

Queer Politics/Queer Sex: Marriage and Sexual Libertarianism.

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Introduction

“The frank refusal to repudiate sex or the undignified people who have it, which I see as the tacit or explicit ethos in countless scenes of queer culture, is the antithesis of identity politics” (Warner 1999, 75).

In *The Trouble with Normal*, Michael Warner explores some of the most interesting political rifts in American gay culture. He begins with Leo Bersani’s observation that most people don’t really like sex and proceeds to develop a theory of sexual shame that explains a great deal about the moralism, hierarchy, and colonization of American gay/lesbian culture. To summarize, the drive toward normalization—what Warner refers to as the damaging hierarchies of respectability (74)—has had the unfortunate side effect of stripping from queer culture the most potentially liberating aspects of the movement’s goals and philosophies. Instead of rejecting the damaging politics of shame and stigma that come with a “normalizing” sexual politics, the loudest voices in the gay and lesbian movement have relegated queerness to the margins, pushing the queer ethos and its radically liberating potential underground. Mainstream gays and lesbians seem to be pushing for middle class normalcy, getting “married,” having kids, going to church, and serving in the military, thereby reifying the dominant sexual hierarchy that marginalizes and damages people who arrange their erotic lives in non-traditional ways.

Warner develops a persuasive argument that is drawn from debates among prominent figures who are most visibly shaping the discourses of sexual politics. Undoubtedly, the figures Warner invokes—Rudolph Giuliani, James Collard, Larry Kramer, Urvashi Vaid, Kendall Thomas, and Andrew Sullivan, among others—have wielded tremendous influence on the tone and tempo of movement politics, but what remains to be seen is whether these discussions accurately describe or resonate with the lives of “mainstream” middle-American sexual minorities.

In “Intimacy and Equality: The Question of Lesbian and Gay Marriage,” Morris Kaplan tackles the issue somewhat differently. Whereas Warner is concerned about the normalizing, homogenizing, assimilationist potential of gay marriage and, even more specifically, sets it in an apparently oppositional relationship to sexual libertarianism, Kaplan sees it as an important component of full citizenship. “[T]he demand for recognition of lesbian and gay marriage or domestic partnership appears as a necessary corollary of equal citizenship in the domestic sphere” (Kaplan 1997:207-8).

Echoing Kaplan, sociologist Steven Seidman defends mainstream support of the right to marry this way:

Defenders of gay marriage make a compelling and to my mind winning point: to the extent that marriage in the United States is associated with first-class citizenship, including social respect, being denied this right is a pointed public statement of the disrespected and social inferior status of gays. Lacking marital rights positions gays as outsiders, denies us a host of crucial material benefits and rights, devalues our relationships, and reduces our chances for personal well-being and a meaningful sense of social and civic belonging (Seidman 2002: 191).

To simply assert, however, that the issue is same-sex marriage, and that Kaplan/Seidman and Warner are pro and con, respectively, is both too reductionist and too speculative. Same-sex marriage does not exist anywhere in the United States, and thus we will not, indeed cannot, know in advance whether it would bring a radical redefinition of a traditional, gendered, and sexist institution, the taming of sexual outlaws, or some other as yet unimagined amalgam of possibilities. What we might determine, however, is whether scholarly debate accurately characterizes the political beliefs of LGBTQ citizens. Are LGBTQ people pro-marriage, anti-sex, somewhere in between, or is the issue more important to gay presses than it is to the quotidian lives of most individuals. Warner and Kaplan and Seidman, among others, theorize equally potent and viable positions, and yet much of the discussion is taking place with little empirical support. The Black Pride Survey 2000 found that marriage/domestic partnership issues ranked third in importance among their respondents, second to AIDS/HIV and discrimination (Battle et al. 2002). Researchers for that project did not assess respondents’ support for what we are calling measures of sexual libertarianism, but their respondents did give high priority to marriage and domestic partnership rights.

