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Gay Liberation Is One Thing, but Nobody Likes a Dyke: Emerging Frames in Queer Radio

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GAY LIBERATION IS ONE THING, BUT NOBODY LIKES A DYKE: EMERGING
FRAMES IN QUEER RADIO

by

Ryan Sugden

A Thesis Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts
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December 2016

ABSTRACT

GAY LIBERATION IS ONE THING, BUT NOBODY LIKES A DYKE: EMERGING FRAMES IN QUEER RADIO

by

Ryan Sugden

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2016
Under the Supervision of Professor David S. Allen

This thesis examines how a social movement uses the media to progress in society. I conduct a framing analysis on the queer community's use of radio during two time periods: 1970s queer radio program *Gay Perspective* and a 2015-2016 program, *Queery*. I examine the show through three emerging frames: Cultured, Diversity, and Assimilation. The thesis studies how segments of the LGBTQIA+ community framed the discussion of gay rights in the 1970s and how those frames have (and haven't) changed in 2016. *Gay Perspective* focused much of its energy on trying to demonstrate the need for rights and attempts to demonstrate how the queer community's members could be functioning members of mainstream society. By 2015-2016, at least some of those rights had been won, freeing queer-rights advocates to wrestle with definitional problems about membership within the community, something addressed in *Queery*. These findings show that social movements are constrained overall by the larger culture in which they are embedded, and call into question the use of radio as an effective tool for transforming a social movement's status within society.

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I used to scoff at the idea of writing a dedication page for a thesis because it seemed so trivial, but after finishing mine, I realized this was the closest I'd ever get to being on the Grammy's stage thanking all my fans and supporters... so I'm taking my moment.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On June 6, 2014, I was driving my car to a friend's house with bags full of clothes. I needed her advice on what to wear to the first time I would attend PrideFest. I had been an out and proud gay man for nearly two years at the time when I received a text from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) stating that on June 6, 2014, the Wisconsin state ban on same-sex marriage had fallen.¹

Though legislators would eventually appeal the newly put in place court decision that allowed for same-sex marriage resulting in a halt on any new same-sex marriages, the law would eventually hold up. As of October 6, 2014, same-sex marriage was considered legal in the state of Wisconsin.² This movement would eventually reach the national level when the United States Supreme Court ruled in favor of the nationwide legalization of same-sex marriage on June 26, 2015.³

Both of these legal decisions came as a surprise not because the majority of Americans didn't support queer rights, but because the decision had taken far too long. Queer identities had long achieved representation in the media within the past twenty years that it had seemed almost arbitrary that it had taken until 2015 to make this happen, especially when the first state legalized same-sex marriage a decade earlier (Massachusetts in 2004).⁴

¹ Jason Stein, Patrick Marley, and Dana Ferguson, "Federal judge overturns Wisconsin's gay marriage ban," *Journal Sentinel* (Milwaukee, WI), June 7, 2014.

² Jason Stein and Patrick Marley, "Gay marriages to resume in Wisconsin as Supreme Court rejects appeals," *Journal Sentinel* (Milwaukee, WI), Oct. 7, 2014.

³ Adam Liptak, "Supreme Court Ruling Makes Same-Sex Marriage a Right Nationwide," *The New York Times* (New York, NY), June 26, 2015.

⁴ Kathleen Burge, "SJC: Gay Marriage Legal in Mass," *Boston Globe* (Boston, MA), Nov. 18, 2003.

The media, though plagued with stereotypical representations of queer identities, has made large strides from the upsetting demise of *Ellen*⁵ to the progressive-for-their-time representations of Will and Jack from *Will & Grace*⁶ to the now-celebrated representations of Cam and Mitch, the married television couple of the hit sitcom *Modern Family*.⁷ As the queer community has continued to garner more and more representation in the media, the acceptance of queer identities has also continued to grow. The media have no doubt played a crucial role in the large strides made in the past two decades. But how has the queer community used media to move its identity and movement forward?

Radio is an understudied medium. While scholars have accessed a vast amount of queer history in television, film and press, that extensive history still doesn't exist for queer radio. This project will examine the media use of the queer rights movement in the early 1970s and in 2015-2016, specifically through the use of radio. The context of time will obviously play a key role in the presentation of self, likely due to the political nature of the queer rights movement at each respective time. Previous studies of the queer-rights movement have identified multiple forms of advocacy, all of which likely contributed to the standing of the community in 2015-2016. To better understand the complex relationship among politics, time and queer identities, it's crucial to examine the ways in which the queer rights movement started and how it presented itself.

Additionally, it is important to examine the differences in identity and content presentation over

⁵ Bill Carter, "ABC Is Cancelling 'Ellen,'" *The New York Times* (New York City, NY), April 25, 1998.

⁶ Kathleen Battles, and Wendy Hilton-Morrow, "Gay Characters in Conventional Spaces: Will and Grace and the Situation Comedy Genre," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 19, no. 1 (2002): 87-105.

⁷ Ziyad Saadi, "Is 'Modern Family' Still Making an Impact After Five Seasons?," *Indiewire*, April 25, 2014, <http://www.indiewire.com/article/television/5-years-in-is-modern-family-still-making-an-impact>.

time to see how the political movement has changed in light of the vast differences in societal expectations and acceptance as a whole. This thesis will use past research on framing analysis and gay liberation to explore the broader issue of how social movements use media to frame themselves, specifically how the queer rights movement uses radio. Most media scholarship on the queer rights movement has focused on the presence and characterization of gay characters in entertainment. This thesis seeks to understand how the queer rights movement used one type of media, the radio, to gain legitimization and tell its story. It will investigate how radio use by members of the queer rights movement evolved from the 1970s, when the movement was fighting for legitimacy, to the state of legal acceptance in 2015-2016. This thesis will investigate the stories members of the queer rights movement tell about themselves. It is hoped that these cases, or frames as viewed by the researcher, will reveal not only something about the relationship between how a social movement frames itself, but also about how a social movement uses radio in an attempt to legitimize its message.

Terms in this Thesis

This thesis uses terms that have been used throughout research with multiple, differing definitions. Therefore, I find it important to define these terms and how I use them in this project.

I refer to what most call the “gay rights movement” as the “queer rights movement” to avoid the inherent sexism in favoring the rights of gay men over lesbians, bisexuals, transgender people, and any other members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Community is used here as the grouping of people who share one identity factor - in this case, nonheterosexuality. “Queer” is meant to encompass all members of the movement throughout time – movement referring to those members of the queer community who chose to come together to fight for equal rights in

the face of discrimination. Though the term queer has a history of negative connotations associated with it, the term as used here is meant to empower the group.

For the purpose of this project, “social movements” refers to a group of people coming together to obtain equal rights and representation. The people must organize into at least one group, though there can be multiple groups (as seen throughout the queer rights movement). A social movement must have both long-term and short-term goals. If a group has larger, long-term goals without short-term goals, it will likely be unable to achieve that one goal in a quick time. Therefore, the short-term goals will keep them motivated, together, and consistently meeting to address the larger, overall picture of their movement. Social movements also need to use resource mobilization, or in this case, media/radio use, to promote their agenda.

The term “Emerging Frames” is used to describe the aspect of frames throughout the framing analysis in this thesis. Frames are referred to as emerging because they emerge to the researcher from within the language of each radio program’s content because they are viewed as something observed rather than something purposefully executed by members of this specific social movement.

Chapter Descriptions

This project consists of five chapters. The first chapter features a brief introduction into my interest in the topic followed the chapter descriptions.

Chapter two includes an outline of past research including 1970s gay liberation, sexuality in media, 1970s radio and queer identities present on the medium, and how social movements use the media to further their social progression. The chapter concludes with a methodology section on what to expect from the project.

Chapter three focuses exclusively on *Gay Perspective* and each episode of the program. I first provide a brief history of the GPU and *Gay Perspective* followed by a summary and analysis of each episode's content. Previous scholarship on the 1970s queer rights movement focuses on the presentation of queer identities both in a pre- and post- Stonewall era. These various analyses focus on presentation of clothing style, types of speech, and overall presentations of personality as they contribute to certain styles of advocacy at the time. I argue that the tensions of overt expression vs. passing, us vs. them, and gay vs. queer become the central focus in the content and presentation of *Gay Perspective*. These tensions illuminate the concerns of queer advocacy groups at the time that couldn't decide which approach to fighting for rights was best, a more in-your-face tactic or a more reserved, conservative presentation of self.

Chapter four focuses exclusively on *Queery* and each episode explored in this project. I provide a summary of WORT as an organization, followed by a summary and analysis of each episode's content. Drawing on the previous research of 1970s gay liberation, I establish changes in the presentation of identities and content in this program to showcase how far the queer rights movement had come in 40 years. I look for any indications of queer assimilation, stereotypes, and instances where the 2015 queer community may draw from similar advocacy styles of the 1970s queer movement, and analyze what that says about societal expectations in 2015-2016.

The final chapter serves two purposes. First, the chapter explores the differences between both radio programs in the political and social context. The second part of the chapter summarizes the project as a whole. I discuss the limitations of my research tactics and address the cultural significance of the shift in how the queer community used radio in the 1970s and how it uses radio in the early 21st century.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW & METHODS

As evolving cultural texts filtered by power struggles give us a better understanding of modern LGBTQIA+ issues, historical and informational texts provide an opportunity to explore differences in representations across time. While many would rather focus on representations of the queer community in film and television, the rather incomplete history of queer identities in radio, especially with the rise in radio use during the 1970s and the addition of FM and the massive increase in stations nationwide,⁸ provides an additional historical reference to focus on.

To explore the cultural connotations of a queer radio programs in the early 1970s (1971-1972) and in the present day (2015-2016), I will first look at the queer rights movement, or gay liberation, during that time period. I will next look at how gay liberation and the sexual revolution were represented in media at the time, as well as an interpretive look on more modern cases. Finally, I will direct my research to any available research on queer radio programs as well as radio trends in the 1970s and early 2000s.

