the threat of taking away their children.

One thing that has contributed to changes in such decisions, however, was the growth of research indicating the fitness of lesbian mothers and gay fathers (see Stacey and Biblarz 2001). "During the late seventies, the first mental health research on the well-being of children raised by lesbian mothers was published, and strategies for persuading judges through the use of expert witnesses were refined" (Polikoff 2000: 315). Changing

disciplinary knowledge, particularly in the psycho-therapeutic disciplines, had ripple effects in other sectors of American life. The changing state of knowledge produced by research on lesbian mothers provided new tactical tools for activists to use in courts. Mental health exclusions were being removed as justifications for anti-gay discrimination, including in parenting. The same fields that had once declared same-sex desires to be a defect were now supporting lesbians in their attempts to parent (see American Psychological Association 2005). While openly gay and lesbian parents continue to lose custody because of their sexual orientation, the changing disciplinary knowledge about the adequacy of gay and lesbian parents has also been adopted within growing numbers of jurisdictions. More lesbians have been winning custody of their children and they are being incorporated in law *as* mothers. In Massachusetts, the SJC first made this positive association explicit in 1980²⁸.

This integration has ripple effects in other areas. During the 1980s, assistive reproductive technologies were becoming more widely available. Many lesbians were choosing to go through such service providers in order to conceive and bear children. Lesbian communicative networks identified which doctors and agencies were “family friendly.” Although some doctors may object to such parenting arrangements due to concerns over “morality,” there is a growing consensus among service providers that lesbians should be given equal access (Murphy 2001; Krantz and Daniluk 2006). In part, this comes from research showing the adequacy of lesbian mothers. Again, we see the cycle of incorporation in operation. Knowledge about the adequacy of lesbian parents who were allowed to keep their children after divorce was used to help more women keep

²⁸ Specific references to Massachusetts law in this discussion are drawn from Bonauto (2005).

their children. As lesbians were incorporated into the law as mothers, legal opportunities for other women to parent increased. As assistive reproductive technologies, more women were becoming pregnant, and also being incorporated within family law in more areas.

One of those areas is what has become known as second-parent adoption (Dalton 2001). The biological mother of a child born using reproductive technologies is legally that child's parent. However, the mother's lesbian partner would have no legal relationship to the child. The second-mother may be very important in the child's life, but they might be declared legal strangers. Second-parent adoption allows this unmarried partner to establish a legal relationship with the child. While the mothers may not be related to each other, they are both legal kin to the child. The first second-parent adoptions occurred in the mid-1980s in Alaska, Oregon, Washington, and California (Polikoff 2000: 320). In Massachusetts, the first second-parent adoption was recognized in 1993.

Again, I don't want it to appear that this integration of lesbian families has moved in one direction. Two years after Massachusetts recognized second-parent adoption, the Virginia Supreme Court ordered the removal of a child from his lesbian mother's home (Polikoff 2000: 332). The child's grandmother had sued for custody because of her daughter's lesbianism. She won. The Court ruled that lesbianism made a woman an unfit mother. While it is important to keep these contradictory moves in mind, my primary focus is on those locations in which the tendencies are in the direction of greater social integration of gay and lesbian people, individuals, parents and partners.

Massachusetts has, in many respects, been on the leading edge of these incorporative cycles. In 1993 it recognized second-parent adoption. In 1999 the Supreme Judicial Court granted visitation to an unmarried lesbian partner who acted as a co-parent. The Commonwealth has banned discrimination in the provision of adoption services and has incorporated gay and lesbian adults within as foster parents. Indeed, in the aftermath of the marriage decisions in Massachusetts a *Boston Globe* study showed that the local Catholic Charities, acting as a proxy state service agency by finding adoptive homes from children who were wards of the Department of Social Services, had allowed some same-sex couples to adopt (Wen 2005). The Bishops approached Governor Romney and some legislative leaders, but were unsuccessful in their attempts to gain permission to exclude lesbian and gay people as potential parents. Overruling a unanimous decision by the Board of Directors in favor of continuing such adoptions, the Bishops required Catholic Charities to stop that social service activity (Wen 2006). Same-sex couples, particularly lesbian mothers, had been incorporated within the state's law, policy and cultural life to such a degree that institutional assumptions about social equality and the desirability of lesbians as adoptive parents were more important than the objections of the Commonwealth's Roman Catholic Bishops.

Although this particular incident took place after marriage became legal, unmarried lesbian partners were still considered good candidates as adoptive parents. The rights and protections that set the stage for marriage remain available. Even as lesbians can now marry, non-married lesbians can still conceive and obtain second-parent adoptions. Legal activism surrounding lesbian parenting activity provides us with an

example of how the cycle of incorporation set the stage for marriage, but also resulted in other processes and sites of incorporating lesbian life.

AIDS

If lesbian mothering has been one particular space of incorporating families headed by same-sex couples, AIDS also has been a central issue. Both involved problems flowing from the exclusion of lesbians and gay men from family policy in such areas as parenting or funerary planning. They have also served to bring these families into governing relations. I noted that parenting has often been of greater concern for lesbians than gay men. That isn't to say that gay men haven't dealt with parenting issues (Miller 2001). Likewise, the family issues that came to the fore with AIDS are also things that may face lesbian couples. The ability to make medical decisions for, or visit a sick partner in, the hospital, to make funerary choices, and to inherit property or survivor's benefits will also affect lesbian couples. However, due to the AIDS crisis, these issues became particularly prominent in the lives of gay men (Chauncey 2004: 95-105).

AIDS forced gay life more directly into the public sphere. The urban sexual cultures developed by gay men in the 1970s—particularly the elevation of sexual experimentation, the growth of sex-related businesses like bathhouses, and the routinization of non-monogamy—were given new attention and condemned as pathological because of the sexual transmission of the virus that was killing these men. Because of its impact on urban settings such as New York and Los Angeles, AIDS brought gay life, the sexuality and the new deadly disease, into prominence in the news media of those cities, and the nation more generally. The death of Rock Hudson and

Magic Johnson's announcement would help bring the disease to greater public prominence. By 1993, Tom Hanks would win an Oscar for his role as a gay man with AIDS in *Philadelphia*, a film about straight America's reaction to the conditions. AIDS brought gay men into media coverage in new and expanded ways (Shilts 1987; Alwood 1996: Chapters 11-12; Chauncey 2004: 40-51).

Part of this increased coverage was the result of social movement agitation. In New York, in particular, AIDS activists challenged the *New York Times* to include more coverage of a disease that was ravaging one of its communities and draining public resources (Alwood 1996: 223-8). However, there was also increased coverage of a new wave movement mobilization. As these men were driven out of the closet due to illness, they were also driven to political action against an indifferent state and society. There are two processes I would like to highlight about this mobilization. The first involves an inward mobilizing effort. By this, I mean that gay men were organizing more community service agencies. While this phase of mobilization witnessed an explosion in such organizing efforts, these efforts were part of a longer-term trend in lesbian and gay movement. Since the early days of Gay Liberation, one aspect of gay and lesbian mobilization has involved organizing for the sake of producing community. In 1971, the Gay Activists Alliance in New York City, for example, rented nineteenth century firehouse to serve as their organizational headquarters and as a community center (Clendenin and Nagourney 1999: 76-9). The Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Center was also established that year (Batza 2005). A prominent part of lesbian and gay organizing activity has involved such inward community-oriented work (Burns and Rofes 1988).

An example tying those earlier Gay Liberation organizing efforts with the AIDS crisis can be seen in a Boston-based organization. In 1971, a group of Northeastern University students established started a one-night-per-week drop-in STD clinic (Fenway Community Health Center n.d.). In 1973 it incorporated as a free-standing medical clinic. The Fenway Community Health Center has grown like other areas of the movement sector I described above. It has also become a mechanism for the incorporation of lesbians and, more particularly, gay men as welfare state clients. As more men were diagnosed with AIDS in urban areas across the country, city and state public health agencies began increasing funding for medical providers serving some affected communities FCHC has been incorporated into Boston's public health system as one of a series of community health centers that are funded by the city. It has also participated in research, receiving funding from the National Institutes of Health and participating in clinical trials of HIV vaccines (Fenway Community Health Center 2009). The absorption of the Fenway, and programs like the Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York City, into state funding streams through service provision contracts and research programs provide another example of how lesbians and gay men are incorporated into society. Within these particular processes, they are integrated as clients of welfare state services. Although AIDS is a prominent life-area where this type of incorporation has occurred, it isn't the only one. Domestic violence programs, crisis phone lines, and youth shelters have also been established as proxy state agencies in various municipalities, doing the work of incorporating lesbians and gay men as potential clients of the welfare state.

If the inward organizing activities produced spaces of incorporation, so did outward forms of activity. Often, the issues facing gay men dealing with HIV/AIDS were not dealt with in the same legal settings as lesbian mothering. Instead, a growing movement for domestic partnerships in the workplace and in municipal ordinances took center stage. Movement organizations worked to include surviving partners under definitions of spouse or next of kin for relations of medical decision-making, funerary planning, and inheritance (Chauncey 2004: 40-51).

Another aspect of the legal sector of movement activity involved attempts to gain protection from discrimination on the basis of HIV-status. Nondiscrimination in the provision of medical and dental services and the privacy of medical records, for example, were legal areas in which legal activists were incorporating gay men into legal policy. Although these AIDS policies often involved non-gay people, the ability to qualify as disabled due to a medical condition affected how many gay men could access welfare services (*Bragdon v. Abbott* 1988).

As more people sought to protect their relationships, more lawyers provided such services. We also see during the 1980s-2000s the rise of a segment of the legal sector dealing not only with civil rights challenges, but also simply with drawing up documents. AIDS, in particular, highlighted the vulnerability of gay men's relationships that flowed from their inability to marry. Just as gay and lesbian parents were looking to establish relationships with their children, these men were looking to provide for each other in cases of illness and death, to protect their property and family relationships. A legal sector that moved beyond fighting prosecutions for sex-related offenses and into the development of such things as powers-of-attorney and wills became more prominent, as

did a kind of “do-it-yourself” legal publishing industry (see, for example, Clifford, Hertz, and Doskow 2007).

The politics of AIDS, then, can be seen as one encapsulation of the cycle of incorporation with which I have been concerned in this chapter. During the early years of the epidemic, AIDS activists had to confront and challenge a reinvigorated anti-Homosexual state and culture. In fields like public health and politics, their sexual practices and selves were being increasingly stigmatized and policed. Their community organizing efforts were in some part brought about by their previous exclusion from social citizenship, from access to welfare state benefits. Eventually, after intense mobilization to gain access to more treatment, and to cause changes in testing regimes (Epstein 1998), gay men were incorporated into the public health and social service sectors of the welfare state. Additionally, challenges to their exclusion from family life ended up integrating them as family members, in some places, with regard to hospital visitation, medical decision-making, inheritance, medical and bereavement leave, and funerary planning. A health crisis had the perverse effect of incorporating gay men as citizens.

Both the AIDS crisis and lesbian mothering illustrate parts of the broad cycle of incorporation at the heart of this chapter. I have centered social movement activity, especially legal activism, in this discussion. This incorporative cycle moves in three phases. The first involves challenges to the exclusion of gay men and lesbians. Restrictions on the use of the mail, threats to take children away from lesbian mothers, and the indifference of state actors to massive illness and death have all provided areas

for such challenges. Successful efforts at removing exclusion have also led to further attempts to enact negative policies of incorporation. These can be seen in the enactment of municipal policies banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment, legislative adoption of policies banning the use of sexual orientation as a factor in making decisions with regard to foster parenting, and legal challenges to discrimination on the basis of serostatus. Finally, we see the pursuit of positive incorporation through the provision of institutional support for the living of lesbian and gay lives. The opening of access to marriage is the most obvious example of this. However, funding for agencies that are providing medical services to lesbian and gay communities and the recognition of legal relationships between lesbians and their children are other examples of how the living of lesbian and gay lives is facilitated in this incorporative cycle.

Within each of these phases, more social spaces are opened to, and more resources provided for, the incorporation of lesbian and gay lives in mainstream life. More states now provide same-sex couples with legal rights and protections than ever before, even as more states have enacted explicit exclusions on the provision of such protections. Although the cycle can move in contradictory ways, the general trajectory is toward greater incorporation. Many of the institutions of Heterosexual domination have been dismantled. The closet is losing its power as a social force, even if it hasn't been banished yet. Same-sex couples are marrying in Massachusetts and Connecticut, and, if polls are to be believed, a plurality of Americans believe that these couples should have some kind of legal protections (Princeton Survey Research Associates International

2008). We can see the move away from Heterosexual dominations triumph in *Griswold* toward the eventual marriages of same-sex couples within this cycle of incorporation.

Chapter 3 **Putting on a Public Face**

A central theme of this work involves the transformations of lesbian and gay life in America. In Chapter One, I focused on changes in the organization of American life that produced the conditions under which categories of Homosexual and Heterosexual came to denote specific types of humans. Human selves were increasingly being defined by desire and the gender of sexual-object choice. These distinctions became the basis of social policy as Heterosexual Domination was established as a primary mode of socio-sexual organization. The institutionalization of this system produced what has become known as “the closet,” a double life in which lesbian and gay selves and activities are hidden and a “mask” of Heterosexuality is put on in order to conceal Homosexual lives. The specification of Homosexuality as a target of social repression in more and more institutional settings and specific practices also produced a subject position from which challenges could take place. As Heterosexuality dominance was reaching its apex, Homosexuals were emerging from the closet and resisting their oppression.

These forms of resistance and their relationships to social systems that were increasingly absorbing rather than excluding lesbian and gay life were the focus of Chapter Two. The central issue there was social movement activity and its role in an expanding cycle of challenging policies and practices of exclusion and promoting others that ban such exclusion or provide social resources that facilitate living lesbian and gay lives. These incorporative processes have transformed gay and lesbian life in such ways that some states are now providing material support to those living particular forms of lesbian and gay life. Other jurisdictions, however, have added more explicit forms of

exclusion to their legal codes, particularly with regard to family recognition and support. The social integration of lesbians and gay men remains politically and culturally controversial even if its general trend is toward greater inclusion. It is this cycle of incorporation, driven by movement activity, that has produced the possibility of respectability being attached to lesbian and gay selves, relationships, and lives. No longer wholly abject, gay and lesbian life is something that can be aspired to.

In this and the following three chapters I turn my attention more specifically to one particular phase of this cycle by looking at news coverage occurring during a campaign for positive incorporation. I have mentioned the Massachusetts campaign for access to marriage several times so far, and it is that campaign I will be investigating. In particular I will be analyzing newspaper coverage of same-sex couples that occurred during the three years of the campaign, and how those couples are represented. In this analysis, I am approaching the news articles in two ways. First, the representations themselves are tales of what has happened. They provide information about how the cycle is progressing. They tell of legislative hearings, protests, and weddings. The activity of gay and lesbian activists, and anti-gay countermovement actors, as well as couples preparing to marry are all part of the cycle that is bringing gay and lesbian life into the mainstream of American society.

Second, these stories are also part of the cycle. These texts emerge from a complex network of social activity. One part of the broader cycle of incorporation has been the inclusion of gay and lesbian organizations within the regular list of sources used by reporters. News organizations have changed the language they use to describe Homosexuals and, as we will see in the chapters that follow, the lives of lesbians and gay

men take center stage in many of these articles in ways they never have before. In addition to illustrating changes in lesbian and gay life, these news representations are simultaneously part of those changes.

In this chapter, I retain my focus on the relationship between social movement actors and the state. After all, the pursuit of marriage in Massachusetts took place within the legal system, and would come to encompass the legislature and administrative agencies of the Commonwealth. To this relationship I add practices of news production. I am interested here in the prominence of what I am calling “public face couples,” whom others have called “poster couples,” (Javors and Reimann 2001) in news reporting during the Massachusetts campaign. I draw on theories of social movement framing activity in discussing the selection of these couples. Their life stories are chosen to highlight their adherence to normative standards associated with marriage and the hardships they face due to their inability to marry. Their prominence in news reporting is explained by looking at routine practices of news reporting, and the institutionalization of lesbian and gay political organizations.

Another group of couples I center in this chapter are those that contain lesbian and gay public officials, particularly members of the legislature. These individuals reinforce the preferred frames of the marriage equality movement through the telling of their own life stories. They do so, however, in social settings where personal tales of the hardships faced by same-sex couples might not otherwise be heard. In short, this chapter looks at the news production of these same-sex couples as it is related to social movement interaction with the state and news organizations

News Stories and Couple Representations

This and the following three chapters involve a discussion of media reporting of same-sex couples during the Massachusetts campaign for access to marriage. Scholars looking at the changing media representations of lesbians and gay men have noted several changes in these representations, particularly over the past decade and a half. In particular, they have noted the transformations I have been discussing, of a move from abject outsiders to normal citizens²⁹. Gay men and lesbians are increasingly appearing in media spaces and although some representations are growing more complex, they are generally limited to upholding Heteronormativity. While displaying Heterosexual tolerance, they are reinforcing the cultural values of consumer capitalism.

While less work, generally, has been performed on news representations as opposed to popular culture texts, Altman's (1996) study of the trends with regard to lesbian and gay men and the news noted moves toward greater inclusion, both in coverage and in the newsroom. Valverde's (2006) discussion of the birth of "the respectable same-sex couple" with which I opened this broad work draws, at least in part, from a comparison of news photos of couples in San Francisco and Toronto. When newspaper stories appear in analyses of the marriage movement itself, they tend to be used as straightforward representations of what happened. While I noted above that these stories are reporting on what has happened, I am not treating them in such a straightforward manner. Instead, I take them to be a *telling* of what happened. Events and characters are *organized* into coherent articles in a complex set of practices involving

²⁹ On the transformations in media representations, I am particularly drawing on Alwood (1996); Gamson (1998); Walters (2001); Seidman (2002); Becker (2006); Cossman (2007).

information gathering, writing, editing and publishing activities. Keeping that background activity in mind, and I do discuss it, I am interested in the organization of that information.

While the issue of same-sex marriage has taken a central role in national political discourse, it is also a very local issue. Individual states and communities, churches and businesses, families and neighborhoods are working through conflicts involving the recognition, rejection, tolerance, acceptance, exclusion, and support of lesbian and gay families. Massachusetts is no different. The Commonwealth was central to the national debates in 2003-4, particularly because it became the first state to allow couples to marry and did so in the context of a Presidential campaign. Even though the events in Massachusetts were reported nationally, the individuals seeking marriage were neighbors and co-workers from such places as Jamaica Plain and Orleans and Newton. The people who wrote letters and protested at the Statehouse to encourage lawmakers to keep those couples out of marriage were neighbors and co-workers from Chelsea and Somerville and South Boston. It wasn't uncommon for lesbian and gay people who wanted to marry to be in the same family as those attempting to exclude them from that institution. For all of the focus this issue received in political discourse, these conflicts were also played out in the daily lives of people across Massachusetts.

Same-sex marriage was also, and remains, a national political issue. Massachusetts was but one, albeit a significant one, site of activity in these conflicts in 2004. San Francisco engaged in municipal civil disobedience by granting marriage licenses to same-sex couples for about a month. Congress debated a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage. Voters in thirteen states approved such

amendments to their constitutions that year. It was a topic in Presidential and Vice-Presidential debates. Events from Massachusetts appeared in news media all across the country, and these national events appeared in the Bay State's media.

Boston, home to the Court that first gave same-sex couple access to marriage, is one of the few cities that still has two major daily newspapers in circulation. The *Globe*, a daily broadsheet owned by the New York Times Corporation, had an average daily circulation of about 450,000 copies and Sunday circulation of about 706,000 in 2003. The *Herald*, the city's more editorially conservative tabloid, had an average daily circulation of about 241,000 and average Sunday circulation of 152,000 in that year (Editor and Publisher 2003a, 2003b). I am using these two newspapers as the sources for local news coverage.

I performed a *Lexis-Nexis* search to collect every articles published in the two Boston newspapers about, or even mentioning, same-sex marriage during the period under study.³⁰ A thorough search of those articles was undertaken to select only those that identified *specific* same-sex couples. Table 3.1 provides the results of this process.

Table 3.1: Articles in Boston newspapers that contain same-sex couples					
	2001 (April- Dec)	2002	2003	2004 (Jan- June)	Total
<i>Globe</i> Articles	25	33	202	507	767
Containing Couples	6	3	17	78	104
Number of Couples	6	3	32	144	185
<i>Herald</i> Articles	12	23	88	268	393
Containing couples	3	1	10	32	46
Number of couples	3	1	13	52	69

³⁰ The period under study starts on April 11, 2001 and ends on June 30, 2004. A full discussion of the selection of these dates, and other technical issues regarding the selection and analysis of these news texts can be found in the Methodological Appendix.

I would like to focus here on the relative paucity of representations of actually living same-sex couples in coverage of the *issue* of same-sex marriage. Only about 13% of the articles published in the Boston newspapers during the period under study actually contain specific same-sex couples. Others may have referred to same-sex couples, or gay and lesbian people, as generic types, or to specific lesbian and gay individuals, like Representative Barney Frank, who were not identified as members of couples. Those articles were excluded from the sample. Even if we consider those additions, though, we still end up with a situation in which public debate about the conditions of lesbian and gay peoples' lives ends up containing relatively few stories told about, or statements from, those people whose lives are being debated.

We can place this relative lack of representation in the routine practices of news gathering and reporting. Same-sex marriage is likely to be reported as a political issue. As such, the people more likely to be included and involved in such stories are actors within political institutions. "News routines are micro-structures, fine threads which, when woven together, create media opportunities for government and corporate insiders" (Ryan 1993: 141). These routines include such things as deadlines, pre-scheduled events, event-based reporting, the assignment of reporters to beats, the use of regular sources within institutions of power, and the use of wire services³¹. One of the things that becomes quite evident in this reporting is that there is a series of reporters whose names consistently appear on certain bylines. Kathleen Burge, for example, appears as the author of several *Boston Globe* news stories about the *Goodridge* case as it winds its way through the court system, while Yvonne Abraham becomes a central reporter during the

³¹ On the issue of routines and the production of news see: Tuchman (1979); Ryan (1993: Chapter 7); Croteau and Hoynes (2003: 126-31)

Constitutional Convention and build-up to marriages taking place. A search for Burge's byline indicates that she is a city reporter whose beat includes the Supreme Judicial Court. Indeed, court reporting beyond same-sex marriage figures in her work. As such, we could assume that she has a set of sources within the court that she relies upon for information. Similarly, the Court operates on a pre-determined schedule, detailing in advance when cases will be heard and when decisions will be released.

Additionally, when cases are argued or decisions released, the participants will often schedule press conferences surrounding that event. Thus, those organizations and/or individuals with a vested interest in the case will have an opportunity to speak to the media, to gain access for their point of view. If the cases involve particularly controversial topics, and it is fairly safe to say that the issue of extending access to marriage to same-sex couples is a controversial topic, other sources that are part of the established set of sources for that topic may be contacted for statements about that issue, as may be other political actors. The "objectivity norms" (Schudson 2001) of professional journalism hold that, for example, anti-gay organizations and voices be included when gay rights are under consideration. These routine practices help to explain, first, why we would see the actors we do—the lawyers arguing before a court, plaintiff couples, anti-gay activists, judges and justices and the decisions they write, members of the legislative branches, the President—in reporting of different events as *Goodridge* made its way through the Courts.

These routines also help us to understand why representations of same-sex couples are so rare in reporting of the *issue* of same-sex marriage. Reporters cover the people "who matter:" Governors, Presidents, legislators, and the like. They cover the

people and institutions that the newspaper organizations they work for define to be newsworthy. In 2003 and 2004, these people in high levels of government were talking about same-sex marriage more often. The anti-marriage backlash that started picking up steam after the 1996 Hawaii decision was running rampant, with state legislatures and other social movements pursuing statutes and constitutional amendments to ban such unions. The President called for a marriage exclusion amendment when both *Lawrence v. Texas* and *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health* were decided, as well as in his 2004 State of the Union and several speeches. It was a topic of debate in the Presidential primary season, particularly because Massachusetts Senator John Kerry was the leading Democratic candidate, and eventual nominee. It was, quite simply, a topic that was receiving greater debate among elites.

In Massachusetts, we had a Supreme Judicial Court decision declaring same-sex couples eligible for civil marriage contracts. They were also asked to rule on whether civil unions would be an acceptable substitute. There were four days of constitutional convention, and back-room maneuvering by political actors. There was also massive social mobilization. In May of 2004, same-sex couples started marrying. Not only did statements by elites drive coverage, but events did as well. The stories we see involving these statements and events are the results of the routine practices of news gathering, writing, and publishing I noted above. The increase in coverage over the span of the four-year study is also attributable to those routines.

The confluence of events surrounding the onset of marriage produced a marked increase in news reporting about same-sex marriage, a critical discourse moment (Ferree, et. al. 2002: 24; Koopmans and Kriesi. NP). This is true of coverage generally, and of

stories including same-sex couples specifically. For example, on the first two days that same-sex couples could marry, May 17 and May 18 of 2004, thirty-five couples appeared in the *Boston Globe* (19% of that paper's total), and 20 in the *Boston Herald* (29%). In other words, about one-fifth of the total couple representations in the two Boston newspapers occurred in just those two days. For the *Globe* 86 couples (46% of the total) appeared in May and June of 2004, while the *Herald* had 31 couple representations (45%).

There are several couples figuring prominently in this coverage. In particular, I am focusing on the seven plaintiff couples selected by Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD) to sue the state and the first couple in the state (and the nation) to legally apply for a marriage license. Because, as I noted above, the events in Massachusetts were national news, I also included a sample of national newspapers in the analysis. A different selection process was used to extract articles from the national sample newspapers than was used for the Boston papers³². For these twelve newspapers, I searched for articles containing the names of members of these eight primary “poster couples.”

Utilizing their names as the criteria, a *Lexis-Nexis* search produced 46 articles with 123 couple representations. In total, combining the local and national samples, 196 articles showing 377 couples were selected for analysis. I should note that while the presence of specific couples within stories was used as a selection criterion, we do not have 377 separate couples. Instead, we have 377 representations of couples. There are a

³² The following newspapers were included in the national sample: *USA Today*, *New York Times*, *New York Daily News*, *New York Post*, *Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Houston Chronicle*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Newark Star-Ledger*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, and *Cleveland Plain Dealer*.

number of couples that appear more than once in these totals. Indeed, our eight poster couples, as might be expected, figure prominently, as Table 3.2 shows.

	Total Couples	8 Poster Couples
Boston Globe	185	47
Boston Herald	69	17
National Papers	123	60
Total	377	124

Marcia Hams and Susan Shepherd, for example, appeared in more than a few stories about the events of May 17. This might be expected. After all, they were the first couple in the state to legally take out a Notice of Intent to Marry. They were present in three *Boston Globe* articles on May 17 and 18 and appeared in another two in June. Those five stories were all of the stories about them that appeared in that newspaper. They were not present in any *Boston Herald* stories, but appeared in ten stories from the national sample, which I will discuss briefly. One-sixth of the total public face couple representations in the national sample were of Marcia Hams and Sue Shepherd.

Those first two days of marriage are also important in the coverage of our other public face couples. When we look at the plaintiff couples, we see them in five *Boston Globe* articles on May 17 and 18, and an additional 12 in the rest of May. (Their presence ends on May 18.) They were also present in three *Boston Herald* articles on the 17th and 18th. These May representations were about one-sixth of the total for the plaintiff couples in the *Herald* and about one-third in the *Globe*. The events of that month drove coverage and the strategically selected “public face” couples remained prominent figures in that coverage.

Representations of these eight couples make up a larger proportion of the national sample than the local one. This is a methodological artifact. The selection criterion for those articles was these couples' presence, whereas the local sample was developed casting a wider net. Even though the presence of the public face couples was the criterion for article selection, just over half of the couples we see in the national sample are *not* these specific poster couples. It is worth noting, however, that more than a few of the other couples we see in this national sample were also selected by activists. For example, some of the couples involved in a New Jersey lawsuit for marriage appeared in an article about an event where Massachusetts plaintiffs David Wilson and Robert Compton were speaking (Bewley 2003). Two articles, involving four couples, were reviews of television advertisements put out by marriage equality advocates (Kurtz 2003; Weiss 2004a). In the total number of representations, then, we see more strategically selected couples than my criteria would indicate.

In addition to couples selected by activists, there are activist couples who are self-selecting themselves to be public spokespeople. For example, I noted Susan Shepherd and Marcia Hams as one of the eight public face couples. They were recruited by local activists to be the first couple in Massachusetts to legally apply for a marriage license. The couple right behind them in line, though, was Sue Hyde and Jade McGleughlin (Gendar 2004). Shepherd and Hams were recruited by Hyde in her capacity with the Cambridge Lavender Alliance and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (Hyde 2004). She is herself an activist involved in the strategic selection and deployment of couples and their life stories. Her co-chair in the Cambridge Lavender Alliance, Arthur Lipkin, and his partner, Robert Ellsworth, also appear in line that night, and in the same

Daily News news article. These activists, although not included in the count above, are also public face couples. They are self-selected instead of recruited, though. If we keep in mind these self-selected couples and others like the New Jersey plaintiffs, we can see that the proportion of couples appearing in the media that were strategically selected by movement actors is higher than it would initially appear. Additionally, the prominence of these various poster couples in the relatively rare articles that include same-sex couples within news reporting emphasizes the importance of these choices. The activities of social movement activists play a central role in determining whose stories are told in the public sphere.

Consider the role of the news routines I mentioned above in this prominence of strategically selected couples. Court hearings and the days when decisions are released offer opportunities for activists to get coverage. These are the sorts of events that a reporter assigned to the “Courts” beat would cover. The fact that they involve a controversial issue makes them even more “newsworthy.” Activists, also knowing the importance of these events in garnering coverage for their cause, will often hold press conferences that coincide with these scheduled events scheduled, and stories about these events are where we often hear from the plaintiff couples. During the constitutional convention, these couples were deployed for a meeting with Governor Romney, and a press conference was scheduled afterward (Beardsley 2004a). Hams and Shepherd reserved a place as the first couple in line as the City of Cambridge planned a public celebration. The weddings of several of these couples were also produced as public media events. The prominence of particular couples is a result of the practices of news gathering and reporting. It is also the result of movement organizations engaging in work

to select these couples and make them available in ways that fit with reporters' work routines.

The overall coverage of the issue of same-sex marriage increased over the period under study, dramatically so in 2004. However, the inclusion of same-sex couples was relatively rare in the overall reporting of this issue, which can be attributed to the routine practices of journalism that tend to focus on the activities of social and political elites. When same-sex couples did appear, those who were selected by movement activists, or were activists themselves, figured very prominently. The same practices that focus attention on elites were also responsible for the higher concentration of public face couples in news coverage. This highlights the importance of couple selection as a movement strategy, to which I now turn.

Selecting Public Face Couples

As I have noted, the prominence of a specific group of couples in news reporting is the result of a complex set of interactions between social movement organizations, various branches and agencies of state government and other social institutions, and the practices of news gathering and reporting. In this section, I turn to an exploration of the messages sent in the selection and deployment of these particular couples. It is no mistake that Hillary and Julie Goodridge, or David Compton and Robert Wilson, or Susan Shepherd and Marcia Hams so repeatedly appear in news coverage. They were selected to be the "public face" of the issue, to serve as representatives of the movement for access to marriage and to highlight the issues faced by "everyday" people. Knowing that their life stories would be prominent, activists sought out people with good stories,

and the skills to tell them well (Bonauto 2005). Recall from Table 3.2 above that representations of the eight primary poster couples were approximately one-third of the total representations of same-sex couples, comprising about one-half of the national sample and one-quarter of the Boston sample. I should also again note, however, that these are undercounts of the total number of representations of couples who were strategically selected by movement activists, or who were those activists.

The eight primary poster couples, and the others I have noted, were selected to serve as the “public faces” of the issue for citizens of the Commonwealth. Stories about them and their families would be disseminated widely, and their lives would be subject to public scrutiny. Their lives—or more accurately, *stories about their lives*—would be a symbolic resource deployed to personalize the problems faced by same-sex couples due to their inability to marry. The life stories of these couples would make explicit the everyday problems associated with this public issue. They were selected because they suffer some hardship that flows from their inability to marry. It is more personally, and emotionally, compelling to speak of a situation in which people were denied access to their partners in the hospital, as was the case with Julie and Hillary Goodridge and Robert Wilson and David Compton, than it is to speak of that possibility, or to talk of potential problems or abstract principles. The telling of these life stories makes “real” the abstract political and legal issues associated with exclusion from marriage.

This also “normalizes” lesbian and gay families, it makes them less “foreign.” As I discussed in the previous chapter, these families are being incorporated into the routine patterns of social life. More stories about them are being told in more settings. That lesbians and gay men are raising children is taken for granted in the news reporting here.

The telling of tales about family life in gay and lesbian households, can serve to decrease the perceived difference between their lives and the lives of those who may not know any same-sex couples. After all, stories about sick children are stories about sick children. Tales of wedding shopping may involve a different cast characters when there are two brides or two grooms, but they are still tales of searching for and arguing over cakes and invitations. Among the strategic choices made by activists is the selection of couples whose stories of couplehood highlight the similarities to married life and uphold the values and practices associated with it.

These couples also humanize the issue. Not only do their tales of life make the discrimination they face “real,” they also transform lesbians and gay men, and the families they form, from abstract types into actually living human beings. Representations of these couples, as opposed to arguments over abstract rights, show living, loving, feeling, speaking subjects. These tales show people engaged in the everyday things that people do. Since the days of the Gay Liberationists the telling of such personal stories has been strategically used as a tool to break down barriers excluding lesbians and gay men. “Coming out” has been understood as a political tool. People who have openly gay and lesbian people as friends and family are less likely to hold anti-gay attitudes and more likely to support the inclusion of lesbians and gay men in society than are those who do not have such people in their lives (Yang 1997). Tales of everyday life can break down stereotypes. (As I discuss in the next chapter, they can also reinforce them.) A parent nursing a sick child is a parent nursing a sick child. Stories of discrimination encountered while trying to make that child feel better can make such discrimination less palatable. Knowing individual lesbians and gay men can decrease the

perceived social distance between one's Heterosexual self and a generalized Homosexual other. As more people live and work in settings in which gay and lesbian people aren't pathological outsiders, but are instead valued individuals who are integrated within their communities and families, more people come to not just tolerate lesbians and gay men but to accept them. One of those potential settings is the mass media.

This issue of humanization through narrating daily life appears in the very first article appearing during the period under study. In response to the filing of the *Goodridge* lawsuit, Acting Governor Jane Swift had issued a statement reiterating her opposition to allowing same-sex couples to marry. In response, two of her former neighbors, who just happened to be plaintiffs in that lawsuit, sat down for an interview with the *Boston Globe*.

Richard Linnell wishes he'd been a friendlier neighbor. He and his partner, Gary Chalmers, and their daughter lived up the street from then-lieutenant governor Jane Swift and her husband, Chuck Hunt, when they were in Northbridge, in Worcester County. He'd see Swift in the neighborhood here and there: putting out her mail or down at the fruit stand at the end of the street. But he never spoke to her. Now Linnell and Chalmers are one of seven same-sex couples suing the state for the right to marry, a right Swift has repeatedly said should be confined to heterosexual couples. "It would have been nice if she had gotten a chance to meet us," Linnell said. "She might have a different opinion in time if she had." (Abraham et. al. 2001).

This brief note is just one part of a series of notes about political issues in the Commonwealth, and is the only mention of this issue in that listing. Note how it places Linnell and Chalmers in the social role of "neighbors." However, Linnell is presented as worrying, that he hasn't been a good enough neighbor; if he had been friendlier during the shared minutiae of social life, maybe the Acting Governor wouldn't oppose the greater social inclusion of his family. Maybe she would have come to see them as a family. He is quoted saying this much. Now, this may not be explicitly about being a

better or worse neighbor, but it does play on the theme I have been discussing. It is assumed, even within this news article, that getting to know lesbians and gay men as people engaged in the normal routines of daily life makes it harder to discriminate against them. This article is reporting the reaction of a gay couple to a statement by their powerful former neighbor, while simultaneously providing an opportunity for the public to “get to know” that gay couple playing the role of good neighbors.

The selection and deployment of public face couples like Linnell and Chalmers can be seen as part of the process through which movement activists are attempting to let the public “get to know” individual same-sex couples in such ways as to shape public opinion. However, they don’t want the public to meet *every* same-sex couple. Couples in non-monogamous relationships, for example, are among those that marriage activists would prefer to keep out of the public eye since they might undermine the messages that activists are trying to put forth. If movement actors want to claim that these couples’ relationships are like marriage, they would likely attempt to choose couples who uphold the values associated with marriage. In their attempts to control *which* same-sex couples the public gets to know, they are working to manage the public impressions of lesbians and gay men. They are looking for people who can fill the respectable roles of good neighbors, loving parents, caring partners, productive workers, and responsible citizens.

Legal activist Mary Bonauto, the lead GLAD attorney in *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health*, as well as the successful suits in Vermont and Connecticut, discussed this selection process in a 2005 article reflecting on the Massachusetts campaign.