It is one thing to write about a “queer ethos” in the abstract, another to define its content, and still yet another to determine who might espouse it. Are queers a discernible group of people who use the word “queer” to describe themselves? Are they people who label themselves using multiple, or perhaps contradictory, categories? Are queers any individuals who choose to represent their desires, bodies, and identities in any non-traditional way, or is best to use the word as an adjective or verb, but not as a noun? Illustratively, a queer ethos and the people who espouse it have been described as sex-positive (Warner 1999: 30-35; Smith 1996: 281), radical (Warner 1993: vii, xxvi; Wilson 1997: 100; Chauncey 2000: 303-04, 313; Duggan 1995: 169-71), angry (Berlant and Freeman 1996: 305-07; Lehr 1999: 89; Warner 1999: 63), anti-assimilationist (Sedgwick 1990, xii; Cooper 1996; Smith 1996: 279; Case 2000; Berlant and Freeman 1996: 305; Warner 2002: 212), young (Phelan 2001: 107; Mort 1993: 203; Smith 1996:281; Boone 2000: vii), urban (Clare 1997: 21), utopian and confrontational (Phelan 2001: 111), interested in transgressive acts (Lehr 1999: 85, citing Stein and Plummer 1996; Cooper 1996; Wilson 1993), flamboyant (Duggan 1995: 160), opposed to gay marriage (Warner 1999, esp. ch. 3), opposed in general to all things “gay” or “lesbian” (Phelan 2001: 152; Duggan 1995: 162-65), opposed to stable identities of all kinds (Somerville 2000: 137, Gamson 1996, 415n), unsystematized and ephemeral (Warner 2002: 198, 203), opposed to legislative or legal politics and a strategy emphasizing civil rights (Phelan 2001: 108; Case 2001: 25), lacking faith in law and political institutions (Smith 1996), concerned with cultural politics and symbolic gestures (Escoffier 1998:179), and in favor of outing (Smith 1996: 283).

Queer theorizing has complexified our understanding of the sexual categories across history and in different cultural settings, and much of it emphasizes power distributions across discursive spaces. The insights of constructivist thinkers are informing critiques of science, political studies, and conceptions of the body, potentially moving queer theory away from the solely discursive and toward the material (Hegarty 1997; Kitzinger 1987; Pitts 2000). These projects invoke a host of new questions: What does queerness have to do with the ways that people behave politically? Who are queers and what are they doing to effect social change? Is there any clear relationship between the academic/activist conception of queerness and its use as an identity or self-description among people who use the term?

Our first attempt to grapple with the data collected for this project summarized the demographic and political profile of those people who used the term queer to identify their sexual orientation, and

considered the extent to which queer theorizing might accurately describe queer citizens and their political behavior (Rollins & Hirsch forthcoming). Our conclusions there seem to point toward two conflicting interpretations. On the one hand, our data support Warner's contention that queer has become a marker of political radicalism within the gay and lesbian community, signaling a rift between the more marginal queer fringe who have refused to repudiate sex, and the more assimilationist gays and lesbians who, on Warner's reading, are at home making dinner for their partners. At the same time that this interpretation upholds the assertions of queer theorists, it also suggests that gay and lesbian scholars who posited an inevitable march to assimilation may have been right (Altman 1971; Epstein 1987; Gamson 1996; Plummer 1998). In short, we concluded in our first analysis that queer—as an identity category—has become the marker of sexual freedom, political radicalism, and social marginalization that was—ironically—similar to the ethos that was associated with gay/lesbian identity in the early years post-Stonewall.

The survey data collected for this project lend themselves to several analytic possibilities. We might explore our respondents' opinions about legal institutions, military service, religion, the family, or party politics, and any of these approaches would yield useful information about the political lives of sexual minorities. But if, as Warner posits, queer is the frank refusal to repudiate sex or the undignified people who have it, then we should focus our attention on the ways that people think about sex and the ways that it might be manifest in radical or mainstream modes of political expression. Consequently, our analysis here is focused on the tension between our respondents' tendencies toward what we are calling sexual libertarianism (i.e., radical sexual identities and behavior that eschew regulation and normalization) and sexual conformity (i.e., marriage, monogamy, parenting). Is it possible to support our earlier finding even as our database continues to expand? If queer is a marker of sexual libertarianism, then we should expect to see more self-identified queers supporting more marginal sexual behaviors, practices, and groups. At the same time, we should expect to find that our non-queer, gay- and lesbian- identified respondents are less favorably inclined toward sexual radicalism.

Hypotheses

If debates about same-sex marriage and sexual libertarianism reflect divergent political trends within the community, we should expect to see more support for same-sex marriage among gay/lesbian identified

respondents, and less support for sexual libertarianism. These trends should be reversed among self-identified queers.