Literature Review

Gay Liberation

The queer community has consistently struggled for acceptance, equal rights, equal representation and governmental support for combatting AIDS. Queer people have long struggled with being seen as normal, especially when in the rise of queer rights and the sexual revolution, they were still seen as deviants from a norm. Because of this cultural status as

⁸ James Robertson and Gerald G. Yokom, "Educational Radio: The Fifty-Year-Old Adolescent. ERIC/EBR Annual Review Paper," *Educational Broadcasting Review* 7, no. 2 (1973): 107-115.

deviant, non-heterosexuals, they had to convince the dominating hetero-world that they were “normal,” which is a common, reoccurring theme in the pre-1970s queer rights movements.⁹

Historians have long glamorized the Stonewall Riots, the 1969 riots outside of the Stonewall Inn, as the beginning of the gay liberation movement.¹⁰ The riots happened in Greenwich Village, New York, following a police raid of the gay club. Instead of patrons abandoning the area and facing arrests and fines, they instead fought back against the police, causing massive riots and one of the first major, gay political moments in history.¹¹ In glamorizing this event, authors often discredit the activists prior to the event who did a lot to bring attention to the movement. Scholars also give far too much credit to Stonewall, claiming that the riots began an unending political outrage that helped queers finally organize and garner some real influence.¹² Neither of these stances provides realistic interpretations of the gay rights movement.

In the pre-Stonewall Era, the 1950s and 1960s, advocates believed the only way to gain any traction for the gay rights movement was to achieve some form of “normal” by “passing,” or the act of appearing as heterosexual in all facets of life except sexual desire.¹³ These advocates were known as homophiles. In arguing for “normalized” presentation, non-heterosexuals could show that they were no different from their heterosexual counterparts and represented the same morals and ideas.¹⁴ Homophile groups like the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis

⁹ Elizabeth A. Armstrong, *Forging Gay Identities: Organizing Sexuality in San Francisco, 1950-1994*, University of Chicago Press, 2002.

¹⁰ Tim Edwards, *Erotics and Politics: Gay Male Sexuality, Masculinity and Feminism*, Routledge, 2012.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy Since the 1960s*, Hill and Wang, 2012.

¹⁴ Ibid.

provided safe environments for queers to gather and lobby for political rights. However, these groups often focused too much on presenting themselves as “safe” and they lost the social construction of the queer identity.¹⁵ Common examples of these sorts of “safe” presentations were queer men and women wearing gender-exclusive clothing that any heterosexual person would wear as well; men often wore suits and women wore dresses or skirts to accentuate the normalcy of their identities.¹⁶

Most queer advocacy groups at the time started on a small scale at first and eventually either died out or grew into much larger groups.¹⁷ This is seen throughout history as hundreds of groups formed post-Stonewall even though most of those groups do not exist today.¹⁸ One of those groups, the Gay Liberation Front (GLF), was known for its “in your face” political agenda in fighting for equal rights. These groups often used “gay-ins,” or gatherings of queer individuals, to protest together. Some groups, like the GLF, believed that the hetero/homo binary of sexuality was not okay even though most groups preferred to keep a black-and-white view of sexuality to more clearly argue their points.¹⁹

Theories on sexuality are often debated in scholarly literature with little or no substantial evidence to prove the claims.²⁰ The two dominant theories are essentialism and

¹⁵ Elizabeth A. Armstrong, *Forging gay identities: Organizing sexuality in San Francisco, 1950-1994*.

¹⁶ Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy Since the 1960s*.

¹⁷ Steven Epstein, "Gay politics, ethnic identity: The limits of social constructionism," *P. N. Nardi & BE Schneider, eds., Social perspectives in lesbian and gay studies: A reader* (New York: Routledge, 1998) (1998): 134-159.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Adam Isaiah Green, "Gay but not queer: Toward a post-queer study of sexuality," *Theory and Society* 31, no. 4 (2002): 521-545.

constructionism.²¹ These theories have multiple labels and are both enforced and denounced throughout the queer community. Essentialist theory says that sexuality is stagnant and never-changing. Essentially, individuals are born with a sexual orientation.²² Constructionist theory says that sexuality is fluid and that people are forced to pick their sexual preference by a society unwilling to accept that people might be attracted to everyone.²³ Both theories present problems because it's likely impossible to prove whether someone is gay or not, and we can likely never prove where sexual attraction originates and how society might influence that choice.²⁴ Constructionist theory is problematic. For instance, to say that an individual cannot be 100 percent homosexual implies that he or she could then be heterosexual, undermining the meaning of the queer rights movement. The gay community needed the binary to give its political movements and agendas some sort of legitimacy.²⁵ Therefore, as the queer rights movement continued to blossom, while members could have believed in constructionist theory, they predominantly practiced essentialism theory for the sake of political movements and group identity.²⁶

Following 1973, an era where activist groups disappeared following a decrease of interest in queer rights after momentum from Stonewall fizzled, a "crystallization" process occurred.²⁷ This crystallization refers to the abandonment of the gay-revolution era and a reestablishment of

²¹ Steven Epstein, "Gay Politics, Ethnic Identity: The Limits of Social Constructionism," *P. N. Nardi & BE Schneider, eds., Social Perspectives in Lesbian and Gay Studies: A Reader.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ David Allyn, *Make Love, Not War: The Sexual Revolution, An Unfettered History*, Taylor & Francis, 2001.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Elizabeth A. Armstrong, *Forging gay identities: Organizing sexuality in San Francisco, 1950-1994.*

the queer community around unity and diversity; the queer community would stand united in political lobbying and social movements while embracing the differences and variation of each person's representation of what gay means to them.²⁸ While this tactic was met with criticism because the majority of the members in queer-rights organizations were middle-class white men, it still holds some currency for modern-day activists.²⁹

The sexual revolution and the queer-rights movement had their setbacks. As the release of birth control allowed for more sexual freedom without the fear of unwanted pregnancy, it also led to an abandonment of safety in sexual conduct.³⁰ Thus, condoms were used less, resulting in the massive burst in sexually transmitted diseases. These instances led many to believe that the sexual revolution would only cause harm to those who partook in it, and this eventually led to the re-establishment of conservative morals through evangelical religion and religious institutions.³¹ While most people still supported the main premise of the sexual revolution, credibility was destroyed as more people seemed to be negatively affected by outcomes caused by the sexual revolution. Religious institutions capitalized on this and conservatism once again became a strong argument in the politics surrounding sexuality and sexual "deviancy" in the gay-rights movement.³²

Sexuality in Media

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ David Allyn, *Make Love, Not War: The Sexual Revolution, An Unfettered History*.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

The representation of queer identities in media has a long history. Film was one of the most popular early forms of media portraying homosexual behavior.³³ Most of these representations were used in joking manners, such as cross dressing or abnormal male behaviors often displayed in overt dancing. However, following an injection of religious-based morals into the Hollywood movie scene, major censorship of homosexuality ensued, resulting in an absence of queer identities and themes in film from the 1930s through the 1960s.³⁴ Most portrayals of queer identities were negative, often providing a social critique of gender norms or comedic relief. Gay men were portrayed in a manner in which their desires objectified heterosexuality, and lesbians were used as erotic instances to appease the heterosexual male gaze.³⁵ Following the Stonewall Riots, the queer community combatted the negative portrayals and demanded more portrayals and positive portrayals, though negative, homophobic representations still existed.³⁶

Television's portrayals of homosexuals, because of its connection to the Hollywood film community, were also negative.³⁷ Gay characters were seen as throw-aways, comic relief, and often mimicked similar, heterosexual instances of longing and unrequited love. These characters, too, often partook in drag, cross-dressing culture. However, in the late 1960s, a shift occurred--homosexuals were presented in more serious, though still negative, ways. Gay characters were still plagued with the promiscuous stereotype, with many often claiming that gay relationships cannot work because homosexuals do not seek lasting relationships.³⁸ But following the

³³ Linda Steiner, Fred Fejes, and Kevin Petrich, "Invisibility, Homophobia and Heterosexism: Lesbians, Gays and the Media," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 10, no. 4 (1993): 395-422.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

Stonewall Riots, gay characters garnered more recognition in shows that often called out the negative stereotypes of the queer community, though these representations were mainly men and not lesbians.³⁹

The change in queer representations was not unwarranted.⁴⁰ Post-Stonewall, activists organized and fought against negative portrayals, which often referred to queers as child molesters with an “illness.” This group, the National Gay Task Force (NGTF), set up alliances with networks to help stop the negative representations, eventually resulting in the removal of advertisers/sponsors from certain programs that did not adhere to the agenda of the NGTF.⁴¹ Through the 1980s, positive gay characters were no longer an exception to a norm even though negative portrayals still existed. And while television still struggled with finding a balance between appeasing a now powerful, more present gay community and religious morals, queer identities slowly, but surely, found themselves making history in media.⁴² Television would become a major source of research in the years following the sexual revolution.⁴³

Coverage of homosexuality in news media was rare before the 1960s until advocates fighting back against police raids and inequality were seen as newsworthy. However, when presenting these stories, news media often framed these causes as unworthy. When the 1970s and 1980s came, different geographical locations of news media presented different forms of queer representations. For instance, San Francisco-area news media were more liberal while *The New York Times* never printed “gay” and instead used “homosexual.”⁴⁴ As media began to shift

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

representations towards more entertainment-based news, queers turned toward more local media created for and by gays, such as gay magazines and newspapers.⁴⁵ However, news media could not avoid addressing the homosexual in America, especially after AIDS became a national epidemic needing to be covered. Coverage in news has only continued to grow, covering topics like AIDS, queer journalists and outings.⁴⁶

Radio rarely featured any fictional representations of queer identities. However, one of the few early representations was by comedian Jack Benny, who used it on radio as early as the late 1920s into the 1940s until he officially transferred his act to television.⁴⁷ This queer representation, unfortunately, was presented as a heterosexual playing up homosexual stereotypes. Inherently effeminate nature was present in his walk and clothing, and it became a part of his characterization as a whole. This became a part of the long-standing tradition in media to make effeminate behavior in men nonthreatening by turning queer characterizations into comedy. Benny's character often relied on queer sexual innuendos, which made the character more accessible and understandable to male-dominated audiences.⁴⁸