Where the plaintiffs are the heart and soul of the case, the job of plaintiff selection is critical. Deciding among the many potential couples is at least

as much a function of the lawyer's gut as a function of objective measures. If we applied a litmus test, it centered more on the core strength of the individuals and couples than anything else. Starting with those who had contacted GLAD about marriage over the years, and after warning that lawyers ask a lot of nosy questions, I asked the potential plaintiffs the obvious: how did they meet and commit, and how long had they been together? Why marriage and not some other legal protection? What kinds of problems had they faced from being denied marriage? Had it affected their children? What kinds of stresses had they endured as a couple?

Often, I met people in their homes, assuming that the media would be interviewing them there and wanting to know what that would look like. I knew they would get their "fifteen minutes" of fame, but that could not be part of their motivation for joining, nor could they have anything particularly embarrassing in their past (Bonauto 2004: 31).

I would first like to highlight the closing clause of this excerpt: they could have nothing embarrassing in their past. The selection of poster couples is part of the process of impression management. Opponents could try to use such embarrassing episodes to undercut the movement's arguments for marriage equality. A *Boston Herald* article from April, 2004 provides us with an example of this. It shows a lesbian foster mother in New Bedford being accused of sexually assaulting a child under her care. Anti-gay activist Ron Crews is quoted as saying, "It appears that children in homosexual relationships are not as safe.... Homosexual relationships are less safe" (Guarino 2004).

Although this foster mother was not an actor in the campaign, the *Herald* specifically connects this event to the issue, writing "A lesbian foster parent allegedly raped a 15-year-old girl in her custody twice last month, ... sparking a new firestorm in the ongoing gay marriage fury." Crews is provided with an opportunity to use the incident to undermine support for gay and lesbian parenting, and for same-sex marriage. He is shown attempting to reinforce of historical cultural beliefs, which are still held among many Americans (Herek 2002), linking of Homosexuality with danger to children. An incident like this one may be out of the control of marriage equality activists, but they

will take steps, like asking “nosy questions” and performing criminal background checks, to avoid any such potential damage by removing from the selection process couples whose lives or backgrounds might undercut the respectable image they are trying to produce.

If the “embarrassing incidents” question is used to exclude certain couples because activists want to avoid sending the “wrong” message, we can see the other questions Bonauto asks as attempts to produce the “right” message. She asked potential plaintiffs to talk about the process of falling in love and building a life and family, about the length of time they had lived together, and about their dreams for future life as a couple. In some ways, she was building a case for *commonality*. However, it is of a different type than was involved in the issues of humanization I discussed above. Even more than breaking down stereotypes about gay and lesbian life, these couples’ life stories were selected because they resembled the lives of married couples. These stories reinforce certain normative values associated with married life. Who doesn’t love a good love story? Connecting same-sex desire to stories about falling in love is part of a process of making ideational connections between Homosexuality and “normal” life. It is also simultaneously severing connections between Homosexuality and “deviance.” In the pursuit of marriage, couples who uphold the normative values associated with that relationship are more likely to be selected and deployed. These people are chosen *because* their lives resemble marriage.

Those resemblances move us to the issue of framing and how this concept is related to these couple representations. The language we use to describe a given situation shapes how we understand it. Activists’ (and reporters’!) use of particular language can

also shape how audiences understand it. So, some of the work involved in movement framing activity involves the development of a language of change. Lakoff, for example, focuses on the possible strengths of using “Freedom to Marry” instead of “gay marriage” rights because “language is important...[and] *marriage* evokes the idea of sex, and most Americans do not favor gay sex” (Lakoff 2004: 47). Because language exists as webs of meaning, the use of certain words to describe a situation will influence how people interpret and understand it.

Over the course of about the past thirty years, framing has emerged as a central concept within the field of social movement studies³³. It has come to be understood broadly as symbolic labor that identifies and articulates social grievances, points to their origins and identifies responsibility for creating and solving such problems. Involving processes that determine and present the “we” of the movement, and the constituency it claims to represent, framing is used to mobilize people to take action. It is engagement with opponents and authorities, and sometimes allies, in symbolic conflict. Movement framing is collective, embedded, negotiated, and emergent activity that is central to political claims making, cultural production, identity formation, and constituent mobilization. These communicative activities involve the ongoing (re)production and transformation of particular ways of understanding social life.

I am treating the selection of these couples as a framing process. Activities like collecting and maintaining records of couples who were seeking the right to marry, interviewing them and performing background checks, meeting with other attorneys and

³³ On the issue of framing, see Goffman (1974), Gamson, Fireman and Rytina (1982), Snow et. al. (1986), Snow and Benford (1988, 1992), Ryan (1991), Gamson (1992), Lakoff (2004), Benford (1993, 1997), Benford and Snow (2000), Ferree et. al. (2002)

public relations professionals to discuss which couples should be selected and rejecting, training them and scheduling interviews and press conferences with the media are all involved in producing and communicating ideas for dissemination wider publics. I have noted how these couples are selected because their stories make some conceptual connections and sever others. These ideational relationships are directly related to the concept of “frames” I am working with.

[Frames are the] underlying structures or organizing principles that hold together and give coherence to a diverse array of symbols and idea elements. [Gamson] offers two common English meanings of the word frame to aid us in understanding this concept. Frames, as in the phrases “picture frame” or “window frame,” define boundaries and direct our attention to what events and texts are relevant for our understanding of an issue or situation. Like a window, we see the world through frames that determine our perspective while limiting our view to only a part of a complex world around us. At the same time, we can think of frames in terms of the “frame of a house,” an invisible infrastructure that holds together different rooms and supports the cultural building blocks that make up the edifices of meaning. (Creed, Langstraat and Scully 2003: 36-37).

I am particularly interested in the second use of frames, here, and am thinking of them as socio-cognitive structures. Sociologists tend to speak of structures as relatively stable patterns of relationships. Such an approach to frames leads us to think of these relationships as a meaning-making conceptual infrastructure. “Homosexuality” can be linked to “normality” or to “illness.” In American public discourse it has been, and continues to be, attached to both concepts. The relative strength of those relationships in a given situation can be determined by such things as the state of professional knowledge in the field of psychology or the questions asked by a reporter at a press conference.

In Chapter One, I borrowed the concept of “the heterosexual matrix” from Judith Butler (1990). I want to extend this idea of a matrix, a conceptual web, beyond this specific sexual and gender organization and meaning system. Although those concerns

remain, we can also think of all of social life as being encompassed within various webs of meaning. These various conceptual and linguistic networks extend beyond ideas to incorporate objects, bodies, images...any social phenomenon, really. In its most general form, a frame ties these phenomena together in such a way as to produce meaning in a given situation. Only within these relational wholes do different individual phenomena become meaningful. The operative frame is the particular arrangement of conceptual relationships that obtains in any given setting. The window/picture frame metaphor can be seen in how that same operative frame filters certain things into this ideational network while excluding others. Political conflict involves contests over whose preferred organizational scheme will hold. “Gay marriage” and “freedom to marry” and “marriage equality” are all linguistic attempts to shape public perception by invoking different webs of meaning through the use of specific language.

Mary Bonauto and her GLAD colleagues were doing framing work when they chose couples to sue the Commonwealth. Through these selection activities, activists were working to establish an equivalence between marriage and these couples’ relationships. These pairs were selected because their lives as couples adhered to the normative values associated with marriage. They took on the task of presenting themselves in such ways as to highlight the similarities between their couplehood and marriage.

“We’re facing retirement. We’ve had some illnesses, and so we’re really feeling vulnerable and unprotected in our relationship,” [plaintiff, Gloria] Bailey said. “We’re concerned about next-of-kin privileges in any kind of an emergency...Our families look at us as a married couple, but the law regards us as strangers” (Emling 2003).

Note the explicit connection Bailey makes between her relationship and marriage in stating that their families treat them as though they were married. This is more than a

reporting of the relationships she and her partner have with their families. It is also an ideological and political statement. She is doing framing work in making an explicit link between marriage and her family life. This is a common type of statement. Of the 84 statements made by public face couples in the sample, 26 involve this type of connection-making work. In talking about their lives, these couples consistently link their relationships and marriage. Not all of it is quite so explicit, though. Often, the couples make connections to the normative values associated with marriage.

As for the spiritual aspects of marriage [Michael] Horgan said, “You wouldn’t find our reasons for marriage much different than a straight couple. We love each other. We’ve been together for eight years and plan to spend the rest of our lives together.” (Weber 2002).

Note how Horgan connects the emotional values associated with marriage to his own relationship with Ed Balmelli. Again, we see a direct connection to marriage. It is made by both Horgan and the *Boston Herald* reporter. Spiritual and aspirational love are highlighted as what define their relationship and marriage itself. A similar process of connecting love and longevity of these specific couples to the marital relationship can be seen in this statement made after the Supreme Judicial Court heard oral arguments in the *Goodridge* case.

“For 32 years, I’ve loved Gloria and wanted to marry her,” said Linda Davies of Orleans, about her partner Gloria Bailey. “And I think that after today, I’ll finally get to do that” (Burge 2003a).

Love binds these couples together. Love drives desire for marriage because it has become the basis of marriage (Coontz 2005). These couples desire marriage because it is the ultimate expression of that love. They don’t seek to change that definition, but to enter into it.

“We are absolutely no different from any other couple who loves each other,” Julie Goodridge, 46, said after the ceremony. “We intend to uphold our marriage the rest of our lives” (Lochhead 2004a).

These couples already “consider themselves to be married” and live their lives that way. They present themselves as doing so in public discourse, explicitly drawing connections between marriage and their lives as couples. They emphasize the various ways they uphold marital values like love and longevity. Those aspects that might signify difference are ignored or downplayed. Well, there is one difference that is highlighted: these couples are not allowed to marry.

“This isn’t changing marriage. This is just opening the door,” said Hillary Goodridge, 48 (Crary 2004; Kuntzman 2004).

“But even a big stack of documents,” Norton said, “does not feel like it has the weight of a single word: marriage.” (Burge 2003b)

“That one little word—marriage—means so much, and we’re not allowed to use it to describe what we have,” said Davies, 57. “I love Gloria, and I’m proud of being with her. And I want people to know it” (Coulombis 2003).

Not only is marriage not being challenged, its value is being upheld, as several of the plaintiff couples make clear. Recall that I started this discussion of social movement framing by drawing on a segment of an article written by these couples’ lawyer, Mary Bonauto. She specifically asked potential plaintiffs about their lives as couples and why they wanted to get married. She was trying to establish the similarity between these couples and married couples. These couples are explicitly making that link in almost one-third of the statements they are reported as making.

Another line of questioning Bonauto used in selecting these couples involved the hardships they have experienced because of their inability to marry. These tales are told in the production of “injustice frames” (Gamson, Fireman, and Rytina 1982). They are a prominent in the statements made by these couples. Of the 84 reported statements made by the public face couples, about one-fifth (16) involved explicit statements of harm. These couples are chosen because they have suffered some wrong that flows from their inability to marry, and because they are able to talk about it in a compelling manner. They work to make an explicit link between those harms and their inability to marry.

Two of the plaintiffs, Heidi Norton and Gina Smith of Northampton, said after the hearing that they realized the precariousness of their unmarried union when they began a family together. If either of them should die, for instance, the other is not entitled to her partner's pension.

“We want to support the family and protect that family as best we can,” said [Heidi] Norton, who gave birth to the couple’s two children. “We’re left unprotected in many ways and a marriage license would fill that gap.” (Burge 2002a)

The preferred frame offered by Norton, and of the marriage access movement, is that the potential economic insecurity if she or her partner should die is a direct result of their inability to marry. This may seem like a self-evident linkage. However, law professor Nancy Polikoff (2008) provides an alternative frame, a different set of linguistic and ideational links that could be applied to understanding these personal troubles. She frames these troubles as a failure of the welfare state to equally recognize and support non-marital families and provide “solutions to the needs all families have for economic well-being, legal recognition, emotional peace of mind, and community respect” (2008: 3). Instead of reinforcing marriage’s legally privileged status, as these couples do, she seeks to undermine it.

These are two different approaches to producing an injustice frame. One focuses on attaining marriage as the solution to the troubles faced by same-sex couples. The other focuses on de-centering marriage in order to protect same-sex couples and other non-marital families. Although the latter is one possible framing of the issue, and is offered by organizations like the Alternatives to Marriage Project (www.unmarried.org) and academics like Polikoff, it was nearly absent in news coverage of same-sex marriage. The public face couples are never quoted as making statements about extending protections to other non-marital families. They are unanimous in attributing their troubles to the inability to marry.

The two most common themes emerging from this injustice framing activity involve economic (in)security and (potential) problems in health care settings.

“It ultimately hurts Annie [the couple’s daughter] more than anyone for Julie and I not to have a legal relationship to each other,” [Hillary Goodridge] said. “It puts me at risk financially, and ultimately puts Annie at risk” (Burge 2002b).

“We have a college fund set aside for Paige [their daughter],” said Chalmers, who earns about \$60,000 a year, about the same as Linnell’s pay as a nurse. “I’d like to see that \$3,600 [paid for health insurance] going towards that fund. Part of the reason we participated in the lawsuit was securing her future” (Associated Press 2003).

These statements both refer to the first form of injustice framing. Note how they both deal with finances and children. At the same time these couples are producing a link between potential financial insecurity and their inability to marry, they are also reinforcing the “family values” associated with marriage, and with their own lives. These couples are presented as responsible and concerned parents who are being hampered in their efforts to provide for their children by their inability to marry. I provide a more

detailed discussion of economic aspects of these representations in the next chapter. However, that discussion deals more with the relatively privileged status occupied by the couples who are represented. Even if many of these couples are shown doing (relatively) well economically, their families remain vulnerable because the state does not recognize their economic interdependence. Any support they might provide for each other, or for their children, is irrelevant to the state because they cannot obtain a marriage license.

Within the reports of injustice provided by the couples, economic issues were mentioned less than problems in health care settings.

“If one of us ends up in the hospital, we’d be strangers to each other,” [Michael] Horgan said. “They’d have to contact one of our next-of-kin because we’re not next of kin” (Burge 2003b).

For Horgan (and his partner, Ed Balmelli), the trouble involves *potential* problems. Next-of-kin relationships allow people to make decisions for each other and to gain access to hospital rooms in which their partners might be staying. Marriage creates a legal kinship relationship between spouses. We saw a similar statement above from Gloria Bailey and Linda Davies. Even if discrimination is not encountered, the potential of it is shown creating uncertainty and stress in these couples’ lives. We do see, however, tales that move such discrimination from the potential to the actual.

Several of the couples told stories of being denied access to their partners when they were hospitalized.

Hillary Goodridge, 46, of Boston, had to say she was the sister of her partner, Julie Goodridge, 45, to see Julie when she was rushed to the neonatal intensive care unit after giving birth to their daughter, Annie.

David Wilson, 58, was not able to say he was the brother of his partner, Robert Compton, 53, because Mr. Wilson is black and Mr. Compton, who has been hospitalized five times in the last five years, is white.

"We never have to worry about going to the hospital and negotiating our way through hospital teams because now we have the opportunity to

protect ourselves through marriage," said Mr. Wilson, smiling at Mr. Compton (Belluck 2003).

Compton recalled an emergency trip he took to the hospital with kidney stones. Wilson had to argue strongly with the doctors and nurses to be allowed at his partner's bedside.

"If David had been a woman, they would have brought him in right away," Compton said. "It is those types of things that married people should realize are important to us, too." (Bewley 2003.)

The potential problems due to the lack of "next of kin" recognition that worried Horgan and Balmelli were realized when the Goodridges and Wilson and Compton experienced problems under traumatic circumstances. Hospital staff actually refused to recognize the partners as next-of-kin and to let them see each other. Marriage is presented as protection from future problems.

Additionally, these tales report experiences of hardship under already difficult circumstances. I know of very few people who *enjoy* going to the hospital. It is a stressful experience. Surgeries are risky, no matter how routine, and the additional problems that these couples faced, the trauma of not being able to have family members visit them, adds to the stress involved in facing potentially life-and-death situations. These tales can heighten the sense of injustice faced by these couples. The inability to contribute an extra \$3,600 to a college fund produces potential problems for Linnell and Chalmers, and their daughter. However, it doesn't carry the same kind of "punch" as a story of being denied access to your life-partner and/or newborn infant during moments of crisis. The second is more dramatic, and produces a more visceral, emotional reaction.

Recall the problems Michael Horgan noted as potentially occurring in a hospital setting because of the lack of a next-of-kin status. Linda Davies and Gloria Bailey were

able to avoid such hardships by taking extra time and labor to head off problems before they happened. The ability to avoid such problems without marriage, even though it takes extra work, might weaken the argument that the troubles they face flow from their inability to marry.

Davies recently had a double-hip replacement, and the couple spent many hours looking for a health care facility that would allow Bailey to stay with her during her hospitalization.

"If we hadn't done that legwork, we could have been excluded from each other because we don't have any next-of-kin privileges," Bailey says. "Linda was more worried about whether I was able to be with her than she was about the surgery" (Block 2004).

Bailey and Davies were able to stay with each other in the hospital. This segment is part of an article discussing different types of risk that aging same-sex couples face. However, marriage is not necessarily the same fix-all it is in some of the other excerpts. Indeed, Bailey's statement is immediately followed by a statement from an anti-gay activist Ron Crews saying that couples should receive protections, just not the term, "marriage."

The relationship between those quotes leads me to one last issue with regard to couple statements and framing. In their statements, these couples are trying to frame issues, to make or break specific conceptual relationships, and invoke their preferred definition of the situation. News organizations also frame the stories they tell. These couples' framing efforts are filtered through a media frame (Gitlin 1980). Reporters and editors, as they write and re-write news stories, select which quotes to use, which actors to include, and how to describe and organize the action. They are producing framed stories. Because the couples' quotes are filtered through this news frame, it is difficult to draw any hard conclusions about the predominance of stories about troubles in medical

settings over statements about financial hardship. It could be that couples made these statements more often. Financial issues do figure prominently in the overall reporting. However, it might also be that news reporters thought that these more dramatic events made for “better” stories, and decided to include more of those types of events.

Whichever the case, the couples are exclusively presented in such ways that these troubles are attributable to the non-recognition of their relationships. In particular, their efforts to link these troubles to their inability to marry make it through these filters.

Marriage equality activists are attempting to make a case for change to various public audiences. One way they do so is by selecting couples whose family lives uphold the values associated with marriage and who suffer some hardship because of their inability to enter that relationship. The statements they make, filtered as they are through the news media, emphasize the similarity of their relationships to marriage. When discussing the hardships they face, they are universally presented as attributing those troubles to their inability to marry. Financial insecurity and problems in health care settings are the dominant forms of injustice framing occurring in these couples’ statements.

Public Officials as the Public Face

Recall how relatively rare specific same-sex couples were in the total number of articles about same-sex marriage that were published in the Boston papers. I attributed this to the routine practices of news gathering that tend to focus on social institutions of power and those occupying positions within them. This also helps us to understand the presence and importance of another set of couples, or at least members of them. In this

section I turn my attention to public officials who are members of same-sex couples. While the public face couples selected by movement actors were far more prominent, these people brought tales of gay life into social locations from which they might otherwise have been absent.

As I noted above, fewer than 15% of the articles dealing with same-sex marriage published in the two Boston daily newspapers during the period under study contained actual same-sex couples or members of them. The number of would have been somewhat lower were it not for lesbian and gay members of the Massachusetts legislature and several other public officials. The twenty-four representations of them comprise about nine percent of the total number of *Boston* newspaper representations. I argue, however, that for these couples, the number of representations is less important than where and when they occurred.

At the opening of Chapter One, I discussed the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention of 2004. Legislators met on four days to debate and vote on several amendments that would have rescinded the right of same-sex couples to marry. News reporting of the convention itself focused on legislators and debate in the House chamber. Other stories focused back-room dealing among state actors, widespread massive social mobilization, and protests that accompanied the convention. The standoff between various factions of the legislature, behind-the-scenes maneuvering between Governor Romney and other opponents of marriage equality, furious lobbying of legislators by different groups, and floor debates filled the papers. The presence of Senator Jarrett Barrios (D-Cambridge) and Representative Elizabeth Malia (D-Jamaica Plain) in the General Court provided an opportunity for these members of same-sex couples to provide

stories of lesbian and gay life in a setting in which it might otherwise not have been heard. They were able to introduce their own life stories into legislative debate, and into media coverage of it. They were also able to reinforce the preferred framing of the marriage equality movement.

Senator Jarrett T. Barrios, who is openly gay and recently adopted two boys with his partner, told a story about taking one of his sons to the hospital with a fever, only to have to argue over his paternity rights with a nurse.

"I thought, as many new parents think, that he could die on my watch, as I was fighting with a nurse over whether I was his parent or not," said Barrios, a Cambridge Democrat. "There are real harms which are incurred by this" (Klein 2004).

Barrios is telling a tale of the troubles facing his family because of a hospital's refusal to recognize them as a family. This is similar to the injustice framing engaged in by our public face couples. The hospital only had Barrios' partner listed as parent. Again, the trauma of discrimination in these moments of crisis heightens the impact of the injustice framing activity. Barrios is telling a tale from his life, and doing so in a very emotional way. His selection of that story to tell, and the news media's decision to report on his telling of it, brings this "real-life" example of these harms into stories about the legislative session. Barrios was able to humanize the abstract issues under debate in the legislature. Had he not been there, legislators may not have heard about the lived consequences that accompany the non-recognition of lesbian and gay families. Just as importantly, perhaps more so, readers of the *Boston Globe* would not have read such a story.

I was at the Statehouse that day, sitting in the Great Hall and watching the debate on closed-circuit television with both supporters and opponents of granting same-sex couples access to marriage. (It was a tense room.) Barrios wept as he told this tale. Many

people watching with me also cried as they watched it. He was humanizing the issue, showing how the lack of family recognition adversely affects people going about their everyday lives, or trying to get by in a crisis. This humanization of lesbians and gay men by and for legislators, and in news reporting, was made particularly clear on the second day of the Constitutional Convention. Republican Representative Shaun Kelly rose to speak about Liz Malia, who also spoke during the convention.

"This is for Liz."

That's how Rep. Shaun P. Kelly, a conservative Republican from the Berkshires, began a speech that silenced the House chamber yesterday morning.

Kelly was referring to a liberal colleague, Elizabeth A. Malia, a Jamaica Plain Democrat who is openly gay.

"In this chamber, Liz has every right and privilege," Kelly said.

"Enshrining in the constitution a notion that when she leaves this chamber she doesn't have a privilege that other people have cannot possibly jibe with what the constitution and democracy is all about."

"Is she eight-tenths of a citizen? Is she nine-tenths? Ninety-nine point nine hundredths?" said Kelly (R-Dalton). "Anything less demeans the spirit of Massachusetts, it seems to me."

Sen. Susan Tucker (D-Andover) began crying as Kelly spoke. Court officers brought her tissues and water while Sen. Therese Murray (D-Plymouth) came down from the rostrum to comfort her. Others in the chamber were equally moved, including some reporters in the press gallery who also cried (Meyers 2004).

Coverage of Kelly's talk shows a Heterosexual rising to the defense of a lesbian colleague. He is shown defending her lesbian love and life, and using the preferred framing of marriage equality activists. Kelly and other members of the legislature were responding to Liz Malia as a colleague, and as a personal friend. Recall from above how Rich Linnell and Gary Chalmers were represented as former neighbor's of the Acting Governor. They worried that in not getting to know Jane Swift better they hadn't made

the human connection that might have moved her to support recognizing their relationship. That article provides an interesting counterpoint to this coverage of the friendship between Kelly and Malia.

Kelly's speech was an *extremely* emotional moment during a Constitutional Convention filled with emotional moments. The *Herald* isn't over-reporting the intensity of the moment, at least as I recall it. Perhaps it was the shock of seeing a Heterosexual Republican defending lesbian love(!) that made it stand out so. While writing this, one thing that occurred to me was that this was the first time I could recall hearing a Heterosexual public official, Republican or not, stand in a legislative session to *defend* lesbian love in such a forthright and personal manner. Often, straight supporters argue from the abstract position of defending equality. Here, Kelly just talked about a friend and colleague who loved her partner. He didn't defend the abstract principle of equality, but an actual loving relationship as the same as anyone else's in the Chamber.

"If you believe that the love that Liz has for her partner is less than the love you have for your spouse, I would suggest that you're wrong," said Kelly, a Dalton Republican. "You would never say you were superior to the gentlelady from Jamaica Plain. You wouldn't do it. You wouldn't say that to her face" (Klein 2004).

It is important to note that the presence of Barrios and Malia, and the effect that presence had on their colleagues, extends beyond the walls of the House chamber. Their stories were reported throughout the Commonwealth. In a setting in which abstract principles may have been easier to discuss, these two people were able to talk about their lives and connect the injustices they face to their inability to marry. Barrios told a tale of problems in the medical sector. Malia is reported talking about the economic insecurity flowing from the possibility she or her partner could lose their jointly-owned home if the other died. Reporting of these people's speeches, and about their impact on their

colleagues, increased the number of sympathetic representations of members of same-sex couples. These representations showed them incorporated within personal and professional relationships as respected co-workers.

These public officials who were shown as being members of same-sex couples were a relatively small part of the overall sample of couple representations, but the tales they told reinforced the framing activity being undertaken by other movement activists, including the public face couples. Both groups of couples told tales of hardship dealing with discrimination in health care or (potential) financial insecurity. Both groups were also represented as upholding the normative values associated with marriage like love, longevity, and responsibility. They were able not only to reinforce these messages but also to introduce them into by telling tales in different arenas of social conflict. Reporting of these sites disseminated those stories to wider publics. Legislative debate would have progressed differently had Barrios and Malia not been present. Coverage of that debate would also have been different. In short, the more lesbian and gay people occupying public office, the greater their ability to shape public discourse. This isn't only due to their (perhaps increased) likelihood of introducing and voting for pro-gay and lesbian legislation. It is also due to their ability to introduce stories of lesbian and gay life into these settings, and into news coverage of them. More stories of lesbian and gay life are reported when gay and lesbian people occupy these locations.

Before I move to the next chapter, and a discussion of how the broader set of couples are represented as economic actors, I want to connect the discussion in this chapter to the cycle of incorporation I introduced in the previous one. Specific same-sex couples are relatively rare in the overall coverage of the issue same-sex marriage. Among

those who are shown, couples selected by movement organizations are very prominent. In particular, the seven couples who sued the state figure largely in coverage. From this chapter, recall the actions GLAD lawyer Mary Bonauto took in the process of selecting these couples and connect those practices to the growth and development of a movement legal sector I discussed in the previous chapter. The institutionalization of the movement legal sector comprised of professionally-staffed organizations opened up more spaces for lesbians and gay men to live as lesbians and gay men.

In particular, GLAD has played a significant role in incorporating gay men and lesbians into Massachusetts law as parents. That work made possible the formation of several of the families involved in the *Goodridge* lawsuit. The incorporation of lesbians and gay men in other sectors of life has allowed them to contribute more resources to these movement organizations, which have been institutionalized within the routine channels of legal and political activity in Massachusetts. When reporters need a statement, GLAD is an *organization* to which they turned. The growth and institutionalization of gay and lesbian community life facilitates and is facilitated by the growth and institutionalization of a movement legal sector. The stories we read are the result of those processes. They simultaneously advance it.

Chapter 4 The Productive Pair as Consuming Couple

Marriage is a material relationship. Among the reasons same-sex couples are pursuing access to marriage are the financial and economic benefits that flow through the relationship. Such things as the potential loss of a home because of inheritance tax policies that favor married couples over other relationships or the lack of access to family health care packages are hardships that affect these couples' material lives. The lack of family recognition creates economic difficulties and material disadvantages.

Opponents of lesbian and gay integration and equality often argue that anti-discrimination policies are not necessary, nor are civil rights claims legitimate, because lesbians and gay men occupy a privileged position in society. That, they claim, makes the potential protections provided by such policies unwarranted. However, when we look at the actual status of lesbians and gay men in society instead of accepting stereotypes, we find that lesbians and gay men are *not* the privileged group they are so often purported to be and that the picture is far more complicated. Indeed, non-Heterosexual identities often carry with them economic penalties.

The United States Census collected data same-sex couples for the first time in 2000. This data, and results from other academic studies (Badgett 1998, 2003, 2007a), demonstrate some of the differences between the lives lesbian and gay people live and these stereotypes of privilege. When we compare, for example, individuals in same-sex relationships with their married counterparts some interesting trends come forward. Men in same-sex relationships tend to make less money than those in Heterosexual marriages, while women in same-sex relationships tend to make more than those in different-sex marriages. It may seem, initially, like lesbians have an advantage over Heterosexual

women. To this fact about lesbian income, I would add these: same-sex couples are less likely to be supported by a single income than are different-sex marriages, and there tends to be less income inequality in same-sex couples than in married couples (Romero, et. al. 2007; Romero, et. al. 2008). Although researchers at UCLA's Williams Institute, which has been collecting and analyzing this Census data, don't break these last two trends by gender, it would make sense that they are related to the somewhat higher wages of women in same-sex couples. Lesbians and Heterosexual women both tend to make less money than men, either gay or straight. Women in different-sex marriages are more likely than unmarried women to be engaged in part-time work or full-time unpaid domestic labor (England 2005), and these census data about same-sex couples do show higher levels of labor market participation. The "mommy track" may contribute to this by keeping many women at home at least for part of their careers. The discrepancy we see between Heterosexually married women and their counterparts in same-sex couples would seem to be due, at least in part, to lesbians not having access to the higher incomes provided by having a male partner in the house.

If we look at household incomes, the data become even more complex. Again, because these data aren't separated out by gender, there are problems with any conclusions we might draw. However, on a national level, same-sex couples as a whole tend to make more than married couples, while same-sex couples raising children tend to be doing so with lower incomes than married couples. Again, this could flow from gender differences, since lesbian couples are more likely than gay male couples to be raising children. In Massachusetts, however, this household income difference between

families with children tends to disappear, with same-sex couples having about the same incomes as those in different-sex marriages.

Lesbian and gay life, then, is not so economically beneficial as people often make it out to be. Gay men in relationships suffer a wage penalty, and lesbians though they do not seem to suffer a wage penalty for their sexual orientation, still tend to experience one due to their gender. It might be expected that gay male couples would have higher household incomes than different-sex married couples despite their lower individual incomes. These lower individual incomes are still higher than the average woman's income, so combining such incomes could lead to a situation in which they could have a higher household income than a dual-income married different-sex couple. Similarly, if lesbians in couples tend to do better than their heterosexual counterparts, two lesbian incomes, with relatively lower levels of inequality, might be somewhat equivalent to a different-sex couple with a higher level of inequality between the partners. This is somewhat speculative, since these data are not broken down by gender. Additionally, in the comparisons between couples that are made, non-married different-sex couples are not included, which becomes a much more important issue now that same-sex couples can marry. However, this information does undercut much of the "gay people are rich and don't need protections" stereotypes.

Aside from the varying forms of economic difference between same-sex and different-sex married couples, the unavailability of marriage results in additional costs for same-sex couples. For example, domestic partner benefits allow the same-sex partner—and in some places, different-sex unmarried partners—of an employee to have access to employer-provided health insurance. However, these benefits are paid for in after-tax

income rather than pre-tax income, which is the case for married partners (Badgett 2007b). This leads to a situation in which the members of same-sex couples end up with a higher taxable income, and a higher tax bill, even if they had the same annual income as a married Heterosexual co-worker. These types of programs, even when providing economic stability, impose higher costs on lesbian and gay families. One form of the injustice framing activity discussed in the previous chapter highlighted these economic costs, particularly focusing on the insecurity that can arise from those costs.

Why, then, if being lesbian or gay carries with it certain economic penalties, does the stereotype of gay and lesbian wealth persist? Part of it is because of “logic” and the argument that, because they have no children, gay men and lesbians have higher disposable incomes. This may be true for many childless households, and the Census data do indicate somewhat higher total household incomes for same-sex couples than for different-sex married couples. However, on a national level, same-sex couples are raising children with fewer economic resources than are married couples with children, even if those two groups are relatively equal in Massachusetts. In other words, the “logic” argument does *not* hold when it comes to comparing couples with children. Indeed, it’s not an argument based on any data, but on a flawed “common sense.”

There are two other reasons, I think, that such stereotypes persist, both more grounded in some kind of actual data. The first is a result of research performed and publicized by lesbian and gay marketing professionals. For example, Alexandra Chasin (2000: 29-40) and Urvashi Vaid (1995: 250-54) both discuss the case of Overlooked Opinions, a marketing firm who, in the early 1990s, developed data based on a sample drawn from catalog and magazine mailing lists and audiences at gay and lesbian events

(see also Badgett 2007a). This data, which marketers flogged widely, indicated that gay men and lesbians as a whole had significantly higher incomes than their counterparts at both the individual and household levels and was used to convince advertisers that there was a potent consumer market just waiting to be tapped. It was also seized upon by anti-gay activists to make the case that Homosexuals didn't need protection from discrimination because they weren't suffering any economic hardships. Instead, such claims of discrimination were presented as specious because gay men and lesbians were actually better off than the rest of the population. The fact that these data were drawn from *segments* of gay and lesbian America—and these were segments that were relatively privileged—was erased. Instead, these income figures were universalized to be true of lesbians and gay men more generally. The process is something like saying that subscribers to *Martha Stewart Living* and *Forbes Magazine* and those who go see Shakespeare in the Park are representative of the nation as a whole.

A third reason for the persistence of these economic stereotypes, and the central theme of this chapter, is that the lesbians and gay men we see presented in the media tend to be relatively privileged. It is fairly easy to think of gay men and lesbians as wealthy professionals and consumers if those are the only, or even predominant, ways you experience such people. Perhaps nothing demonstrates this quite so well as the highly popular BravoTV show, *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*. This festival of product placement, airing from 2003-2007, had the “Fab Five,” a group of lifestyle and consumption “experts,” weekly invade the home of a hapless Heterosexual in order to train him in how to cook gourmet meals, tastefully decorate his home, engage in “cultural activities,” and clothe and groom himself. More importantly, they show him, and the

audience, where he can shop in order to get the commodities necessary for these newly learned skills. Through proper training in lifestyle consumption, he is “made better.” His pedagogues are presented as consumers *par excellence*, and as taste trendsetters, which is also presented as flowing from their status as gay men (Sender 2006; Cossman 2007: 185-91).

Media representations of lesbians and gay men as relatively privileged professionals and consumers are far more common than just this one reality program. They extend into scripted television and film (See Becker 2006; Seidman 2002; Walters 2003; Cossman 2007; Duggan 2008). The Bravo network itself has become a site of lifestyle television, with gay men (in particular) figuring among its taste-making elite on shows dealing with fashion (“Project Runway”) and interior design (“Top Design”), with gay men and lesbians also figuring as consistent contestants in the kitchen (“Top Chef”). While popular cultural producers and marketers may be responsible for fostering certain misrepresentations of lesbians and gay men as more broadly privileged, so to are the news media. They often foster these stereotypical ideas by accepting and circulating stories about, for example, the power and desirability of gay and lesbian markets. Additionally, because of news routines that lead them to report on the more rich and powerful people in society more generally, which I discussed in the previous chapter, the gay men and lesbians they report upon might be expected to come from those same groups of elite social sectors.

Movement actors also bear some of the responsibility for the reproduction of these stereotypes of greater wealth. As I discussed in the previous chapter, the couples selected by movement actors to represent the issue are quite prominent in the overall

picture of same-sex couples that we see during the Massachusetts campaign. The plaintiff couples, at least as they are shown in these news representations, tend to occupy more privileged class locations than either the general public or other Bay State lesbians and gay men.

In this chapter, I turn to the economic aspects of the news representations of same-sex couples produced during the Massachusetts campaign for equal marriage rights. I begin with work life. The couples we see tend to be professionals. In a pattern that holds throughout the representations here, the more sentences in an article that are devoted to any given couple, or one of its members, the higher up the economic ladder they tend to exist. So, while professionals and managers tend to dominate, and they tend to be successful

Next I turn to issues of income and wealth. This is where these issues of privilege come to the fore. And again, an increased amount of coverage in any given article tends to involve couples with higher levels of wealth and income. The concerns with regard to financial hardship that were part of the injustice framing I discussed in the previous chapter tend to be the concerns of people with more economic resources. Although saving for a child's education or worrying about a partner being able to inherit a house or pension should their partner die are concerns that are not limited to the wealthy, those couples who we see expressing such concerns tend to be those who are working with more economic resources than the general population.

Finally, I look at these couples as consumers. In this section, I discuss how the successful entrepreneurship exhibited by many of the professional couples is related to gay and lesbian identity-based consumption. This consumption is presented as a site of

integration, a set of practices by which lesbians and gay men are incorporated into American life, and through which they are able to contribute to society.