Methodology

We developed and distributed an eight-page mail survey to the mailing lists of several LGBTQ organizations in San Diego, California, Albany, New York, and the Twin Cities area of Minnesota. (1) The survey is divided into three sections. The first section is comprised of forty-seven statements representing a wide variety of political sentiments. Respondents were asked to rank their level of agreement with these sentiments on a seven-point scale. The second section consists of twenty-one true/false questions primarily intended to assess respondents' political knowledge. The final section allowed us to assemble our respondents' political and demographic profiles and included two feeling thermometers that are intended to locate respondents on the liberal-conservative (or assimilationist-liberationist) political spectrum. (2)

Surveys were distributed to approximately 2000 individuals in San Diego, 4000 individuals in the Albany region, and 7000 individuals in the Twin Cities area. Our distribution lists included a theater group, student groups, an athletic club, a transgender discussion group, and local community centers. Because our respondents have crossed at least one threshold of political engagement—joining a group, subscribing to a newsletter, or giving their name to a LGBTQ organization—they should be viewed as a politically active group. Although some respondents indicated in their responses that they were still questioning their sexual orientation, and a very few identified as heterosexual, it is clear that we have drawn a sample that is almost entirely out of the closet and politically engaged. We had hoped to draw a large sample from diverse sections of the community, but found it very difficult to reach beyond the well-documented whiteness and maleness of organized LGBTQ politics. Indeed, as the project continues to develop it has become increasingly clear that there is a serious lack of diversity in local political leadership and organization, underscoring the existence of deep divisions between white and non-white LGBTQ communities nationally (see Battle et al., 2002, 43-44).

Studies of LGBTQ politics have relied on various methods to reach the community, including samples from larger surveys, census data, exit polls, snowball and strategic sampling (Bailey 1999; Hertzog 1996; Herek and Glunt 1993; Jennings and Andersen 1996; Whisman 1996; Yeager 1999; Zeeland 1995, 1996, 1999). Drawing a truly random sample snapshot of the LGBTQ community is impossible given the

exigencies of the closet and the difficulty of defining the target population (Green, Strolovitch, Wong & Bailey, 2001; Laumann 1994:292), thus while studying groups and organizations may skew the data in the direction of privilege (Badgett 2001), the technique results in a profile of the people who are most visible and engaged in LGBTQ politics at the local level.

Table 1: Comparing Queers and Non-Queers

| | Total Sample | Queers | Non-Queers |
|--|---------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Descriptive Variables | | | |
| White | 90% | 89% | 92% |
| Male | 57% | 50% | 60% |
| Democrats | 78% | 73% | 81% |
| Republicans | 4% | 4% | 4% |
| Independents | 4% | 9% | 3% |
| Coupled | 33% | 30% | 36% |
| Attends Church | 44% | 36% | 45% |
| Mean Age | 48 | 45 | 48 |
| Mean Income Category | 4.63 | 4.11 | 4.78 |
| Mean Education Level | 3.17 | 3.12 | 3.18 |
| Mean Visibility Level | 1.75 | 1.97 | 1.56 |
| Mean Discrimination Scale | 0.76 | 1.11 | 0.72 |
| Has had a commitment ceremony | 13% | 15% | 14% |
| Children | | | |
| Yes | 17% | 14% | 15% |
| No | 83% | 86% | 85% |
| Mean NAMBLA Rating | 17 | 21 | 17 |
| Statement Responses | | | |
| It is important for gay and lesbian people to fight for the right to marry. | 5.41 | 5.24 | 5.42 |
| Would you like to marry if it becomes legal for same-sex couples to do so? | 1.37 | 1.3 | 1.4 |
| If two men want to have sex without condoms, that's ok. | 3.73 | 4.00 | 3.70 |
| Gay sex clubs should be closed. | 3.06 | 2.60 | 3.10 |
| Monogamous lesbian and gay couples are just imitating heterosexual patterns. | 2.22 | 2.27 | 2.17 |

Demographic Overview of the Sample: So far, we have received a total of 2053 returned useable surveys, a response rate of approximately 16%. As Table 1 indicates, the sample is very white, somewhat more male than female, politically liberal and socially privileged. The mean income category of 4.63 translates into roughly \$35,000 per year, while the education marker indicates that the mean respondent had graduated college. The visibility mean of 1.75 indicates that respondents were likely to display at least one, but probably two, symbols of their sexuality in public space. The discrimination-scale average of slightly less than one meant that many people had experienced at least one type of discrimination in their lives. The age of our respondents was reasonably well distributed between 18 and 90 with a mean of 48. Despite the opportunity to identify their sexual orientation across numerous categories, most (1630, 85%) chose to label themselves as gay or lesbian; only 285 (15%) individuals opted for the category queer. Less than two percent of the overall sample identified as transgender. Our respondents are generally politically liberal and active, and reasonably well informed: 97% are registered to vote, 78% are democrats, 4% are independents, and 81% answered at least five out of six true/false knowledge questions correctly.