The study of queer identities continues into the modern day as scholars study the importance of media in helping socialize queer individuals. Media expose audiences to wide varieties of identities, allowing viewers to come to terms with any questioning thoughts they have about their identities. However, while queer representations continue to blossom, work still needs to be done. It is assumed that nearly 10 percent of the population identifies as members of

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Alexander Doty, *Making Things Perfectly Queer: Interpreting Mass Culture*, U of Minnesota Press, 1993.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

the LGBTQIA community.⁴⁹ Unfortunately, queers are underrepresented, with less than 8 percent of total queer representations reported across various media, including TV and music.⁵⁰ Furthermore, even though queers are still garnering more support and viewership, some of these representations still reinforce stereotypes for comedic relief, and very few of these representations show any sexual intimacy at all. The concept of heteronormativity remains dominant among these representations.⁵¹ Heteronormativity is the concept that gender is influenced by biological sex and sexual preference.⁵² Therefore, representations of queer men will likely lean more towards feminine gender norms because heteronormativity suggests that those sexually interested in men should possess feminine gender norms, and those feminine male characters will likely have sexual partners that embody masculine gender norms.⁵³ In media popular with queer audiences, heterosexuality and heteronormativity are vastly overrepresented.⁵⁴

1970s Radio & Queer Identities

In the 1970s, radio was on the rise, especially commercial radio.⁵⁵ Radio listenership has gone through three waves. The first wave was from 1925 to 1940, when the majority of radio

⁴⁹ Bradley J. Bond, "Sex and Sexuality in Entertainment Media Popular with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Adolescents," *Mass Communication and Society* 17, no. 1 (2014): 98-120.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Kristen Schilt and Laurel Westbrook, "Doing Gender, Doing Heteronormativity 'Gender Normals,' Transgender People, and the Social Maintenance of Heterosexuality," *Gender & Society* 23, no. 4 (2009): 440-464.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Bradley J. Bond, "Sex and Sexuality in Entertainment Media Popular with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Adolescents," *Mass Communication and Society*.

⁵⁵ James Robertson, and Gerald G. Yokom. "Educational Radio: The Fifty-Year-Old Adolescent. ERIC/EBR Annual Review Paper." *Educational Broadcasting Review* 7, no. 2 (1973): 107-115.

stations were AM. The second wave, roughly from 1945-1965, focused on hit music radio.⁵⁶

Following that, the third wave, called format radio, saw a massive gain in listenership with the emergence of FM stations as a source for music.

With this growth in FM radio stations, station managers emphasized three lessons to be learned from the growth of radio.⁵⁷ First, localism was emphasized by focusing less on network-based programming and more on original programming and formatting with local personalities.⁵⁸ Second, these stations emphasized popular music recordings, also known as music rotation, to keep listeners tuning to the current musical trends. And third, radio became a direct competitor with other media looking for advertising dollars.

As advertisers transitioned to television and stopped placing so much emphasis on radio, stations had to be more flexible with advertising rates to increase advertising.⁵⁹ As the expansion of radio continued through the 1970s, the acceptance of radio as a passive entity grew. Because listeners passively engaged in the medium, advertisers and radio programs had to keep programming short and to the point so that those engaging could receive, comprehend, and remember the messages sent out.⁶⁰ This was largely due to the growing acceptance of radio as not only a passive medium, but also an individual experience.⁶¹ As a result, the target audience became vital as radio raced to capture and measure the listeners' attention span. In addition, by keeping content short and to the point, stations could then determine which audiences they

⁵⁶ Barry L. Sherman, "The Radio Business," In *Telecommunications Management: The Broadcast & Cable Industries*, edited by Barbara L. Raab, 75-97, Georgia: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1987.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

attracted and pitch that audience to advertisers. This affected how advertisers spent money on advertising in the medium, and it also influenced what types of programming made it on the air.⁶²

In the early 1940s, it was obvious that commercial radio was not providing much educational programming for listeners and because of that the FCC spearheaded noncommercial radio programs. By the 1950s, there were over 100 noncommercial stations on the air and over 700 stations by 1975.⁶³ Commercial radio during this time was predominantly network radio, with stations programmed by networks like NBC and CBS.⁶⁴ The majority of commercial radio programming featured mostly popular music and comedy, variety-styled programming. At the time, the majority of noncommercial radio stations were licensed to universities, which gave students an opportunity to learn how to broadcast through DJing and news reporting.⁶⁵ Noncommercial radio stations were also run by religious institutions.⁶⁶

As advertising grew in the 1920s, it became a major part of commercial radio.⁶⁷ Large networks, as well as local stations, relied on advertising to increase profitability. However, while local stations adopted that commercial aspect, they were also known to care more about their public responsibilities.⁶⁸ While the number of commercial stations outnumbered noncommercial, noncommercial stations that chose to serve the public not only gave voices for historically underrepresented groups, but they also paved the way for public broadcasting like National

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Hugh Richard Sloten, *Radio's Hidden Voice: The Origins of Public Broadcasting in the United States*, University of Illinois Press, 2009.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

Public Radio (NPR).⁶⁹ These stations combatted commercial radio, and though there is seemingly nothing wrong with using advertising to make a profit, noncommercial radio often provided more outlets for underserved groups within society.⁷⁰

The queer community has sought out major mainstream media exposure since the late 1950s. One of the first instances of queer identities on radio was presented during an hour-long, one-time radio show aired on WBAI-FM in 1962, “The Homosexual in America.” The program covered conservative views of a panel of psychiatrists and was the subject of protests. The queer community asked for its own time on the station to dismiss the gay stereotypes raised during the program.⁷¹ The station granted access to some queer protestors.⁷²

The 1960s saw a growth in queer radio programs, especially in the western United States. One station in particular, KPFA-FM, was forced by the FCC to stop airing a reading of Allen Ginsberg’s poem “Howl” because of its overt homosexual tone.⁷³ Then the Stonewall Riots happened and the 1970s witnessed a growth in queer radio. Groups found ways to advocate for queer identities through NPR and school-funded radio programs, such as WGTB at Georgetown University. These programs featured music and commercials, but eventually ran dry after producers ran out of funding.⁷⁴ The reoccurring problem with queer radio was the lack of financial support provided by the stations and companies choosing to air the material. These programs weren’t able to obtain longevity because they couldn’t maintain an audience or attract

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Robert W. McChesney, *Telecommunications, Mass Media, and Democracy*, Oxford University Press, 1995.

⁷¹ Phylis Johnson, “The Howl Not Silenced: The Rise of Queer Radio’,” *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, TBA, Montreal, Quebec, Canada* (2008), pp. 1-29.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

advertising support.⁷⁵ The alternative nature of these programs resulted in a cyclical process in the rise and fall of queer radio every few years.

When it comes to educational radio, scholars have found that educational radio programs do not focus on what is wanted based on audience demand, but they focus on the perceived needs of the community (*i.e.*, because radio stations rarely play classical music, others must make up for it).⁷⁶ Educational radio programming is essentially the same as public service radio that was meant to better the communities, with very loose definitions of “better” or “providing educational content.”⁷⁷

Broadcasting queer identities helped radio stations meet public service broadcasting standards at the time.⁷⁸ And while broadcasting locally produced content and giving local groups an hour-long program early in the morning allowed stations to prove to the FCC that they were meeting the needs of the community, this is still an important example as to how significant radio is as a medium for disenfranchised groups. Educational radio originally set out to bridge the gap across cultures through the listening experience. However, with the rise in modern day, personal devices like the iPod, listening has become more common, but it also reinforces cultural boundaries.⁷⁹

Unfortunately for queer radio programs, though growth was happening at the time, most were run by volunteers and were limited both fiscally and by region.⁸⁰ With the AIDS epidemic

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ James Robertson and Gerald G. Yokom, "Educational Radio: The Fifty-Year-Old Adolescent, ERIC/EBR Annual Review Paper," *Educational Broadcasting Review* 7, no. 2 (1973): 107-115.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Susan J. Douglas, *Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination*, U of Minnesota Press, 2004.

⁸⁰ Phylis Johnson and Michael C. Keith, *Queer Airwaves: The Story of Gay and Lesbian Broadcasting*, Routledge, 2014.

just beginning in the 1980s, syndicated radio program hosts like Howard Stern and Rush Limbaugh often ridiculed minority groups, including the queer rights movement, and that content was followed by a major rise in ratings.⁸¹ With this new rise in anti-minority radio banter, the queer community had to further its message by taking back the media to present itself.

In the 1990s, the queer community re-established itself as not only a credible market audience, but also an audience that couldn't always be defined by stereotypes. This credibility eventually resulted in the first daytime drive-show called *Good Morning Gay America*, hosted by an openly gay couple on a commercial radio station.⁸² With the growth in technology in the 21st century, web-based radio programs and satellite radio allowed for a larger use of radio as medium for queer voices to speak to their community.⁸³

Social Movements, Framing Ideologies & Radio Use

One of the most important aspects of making a successful social movement is the ability to communicate messages to movement participants and to the general public.⁸⁴ Throughout time, this communication has frequently been done through the use of mainstream media, as seen in the growth of positive, queer representations.⁸⁵ However, that's not the only way that social movements have used media to further social change. Two important, but not-so-well-known

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Tiziana Cavallo, "Romeo in Love: A Community Format in a Community Radio," In *Radio Evolution: Conference Proceedings*, 2012.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Peter Brinson, "Liberation Frequency: The Free Radio Movement and Alternative Strategies of Media Relations," *The Sociological Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (2006): 543-568.