The Professional Pair

The couples presented in newspaper reporting during the Massachusetts campaign tend to be from the professional classes. Within the 377 represented couples, careers were listed for 169 individuals, 24 of whom were the public officials I discussed in the previous chapter. Of the remaining 145 individuals, lawyers, small business people, and human service professionals all had more than twenty individuals. About half of the total were drawn from these fields. In addition, individuals working in education were mentioned fourteen times, and medicine thirteen times (there were also nine students included). Scattered among these were business executives, financial planners, and computer programmers. Very rarely do we see work in the trades (three mentions), and when something like a retail workplace is cited, it is the manager or owner we meet, not the cashier or stock-person. There were also some descriptions like “who works in the medical field” (Washington 2003) that made determining a specific job difficult to determine. Overall, though, the people we see, as a group, tend to be employed in professional and managerial fields.

It isn't only the prominence of the professions in the total number of representations of work life that produces a particular image of lesbians and gay men. It is also in the type of coverage their work lives receive. The number of sentences in an article that are devoted to a couple (or its members) also plays a very important role here. The more sentences in a given article that are about or contain a couple, or member of

one, the more likely economic information is to be included. This leads me to an important point about these representations of same-sex couples as economic actors: the couples about whom more information is given tend to occupy higher positions on scales related to career, income, wealth, and consumption. The couples with more “space” devoted to them tend to be the more privileged couples.

"I'm mostly excited, but I'm also bewildered because there's a lot of confusion now," said Robyn Ochs, 45, who works in technology at Harvard, and will marry her partner, Peg Preble, 46, an electrician. "What does this mean, having a relationship that isn't recognized at the federal level but is at the state level? What benefits won't we get? How does this play out? How do we do our taxes next year? In the long run, do we incur more responsibilities than we get benefits because of the lack of federal protection?" (Belluck 2004)

This excerpt, which includes one of the very rare descriptions of employment in the trades, demonstrates how much of the work information about these couples is presented in these news articles. We don't often receive detailed information about work life. Their jobs are simply listed, and such presentations as this tend to dominate with regard to work life. Instead, careers are listed as providing some kind of information about these couples. This single quote also highlights some of the economic concerns with regard to marriage that same-sex couples deal with. It's almost exclusively about Ochs and Preble as economic actors; elated and confused, maybe, but still economic actors.

This article is about the events at Cambridge City Hall on the night of May 17, 2004. Ochs and Preble are among those couples who showed up to get married that night³⁴. A total of eight couples appear in this 61-sentence article. Ochs and Preble have

³⁴ It isn't noted in the article, but Ochs is also a prominent bisexual scholar activist <<http://www.robynochs.com>>. She might be included among the self-selected public face

one unit devoted to them, while Susan Shepherd and Marcia Hams, the couple selected by local activists to be first in line that evening received seven sentences. All of the other couples had between one and four sentences devoted to them. This was a fairly standard form of representation. Most of the articles we see in this reporting are not about specific couples. Recall from the previous chapter how I discussed news routines. The several couples in this article were there because of their presence at an event. Other events, like a public educational forum about syphilis testing or a wedding expo or a public rally also figured in this reporting and contained multiple couples who each occupied just a few sentences of the whole article.

In articles that focus on fewer numbers of couples, and provide more details about them, the work lives of their members become more prominent. This holds even when the article itself is not centered on their work. This is also true for other areas of economic activity. Beyond the sheer predominance of the professions within the total number of representations, those couples whose lives tend to receive more depth of coverage also tend to be those whose lives might be said to occupy higher rungs on the socio-economic ladder.

When friends asked Sharon Rich whether she and her partner planned to marry when Massachusetts allowed them to, Rich said, “I have to talk to my lawyer first.”

“One thing I do know is that if we are married, we’ll save more than \$500 a month in health insurance costs, so I’ll probably discuss this with my lawyer soon,” she said.

That Rich is taking a pragmatic and financial approach is hardly a surprise. She Runs Womoney in Belmont and is routinely included on any list of the nation’s top financial advisers (Jaffe 2004).

couples I discussed in the previous chapter. Interestingly, her role as a prominent queer activist went unnoted in this article, and in articles in the *Newark Star-Ledger* in which she also appeared (Crary 2004)

Rich is not the primary focus of this article, and she only shows up twice more in the article, both times to provide a one-line evaluative statement³⁵ regarding the financial differences between marriage and other legal arrangements. She receives six sentences in a 29-sentence story. Even though the article isn't about her relationship, and her partner only sort of shows up in those first two lines, she figures prominently because of her career. This article is about the potential financial benefits and costs that would flow to same-sex couples were they to marry. Rich is relevant as a financial expert *and* as woman in a same-sex relationship. We have here “[one] of the nation’s top financial advisors” who also happens to be a member of a same-sex couple³⁶. That the *Globe*’s reporter would search out a financial expert to talk about the financial aspects of marriage isn't perhaps all that surprising. Indeed, one of the few differences that appeared between coverage in the *Globe* and in the *Herald* is that the former paper published more articles exploring a variety of issues surrounding same-sex marriage. The financial aspects, couples getting the requisite syphilis testing at the Fenway Community Health Center, even an article talking about not rushing into marriage, but waiting to make sure both partners are ready, all appeared in the *Globe*. So, as a part of this greater amount of space devoted to the issue in Boston’s broadsheet than in its tabloid, it makes sense that financial experts—or medical doctors, or gay and lesbian couples’ therapists—would be sought out for comment. This, again, has the effect of including greater numbers of these

³⁵ As Schokkenbroek (2007) notes, evaluative statements in news stories often serve the task of providing an opinion within the story where a reporter is—due to objectivity norms—unable to state something as their own opinion. It may be a fact that the onset of marriage will produce new financial issues for same-sex couples, but the reporter has to find someone else, preferably an expert on the issue, to make that claim.

³⁶ It might be worth recalling, here, my note at the beginning of this chapter about news routines focusing on the rich and powerful, thus capturing rich and powerful lesbians and gay men in its network of sources and subjects.

different professionals, who seem to be the new disciplinary experts molding institutional lesbian and gay life, in these news representations. Exploration of the issues surrounding same-sex marriage had the effect of increasing the number of couples appearing in the media. It also had the effect of increasing the representations of relatively privileged lesbians and gay men.

The inclusion of Rich is something of a middle-range representation in terms of amount of space devoted to a member of a couple. There is a more detailed description of her work life than there were with the Ochs/Preble couple noted above. There were fewer lines devoted to Rich than several others. For example, a 45-sentence profile of plaintiff Julie Goodridge devotes a full 32 sentences to her. This profile is about her work life as a corporate activist working on gay and lesbian issues³⁷. So, it contains more than the usual amount of information about work and economic life. However, it also illustrates what I have been discussing: the greater the amount of information presented about a couples' economic life, or the economic life of someone identified as living within a same-sex couple, the higher up on the socio-economic scale they are likely to be.

Goodridge manages about \$75 million for wealthy clients with a social conscience. Under her leadership, the investment advisory firm NorthStar Asset Management has introduced a host of shareholder resolutions on issues ranging from predatory lending to executive pay, in addition to protecting gays against discrimination (Talcott 2004a).

Again, note her professional status. She is an investment advisor, and, it appears, a successful one. She is managing a sizeable pool of money, and is working to change how the corporate world operates. Beyond the money, though, we see other indicators of

³⁷ This is actually the second article the *Globe* published with regard to Goodridge's role as an investment manager. The first, published in early 2001 (Kong'ay), included her in a profile of several investment managers who were involved in attempting to influence corporate policy. However, in that first article, published a couple weeks after the marriage lawsuit was filed, made no mention of her role in the lawsuit.

how she operates within the higher socio-economic strata of society.

Tootsie Roll, one of her first gay-protection resolutions, was easy. The company already provided domestic partner benefits for its employees, but it lacked formal nondiscrimination wording in its employment codes.

On New Year's Eve that year, Goodridge said, she received a call from Ellen Gordon, president of Tootsie Roll.

"She said, 'What can we do to keep this off the proxy ballot?' " Goodridge said. "After about 15 minutes, she agreed to change the company policy" (Talcott 2004a).

She receives a phone call from the president of the Tootsie Roll Corporation...on New Years Eve. Perhaps this shouldn't be surprising for someone whose work life is spent with corporate managers who are able to contact her on a holiday. It would seem that the president of Tootsie Roll has Goodridge's private phone number, and feels comfortable calling it at any time to discuss work-related issues. Now, I may be reading something into this about New Year's Eve's holiday status and what is often a slower work day for many of us. However, Goodridge is moving within circles that very few of us will ever encounter. A similar thread is carried throughout the article, with friends—who also occupy similar upper-level professional positions—commenting about her personality and work. She is successful, these quotes indicate, because of her drive and determination, because of a work effort that has led her to this economically privileged position.

Again, the point here is not that all of the couples we see are presented as occupying these kinds of upper-level professional positions. Most of the people we see don't travel in such rarified settings. This is especially true at events where people who are more likely to simply "show up" and get covered. The point I am making here, and this returns us to my discussion from the beginning of the chapter, is that the more

detailed reportage about the couples that we are presented with, the more likely we are to be presented with someone from the upper classes. In this section, I have focused on how that is related to work life. In the following sections I turn to issues of income, wealth, property, and consumption. The same trend with regard to depth of coverage and privilege obtains. Reporting about same-sex couples, including those couples selected by the movement, presents an image of privilege that contributes to the reproduction of inaccurate stereotypes of lesbian and gay life.

Income and Wealth

It is not solely representations of professional life that places these couples, and the members of them, on higher rungs of the economic ladder. We can also see it in the reporting of financial issues. Much of the reporting on these couples and their relationship to marriage involves the material benefits and protections of marriage. Recall that this was one of the two primary areas of injustice framing offered by the public face couples. An article, which I introduced in the previous chapter, about the financial penalties faced by same-sex couples because of their inability to marry provides an example of this.

Rich Linnell and Gary Chalmers say their battle for the right to marry is about fairness and money—and their daughter’s future.

Linnell and Chalmers say their inability to marry takes a financial toll, even on 11-year old Paige. For example, there’s the extra \$3,600 Linnell pays each year because he cannot piggyback, as a spouse could, on the health insurance policy Chalmers gets as a teacher.

“We have a college fund set aside for Paige,” said Chalmers, who earns about \$60,00 a year, about the same as Linnell’s pay as a nurse. “I’d like to see that \$3,600 going toward that fund. Part of the reason we

participated in the lawsuit was securing her future” (Associated Press 2003).

Again, we have a statement about the hardships faced by same-sex couples because of their inability to marry. And, we have a life practice that links this couple to many others, saving for a child’s education. These are responsible parents trying to do what is best for their child, but who are hindered in their efforts because they cannot marry. However, they are also coming from a position of relative class privilege.

A household income of approximately \$120,000 in 2003 would have placed this couple well within about the top 15% of households in the United States that year (United States Census Bureau 2004). If we return to the census data I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter—and that data is from the 2000 Census, so the three-year difference between that data and the information presented here *might* have an impact on these numbers—the individual incomes of \$60,000 place each of these men at near parity with regard to their counterparts in different-sex marriages, who earned an average \$60,739. They did better than other men in same-sex couples, whose average income was \$53,133. Their household income, though, located them well above average Bay State families who, according to the 2000 Census, had a median income of \$70,900 and a mean income of \$89,416. Same-sex couples in Massachusetts were recorded as having a median income of \$74,600 and a mean of \$95,735. Married couples with children had a mean household income of \$94,777, but the other mean and median figures for same-sex couples with children and married couples with children tended to be within \$100 of each other. In other words, even though Linnell and Chalmers were experiencing some difficulties saving as much as they would have liked for their daughter’s college, the

family income from which they were drawing those savings was higher than most other people in the Commonwealth, and the country (Romero, et. al. 2007; Romero, at. Al. 2008)³⁸.

Issues surrounding the financial aspects of life are fairly common in the overall set of representations. In the previous chapter I discussed the prominence of these issues in the framing activity of movement actors. In addition to Linnell and Chalmers, the examples above also showed Robyn Ochs musing about potential financial issues regarding taxation and insurance that might change because of her marriage, and because of the discrepancy between state and federal policy. Sharon Rich was introduced in an article discussing many of these financial issues in more detail. In the previous chapter, we saw the Goodridges musing about the financial risks facing their family should the income from Julie's financial advising work, discussed in this chapter, disappear. We will, throughout the next several chapters, encounter several other couples and articles discussing such issues. Perhaps this shouldn't be surprising. Marriage is, after all, a material relationship and these representations were all produced in the context of marriage politics.

I move now from income to wealth and property. A concern that routinely arises among couples discussing problems flowing from their ineligibility for marriage is the ability to transfer property from one partner to another, usually in case of death. One of the advantages of marriages is that spouses are able to transfer property to each other without it being taxed. Non-marital partners, be they same-sex or different-sex, cannot do this. Legal kinship, established through "blood" or marriage, is used to determine

³⁸ Both mean and median income, across the different family-status categories, tend to be higher in Massachusetts than they are nationally.

property relationships. The lack of economic security due to the privileging of marital relationships over all others, and the inability of same-sex couple to access that privilege, was expressed clearly in debate during the Constitutional Convention.

As the vote loomed around 9 p.m., Rep. Elizabeth A. Malia, the only openly gay House member, took the floor for the first time in the two-day debate to plead with her colleagues to let her and Rita, her partner of 30 years, finally get married.

“If I were to die, my partner of 30 years might lose her home, our home, that we’ve worked for and paid for,” Malia (D-Cambridge [sic]) said. “We’re here to ask you to please understand that the institution of marriage is not and has never been a rigid, inflexible institution” (Beardsley 2004b).

The material privileging of marriage results in non-married families, even those that function like marriages, being placed at greater economic risk. However, the couples we tend to see tend to be living with more material resources to begin with. A return to the census data provides evidence of this. Malia and her partner are not exceptional in owning a house. A majority of Massachusetts residents do so. However, this is an area where the inequality between married couples and same-sex couples is erased, since same-sex couples are less likely than their married counterparts to own their home. About 60% of same-sex couples own their home, while about 80% of married different-sex couples do (Romero, et. al. 2007). That’s not a particularly big deal when discussing these issues. After all, it’s not home ownership itself that establishes these same-sex couples as a more privileged group of people. The prominence of home ownership in these debates *could* lead to a reinforcement of stereotypes of privilege, but majorities of families in the Commonwealth own homes. What is important here, again, is the amount of information presented in the article. More information is provided about those people

living in higher class positions. This also holds when housing and property issues are involved.

When Joy Chertow and Katherine “Kitty” Cox bought a 1890s Victorian together a couple of years ago and formed a blended family with their children from past relationships, they planned to be married at home, and were the following August. They held a ceremony officiated by a rabbi on their wraparound porch, followed by a party in the living room....

...Last time, they were in the middle of remodeling the 5,000-square-foot home, which has inlaid wood floors, built-in benches, a breakfast nook, and an oak stairway, among other special features. This time, the home is like a piece of art.

“We restored a grande dame that needed loving care,” says Cox, 51, first cousin to actress Courtney Cox Arquette. Cox is a manager at the real estate offices of Partners Health Care. Managing the outsourcing of 700,000 square feet of real estate helped her stay, “undaunted by repairs,” explains her partner, Chertow, 48, a part-time art-teacher at Solomon Schechter Day School of Greater Boston and a painter primarily of Judaica (Pollack-Fusi 2004).

This excerpt, drawn from an article in the “Living” section of the *Globe*, is largely about these two women and their relationship to their house. There are several things I would like to note here. First, we have professional life. Kitty Cox is a real estate manager for a major business in the Boston metropolitan area, while her partner is an artist and teacher. Next, we have another line placing them in a more rarified social world, noting the Cox is closely related to a famous actress. Finally, though, we have the home. It’s a relatively large home. Even in a society in which the home size has been increasing steadily for several decades, Chertow and Cox’s house, built over a century earlier, is still more than twice the size of an average new house (United States Census Bureau 2001). In addition to providing the details we see in this excerpt, the article also talks about the various remodeling work they did on the house. It also notes that these two women have built an apartment in the basement, with independent access, for

Chertow's 19-year-old son. This is part of the tendency I have been discussing with regard to more detail in articles tending to be included about those occupying higher socio-economic positions.

We see similar phenomena in other representations in which property takes center stage.

"He left me penniless," said Venzer, 48, who has sued to have a judge divide the former couple's assets.

Venzer is sitting in the kitchen of the couple's 1905 stone-and-shingle mansion—the only room that's cool on a hot summer day. He says he can't afford to air condition the rest of the 23-room house, situated on seven acres at the end of an unmarked wooded lane....

...Barri, 56, has offered to pay Venzer monthly support until Barri turns 65. In exchange, he wants Venzer to sell the house and split the proceeds with him. Barri estimates the house is worth at least \$3 million....

..."I only tried to make him feel good about the fact that he was a man and he wasn't working," said Barri, who paid Venzer monthly support from the time they split up in 2000 until last December and is still paying Venzer's daughter's college tuition. "And he used to cook - but that stopped after four or five or six years."

Barri says the fight is really over the house, which he calls Venzer's "magnificent obsession."

"Call it anything you want," says Venzer, "but my heart and soul are in this house."

Behind the heavy gumwood door with the brass Barri/Venzer nameplate are signs and symbols of the couple's life together: family photos, European antiques, showy floral displays.

Venzer is especially proud of the kitchen, which took more than five months to renovate. Venzer spent weeks locating southern yellow pine to match the original 100-year-old woodwork.

"It is a singular house," agrees Barri. "Almost every room has a working fireplace. There is a hot tub, inside and outside, a pool, and tennis court.

"But, is it fair that he live in 80 percent of our assets for his whole life and I'm outside? Learning to live in a different place is daunting. But as people

have said to me, what kind of life is it to be so obsessed with a piece of real estate . . . even if it's a baron's house."(Estes 2002).

This article, and we'll encounter other parts of it in Chapter Six, is about a break-up. The couple here is significant because Joseph Barri is a prominent Boston lawyer and advocate for marriage rights for same-sex couples. This article notes that he has been in conflict with the *Globe* about the ability to have his commitment ceremony with a different man included in the "Wedding Announcements" section of the paper, which has been a common site of conflict between lesbians and gay men and the news media (Jensen 1996). This article is based on the premise that there is some kind of irony that Barri was using the fact that he and Venzer were not married to "stiff" him on a support settlement. I am less interested in that issue here than I am in the types of economic resources that are being contested. The conflict involves a \$3 million home with 23 rooms sitting on seven acres. That's even more expansive than Chertow and Cox's house. And, at three-million dollars, it's a fairly expensive house, even in the Boston real estate market.

Note also the level of detail given to the descriptions of these homes. We learn about wood inlays and fireplaces, about breakfast nooks and hot tubs, about wraparound porches and brass nameplates. While several couples, or their members, are shown in their homes, none of the descriptions of those couples' lives come anywhere close to the level of description included in these two articles. We also see other markers of economically privileged life. Just as Chertow and Cox built a basement apartment, Barri was paying for his ex-partner's daughter's tuition. Both couples were able to pay for extensive remodeling and refurbishing work. Again, it isn't just representations of home ownership and other aspects of economic life that establish an image of these couples as

relatively privileged. It is also the fact that we are given more information about those who have more.

Other than Jack Venzer, and his claims of pennilessness while still living in a 23-room manse on seven acres, we see almost no one suffering financial woes. There may be potential hardship, as Liz Malia discussed with the possibility of losing a jointly-owned home at death, or there may be financial penalties flowing from the inability to marry, as with Chalmers and Linnell working to save for their daughter's education. One couple is shown moving up their marriage date because one partner's employer, with the onset of marriage, is going to stop providing the domestic partner benefits they had been using (Greenberger and Blanton 2004) and another couple is shown holding off on getting married due to unnamed "financial issues" (Yonan 2004). However, even when financial concerns are discussed, they tend not to be those of people struggling to pay their rent or needing to apply for heating assistance.

Where is the working class?

I have been discussing the representations of same-sex couples as relatively privileged. There are very few working-class representations present. They do exist, however, and they flesh out the overall picture of lesbian and gay life in class-based ways that maintain the centrality, and desirability, of middle and upper class status. I would argue that the relationship between working class life and upper/middle class status in these representations is a work ethic and achievement ideology that allow lesbians and gay men to leave the working class. The professionals and business people we have met are successful in what they do. They have worked hard to achieve and obtain what they

have. Liz Malia links hard work to home ownership in her comments during the Constitutional Convention, and Julie Goodridge is shown working for corporate policy change on a holiday. These representations uphold the myth of American meritocracy: hard work leads to just rewards and upward mobility. This is also true for the, admittedly very few, representations of working class life we see.

The most prominent discussion of working class life in the articles analyzed here is a profile of Marcia Hams and Susan Shepherd and their son Peter Hams. Recall that these two women were the first couple in the Commonwealth to legally apply for a marriage license.

Sue and Marcia were machinists at General Electric in Lynn, both active in the labor union. One day in 1976, after work, Marcia was waiting for the bus. Sue pulled up and offered her a ride. A few months later, they moved in together. They bought a house in Lynn, and in a bold departure from the standards of the day, they decided to have a baby.

"This was before the baby boom among lesbians," says Sue, "and we didn't even know any lesbians who were having a kid. Sure, there were doubts, but we knew that we could be good parents and we believed that the love we'd have for our kid would overcome anything."

The '70s was not an easy time for two women who worked in a machine shop, were active in union politics, and were openly gay.

"If you were a woman in the shop," says Sue, "the men assumed you were a lesbian or a whore, and so, one of the girls said, well, she'd rather be a lesbian" (Thomas 2004).

I begin by noting the ways that Shepherd and Hams are presented as exceptional. Active participants in their labor union, openly lesbian on the shop floor in the 1970s, and engaging in what is gender-non-normative labor, these women are shown as groundbreakers. There's a way in which the article seems to be saying they were groundbreakers without attempting or intending to be. As open lesbians, lesbian mothers,

and trade-union organizers, they are shown stepping outside the roles seemingly available to women, particularly working class women.

Aside from these two women's work as machinists, there is really only one other mention of any of the couples, or their members, working in the trades. I highlighted the electrician Peg Preble earlier in this chapter. Aside from these three women, and the father of a high school student I discuss in Chapter Six, labor in industry or the trades simply does not show up in representations of the lives of same-sex couples. If not unmentionable, it is mostly unmentioned. And, even though Hams and Shepherd opened the article on the shop floor, that is not where they stayed. Near the article's end, we read that Hams is the deputy director of a health care advocacy group and Shepherd is a graduate student³⁹. They are an upwardly mobile couple.

The article also traces Peter Hams' "upward" movement from the working class community of Lynn to an elite prep school, and then a Division I university, in large part because of his hockey abilities. However, the hard work of himself and his mothers also plays a central role. In the description of his life at prep school, the world from which he came is set off as separate from that of his classmates from wealthier backgrounds.

By age 15, he'd become so adept at hockey that he was invited to leave Cambridge Rindge & Latin School for Tabor Academy, but the transition was difficult. He was dyslexic, and had to spend many more hours studying than his classmates did, and it was not lost upon him that most of his classmates came from homes with greater wealth, greater influence, and also a father as well as a mother.

³⁹ That organization is Health Care for All. Shepherd is a graduate student doing her PhD in Industrial Hygiene. While neither woman remains on the shop floor, their professional lives still maintain a focus on the conditions of working class life. My thanks to Charlotte Ryan for noting the relationship between these current professions and working class life. What is perhaps more important with regard to the representations we are provided, however, is that these ongoing concerns are absent. Instead, working class life is something that is relegated to the shop floor, and to the past.

Several times a week, Sue and Marcia drove 75 minutes to Marion to attend his hockey games or often to sit in his dorm and help with his homework. "If they had not done that," he says, "I wouldn't have made it."

But how would he break the news about his two mothers to his roommate, a wealthy kid from Newport R.I., who wore J. Crew shirts, khakis, and boat shoes and whose parents were doctors? (Thomas 2004)

I would like to briefly note, here, something that is not about economic relations.

Note the responsible parenting practices these two women are shown to have undertaken.

We also see it in the article about Chertow and Cox, who bought their Victorian manse because parenting books said it was better to move a blended family into a new home than into the home that one family was already in. We see it in Linnell and Chalmers saving for Paige's college fund. These couples are represented as engaging in responsible parenthood, which contributes to the broader issue of respectability I introduced earlier.

That responsible parenting is related to Peter's work ethic. He had to work through his dyslexia, putting in more time and effort than his classmates. This was on top of the hockey that brought him to Tabor Academy, and the kind of success he has realized in the athletic world is one that comes through hard work, not talent alone. Additionally, his mothers undertook extra labor to help him succeed. Even apart from attending his hockey games, they spent more than a little time driving to his school to help him with his homework. Peter's success is attributable to his and his mothers' hard work. Additionally, this work ethic has allowed them to overcome. Peter has been able to overcome, or at least work with, a learning disability. The family has been able to overcome discrimination they faced on the hockey rink due to Peter having two moms instead of even a single hockey dad. And, Marcia and Sue have overcome anti-lesbian social animus and become parents and international marriage equality celebrities. Hard

work is attached to this overcoming. A work ethic is reinforced as central to “getting ahead.”

Additionally, we can also see how the working class life of Peter Hams and his parents is set off as something apart from the privileged world from which his classmates come. The issue of his parents being lesbians is actually something that turns out to be not a very big deal for his roommate to handle. “So?” is the response he receives to his nervous declaration. Prior to telling his roommate, though, it is viewed as something that compounds the difference between the two teens. The issue is the different social worlds from which they come due to their class position. His roommate’s world, Newport, Rhode Island, home of mansions and yacht clubs, is a far cry from the shop floor and what he calls the “ham and egg people” of Lynn, Massachusetts.

The sort of upward mobility presented in this article, a move from the working class to the professional class, and the setting apart of working class life from middle class life can also be seen in a *San Francisco Chronicle* profile of Mary Bonauto, the lawyer who argued *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health* before the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court.

She grew up with three brothers in the faded working-class town of Newburgh, N.Y., the daughter of Italian and Russian immigrants in what she calls a “highly Catholic” family.

She describes Newburgh as “a very tough place” where race riots seemed to happen every fall, and “having a name ending in a vowel wasn’t the best thing either.” (Lochhead 2004b)

In both of these articles, working class life is presented as involving difficulty. The shop floor in Lynn is not an easy place for women. Newburgh, NY is a “tough” place infused with racial and ethnic tension and violence. These articles don’t represent working class communities as exclusively negative places to live. Peter Hams, especially,

is shown having a certain level of affection for the place he came from. Additionally, an article about two high school girls in Dover, NH, which I discuss in more depth in Chapter Six, presents that working class mill town as a family-oriented community that is receptive and welcoming. As I have noted, though, there are very few representations of lesbian and gay life in working class communities, or of working class lesbians and gay men. It is thus more difficult to draw very many conclusions about news representations of working class lesbian and gay life.

However, when we view these, relatively few, representations of working class life alongside the stories of middle and upper class life, we can see how they reinforce certain messages. First, there is an emphasis that they all share on hard work as central to success and “getting ahead.” This work ethic is related to various forms of upward mobility. Higher levels of income and wealth, professional success, and real estate are the result. As is class mobility. The working class, though rarely presented, seems to be a social space for lesbian and gay people, and the couples they form, to be *from*.

Couples occupying positions in the more privileged professional classes predominate in the representations of same-sex couples published during the Massachusetts campaign for access to marriage. This is true of both the number of representations and also their details. This emphasis reinforces the desirability of the middle and upper classes as social locations. The American meritocratic approach to class status, where position is earned through hard work and skill, is reflected in the reporting on same-sex couples. Part of the integration of these people into more mainstream discourses involves their incorporation within broader American narrative forms. The success story of “moving on up” is one of those forms. It isn’t a dominant

theme in these stories, because many of the characters are already “up.” They are hard-working, productive, and successful. This brings me to a major site of the integration of gay and lesbian identities and people within market relations, at least as it is reported in these newspapers. Gay and lesbian economic productivity is represented as flowing from their entrepreneurial and consumptive practices.

Entrepreneurs and Consumers

I have been discussing representations of same-sex couples as they are related to economic life, focusing particularly on work life, income and wealth, and the ways that those representations, along with the relatively brief glimpses of working class life we receive, tend to uphold the desirability and centrality of middle and upper class professional life. I now turn my attention to coverage of another area of economic activity, consumption. We have already seen some examples of this in discussions of the homes people own. However, its central importance for the discussion here is in how consumption is shown as a force for incorporating gay men and lesbians into the mainstream of society. Through their consumption, and through the entrepreneurial activity within identity-based markets, lesbians and gay men are shown as contributing to the economic health of the Commonwealth.

I begin by returning to reporting of the work life of our couples and the individuals in them. Twenty-five of the people profiled are business owners. At 17%, this makes these people one of the largest concentrations of any group. Of particular interest here are those who own businesses catering to lesbian and gay consumers. We have already encountered some of them above, like financial planner Sharon Rich. Her

business was similar to those I discuss now. She has established an identity-based business. In the case of her financial planning services, she is listed as particularly influential with regard to investing by and for women. In the discussion here, I turn to specifically lesbian and gay identity-based consumption and entrepreneurship.

Judy Dlugacz—president and founder of Olivia Cruises and Resorts, a California-based firm that has planned a 1,200-person Boston-to-Montreal cruise for lesbian couples in July—said she has been warning the 1,000 people who have already booked passage on the trip that Massachusetts laws could complicate wedding plans. Tickets cost \$999 to \$3,200, she said.

“We’re expecting those from Massachusetts to get married in Massachusetts, and the rest will probably do a large commitment ceremony, as we do with most trips,” Dlugacz said. She recently married her female partner in San Francisco, where the mayor has defied state laws prohibiting such unions (Lewis 2004).

First, note how this entrepreneurship is also related to the “moving on up” narrative of success I just mentioned. One of the ways that lesbians and gay men are presented as respectable citizens is in their economic productivity. They uphold the normative values of hard work and success, and one of the ways in which economic activity has been particularly valued is in the creation of businesses, of meeting unmet “needs.” Lesbian and gay entrepreneurs are engaging in that activity. Here, we are presented with a company that specializes in vacation packages for lesbians.

What I want to highlight here is the relationship between such entrepreneurship and identity-based consumption. The couples presented here are being integrated into market relations via the commodification of lesbian and gay identity (Evans 1993; Bell and Binnie 2000: Chapter 6). This isn’t just seen in the opportunity and ability to spend a couple thousand dollars to vacation with other lesbians. They are also being sold the opportunity to be part of a mass commitment ceremony with those other vacationers.

These 1200 lesbians are engaging in consumption as identity-work, and entrepreneurs like Judy Dlugacz are forming businesses willing to cater to those consumers. She has created a successful business catering to a certain class of lesbians, who are then able to go on vacation with other lesbians of that class. Their consumptive practices (re)produce “lesbian” not only as an identity category, but also as a market segment. And, it is a desirable market, for these businesses and the news media alike.

This desirability is demonstrated in a number of ways. One article published during this time period, although it doesn't contain any information about any specific couples, talks about the economic boon that Massachusetts is expected to realize because of couples coming to the Commonwealth to marry (Belkin 2004a). It is not their marriages that are presented as important to the Bay State, even if the fees they pay might find their way into state coffers. Instead the money these will spend on such things as hotels, restaurants, and event planners is what matters. Their consumption is expected to support Massachusetts businesses, which will provide more financial resources to the communities in which they marry, and to the state's revenues. This makes these couples desirable *as consumers*. Lesbian and gay consumptive practices are presented as a positive aspect of their integration into society through marriage. Indeed, lesbian and gay consumption makes them better citizens.

As I discussed above, the couples represented tend to contain people in the professional and managerial middle and upper classes. Descriptions of income, finances, and property tend to locate these couples and their interests in relatively privileged socio-economic locations. This is reinforced in reporting of their consumptive practices. Spending a couple thousand dollars to go on a cruise isn't something everyone can

afford, nor can everyone take time off from work for such a cruise. These vacation packages are not marketed to lesbians generally, but to a specific lesbian market segment. There are a number of ways that we see such identity-based consumption occurring. Additionally, we also see different forms of lifestyle consumption associated with the upper classes. The types of houses we see above are one example. Going on a cruise is another. So is buying a sailboat (Singer 2004a).

A central form of lifestyle consumption represented here, particularly as it got closer to the date when same-sex couples would start marrying, is paying for everything associated with a wedding. The first issue I would like to highlight, which also returns us to a central theme of this chapter, is the rather high-end forms of wedding spending going on.

“Here comes the bride, all gay with pride,” about 100 friends and family members sang as the Goodridges walked down the aisle in Giorgio Armani pantsuits, preceded by their 8-year-old daughter as flower girl” (Cooperman and Finer 2004).

Here, we see one of the public face couples at their wedding. We have encountered the Goodridges several times. In this brief excerpt, we see a small detail of their consumptive habits in their purchase of matching Armani pantsuits. Such brand name reporting is not uncommon. Indeed, in other reporting of the wedding days of lesbians and gay men across the Commonwealth, what people wore shows up several times. I find it interesting, though, that the *Washington Post* found it reportable that the Goodridge’s clothing was by Giorgio Armani. Although this excerpt tends to show a somewhat higher form of designer consumption, there is a tendency among the representations of consumption that holds with the other forms of economic activity. People who are higher up the economic scale tend to have more information included

about them in news stories. It may be brand name fashion or it may be southern yellow pine that matches the woodwork in a mansion, but the same trend holds for consumptive practices.

“The Pink Event,” sponsored by Bloomingdale’s at Back Bay’s Lenox Hotel, purposely was not advertised to the general public. Organizers instead chose direct advertising to the gay and lesbian communities.

“We did target it very specifically,” said Chris Willis,” a manager at Bloomingdale’s in Chestnut Hill.

The event drew more than 150 people and featured more than a dozen vendors hoping to cash in on the same-sex marriage market. Dozens of gay and lesbian couples checked out wedding bands, floral arrangements, and place settings. Couples modeled the latest in same-sex marriage attire culled from the collections of Hugo Boss and Vera Wang. Guests dipped strawberries in a chocolate fountain and sampled all manner of cake. (Slack 2004)

In this segment, we see a mainstream retailer attempting to appeal to lesbian and gay consumers. While Judy Dlugacz, as well as the entrepreneurs I discuss below, is involved in setting up a business specifically geared toward lesbian consumers, the Chestnut Hill Bloomingdales is here presented as trying to lure those people into its regular group of shoppers. They are being marketed to by a major high-end retailer that is selling Hugo Boss and Vera Wang. The store is using lesbian and gay identity as a marketing tool and pursuing what they perceive to be a desirable consumer market. Gay men and lesbians are being incorporated as consumptive citizens.

The “Pink Event” is but one example of the presentation of lesbian and gay consumers. The opening of marriage to same-sex couples is a business opportunity. There’s money to be made.

From a distance, there is nothing obviously gay about the advertisement from Shreve, Crump & Low, the storied Boston jewelry store founded in the days of Paul Revere. The design, a selection of Furrer-Jacot wedding

bands resting on a wedding invitation, is traditional. The placement of the rings, priced from \$750 to \$15,000, on the invitation, obscures just who is getting married. The tag line, however, makes the sentiment unmistakable: "This is love. It's not up for a vote."...

...Yolanda Cellucci, the chief executive of Yolanda Enterprises, which runs a designer bridal salon and other wedding services in Waltham, Mass., had no qualms about taking part in the expo. "Two dresses are better than one," she said, pointing out that while the average bride might spend \$3,000 on a gown, she recently outfitted a lesbian couple with custom-made women's tuxedos for \$2,500 each (Flaherty 2004).

I noted how Bloomingdales was attempting to make inroads into gay and lesbian consumer markets. This is different than the work of Dlugacz's founding of Olivia Cruises. That company was founded because many cruise lines were seen as unwelcoming to lesbian vacationers, be they individuals or couples. I am particularly interested here in the relationship between identity-based consumption and identity-based entrepreneurship. One aspect of this relationship is a central theme in some of the articles that specifically discuss these issues of consumption. Gay and lesbian consumers are presented as wanting to support businesses that have supported their communities.

Such activities can still be controversial. Witness the American Family Association's targeting of Ford because of its advertisements in gay and lesbian publications (Peters 2006), and the controversy over advertising South Carolina to lesbian and gay tourists (Behre 2008). Some of the fear of targeting these consumer markets has abated and more and more companies—like Bloomingdales here—are advertising to lesbian and gay consumer markets. These shoppers are presented as being loyal, which can also make them desirable.

Altar-bound gays say they want to keep their money in their community by hiring either gay vendors or straight vendors with a record of community service.

"I think it would be wise to give it back to the community that supported

you before the laws were passed,” said Taylor [a Malden event planner], who already is planning a wedding next year for two women.

“It was going to be a commitment ceremony,” she said. “Hearing they could instead get married in May has made them very happy.

Page [a Boston event planner] and partner Marianne Stravinskas began planning their wedding as soon as the SJC ruling was announced Nov. 18.

They hope to be the first in line May 16—180 days after the SJC ruling—when cities and towns begin issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

But they won’t be seeking traditional wedding providers. They want an original ceremony that reflects their lives together.