Assessing Support for Marriage

A sizeable percentage of the sample reports being in a relationship (33%), and many of our respondents report being parents (17%). Regular church attendance was also reported by a large number of the respondents (44%). Several variables in the survey may allow us to assess attitudes toward sexual libertarianism and support for marriage rights, and to determine if agreement with a pro-marriage political agenda conflicts with, or is at odds with more libertarian postures toward sexual expression. We asked respondents to rate the following question on a seven-point scale: “It is important for gay and lesbian people to fight for the right to marry.” The largest group of respondents agreed strongly with this statement; less than 10% of the sample rated it lower than neutrality, and more than 55% rated it with agreement at a 6 or 7, signaling widespread support for marriage rights as a political goal. We also asked respondents to indicate whether or not they would marry if same-sex marriages were to become possible. Answers ranged across a three point scale—no, maybe, and yes. Slightly more than half (51%) indicated that they would marry if it were possible for same sex couples to do so, and although many expressed uncertainty (35%), only a small segment said they would not marry if they could (14%). A third measure of support for the institution of marriage was determined by asking respondents if they had had a commitment ceremony, and among the

sample as a whole, 13% said they had. Curiously, when the queers and non-queers are separated, 15% of the queers replied that they had had a ceremony, while only 14% of the non-queer subset had done so. Clearly, then, there is a strong trend of support for marriage rights among our respondents.

Assessing Sexual Libertarianism

Respondents rated their feelings toward a number of groups on a 100-point feeling thermometer. That instrument places completely negative feelings at 0, neutrality at 50, and complete support at 100. Among the groups included was the North American Man Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), probably one of the most controversial and problematic organizations in American politics. The group, founded in 1978, was established for the purposes of advocating the repeal of age of consent laws, specifically lobbying for greater acceptance of romantic and sexual relationships between older men and younger boys. Although the group has always been somewhat marginal to the gay and lesbian movement, it was more prominent in the 1970s and has, in recent years, been silenced considerably through prosecutions of its members and civil litigation. On the whole, feelings toward the group were negative, with 48% of the sample rating them at 0. Although 12% of the sample located themselves at complete neutrality, fully 94% of respondents ranked the group at 50 or below. Only 6% of the sample rated the group above neutrality, with clusters of 2% scoring the group at 60 and slightly more than 1% rating them at 100.

We used three other attitudinal statements to assess support for sexual libertarianism. The first, "Monogamous lesbian and gay couples are just imitating heterosexual patterns," was intended to determine how our respondents felt about monogamy and its place in same-sex relationships. Responses clustered solidly at the disagreement end of the scale, with 74% rating the question at a 1 or 2. With 90% of the sample rating this question from neutrality to strong disagreement, only 10% of respondents expressed mild to strong agreement. In order to measure respondents' feelings toward public sex venues, we asked them to rate their feelings toward the statement, "Gay sex clubs should be closed." Responses to this statement were mixed, with 50% of the sample indicating strong disagreement (at 1 or 2), one quarter (25%) placing themselves at neutrality, and slightly more than 17% expressing moderate to strong agreement (5-7). Clearly, the sample leans in the direction of supporting the availability of public sex venues, but there is certainly a strong measure of dissent from that position. A third variable measures support for "bareback" sex, "If two men want to have sex without condoms, that's ok." Responses to this

statement ranged across the spectrum of possibility, with 34% of the sample clustering at disagreement (1 or 2), 25% at neutrality, and 25% expressing agreement (6 or 7).

These variables are, admittedly, open to multiple interpretations, but when the “clubs” variable is inverted (to match the direction of the other two) and the three are correlated some consistent patterns emerge. The “imitate” variable correlates significantly with “clubs” (0.14) and “clubs” correlates significantly with “condom” (0.19). Thus, while some respondents might agree that bareback sex is acceptable—because monogamy is understood as a proxy for safety—others may feel that bareback sex is an individual choice regardless of the sexual setting or circumstances. Although averaging these variables has a homogenizing effect, it also pushes to the ends of the scale those individuals who express similarly libertarian and similarly conformist attitudes. An average of “imitate” and “clubs” pushes those individuals who support non-monogamy and public sex to the high end of the resulting seven-point scale; an average of “clubs” and “condom” similarly reveals individuals who support barebacking as a form of sexual libertarianism.