⁸⁵ Linda Steiner, Fred Fejes, and Kevin Petrich, "Invisibility, Homophobia and Heterosexism: Lesbians, Gays and the Media."

techniques are the use of alternative media and the breaking down of mainstream media barriers that prevent social groups from furthering their movements.⁸⁶

The free radio movement, beginning in the late 1980s, suggests that radio has historically been a source for social movements.⁸⁷ The creation of the movement allowed for those who believed that the FCC's radio guidelines were preventing groups from using alternative media to further their own agenda. Though social movements using the free radio movement may have had separate agendas, they remained united in their belief that no matter how important movements' messages are, those messages are useless unless they are able to be broadcast.⁸⁸ Alternative media matter because they give voices to underserved groups.⁸⁹ At the same time, the pirate radio movement was growing as well.⁹⁰ However, the pirate radio movement focused specifically on music that wasn't always accessible through other media.⁹¹

Social movements have historically been seen as groups of people banding together to air their grievances and fight for rights.⁹² However, social movements are more than just groups of people using specific, structured events to promote their messages and garner more support, though social movements do use members' voices to construct their movements and meanings for both followers and oppositional forces.⁹³ The construction of this meaning is done through an

⁸⁶ Peter Brinson, "Liberation Frequency: The Free Radio Movement and Alternative Strategies of Media Relations."

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Adrian Johns, "Piracy as a Business Force," *Culture Machine* 10 (2009): 44-63.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory," *American Journal of Sociology* (1977): pp. 1212-1241.

⁹³ Robert D. Benford, and David A. Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology* (2000): 611-639.

action often referred to as “framing.”⁹⁴ Framing refers to the action of constructing one’s own reality in terms of another’s presentation. Therefore, how social movements choose to speak about themselves and present their messages become a part of the framing process for the researcher. Social movements decide how to present their message. They are constructing their message to achieve certain goals. This does not mean that a social movement’s message will become dominant, however. New media, citizens, and opposing groups often seek to present alternative frames. Framing, then, becomes the way in which a researcher makes sense of how a social movement attempts to label and identify itself.⁹⁵

Frames are essentially the ways “that we all actively classify, organize, and interpret our life experiences to make sense of them.”⁹⁶ The ways in which audiences perceive information allows them to label that information and organize it in a way that allows them to make sense of that based on their prior experiences.⁹⁷ Frames allow both audiences and those crafting the frames to select how they present themselves through what they emphasize and exclude in their presentations.⁹⁸ This allows for both framers and those consuming the frame to organize the idea and give meaning to it.⁹⁹

With the development of new media, social movements are able to use alternative networks to promote their messages in an attempt to construct a dominant frame.¹⁰⁰ Alternative media aid social movements because rather than having media or other dominant social groups

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Zhongdang Pan and Gerald M. Kosicki, " Framing Analysis: An Approach to News Discourse," *Political Communication* 10, no. 1 (1993): 55-75.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ R. Kelly Garrett, " Protest in an Information Society: A Review of Literature on Social Movements and New ICTs," *Information, Communication & Society* 9, no. 02 (2006): 202-224.

impose a frame on the group, the group can construct its own frame.¹⁰¹ While that doesn't necessarily mean that audiences will accept or adopt the frame, it still gives a social movement an opportunity to craft the message that is made public. The growth in technology has revolutionized media communication in political movements, making any kind of media presence, whether that is traditional, social, or alternative media, a necessity for a successful social movement.¹⁰² Furthermore, because alternative media allow social movements to avoid relying on dominant, biased, mainstream media, new technology furthers that notion.¹⁰³

Some queer-rights movements have used alternative media in an effort to change the way the group is framed. The Centre from Vancouver focused on bringing the queer community of the city together, concerned more with social rather than political action.¹⁰⁴ In doing this, the group elected to use media to educate members of the community in hopes of mobilizing them to help celebrate the queer community. The group's media use then helped legitimize the movement to further its social progression; whether the message is heard by the all members of the public or not, the community is still positively mobilized.¹⁰⁵ While that is great for the community, it keeps The Centre from completely breaking into the mainstream, especially when its voice isn't strong enough to consistently produce media related to their movement to help further social progression (costs for an education video were \$4,000, which the group didn't necessarily have).¹⁰⁶ Because of this, the group was able to change attitudes within the

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ William K. Carroll and Robert S. Ratner, "Media Strategies and Political Projects: A Comparative Study of Social Movements," *Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers canadiens de sociologie* (1999): 1-34.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

community through mobilization even though attitudes towards the groups didn't really change.¹⁰⁷

In the 1970s, the queer rights movement was blossoming into a full-scale minority movement as members of the queer community began to reposition themselves as ethnic minorities; sexuality became equivalent to race, gender, and other demographic variables.¹⁰⁸ As queer identities began to access mainstream media to have their voices heard, newspapers were the main medium used, with radio, and its relatively low cost, as a close second.¹⁰⁹

When it comes to using media for social movements' activism, it's important to note that sometimes the message conveyed can become contradictory (as seen with the queer rights movement in the modern day). But when specifically focusing on media activism, members of a movement need to remember that sometimes political participation in itself is a victory.¹¹⁰ By allowing members to have a sense of identity and become a larger part of that movement, media use becomes more focused on social gratification achieved by members than focused on producing quality media content (though that can still happen as well).¹¹¹ Unfortunately, becoming media experts can take a much larger commitment and it may have very little payoff; however, by encouraging people to participate, activists then, in turn, encourage larger, social shifts.¹¹²

The research examined here suggests that in the early years of the queer-rights movement media were used to advocate for acceptance and equal rights. Often activists turned to radio to

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Steven Epstein, "Gay Politics, Ethnic Identity: The Limits of Social Constructionism."

¹⁰⁹ Tiziana Cavallo, "Romeo in Love: A Community Format in a Community Radio."

¹¹⁰ Christina Dunbar-Hester, "Producing 'Participation'?: The Pleasures and Perils of Technical Engagement in Radio Activism," *Public Culture* 26, no. 1 72 (2014): 25-50.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

tell their story and fight for those rights. As the queer-rights movement gained both legal and cultural standing, however, their media presence and the stories they told changed. The battle turned from achieving acceptance and equal rights to focusing on the portrayal of queer identities by the media. Increasingly the question became whether the media were accurately reflecting the diversity that is the queer community.

This thesis will examine whether that change is reflected in the way the queer-rights movement frames itself and the role that radio programming plays in a group's attempt to establish a dominant frame within society.

Methods

To answer those questions, I conduct a framing analysis of two Wisconsin-based queer radio programs. The two programs explored are the Gay People's Union's (GPU) *Gay Perspective*, which aired from 1971 -1972 on WZMF and WUWM,¹¹³ and Madison's *Queery*, which aired in 2015 and 2016 on WORT from 7:00 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays.¹¹⁴ Framing analyses are usually done in one of two ways.¹¹⁵ The first uses identified frames from previous literature to see whether groups use those frames in their work, and the second allows frames to emerge from the texts that researchers study.¹¹⁶ This thesis focuses on the latter, letting frames emerge from two radio programs to see how the groups frame themselves. Through this analysis, I hope to better understand how the queer community frames itself and how radio plays a role in that framing.

¹¹³ University of Wisconsin Digital Collections. Gay People's Union Collection Home (n.d.). Retrieved March 7, 2015, from <http://uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections/GPU>.

¹¹⁴ "WORT 89.9FM/HD Madison, Wisconsin." WORT 89.9 FM. Accessed December 28, 2015. <http://www.wortfm.org>.

¹¹⁵ Stephen D. Reese, Oscar H. Gandy Jr, and August E. Grant, eds, *Framing Public Life: Perspectives On Media and Our Understanding of the Social World*, Routledge, 2001.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

I look at how the content is presented and locate the frames within the historical development queer rights movement.

To examine the content, I use the digital archives of each radio program. *Gay Perspective* is available for download online through the digital archives of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Golda Meir Library; *Queery* is available online through digital archives at wortfm.org. In total, *Gay Perspective* is nearly eight hours of archived airtime. I analyze all of the content available for *Gay Perspective*. I also examine eight hours of *Queery*. The selected episodes of *Queery* will be the latest 16 episodes aired in 2015 and 2016 (episodes aired from November 4, 2015 through February 17, 2016). Using the 16 hours of content, I identify the dominant frames that emerge from the two radio programs.

As is with case studies, it is difficult to make any argument about my findings being generalizable to a larger population. As Gomm et al., argue, one way to demonstrate generalizability is by demonstrating that an example is typical.¹¹⁷ Much of my research supports the idea that the two radio program do represent ideas associated with the queer-rights movement at that particular time.

Other researchers have argued that generalizability is not the goal of the case study method. As Lincoln and Guba suggest, case studies provide the "thick description" that helps people understand the "contextual information that is grounded in the particular setting that was studied."¹¹⁸ In that way, while findings of case studies are not generalizable to a larger population, they still allow researchers to better understand a narrow range of events at a moment

¹¹⁷ Roger Gromm, Martyn Hammersley, and Peter Foster, *Case Study Method: Key Issues, Key Texts*, London: Sage (2000), pp. 105-107.

¹¹⁸ Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon S. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage (1985): pp. 359-360.

in time. Case studies are known to focus research attention on one specific, local instance of a specific social phenomenon.¹¹⁹ In this case, these case studies focus on the social phenomenon of queer radio across time as it is broadcast in Wisconsin. Case studies are known for their limited nature in that they focus specifically on one particular instance, essential to case studies, that may not represent a larger, generalizable picture.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Earl R. Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research*, Vol. 112. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth publishing company, 1998.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

CHAPTER III

GAY CONSERVATIVE DON'T SUCK... THAT'S THE PROBLEM

This chapter reports a review of the content and a framing analysis of the *Gay Perspective* radio program, which aired in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for short periods in both 1971 and 1972. The program was produced in part by the Gay People's Union (GPU), an important early gay rights group in Wisconsin.¹²¹ The chapter begins with a brief history of the Gay People's Union and the radio stations that aired *Gay Perspective*. It then offers a brief review of the content of each episode of the show that was analyzed for this study and concludes with an analysis of the frames that are used within the show.