“We don’t want a mock-hetero marriage,” she said. “We need to develop new ceremonies and new traditions that express our own community. That’s the new frontier.” (Bisbee 2003)

Again, we see the relationship here between identity-based entrepreneurship and identity-based consumption. There is a desire presented to maintain money within “the community.” Those businesses that have supported and welcomed lesbian and gay consumers, particularly those that were also formed by lesbians and gay men, are preferable to those that might be more mercenary in their pursuit of lesbian and gay dollars. The loyalty of lesbian and gay consumers is presented as something to be earned. Those who have earned it should benefit now that new economic opportunities are arising. Commitment ceremonies are not new. Weddings are. Taylor is able to transform the event she was planning from a commitment ceremony to a wedding with seemingly little difficulty. In some ways, this isn’t surprising. After all, both the wedding and the commitment ceremony are ritual events in which the members of a couple proclaims their dedication to each other in the presence of a community who declaring its willingness to support them in their life as a couple. The difference is in the license. Both, however, present opportunities to spend, and to make, money.

These weddings are also presented as opportunities to individualize the ceremony. I would like to highlight here not just how a wedding is expected to “reflect the lives together” that same-sex couples have produced. My starting assumption is that *any* couples marrying who have been together for any amount of time, or who even who haven’t, will want expressions of their lives and selves. Instead, I wish to focus on the forms of lesbian and gay cultural expression are being integrated into the ceremonies and, more importantly for this chapter, into consumer market relations. Event planners, now able to put wedding together, are themselves presented as people who will be on the forefront of this “new frontier.” They will create these cultural events alongside, or as, the couples who will be marrying. These new business opportunities are simultaneously presented as opportunities to integrate lesbian and gay cultural difference into market relations.

“Anything from gospel choirs to pop music to show tunes—I hate to be so cliché, but it’s true,” says Bryan Rafanelli, 41, co-owner of Rafanelli Events, an event planning company in Boston. “I could imagine there would be some disco weddings, ‘70s or ‘80s parties. That’s been our culture, to go to clubs and dance and have fun. That’s the place where it’s going to be thrown wide open.”

The difference between straight and gay weddings will be in the details, according to Boston-area bakers, jewelers, florists, and wedding planners. It’s a trend that Sarah Myles, co-owner of Spruce Floral on the Waterfront, says is occurring throughout the field as straight couples personalize their ceremonies. Although the territory is too new for anybody to make definitive statements, there’s an overwhelming belief that the gay community will embrace traditional three-tiered cakes, rings, and receptions. They’ll just add an extra dose of flavor to the proceedings.

"Just making the decision to have a marriage or commitment ceremony," says Ellen Bartlett, owner of Brookline's Cakes to Remember, "is sort of acknowledging wanting to be a part of the general community. People are still walking down the aisle, doing things attached to the whole marriage thing, but with a twist, much more of a twist than a lot of couples do."

When Rafanelli and his business and life partner, Mark Walsh, 43,

realized they could soon make their own 14-year relationship legal, they discussed what they'd want in their ceremony. It was a classic talk that touched on where it would take place, how big it would be, and what the wedding cake would look like.

“What we're asking for is what everyone else has,” Says Rafanelli. “It'll just be brighter and more colorful.” (Jones 2003.)

Gay and lesbian identity is here presented as a minority cultural identity. It is no longer something to be hidden, as I will discuss in the Chapter Six. Instead, it is something to be incorporated into traditional celebration. Having a wedding isn't enough. It needs to be a *gay* wedding, and there are gay and lesbian companies willing to help make that come true. The wedding, here is a space of lesbian or gay identity practice, a site to enact difference. One thing that enables them to do so is the existence of lesbian and gay entrepreneurs who understand “the culture.” Within the sections just quoted we have lesbians and gay men providing services for lesbians and gay men. It isn't just lifestyle products and services that are being consumed, but identity products and services. It ranges from such things as the wedding services to greeting cards.

Another card maker, Pink Rainbow Galaxy of Savannah, Ga., sells a card with an illustration of a pink car with rainbow cans clattering off the back. A sign in the window proclaims “Justly married.” The company's co-owner, Jennifer Strickland, said she has attended family events where someone brings a traditional card with crossed-out words.

“Most of the cards have a man or a wife on it,” she said. “When my in-laws buy a card, instead of giving me one that says, ‘To my daughter's husband,’ they'd scratch that out.”

When Strickland and her partner visited New Orleans one year, they saw a disheveled drag queen totter into a bar. The man had runs in his stockings, needed a shave, and dropped his makeup on the floor. So the couple bought him a drink and, three years later, the drag queen became the inspiration for a wedding card: a blushing bride with hairy arms and a five o'clock shadow. The inside reads, “Congratulations on your big fat, gay wedding” (Talcott 2004b).

The article goes on to note that corporate greeting card companies are considering

getting into the same-sex couple market, just as Bloomingdales did above⁴⁰. However, if we return to the relationship between identity based-entrepreneurship and identity-based consumption, we see more than just the integration of lesbian and gay identities in market relations. Greeting cards that don't recognize there are two women or two men involved in the wedding just don't "work" for same-sex couples. Families and friends attempt to purchase cards that meet reflect the couple, and when they are unable to do so, they are shown altering the cards in such ways as to make sense. A welcoming and meaningful gesture is attempted. But the structure of greeting card markets, the ways that companies have failed to make cards that reflect the reality of lesbian and gay life or the existence of same-sex couples, forces the people attempting to make these welcoming gestures to alter the cards. I see their attempt as something lovely. They have tried to find something that works, but because of the lack of available appropriate cards, they have to "settle."

Jennifer Strickland, being a good American entrepreneur, has attempted to solve this problem by making cards that reflect the existence of same-sex couples. However, she isn't just copying the same types of cards that exist and changing the gender composition. This isn't simply changing the words on Hallmark. Instead, she and her partner—the company—are drawing upon lesbian and gay cultural forms to create more specific types of greeting cards. A drag queen becomes a signifier of cultural difference. Lesbian and gay identity is presented by these entrepreneurs, and by the newspapers that feature them, as a *cultural* identity. It is a cultural identity enacted in consumptive practices.

⁴⁰ I found it a bit amusing that while I was editing this work, a friend in Chicago texted me with a picture she took with her camera phone of same-sex wedding cards being sold at her local Borders Bookstore.

In this chapter, I have focused on how the same-sex couples presented during the campaign for marriage equality are shown as economic actors. In general, the people we see are relatively privileged, a characteristic that becomes more prominent as more information is provided about couples. These couples tend to be shown having higher incomes, greater assets in terms of wealth and property, and more extravagant purchasing options. In general, these representations tend to uphold the centrality and desirability of middle and upper-class life.

There are also several aspects of these people's lives that contribute to the "respectability" of these couples I noted in the introduction. First, they are upholding normative values. If respectability is a condition in which people are honorable because they uphold the dominant values of a society, then we can see some of these characteristics embodied in the couples represented here. In the last chapter, I discussed how the public face couples, in particular, upheld marital norms like love and longevity. Connecting that chapter to this one, we also see family values coming to the fore in the responsible ways these couples approach parenting. Marcia Hams and Susan Shepherd, in particular, embody this respectable parenthood model within this chapter.

Here, however, I would like to discuss the ways that these couples respectability is connected to norms associated with economic life. If we look at work life, we see these couples upholding normative values surrounding the work ethic and upward mobility. The achievement ideology, which holds this hard work as the key to success, is reinforced in the representations of these couples' lives. The success that results is also present. Capitalism is a system of accumulation. The normative values associated with

consumer capitalist society tend to stress accumulation as well. Combined with the work ethic and achievement ideology, accumulating capital makes one respectable.

Responsible use of that capital enhances respectability. Paris Hilton's profligate spending on parties is not respectable; Bill Gates' contributions to charity are.

A similar process is at work here. Some forms of consumption can definitely be seen as non-respectable. If these successful couples were out spending their money on cocaine, for example, the public would probably take issue. Instead, the forms of consumption we tend to see, especially as it is associated with wedding spending, serves to incorporate them within the polity as responsible economic citizens.

I began this chapter talking about the stereotype of gay wealth and the various ways it may be upheld. The representations we see during the marriage campaign—flowing from routinized reporting practices and the efforts of movement activists—play a central role in reproducing stereotypical ideas of gay privilege. They also tend to show these couples acting as responsible, respectable citizens. The paradox here is that the claims used by anti-gay activists to oppose gay inclusion, that lesbians and gay men are acceptable, are some of the same factors that foster their inclusion, and that make them good citizens.

Chapter 5 Shifting Boundaries

On May 16, 2008, popular daytime talk-show host Ellen DeGeneres announced to a national audience that she and her partner of several years, actress Portia DeRossi, would be getting married⁴¹. The audience gave her a rousing ovation and the message boards on her website were filled with statements of support⁴². While there may have been lesbians and gay men in her audience, the Heterosexual women that predominate in the studio where her show is filmed and in the various domestic spaces in which her show is watched were among her biggest supporters. Millions of Americans, it seemed, were thrilled about these two women getting married.

A half-century ago, when publicists and movie studios were still creating heterosexual relationships for their lesbian and gay stars (Signorile 2003: Chapter 3), a scene like this would have been unimaginable. Even a decade ago, such a reaction would have been highly surprising. Ellen DeGeneres was herself the subject of intense controversy when she, along with the lead character on her eponymous situation comedy, came out publicly in 1997 (Becker 2005:164-8). Any public outcry that accompanied her engagement announcement didn't seem, to be anywhere near as intense, wide-spread, or vituperative as it had been during her earlier announcement. I will admit that I did not follow the media coverage of DeGeneres's announcement terribly closely, but I can recall

⁴¹ DeGeneres's announcement came on the heels of a California Supreme Court decision, *In Re Marriage Cases* (2008), that declared that state's exclusion of same-sex couples from marriage to be unconstitutional. Several of the disparate lawsuits that were combined in this case were the result of activities during the time frame under study in the Massachusetts case, and the municipal civil disobedience of San Francisco during the spring of 2004.

⁴² The announcement can be watched here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-nGsN1_fm8>. The message boards can be seen here: <http://ellen.warnerbros.com/2008/06/ellens_getting_married.php?page=45>

no prominent leader coming forth to call her “Ellen Degenerate,” as Jerry Falwell had a decade earlier. It is undoubtedly the case that her announcement was not greeted with joy in every setting. Even the chat boards on Ellen’s web-site had people posting that they would never watch her show again, or condemning her to eternal torture for being a lesbian. Such statements were overwhelmed, though, by those of encouragement. On later episodes of her talk show, President Bush’s daughter Jenna jokingly offered the family ranch as a potential site for the nuptials, and Senator John McCain, an opponent of relationship recognition for same-sex couples, wished DeGeneres and DeRossi happiness in their marriage. The public discourse over the role of lesbians and gay men in American society has shifted since Ellen first publicly came out.

In the introductory chapter to this work, I noted that Foucaultian sociologist Mariane Valverde had declared “the birth of a new type in the history of sexuality” (2006), the Respectable Same-Sex Couple. Ms. DeGeneres and Ms. DeRossi—based on public reaction—can be included within this category. Their relationship is *valued* by Heterosexual family, friends, and fans. The couple is held in public esteem. If not because of, and not necessarily despite, the same-sex composition of the couple, they are held up as an example of something to be aspired to. They are respected as a couple.

This issue of the rise of respectability is, in some ways, central to this entire work. My primary focus has been on how lesbian and gay life is changing, and how the news representations of same-sex couples, and the individuals in them, published during the Massachusetts campaign for access to marriage illustrate and participate in those changes. The issue of respectability forms one basis of this chapter, but it has also been present in the previous ones. Consider my discussion of the selection of public face couples in

Chapter Three. One of the things I centered in that discussion was how those couples reinforced the normative values of marriage. I am conceptualizing respectability as adherence to, or excellence in meeting, normative standards. These can be standards surrounding hard work or relationship maintenance. The longevity of the public face couples' relationships, ranging from four to thirty years at the time of the lawsuit's filing, is one of those areas where we see this coming to the fore. But, the declarations of love don't hurt. These couples are seeking to marry for the "right" reasons. They live exemplary lives as responsible parents and loving partners.

Recall, also, my discussion from Chapter Four. There I focused on these couples as economic actors. Again we see the ways that their lives uphold normative values. Their success, work ethic, and upward mobility are all markers of doing things right. Likewise, the economic insecurities that connect that chapter to the previous one show how these couples are trying to do the right thing. Their insecurities flow from their attempts to be responsible parents and partners, to provide for their families. We see no welfare cheats or deadbeat parents in these representations. Instead, we see families upholding many of the dominant norms in American social life. Throughout this work, and throughout the representations at the heart of this work, we see these couples being "decent or correct in character and behavior" (Mirriam Webster 1998:1004).

In thinking about the integrative transformations that produce the possibility of lesbian and gay lives being respectable lives, it is worth noting how various boundaries have been and are being altered. The previous chapters have involved the content of the category of "respectability" while parts of this chapter looks at the boundaries around it. The borders surrounding the social categories of "Lesbian" and "Gay" are also being

redrawn. Where the ideas defining these categories once defined the people included within them as threats to children and the nation, they now include parenthood and productive citizenship. The boundaries have shifted such that lesbians and gay men are no longer pathological but *normal*. They can even be exemplary.

These shifts around the category “lesbian” or “gay” are not the only one’s occurring, in the broader society or in the news representations here. There is also ongoing boundary work occurring *within* these categories, and some of that work is taking place as marriage becomes available. Same-sex couples can themselves now be divided into categories of married and unmarried. This also affects how the line between Heterosexual and Homosexual is (re)drawn. The broader acceptance of lesbians and gay men, as well as the inclusion of same-sex couples within marriage, is producing new boundaries that both uphold and challenge the normative lines and categorical definitions that were produced during the institutionalization of the Heterosexual/Homosexual binary.

I introduced the idea of a “cycle of incorporation” to explain and explore that changing binary. If, as Sedgwick argues (1985), Heterosexuality has been constructed and defined through the exclusion of homosexuality, the changes of the past few decades have produced a shifting boundary between these two categories. Homosexuals are no longer excluded, and the boundary between Heterosexuality and Homosexuality no longer predominates in every setting. In some cases, the boundary between married and unmarried may be central, with same-sex married couples coming to identify and be identified more closely with married different-sex couples than with lesbians and gay men who are single or in unmarried partnerships. The issue does not deserve the hand-

waving dismissal given to it by William Eskridge (2002: Chapter 6), nor does it mean that such divisions will dominate. Instead, it calls for a look at where and how such new boundaries are being produced, and where others are shifting and/or being erased. It also calls for an interrogation of the effects these boundaries will have in everyday life.

Boundary maintenance is a prominent human activity. Through it, we determine who is a member of our group and who isn't, what is acceptable behavior and what isn't, even who is sexually desirable and who isn't. In this chapter, I discuss several aspects of this boundary-work as it took place in newspaper coverage of same-sex couples during the Massachusetts campaign for marriage. I began by looking at issues of parenting, and how the distinctions between Heterosexual and Homosexual are being reworked as gay and lesbian people are included within marriage. New divisions within same-sex couples are arising as the distinctions between gay and straight life change.

From there, I shift to a discussion of the boundaries surrounding marriage. Throughout this work, a central concern has been how same-sex couples are represented as adhering to, even surpassing, normative standards of behavior. Economic success, long-lasting relationships, and admiration from peers and family are all, even if not explicitly noted, markers of respectability. In this chapter I turn to the boundaries around it. In these representations, couples are shown reinforcing marriage as the preferred family relationship. While their previously discussed comments about its value are part of how that occurs, it can also be seen in representations of failure. A relationship may fall apart, or a break-up be handled poorly. The normative standards of marriage may not be met, or people may fail to adequately plan for the collapse of their relationship. What establishes these couples as respectable is their ability to plan for failure and avoid it

through the management of risk.

Parenting and social boundaries

The issue of parenting is one area where we can see the shifting social boundaries quite clearly. The fact that lesbians and gay men have been incorporated as parents, and as good and desirable parents at that, represents a major change in the boundaries surrounding these categories. However, even accepting that lesbians and gay men parent, we should also recognize that a border between these couples and many of their Heterosexual counterparts remains in place. While more same-sex couples are choosing to parent—over 7,000 children in Massachusetts were being raised by same-sex couples in 2005 (Romero, et. al. 2008)—the ways that they obtain children to parent often differ from those of different-sex couples⁴³. A primary difference comes from the way that lesbian and gay couples sever the relationship between conjugality and reproduction. Very rarely are there “oops” babies in same-sex relationships.

The issue of parenting figures large in the representations of same-sex couples that we have here. Of the 377 couples, 72 are explicitly named as having children in their families. One of the things that demonstrates the almost taken-for-granted fact of lesbian and gay parenting is how non-controversial it is in the reporting about these families⁴⁴.

⁴³ In Chapter Two I discussed how many of these couples have children from different-sex relationships. However, as fewer lesbians and gay men marry before coming out, more of them who want to parent are having to turn to other sources. Adoption, fostering, and assistive technologies like insemination and surrogacy are increasingly being used. These are also used by different-sex couples.

⁴⁴ There are two counterexamples worth noting. The first is the case I mentioned in Chapter Three, where a lesbian foster mother was accused of rape, which Ron Crews

Don Picard and Robert DeBenedictis tucked their two young children into bed before racing over to Cambridge City Hall on Sunday night to apply for a marriage license. ...

... After a judge waived the required waiting period, the couple were able to exchange official vows with their adopted children, Carmen, 5, and James, 2, beside them (Polumbo 2004).

Note how the presence of children is dealt with in this article. The kids are put to bed before their dads run out of the house (no mention of any babysitters, though), and then appear at their fathers' wedding. There is no mention of any potential unique issues facing gay and lesbian parents, nor is such parenthood problematized. It is presented as a fact of life that these two men have children. They are shown doing the everyday work of parenting. Putting the kids to bed in the evening is something most parents with small children probably spend time, and effort, doing. What we see occurring is the production of lesbian and gay life as similar to that of Heterosexual life. Trying to get children to go to sleep is something that *parents* do, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender. So is being awakened by them on a big day.

It's 5:30 a.m. on Monday, and Lili, 4, has just woken her parents, mother Erika and Rhonda Bourne. It's a big day: Mommy and ``Amma" are getting married - legally.

By 7:30, everyone is dressed: Rhonda in an L.L. Bean brushed-cotton shirt, Erika in a batik jacket, Lili in pink from head to toe.

At 8:09 the family's Mazda MPV rolls into the Waltham City Hall parking lot. Inside the gold-domed building, all is quiet.

Then the well-wishers and other marrying couples start to arrive. (Singer 2004b).

The county clerk, it is reported, even had lollipops available for the children who

attempted to tie to the issue of lesbian and gay parenting (Guarino 2004__). The other is a letter-to-the-editor criticizing the Goodridges for having a baby before they were able to marry (McFadden 2004).

would be showing up with their marrying parents that day. The presence of children in families headed by same-sex couples was *expected* at Waltham's city hall. While the broader political debates may have included the anti-gay voices, reporting about the couples themselves is not reported as something out of the ordinary, extreme, or even controversial. Instead, it is presented as "the way things are," as a taken-for-granted fact of day-to-day life in the Commonwealth.

That isn't to say that there is no controversy over the place of children in lesbian and gay homes. One of the rallying cries of anti-gay forces became "Every child deserves a mother and a father," and Governor Mitt Romney, building up to his Presidential campaign, publicly complained about the fact that birth certificate forms were being changed so that both mothers or both fathers could be listed when a child was born into such families (Levenson 2005). A year after these events, as I discussed in Chapter Two, the Commonwealth's Roman Catholic Bishops forced Catholic Charities of Boston to stop providing all adoptions after the legislature refused to grant it special permission to discriminate against lesbians and gay men when screening potential parents. The presence of children in gay and lesbian homes is, broadly, a topic of some political and social controversy. Some states still ban adoption and fostering (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force 2008e). Arkansas joined their ranks in 2008. However, in the reporting about same-sex couples during the Massachusetts campaign, the presence of children in gay and lesbian homes is largely non-controversial. These articles simply tell tales of parenting. And, they often tell tales of responsible parenting. The Chertow/Cox couple I discussed in Chapter Four discuss buying a new home because parenting books told them that it is best to start a blended family in such a setting. We saw the

Linnell/Chalmers couple trying to save for their daughter's college education. These representations of responsibility contribute to the production of respectability, and to the normalization of lesbian and gay parenting.

That lesbians and gay men are raising children is largely non-controversial in the Commonwealth. While the presence of children in lesbian and gay homes is taken for granted, the ways that children are brought into these homes is one area where we see shifting boundary work occurring. The severing of the relationship between conjugality and reproduction creates a potential for the maintenance of boundaries between same-sex and different-sex couples because of how they bring children into their homes. Even though both same-sex and different-sex couples make use of international adoptions, interactions with governments and adoption agencies can reinforce the boundaries between Heterosexuality and Homosexuality.

Lynette Sinclair and Michelle Cote started to build a family last November when they adopted a baby girl, Alana, from Eastern Europe. The next steps, they hoped, would be to marry in a small ceremony when same-sex marriage is legalized in Massachusetts and then to adopt a sibling for their daughter.

But now the Natick couple, like many gay couples across the state, have realized that they could be forced to choose between formalizing their relationship and adopting a child from overseas.

Many foreign countries forbid gay couples from adoption. If a gay couple declares married on the required adoption paperwork, specialists say, the couple's application could be rejected....

... The way to sidestep those differences, gay-friendly adoption agents say, has been to have one member of a gay couple file as a single parent. When it came time to fill out the international paperwork in adopting Alana, Sinclair signed all the legal documents. Cote posed as her cousin....

...Now that Alana has been in the country for six months, Cote has begun the paperwork to legally serve as a coparent. The two women are weighing their options for adopting another baby. Considering how far

they have come, they said, marriage can wait. “Having the second child is more important than legalizing our commitment to each other,” Sinclair said (Ordonez 2004).

Note, first, Cote’s dishonesty in filling out paperwork. Sinclair and Cote lied in an effort to obtain children to raise. Even in a place like Massachusetts, where moves toward lesbian and gay equality and the destruction of the institutional closet are occurring at a faster rate than in many other places, we still see a form of re-closeting taking place. Cote lied to get around specific anti-gay statutes. Such a tale could be read as a lesbian undermining the rule of law. However, this action is presented from a perspective that makes it seem almost necessary. This is related to an issue I raise in the next chapter with regard to the centering of gay and lesbian life in the telling of these stories, and how discriminatory practices, not Homosexuality, becomes a problem to be addressed.

It is useful here to recall the production of closet by institutional practices that force lesbians and gay men live double lives, and its maintenance via threats of exposure. We see that occurring here, not only in Cote’s dishonesty in filling out paperwork, but also in the couple waiting before initiating a second-parent adoption, and in their refusal to marry lest they hurt their chances of adopting another child. This couple is forced, if it wants to adopt a child from overseas, to hide their gay life. (However, being interviewed for a national newspaper is hardly hiding; their closet is partial.) Although the article maintains a lesbian point of view in the ways that it normalizes lesbian and gay parenting, there is also a way in which it potentially undercuts notions of responsibility and respectability. Even though the couple’s dishonesty is attributed to structural forces, they are still shown being dishonest. The wait to establish legal parenthood, although not discussed in this manner, also places the relationship between Cote and their daughter in legal limbo for those six months. There is contradictory work being done in this text. It

describes, and participates in, the ongoing cultural incorporation of lesbian and gay parenting in Massachusetts life. Parts of it, however, can also be read as calling into question some of the practices in which these parents are engaged.

In Chapter Two, I noted the ways that lesbians and gay men have been incorporated into Massachusetts law as parents. There are a number of ways that they go about obtaining children, including adoption, surrogacy, and the use of insemination services. The Cote-Sinclair family are shown going through one of those processes in their attempts to adopt internationally. The cultural and legal acceptance of gay and lesbian parenthood we see in the Commonwealth, though, is far from universal. The intersections between Massachusetts policy and that of other governments are a site where the boundary maintenance and transformation work I am discussing are being played out. Another such area involves the dissolution of families into which these children have been brought.

On the heels of its historic ruling permitting same sex marriages, the state Supreme Judicial Court this week will consider another thorny issue in the fast evolving field of family law: whether a man or woman must support a child born out of wedlock to a female partner through artificial insemination....

... In a landmark 2000 case, the SJC ruled that a woman could not use frozen embryos fertilized by her former husband to become pregnant against the man's wishes, declaring that he could not be forced to become a parent - even though he had signed a contract giving his wife control of the embryos if they separated.

The woman in the case the SJC will hear on Thursday says she reluctantly consented to the insemination and never agreed to be the child's parent. The couple lived together in the Northampton area for 3 1/2 years and had a commitment ceremony in 1998. They broke up in April 2000.

After a three-day trial, Probate and Family Court Judge Gail L. Perlman concluded last May that the woman being sued for child support had made an agreement "to create a child" with the biological mother. ...

...Lawyers for the biological mother, identified only as T.F. in court briefs, and her former companion, identified as B.L., said the legal issues in the case would be the same if it involved an unmarried heterosexual couple. However, the case is of particular concern to lesbian couples, who are increasingly having children after one becomes pregnant through artificial insemination, lawyers said.

“One of the realities of the world today is that more children are being born through reproductive technologies where they have a biological connection to one parent and not the other,” said Bennet H. Klein, a lawyer for Gay & Lesbian Advocates and Defenders who is representing the woman suing for child support. “Part of the reason we’re seeing this case is because the law has not fully caught up with reality. (Saltzman 2004)

Note, first of all, how different categorical boundaries are being shifted. The *Globe* makes an explicit connection between this couple and unmarried different-sex couples⁴⁵. The issue is how unmarried parenthood will be dealt with, and the case is reported as setting precedent for *all* unmarried couples. In other words, if a different-sex couple agreed to create a child, presumably using assistive technologies, but broke up during the pregnancy the issues would have been the same. The distinction between same-sex and different-sex couple composition is rendered less significant than differences in marital status. It is worth noting that this equal application of law may have an unequal application in everyday life because the issue may be of greater concern to lesbians because of the greater proportional use of assistive reproductive technologies. However, the legal boundary between Heterosexuality and Homosexuality is shown becoming *less* significant.

Now, the boundary between married and unmarried couples was one that could not exist within American lesbian and gay communities before May 17, 2004. In some

⁴⁵ The SJC eventually ruled that the non-biological parent had no support obligation for the child, despite also finding that the partner had agreed to enter into the parental relationship and that the biological mother would not have pursued the pregnancy without this agreement (*T.F. v. B.L.* 2004).

states, other distinctions—Domestically Partnered or Civilly Unionized versus not—might have been available, but not marriage. In most of the country, these boundaries still cannot exist and same-sex couples automatically fall into the “unmarried” category, living under the same governing relations as unmarried heterosexuals. When states enact relationship recognition policies new lines of demarcation arise. In particular, equal access to marriage may make the Hetero/Homo distinction less salient than that between married and unmarried.

In what lawyers are calling the first case of its kind now that gay marriage is legal, a just-married lesbian couple filed a medical malpractice lawsuit in Worcester yesterday contending that one of the women should be awarded damages because doctors failed to detect breast cancer in her spouse.

The lawsuit was filed in Worcester Superior Court by Michelle Charron, 44, and Cindy Kalish, 39, who are married.

Their suit claims a form of damages known as "loss of consortium," a routine provision in malpractice law. It allows spouses, parents, and children to assert that they have lost affection, companionship, and support as a result of an injury to their relative.

Lawyers say the "loss of consortium" claim was not available to gay couples until Massachusetts legalized gay marriage on Monday. They add that the case also provides a glimpse into the kinds of legal battles Massachusetts courts can expect, following the Supreme Judicial Court decision that legalized gay marriage, as lawyers plumb the challenges of life injuries and hospitalizations, joint tax returns, and criminal trials that this newest group of spouses will experience.

"I think there will be tons and tons of incidental issues, and this apparently is the first one," said Steven Schreckinger, a tort lawyer at the Boston firm Palmer & Dodge (Weiss 2004b).

Again, the availability of marriage is shown shifting legal and social boundaries.

Indeed, this article and a similar one in the *Herald* (Lazar 2004) both explicitly discuss how the onset of marriage is producing a new set of legal concerns involving the drawing of categorical boundaries. It is more than the lines between Heterosexuality and

Homosexuality that are being altered. Distinctions between married and unmarried are also being redrawn. These boundaries are being (re)drawn through the (re)drawing of each other⁴⁶.

The lines of demarcation are shifting. Is the couple's status as lesbians or married more important? How does that relate to the distinction between them and different-sex or unmarried couples? In what ways are these boundaries being reinforced or diminished? The integration of same-sex couples into broader relations of governance, and particularly into marriage, is important in establishing which social boundaries will obtain in a given situation. Same-sex couples are simultaneously becoming more like different-sex couples and less like each other as some choose to marry and others don't.

While the inclusion of gay men and lesbians within marriage is causing shifts in the lines of demarcation between same-sex and different-sex couples, and between same-sex couples, there is also other boundary work occurring. A recurring theme within this work has been how news representations are reflecting and producing these couples as respectable. Another boundary being drawn here is that surrounding respectability. In this section, I discuss the establishment of that boundary through representations of failure. First, though, I return to issues involving the normative values with regard to family life and the value placed on marriage itself.

⁴⁶ The SJC ruled against Charron and Kallish. It treated them just like any other couple. The unmarried status—even though marriage was unavailable—at the time of misdiagnosis was the determining fact (*Charron v. Amaral* 2004). If a different-sex couple had gone through a similar experience of being misdiagnosed and then choosing to marry, they would have been turned away. The distinction being drawn as most important is that between married and unmarried. The fact that marriage was unavailable because of Hetero/Homo boundaries is rendered irrelevant.

At the beginning of this chapter, I discussed the respectability attached to the relationship between Ellen DeGeneres and Portia DeRossi. In particular, Ellen is held in high esteem. She is deemed someone worthy of emulation. Indeed, we have seen throughout this work how such respectability is being applied to other couples, even if I haven't always explicitly named it. A couple we will meet in the next chapter was voted the cutest couple in their high school class. They were *honored* by their classmates as a couple. In that case, the qualities that made them honorable, at least as voting criteria, were that they were "cute" together. What these couples have in common, what can be seen as defining respectability, is their adherence to and excellence in meeting normative standards. We have seen this in the establishment of long-time loving couples who care for each other and act as responsible parents. We have seen it successful couples whose upward mobility and consumptive practices flow from a solid work ethic. I have discussed many of those phenomena in relation to the cycle of incorporation I introduced in Chapter Two. It is that cycle that produces the conditions under which the living of lesbian and gay lives could be a respectable thing to do.

In my discussion of the selection of poster couples, I noted how they were chosen because of their adherence to marital norms. Their lives upheld those values, but so did their statements. There is a degree to which respectability flows to those couples, and many others we see, because they respect marriage. Marriage is valued as marriage, not as a set of benefits, rights, and obligations. This is not universal. After all, some of the couples we see are marrying for the protections.

Rene Perriolat, 72, said the opportunity for him to marry the man he fell in love with 52 years ago in the Army is a relief in terms of protecting the assets they've together accumulated, but isn't necessary to prove their timeless love (Richardson 2004a).

When couples discuss their reasons for marrying the material benefits and the valuation of marriage appear together quite often. When these issues are separated, though, marriage itself tends to be valued above the benefits and protections. Marrying for these can seem mercenary. Marrying for love is respectable. Many of these couples seek the esteem that marriage confers.

“We’re stepping into the shared cultural understanding of marriage,” said Joanne Frustaci, who will wed her partner when her supportive father gets out of the hospital. “We uphold the sanctity of marriage.” (*Boston Globe* 2004)

These couples “uphold the sanctity” the marriage. This is a move beyond access to insurance and inheritance. This civil status—although there is much conflation and conflict surrounding the religious and civil “nature” of marriage within these political conflicts—is elevated above politics and civil society. It is more than a contract or a set of benefits and obligations. It is a *holy* status, even if a secular state is sanctifying it. One would be hard pressed to find any wiggle room between Frustaci’s elevation of the relationship and that of (at the time) President George W. Bush, who was seeking to keep her out of it. Both treat it as a relationship that is far more than the statutes defining it. Indeed, it is that elevated status that is at the heart of political conflicts over the status of same-sex couples. For majorities of Americans, even for many who support providing legal benefits and protections to same-sex couples, lesbians and gay men and our relationships are, by definition, not respectable, or at least not *as respectable* as Heterosexual relationships. Our families are not deserving of the same esteem that comes from marriage.

We can see this respect for marriage being reinforced in representations of some of the couples who married with the knowledge that their licenses would have no legal

status. Being able to stand in front of a civil authority and have their relationship validated by a civil authority was what mattered⁴⁷.

“This is the most important day of my life,” said Chris McCarry, 43, of Anniston, Ala., clutching the hand of his partner of six years, John Sullivan, 37. “I’m marrying the person I love, and this is the first day it’s been possible” (Swanson 2004).

We will meet McCarry and Sullivan again in Chapter Six, where the *Boston Herald* notes that they will not hold hands in public (Richardson 2004b). In this story, they are “clutching” hands, tightly holding on to each other on the “most important day” of their lives. They are marrying for love, not money. Unfortunately for them, and despite the joy expressed at being able to stand in front of a Justice of the Peace and declare an anticipated life-long love-based commitment to each other, McCarry and Sullivan are not married. Their license was nullified⁴⁸. Although a wedding ceremony took place and a license was issued, the truth is that without the recognition of a broader community, no marriage exists. In this context, the political community of Alabamians has declared them legal strangers. Even in Massachusetts, they would have to re-wed in order to be recognized as a married couple. Despite all of that, though, this is shown as a very emotional experience for them. A polity has declared them a family, even if only for a day. The city of Provincetown held a public celebration. Their *love* for each other

⁴⁷ These authorities could also be religious. I am treating clergy who perform legal weddings as proxy state actors, though.

⁴⁸ A running conflict during the political maneuvering of that spring was the status of out-of-state couples. Governor Romney, utilizing M.G.L. 207§11, ordered all town clerks to reject marriage applications from out-of-state couples. Dubbed the “1913 law,” this statute forbade couples whose marriages were illegal in their home states from marrying in Massachusetts. Four municipalities publicly declared they would defy the Governor. While these cities did allow out-of-state couples to marry, most of those marriages were nullified, and the SJC upheld the constitutionality of the 1913 law. It was rescinded in 2008.

has been sanctified by a state. That desire for *acceptance* and having their relationships *valued* by a community larger than their family is something we see over and again.

“Our kids want us to be married,” Sue Hyde, 51, of Cambridge, who will marry her partner of 19 years, Jade McGleughlin, 42. The couple’s two children, Jess, 11, and Max, 9, plan to join their parents at City Hall for the event.

“My kids’ friends tease them and say, ‘Your parents aren’t married, they’re not even real,’” said Hyde, the New England organizer for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. “Now my kids will be able to say, ‘Yes, they’re real. They’re married’” (Gendar 2004).

Hyde is shown upholding the *elevated* status of marriage. The marriage license gives her family a sense of social legitimacy that it didn’t have previously. Her family is now a “real” family, whereas the day before, even an hour before, it apparently wasn’t. Hyde herself may not believe that non-married families are not real families, but in the way she is represented here, in the words of hers that are selected, we see a process by which the boundaries between married and unmarried families are being reinforced, not just legally but culturally. There is a stigmatization of non-married families as “not real,” both by the kids who tease Hyde and McGleughlin’s children and by Hyde herself. The couples seeking marriage are respectable because they respect marriage. They elevate it to a “sanctified” status that makes their families “real.” They value marriage *as* marriage, and through their desire for it and adherence to values associated with it they are able to garner respect.

There are a number of normative standards associated with marriage, and with the establishment and reinforcement of boundaries around respectability. This goes beyond valuing marriage as marriage. Consider, for a moment, the “til death do us part” vow. Marriage, even with the increase in divorce since the advent of “no-fault,” is usually entered into with the hope and expectation that it will last a lifetime. We see that

optimistic anticipation in many of the same-sex relationships presented in these newspaper reports. We are also shown evidence of couples adhering to the “life-long relationship” standard, even without the ability to marry. The plaintiff couples discussed in Chapter 3 were themselves selected to have a variety of lengths of time spent as couples, ranging from four to thirty years (at the time the lawsuit was filed), the other poster couple was together for 27 years, and the broader sample had lengths of time together ranging from nine months to sixty-six years. The average length of time together in these reports was just over 18 years. It was kind of entertaining, while analyzing these articles, to see the length of time prominent couples were together increase. It was almost as though I were watching them age as couples, as if I could imagine an anniversary party each year. “Now it’s 31 years. Now it’s 32 years....” If upholding and enacting the values associated marriage is part of what makes these couples respectable, as I am arguing, then the ability to maintain long-term relationships is part of that formula.

As marriage becomes available, the longevity of these relationships becomes more closely associated with marriage. Something to keep in mind is this: these couples who had managed to stay together for several decades did so without the “benefit” of marriage. While many of the couples were pursuing access to marriage, many others viewed it as something outside the realm of possibility, as I discuss in the next chapter. In those circumstances, the length of time together itself becomes respectable. In the context of the availability marriage, that length of time is transposed onto that relationship form.