Hypotheses Tested

In the next phase of the analysis, each of these markers is positioned as a dependent variable in series of regression models that include multiple controls. Three marriage support variables and three measures of sexual radicalism were regressed stepwise forward, using OLS regression or probit techniques where appropriate.(3) We speculated that several demographic variables would likely correspond with tendencies in either direction: Sexual identity (queers = 0, gay/lesbian = 1); gender (female = 0, male = 1); having children; relationship status; church attendance; age; personal income; education level; self-reported outness level; experience with discrimination. We expect that the pro-sex position will be more visible among younger, single, childless, males, in lower income brackets, who identify as queer, and who have experienced greater levels of discrimination and violence. The pro-marriage position should be more apparent among older respondents, women, people with children, those in higher income brackets, who identify as gay or lesbian, and who have not been motivated to political radicalism through experiences with violence. Table 2 reports the results of these analyses.

Table 2: Independent Variables

| Independent Variables | Marry N=1281 | | WedScale N=1249 | | Ceremony N=918 | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|------|--------------------|------|-------------------|------|
| | Coef. | SE | Coef. | SE | Coef. | SE |
| Gay/Les/Queer | 0.45*** | 0.12 | 0.23*** | 0.06 | | |
| Male | | | -0.21*** | 0.04 | -0.45*** | 0.10 |
| Children | | | | | 0.25* | 0.13 |
| Coupled | | | | | -0.56*** | 0.10 |
| Church | 0.21** | 0.08 | 0.20*** | 0.04 | 0.25** | 0.10 |
| Age | -0.02*** | 0.00 | -0.01*** | 0.00 | | |
| Income | | | | | | |
| Education | | | | | 0.09 | 0.05 |
| Visibility Scale | 0.16*** | 0.04 | 0.07*** | 0.02 | 0.19*** | 0.04 |
| Discrimination | 0.12** | 0.04 | 0.07*** | 0.02 | | |
| Prob < Pseudo R2 | 0.0001 0.06 | | 0.00001 0.10 | | 0.0001 0.11 | |

| Independent Variables | NAMBLA N=1033 | | Imitate/Clubs N=1278 | | Clubs/Condom N=1259 | |
|-----------------------|------------------|------|-------------------------|------|------------------------|------|
| | Coef. | SE | Coef. | SE | Coef. | SE |
| Gay/Les/Queer | -5.96** | 1.91 | -0.36*** | 0.09 | -0.42*** | 0.11 |
| Male | 10.78*** | 1.41 | 0.79*** | 0.07 | 0.75*** | 0.08 |
| Children | | | | | | |
| Coupled | -2.70 | 1.41 | -0.14* | 0.07 | | |
| Church | | | -0.18** | 0.07 | -0.20* | 0.08 |
| Age | | | 0.01** | 0.00 | -0.01** | 0.00 |
| Income | -1.20*** | 0.30 | | | | |
| Education | | | | | | |
| Visibility Scale | | | | | 0.07* | 0.04 |
| Discrimination | | | 0.09** | 0.03 | | |
| Prob < Pseudo R2 | 0.0001 0.07 | | 0.0001 0.13 | | 0.0001 0.08 | |

p < .10 = no mark
 p < .05 = *
 p < .01 = **
 p < .001 = ***

Analysis

Several things become apparent from these regression analyses (Table 2). First, although each model is significant, the moderately low R² in each instance should inspire cautious interpretation; these demographic characteristics explain only a small part of the variance on each dependent variable. In general, our hypotheses are confirmed: less support for marriage rights is apparent among men, younger people, and respondents who identify as queer. Conversely, there is greater support for the measures of sexual radicalism among men, respondents in lower socioeconomic categories, and among those

who identify as queer. It is also not surprising that the propensity for having had a commitment ceremony is associated with being in a relationship and having children. The prominence of church attendance across five of the six models is not unexpected. And the direction of the coefficients indicates that respondents' support for institutionalized relationships plays an important role in the political expression of their sexual orientation.