Gay People's Union

The Gay People's Union (GPU) began in 1971 as a student organization at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where it eventually became a major resource for the gay community in that area.¹²² The GPU consisted of members originally from the Gay Liberation Organization (GLO).¹²³ Tensions increased in 1970 between the GLO members as they debated which ways to focus the organization's efforts. Some members believed it best to embrace their queer identities in radical ways and eventually created the Milwaukee Gay Liberation Front. The remaining members of the GLO reestablished themselves as the GPU.¹²⁴ GPU eventually became one of the most important LGBT rights organizations in the area at that time.¹²⁵ The group was considered politically "moderate," emphasizing educational and legal action through their engagement with

¹²¹ University of Wisconsin Digital Collections, Gay People's Union Collection Home (n.d.).

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Don Schwamb, "Gay People's Union-- History of Gay & Lesbian Life, Milwaukee WI-Organizations: Activist & Political," History of Gay & Lesbian Life, Milwaukee WI-Organizations: Activist & Political, March 1, 2012, Accessed May 11, 2015.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ University of Wisconsin Digital Collections.

mainstream radio and magazines.¹²⁶ GPU played a role in establishing a LGBT resource center, call-in phone lines, a news zine, magazine, and the radio show explored in this thesis, all of which operated at various times on UWM's campus and in the wider community. It's unclear whether the GPU exists in 2016.¹²⁷

What is *Gay Perspective*?

Gay Perspective was the first regularly scheduled, scripted radio program produced by the GPU.¹²⁸ Created and aired in the early 1970s, the founders of *Gay Perspective* hoped it would become a local, public voice for a historically unrepresented minority group. While gay characters were not absent from media representations in the early 1970s, the program removed the sarcasm and exaggeration commonly associated with those portrayals, taking a direct, clinical, tone when discussing issues of gay identity.

Listened to today, in an age where inflammatory, talk-radio rhetoric is the norm for informational radio, the program is presented with a straightforward, but exceedingly dry style, common in full-service informational radio in the early 1970s.¹²⁹ The program aired on the Milwaukee commercial FM station WZMF from February to June 1971 and then on the public FM station WUWM from July 1971 to May 18, 1972.¹³⁰ Initially the program was run during a late time-slot (Mondays at midnight) on WZMF, limiting its ability to attract a local audience.¹³¹ However, the program changed stations in 1972 and was eventually moved from the midnight time slot to a primetime slot at 8 p.m. (and eventually 6 p.m.). The reason for the change in time

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ John Crittenden, "Democratic Functions of the Open Mike Radio Forum," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 35, (Summer 1971): 200-210.

¹³⁰ University of Wisconsin Digital Collections.

¹³¹ Ibid.

slot is unknown, though likely due to the station change. After moving to the earlier time slot, *Gay Perspective* would eventually re-run sections of the first season's episodes, allowing the new audience to "catch up" on the ongoing discussions.¹³² During two seasons, the program operated as an open forum, actively seeking out listener contributions for both topical scripts and editorials.¹³³

After a year of running the program, WZMF eventually removed *Gay Perspective* from its rotation for unknown reasons, which resulted in WUWM picking up the program.¹³⁴ Though it was canceled by WUWM less than a year later,¹³⁵ its existence on the new station was notable. WUWM began in September 1964 as a student laboratory with its signal barely reaching beyond Milwaukee's east side.¹³⁶ WUWM qualified as a National Public Radio affiliate in 1967, hired professionals, and installed professional studios.¹³⁷ After increasing its signal strength in 1978, it began focusing on community service outreach.¹³⁸ In 1980, WUWM connected with NPR and became the first Milwaukee radio station to receive NPR feeds via satellite.¹³⁹ The station began focusing primarily on in-depth news in 1988, growing the audience.¹⁴⁰ While it's unclear why WUWM elected to air a failed program such as *Gay Perspective*, GPU was based out of UWM's

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ "WUWM's History." WUWM 89.7 FM Milwaukee Public Radio. September 27, 2007. Accessed September 14, 2016.

<http://web.archive.org/web/20070927023712/http://www.wuwm.com/history.shtml>.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

campus and the university is frequently referenced on the show. The people behind the group, newspaper and radio show were tied to campus events through the LGBT resource center.¹⁴¹

Gay Perspective is a cultural artifact that allows for the examination of gay identity in a different era, but also demonstrates the struggles social movements face in trying to gain access to media. The program provided a public voice to a radically underserved group, one that was struggling with its own identity. By trying to build a community through radio, sharing resources and experiences, the program found some limited success in airing the GPU's message of tolerance. However, it also demonstrates the challenges social movements face as they try to engage a broader audience.

The Content

Before exploring the emerging frames within *Gay Perspective*, it's important to briefly discuss the show's content. The show's programming varied widely. The show maintained a talk show format throughout, though some episodes had only a host talking about the week's given topic. Other episodes featured the host interviewing a special guest for the week, who often was connected in some way to the week's topic (*e.g.*, an episode on female impersonation would feature a female impersonator). There was no regular host of the program and music was played between breaks.

The first aired episode, entitled "Gay Liberation," briefly summarizes the gay liberation movement.¹⁴² This episode specifically emphasizes the Stonewall Riots as the beginning of the queer rights movement, though the GPU does eventually recognize groups like the Mattachine

¹⁴¹ Christopher Terry, interview by Ryan Sugden, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, December 1, 2015.

¹⁴² "Gay Liberation," *Gay Perspective*, WZMF, (Menomonee Falls, WI: WZMF-FM, February 15, 1971).

Society and the Daughters of Bilitis.¹⁴³ In addition, the episode interprets and repurposes, but also reinforces, negative stereotypes of queer individuals (mainly men). It emphasizes the effeminate behavior of queer individuals and refers to “fags” as “loveless and pathetic” people who are unable to accept love because they only look for sex. The episode finishes by summarizing the objectives of gay liberation, which were explored in the literature review of this thesis.¹⁴⁴

The second episode, entitled “Why we’re organized,” discusses the mission statement of the GPU:

Believing in our democratic heritage and that ethical values are self-determined and limited only by every person’s right to decide his own, we organize for the reaffirming of individual pride and dignity regardless of orientation, the elimination of public stigma attached to human self-expression, the accomplishing of effective changes in unjust laws concerning private relationships among young adults, the giving of real and substantial aid to members in difficulty, the promoting of better physical, mental and emotional health, the creating of a sense of community and the establishment of a proactive, social atmosphere and constructive outlets for members and their friends.¹⁴⁵

The statement and much of the discussion on the episode emphasize individuality without a sense of community, though the GPU tries to promote community activity in their attempts at recruiting volunteers to help the movement. The episode finishes by claiming all people need gay

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ “Why We Are Organized,” *Gay Perspective*, WZMF, (Menomonee Falls, WI: WZMF-FM, March, 1971).

liberation and arguing that the GPU and queer rights movement need active participation instead of people who care more about bathhouses than “serious matters.”¹⁴⁶

The third episode, entitled “Relationships between Gays and the Straight World,” focuses on how members of the queer community reaffirm stereotypes and how that isn’t ideal because heterosexuals do not understand effeminacy in men or butchness in women.¹⁴⁷ The episode continues by claiming that everyone knows “a queer,” but they don’t realize they do because of the lack of stereotypes that some queer individuals embody.¹⁴⁸ In making this reference, the show negatively reinforces the stereotypes of queer individuals by saying that the stereotypes are true, but denying that stereotypes are always present, which may help society better understand queer individuals as “normal.”

“Sex Laws,” the fourth episode, discussed various sex laws across the nation, referencing the idea that it is technically not a crime to be homosexual (though at the time 48 states prohibited homosexual conduct).¹⁴⁹ The show notes that most sex laws use vague language, such as “unnatural acts,” to apply the laws to a range of situations in order to prosecute homosexual males.¹⁵⁰

The fifth episode, entitled “Gay and the Military,” focuses on policies like “don’t ask, don’t tell,” reiterating the idea that as long as individuals can pass as heterosexual and don’t say they are homosexual they are able to take part in the military.¹⁵¹ The host furthers this notion by

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ “Relationships Between Gays & the Straight World,” *Gay Perspective*, WZMF, (Menomonee Falls, WI: WZMF-FM, March, 1971).

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ “Sex Laws,” *Gay Perspective*, WZMF, (Menomonee Falls, WI: WZMF-FM, March 14, 1971).

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ “Gays & the Military,” *Gay Perspective*, WZMF, (Menomonee Falls, WI: WZMF-FM, April 4, 1971).

saying people “don’t have to be caught in the act to be discharged.” If people maintain a “normal, masculine behavior,” they are fine, the show’s host argues.¹⁵²

The sixth episode, entitled “Casual Sex,” talks about the problems associated with casual sex, arguing that most people at the time viewed sex as a means for reproduction and not for fun or recreation.¹⁵³

The seventh episode focuses on oppression.¹⁵⁴ Due to the oppression that queer individuals face on a regular basis, the host claims people are forced to think first about how people may react to their queerness and second about their relationships with other individuals. The host ends the episode by saying education should be the priority for making queerness acceptable.¹⁵⁵

The eighth episode focuses on coming-out interviews with three men named Sam, Roberto, and Ron.¹⁵⁶ The three shared their coming-out experiences and how they feel about gay culture.¹⁵⁷

“Leather and S&M,” the ninth episode, focused on what “masculine” men look like -- leather boys.¹⁵⁸ The host emphasizes that masculinity is realized through specific clothing like

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ “Casual Sex,” *Gay Perspective*, WZMF, (Menomonee Falls, WI: WZMF-FM, April 11, 1971).

¹⁵⁴ “Oppression of Homosexuals by Government, Business, Professions and Society at Large,” *Gay Perspective*, WZMF, (Menomonee Falls, WI: WZMF-FM, May 2, 1971).

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ “Coming Out Interviews,” *Gay Perspective*, WZMF, (Menomonee Falls, WI: WZMF-FM, May 16, 1971).