Five minutes after Alex Westerhoff and Thomas Lang, in tails and tux, walked down a white-carpeted aisle here last night, their wedding became not about same-sex or any sex, but about two people promising their lives to each other.

In many respects this wedding is “like any wedding,” said officiating minister the Rev. Peter J. Gomes of Harvard University. “Preservice jitters... anxiety... confusion,” he said. “And so we celebrate the ordinariness of the occasion.”

But Gomes also said there’s “something quite unique and special” happening in this small chapel.

You expected Gomes to speak of history: Yesterday, for the first time, homosexual couples could wed in Massachusetts. Before yesterday this union would have been illegal [sic]. Instead, Gomes referred to the two men before him as “unique” in their love. Men who put “16 years’ worth of thought and care and consideration” into getting married.

And so it was in many ways a traditional wedding (Eagan 2004b).

Westerhoff and Lang are shown marrying in the presence of many of the Commonwealth’s political movers and shakers. In a *Boston Globe* article mentioning, but not about, their wedding, it is noted that they were also the first male couple to receive a Civil Union in Vermont (DePasquale 2004). This is a couple who have centered life together as a couple, and who have worked to garner social recognition for their relationship when it became available. Their relationship is presented as something very important to them and Rev. Gomes’s statement, as reported by the *Herald*, about putting 16 years into getting married signifies the centrality of that relationship in their lives.

I doubt, however, that they actually put all that time into getting married. Yes, it is a rhetorical flourish. However, it can also be read as centering marriage, as making the longevity of their relationship *about* marriage. Life as a couple during those 16 years probably did resemble married life. There were undoubtedly the mundane tasks of paying bills, cooking meals, and cleaning the house. There were likely also arguments and inside jokes, as well as periods of caring for each other while ill, and nights of both passionate and mundane love-making. The labor what went into maintaining their relationship—“thought and care and communication”—are elevated as values associated with marriage.

These two men would likely have put that same labor into their relationship had marriage remained unavailable. They *did* put 16 years of labor into the relationship without marriage. However, once marriage became available, that labor was reinscribed. It is now described as being focused on marriage, instead of on a loving, committed relationship. The long-term couples we see have all done the work of relationship maintenance without the title or benefit of marriage. Their relationships are being newly elevated because they are now marital relationships. The boundary we are seeing established is one that retains this work and longevity in the marital relationship. It makes that labor a defining feature of marriage, and establishes a rhetorical boundary between marriage and other relationship forms. Marriage is valued as a long-term relationship, and these long-term relationships become about getting married.

Marriage is “Serious” business

The Westerhoff/Lang wedding shows a couple taking marriage seriously. This is consistent in representations of couples shown thinking about and working on their relationships. A consistent theme is that marriage itself is “serious business.” While the wedding ceremony might be a time to enact individual and cultural differences, even to have a bit of fun, marriage is not so frivolous. Part of being respectable involves treating marriage with the seriousness it deserves.

The 10th annual Gay-Straight Youth Pride rally yesterday was a little more than the usual array of rainbow-colored flags, pink triangle buttons, and the picture of unrestrained teen spirit.

This year, there was enthusiasm like never before.

"Everyone is just so happy about gay marriage," said Herve Tennessee, 21, of Somerville. "It's really about time." ...

... "I never cared about gay marriage before because I never thought it would happen," said Tennessee, who was wearing a cut-off T-shirt that read: "Love is a Battlefield."

Tennessee plans to travel to New York and reunite with his high school sweetheart, he said.

"I'm going to propose," he said. "I don't see why people have a problem with that. It's not like we're hurting anyone" (Tench 2004).

Tennessee is presented as being caught up in the moment, an understandable reaction. One might ask, though, whether rushing off to another city to "reunite" with an old flame, and to propose, is taking marriage seriously. I argue we are seeing boundary work occurring here, and the boundary being established surrounds respectability. Marriage is a commitment to be taken seriously, and to be entered into with full consideration instead of on a whim.

The moment came in mid-March, during a State House rally in favor of same-sex marriage. Boyfriends David Griffiths and Geoff Lin were there, lending support to the cause, when an enthusiastic speaker from one of the activist groups asked for a show of hands: How many fiancés were in the crowd?

Amid cheers, hands shot up, but Griffiths's and Lin's weren't among them. "We looked at each other thinking the same thing: Why aren't our hands raised?" said Lin. "If we are going to be life partners, shouldn't we be talking about this right now?"

The moment sparked an ongoing conversation between the men about their two-year-old relationship, and for now they have decided they're not ready to start calling caterers. "We're at a real turning point, and we're not moving toward marriage at this time, which is fine," said Griffiths. "Both of us aren't sure, so we're moving forward to respect that and allow room for figuring that out."

Griffiths, a psychologist who specializes in gay and lesbian couples, said the moment also crystallized a more general concern: As Massachusetts prepares to make history Monday by allowing same-sex marriages, he and others worry that in the midst of the excitement about a hard-won right, a concern that the window of opportunity may close in 2006, and a sense of obligation to the community, some couples may be rushing to the altar.

"It was just a spontaneous question on her part that was a way to get the crowd going, but it kind of put you on the spot," said Griffiths, who lives and practices in the South End. "Am I going to be part of the party, or not? And what's wrong with us if we're not attending the party? But marriage isn't that. The wedding reception may be a party, but the marriage isn't" (Yonan 2004).

Herve Tennessee is represented as being got caught up in the excitement of moment. Lin and Griffiths appeared with three other couples in the *Globe* two days earlier. That article focused the need to *not* rush into the relationship. Marriage is more than the wedding. It is a relationship presented as requiring thought and care and work, both before entering it and while living within it. It is a desirable relationship, but not one that should be entered into hastily.

We see this combination of desirability and exhilaration expressed in the rush of couples to San Francisco and to Multnomah County, OR in the spring of 2004, as well as to Massachusetts when it first became legal there (Robertson 2004). In the first week that same-sex couples were allowed to marry, the *Globe* reported that 164 couples had come from outside the Commonwealth to do so, even after Governor Romney had declared they would not be allowed to (MacDonald and Dedman 2004). Several of these couples were presented in the first few days, even with the knowledge that their relationships would still be unrecognized in their home states, like the McCary/Sullivan couple from Alabama I discussed above. A few couples mentioned the possibility of using their new licenses (which ended up being voided) to sue for the benefits of marriage in their home states. Most of them, though, were presented as just wanting to get married somewhere it was legal. Even if the marriage isn't recognized, even if the contract is nullified, getting married for the sake of getting married is still presented as something these couples view as worth pursuing. However, there are different ways of doing so, some more respectable

than others.

As soon as they heard Lynch's opinion [a non-binding opinion by the RI AG that Rhode Island may recognize the same-sex marriages contracted in MA], Lee and Judi McNeil-Beckwith, registered nurses who live in Providence, got in their car and drove to Worcester City Hall to apply for a license.

"We were clear that if it would be honored in our home state, we would get married," Lee said....

...In Northampton's City Hall, Christine Cintron-Pecoraro, 47, and her partner Ivonne Cintron-Pecoraro, 48, of New York City, said they came here to marry though they had no intention of moving to Massachusetts. But the clerks didn't know it.

"We are not planning to move here, and we did lie on the certificate," Christine Cintron-Pecoraro said. The couple plans to test New York's ban on same-sex marriage immediately.

"As soon as we get back today, we are going to challenge the law," she said. "I think our chances are very good in New York. It tends to be a very liberal state. And I know there are many other couples that plan on challenging with us" (Lewis and Ebbert 2004).

Contrast these images of the McNeil-Beckwiths and the Cintron-Pecoraros. One couple ensured that they were following the law, the other willfully subverted it. The first couple decided to marry only after it was clear there was a chance it would be recognized, the other lied in order to obtain a license. One couple respects and lives within the bounds of the law, the other subverts it and brags to the media. We do see other examples of lying to get around anti-gay legislation. For example, Michelle Cote lied about her relationship in order to adopt a child from a foreign country. The Cintron-Pecoraros lied in order to obtain a marriage license. However, in the first circumstance, there were no contrasting images presented. Cote was shown as breaking the law to get around her status as an outlaw. The contrast in this article, though, seems to place the Cintron-Pecoraros more squarely in that category of subversive outlaws. Setting aside for

a moment the nullity of a contract entered fraudulently, we see here another boundary surrounding respectability, one of respect for the law. Lying and breaking the law are generally taken to be unrespectable actions. There may be times when the violation of these standards might be acceptable, but respect flows from taking respectable actions. While the previous example, presented in isolation, may be, I think, read more sympathetically, this example seems more of an example of “flaunting” illegality. It is presented in a less-than-respectable way because of the contrast with a couple who waited and followed the rules.

Failure

Not all of the couples appearing in the news media during the period under study are able to make their relationships last for a lifetime. We are presented with several couples that collapse. They may have failed to do the right kind of work, to do enough work, or just to “make the relationship work.” Whatever the reasons, they have failed as couples. This establishes another form of boundary around respectability. It is difficult to remain a respectable couple if you are no longer a couple. Beyond that, because of the values associated with working on a relationship and keeping it centered, the inability to make the relationship work is often placed on the members as a fault. It may be a tragedy, but it is also a failure to adhere to long-term couplehood norms associated with marriage.

I highlight some of the failures of relationships here, and how those work to establish and reinforce certain norms of respectability. The failure of these relationships is a public failure. In part, that is due to legal conditions. Two of these reported relationships were lesbian (former) couples involved in lawsuits, which are public

records, regarding child visitation and support. I noted one of these couples above while discussing the complexly shifting boundaries between Heterosexuality and Homosexuality and married and unmarried status. In that case, the conflict was over support for a child. In this case, the conflict involves child visitation following the dissolution of the couple.

Certainly, there were plenty of indications that the couple was preparing for a family. By K.M.'s account, they met in the fall of 1992. Less than two years later, they moved in together. They registered as domestic partners and, in 1994 decided to have children. They began making arrangements with a fertility clinic.

The girls were born prematurely in December 1995. On Christmas Day, the women exchanged rings. To make room for the children, they moved across San Francisco Bay to Marin County.

"We were building a family. The thought was that we would always be together," K.M. said in a telephone interview. "I'm their mom, I'm their parent. Like any parent would, I expect custodial and visitation rights."

Two years ago, the birth mother moved with the girls to Massachusetts, her childhood home. In October 2002, K.M. asked a court to grant her parental rights. When the trial ended, her former partner began limiting contact with the girls. "There was little trust left," said Diana Richmond, the birth mother's attorney (Caina Calvan 2004).

This tale starts off as one like many other relationships, which highlights a point to which I will return in the next chapter regarding the convergence of Homosexual and Heterosexual life scripts. As they are shown, the couple met, fell in love, started living together, registered their relationship, and started raising children. There was an expectation of living together for the rest of their lives. However, they broke up, and ended up in court. There are several failures worthy of note here. The first, obviously, is the failure of the couple to stay together. This is made even more significant because of the presence of children in the home. The inability of these two women to come to some kind of visitation agreement on their own can be seen as another failure. They have been

unable to resolve the conflict by themselves, and have instead ended up in court. We are shown one parent refusing to grant visitation to another parent. Additionally, we see not only the failure of a relationship, but the failure to break-up well, to handle life as ex-partners amicably (which is not always a possibility). These personal failures bring the state, and news media, into their lives more directly.

The invitation of the state into the break-up, more directly into the lives of these individuals, is also an invitation for publicity. Engaging in “adequate” self-governance allows the couple (at least theoretically) to maintain some kind of privacy about their life. But, making it part of the public record removes the expectation of privacy. Additionally, cases such as this, and the publicizing of them, serve a public pedagogical function. Other non-married couples who fail to stay together and find themselves in situations like this will be bound by the precedents established in this case. If they be members of the news reading public, extant non-married couples will read about what might happen to them should they fail. The public is being taught about the legal procedures and precedents that unmarried couples face. The difficult break-up of this couple will affect more than just the two of them. Their public failure serves as warning and education for the public.

All of the couple representations we see serve some kind of pedagogical purpose. They may just be to inform people as to what is happening in the Commonwealth, or another part of the world. They may involve letting people know what steps they need to take in order to apply for a marriage license, like getting a syphilis test (Stearns 2004). There is also a point, which Toby Miller (1993) discusses with regard to cultural texts more broadly, in which these articles are training people in how to be good citizens.

When an article questions whether or not gay couples will rush into marriage too quickly (Yonan 2004), couples therapists are brought into the text to warn against such actions. Likewise, when couples' break-ups are detailed, the consequences of such failures are noted. The difficulty and emotional pain, even the loss of visitation rights, are named. We also see what types of actions can lead to such failure, and sometimes how to avoid it (see also Cossman 2007).

There is one other form of normative failure that I would like to note here. It is related more directly to sexual activity. Only twice in these representations is sex mentioned, and both times it figures negatively. The first was itself the rather stunning article about a lesbian foster mother accused of rape that I first noted in Chapter Three (Guarino 2004). In that article, anti-gay activist Ron Crews was quoted directly connecting lesbian sexuality and children's (lack of) safety. What I want to focus on, beyond the outrageous statements that this case is somehow indicative of a broader threat to children placed raised lesbian and gay homes, is how lesbian sexuality is itself pathologized. As I noted, there were only two articles about or containing same-sex couples that explicitly mentioned sexual activity. That article noted homosexual activity as a threat to children. The other, while also filled with sensationalist reporting, was about the failure of a relationship. I mentioned Joseph Barri and Jack Venzer in Chapter Four. In that case, my concern was with property issues. Here, I turn to a brief note in the article about the couple's sex life.

The personal battle and war of words between Venzer and Barri rivals the most bitter Hollywood divorces.

"I left for six hours to install his mother in her beach house," grumbled Venzer, recalling the day Barri left. "When I came home, the house was empty. I never saw it coming. I was devastated."

“He’s a great storyteller,” retorts Barri, who says in an affidavit that the couple was never monogamous and that he never forced Venzler to stay home. (Estes 2002).

This couple has failed as a couple. Their greater fall from respectability is in the ways they handle that failure. The article tries to establish an irony in the fact that Barri, a prominent lawyer and marriage equality advocate, is using the fact that same-sex couples cannot marry to avoid providing support for his ex-partner. He is also shown in conflict with the *Globe* over a wedding announcement with his current partner while involved in this conflict. The article exacerbates this couple’s failure, and their lack of respectability, by nearly holding them up to ridicule. Presented as engaging in petty sniping, rivaling “the most bitter Hollywood divorces,” the article also discusses how they never lived up to marriage. It is reported that there was no ceremony, no public expression of the relationship. Additionally, the couple was not monogamous. According to Barri and his lawyer, this is an indication that they weren’t married.

The *Goodridge* decision giving same-sex couples access to marriage notes that it is a relationship to “the exclusion of all others” no fewer than five times. That exclusivity may be with regard to the emotionally intimate aspects of the relationship, but I’m willing to bet that Chief Justice Margaret Marshall was thinking more specifically about sex. Marriage is *defined as* a monogamous relationship. Indeed, Massachusetts, along with 24 other states, still has an adultery law on the books. Although such laws are rarely enforced, particularly since the advent of no-fault divorce, the Massachusetts statute carries a potential penalty of three years in prison, two years in jail, or a \$500 fine (*Commonwealth v. Stowell* 1983; M.G.L. c.272 §14). The violation of marital monogamy is a *criminal* offense. Even if it is very rarely prosecuted as such, it is still a violation of the marriage contract. A failure to be monogamous is a failure to live up to

the normative standards of marriage. Barri is able to use this lack of monogamy, in what we might assume was a mutual decision, to denigrate his own (former) relationship as *less than* marriage. We see a similar thing occurring in an article that makes only a passing reference to non-monogamy.

He [Steve from Jamaica Plain] also said many friends are in "open" relationships. "What happens to that when they're married?"

"More people eligible for adultery," says Jill Blanchard, 52, of Somerville and, she adds, "for the stigma of divorce." (*Boston Herald*, "Heteros warn: Coupling has its miseries." November 20, 2003.)

In this rather light-hearted reaction piece to the SJC's *Goodridge* decision open relationships are presented as either a threat to marriage or a failure to live up to its standards, and divorce is explicitly stigmatized. Although the couples engaging in them may be long-term couples, somehow their relationships will be altered by going to the altar. Practices that are far from uncommon among gay male couples who are able to establish longevity (see Adam 2006; Stacey 2004, 2005) are stigmatized and excluded from respectability. Monogamy is reinforced as a marital norm. Marital bed death may not be an actuality, but the lack of representations of sexuality in what has been *the* site of legitimate sexual activity is notable. Publicity only occurs when sexual activity violates the norms of marital monogamy. What we see is the establishment of a boundary around the marital bedroom, a site no one may enter...even if the couple invites them. Normal people may sometimes cheat, but respectable couples are monogamous.

Respectability and Responsibility

In the British film, "Bedrooms and Hallways" (1999), a playful romp around the fluidity of love, and sexual identity and activity, the film's hero, Leo, is troubled by his

growing affection for and attraction to a Heterosexual man with a Irish brogue that “washes over you like some dark, powerful river.” Seeing no possible future in pursuing any kind of romantic or sexual relationship with someone identified as straight, he allows himself to wallow in misery. His roommate, Darren, however, will have none of it. Of course the relationship will end. “All relationships end,” he says. “You either split up or you die.”

We have seen examples of couples splitting up, and not doing it well. We have also seen couples worried about the possibility of death. We see couples planning for the end of their relationships. These issues surrounding the end of relationships bring me to another area of boundary work surrounding respectability: responsibility. The responsibility these couples take for each other with regard to end-of-life issues is part of what marks them as respectable.

However, not every relationship—marital or otherwise—ends due to death. Sometimes, people break up, and one of the other areas in which we see responsibility and respectability merging is in the planning for potential failure.

Barri and Venzer never had a commitment ceremony, but the couple did sign estate plans, leaving everything to each other in the event of death. After their deaths, the house would go to their children. But the agreements, Epstein [Barri’s lawyer] said, do not apply if the relationship ends (Estes 2002).

We briefly encountered this failed couple two pages ago. There, their fall from respectability was due to their failure to break-up well, and in the non-monogamous nature of their relationship. Here, we see another ways they failed to live up to marital norms by not having a ceremony in which they received public recognition of their relationship. They were responsible in planning for potential death, but didn’t plan for the possibility that their relationship would end for any other reasons. The failure to plan

compounds the failure of the relationship, and adds to the drama and trauma of the break-up.

The marital ideal of a life-long relationship makes planning for the possibility of a break-up seem gauche or mercenary. However, divorce is a prominent social reality, and the economic calculus involved in making decisions about whether to marry or not is a fact of life for many couples, gay and straight alike. Many marriages fail, which would seem to indicate that planning for such a possibility is a responsible course of action. While the romantic ideal of “happily ever after” may be what most people have in mind when they decide to get married, and while almost every couple that marries probably believes they will be part of the lucky half, the truth is that large numbers of them will divorce. Bad break-ups *might* be avoided by planning for the division of property in advance.

James Vogel and Robert Anderson happily planned their May 20 wedding with lilacs in the church, four entrée choices, and chocolate and lemon tea cakes at a South End reception. They are also planning for the possibility of divorce with a prenuptial agreement...

...Anderson and Vogel’s prenu will establish joint ownership of their West Roxbury home, which Vogel purchased years ago but they renovated together. The prenu is “bringing the financial aspect into line with the emotional part,” Vogel said...

...Vogel’s gift tax could be minimized upon divorce, if he transfers the deed to both their names and, in the prenuptial, agrees to split the value of the house 50-50....

...Both Anderson, who teaches architecture, and Vogel, an architect, have properties they also want to protect in a prenu. Anderson, 38, is likely to inherit a farm in Norway his ancestors have owned since the 17th century. Vogel’s parents gave him land in Falmouth, on Cape Cod. If they divorce, their family properties would be joint property under the law. Their prenuptial agreement, for example, will specify that as long as Vogel’s property is not developed, it will remain his. (Blanton 2004)

This couple, and recall Chapter Four and its discussion of the relatively privileged positions of the couples we see, is taking responsibility for their property. Marriage has become, more than ever before, an association of individuals. The historical transformation of this relationship has moved it away from that of a unit with each member having specified roles and responsibilities, and toward an agreement between individuals each with their own rights and interests. The household as a unit of production has given way to separate checking accounts. Property is still merged legally under marital contracts, but the prenup establishes a pre-divorce dissolution agreement. Here, Vogel and Anderson each want to maintain property that was theirs prior to the relationship. If they put joint resources into that property, it becomes joint property. I am less interested with the specifics of their relationship, than I am with the ways their decision to sign a prenuptial agreement is presented: it is the responsible course of action.

This issue of responsibility, and its relationship to respectability, comes up in a number of ways. One of the ways that these couples we are shown being responsible is in how they have worked—prior to being able to marry—to take financial care of each other. Marriage, even as an association of autonomous individuals, is a relationship of interdependence.

Karin Blake, 61, a Massachusetts estate-planning attorney, has paid into Social Security for 35 years. But if she dies before Connie Tassinari, 68, her partner of 31 years, Tassinari won't be eligible for any of Blake's benefits.

Blake has tried to make up for the loss of benefits by purchasing life insurance, but premiums for older policyholders are expensive....

... Frederick Hertz, an attorney in Oakland and co-author of *A Legal Guide for Lesbian and Gay Couples*, says he's representing a gay senior who could lose his longtime home because his partner died without a will. Initially, the deceased partner's family told the man he could remain in the

home, but when the value of the property doubled, they decided they wanted to sell, Hertz says.

Couples can avoid such disasters through estate planning, but most Americans, including many gay couples, don't have a will. Jack Evans, 74, and his partner, George Harris, 69, of Dallas have had a will for years, and they update it every year or two. Evans and Harris, who have been in the real estate business for more than 30 years, have taken numerous other steps to protect their financial interests. But many of their friends haven't followed their example, Evans says.

"I know a lot of people out there, a lot of my friends, that don't have their wills in order," he says. "That's absolutely crazy" (Block 2004).

In each of these cases, partners have taken special steps to make sure that their other halves will be cared for. They are shown responsibly managing risk, be it that of death or of divorce. This issue of taking responsibility is part, not only of lesbian and gay life, but of American life more broadly. Planning for dissolution or death is responsible and respectable because there are fewer sources of support should such problems occur. However, in looking at these media representations, and at public discourse more broadly, only the first half of that sentence is noted. Failure can result in a loss of respectability, and the risks of failure are increasing. Respect is reserved for those who successfully managing these risks.

In this chapter, my focus has been on the shifting boundaries occurring in reporting about same-sex couples during the Massachusetts campaign. I began with a discussion of the boundaries between Heterosexuality and Homosexuality are being altered by the introduction of marriage into gay and lesbian life. As I discuss in the next chapter, for many lesbians and gay men, the life course is coming to more closely resemble that of their Heterosexual counterparts. The introduction of marriage into lesbian and gay lives is a major site of this convergence, and is simultaneously creating

new boundaries between same-sex couples. The difference between married and unmarried status creates a division between these couples. It also creates new similarities between same-sex couples and different-sex couples. Married couples, whether heterosexual or homosexual, share a set of rights unavailable to unmarried couples. So, marriage itself is producing new boundaries while reinforcing and severing old ones.

I also focused on boundaries around respectability. My primary focus there was on how failure itself produces such boundaries. These issues are related to the normative standards that produce respectability. A failure to uphold those standards may lead to a loss of respectability. These standards might involve staying together—or breaking-up well when unable to stay together—or monogamy, or even lying on a marriage license application. Whichever area they flow from, however, it is the failure to live up to normative standards associated with couplehood that (re)produce cultural boundaries surrounding respectable couplehood. I now turn from the changes introduced by marriage and how they create boundaries to news representations of the broader transformations in lesbian and gay life.

Chapter 6 From the Closet to the Chapel

A dear friend of mine still likes to tell the story of how she discovered I am gay. We were on the Residence Life staff at Iowa State University and preparing for a new academic year. A few of us were having a small get-together in my room, and as she and the other folks were leaving, she spied the books I had left on my desk. I was reading through *Now That You Know* (Fairchild and Hayward 1998) and *Loving Someone Gay* (Clark 2005) in preparation for sending them to my parents. I was not yet out of the closet and had driven 45 miles to a bookstore in Des Moines to purchase these books. In terror, I watched her eyes focus on those books as she left the room. By the end of that year I would be an outspoken campus activist. According to the administrative people I worked with, I was the first openly gay live-in Resident Assistant at Iowa State (that they were aware of) and a completely different person than the terrified young man making a tentative incursion into the “Gay and Lesbian Literature” section of the bookstore after first ensuring no one would see me. Coming out of the closet created huge changes in my life, as it has been for millions of other lesbians and gay men. And, although it no longer defined my life, it remained a prominent shaping force.

In this chapter, I focus on how similar changes are represented in the lives of same-sex couples appearing in newspaper reporting during the Massachusetts marriage campaign. In Chapters One and Two, I discussed the institutionalization of the closet and introduced what I am calling a “cycle of incorporation” to explain the dismantling of that institution and movement toward the integration of lesbians and gay men into American society. I begin with a discussion of how gay men and lesbians, entering into the

institution of marriage, are shown as leaving this institution behind. This move, away from hiding and into the public, is represented in a progressive narrative of not just coming out of the closet but of overcoming oppression. The onset of marriage is also shown as initiating a change in lesbian and gay consciousness. While the closet mentality of accommodationist hiding no longer rules, the internalization of marginalization remains as a factor in how lesbians and gay men experience the world. The initiation of equal citizenship and social inclusion challenges the ways that second-class status has become accepted as simply “the way things are.”

I then move to a discussion of stories themselves. These are accounts of life we use to relay “what happened.” They are also sifted and organized. We may draw from the raw material of life in telling stories about it, but we make choices in how we pull all of that information together in the production of a coherent narrative. In particular, I focus on how the stories of closeted life and how they are told reflect the changing conditions of lesbian and gay life.

There are also stories not of what happened but of what is to happen. These changes in lesbian and gay life are also producing changes in the life scripts available to them. The onset of marriage availability, in particular, confuses the forms of possible life that have been available. It adds potential new episodes. However, it is not only marriage that is adding new possibilities. As lesbians and gay men are incorporated into more institutional settings, the life scripts available to them change in such ways that they are more closely resembling those of their Heterosexual counterparts.

Finally, I return to the closet. While it is a less powerful institution than it once was, it is not yet dead. Ideologies and practices of Heterosexual supremacy still hold in

many settings. These affect which stories can be told. However, even as Heterosexual supremacy still obtains as a major organizing force in society, changes in the stories told in news media both represent and reflect a situation in which anti-gay and lesbian discrimination, not lesbian and gay life, is increasingly understood as a social problem.

The Closet: a relic of the past?

I begin here by returning to the understanding of the closet as a social institution. This complex set of social practices keeps the desires, identities, practices, and lives of lesbian and gay people out of the view of other people. The act of “coming out,” which once referred to entering “the life,” has come to signify exposure of lesbian and gay selves and lives. The necessity of living in the closet is produced by the threat of negative sanctions should exposure occur. These can range from a disapproving glance or statement to the loss of a job, from rejection by one’s friends or family to physical violence. The threat of these penalties does the social work of maintaining the closet.

For millions of lesbians and gay men, this institution is of “diminishing social significance. Simply put, more gay people organize lives beyond the closet” (Seidman 2002: 91). That does not mean it is insignificant, though. Many people are partially closeted, keeping parts of their lesbian and gay life hidden from specific individuals. The living of rigidly segregated double lives that was once so necessary is becoming rarer and rarer. Although the closet as an institution may be falling away—in some areas much more quickly than in others—it is still a part of living memory for many lesbian and gay people, and a part of daily life for many others. I now turn to how this institution and its role in lesbian and gay life is reported in the newspaper articles I have been discussing.

When Alex Westerhoff, then 17, first came to America from his native Germany, he had to sign immigration documents swearing that he was neither mentally deranged, a communist or a homosexual. Westerhoff lied, and until he became a citizen 10 years later, he worried that someone might discover his lie and deport him.

Yet, last night in Manchester-by-the-Sea, about 100 guests—men in black ties and women in bejeweled gowns—celebrated their marriage with [Westerhoff and Thomas Lang] (Eagan 2004b)

We met Westerhoff and Lang in the previous chapter. Theirs was a wedding attended by the movers and shakers of Massachusetts political life. Recall that for much of the Twentieth Century it was *illegal* for lesbians and gay men from other nations to enter the United States, a ban that was finally lifted in 1990 (Eskridge 1999: 132-4). Without explicitly acknowledging it, the *Herald* is discussing the state's production of the closet. Exclusionary policies necessitated that Homosexuals conceal and lie about their lives. Dishonesty is central to life in the closet. Indeed, dishonesty *defines* life in the closet. We see that in the reporting of Alex Westerhoff's experience. Government policy required that he lie if he was to gain entry into the United States. To stay in the country, the lie had to be maintained. The risk of exposure carried with it the possibility of expulsion. Life in the closet, no matter how deep, is always a life under some kind of threat.

Note also how the reporting centers Westerhoff's experience. The *Herald* is providing a glimpse of life in the closet, of the worry that accompanies the threat of exposure. It is acknowledged that he lied, but that lie is placed in the context of historical conditions that made it necessary. The article is sympathetic to Westerhoff, offering no judgment of his dishonesty. Instead, the focus is on his emotional state. The constant fear that such dishonesty produces is contrasted with the ability to live, and celebrate, an openly gay life. Westerhoff's life in the closet is presented as a feature of

the “bad old days.”

It is notable that the power of that institution is generally represented as a relic of the past. “Look how far we’ve come,” is a basic theme within this article, and within the reporting of lesbian and gay couples more broadly. No longer is it necessary for Westerhoff to hide his gay self from the world. Now, he is able to openly proclaim himself to be gay, to make a public declaration of his love for another man. Instead of having to hide from the state, that institution is now recognizing and supporting his relationship. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is *facilitating* the living of his gay life. And, the tale told by the *Herald*, of movement away from a closeted life, is written as a tale of *progress*.

Again, I am treating the closet as a social institution. More than the living of a double life, it also includes the wider set of social practices that enforce the necessity of that dual existence. The immigration exclusions Westerhoff was subject to are part of that. I noted a number of other policies and practices responsible for producing the closet in Chapter Two. While lesbian and gay lives could be lived during the closet’s heyday, they were usually consigned to the margins of society.

Once, Bonnie Winokar was an 18-year-old lesbian in hiding, sometimes sneaking into the seedy, low-lit gay bars that thrived in the old Combat Zone. A school teacher, she worried constantly about being “outed.”

Once, Mary McCarthy was an unhappily married mother of three worn down by “living a lie.”

On Beacon Hill yesterday, Bonnie remembered hearing the news in November. The state’s highest court said gays could marry....

...Said Mary, “We do not have to live with secrets...or fear.” (Eagan 2004a)

Again, we are presented with closeted, hidden, lives. And, again, we see a progressive tale of moving away from the fear and secrecy of life in the closet. We also see other practices the upheld and maintained that institution. For example, we see how gay bars are segregated to a particular area of the city. The “Combat Zone” was a area of Boston, located near the Chinatown and Theater Districts, in which the city attempted to concentrate its “adult entertainment” sector (Addison 1976). It was Boston’s “red light district.” Because of the stigmatization of homosexuality, locations where lesbians and gay men could meet each other for socializing or sex were often relegated to areas where sexually oriented businesses were located. Often, these were spaces of both higher criminality and higher policing. There is also the fact that these bars were themselves “seedy” and “low-lit.” Bars catering to lesbians, gay men, and other sexual minorities were located outside “legitimate” market relations in many parts of the country. Gay and lesbian meeting places were defined as deviant sexual spaces and consigned to the margins. They were very often subject to more police harassment than police protection. These were risky places to visit.

In addition to being required to go to what tended to be a relatively unsafe part of the city, there was another risk for Winokar, this related to her job as a teacher. In political conflicts about Homosexuality, anti-gay actors often deploy the trope that Homosexuals are a threat to children by drawing on notions of Homosexuality as contagion to which children are particularly vulnerable and rhetorics of “recruitment.” In some locales, lesbian and gay identities have been used to fire teachers for violations of “morals clauses” (Cain 2000: 113-4). Some states have attempted to keep gay and lesbian people from becoming teachers. Although Californians rejected a 1978 ballot initiative

that would have required the firing of all Homosexual teachers, the Oklahoma legislature that year did enact a law barring the employment of lesbians and gay men as teachers. Parts of that law were struck down by federal courts in 1985, but the state House of Representatives has approved similar legislation twice since then, most recently in 1998 (Lipkin 2001: 195). There were, and often still are, solid grounds for lesbian and gay teachers to fear exposure. In Winokar's case, this threat is presented as existing during a previous part of her life. Again, we see a progressive tale away from the closet.

The other member of this couple is also presented as living a once-closeted life. The representation of Mary McCarthy's previous entry into a different-sex marriage is itself done in such a way that it defines life in the closet: it is "living a lie." As I noted in Chapter Two's discussion of lesbian mothering, it has been far from uncommon for lesbian and gay people to have children within different-sex marriages. These relationships were sometimes entered in attempts to "marry away the gay." Even if it wasn't done for such "curative" reasons, lesbian and gay people were still very often getting married because "getting married is what people do." For people coming of age in earlier generations, living gay and lesbian lives was very rarely seen as a viable option. It wasn't an available life path. In some places it still isn't. What was available, and expected, was getting married. We are all—lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, heterosexual, or kinky—raised in a society in which marriage is valued and valuable, and in which it is seen as the way life should and will progress for each of us. Sometimes people marry because they believe that getting married is what they are supposed to do.

Mary McCarthy is not the only person shown in these newspaper reports who was once in a different-sex marriage. However, there are only six such notations. Generally,

they appear as part of one-sentence statements about children. And, more importantly, they occur in the context of these couples marrying, or preparing to get married. Their current gay life is centered and celebrated. Rarely do we see stigmatization of those Heterosexual pasts as “living a lie,” as in McCarthy’s tale. However, the general trend is toward treating the gay life as and love as worthy of celebration.

These trends are not universal. Here I offer one article as a counter-example that helps to illustrate the larger point about the generally progressive narrative trajectory. This is not the only way to represent the changes in these people’s lives. The lives of people who were once heterosexually married and now in same-sex relationships, like Mary McCarthy, was used by anti-gay *Globe* columnist Jeff Jacoby in a hilariously hateful column (Jacoby 2003).⁴⁹ His argument was based on the notion that acceptance of Homosexuality led to the destruction of Heterosexual marriages. Because about forty percent of the couples obtaining Vermont Civil Unions contained individuals who were once heterosexually married, stigmas on homosexuality should be returned, retained, and reinforced. Same-sex relationships, he argued, should not be recognized because repressing Homosexuality and excluding same-sex couples from the protections and obligations of family law would “encourage” folks like McCarthy to stay married. In making a case for the return of the closet, Jacoby was basically saying, “It might require you to stay miserable, but by all means get and stay heterosexually married.”

Just as I introduced Nancy Polikoff’s (2008) alternative injustice framing in Chapter Three, I note Jacoby’s article because it presents an alternative to the progressive

⁴⁹ Because he didn’t cite any specific individuals, Jacoby’s piece was not included in the overall sample of articles about or containing same-sex couples. It was included here, though, as an example of the sorts of things still faced by some same-sex couples.

narrative we see in other reporting. I do so to “denaturalize” the reporting we are seeing. Because of the dominance of the preferred framing of harm flowing from the inability to marry, other possible ways of understanding the difficulties facing same-sex couples may be more difficult to see. Similarly, in the lives of these individuals a move away from the closet is presented as a move toward a happier, more fulfilling and honest life. It is possible to report on these issues in other ways. Jacoby provides just such an example. I introduce some of them in order to illustrate how the news we read isn’t “what happened” but a telling of it. Reporters and other media professionals selectively organize the information they put in news stories.

The stories of Alex Westerhoff, Mary McCarthy, and Bonnie Winokar all discuss different facets of life in the closet. I have discussed how these representations are themselves related to related to broader social practices that were involved in the production of the that institution. Again, the fact that these depictions locate its reign in the past is particularly notable, as is the fact that the life stories of these three people, and of several others that we see during this time period, move in such a way as to overcome the closet, not just come out of it. The oppression of lesbians and gay men—and make no mistake, the closet is not a protective institution but an oppressive one—is presented as something that is destructive. That presentation is being undertaken not only by the lesbians and gay men whose lives are being reported, but also by the media outlets doing the reporting. Yes, Jacoby argues on the *Globe’s* editorial page for a return to stigmatizing lesbian and gay desires, identities, and behaviors, and a reinstitutionalization of the closet’s repression. And, yes, there are other anti-gay voices appearing in the pages of the newspapers included in this study.

"It's a sad day for me personally," said Ron Crews, the former head of the Massachusetts Family Institute who is running for Congress. "The piece of paper my wife and I got 34 years ago had the words 'bride' and 'groom' on it. The piece of paper these couples are getting . . . says marriage has been redefined and devalued" (Jones and Bayles 2004).