Read together, the significance and direction of these variables is as expected and lends support to the hypothesis that there are two differing political profiles in LGBTQ politics. "Mainstream" gays and lesbians seem to be expressing a more assimilationist political posture, while the more radical queers are challenging expectations about monogamy, sexual libertarianism, and interactions between sexual minorities and state institutions. The significant but negative coefficient for being in a couple on the ceremony variable seems strange at first glance, but is explained by the fact that very few of our respondents, even those who are in relationships, have had a commitment ceremony, and that many of those who have had ceremonies are no longer in couples.

Not all of these findings are as readily interpretable, however. The variable marking experiences with discrimination and violence yielded positive coefficients on the right to marry question, the propensity to marry scale, as well as the imitate/clubs radicalism scale—confounding our hypotheses by pointing in two directions at the same time. The strength of the coefficient for this variable is modest to weak in each case, suggesting that such experiences are indeed motivators of political action, but that the direction and profile of that engagement is less predictable. For some people, such experiences inspire assimilationist political tendencies, and for others their response was more radical. The emergence of the education variable only on the marker of having a commitment ceremony is unexpected given its absence from the other models, as is the negative coefficient for income as predictor of support for NAMBLA.

When controlling for all the other demographic variables, the identity marker remains in all the analyses except one. Gay/lesbian identified respondents were more supportive of marriage rights as a political goal and were more likely to report a willingness to marry should the option become available. Queer identified respondents were more supportive of NAMBLA and the markers of sexual libertarianism. These findings support the contention that queers are more radical, less assimilationist, more sexually libertarian than their gay and lesbian identified counterparts.

Discussion

These findings point toward at least two conclusions. First, the largest majority of our respondents identified themselves as gay or lesbian, and expressed support for marriage rights, as well as a willingness to get married. This sizeable segment of the sample expressed little support for sexual libertarianism. There exists, however, a clear subset of the sample that maintains a more liberationist profile and supports less institutionalized forms of political engagement.

Nevertheless, there does seem to be variation among community members about not only the political potential of same-sex marriage, but also what such a radical change in the institution itself might mean. When the queers and non-queers are sorted and categorized according to two additional characteristics—heterosexual identification and reporting being married—18% of the queers report being married. Among the gay/lesbian identified subset only 12% of the respondents claimed that status. Interestingly, while only 5 (0.35%) of the gay/lesbian respondents also chose to identify as heterosexual, and none of those stated that they were married, 6 (2%) of the queers identified also as heterosexual and 3 of those reported being married. Furthermore, the group of respondents who reported being married does not overlap completely with those who reported having a ceremony. Among the 278 respondents who report having had a ceremony, half claim to be married and half do not. Among those who claim to be married, 44% indicate that they have not had a ceremony. Thus, although we cannot tell with certainty whether respondents are legally married, or claiming domestic partnership, or other commitments, we can assess some measure of support for claims upon the institutional label and rituals that accompany the label “married” (see Yang 1997). Despite the fact that these numbers represent but a very tiny portion of the overall sample, they do suggest that there are different conceptions of what marriage in general, and what same-sex marriage in particular, mean politically.

In conclusion, there seems to be support for both sets of arguments: the gay/lesbian contingent expresses a more mainstream, assimilationist profile that favors same-sex marriage and rejects sexual libertarianism. Although sex-positivity is part of the queer profile, there also seems to be, among that contingent, a suggestion of recognition of the position that queer marriage fundamentally alters the structure of marriage as an institution. We should not lose sight, however, of the fact that the gay/lesbian contingent is far larger in

numbers and that their political positions are more prominent among these data.

Notes

1. The experience of finding organizations to work with us was informative in itself and the levels of access varied widely. Some groups eagerly invited us to their meetings and allowed us to distribute materials to attendees. Other groups provided us with their mailing lists and allowed us to send materials through the mailing services they regularly use for their own organization mailings. Some groups were very protective of their mailing lists but included our survey in their own regular mailings and allowed us to reimburse them for the costs of excess postage. In general, organization leaders were most concerned about protecting the privacy interests of their membership. The possibility of outing someone against their will was clearly an issue, especially for those groups that emphasize support for people with HIV.
2. The instrument is posted online at http://www.qc.edu/Political_Science/CPSurvey
3. Because the question asking whether respondents had had a commitment ceremony is binary, probit analysis was used in that instance. Whereas OLS regression techniques yield coefficients that represent “movement” along the scale of the dependent variable, probit regression relies upon logged probabilities and thus does not translate directly into interpretable units.

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