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ “Leather & S&M,” *Gay Perspective*, WZMF, (Menomonee Falls, WI: WZMF-FM, May 23, 1971).

boots and leather. The episode focuses on heteronormative structures of masculinity and femininity in same-sex relationships.¹⁵⁹

Episode 10, “Homosexuality in Prisons,” talks about the issue of prison rapes, with many prison suicides being related to sexual coercion.¹⁶⁰ The host says that sex is used as power in prison because it allows “older, stronger men” to protect younger men in exchange for their submission to sex.¹⁶¹ Once a man submits to sexual conduct, he becomes “fair game” and must always submit; this situation is referred to as a “married situation,” the host says.¹⁶² When asked how to combat this problem, the host argues that conjugal visits will not help because wives and girlfriends can’t be there at all hours. The host implies that men *always* need sex.¹⁶³

Episode 11 features a special interview with Wisconsin State Rep. Lloyd Barbee, who was working on reforming the sex laws in Wisconsin at the time.¹⁶⁴ Barbee was an appropriate guest for this episode because he was working to remove sodomy from the list of illegal sex acts.¹⁶⁵ He also believed that sexual consent could be given at age 14 and that children often lie about sexual encounters.¹⁶⁶

Episode 12 is the first episode to explicitly focus on lesbians rather than gay men.¹⁶⁷ The host talks about gay marriage and discrimination in religion before turning to a discussion about

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ “Homosexuality in Prison,” *Gay Perspective*, WZMF, (Menomonee Falls, WI: WZMF-FM, June, 1971).

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ “Interview with Lloyd Barbee,” *Gay Perspective*, WZMF, (Menomonee Falls, WI: WZMF-FM, June 13, 1971).

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ “Oppression of Lesbians,” *Gay Perspective*, WZMF, (Menomonee Falls, WI: WZMF-FM, July 9, 1971).

the oppression of lesbians. The host for the week is a woman and she talks about how she experienced discrimination as a homosexual and a woman.¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, she talks about how lesbians can't find a place in the women's movement because they are homosexual, and they can't find a place in the homophile movement because they are women (and the queer rights movement has notoriously been directed to and served gay men).¹⁶⁹ This is the last episode to air on WZMF.¹⁷⁰

The thirteenth episode, and first to air on WUWM, features an interview with a lesbian couple trying to obtain a marriage license.¹⁷¹ While the two found a lawyer and priest willing to validate their marriage, the state refused to recognize their marriage.¹⁷² During the gay marriage interview, the interviewer points out the obvious gender roles in the relationship, stating that one of the women dresses in men's clothing and the other does not.¹⁷³ This, and a later interview with another lesbian, is a reinforcement of heteronormative ideals in which women must be effeminate and men must be masculine.¹⁷⁴ In association with that episode's interviewees and topic, the *Gay Perspective* announcer reveals that the GPU does not support gay marriage.¹⁷⁵

In Episode 14 a host interviews a female impersonator. The impersonator is billed as a woman because female impersonation, or drag, is about looking like a woman.¹⁷⁶ The

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ "Gay Marriage," *Gay Perspective*, 89.7 FM, Milwaukee Public Radio, (Milwaukee, WI: WUWM, October 7, 1971).

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ "Drag & Female Impersonation," *Gay Perspective*, 89.7 FM, Milwaukee Public Radio, (Milwaukee, WI: WUWM, October 28, 1971).

interviewee talks about how he hates dressing up, but he does it for the job and believes that the audience would be upset if they knew he was a man.¹⁷⁷

Episode 15 explores the relationship between religion and homosexuality. In doing so, the host reinterprets messages from the Bible, claiming that those who quote it to delegitimize homosexuality are entering a never ending battle between religion and modern thought.¹⁷⁸

Episode 16 talks about sexually transmitted diseases, specifically venereal disease, and how people can avoid and/or diagnose them.¹⁷⁹

Episode 17 reviews lesbian literature up until 1928. It's unclear why 1928 is a significant cut-off date.¹⁸⁰

“Gay Liberation: Who Needs it?” is the title of episode 18, and focuses on defining gay liberation and why it is necessary.¹⁸¹ The episode touches on a need for queer individuals to be a part of the bar scene in order to be a part of the community.¹⁸² The episode also touches on queer individuals needing to speak intelligently to get their point across.¹⁸³

Episode 19 features an interview with a lesbian named Chris and examines how lesbians are isolated within the gay community.¹⁸⁴ In her interview, Chris says, “[V]ery rarely will you

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ “Religion & The Gay,” *Gay Perspective*, 89.7 FM, Milwaukee Public Radio, (Milwaukee, WI: WUWM, December 9, 1971).

¹⁷⁹ “Venereal Disease & STD’s,” *Gay Perspective*, 89.7 FM, Milwaukee Public Radio, (Milwaukee, WI: WUWM, undated 1972).

¹⁸⁰ “Lesbian Literature to 1928,” *Gay Perspective*, 89.7 FM, Milwaukee Public Radio, (Milwaukee, WI: WUWM, January 13, 1972).

¹⁸¹ “Gay Liberation; Who Needs It?,” *Gay Perspective*, 89.7 FM, Milwaukee Public Radio, (Milwaukee, WI: WUWM, February 24, 1972).

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ “Interview with a Lesbian,” *Gay Perspective*, 89.7 FM, Milwaukee Public Radio, (Milwaukee, WI: WUWM, March 30, 1972).

interact with the opposite sex.”¹⁸⁵ She claims this lack of interaction between gay men and lesbians damages the foundation of the gay community.¹⁸⁶ Because of this apparent reality at the time, gay men and lesbians are seen as opposites rather than allies, forcing the two groups to pick sides within their own community. There is a clear divide in the idea of queer vs. gay, where Chris emphasizes her ability to pass within heterosexual society by simply enforcing a more effeminate nature rather than the masculine tendencies she leans to and feels more comfortable in.¹⁸⁷ These same heteronormative standards are enforced in the intimate relationships as well. The sexual roles and deviancies within the gay community are addressed in the show, where the interviewee claims that women need an emotional commitment before they have sex with someone. She suggests that women view sex as the final act that seals the status of the relationship.¹⁸⁸ Men, on the other hand, engage in sex more often without having an emotional attachment to their lovers, she argues.¹⁸⁹ Chris states that men’s view on sexual intimacy is more “mature.”¹⁹⁰ She claims that men handle their sexual relationships a lot better than most women.¹⁹¹ In addition, Chris claims that when she reveals to a man that she is a lesbian, that man sees her as a challenge and a threat to his masculinity and manhood.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

“Discovering GPU in ’72,” episode 20, starts out with the host saying that in the past year of broadcasts, the GPU has covered the “most important” topics for the queer community.¹⁹³ The host then talks about getting involved with the GPU.¹⁹⁴

A poet named Narcissti is interviewed in episode 21, and he reads his poems about sex and love.¹⁹⁵

Episode 22 revisits the relationship between religion and homosexuality, with the host often quoting scripture.¹⁹⁶ It also talks about the negative aspects of being gay, with the host suggesting that most queer people are lonely gay men cruising in the park for sex.¹⁹⁷ This is also one of the few instances where the program relates gay liberation as an ethnicity, similar to black liberation, women’s liberation, etc.¹⁹⁸

The last aired episode of *Gay Perspective* features live performances from a lesbian singer, Malu Brubaker.¹⁹⁹ Brubaker played songs that reflect how she felt about the queer rights movement, noting that gay men push their agenda first and forget that they’re fighting for the same rights as lesbians.²⁰⁰ In another song, entitled “Gay Liberation is One Thing but Nobody Likes a Dyke,” Brubaker sings about how the queer rights movement and opposing forces believe that it is okay to seek gay liberation as long as individuals are not overtly expressing

¹⁹³ “Discovering GPU in ’72,” *Gay Perspective*. 89.7 FM, Milwaukee Public Radio, (Milwaukee, WI: WUWM, April 13, 1972).

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ “Interview with Narcissti (Poet),” *Gay Perspective*, 89.7 FM, Milwaukee Public Radio, (Milwaukee, WI: WUWM, April 20, 1972).

¹⁹⁶ “Religion & Homosexuality,” *Gay Perspective*, 89.7 FM, Milwaukee Public Radio, (Milwaukee, WI: WUWM, May 4, 1972).

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ “Interview with Malu Brubaker,” *Gay Perspective*, 89.7 FM, Milwaukee Public Radio, (Milwaukee, WI: WUWM, May 18, 1972).

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

queerness or forcing their sexuality onto someone else.²⁰¹ This is the final episode of the program to air, even though the host said the GPU planned to continue the show in the fall.²⁰²

Gay Perspective gave a voice to a minority group. It covered topics from marriage equality, female impersonation, leather boys, sodomy laws, etc., over the span of two years. GPU members were guests on other radio stations/programs like WOKY where they addressed questions of homosexuality and the bigotry associated with it at the time.²⁰³ The group did what it set out to do; the program mostly provided the perspective of parts of the queer community by emphasizing education via mainstream outlets.

Through 23 episodes, five overarching themes occur: legal issues, conversations about sex, performance of gender/sexuality, social life and issues and queer culture. Seven episodes centered on queer culture, five on social life, four on performance of gender/sexuality, four on legal issues, and three on sex.

Emerging Frames

While *Gay Perspective* covered a wide range of topics during its run, a number of dominant frames emerged in the programming that reveal much about how GPU envisioned the gay rights movement in the early 1970s. Three of those dominant frames were the cultured frame, the diversity frame, and the assimilation frame. This analysis does not deny that other frames might also be present, but focusing on these frames helps us better address the research questions central to this thesis.

The Cultured Frame

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ University of Wisconsin Digital Collections.

In its attempt to change the perception of the gay community in straight society, GPU sought to redefine the image of homosexuals. As GPU's mission statement makes clear, it sought to present homosexuals as people with pride and dignity, eliminate public stigma associated with being gay, and create a greater sense of community. To achieve that goal, *Gay Perspective* sought to present homosexuals as cultured individuals who "can become a contributing member of society."²⁰⁴ It challenged the assumption that mainstream society viewed homosexuality as a lesser form of life by adopting the Cultured Frame.