Jacoby's article and Crews' statement provides a contrast to the stories describing the changes in lesbian and gay life. They also provide an illustration of the difficulty facing anti-gay actors. The tendency in this reporting is to describe the closet as a social problem, not lesbian and gay life. Crews' statement of sadness is contrasted with the joy of people getting marriage. It also illustrates the difficulties facing anti-gay actors. Crews receives that single unit of coverage. Governor Romney and President Bush also appear, but it is the same-sex couples that take center-stage. In that 92-sentence article, seven couples receive a total of 51 sentences of coverage.

When [Gloria] Bailey and [Linda] Davies first pledged their commitment to each other, their love and union were a secret. "We had a private ceremony, just the two of us, 33 years ago when we were not 'out' to another soul," Bailey said.

But in 2001, the pair was out in a big way, joining the other plaintiffs in the lawsuit that wound up before the state high court, which ruled 4-3 that barring same-sex couples from marriage violated the state's constitution. . . .

. . . On Monday, they went to the courthouse for a waiver with no fears. "I can't tell you how proud I am to go," Davies said. "The change in us, and in our society, in just the last three years is amazing."

The couple was given the honorary position of being the first to be taken before a judge. When they walked out clutching the white waiver, everyone applauded. (Jones and Bayles 2004.)

Tanya McClosky and Marcia Kadish kept their relationship quiet 18 years ago because they figured society just wasn't ready.

But yesterday, with fists pumping in the air, they stepped out of Cambridge City Hall and into the national spotlight as the first same-sex couple in the country to legally tie the knot.

“We’re certainly out of the closet now,” Kadish joked yesterday (Ballou 2004).

Again, we see a continuation with the theme of a progressive move away from life in the closet. Here, however, it is intimate relationships and life partnerships that once had to be hidden. Both of these couples once felt it necessary to hide their relationships. Neither of these is really able to do so anymore. Indeed, that hiding is presented *in contrast to* the joy of being able to openly declare their love. Their marriages are being publicly reported for all to see.

Even if they weren’t appearing in the *Boston Herald* and *USA Today* these couples would now be public as couples. A private commitment ceremony can be hidden, a marriage can’t. It is a public relationship. Couples may elope and attempt to keep their relationship from certain people, but their marriage is part of a public record. When couples file their marriage license a record of their joining together is maintained by state authorities. Because it is a public act, marriage can’t really be closeted.

If we consider this with regard to the narrative I have been discussing, what we also see is a positive value with being *publicly* gay and lesbian. These couples are seeking public acknowledgement of and support for their relationships. Being able to couple isn’t the issue. The couples we have seen thus far have been together for fairly long periods of time. They have established lives of interdependence, and have been represented as doing so. And, with relationships lasting for decades, we might also assume that they are “out” in their personal relationships. We know Davies and Bailey are, since we found out in Chapter Three that their families already considered them to be married. We also know from reporting on their relationship that Westerhoff and Lang previously sought state recognition of their relationship, being the first male couple to

receive a Civil Union in Vermont. The move from the closet to the chapel is a shift not just toward openness but toward publicness. Lesbian and gay lives have moved out of the shadows and into the spotlights. And, again, that move is presented, for the most part, as a positive one. It isn't just lesbians and gay men presenting it that way. It is also the news organizations telling stories of lesbian and gay couplehood.

Changing consciousness

The closet is only sometimes specifically named in these articles, and rarely as a social institution. However, within these representations we see it shaping how lesbian and gay people experience and understand their lives. While the institutional supports of the closet may have been predominantly dismantled, particularly in places like Massachusetts, the consciousness of our couples is still heavily influenced by it. The closet still affects lesbian and gay life.

One of the transformations accompanying the ongoing dismantling of the closet is a move from outsider to member of society. The closet was produced via the expulsion of Homosexuality from the legitimate channels of American life. The incorporation of lesbians and gay men involves the replacement of exclusionary policies and practices. Inclusion within the institutions of social life is becoming the rule. This is no small change, and it is related to both institutional practices and individual perceptions regarding the place of lesbians and gay men in society. Among those individuals whose perceptions are changing are the gay men and lesbians who can now legally marry.

“I never thought I would I would live to see this,” said [Joel] Hencken, 56. “I’m old enough to remember when you were mentally ill if you were gay. The changes I’ve seen in my own lifetime never cease to astonish me. It’s miraculous” (Convey 2004).

“This is amazing,” [Susan] Shepherd said. “You never thought this would ever happen, not in any amount of lifetimes you could think about” (Abraham and Klein 2004).

As they are shown here, these people quite simply never expected to be allowed to marry. These representations demonstrate how lesbians and gay men have internalized merely being tolerated. While many lesbians and gay men, and the families they form, have been *accepted* by their personal associates, broader societal acceptance has been sorely lacking. And, that is something that many lesbians and gay men have resigned themselves to, or at least become acclimated to. This may not be done consciously, but many people have accepted the partial outsider status they currently occupy. Limits to the acceptance of lesbian and gay life have been internalized and taken-for-granted facts of life.

When the clergy [at a Cambridge celebration] invited engaged couples to come forward for a blessing, Evelyn Gladu, 61, turned to her partner of 20 years, Bette Spear, 58, and popped the question.

"Are you asking me?" a smiling Spear said just before the pair headed out of the pew to receive a blessing.

Spear said she cried when she read the Nov. 18 Supreme Judicial Court ruling that said the state must allow gay and lesbian couples to marry.

"We didn't know we were second-class citizens," Spear said (Hill 2004).

"I wasn't aware of how repressed I felt," said Maryellen O'Neil, a plant manager for an elementary school in Truro, Mass., who will get a license on Monday to marry Lisa-Annette DiStefano, her partner of 18 years.

"I had never thought that we could get married," Ms. O'Neil said, "and I didn't know that it meant very much to me. I found out it did when, the day after the judges made their ruling, I was waking up in the morning and I had a smile on my face before I even opened my eyes" (Belluck and Zezima 2004).

Again, marriage—and the equality and social acceptance it signifies—is represented as something that had always seemed out of reach, beyond possibility. Many lesbians and gay men have internalized our semi-outsider status. It has become, not necessarily an everyday marker of exclusion and repression, but just “the way things are.” And, because of its non-availability, lesbians and gay men have taken all kinds of steps to provide whatever protections they for their relationships that they could. We see some of these efforts in the reporting, including in some examples I highlighted in Chapter Three. Same-sex couples have made private legal agreements through such things as power of attorney agreements, wills, and medical proxies to protect their relationships. They have also spent a lot of money on lawyers’ fees to do so. Lawyers have created practices specializing in such work. In other words, the outsider status of same-sex couples has become a taken-for-granted way of life and institutionalized as such. The small, and sometimes not-so-small, ignominies of daily life have become “the way things are.” Life goes on, and people have made ways to get through it as best they can. Marriage may not have seemed accessible, but family life had become possible and gay men and lesbians have created forms of life and institutionalized practices to protect their families.

Think again about the lines, “I wasn’t aware of how repressed I felt,” or “we didn’t know we were second-class citizens.” I had a similar reaction to the events of that spring. It surprised me, especially because a significant part of my work life is organized around studying and teaching about the practices and processes involved in the production and maintenance of Heterosexual supremacy. Even with that intellectual work, and with a background as an activist, I was shocked by my own emotional reaction.

One night, after spending something like 15 hours at the Statehouse singing and chanting, and just standing around, outside the House chamber, I broke down crying in the shower. Physically exhausted, I was also overwhelmed emotionally. The potential for actual *inclusion*, for becoming an equal citizen—a full member of society—was something that I had almost believed was unavailable. The threat of having it taken away seemed too much to handle. I, like O’Neil and Spear, had internalized and accepted my own marginal status. The availability of fuller forms of inclusion forced a shift in how we understood our place in the world.

Stories and Scripts

At this point, I would like to move from the broader social narrative being produced—that of a move from the bad old days of the closet to the good new times of inclusion and support—and toward a more specific look at life narratives. The stories being told by our couples, and retold by the news media, do share a certain trajectory. It is one of a move from exclusion and toward inclusion. However, there are also different life stories being generated. Our older couples lived closeted existences. Some of the younger couples and individuals we see in these representations have never experienced that institution.

Think of your life as a story, or as a collection of stories⁵⁰. It’s probably a fairly easy thing to do. After all, storytelling is a universal form of human communicative activity. It’s something we almost seem to do naturally. Telling stories is how we, as a

⁵⁰ On narratives, I am drawing from: Labov and Waletzky (1978); Labov (1972); Barthes (1977); Ricouer (1984); Langellier (1989); Riessman (1993; 2008); Plummer (1995); Bell (1996, 1998); Berger (1997); Schokkenbroek (1999); Amsterdam and Bruner (2000); Hinchman and Hinchman (2001); Bruner (2002; 2004); Davis (2002).

species, relay “what happened.” In narrating our lives, we select significant events and activities, and we organize them into a coherent whole as we tell them. We pick and choose significant moments from which to construct our life stories, narratively producing our selves (Bruner 2004). It is literally impossible for us to narrate every aspect of every moment of life. To do so would leave no time for doing anything else. It would also be inaccurate. Narratives are always partial fabrications. They “are not unreal accounts in the sense of being unrelated to reality. They are framed accounts” (Labov 1982: 220-1). Recall from Chapter Three how frames establish relationships between ideational units. The same thing happens when we tell stories. A story can be seen as a frame set in motion.

As we move through life, our narratives of the same incident themselves change. We select different parts of our lives as tellable, and we tell them in different ways. Queer theorist Shane Phelan illustrates this process in detailing the development of her lesbian identity.

When I first came out, I looked onto my past for the indicators of my true sexuality and glorified to find them. Thinking that I was discovering rather than becoming, I traced my history of latent lesbianism: being a tomboy, playing sexual games with pubescent girlfriends, being a feminist, not shaving my body hair. This was supported by several friends’ responses to my announcement: “I knew it all the time.” Wow! These people met me when I was married to a man, and they nevertheless knew! It must be true (Phelan 1993: 774).

Not only did Phelan’s sexual identity change when she came out, but the ways that she understood and narrated past experiences also changed. She discusses how many of the activities that suddenly became newly meaningful in the production of a *lesbian* self were themselves not essential markers of lesbianism, but of nonconformity with patriarchal expectations of feminine behavior. However, the social category of lesbian is

often defined in such ways—both within and outside of lesbian communities—as to also include some gender nonconformist practices. For many Heterosexually-identified women, such practices as climbing trees and not shaving body hair would likely have different meanings and would be incorporated into Heterosexual selves differently, most likely not as indicators of latent lesbianism. They would be narrated another way depending upon which type of life and forms of identity are being described. Various episodes, and the significant aspects of them, are woven together to form a *meaningful* tale of “who I am.”

Telling life stories while closeted means actively excluding experiences. Members of the couples discussed above, during the closeted periods of their lives, actively filtered out any information that might indicate homosexuality from the stories they told about their lives. They lived in fear that such information would be exposed, that tales of their gay lives would be told. Now, they tell stories that include their gay and lesbian identities and relationships. What was once shameful—same-sex desires and lesbian and gay lives—is now embraced. What was once hidden is now openly celebrated. Sneaking into a seedy gay bar in a dangerous part of town is not something that Bonnie Winokar would have likely talked about with her colleagues in the teachers’ lounge on Monday morning. Now, she can tell such a tale as part of a series of difficult episodes that have been overcome. She openly tells the story of life with a same-sex partner, and willingly tells her own lesbian life story to the entire world. Her gay life had to be hidden in her work life as a teacher. As her life has moved forward, her previous inability to tell is itself now told.

Lesbian and gay life has become publicly narratable. However, that narratability is still partial and unequally available. While not everyone may desire the reconstitution of the closet, it is still situationally enforced. Parts of lesbian and gay life are still considered untellable in certain circumstances.

Austin Naughton is about to start teaching his seventh-grade social studies class about the United States Constitution. What would normally be a routine part of the curriculum has become particularly significant to this Boston resident, who has been teaching at Devotion School for the past five years.

Naughton and his partner of six years have been closely following the debate surrounding same-sex marriage, since the pair is hoping to wed soon. But Naughton has also been warned not to talk much about his personal situation while teaching about the issue to his class.

"He should leave his personal experience out of it," says John Dempsey, principal at Devotion.

Dempsey said he is aware that Naughton discusses topical issues with students, including same-sex marriages. But he says such topics must be handled carefully.

"An educator needs to use judgment when dealing with young children from various backgrounds," said Dempsey, pointing out that some seventh-graders are only 12 years old (Samburg 2004).

Naughton's homosexuality, while acknowledged, is still stigmatized. The article notes that he has been "open about his sexuality for most of his nine-year tenure in Brookline," and has dealt with "mostly supportive" people in his time at this school. However, when it comes to studying this particular topical issue, it is his life that is controversial and must be purged from the lesson plan. In Chapter Three, I discussed the humanization of Homosexuals and how the life stories of poster couples moved some of the discussion of marriage away from the abstract realm of social issues and into the area of personal life. The request to depersonalize the issue and erase Naughton's life experiences reverses that move. There is an act of dehumanization with regard to the

issue when people's lives are erased from the discussion of these topics. In a way, the principal is asking Naughton to re-closet himself, at least partially, by keeping tales of his personal life out of the discussion.

"How much can a teacher talk about their personal life? Am I talking about my personal life too much or are these just natural mentionings of my life?" said Naughton, noting that heterosexual teachers can casually mention husbands, wives, or families without scrutiny (Samburg 2004).

The erasure of personal narratives of lesbian and gay life is one way in which Heterosexual supremacy is maintained. Naughton's comment about Heterosexual teachers is central to this. Certain tales of lesbian and gay life are to be erased while the same tales of heterosexual life are accepted. Naughton is able to generally live outside the closet. After all, he is telling the tale of being a gay teacher and wanting to marry his male partner in the *Boston Globe*, which is hardly the act of someone living a deeply closeted life. However, he is also expected to re-closet himself in certain discussions, particularly those involving children. The recent move toward greater a social tolerance of lesbians and gay men is one that still leaves tales of gay love, domesticity and family life outside the realm of acceptability in certain settings. It remains partial, local, and controversial.

However, the untellable aspects of gay life are shifting. Naughton is able to be "out" at work. Many of his colleagues will likely hear about his wedding in the teachers' lounge. Some may even attend. And, the *Boston Globe* is centering Naughton's perspective over that of the school's principle. Yes, the principle is given "face time" in the article and is able to present his concerns. He is also noted as saying that at least one parent has raised the issue. However, Naughton is given space to question the Heterosexual supremacy that comes from silencing tales of gay life while not even

questioning the same stories told by Heterosexuals. The newspaper, while presenting a “balanced” story, is simultaneously interrogating the practices of gay and lesbian oppression. It is providing a space for a gay teacher to discuss how he is being silenced in the workplace.

The circumstances and sites of telling stories about lesbian and gay life are shifting. We can clearly see this in the different experiences of our two teachers, Bonnie Winokar and Austin Naughton. These shifts are contested, though, and the movement toward greater inclusion has also seen the rise of anti-gay and lesbian backlash. “As the gay political agenda shifts from the struggle for toleration to establishing real social equality, resistance has stiffened” (Seidman 2002: 180). Part of that resistance exists in the call to censor stories of gay and lesbian life even, perhaps especially, when those lives are topics of controversy.

Scripting a life

Part of the shifting narratability of lesbian and gay life involves narratives of the future, anticipatory tales of life to be lived. In thinking about stories of events to come, it may be useful to consider them as scripts, like those for a play or a film. Approaching them in this manner we come to see them as stories we are intended to act out. We are performers in the play of our own lives, and the directions are set out, to some degree, in advance. These scripts are established and reinforced in variety of forms and settings.

We could even consider a well-known nursery rhyme to be a life-script.

Adam and Steve sitting in a tree
K-I-S-S-I-N-G
First comes love,
Then comes marriage,

Then comes baby in a baby carriage.

This rhyme sets up a specific order of events. It tells a story. It also presents a possible tale of the future for the children repeating it. They are reinforcing the socially expected life course of developing a love-based relationship and then establishing a family. People fall in love, marry, and have children. This rhyme reinforces that order of events. When we teach it to children we are also training them in a potential course of life. And children themselves, in learning and repeating this rhyme, are reinforcing this prospective chain of events. This small tale is more than just a few throwaway lines repeated for fun. It is a life-script, albeit a very minimal one.

We are all raised with certain expectations as to how our lives should be acted out, which paths they should take. Indeed, socialization processes—like teaching nursery rhymes or including “marriage and family education” in high school—involve training us as to which paths we should take, and which we should avoid. We are taught how those paths can and should be realized. These “future stories” shape and produce our goals and our hopes.

Lesbians and gay men are raised in the same society as our Heterosexual counterparts. We receive the same training and are taught to value similar things. Just like our Heterosexual siblings and friends, the life scripts we are raised with include expectations of marriage and family formation. Coming out as lesbian or gay, however, has usually meant a massive disruption in that script, as we saw above. Not only are life events reinterpreted, as Phelan demonstrated, but certain experiences and expectations, like marriage, are/were expunged from that script. While we have produced different story forms and scripted life paths, the possible future lives have been different than those

of our Heterosexual neighbors and family members. That is where the sense of “I never thought this would happen” that so many couples expressed comes from.

The ongoing incorporation of gay and lesbian life that is dismantling the institutional closet is altering the life scripts available to them. It has become more and more possible to insert lesbian and gay selves into the broader narrative forms and possible future lives that are made available within society. Indeed, “settling down” and raising a family has become part of a standard life-script for many lesbians and gay men. McClosky and Kadish had been together for 18 years before they could marry, and Bailey and Davies for 33 years. In a similar vein, the production of commitment ceremonies, and the development of blessings for those ceremonies within some religious traditions, has been a way of adapting lesbian and gay life scripts to wider social forms. Marriage may be (or may have been) unavailable, but scripts involving the formation of romantic-erotic pairs as the basis of family life have been altered a bit to include same-sex couples within them. Institutions have established practices that both drive and reflect those changes. And, gay and lesbian life scripts have been altered such that they now include getting married.

These shifts are illustrated in several of the articles regarding marriage becoming available to same-sex couples. Lesbian and gay couples are represented not just as experiencing something they never thought possible, as we saw above, but also struggling with what this means for the future of lesbian and gay life. It isn’t simply that marriage, previously unavailable and almost unthinkable, has become a reality, but also how this changes the anticipated ways that gay and lesbian life is to be lived.

David Faulcon, 39, interviewed at the Blade, a South End barbershop, admitted he'd feel "a little insulted" if his longtime partner (assuming he had one) did not propose marriage the moment it was legal. ...

...Steve from Jamaica Plain had practical concerns: Who proposes? Which parent (father of which groom or which bride?) foots the wedding bill? (Eagan 2003)

The introduction of marriage into gay life is represented as bringing a whole new set of concerns. Same-sex couples have worked out ways of establishing long-term committed relationships. They have figured out, often without dominant scripts being available to them, how to deal with questions like "Where is this relationship going?" or "Should we have a commitment ceremony?" As we saw in the previous chapter, they have established businesses to cater to such ceremonies. But, now that marriage is available all of that appears to be thrown into question. The incorporation of lesbian and gay lives into the dominant narrative patterns, including into possible future lives and the scripts that call for acting out, changes the significance of the forms of life lesbians and gay men have created. No one worried about which parents would pay for a commitment ceremony because it wasn't a "real wedding." Now that the "real" thing is available, the working assumption appears to be that lesbian and gay lives will have to be changed in order to "fit" within those scripted patterns.

What color should the wedding cake be? Who gets the engagement ring? Should the engagement ring even be a part of the proposal process?

These are some of the issues that will need to be resolved if and when the Supreme Judicial Court's ruling to legalize gay marriage becomes law next year...

..."How would I propose to Mark," [Bryan] Rafanelli wonders, "assuming he's not going to propose to me? Who asks who?"

In this fog of confusion, Rafanelli is at least sure about one thing: "I don't want a diamond, I'll tell you that." (Jones 2003)

The same questions raised in the previous excerpt are present here. The incorporation of lesbians and gay men into dominant life scripts is something anticipated due to marriage becoming available. Something not mentioned, however, is that the scripts involving proposals, rings, paying for weddings, and the like is that these social scripts are highly gendered. Getting down on one knee and offering a ring is men's work. Crying and accepting is women's work. If everyone acts out their roles in the proper way, we have a happy ending. The presences of two men or two women gender-fucks the proposal script.

These specific situational scripts have largely been absent from lesbian and gay life, thus the questions. This isn't because people haven't been coupling, but because there was no marriage to propose. Additionally, the gendered aspects of this script make it somewhat inappropriate, or at least a little confusing. Women don't ask, and men don't get asked. So, the availability of marriage, adds new possible episodes within lesbian and gay life scripts. However, the gender issues involve also serve to confound those scripts. Currently, there isn't a non-gendered proposal script into which people are trained.

Also notable, however, is that lesbians and gay men have produced *alternative* life scripts that did not make use of such things as proposals and marriage. "I don't want a diamond" is an explicit rejection of the dominant script. It may be that Rafanelli is rejecting the gendered aspects of the diamond ring. After all, women, *not men*, receive diamonds in these situations. It may also be a partial rejection of the acting out of certain life practices. What is being presented is a process of social change in which the life scripts of lesbians and gay men are presented as being thrown into flux. Some couples reject marriage altogether, but they are presented as throwbacks to an earlier era (Aucoin

2003). The larger issues facing lesbians and gay men are presented as involving the formulation of new life scripts that incorporate the anticipated moments and trajectories that come from the broader culture while maintaining some of the cultural practices and values produced in gay and lesbian communities.

The inclusion of marriage is but one way in which the life scripts of lesbians and gay men are becoming more like those of our heterosexual counterparts, both within these news representations and the broader society. As lesbian and gay life is incorporated *into* the dominant patterns of American life, these scripts are merging at earlier life-stages. Young lesbian and gay people can expect more of the same things their straight counterparts can expect than people of my generation could. Perhaps nothing illustrates this more clearly than a *Boston Herald* column that discusses the move toward greater acceptance of lesbians and gay men.

Up in Dover, N.H., population 26,084, hardly a countercultural capital, with little white Christmas lights and a covered bridge in its down home town center, high school seniors just elected two girls as yearbook “class sweethearts.” Two lesbian girls....

...”I am very proud of her,” regular guy service technician Fred Salisbury said yesterday of 17-year-old Nicole, a pretty , green-eyed blond, top 10 athlete, a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity.

As for her “sweetheart” of two years, Ashley Lagasse, Salisbury said, “She is like a member of our family. If we go to Six Flags, wherever, she is welcome....”

...The sort of couples Rudnick, et al [who are sponsoring a marriage exclusion amendment in Massachusetts], fret will seduce our little ones were just deemed “cutest couple” by 77 percent of their 350 classmates....

...“(Nicole and Ashley) have been a couple for two years now. I guess all the students know and then the voted her this (honor). Like I said, I am very proud of her,” Fred Salisbury said. “She really is the perfect kid.” (Eagan 2001)

Dating someone of the same-sex in high school *and* being recognized by your

classmates as the cutest couple is something that would have been unimaginable for the lesbians and gay men above who hid their relationships and selves deep in the closet. Indeed, it still is for many young people today. Here, the school's superintendent overruled an administrator who tried to challenge the class's decision to *honor* this lesbian couple. Their inclusion is institutional. Consider this as part of the cycle of incorporation I introduced in Chapter Two. Groups like Gay-Straight Alliances are popping up around the country, although not always without controversy. Massachusetts has had a state commission focusing on the needs of LGBT youth since 1992⁵¹. A year later the state enacted a "Students' Bill of Rights" that included protections for lesbian and gay youth. The Boston metropolitan area hosts an annual prom for LGBT youth and hosts an independent Youth Pride event. New York City has an alternative high school that is predominantly geared toward serving the needs of sexual minority youth. In other words, young people in these areas are being provided more opportunities to openly express lesbian and gay identities, and to live lesbian and gay lives. The incorporation of lesbian and gay youth into these institutional processes is related to these changing narrative forms. Going to the prom, for example, is a ritual of high school life in many parts of the country, as is taking part in senior class "award" voting. These were once unavailable to those with same-sex partners. Now, we see such a couple being *honored* by high school classmates and supported by their parents and school administrators.

⁵¹ The Commission, originally established by Governor William Weld in 1992 the commission. It was under the purview of the Governor's office until 2006, when Governor Mitt Romney, in the continuing rightward and anti-gay trajectory his political career took as he prepared for a Presidential run, threatened the Commission's funding. The General Court removed the Commission from the Governor's control and established it as an independent body that year. Information on the Commission and its programs can be found at: <<http://www.mass.gov/cgly/>>

These two young women are presented as being accepted simply *as a couple*. Their lesbianism, while central to the article, is almost incidental to their high school lives. Nicole's father talks about her the way we might expect any proud father to talk about his daughter, and three-quarters of her classmates were willing to vote for Nicole and her girlfriend, not as the cutest lesbian couple, but simply as the cutest couple. And, the article presents their inclusion in a positive light. Admittedly, this is an opinion piece. However, there is a similar dynamic, as I have noted, in much of the news reporting here. Rejection of these couples is presented as a social problem.

For the previously closeted couples presented above, being voted as the cutest couple in your class would have been unimaginable. Indeed, the opportunity to marry that some of them are exercising is presented as almost inconceivable. For students in many parts of the country, being accepted in high school is still out of the realm of possibility, as is the opportunity to marry. But, the representations of gay and lesbian life produced during this campaign—and this article was written to contrast the reception of these two young women with a group in Boston organizing to enshrine the exclusion of same-sex couples from marriage in the Massachusetts constitution—show how the social location of gay men and lesbians in American society, or at least news representations of it, is shifting.

The closet: dying but not dead

I do not want to overstate the degree to which the couples presented during the period under study here are included. While there are many stories of acceptance, it is partial and contested. The context of all of these representations is the pursuit of access

to marriage. This is not an uncontroversial subject. American voting publics have made it clear time and again that they reject such inclusion. The couples represented here still experience a variety of forms of exclusion and discrimination. Recall how some of the couples discussed above once felt that they had to hide their relationships. Austin Naughton is shown still being asked to hide his relationship when he is teaching. The closet, while less of a total institution than it once was, and while playing a smaller role in the lives of more and more lesbians and gay men, is still a fact of life for many people.

When they're at home in Alabama, Chris McCarry refuses to hold hands with his partner in public, but yesterday the handsome couple, dressed in similar brown suits, stood atop the Town Hall stairs waving a license that allows them to marry.

"I realize that people may change toward us if we display our affection," McCarry, a 43-year-old divorce lawyer, said yesterday. "But here, they're cheering for us outside the courthouse" (Richardson 2004b).

The "changes" that might overtake people should they encounter McCarry and his partner holding hands are not presented as positive ones. Provincetown, and "liberal Massachusetts," is set apart as someplace different. It is a space where it's not only ok to be gay, but where same-sex relationships are celebrated. The Bay State is "different." The closet is may be a social location, but the institutional practices that support it vary according to geography. We are presented, overall, with progressive narratives of movement toward inclusion and equality. However that movement is partial, tentative, and local.

"I really think this could backfire badly," said a corporate attorney in Kansas City, Mo., who makes no particular secret of his sexual orientation but refuses to proclaim it.

"I've got one foot out of the closet, which is far enough for Missouri," he said.

Speaking on condition that he not be identified, the attorney said that had gay activists focused on achieving Vermont-style civil unions they "could have won broad support from many Americans. But 'real marriage' is just a bridge too far. I've got straight friends, dear friends, whom I know to be fair-minded and compassionate. But marriage between men and men or women and women - that's just not palatable to too many people. "

He added: "I'm truly fearful that single-sex marriage will inflame prejudice at a time when gays and lesbians are winning genuine acceptance on so many other fronts. Is that marriage certificate really worth it?" (Nickerson 2004).

Note how both McCarry and his partner, and this anonymous lawyer, feel the need to closet parts of their life. This is true even in a metropolitan area like Kansas City. The closet consciousness I discussed above, the internalized acceptance of being “less-than” still reigns. The fear of a political backlash is well-founded. Fourteen states, including Missouri, passed marriage exclusion amendments that year. Alabama did so in 2006. Several gay commentators, hardly closeted ones at that, have expressed dismay at the threat and actuality of anti-gay backlash because of the pursuit of marriage rights (see esp. Warner 1999, D’Emilio 2006)

Before moving on, I want to take issue with something the lawyer said. A gay life in the closet, even partially, is not a gay life that is accepted. It is a life that is tolerated, and there is a difference. Nicole Sullivan and Ashley Lagasse were honored by their classmates as a couple. They were accepted as full members of their high school class and community. People in Provincetown are shown cheering for McCarry and his partner—as are people throughout the Commonwealth on those first two days of marriage. This lawyer’s life is not accepted. He is shown feeling the need to hide his identity. While a sense of caution can be a useful survival strategy, it also points to the partial acceptance of second-class status and the closet mentality I discussed above.

Some may accuse me of being too hard on this man. After all, accommodating

Heterosexual demands for the erasure of gay life can keep one from being disowned or assaulted. There are many areas of life, even in the Commonwealth, where coming out can be dangerous. I have had students in this city thrown out of their home for being gay, and discriminated against in public settings. The movement toward inclusion that I have been discussing is partial, and the lesbians and gay men presented here are well aware of the tentative nature of their acceptance. Something that comes up not infrequently is that anti-gay discrimination is very much *not* a thing of the past. The people presented here, despite growing acceptance, still have experiences and expectations of being excluded.

On Friday, in a Brookline store, Sara Orozco leafed through a display of ketubahs ornate Jewish wedding contracts. Orozco, raised Catholic, had been practicing the word on the way over, nervous about getting it right. Her partner, Lori Herman, who is Jewish, had told her not to tell anybody in the store the couple were lesbians, fearing disapproval. But all the ketubahs referred to brides and grooms, and she hadn't expected that. Orozco had to ask for help.

At first, the salesman didn't see why she needed a ketubah that didn't contain the word groom. Was the couple very old?

"It's a bride and a bride," Orozco said, tentatively.

The man paused a minute, then suddenly understood and clacked shut the display.

"That kind of ketubah, we don't have them here," he said, politely.

Orozco, 41, felt her blood rush. It all came flooding back: the pain of not fitting in, the curious stares of strangers on the beach, her futile attempts at dating boys to save her family from shame (Abraham 2004).

The fear of disapproval remains, and it is well-founded. It isn't only occurring in Missouri or Alabama. Even though Massachusetts has moved toward including same-sex couples within marriage, various communities, individuals, businesses, and organizations within the Commonwealth still refuse to do so. In this case, the issue is finding a *ketubah*

for a same-sex couple. Such other things as what kinds of little plastic couples are available to set on the top of a wedding cake or the exclusion of same-sex couples from “Congratulations” cards, discussed in Chapter Four, provide examples of how gay men and lesbians and the families they form are excluded within the micro-practices of daily life. The reaction of “we don’t have *that* kind of product” is an ongoing reminder of the non-acceptance of lesbian and gay life. These seemingly small day-to-day rejections are part of broader system of social practices through which Heterosexual dominance is maintained. However, they are also presented from the perspective of lesbians and gay men. The man behind the counter isn’t interviewed. His perspective on same-sex couples and their inclusion is not mentioned. Again, because of this centering of gay and lesbian experience, anti-gay discrimination is presented as the problem.

We also see this in a story about another area of exclusion, life with families of origin.

A moment after the diminutive Congregationalist minister pronounced them legally married last weekend, Marianne Leahy tenderly kissed her partner of 18 years on the lips and breathed a sigh of relief.

The sigh was not because her partner and their three children were now legally one family, or because at that moment she became formally bound to the woman she had pledged to love until the end of her days.

Rather, it was because swirling amid the emotion of the day was a terrible family tension. Leahy's sister had never seen her kiss a woman before and as Leahy leaned toward her partner, she realized, as much as she didn't want to think about it, that since her back was toward her sister, she wouldn't see the kiss.

"I know I shouldn't have cared," Leahy, a resident of Boxborough, said after wedding. "But that's what I was thinking" (Belkin 2004b).

I discussed above the ways that lesbians and gay men have internalized their marginal status in society. Recall how Chris McCary and his partner, the couple from

Alabama who married in Provincetown, refuse to hold hands in their home community because of the reactions they might receive. As with that example, Marianne Leahy is shown as having internalized her marginal status. She is shown being concerned about the reaction of anti-gay Heterosexuals at her own wedding. Making peace, even within our families, has often meant “getting along.” It has meant accommodating homophobic expectations in order to “keep the peace.”

Leahy and her partner, Lori Weissberg, needed to look no farther than the front row of the wedding party to acknowledge an embodiment of those dynamics.

In the front row, wearing a black dress and a stoic expression, sat Leahy's older sister.

Just three weeks earlier, she was refusing to attend the wedding. Conspicuously absent was Weissberg's older brother as he has been from her life for years.

Of all the stress that led up to their wedding preparing their home, writing their vows, paring the guest list the presence and absence of those two siblings was among the most anxiety-provoking for both women. Though she wanted to be surrounded by her friends and family, Weissberg didn't even think to invite her older brother, a financial executive in Connecticut. His wife believes homosexuality is an abomination, Weissberg said. She refuses to allow Weissberg's name to be mentioned in her house.

"She thinks our lives are a sin," Weissberg said of her sister-in-law. "What am I supposed to do with that?"

Leahy also wanted to be surrounded by her family, but three months before the ceremony, her sister whom she used to speak with on the phone nearly every day told her that while she could tolerate Leahy's lifestyle, she had no intention of endorsing its sanctification (Belkin 2004b).

The price of inclusion within our families of origin for many lesbians and gay men has been the erasure of lesbian and gay lives, either partial or complete (Westin 1991: Chapter 3; Naples 2001). If those lives aren't erased, if people aren't willing to closet themselves, they face the risk of expulsion. Here, Heterosexual members of the

family expect Leahy to act in such ways as to make them comfortable with their anti-gay attitudes.

Above, I discussed the inclusion of lesbians and gay men and the families they formed, and how these news representations present that as a progressive tale away from exclusion. This story, and episodes within others, demonstrate that such inclusion is far from universal. These individuals and couples are engaged in political and personal conflict over their acceptance. The news stories here show the personal costs of such exclusion. Emotional turmoil and trauma flows from conflicts with and rejection from families of origin. Fear keeps life hidden.

But, in focusing on the couples themselves, these newspapers present these episodes in such ways that the experiences of lesbians and gay men are centered. That doesn't mean that those opposed to accepting and including lesbian and gay lives are not given voice. Although Weisberg's sister, brother, and sister-in-law are not heard from in this article, journalistic objectivity norms ensure that we hear from anti-gay actors in much of the coverage of the *issue* of same-sex marriage. Protestors, including the Phelps clan from Topeka, are shown at the celebrations on the first days of marriage, and at the various meetings of the constitutional convention. Anti-gay activists appear in the same stories about the court case that many of our public face couples appeared in. However, when we see the couples, when they are the center of focus, the *harm* of homophobia is presented, and it is presented as a negative. Anti-gay and lesbian discrimination, not lesbian and gay existence, is the problem.

Recall the Jacoby article I mentioned above. His argument was an example of how the stigmatization of gay and lesbian lives might be presented in a more positive

light. It was a way to keep people married. We might also think of how the specific couples we meet in the news could be presented differently. If we think of these exclusions from the perspective of some of the anti-gay activists in Massachusetts, we might write the stories in such ways as to show how discrimination against same-sex couples presents negative incentives for the living of “immoral” lesbian or gay lives. These organizations would like to see *fewer* people living openly as lesbian or gay. Providing disincentives for the living of those lives could be presented, at least from their perspective, as a positive development. Making it harder to be gay, providing incentives for gay people to “get over” or “move out of” their homosexuality and into heterosexual lives would then be an indicator of success. If the tale of Sara Orozco were told from the shopkeeper’s perspective, we might see a tale of lesbians “polluting” and “degrading” a sacred tradition, just as Ron Crews said above. I bring this up to note that the news stories under consideration here are organizing and presenting information from a particular perspective, one that focuses on telling about the lives of lesbian and gay men from their own point of view.

A few decades ago such stories as these, presenting the news from a lesbian or gay point of view, would rarely have been published (Alwood 1996). Now, when lesbian and gay lives are reported, their point of view is favored over those who would stigmatize those lives. In Chapter Two, I discussed the cycle of incorporation as the broad process by which lesbians and gay men are being integrated into American life. The dominant theme of this chapter has been how those changes are reflected in reporting about same-sex couples during the Massachusetts marriage campaign. One of the most important changes in that regard has been the incorporation of gay and lesbian perspectives into

news reporting.

That centering of lesbian and gay life in news reporting is a central feature of this chapter. It is one part of the transformation of lesbian and gay life in American society. In this case, the transformation involves the centering of gay and lesbian perspectives in news reporting. The broader theme of this chapter has been the transformations in narratives about lesbian and gay life. Related to the centering of these narratives in news reporting is the fact that such tales are now tellable in news reports and other public settings. During the days in which the closet reigned as the dominant institution in gay and lesbian life, tales of lesbian and gay life had to be hidden. Now, tales are told about the hiding of those lives.

Perhaps more central, though, is the transformation in prospective tales of lesbian and gay life. The scripts available, the tales of life to be lived, are increasingly coming to approximate those available to Heterosexuals. The cycle of incorporation at the heart of these changes in lesbian and gay life includes the incorporation of these lives into dominant narrative forms. Although scripts of Heterosexual and Homosexual life are converging, the structures of Heterosexual domination have yet to be completely removed, and discriminatory perspectives and practices remain in place.

Chapter 7 What Price Respectability?

During the process of writing this work, I presented a first draft of what became Chapters 3-6 at a meeting of the Movement/Media Research Action Project seminar at Boston College. After the meeting, my colleague, mentor and friend, Charlotte Ryan, said to me, “This is a very ambivalent work.” She’s right. This work is ambivalent. So am I. As I am writing this, I sit in a strange space of desiring the inclusion that accompanies these politics while simultaneously despising the mainstreaming work that restigmatizes many forms of queer life. That may overstate things a bit, but we see these same battles every year when people complain about the drag queens and leatherfolk and bare-breasted lesbians in Pride parades. It seems that, in the pursuit of marriage and identarian civil equality, asking questions about what type of society we are seeking inclusion in become unaskable. The transformative politics of liberation are being replaced with a fight to be the same.

In this concluding chapter, I revisit some of the themes I have been discussing while also exploring that sense of ambivalence. The broad theme of this study has involved the changes taking place in lesbian and gay life, particularly how they are being represented in newspaper reporting about same-sex couples. A secondary theme has been the production of Respectable Same-Sex Couples as a social type within these processes of change from abjection to absorption. These transformations in gay and lesbian life over the past few decades have been nothing less than stunning.

A group of people despised by virtually everyone, hounded and pursued by government officials and law enforcement agents, condemned by every significant religious tradition, and pathologized by scientific experts now has taken its place among the panoply of groups — ethnic, racial,

religious—that claim recognition and legitimacy in public life. (D’Emilio 2006)

It was only a little over five years ago that the United States Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional to criminalize sexual activity between adults of the same sex (*Lawrence v. Texas*). No longer could we be arrested and thrown in jail for making love, which is exactly what happened to the two Texas men who initiated that lawsuit. While Justice Kennedy made it perfectly clear that they were not endorsing state recognition and protection of same-sex couples as legitimate families, less than a year after that decision such couples would be getting married all over the Commonwealth of Massachusetts⁵². Fewer than twenty years ago, it was illegal for lesbians and gay men to enter the United States, and only thirty-five years ago, we were officially mentally ill. Now, some states are actually facilitating the living of (certain) lesbian and gay lives. While equality is still elusive and contested, and while social inclusion is partial and tentative, the general tendencies are moving in the direction expressed by Prior Walter at the end of Tony Kushner’s monumental work, *Angels in America*: “We will be citizens. The time has come” (1994:148).

However, inclusion and the pursuit of equal citizenship come with a cost. Some parts of lesbian and gay life must be left behind if we are to gain entry. The reinforcement of normative boundaries accompanying the deployment of respectability continues the exclusion of certain minority sexual practices and values. I briefly noted this in Chapter Five’s discussion of the Barri/Venzer break-up. That couple’s non-monogamy was stigmatized, despite it being a relatively common, even routinized, relationship practice

⁵² For a discussion of the boundary maintenance work occurring in that decision, see Cossman (2007: 28-32)

among many long-lasting same-sex male couples (Adam 2006). In the legal, political, and cultural pursuit of marriage, in the processes of being absorbed by state and society, what are we leaving behind? Who are we erasing? Are those losses worth it? What choices do we have and can we make in these matters?

These questions were refreshed for me recently during a romantic dinner. My date and I were doing the usual small talk involved in getting to know each other, and I mentioned the themes of this dissertation. In the conversation that followed, it turned out that neither of us was really interested in getting married, and both of us were critical of what we saw as a dominant theme in current gay and lesbian politics: the struggle to be the same. One of the things we were both trying to figure out was, “What does it mean to build a gay life in the contemporary world?” Is gay life now the same suburban picket fence, only adorned with a rainbow flag?

Even as I feel the desire to resist the trends that may render gay difference as something akin to the choice of toothpaste, I should also note the joy with which I personally greeted the victories in these marriage struggles, rare as they may be. As I said in the Introduction, I have never experienced anything like the collective joy I shared with thousands of people in front of Cambridge City Hall on the night of May 16, 2004. I also wept with happiness at my aunts’ 2005 wedding in Vancouver, BC. I personally despise the emphasis on and reinforcement of marriage, *and only marriage*, as the sole legitimate site of family formation and sexual activity that flows from these politics, but I’m also a sucker for romance, and I still tear up when reading many of the articles in this study. The French romantic comedy *Amelie* (2001) always gives me the sniffles, and I

even get a little weepy while watching television talk-show marriage proposals. Have I mentioned my ambivalence?

In this concluding chapter I return to many of the themes I have been discussing throughout this work. The news reports I analyzed detail any number of changes occurring in lesbian and gay life over this first decade of the Twenty-first Century. While I may still tear up when re-reading them, I also become very frustrated. I begrudge the couples nothing in their desire to protect their families and gay public acceptance for their relationships (see Lannutti 2008). However, the elevation of marriage above all other relationships, the praise of the institution and stigmatization of nonmarital families, and the exclusion of nonnormative gender and sexual practices leaves me cold.

The changes we see are moving in contradictory directions. However, one thing that I found very encouraging is the centering of lesbian and gay life. It may be a relatively limited representations of such life, and even more limited representations of the various worldviews and political ideologies that exist within our communities, publics and movements, but lesbians and gay men are telling their tales to the world as participants in society. This alone represents a significant change since the day in the early 1990s when I stood in a friend's Ames, Iowa apartment and declared that we'd never see same-sex marriage in my lifetime.

To begin, I would like to connect the biopolitics involved in normalizing the population that I discussed in the Introduction of this work with the "cycle of incorporation" I developed in Chapter Two. The former involves the simultaneous processes of shifting normative boundaries, particularly with regard to the destigmatization of Homosexuality, and the use of disciplinary knowledge and public

policy to mold the social body. The latter uses such knowledge to absorb political subjects into the governing relations of social life.

As an example of these processes, consider the state's absorption of gay and lesbian social service agencies, like the Fenway Community Health Center I discussed in Chapter Two. A recently instituted program at the Fenway involves the provision of counseling services, support groups, and publicity campaigns to encourage and assist people, particularly men who have sex with men, to stop using crystal methamphetamine. This program is partially funded by the federal government's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (Jacobs 2007). Through specifically targeted programs such as this, the state is attempting to mold the population in such ways to decrease or eliminate the use of this drug. The state and its proxy agencies, using social scientific knowledge and psychotherapeutic/medical/public health expertise is attempting to shape the behavior of its citizens.

Similarly, when I go to that clinic for my regular HIV and STI-testing, I am subjected to a series of questions about my sexual behaviors, none of which are related to diagnosis, for which only my blood and urine are needed. The asking of these questions and the recording and reporting of my answers are practices of social surveillance. From the information I provide—along with thousands of other patients at the Fenway, and millions nationwide—knowledge about the populace's health and sexual practices is developed. New techniques of intervention on the social body can then be produced. These may take a variety forms, from public advertising campaigns to individual counseling sessions, but they all have the purpose of getting people to engage in certain activities, like consistent condom use, that make them/us less likely to contract HIV and

other sexually transmitted infections. The state and various disciplinary fields of expert knowledge are working to mold the population. These promiscuous practices of surveillance and programmatic intervention are the technologies that Foucault referred to as “biopower”(1990: 140).

The incorporation of lesbian and gay lives involves more than the provision of support for living those lives. It also absorbs them into these governing relations of society. The Fenway, for example, is not only a site where lesbians and gay men go for medical treatment, it is also a site through which the state monitors the sexual activities and health of these citizens, and intervenes in their lives. No longer are these citizens subject to the repressive forms of policing that were the hallmark of mid-century Heterosexual domination and the institutional closet. Instead, they are absorbed into these relations and practices of “government at a distance” (Rose 1999:49-50). These practices produce citizens who engage in the work of self-regulation. The normalization of the social body is accomplished (or at least attempted) through the training and surveillance of citizens in these practices of self-governance that are aligned with the goals of social authorities.

These practices are related to the cycle of incorporation I detailed in Chapter Two. This is particularly true of that cycle’s third phase, which involves the implementation of policies of institutionalized support for the living of lesbian and gay lives. However, it isn’t any and all lesbian and gay lifestyles that are supported, which is part of the ambivalence I noted above. Only specific life practices are encouraged and propped up. The snide reporting of the collapsed relationship between Jack Venzler and Joseph Barri (Chapter Five) showed Barri and his attorney using the couple’s non-monogamy as a

reason to declare their relationship not similar enough to marriage for Venzer to be entitled to economic support. Although it doesn't seem to have been enforced in several years, Massachusetts law *criminalizes* adultery. Through the social and legal privileging of monogamous marital relationships, the state is working to mold the population. It is encouraging and coercing its citizenry to limit their sexual relationships and activities. Media representations reinforce this state activity by pedagogically informing the public about preferred activities and lifestyles, the boundaries around them, and the sanctions applied in cases of failure. These practices involved in the incorporation of lesbian and gay life with the media “educating” the public about the need for, and acceptable forms of, self-governance. All of these practices are involved in the production of the Respectable Same-Sex Couple.

Manufacturing Respectability while Maintaining Inequality

I have been defining respectability as the actions or qualities demonstrating adherence to and excellence in the meeting of normative standards associated with specific social roles. In Chapter Three, my primary focus was on the practices of social movement actors in producing and deploying this quality through the same-sex couples chosen to represent the movement and issue. To begin, it is worth recalling how the couples we see in the news come to be there. Routine practices of news gathering—like covering scheduled events, assigning reporters to beats, and reliance on regular networks of sources—make some stories and people more likely to appear in the news than others. Many gay and lesbian movement and community organizations have been integrated into these news routines. They have increasingly established themselves as legitimate players

within political spheres of activity through processes similar to those I described with regard to the institutionalization of the legal sector of lesbian and gay movement (Chapter Two). This has fostered their integration into the network of sources used by reporters and their ability to impact news coverage.

In pursuit of their goals, these organizations and other movement actors engage in communicative activities they hope will shape the perception of public officials and mass mediated publics. Through this framing activity, they are attempting to enforce certain ideational linkages while severing others. In the pursuit of access to marriage, for example, movement actors are attempting to create ideational links between the lives lived by same-sex couples and marriage itself, while minimizing the connections between lesbian and gay life and, say, sexual promiscuity. The selection of couples to serve as the “public face” of the movement is a form of framing activity. The practices through which these couples are selected and then deployed in various public settings are undertaken in order to communicate specific messages about gay and lesbian life.

The importance of these selection processes—and of these couples’ ability to communicate the movement’s preferred message—is underscored by noting the prominence in news reporting of the eight couples I specifically focused on. The seven couples chosen to sue the state by the Boston-based legal advocacy group Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders and the couple selected by the Cambridge Lavender Alliance and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force to be the first to take out a Notice of Intent to Marry comprised approximately 25% of the total number of couple representations appearing in the two Boston newspapers in the period under study and just under half of the representations from a sample of national newspapers. Both of these

were undercounts of the total number of couples who appeared that were chosen by movement organizations or were themselves movement activists. Movement activity played a significant role in determining which same-sex couples publics in Massachusetts and the nation would encounter.

There are two types of framing activity I would like to highlight as they are related to reporting of these couples' life stories. The first involves doing well what the Barri/Venzer couple above failed to do: upholding the normative values and practices associated with marriage. Through this "family values framing" the couples worked to establish the similarities of their lives as couples with the lives of different-sex married couples. If the members of these couples act like they are married, and if the people who are close to them treat them as though they were married, then it becomes easier for legal officials and public audiences to perceive their relationships as the "functional and factual equivalent of marriage" (Hunter 1995: 116). These couples, then, are selected because their relationships look like marriages, because they uphold the normative values associated with that form of relationship.

They are also selected because they suffer some kind of harm due to their inability to marry. There are tales of being denied access to partners in hospital settings and of paying higher taxes. There are claims of potential problems, such as the inability to access pensions or the possible loss of a home because of how marriage is privileged in inheritance law and tax policy. Such "injustice framing" (Gamson, Fireman, and Rytina 1982) locates the actual or potential harms faced by these couples in their inability to get married. Indeed, such hardships are *exclusively* linked to the inability of these couples to marry. This preferred framing of these issues was reinforced during the 2004

constitutional convention by gay and lesbian legislators who were members of same-sex couples.

Also in Chapter Three, I briefly introduced an alternative frame to that offered by the public face couples and marriage equality movement actors. I did so there to note that the framing offered by movement actors was not the only possible approach to these concerns. Here, though, I offer it as my preferred approach. Nancy Polikoff's (2008) "valuing all families" approach partially severs the "necessary" relationship between marriage and the provision of social and material benefits. Recall, for example, the speech that Representative Elizabeth Malia of Jamaica Plain gave during the constitutional convention.

"If I were to die, my partner of 30 years might lose her home, our home, that we've worked for and paid for," Malia (D-Cambridge [sic]) said. "We're here to ask you to please understand that the institution of marriage is not and has never been a rigid, inflexible institution" (Beardsley 2004b).

She specifically ties the potential loss, upon death, of the home she and her partner jointly own to their inability to marry. Because of the ways that inheritance is taxed, particularly in the privileging of marital relationships over all others, those who are unable to marry are at risk of losing such property when one member of a relationship dies. However, Polikoff (2008) argues that the solution to this problem does not inhere in making marriage available to same-sex couples, which she does favor, but in "reforming tax laws so that *no one* loses their primary home because a co-owner dies" (190-1).

This is one of those areas where my own sense of ambivalence also comes to the fore. I, like Polikoff, favor the ability of same-sex couples to marry as a matter of equality. I also, like Polikoff, favor an approach that protects more families than those who marry. It makes no sense to me that people who have built life-long relationships of

interdependence—be they sexual, filial, or other—may be put at risk of losing a jointly-owned home if one person dies solely because they lack a marriage license. The key, it seems to me, is to recognize and protect relationships of interdependence, whether or not people are sleeping together.

Some marriage equality movement actors may claim that they, too, favor such an approach to expanding family protections. After all, GLAD has sued to protect the rights of people who are not in marital situations, as have other legal sector organizations. However, the ways that marriage advocates consistently and specifically link hardships like the potential loss of a home to the inability of same-sex couples to marry undercuts such a more broad-based approach to family protection. They claim that it is these couples' inability to marry that is *the* cause of the potential loss of their home. We could just as easily claim, as does Polikoff, that the problem flows from policies that protect only married couples and their property.

This centering of property protections in marriage is related to the normative value it holds. The public face couples, as well as others throughout period under study, establish their respectability in the ways that they uphold such values, both in action and in statement. For example, in Chapter Five, we see Joane Frustaci in a *Boston Globe* editorial saying, “We uphold the sanctity of marriage” (*Boston Globe* 2004). This sanctification is not socially neutral or egalitarian.

“Marriage sanctifies some couples at the expense of others. It is selective legitimacy. This is a necessary implication of the institution, and not just the result of bad motives or the high-toned non sequiturs of [anti-gay legislators]” (Warner 1999: 82).

Nor is it a result of the feel-good motives of couples finally able to enter the relationship. This is, again, a space of profound ambivalence for me. I recognize the joy

Frustaci and her partner—as well as my own aunts and the other couples we see happily walking down the aisle or standing in front of a Justice of the Peace—had upon being able to marry. Indeed, I shared it. However, they are also entering a *privileged* social relationship. They are, indeed, seeking that privilege and the elevation of their relationship over those of non-marital relationships. As Warner notes, the sanctification they desire comes at the expense of other families.

We see this in areas beyond inheritance. Indeed, such things as problems in medical settings, the other primary area of injustice framing, also highlight the problems with this privileging of marriage. Two of our plaintiff couples related tales of being denied access to their partners while in the hospital, and others discussed the fear of such things happening. In every case, the link was made between these couples' inability to marry and the actual or potential hardships they suffered. Not only did the couples make these links, but the newspapers themselves did as well. The consistent linking of these benefits to marriage coupled with the constant reinforcement of marriage's social value does the work of limiting other political claims. It becomes more difficult to argue for expanded access to family protections when you've spent four years reinforcing the link between these benefits and one, and only one, specific relationship form.

Similarly, the movement, at least implicitly, is engaged in the re-stigmatization of non-marital cultural sexual values. It isn't just that certain families are being elevated over others. Queer communities—and this is where the distinction between lesbian, gay, and queer becomes most important—have spent much time and labor in re-negotiating and experimenting with, for example, sexual values (see Califia 1994, 2002; Warner and Berlant 1998; Warner 1999, 2005; Adam 2006). The complex linkages between intimacy,

sexual activity, desire, and emotions have been questioned and reformulated in a wide variety of ways. The pursuit of marriage and its reinforcement of the link between sexual monogamy, love, and fidelity has the potential to erase much of that queer work. At a minimum, it makes the questioning of those linkages more difficult and re-stigmatizes queer experimentation.

The marriage equality movement is involved in the production of respectability in its selection of same-sex couples and their life stories. In the tales these couples tell and the arguments movement actors make, they reinforce the links between marriage and the benefits and protections distributed through it. This is, in large part, due to the nature of the politics of incorporation. The movement is, in its identarian civil rights approach, seeking integration into the governing relations and definitions of family life in America. It is not seeking to alter them.

Income, Wealth, and Consumption

In Chapter Four I turned my attention to economic life and its relationship to respectability. I began that chapter with a discussion of the common stereotype of gay and lesbian economic privilege. However, I noted that census data about same-sex couples paint a much more complex picture when it comes to lesbian and gay economic life. They indicate that gay men tend to make less than Heterosexual men, while lesbians make more than Heterosexual women. Same-sex couples may have somewhat higher household incomes than their Heterosexually-married counterparts, but the economic costs associated with being unable to marry may mitigate that. Same-sex couples raising children are doing so with relatively equal incomes to that of different-sex married

couples in Massachusetts, and less income nationally. Sexuality and economy intertwine in queer ways⁵³.

If lesbian and gay people and the families they form are not only *not* privileged but even suffer certain forms of economic discrimination, why do such stereotypes persist? While marketing professionals may have been flogging numbers showing that gay men and lesbians are economically privileged consumers for years, I pointed to media representations more broadly as a driving force in the reinforcement of such stereotypes. The news representations here definitely reinforce such stereotypes. Ironically, though, it is these same representations of privilege that also produce notions of respectability. Productive and successful professionals and managers, hard working and upwardly mobile achievers, and consummate consumers, these couples are shown upholding the normative values associated with life in neoliberal consumer capitalist society.

The first thing to note about the news representations of same-sex couples I discussed in Chapter Four is that the more coverage in an article that was devoted to a couple, or one of its members, the more economically privileged they tended to be. The first area we saw this involved work. The people in these couples, when their jobs were reported, tended to be professionals. As more information about a couple or its members was included in news articles, descriptions of professional careers, business ownership, and the economic success related to them became more prominent. Additionally, while professional careers tended to predominate, more in-depth coverage tended to be devoted to those occupying positions of greater power, prestige, and authority.

⁵³ On these economic issues, see: Evans (1993); Badgett (1998, 2003); Bell and Binnie (2000: Chapter 6); Chasin (2000); Duggan (2004); Gluckman and Reed (2007).

This tendency toward increasing levels of coverage within news articles being associated with higher positions on the employment ladder was repeated when it came to reporting that included income, wealth and property. Recall, for example, the reporting of Richard Linnell and Gary Chalmers and their attempt to save for their daughter's college education. The reporting of their income located them well within the top 15% of households in the nation. Saving for a child's education is not something limited to families in that economic stratum of society, but, again, we tend to receive coverage of couples who are more likely to be higher up the income and wealth scales than the general population. It isn't just in areas of income that we see this. While same-sex couples may be less likely than their married Heterosexual counterparts to own homes, when the homes and real estate they do own are described in these news reports they tend to be more expensive and expansive properties. I discussed these as a result of the same media routines that produced the prominence of the public face couples. What we see throughout this coverage is a reinforcement of the qualities associated with life in those more privileged social locations. More money means more coverage, and success is respectable.

This is related to the other area of economic activity I discussed: consumption. "The discourse of the pink economy constructs queers as model consumer-citizens and therefore as builders of stable communities" (Bell and Binnie 2000: 197). The onset of marriage was reported as producing a potential boon for Bay State communities, as gay men and lesbians would now be spending money on weddings. There was reporting of various entrepreneurial activities by lesbian and gay business people to meet the "needs" of gay and lesbian consumers who were looking for identity-based consumption

opportunities. Greeting cards, wedding garb, and honeymoon cruises all present opportunities for gay men and lesbians to spend money and make money. They are also presented as sites of integration. We can see this in a report from the *Boston Globe*.

With a tremendous wave of prospective clients poised to flood their industry, wedding professionals and gay tourism insiders from across the country are trying to position themselves to take advantage of the Massachusetts Supreme Court decision that will legalize on May 17.

Caterers, musicians, invitation makers, innkeepers, and entrepreneurs from dozens of other auxiliary industries say they all stand to benefit from a massive influx of spending that many anticipate will accompany same-sex weddings. Bottled up expectations of gay and lesbian partners who have been limited to civil ceremonies, combined with the gay community's high-end spending habits, are poised to affect a wide range of businesses, industry insiders say.

And piggy-backing on that potential boom are hopes that same-sex partners from around the country flock to Massachusetts and give a shot in the arm to the state's sprawling tourism market, the third biggest industry in the Commonwealth (Belkin 2004a).

Same-sex couples are valued and valuable because of their economic contributions to individual businesses and to the Commonwealth's economy. The article continues to talk about same-sex couples as a relatively privileged group when compared with the rest of the population. For example, it discusses "a 2001 study" (no citation was given in the article) that shows the median income of same-sex couples at \$65,000. While that may be "nearly 60 percent higher than the US median income" it is actually lower than the median household income for married couples in Massachusetts, which the 2000 US census recorded as \$70,900 (Romero, et. al. 2008). That same census data gave the median for same-sex couples in Massachusetts to be \$74,600. I am not sure what to make of the discrepancy between this census data and the other unnamed study. It appears to be true that same-sex couples as a group tend to have higher household incomes than

Heterosexually-married couples. However, what often happens in such reporting is the “statistical averages are transformed into universal qualities” process that I discussed in the Introduction. In other words, the news media are specifically building up gay men and lesbians as desirable consumers in limited and stereotypical ways, which several analysts have discussed (see esp., Badgett 1997, 2007a).

A focus on the most privileged couples and individuals erases the forms of economic disparity that exist within gay and lesbian communities. The *Globe* article takes the spending capacity of relatively privileged same-sex couples and universalizes it to all such families. Recall also how the couples we tend to see more coverage of tend to be those with more economic resources. The financial problems included within the hardship framing tend to be coming from these relatively better off positions. Sharon Rich, for example, is shown discussing the \$500 in health insurance payments her family could save on a monthly basis because of marriage. No mention at all is made of the families who might not be able to afford employer-provided health insurance or those who might be relying on MassHealth, the state’s health insurance assistance program, for coverage. While Rich’s family is looking to save \$500/month, many families would have to forego coverage altogether if it came at such a cost.

This is related to the earlier discussion involving the privileging of marriage. Why, for example, should a conjugal relationship have anything whatsoever to do with access to health insurance? Massachusetts has instituted universal health care by mandating the purchase of health insurance, supplemented by the provision of state-financed insurance for low-income people. However, employer-based insurance still serves as the basis of the program. Such insurance works by distributing benefits *through*

marriage. While increasing numbers of companies are instituting domestic partnership programs (Human Rights Campaign 2009), an article in the *Boston Globe* published just before same-sex couples started marrying in Massachusetts indicates that some of them are removing such programs as marriage becomes available (Greenberger and Blanton 2004). This reinforces the economic privileging of marriage I discussed above.

Failure, Boundaries and Responsibilization

The relative privilege of the couples we see brings me to the topic of Chapter Five, the issue of boundary work. This is taking place around notions of respectability, but also establishing and shifting boundaries between married and unmarried same-sex couples and different-sex couples in a variety of ways. There are two primary areas of that boundary work I would like to highlight here, both starting from failure. The first involves how couples take responsibility to avoid failure, or at least plan for the possibility it. The second involves how the failure of some couples was related to the shifting of boundaries within gay and lesbian communities, and between same-sex and different-sex couples.

To introduce the first border area I return to the health insurance issues I was just discussing, along with many of the other areas of economic life that are centered in marriage itself. As I closed Chapter Five, I focused on an article describing Robert Anderson and James Vogel preparing for their marriage by preparing for its failure. They were putting together a pre-nuptial agreement. It could seem like this is a failure of respectability, of planning to not uphold the normative values associated with life-long couplehood that accompany marriage. I argue, however, that it is actually upholding the

normative values associated with a radically privatized “ownership society” pursued by neo-liberal and neo-conservative political-economic actors over the past several decades. This couple is shown responsibly managing the risks that are increasingly being placed on individuals and families.

Consider your 401(k), if you (still) have one. This type of investment program has become a dominant form of “saving” for retirement. Of course, such accounts aren’t really savings accounts, as millions of people who are delaying retirement because of the recent decimation of these accounts are well aware. These are instead privatized investment accounts. The virtual savings they provide are dependent on the consistent growth of various financial markets. Individuals are encouraged to invest in such accounts by taxing their income *after* “deposits” have been removed from their paychecks, whereas such deposits into insured bank-based savings accounts do not receive such favorable tax treatment. Tax policy incentivizes investment over saving. This places individuals at greater risk. Respectability can be garnered via planning for, avoiding, and managing such risk.

Such investment-based “retirement savings accounts” have replaced defined-benefit pension plans. No longer are individual laborers guaranteed some kind of retirement income through such programs. Instead, the responsibility for investing and keeping track of where that money is going is displaced from the employer, or the state, to the individual (Hardy and Kruse 1998). The increased risk flowing from these privatized retirement-investment practices also displaced onto the individual employee (Vickerstaff and Cox 2005). This neo-liberal ownership society also incentivizes such things as individual home ownership and the taking on of mortgage debt, financing

children's college education via student loan debt and saving in so-called "529-accounts." The couples we see engaging in these activities are upholding the cultural norms associated with responsabilization in this privatized ownership society (Saunders 1993; Beland 2007). These news representations produce a respectability that flows from responsible practices of risk management and the pursuit of property ownership and wealth accumulation. The failure to adequately do so produces boundaries around respectability.

This involves not only the management of material risk, but also relationship risk. Another area of this responsabilization comes through the performance of the necessary labor to "make a relationship work" (see Cossman 2007: Chapter 2). This particular boundary around respectability is implicated in the production of other borders. One area in which such distinctions are discussed is in news reporting of cases involving lesbian break-ups and the conflicts over child support and visitation that flowed from the collapse of those couples. An additional lawsuit making a loss of consortium claim filed once marriage became available was also discussed. These cases, and the articles about them, served to reinforce the distinction between married couples and unmarried couples. Indeed, those distinctions were explicitly noted. This establishes boundaries between same-sex couples, and diminishes boundaries between unmarried Heterosexual couples and unmarried same-sex couples, as well as those between married different-sex and same-sex couples.

Legal scholar William Eskridge (2002) disputes the *cultural* significance of these new distinctions between same-sex couples, even if material and legal boundaries are being reinforced. He may be right. After all, the broader culture is moving in such

directions that marriage does not carry the same kinds of normative power it once did. It is interesting to note that marriage is being pursued and elevated by same-sex couples during the same period in which its cultural significance is declining among Heterosexuals.

Being heterosexual no longer means settling as a young adult into a lifelong coupled relationship sanctioned by the state and characterized by the presence of children and sharply gendered spousal roles. Instead, there may be a number of intimate relationships over the course of a lifetime. A marriage certificate may or may not accompany these relationships. Males and females alike expect to earn their way. Children figure less importantly in the lifespan of adults, and some heterosexuals, for the first time in history, choose not to have children at all. (D'Emilio 2006)

In other words, increasing numbers of people are accepting non-marital relationships as familial and seeking them out. More Heterosexual people are living in such families, and they receive some social and cultural support for doing so. Sometimes they are even receiving material support. In some companies, for example, different-sex couples are eligible for domestic partnership benefits. The lesbian parents in the cases discussed as establishing some of these shifting boundaries are following a path laid by other lesbian parenting cases in which non-married families were increasingly incorporated into the law. While marital relationships are still *highly* privileged in law, family recognition is no longer an all-or-nothing proposition. The normative boundaries, the distinctions between married and unmarried life, between Heterosexual and Homosexual, are all undergoing change. The news articles analyzed in this work show us to be in a period of flux.

Coming together, coming apart

I will return to the issue of boundaries, particularly those within lesbian and gay

communities, shortly. Here, I turn to my discussion from Chapter Six. The work there was primarily concerned with the changes in lesbian and gay life and how they are narrated. If the frames I discussed above create links between things like people, ideas, objects, problems, institutions and actions, narratives set those links in motion. In that chapter I dealt with two primary types of narratives. The first, life-stories, are the ways we tell about what has happened to us. The second, life scripts, are future tales laying out possible courses of action and life trajectories for us.

In the first case, tales of what has happened, I focused on reporting of the life stories of lesbians and gay men, particularly the institution of the closet. That complex set of social practices, the development of which I discussed in Chapter One, requires the hiding of lesbian and gay lives from the sight of Heterosexuals and the dominant institutions of social life. The cycle of incorporation that has transformed pathological Homosexuals into respectable lesbians and gay men had removed many of the social supports for the closet. It is no longer the total institution it once was. That alone is cause for celebration.

The closet remains, however, a fact of life for many gay and lesbian people. While far fewer of us live the double lives once required, many are still required to hide segments of our lives from particular people. In many parts of the country, and even in many of our families of origin, the structures associated with Heterosexual supremacy are such that many straight people still expect accommodation of their anti-gay attitudes by lesbian and gay men and many of us still engage in such practices of accommodation. Several of the couples, and members of them, that we met in Chapter Six still felt pressure to hide their relationships. This may have involved pressure from a supervisor at

work, avoiding holding hands in public, or not kissing partners in front of anti-gay siblings. So long as straight people expect gay men and lesbians to hide our lives, and so long as there are negative sanctions applied to being open with those lives, Heterosexual domination remains in place.

However, many of the institutional supports for of Heterosexual domination are crumbling. After all, same-sex couples are *marrying*. While this relationship remains a system of privilege, it is a system in which same-sex couples are now receiving the social, cultural, legal, and material privileges constituting it. Marriage represents first-class citizenship. It has been the model for the relationship between citizen and state (see Cott 2000: Chapter 1) and the relationship through which social benefits have been distributed. That gay and lesbian relationships are now eligible for it signifies a tremendous change in our place in American society. Full citizenship is within reach.

This transformation in the normative location of lesbian and gay life has led to transformations in lesbian and gay consciousness. Several of the couples we saw, beyond proclaiming that they never thought marriage itself would be possible, declared that they weren't even aware of the ways that they were still excluded from full citizenship. In other words, the second-class status of lesbian and gay life was internalized and the onset of more equal citizenship laid bare that abject status. While hiding is no longer necessary for many, if not most, lesbians and gay men, there is still a degree to which we accept the daily indignities that continue to define gay and lesbian life in a heterosexist society. The availability of marriage is shown changing the consciousness that leads to such acceptance of social exclusion as simply "the way things are."

This leads me to another type of change occurring in these narratives of gay and

lesbian life, the availability of new life scripts. Of course, the possibility of getting married adds an entirely new potential activity to the life course of lesbians and gay men. It also introduces a whole host of other potential activities, like proposing and shopping for rings, that were previously expunged from the potential course of life that occurred when people come to accept and adopt gay or lesbian identities. Marriage, however, is but one site of incorporation. It is a major one, to be sure. However, the cycle of incorporation is leading to gay and lesbian lives being absorbed by a wide variety of social institutions. Certain forms of lesbian and gay life are receiving increasing social support in more and more social settings.

Perhaps nothing illustrates this more clearly than the two high school students, Nicole Sullivan and Ashley Lagasse, who were voted the “cutest couple” in their high school class. These two young women demonstrate some of the ways that some forms of gay and lesbian life are coming to more closely approximate institutionalized Heterosexual life, how the life courses available to lesbian and gay people are coming to more closely resemble those of their Heterosexual counterparts. This is a result of how lesbian and gay lives have been incorporated into the regular processes of institutional life in the United States. It is possible to view this as the culmination of the cycle of incorporation.

This returns me to that personal ambivalence with which I opened the chapter. I have consistently tried to note that the incorporative processes making up the broader cycle do not integrate all lesbian and gay lives and lifestyles, but certain ones. The lives of the privileged, for example, are more likely to be supported, while the lives of the poor are still more likely to be policed. While lesbians, in particular, have gained support for

parenting, if they be poor and receiving state assistance they will, like poor Heterosexual women, but subject to greater controls on their parenting. They will be subject to state policy encouraging and coercing them into wage labor markets at the expense of their mothering activities (Little 2006).

The differences among gay and lesbian people are often erased in the politics of marriage. The cycle of incorporation leads to certain lesbian and gay life's being supported, and it is those lives we see. These are the lives most positively affected by marriage. However, the respect that flows to such couples can be used to stigmatize and punish other couples. In other words, for many people respect is a trap. The question that rarely gets asked in these newspaper reports or by marriage advocates is: Into what kind of society are we seeking to integrate? Again, this is because they are seeking to gain entry into, not transform, the governing relations of society.

Some of these splits within lesbian and gay communities are produced by the differential integration of people based on such things as class location. Others, are produced by participation in and resistance to the various phases in the broader cycle of incorporation. For example, as I discussed in Chapter Two, the first phase of this cycle involves challenging practices and policies of exclusion. Among those things, gay and lesbian activists have challenged are normative boundaries around sexual activity. The right to engage in sexual activity with a same-sex partner was something that gay and lesbian people could not take for granted for much of the Twentieth Century. Moral scolds declared such practices outside the bounds of acceptable human behavior—and they continue to—and the state criminalized such behavior. While struggles around the morality of same-sex activity continue, and this work is being written at an institution

that declares such behavior “evil,” it has been decriminalized and, in some settings, normalized.

However, the challenging of certain boundaries and practices also produces new boundaries. Marriage advocates, if they even discuss sex, continue the normative linking of sexual activity to emotional intimacy and fidelity. While it may be severed from procreative potential among same-sex couples, it can still play the same roles stressed by the Nineteenth-Century doctors and public moralists and “contribute to individual health, marital intimacy, and even spiritual joy” (D’Emilio and Freedman 1997: 72). It remains, however, linked to marriage.

This is but one possible set of normative values associated with sexual activity, though. It can also provide pleasure and entertainment. Queer theorists and activists and everyday people have been exploring the varied relationships between sexual activity, emotional intimacy, pleasure, and fidelity. While they have been continuing to challenge the boundaries surrounding sex, other gay and lesbian people have come to defend the new boundaries that include them. The cycle of incorporation need not continue on the challenging of boundaries trajectory I intimated in Chapter Two. At each phase, new potentials for conflict appear as those who are included may find the removal of certain boundaries a worthwhile stopping point. We see this very much in the writing of pro-marriage activist E.J. Graff (1999: 189-90):

Opening marriage to same-sex couples would leave alone those who prefer leather bars—while allowing the home-and-hearth couples to have their gold rings....[T]he option of civil marriage will indeed, as some people predict, split the incredibly multiplicitious lesbian and gay communities in two. It will expose that the varietists and the promiscuous are most properly grouped with other sexual dissidents of whatever orientation... Opening marriage to same-sex couples may well shift our society’s sexual dividing line from the current and temporary line between

homosexual and heterosexual back to one more historically familiar, a divide between monogamous and promiscuous.

Aside from Graff's seeming willful historical ignorance about the complicated relationship between monogamy and marriage, there is a deeper problem with her writing. She neglects, for instance, the fact that many of those attending the leather bars may themselves be marrying. But, more than that, as Michael Warner stated above, she is seeking her "gold ring" at the expense of others. Her relationship is worthy of respect. Others are worthy denigration, which she is happy to provide. She accuses those who criticize marriage of arrogance, and claims that it is simply a desire for coupling that makes marriage so attractive, ignoring the powerful social forces that align to make it so desirable. The leather bears on the corner who throw play parties in their basement dungeon apparently aren't worthy of respect, or of the law's protection. She refuses to ask, as does most of the marriage equality movement, "Into what type of society are we seeking to integrate?" More importantly, "Is it a just society into which we are seeking to integrate?"

This is a source of my ambivalence. Such splits are likely unavoidable, as Graff and Warner both note. The problem, again, isn't *necessarily* that marriage is unavailable, though that may be a very real problem. The broader issue is that we are integrating into a society that privileges marriage to such a degree that other relationships are deemed worthy of denigration, and the people in them deserving of greater insecurity.