Throughout the program, the GPU used artistic forms of representation to reinforce queer identities. This is seen throughout multiple episodes that reference certain art forms and historical perspectives to legitimize the validity of homosexuality. Throughout the program, the hosts or accompanying guests are heard reading poems, one of the most difficult forms of literature to understand because of its subjectivity. In fact, the very first episode starts with the host reading poems.²⁰⁵

The continuing association with literature and art helps establish the credibility of homosexuality. This is seen through episode 17's study of lesbian literature in the 19th and early 20th centuries²⁰⁶ and in the interview with Narcissti, the poet who reads several of his works on the program.²⁰⁷ In referencing these various cultured forms of representation, *Gay Perspective* argues that homosexuality isn't a lesser form of living; homosexuality is actually a more complex form of sexuality that is associated with an educated mind.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ "Gay Liberation."

²⁰⁶ "Lesbian Literature to 1928."

²⁰⁷ "Interview with Narcissti (Poet)."

In addition to linking homosexuality with literature, the program also often references historical instances of homosexuality. In the fourth episode on sex laws, the GPU talks about the idea that sex should only be for procreation, which reinforces the sex laws at the time, which were meant to delegitimize homosexual activity.²⁰⁸ The host begins the episode with talking about Greek vs. Jewish perceptions of sexual conduct. Because Jewish society was under populated, it reinforced the idea that sex should be used to procreate. And because Jewish culture is the main root of Christianity, it likely contributed to the notion of sex as primarily being a form of procreation.²⁰⁹ Because Greek culture was severely over populated, it often pushed to use sex as a form of stimulation, leading to a history of sexual exploration.²¹⁰

The historical examination of homosexuality was also applied to religion. In an episode solely dedicated to the relationship between homosexuality and religion, the host talks about Christians who pick and choose Bible verses to delegitimize homosexuality.²¹¹ However, the host argues that if Christians researched Christianity and the Bible, they would recognize that the verses that delegitimize homosexuality are taken out of context. When read more completely and accurately, the host argues, the Bible could be seen as supporting queer sexuality.²¹² *Gay Perspective* argues that the battle of homosexual acceptance is a battle between religion and modern thought, which again emphasizes that cultured, well-educated people understand that homosexuality is a legitimate form of living.²¹³

²⁰⁸ “Sex Laws.”

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ “Religion & The Gay.”

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

The exploration of historical references to validate homosexuality continues in the episode on female impersonation.²¹⁴ Before interviewing the guest drag queen, the host uses ancient Roman gods to further the understanding of effeminacy in men, and how one of the gods was supposed to sympathize with feminine souls trapped in male bodies.²¹⁵ The host continues by saying, “[U]niformed persons believe that all homosexual males are effeminate.”²¹⁶ The host not only uses a cultured, world perspective to parallel homosexuality, but he also continues to reinforce the emerging theme that if you don’t understand or support homosexuality, it is because you are unintelligent, or in this case, uninformed.

The GPU was known for its “education first” mantra, as it emphasized education as a priority towards the acceptance of homosexuality as a valid form of living. This perspective was emphasized in episode seven’s theme of oppression,²¹⁷ and it was also emphasized throughout the program’s short history. Furthermore, in one of the last episodes of the program, the GPU, when calling for active participants, said that helping people is important, but it’s also important to speak intelligently to get the point across and legitimize the movement.²¹⁸ In the eyes of the GPU as framed in *Gay Perspective*, if people are educated, they have no reason to fear, question or doubt the legitimacy of homosexuality. The Cultured Frame serves to reinforce that notion.

The Diversity Frame

Though the GPU was struggling with gaining larger acceptance into mainstream society, a lot of the issues discussed on the show were related to identifying fully as an entire community. Sexuality, to this day, is often split up into two sections: heterosexual and non-heterosexual.

²¹⁴ “Drag & Female Impersonation.”

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ “Oppression of Homosexuals by Government, Business, Professions and Society at Large.”

²¹⁸ “Discovering GPU in ’72.”

However, the queer community is full of many different sexualities, and labeling the entire community as non-heterosexual would be a grave mistake. This idea is aptly explored through an emerging frame that comes out of the content: the Diversity Frame.

In the 1970s, America was wrestling with a switch from integration to diversity.²¹⁹ Historian Bruce J. Schulman argues that this was reflected in America moving away from the idea of being a melting-pot society and toward a society that recognized and celebrated difference.²²⁰ However, this was more than just demographics. Schulman argues that “law and public policy actively encouraged the shift from integration to diversity,” with the 1970s seeing a growth in civil rights groups and affirmative action.²²¹ The changes diversified representations throughout the job market and educational institutions.²²² Originally this diversification helped underprivileged minority groups become like everyone else, but as America moved from integration toward diversity, cultural differences were seen as being vital to reflecting the many differences among American citizens.²²³

In examining the content, it’s very clear that word choice is key when presenting opinions, beliefs, and diversity related to homosexuality. For instance, throughout the program, specifically in noted episodes 2 (“Why We’re Organized) and 8 (“Coming out Interviews), the hosts refer to being attracted to the same-sex as a preference rather than an orientation, which is used in the modern day.²²⁴ While this is a slight difference in word choice, the implications are much larger, especially for the time. In the 1970s, straight society took advantage of any way to

²¹⁹ Bruce J. Schulman, *The seventies: The great shift in American culture, society, and politics*, Simon and Schuster, 2001.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ “Why We Are Organized.” “Coming Out Interviews.”

discredit the queer rights movement.²²⁵ After the outbreak of AIDS in the 1980s, religious institutions argued that this form of “gay cancer” proved that homosexuality could never be viable.²²⁶ Because of this time period and the negative perception of homosexuality, the use of “preference” hinders the group’s ability to move forward because the word implies that sexuality is a choice. While most advocates in the modern day believe in the fluidity of sexuality (constructionist theory), reinforcing the idea of diversity (it being a person’s choice that ought to be recognized and celebrated by society), the queer rights movement of the 1970s use essentialist theory to ground queer identities as an ethnicity. This kept in line with the idea of diversity, allowing advocates and members of the queer rights movement to establish themselves as legitimate members of society in hopes of being accepted rather than assimilated.

The hosts and interviewees on the show rarely said “we” or “us” when referring to members of the queer community. Instead, they chose to refer to members as “them” or “they,” separating themselves from the larger community. A common theme was when the interviewer and interviewee both refer to gay people as a “they” rather than a “we.” I noticed that the hosts only used “us” or “we” in two of the 23 available episodes. The first use of “we” was on the April 4, 1971 episode entitled “Gays & the Military,” nearly two months after the show started airing.²²⁷ The second episode that explicitly used “we” and “us” was the April 13, 1972, episode entitled “Discovering GPU in ’72,” over a year after its first explicit use.²²⁸

While this is just one small instance of language use throughout, it’s important to note it because of its relation to the other content. The program doesn’t give a sense of camaraderie

²²⁵ David Allyn, *Make Love, Not War: The Sexual Revolution, An Unfettered History*.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ “Gays & The Military.”

²²⁸ “Discovering GPU in ’72.”

between *Gay Perspective* and the members of the queer community. There is seemingly no pride in one specific queer identity; instead the focus is on individualizing gayness in hopes of celebrating individual uniqueness, or diversity, in hopes of avoiding being reduced to a group. In addition, in the gay marriage episode, the GPU stated:

Lest our listeners think that Gay People’s Union advocates legal marriage for all gay people, let this be made clear: Our position is that if two people choose to marry, it is their business, and the government has no right to interfere. What is right for one couple is not necessarily right for another. Marriage is an individual decision made only by the people involved.²²⁹

The group believes that marriage should be between two consenting adults and government should not interfere with it.²³⁰ Because the GPU believed government should not interfere with marriage, the regulation of marriage fell to religion, a notorious opponent of the queer community.²³¹ The vague word choice in the GPU’s stance also implies that marriage isn’t for everyone. And while true, they never challenge similar assumptions about heterosexual marriage. The GPU, in turn, ostracizes the queer community and any sense of equality. This is just one of many instances in which the GPU wants to focus on the diversity of homosexuals instead of on the stereotypical representations that dominate the world’s views and beliefs. The focus on telling the stories of individuals, such as the lesbian couple seeking a marriage license, is to focus on “who they are instead of what they are,” emphasizing their sexuality so that they can fit into the dominant, hetero-society.²³² *Gay Perspective* emphasizes individual forms of

²²⁹ “Gay Marriage.”

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² “Gay Marriage.”

queerness to encourage the celebration of individuality. While this is damaging to the community because it individualizes everyone, the Diversity Frame allows for some sort of separation from the negative stereotypical representations of the past.

The Assimilation Frame

Perhaps the most dominant frame throughout the entire program is the Assimilation Frame, which exists in opposition to the Diversity Frame. A clear separation exists in the gay community as a whole in the 1970s. Context plays a major part in this, especially within *Gay Perspective* where the lesbian interviewee named Chris emphasized that Milwaukee is too conservative to deal with queer identities and fluid sexuality.²³³ Chris implies that because of the location, queer people are forced to remain conservative because they are uncertain and unsure of the roles they are allowed to fill. As a result, they act more conservative to integrate homosexuality into straight society, reinforcing the idea that heterosexuality is dominant. The separation not only exists within the gay vs. straight binary, it also exists within the queer community.

Identity politics, which emphasize a need to bring together similar subjects into one blanket category, argues that through similar traits and characteristics, groups can come together and mobilize successful efforts at obtaining minority rights.²³⁴ There is almost a need to stick together because of that one inherent quality -- policies and institutions subsequently shape collective identity.²³⁵ Because many different ideals and beliefs exist within this one overarching community, tensions exist between members when determining who is the “us” and who gets to decide who that “us” is. While there is no clear answer as to who chooses the “us” and “we” of

²³³ “Interview with a Lesbian.”

²³⁴ Elizabeth A. Armstrong, *Forging gay identities: Organizing sexuality in San Francisco*.

²³⁵ Ibid.

the gay community, it's important to look at the identity issues and politics within the community, something explored by *Gay Perspective*.²³⁶ The Assimilation Frame suggests that the best way for homosexuality to be accepted, either voluntarily or involuntarily, is by finding ways to integrate with mainstream society.