Throughout the winter and spring of 2003-4, when the conflicts in Massachusetts were at their height, a Heterosexual friend of mine said to me, "I feel like my family is consistently being stigmatized in these debates." He's right; his family was stigmatized. He was raised by a single mother and is living in a long-term unmarried relationship. He

and his different-sex partner have been together longer than several couples I know who have married over that same period of time. They have maintained their relationship longer than the lead plaintiffs in the Massachusetts marriage lawsuit stayed married, and they have built a strong relationship of interdependence. Both his family of origin and his current family setting are denigrated by a politics that stresses and reinforces marriage as *the* legitimate and respectable form of family. Another Heterosexual friend of mine recently married. He and his partner have been together for over two decades, but his partner lost her job and her health insurance. They were *coerced* into marriage because his employer does not offer domestic partner benefits, to either same-sex or different-sex couples. Their “choice” was to get married or live without health insurance. Marital hegemony renders the discourse of “choice” fallacious.

These two couples are, to the best of my knowledge, monogamous. They don’t fall within the groups receiving Graff’s opprobrium. Actually, maybe they do. Given her affection for marriage, maybe those who live critiques of it should remain outside the bounds of respectability. After all, her elevation of marriage, as well as the activities of the marriage equality movement, continues the stigmatization and denigration of my friends’ family situations. These friends’ families aren’t “real” unless they marry. The movement’s arguments reinforce the normative boundaries between married and unmarried families, and the lines of demarcation that make some families worthy of protection and security while rendering others unworthy. This is not the same as establishing lines of demarcation between monogamous and non-monogamous couples that Graff seeks to make and strengthen. It is sanctifying marriage at the expense of others. “In other words, a choice to marry can be a great gain unless it becomes a way to

limit the bounds of sexual difference by bringing dissenters into a bounded acceptable range.”⁵⁴

The continued privileging of marriage is coercive. I can celebrate the entry of lesbians and gay men into more equal citizenships, as I did at Cambridge City Hall in May of 2004, while recognizing that the rights being sought exist in an unjust society. That is the source of my ambivalence. The production of respectability, both by movement and media, signifies and participates in both progress toward equality and the maintenance of injustice.

⁵⁴ Personal correspondence with Charlotte Ryan. October 17, 2008.

Methodological Appendices

Appendix A Methods of Inquiry

This work concerns news representations of same-sex couples. In particular, I am interested in the rise of what Mariane Valverde (2006) has called “Respectable Same-Sex Couples” and their relationships to the changing place of gay men and lesbians in American society. I have taken that concept as my starting point, and the basic questions I am trying to answer are two-fold:

1. *What is the content of this Respectable Same-Sex Couple, and contours around it, as it was produced in newspaper coverage of same-sex couples during the Massachusetts campaign for marriage equality?*
2. *How is newspaper reporting representing the changes in lesbian and gay life as they are surrounding the politics and pursuit of marriage equality, particularly as they are related to same-sex couples?*

There are a few aspects of this question that call for unpacking. First, why newspapers? Print is, after all, a dying news medium. It was perhaps healthier during the 2001-4 period of the Massachusetts campaign than it is at the time of this writing, but it was also in decline at that time (Gans 2003: 31; Croteau and Hoynes 2006: 48). Even though fewer people are reading newspapers, they are still roughly comparable to television news in terms of the pairs of eyes looking at them. During the August sweeps period of 2003, the 11:00pm news telecasts for Boston’s three major network affiliates had a combined viewership of approximately 395,000 households (Ryan 2003). During that year, the *Globe* had a daily circulation of over 450,000 and the *Herald* of over 240,000 (*Editor and Publisher* 2003a). In addition to the daily circulation and viewership numbers, these newspapers and television stations have web presences. Their stories are read at their individual websites, and they are also included in news aggregator

sites like Google News. Newspapers may be in decline, but at least in 2003 they still remain an important source of news coverage.

Even beyond the number of eyes they reach, daily newspapers also play a major role in driving news coverage in any given media markets, and provides more stories than do television stations. Space and time considerations limit what types of stories, and how many of them, are included within each of these sources. “With one minute containing about 160 spoken words, the total number of words in an entire TV newscast would fill slightly more than half of a standard newspaper” (Ryan 1991: 148). There are more stories, generally, in a daily newspaper than an evening news broadcast. In addition, the stories we have in newspapers tend to be longer than those on television. So, even as more people may be turning away from newspapers, they still provide a greater depth of coverage than other local daily news sources. They paint a more complete and complex picture than does television news coverage.

Finally, there is the issue of obtaining news stories to study. The *Lexis-Nexis* database provides an easily accessible archive. Some of the theoretical reasons for choosing newspapers are their greater likelihood of having more depth of coverage, a roughly equivalent audience base to broadcast news, and an important role in driving the trajectory of local news coverage. However, a pragmatic reason for selecting them was, quite honestly, convenience.

Article Selection

I am focusing on two newspapers in particular, the *Boston Globe* and *Boston Herald*. I just noted a few reasons for the selection of daily newspapers, but why Boston?

The simplest answer is because Massachusetts was the first state to allow same-sex couples to marry, and these two newspapers serve the Commonwealth's largest metropolitan area, which is also its capital. Boston is also one of a shrinking number of cities that has two daily newspapers (Croteau and Hoynes 2003: 52-6). In other words, we have a large metropolitan area that is the political, cultural and economic center of the first state in which same-sex couples were able to legally marry. This case has historical and theoretical significance.

The case was also interesting to me personally because I was living in Boston during the time when much of this activity was occurring. I was reading about these issues on every day, while also attending protests and demonstrations and writing about the issue on some prominent national blogs⁵⁵. It wasn't only a local story for these two newspapers, it was a local story for me.

Because Boston's two dailies have different formats and editorial positions on the issue of same-sex marriage, I initially selected these two papers with the intent of performing a comparative analysis. The *Globe*, a daily broadsheet, was in favor of extending marriage rights to same-sex couples while the city's daily tabloid, the *Herald* favored a more limited approach to protecting and recognizing these families. During the contentious period following the Supreme Judicial Court's decision in *Goodridge*, the editors of the *Herald* favored legislative approval of an amendment taking away the right to marry, accepting the "Let the people vote" framing of anti-gay activists, while the *Globe* opposed all such attempts. Because of general and stylistic differences between

⁵⁵ I am not going to cite these blogs because I was writing pseudonymously. It may not be difficult for people to trace me, and some have done so, but I'm not going to make it any easier.

tabloids and broadsheets, we might expect there to be stylistic differences in how these papers would report the issue, with the *Herald* approaching it in a more sensationalistic style and the *Globe* in a more “straight” news fashion. However, there was little difference in how these two newspapers represented same-sex couples during this period. I would attribute at least part of this lack of difference to the standardization of reporting that occurred as a result of the professionalization of journalism (Schudson 1995: 66-7).

The distinction between the papers that did appear tended to involve the depth of coverage. There was some stylistic difference in headline writing, but that did not tend to extend into the articles. The *Globe* had about twice as many articles as the *Herald*, both in articles about the issue of same-sex marriage and articles containing same-sex couples. Additionally, the average length of articles in the *Globe* was about 35 sentences long, and for the *Herald* it was 21. The comparative aspects of the study were dropped in favor of a more “cumulative” approach.

In addition to the two Boston newspapers, I included a group of national newspapers within the study. While the events in Massachusetts were of local concern, they were also a national news story. So, an additional issue in the news production of these couples was how the events in Massachusetts were being reported in the rest of the nation. My original intent was to select the top ten national papers by circulation to include within this study. I utilized *Editor and Publisher* circulation numbers from 2003, the year that *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health* was decided, to establish this list (*Editor and Publisher* 2003a). There were two issues with this. First, some cities, like New York and Chicago, were overrepresented. I wanted more diverse geographic coverage. So, I grouped these top circulation newspapers by city. For example, the

Times, *Daily News*, and *Post*, became “New York,” *USA Today* and the *Wall Street Journal* were “national,” and the *Sun-Times* and *Tribune* were “Chicago.” As I discuss below, some of these newspapers disappeared from the sample because they contained no articles that fit my selection criteria. Table A1 shows the national newspaper sample I developed using these circulation data and the selection criteria I discuss below, while combining individual newspapers into cities.

Table A1: Non-Boston Newspapers		
City	Newspapers	Number of Articles
National	<i>USA Today</i>	5
New York	<i>Times, Daily News, Post</i>	12
Washington, D.C.	<i>Post</i>	5
Chicago	<i>Tribune</i>	1
Houston	<i>Chronicle</i>	4
San Francisco	<i>Chronicle</i>	6
Newark	<i>Star-Ledger</i>	3
Philadelphia	<i>Inquirer</i>	5
Atlanta	<i>Journal-Constitution</i>	4
Cleveland	<i>Plain-Dealer</i>	1

This discussion may be a little confusing since I am moving back and forth between different phases of the research process. For example, I am here discussing selection criteria that I have yet to establish. In part, this is because the practice of *doing* research is rarely so straightforward as Research Methods textbooks sometimes make it appear. Things happen in the middle of a project that throw everything into flux, requiring a “restart” of some part of the research process or an abandonment of something else. I experienced such a setback when the staff at Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders refused my request for interviews about the process of selecting plaintiff couples. My original intent had been to study how the selection of couples proceeded in order to come to a greater understanding of the practices that lead

us to see certain people in the news and not others. Because of GLAD's refusal to take part, I had to throw that idea out, and media representations themselves became the central focus of this work. This isn't a complaint, although the panicked email my committee received after I got the GLAD refusal may certainly have appeared to be one. Instead, it is a comment about the nature of doing research. My reporting of the research process jumps back and forth a little because the process itself does so. Such is the nature of the beast.

Article Selection

In the research question above, I described the time frame under study as the period encompassing the "campaign for marriage equality." The selection of a starting date for this is relatively straightforward. I selected April 11, 2001 because that was the date on which the *Goodridge* lawsuit was filed in Suffolk County Superior Court. The *issue* of same-sex marriage didn't start to appear in the news at this time, though. There was a movement underway in the Bay State to ban such marriages (Bonauto 2005), and Vermont's Supreme Court had ruled that couples in that state were eligible for the benefits accompanying marriage two years earlier (*Baker v. Vermont*), leading to highly contentious climate in that state (Moats 2004), and increased reporting of political activity there. As interesting as these events were, my goal was not to capture *all* discourse about same-sex marriage. My focus is specifically on the period of the MA campaign, so the filing of the lawsuit was selected as the date to begin looking at media coverage.

The selection of the ending date also raises questions. I selected an end-date to include coverage of couples exercising the right they won in this campaign, rather than the end of the legal phase of it. May 17, 2004 was the first day they could marry, so it might make sense to select coverage of that day as the end-date. I elected to extend the period a bit longer so that follow-up coverage would also be included. It may be a rather arbitrary date, but I chose to extend the study period to the end of June 2004. Although coverage dropped significantly after the mid-May period, June reporting did include some coverage of that first day and week of marriage. It also continued exploration of issues arising because same-sex couples could now marry. Extending the coverage further would have likely added little, while ending it sooner would have resulted in the loss of useful data. For example, a story about how same-sex couples being able to marry was affecting relations with their families of origin was published on June 27 (Belkin 2004b). A profile of the first couple in the state to take out a Notice of Intent to Marry was published in the first week of June (Thomas 2004). However, as 2004 moved on, the issue moved again into the political realm, with ballot initiatives and political campaigns moving to the fore, and the lives of individual Massachusetts couples became less important in news coverage.

Having established the period under study, and the newspapers included, I now turn to the techniques used for selecting articles. I used different criteria for the Boston and national samples. For the Boston papers, I began by searching *Lexis-Nexis* for every article about same-sex marriage published during the period under study. I used the following search string:

“Same-sex” or “gay” or “homosexual” and “marriage”

This produced a sample of 767 *Boston Globe* articles and 393 *Boston Herald* articles. All of these were downloaded in pdf format and saved on a dedicated CD. Since the focus of this study is media coverage of same-sex couples, not the issue of same-sex marriage, the next step was to extract only those articles containing same-sex couples. I wanted representations of couples comprised of actually living humans as opposed to the couple as a generalized entity or abstract construct. I utilized the following selection criterion to determine which articles would be included: only those articles containing specifically identifiable individual couples, or individuals specifically identified as being members of same-sex couples. This does not mean that these people had to be identified by name. There were some people who asked not to be named, but who were still identifiable as an actually existing couple. Articles containing those couples were included within the study sample. A few other articles contained couples that were grouped together but not specified as individual entities. For example, an article about the preparation for marriage by municipal clerks noted that several had received calls from out of state couples, but no specific couples were identifiable (McElhenny 2004). Articles such as that were excluded. The results of this selection process are found in Table 3.1 in Chapter Three.

A different approach was used to produce the national newspaper sample. Since my focus the Massachusetts campaign I did not want to use the same type of comprehensive selection process for these national newspapers. Doing so would have added all sorts of information about events in those states that didn't relate to what was happening in Massachusetts. I also had a secondary focus, flowing from my interest in social movement activity as a driving force in the campaign. Because of this dual focus, I

chose the presence of what I am calling “public face couples” (see Chapter Three) as the selection criterion. Interestingly, in the articles that ended up being selected, some of these Massachusetts public face couples were shown giving speeches at events in the cities in which these other newspapers are published. Additionally, events in Massachusetts were sometimes used as a “news peg” (Ryan 1991: 96-100) for stories about local events, and the reporting of them included couples from those cities and states. For example, a *Chicago Tribune* story about events in Massachusetts also included protests in Chicago (Swanson 2004). It is probably unavoidable that some type of “pollution” by non-Massachusetts events would occur, no matter what criteria were used.

Table A1 above shows the newspapers that were eventually included. However, a broader sampling frame was used in the search for articles. I chose the top circulation newspapers as listed by *Editor and Publisher* (2003a), and used the following *Lexis-Nexis* search string (these are the names of the members of the eight public face couples):

"julie goodridge" or "hillary goodridge" or "david wilson" or "robert compton" or "michael horgan" or "edward balmelli" or "maureen brodoff" or "ellen wade" or "gary chalmers" or "richard linnell" or "heidi norton" or "gina smith" or "gloria bailey" or "linda davies" or "susan shepherd" or "marcia hams" and "marriage"

I started with the top ten daily newspapers by circulation. The *Boston Globe* was already part of the study so it was removed from the list and the next newspaper on the list moved onto the list⁵⁶. Some of the other newspapers in the top 10, like the *Wall Street Journal* and *Los Angeles Times* returned zero articles. They were also removed and new papers brought in. Additionally, as I noted above, I combined the newspapers according to city. I continued removing and adding top circulating dailies until I had ten cities with

⁵⁶ I did perform this search for the *Globe* and the *Herald*. It returned one *Globe* article not captured in the previous search (Talcott 2004b).

newspapers publishing articles containing the name of at least one member of the eight primary public face couples. This produced a total of 66 articles.

I then reviewed all of these articles to ensure that the people named were actually Massachusetts public face couples. Indeed, all six of the *Chicago Sun-Times* articles that the *Lexis-Nexis* search returned as containing one of the selected names and the term marriage were rejected because none of those names were actually referring to people involved in the Massachusetts campaign. “David Wilson” is not an uncommon name.

This process left me with a national sample of 46 articles. All of these were also downloaded and saved in pdf format on a dedicated CD. The final results of the Boston and National sampling processes can be seen in Table 3.2 in Chapter Three.

Article Analysis

After selecting the articles to be analyzed, I went through a process of changing them into a more manageable format for coding. Each article was first transformed from the downloaded pdf format into Microsoft Word files. Originally, my intent was to perform a structural narrative analysis of the articles (see esp.: Barthes 1977: 79-124; Riessman 2007: 77-104; Labov 1972: 362-70). However, as I started going through the articles, I realized that many of them were not narratives. Also included within the sample were articles in the form of analysis, argument, or profile. They may have had narrative components, but the articles themselves were not stories⁵⁷.

⁵⁷ “Narrative” can be a tricky signifier. It has come to mean a number of things. I am working with definitions like those of Barthes (1977: 79-124), who defines a narrative as consequential events, or Labov (1972: 360), who treats them as “a sequence of [at least] two clauses which are temporally ordered.”

Because the narrative form was not universal, I modified the approach I was using to transform these articles. I began with the narrative techniques used by Bell (1996, 1998) and Schokkenbroek (1999) in their analyses of news stories. Both of them drew on the structural approach developed by William Labov in his classic study of Black Vernacular English (1972)⁵⁸. This approach defines the most basic form of narrative as “a sequence of [at least] two clauses which are temporally ordered” (360). The clause is the most basic linguistic unit connecting actors to action, and it is action that drives stories. Because I was no longer approaching the news articles as narratives, I rejected this clausal level of analysis. Instead, I chose the “sentence,” the fundamental unit of written language, as the basic unit analysis.

Each of the articles, including headlines, was broken down into individual sentences, which were then numbered. The numbering was for record-keeping purposes, for identifying the particular sentences within each article that contained couples and/or information about them. The text of those sentences was bolded in the Word file, while text not containing or referring to them was left in its original form. I provide an example of just such a modified article in Appendix C. I also include the codes (discussed below) applied to these sentences in the course of analysis.

While I was performing this transformation of each of the articles, I was also compiling a Microsoft Excel database of basic information for each couple in the articles. The information recorded for each article is presented in Table A2. The “codes contained in article” weren’t added until the next several passes over the articles. I now turn to the processes of how they were developed.

⁵⁸ See also: Labov and Waletzky (1967); Langellier (1989); Riessman (1993; 2008)

Table A2: Article Census	
Category of information	Specific information recorded
Newspaper Article	Date of publication; Newspaper; Opinion or News story; Overview/subject/topic.
Couple Information	Is the couple a public face couple (the primary 8)? Gender; Hometown; Length of relationship;
Information for each member of the couple	Name; Age; Occupation; Race/Ethnicity; Miscellaneous notes
Discursive Units (sentences)	Total number in article; Which numbered units contain, refer to, or about a couple or its members
Other information	Couple's religion; other family members present (relation and age); Codes contained in article

Coding

I am looking at newspaper reporting and the production of the “respectable same-sex couple.” This type is of particular interest because of its relationship to the changing place of lesbians and gay men in American society. There are three primary areas of interest for me in this work: respectability, social movement framing activity, and changes in lesbian and gay life. Here, I discuss how I developed the coding system used in the analysis of these newspaper representations. Coding is a process of data reduction (Babbie 2004: 376-379; see also, Berg 2009: Chapter 11). It allows the researcher to identify which parts of a text actually include the particular information of interest and to extract them for analysis. Appendix B provides my “codebook,” the list of codes I applied to textual units and how they were defined.

Respectability

I begin with the concept of “respectability.” The trusty *Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (1988: 1004) sitting on my bookshelf defines it as being “decent or correct in

character or behavior.” Using that basic definition and relating it to the news representations of these same-sex couples, I am conceptualizing “respectability” as *actions or qualities demonstrating adherence to and excellence in the meeting of normative standards associated with specific social roles.*

As I am using it, *a social role is a routinized set of practices associated with a particular social position* (see Abercrombie, Hill and Turner 1994: 360-3). Every role, every social position, exists within networks of social relationships and carries with it a variety of expected practices to which we attach meaning. Among the practices associated with my social position of “teacher,” for example, are such things as lecturing, prepare lectures, grading papers and exams, meeting with students, and composing syllabi. (The role “professor” adds additional practices to that list.) In other words, these various practices constitute the role of “teacher.” It is the practices associated with these various roles, and the descriptions of them, that I was interested in while developing the coding system for dealing with responsibility.

In Table A3, I provide a list of the social networks and roles/positions for which I developed specific codes. My goal in establishing these roles is to see when and how same-sex couples, or their members, are presented as being engaged in the activities associated with them. For each of these, I provide a conceptual definition in my codebook, Appendix B. I am identifying these various agglomerations of actions in order to establish the content of the Respectable Same-Sex Couple as a social type.

Within each of the roles/positions listed, I developed a series of codes related to the specific sets of activities I identified as being central to those social positions. Now, the research process is an iterative one. While I established a beginning set of codes,

some activities that did not fit within it would sometimes arise in the course of applying these codes to the news articles. One solution to this issue is simply the addition of an “Other” category/code. An alternative approach is to add another category to the list of possible codes. I did both in the course of this study.

Table A3: Social Networks and Roles established for coding couple representations	
Social Network	Roles/Positions
Family	Parent Spouse/Partner Other relative
Business	Business Owner Employee Consumer Property Owner
State/Politics	State actors Social movement activists
Education	Teacher Student
Community	Neighbor

I am not going to discuss here each and every one of the codes I developed. Instead, I provide an example by focusing on the first role listed in Table A3, that of “Parent.” I am treating the role of parent as *the set of practices associated with child-rearing*. I divided this into four distinct sets of practices, which became the codes I applied while analyzing the articles under consideration. First, I looked at those “everyday practices” of parenting. These are those routine practices in which parents engage in the everyday interactions with their children. Such things as making dinner, changing diapers, helping with homework, driving to soccer practice and tucking in at bed-time are included within this category.

The next set of practices I established a specific code for were those I called “parental planning.” These are the practices for which intentional planning for the future

life of the child or making decisions about what types of parenting practice would be incorporated into family life. Everyday practices may be the *result* of these practices, but they involve two different sets of activity. Included within this category such things as researching and deciding upon what kinds of parenting techniques to use or saving for a child's college education.

The third set of practices involved obtaining children to parent. There are a number of techniques such couples use to bring children into their home, like adoption, surrogacy, and insemination. I did not establish a particular code for each of these different techniques couples used. Instead, I noted which articles actually discussed or mentioned how children were brought into such families. After I specified the articles discussing family formation, I could return to them to determine how such family formation was discussed. This is related to the processes I discuss below. Here, I note that the articles, and sentences within them, that discussed such family formation practices were simply being identified at this first stage of the research process. After such articles were identified, they were then collected together and any trends in family formation—if they existed—could then be extracted and analyzed.

Finally, I included a code for “other.” This was applied to sentences that noted or described parenting, but did not include the information included under the other codes. This could be something as simple as noting that a couple had children. It was intended to capture sentences mentioning or describing practices of child-rearing that did not fit under the other categories.

This also points to something that may not have been clear from my definition of parenting as a set of practices. News representations do not always mention practices.

They may simply state that a couple has children. In other words, news reporting may simply involve description. In my coding system, I included sentences that included language that was descriptive of these couples and their families *and* of the activities they were shown engaging in.

Each of the roles noted in Table A2 was broken down into a specific set of practices. These are listed in the codebook in Appendix B. These sets of practices are what define these roles. However, it is not simply identifying which practices people are engaging in, although that is important. In addition to establishing those, I was interested in this category of respectability, of performing the roles in such way that the couples were upholding normative values associated with those roles. So, it's not simply enough that they were shown parenting, but also that they were shown parenting well, or poorly. The "well/poorly" distinction was included to help establish boundaries around the "respectable" category. So, a "+" was applied to the specific codes attached to sentences in which the couple, or members of it, were shown or described as engaging in actions that specifically upheld normative values or displayed excellence. In order to establish the other boundary, a "-" was applied to the specific codes attached to sentences in which the couple, or members of it, were shown or described as engaging in actions that failed to uphold those normative values. So, kidnapping a child to parent—something I did not find, but am simply using as a possible example—would receive a code of a "negative obtaining children" (or 1.1.1.3-).

Social Movement Framing Activity

The next set of concerns I have with regard to these couples specifically involves the eight public face couples. As I discuss in Chapter Three, these are couples

intentionally selected by movement activists to serve as public representatives for the movement, and for lesbian and gay families more generally. In that chapter, I discuss their selection and their comments as they are related to concepts of “framing.” I also discuss there the theoretical issues related to framing and the deployment of language. I will not revisit those issues here. One thing I will note, however, is that I am approaching these issues from a “dual framing” perspective. The selection of couples themselves is a framing process. In dealing with that topic, the issue of roles and respectability is central. I deal with those topics above. My primary concern in this section deals with the framing activity of the couples themselves in the statements they are reported making.

In particular, there are three types of statements I was interested in. The first involves what Gamson, Fireman, and Rytina (1982) have called “injustice framing” and which I am conceptualizing as *statements indicating a potential or actual harm flowing from the inability to marry*. In developing the codes for this, I divided this injustice frame into statements discussing three types of injustice: economic hardship, medical hardship, and other hardships.

I will, as I did above, discuss these particular types of framing activity in more detail here. Before I do so, however, I note that there were three other types of codes that I applied to the statements of public face couples. The first involved what I am calling “Marriage” statements. These displayed how the couples’ relationships were similar to marriage, or how the couples described their lives in such ways as to uphold the normative values associated with—and the value of—marriage. The other primary set of statements involves “History.” These dealt with the couples’ role in the case—which was itself historical—or with the broader history of lesbian and gay life in America.

Finally, I included an “other” category, which was applied to comments that did not fit within the first three types.

Here I return to the three types of “Injustice Frame Statements.” The first were those associated with “Economic Hardship.” These were statements in which the couples told of actual or potential harm in their economic lives that resulted from their inability to marry. Such instances could be the inability to inherit a pension or home upon the death of one member of the couple or an increased tax bill because of the difference in how health insurance benefits are taxed with regard to married and unmarried couples. The other area involves “Medical Hardships.” These are the actual or potential harm suffered in medical settings that flow from the inability to marry. This can include such things as not being allowed to visit a sick partner in the hospital to the inability to make medical decisions. There is also an “Other Hardships” category for real or actual harms in settings or activities not included in the other two categories. These “Social movement framing” codes were only applied to the seven plaintiff couples, the first couple in the state to marry, and couples identified as containing public officials. Again, the full list of codes can be found in the Codebook in Appendix B.

Changes in Lesbian and Gay Life

The final area of concern involves the ways that lesbian and gay life itself is changing. There are three areas of concern here. The first involves the institution of the closet. This complex set of practices involving the hiding of gay and lesbian identities, desires, and activities has been a central defining feature of lesbian and gay life over the course of the Twentieth Century. I discussed its rise in Chapter Two and its downfall in Chapter Three.

In dealing with this issue, I established three sets of codes. The first involved issues with regard to the closet, the second with the changes in courtship, coupling and family life resulting from the availability of marriage, and the third with broader changes in lesbian and gay life. As with the other two coding schemes, I only discuss the development of one specific group of interrelated codes. I focus here on issues regard the closet.

The first code here involves life *inside* the closet. I defined this as “sentences describing members of same-sex couples and the hiding of their lesbian or gay life, or aspects of it, from other people.” Such statements can involve a fully or partially closeted life, and it can involve past or current practices. The second code with regard to the closet involves sentences showing lesbian and gay lives lived publicly. However, this code is specifically related to statements that contrast this life with life in the closet. Again, the full set of codes can be found in Appendix B’s codebook.

Returning to the articles

Having established the codes, the next step was to apply them to sentences within the articles under study. Again, this is a systematic technique for establishing which articles, and which sentences within them, contain information of particular interest. Additionally, as I noted above, the process of applying these codes to specific sentences is an iterative one. There may be information, for example, that relates to parenting but that wasn’t included in the original set of codes that was developed. As new codes are established, articles that had already been coded had to be re-evaluated to determine

whether these new codes were applicable to them. The final codebook reflects the results of those iterative practices.

The application of these codes to the newspaper articles is where I am somewhat “old school.” Each of the articles was printed and coded by hand. I am simply more comfortable with pen and paper. I used no particular data analysis software for this process, and the sample article in Appendix C was reproduced from the hand-coded paper copy. The results of this coding, the specific codes applied to particular sentences within specific articles, were inserted in the main database of articles that I discussed in Table A2.

The recording of these codes in that database provided me with a list, for example, of all the couple representations to whom the “obtaining children” code (1.1.1.3) had been applied. I could then pull together the articles containing these couples. The collection of these articles allowed me to then divide the articles into the different categories like “adoption” or “insemination” to determine how these practices were described. For something like this category, the first step was to determine the number of articles describing each of these practices. The 15 articles noting how same-sex couples went about obtaining children were then pulled out of the broader sample for further analysis. Within those, I then looked at the specific articles, and the specific lines within them to analyze such things as how prominent discussions of the ways children were obtained were within the broader and under what circumstances these discussions became more prominent.

The fact is that most of these articles had one sentence containing this code. In other words, the articles simply noted the fact that children were adopted or the result of

insemination without providing any other kind of information. I also noted under which circumstances the descriptions resulted in greater coverage—which articles had more sentences devoted to them. The most prominent one is discussed in Chapter Five. That article is specifically about obtaining children, and the problems couples may face with regard to international adoption. From the fact that so few articles containing children discussed how those children came into these families, and from the fact that most of the representations that do mention how children came into these families only note it without going into any detail, led me to conclude, as I stated in Chapter Five, that the presence of children in these homes is somewhat taken for granted.

I followed this analytical process for the various codes I developed, and these analyses led to the discussions in Chapters Three through Six. In writing those Chapters, I included a number of excerpts from these newspaper articles. Those excerpts were transformed back into the form in which they were published in newspapers for space considerations. This was also done to maintain some fealty to what we read every day. It is, after all, these news articles that are at the heart of this study.

APPENDIX B

Codebook

- 1. SOCIAL ROLES:** *A social role is a routinized set of practices associated with a specific location within a network of social relationships.* In this chapter of the codebook, I first establish the social networks I was primarily interested in investigating.

To be applied to sentence/units that display the couple, or the individual who is a member of the couple, engaging in the actions associated with the given role. Also includes descriptors (neighbor, job, etc.) A “+” at the end of the code indicates that the individual/couple is shown/described in such a way that they are performing the role in an responsible/fashion or are shown excelling at meeting it. A “-“ at the end of the code indicates that they are performing it poorly, or have failed.

- 1.1. **Family** These networks are those established by social “kinship” or “blood.” They involve the establishment of relationships of interdependence based in romantic/erotic pairing, and in the raising of children.

- 1.1.1. **Parent** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, child-rearing.

There are four codes associated with Parenting

- 1.1.1.1. **Everyday parenting** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, the everyday practices involved with parenting

- 1.1.1.2. **Parental planning** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, planning for children’s future or planning their own parenting.

- 1.1.1.3. **Obtaining children** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, the practices of obtaining children to parent.

- 1.1.1.4. **Other** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associate with, other aspects of parenting activity.

- 1.1.2. **Partner/Spouse** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, life-partnership.

There are five codes used for Partner/Spouse:

- 1.1.2.1. **Erotic Partner/Spouse** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, sexual activity

- 1.1.2.2. **Economic Partner/Spouse** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, economic activity
- 1.1.2.3. **Emotional Partner/Spouse** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, the emotional and affectional aspects of couplehood.
- 1.1.2.4. **Partnership/Spousal Maintenance** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, the interpersonal activity involved in maintaining a relationship over time.
- 1.1.2.5. **Other** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, aspects of life as a couple not represented in the other codes.

1.1.3. **Other Relative**

There is one code associated with this category

- 1.1.3.1. **Other Relatives** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, other family relationships

1.2. **Business/Economy**

1.2.1. **Owner**

There is one code associated with this category

- 1.2.1.1. **Business owner** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, owning a business of any size.

1.2.2. **Employee**

There are two codes associated with this category

- 1.2.2.1. **Manager** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, managing a company/business of which they are not the owner.
- 1.2.2.2. **Non-management employee** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, working for a company/business in a non-management position.

1.2.3. **Consumer**

There are two codes associated with this category

- 1.2.3.1. **General consumption** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, purchasing products or services.
- 1.2.3.2. **Identity-based consumption** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, purchasing products or services
- 1.2.4. **Property Owner** These codes are related to owning non-business property.

There are two codes associated with this category

- 1.2.4.1. **Financial Resources** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, accumulating wealth.
- 1.2.4.2. **Real Estate** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, homes and/or land.

1.3. State/Politics

1.3.1. State Actors

There are three codes associated with this category

- 1.3.1.1. **Elected Official** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, an elected position in government.
- 1.3.1.2. **Appointed Official** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, an appointed position in government.
- 1.3.1.3. **State employees** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, an employee of a state agency.

1.3.2. Social Movement Activist

- 1.3.2.1. **Public Face Couple** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, serving as a public face couple, in Massachusetts or elsewhere.

1.3.2.2. **Organizational Actor** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, working for a gay and lesbian (or LGBT) social movement organization.

1.3.2.3. **Other** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, gay and lesbian activism but not specifically affiliated with any organization.

1.3.3. **Citizen**

1.3.3.1. **Voter** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, voting.

1.4. **Education**

1.4.1. **Student**

There are three codes associated with this category

1.4.1.1. **High School Student** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples as, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, a high school student.

1.4.1.2. **College Student** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples as, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, a college student, at the graduate or undergraduate level.

1.4.1.3. **Other** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples as, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, any other type of student.

1.4.2. **Teacher**

There is one code associated with this category

1.4.2.1. **Teacher** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples as, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, a teacher at any level.

1.5. **Community**

There is one code associated with this category

1.5.1.1. **Neighbor** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples as, or showing them involved in the practices associated with, a neighbor.

2. SOCIAL MOVEMENT FRAMING: These codes are specifically to be used when analyzing the statements of public face couples and elected officials.

2.1. **Injustice Frames:** Statements made by the members of these same-sex couples identifying actual or potential harms flowing from the inability to marry.

There are three codes associated with this category

2.1.1. **Economic Hardship Frame.** Actual or potential harm in economic activity flowing from the inability to marry.

2.1.2. **Medical Hardship Frame.** Actual or potential harm in a medical setting flowing from the inability to marry.

2.1.3. **Other Hardships.** Actual or potential harm in other settings or activities flowing from the inability to marry.

2.2. **Marriage Frames:** Statements made by the members of these same-sex couples demonstrating their commitment

There are two codes associated with this category

2.2.1. **Similarity to Marriage.** Statements in which the couples explicitly demonstrate the similarities between their relationships and marriage.

2.2.2. **Normative Family Values.** Statements in which the couples explicitly demonstrate the esteem with which they hold marriage.

2.3. **History Frames:**

There are two codes associated with this category

2.3.1. **The Case.** Statements in which the couples comment on their role in the *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health* case.

2.3.2. **Gay and Lesbian History.** Statements in which the couples comment on the historical significance of the *Goodridge* case.

2.4. **Other.** Statements not included in other frames.

There is one code associated with this category

2.4.1. **Other** Statements that are not included within the other frame/coding categories

3. **HISTORICAL CHANGE** These codes involve representations of the changes occurring in lesbian and gay life.
 - 3.1. **The closet** The closet involves hiding lesbian and gay lives. These codes involve the closet, in either history or contemporary life.
 - 3.1.1. **In the closet** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples and the hiding their lesbian or gay life, or aspects of it, from other people.
 - 3.1.2. **Outside the closet** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples in such a way as to contrast the life they are living with a closeted life.
 - 3.2. **The life course** These codes involve changes in the life course of lesbians and gay men
 - 3.2.1. **Marriage** Sentences describing members of same-sex couples and how the introduction of marriage is creating changes in the life course of lesbians and gay men
 - 3.2.1.1. **Courtship and coupling** statements describing how courtship and coupling practices are being altered by the availability of marriage.
 - 3.2.1.2. **Marriage** Statements describing how questions about the activities surrounding marriage itself are being incorporated into the lives of same-sex couples where they were once absent.
 - 3.2.2. **Other** Sentences describing the changing life course of lesbians and gay men as they from outsider to insider. These statements do not include marriage itself.
 - 3.2.2.1. **Heterosexualization** Sentences describing the ways that lesbians and gay men, who are members of same-sex couples, are .
 - 3.2.2.2. **Honor/esteem** Sentences describing the ways that lesbians and gay men, and the families they form, are being held in honor and/or esteem.
 - 3.2.2.3. **Consciousness/Identity** Sentences describing the ways that lesbians and gay men consciousness is shifting.
 - 3.2.2.4. **Discrimination** Sentences describing the ways that lesbians and gay men experience discrimination.
 - 3.2.2.5. **Other** Sentences describing changes in lesbian and gay life men, and the families they form, that are not otherwise included.

APPENDIX C
Sample Article

Boston Globe
Date: April 21, 2001

Code(s)	Unit
1.5.1.1 2.4.1	1. Swift's Old Neighbors File Lawsuit for the Right to Same-Sex Marriage
1.5.1.1-	2. Richard Linnell wishes he'd been a friendlier neighbor.
1.1.1.4 1.5.1.1	3. He and his partner, Gary Chalmers, and their daughter lived up the street from then-lieutenant governor Jane Swift and her husband, Chuck Hunt, when they were in Northbridge, in Worcester County.
1.5.1.1	4. He'd see Swift in the neighborhood here and there: putting out her mail or down at the fruit stand at the end of the street.
1.5.1.1-	5. But he never spoke to her.
1.3.2.1	6. Now Linnell and Chalmers are one of seven same-sex couples suing the state for the right to marry, a right Swift has repeatedly said should be confined to heterosexual couples.
2.4.1	7. "It would have been nice if she had gotten a chance to meet us," Linnell said.
2.4.1	8. "She may have a different opinion at this point in time if she had."

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