Identity issues are present in the inherent tensions between passing vs. coming out, and the differences expressed in queerness and the performance of straightness. Passing is essentially fitting in with the societal norm by emphasizing a heterosexual form of homosexuality.²³⁷ Passing gets those who do so away from a stigma and stereotype of what being gay entails and, thus, makes homosexuality seem less threatening and more acceptable.²³⁸ However, it validates the dominant social group, or in this case heterosexuals, as powerful, normal, and the “correct” way to live.²³⁹ Effeminate gay men are then constructed as villains because they deviate from a hetero-norm and, instead, implicate other queers around them; those who pass do not see effeminate males as real people because of the lack of adherence to social norms associated with identity politics.²⁴⁰ The belief is seemingly that effeminate gays give a bad name to queers as a whole. That idea can be attributed to a gap in intergenerational communication or the idea that older and younger queer people use language differently.²⁴¹ Those who do not support the word queer because of its emphasis on overt sexuality are those who also choose to pass and live heterosexual lifestyles because they believed they had to in order to live a more comfortable, less

²³⁶ Joshua Gamson, (1995), Must Identity Movements Self-Destruct? A Queer Dilemma. *Social Problems*, 42(3), 390-407.

²³⁷ Ragan Fox, "Gay grows up: An interpretive study on aging metaphors and queer identity," *Journal of Homosexuality*, 52, no. 3-4 (2007): 33-61.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

dangerous life.²⁴² Queer ideals, on the other hand, encourage gay men and lesbians to embrace their differences; queer “scoffs at the utility of passing as a method of survival.”²⁴³

This tension is explored throughout *Gay Perspective*, which often calls into question the legitimacy of sexuality even though the program was meant to encourage a deeper understanding of the queer community. In the opening episode, the host refers to an effeminate gay man as “such a character that if you were seen with him, you’d be seriously compromised.”²⁴⁴ Because the goal of passing is to keep sexuality hidden, the GPU reinforces that notion, expecting queer individuals to assimilate into hetero-society. This use of language to promote assimilation is further explored throughout the program, specifically two episodes, “Gays & The Military” and “Leather & S&M.” Both of these episodes reinforce heteronormative standards expected in gay men, referring for a need for gay men in the military to have “normal, masculine behavior,”²⁴⁵ and a need for gay men wearing leather and boots because of their inherent desire to be masculine, attract “real” men, and convince themselves that they are not effeminate.²⁴⁶

Throughout the program, not only is the GPU inadvertently framing homosexuality as a need to assimilate into straight society, but also it often denigrates queer lifestyles. In the episode that interviewed three gay men on their coming out experiences, interviewee Roberto, when asked about how comfortable he is with his homosexuality, said, “I’m not sure. I’m more afraid.”²⁴⁷ He said he’s disappointed by the things going on at the bars and adds, “A lot of homosexual life I see ... I do not want to be a part of that.”²⁴⁸ *Gay Perspective* attempts to

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ “Gay Liberation.”

²⁴⁵ “Gays & The Military.”

²⁴⁶ “Leather & S&M.”

²⁴⁷ “Coming Out Interviews.”

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

separate its version of queer life away from the so-called dominant version by attacking the stereotypical premise. Not only is the program a reinforcement of straight society as the dominant force, it also implies that to make progress, homosexuality must first appeal to heterosexuality as well. Lloyd Barbee established that notion when he talked about reforming the sodomy laws. Barbee never refers to sexual intimacy between same-sex couples.²⁴⁹ In fact, his entire argument is that his Assembly Bill 600 - which did not pass - actually serves heterosexuals.²⁵⁰ The episode ironically offers no gay perspective.

At large, the Assimilation Frame is bound to both dated- and modern-day conceptions of heteronormativity. Those who view homosexuality as a burden adhere to a heteronormative thinking of sexuality because they view gender-nonconforming as an abomination. It is uncomfortable to deal with, and therefore we must be able to live within a binary of gay vs. straight. Throughout *Gay Perspective*, women are referred to as “attractive” when they make appearances, and common gendered notions of what relationships look like are reinforced (one person is masculine and the other is feminine).²⁵¹ This same notion is explored on the male spectrum as well, telling older men they must adhere to masculinized forms of pleasure and seek out a younger, less experienced, more effeminate man.²⁵²

The clear intent of this program is to make queer individuals feel as if they are part of a lesser subculture than those around them, and thus encourage them to assimilate themselves into dominant society. This theme is aptly explored and relied upon because of the discontent within these queer individuals; they did not see themselves as equal to their heterosexual counterparts,

²⁴⁹ “Interview with Lloyd Barbee.”

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ “Gay Marriage.”

²⁵² “Leather & S&M.” “Homosexuality in Prison.”

nor did they believe they deserved to be equal. These queer individuals saw themselves as a subculture of heterosexuality; they saw themselves as a branch of normal sexuality, and they would do anything to assimilate to heterosexuality because they wanted to be normal. They did not view themselves as normal.

Conclusion

Though *Gay Perspective* lasted less than two years, its content is both interesting to observe from an outsider's perspective (as someone from 2016) and an insider's perspective (as someone who identifies as a member of the queer community). In listening to the content of *Gay Perspective*, I was able to find that the show relied on three dominant frames: Cultured, Diversity, and Assimilation. Each frame demonstrates varying degrees of problems faced by the queer rights movement. The Cultured Frame demonstrated how the group sought to establish an understanding of sexuality as a form of higher education and to root that sexuality in a cultured experience. The Diversity Frame shows how the group sought to individualize themselves from each other by celebrating differences within the group. The Assimilation Frame challenged the the Diversity Frame often demonstrating the group's desire to be accepted into the larger society. Its reliance on competing and perhaps contradictory frames reveals much about the GPU, and perhaps the queer rights movement, as a social movement. As it struggled for an identity, it wrestled with questions of community, individualism, and integration. The GPU and queer rights movement at the time had to wonder whether they should integrate with society or break away; they were obviously struggling with those ideas. All three of these frames reiterate the idea that the group was unsure of how to present its ideas.

CHAPTER IV

DIVERSITY ISN'T ALL RAINBOWS AND UNICORNS

This chapter reports a review of the content and a framing analysis of eight hours of the *Queery* radio program, which currently airs in Madison, Wisconsin.²⁵³ The specific episodes focused on in this chapter aired from November 4, 2015, through February 17, 2016, at 7 p.m. every Wednesday night. In listening to the programming, I look to identify the three emerging frames from the previous chapter: the cultured frame, the diversity frame, and the assimilation frame. *Queery* is produced by Madison radio station WORT. The chapter begins with a brief outline of WORT and all available information on *Queery*, followed by an in-depth look at the content of the show. It concludes with a description of the frames that are present in the show's content.

WORT

Started in 1975, WORT (89.9 FM) is community-based radio station located at 118 S. Bedford St. in Madison, Wisconsin.²⁵⁴ As of 2016, the station broadcasts a mix of talk and music programming, the majority of which are locally produced.²⁵⁵ The station relies on volunteers to help run the station, assisting with researching, creating, producing and hosting all of the programming.²⁵⁶ WORT describes its power structure from within as:

The organizational structure of WORT reflects the station's principles of democratic decision making; the paid and unpaid workers (the volunteers) at the station elect the Board of Directors; the Board sets policy and hires full-time and part-time paid staff. The

²⁵³ "WORT 89.9FM/HD Madison, Wisconsin," WORT 89.9 FM.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

full-time staff is organized as a collective that operates within sound management practices and written policies established by the Board. The staff collective oversees the day-to-day operations of the station.²⁵⁷

Queery

Queery is the Madison area's longest running queer radio show.²⁵⁸ It started in the early 1990s under the name *Out Front*, but went off the air because it could not financially sustain itself.²⁵⁹ Following a hiatus in programming from 1993 to 1995,²⁶⁰ a group collective was created to manage and revive it.²⁶¹ The show eventually came back on the air as *Queery* under new directorship in late 1996.²⁶² WORT also partners with a nationally syndicated show, *This Way Out*, that has aired on the station since the 1980s.²⁶³

The Content

Before examining the emerging Cultured, Diversity and Assimilation frames within *Queery*, it's important to briefly discuss the show, topics and content of the program and how it reflects the standing of the queer community and queer topics in modern society. The show's programming has no set format to how it presents each week's topic, though it maintained its talk show identity throughout the period of time I studied. Some episodes just had the hosts talking about queer issues in the news, while others featured hosts interviewing a special guest for the week. There were different hosts throughout the study period; however, hosts often made

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Doug Holtz, e-mail message to author, July 7, 2016.

²⁵⁹ Norm Stockwell, e-mail message to author, July 7, 2016.

²⁶⁰ Sybil Augustine, e-mail message to author, July 7, 2016.

²⁶¹ Norm Stockwell, e-mail message to author, July 7, 2016.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

more than one appearance during the 16 episodes explored in this chapter.²⁶⁴ Most of the episodes mention the ongoing queer events in the Madison area and invite listeners to come out and take part in the community. Music was played if time permitted.

The first episode in the study period aired on November 4, 2015.²⁶⁵ The episode is the first to air after Halloween, and the hosts, Sister Shawntee and Sister Perversela (referred to as “The Sisters” – even though they were men - for the remainder of this thesis) take this opportunity to chat about their Halloween antics.²⁶⁶ The Sisters are very effeminate in tone and conversation, referencing Sister Perversela’s drag career and how they chose not to dress up for Halloween because they wanted to let everyone else be “fabulous.”²⁶⁷ The Sisters make a lot of sexual innuendos throughout the episode, referencing the need for people to moisturize their skin, using a lot of lube, and Sister Shantee makes a joke about loving roofis (date rape drug).²⁶⁸ Each sister takes a moment to rant about a topic each cares about. Sister Shantee talks about the anniversary of the first detection of HIV and the lack of conversation about HIV and AIDS. He cites the growth in infection rates and the lack of conversation about HIV because medication has given infected people longer.²⁶⁹ Sister Perversela talks about the queer community dealing with higher suicide rates, and he says people need to “help our brothers and sisters get through these feelings of inadequacies.”²⁷⁰ The Sisters finish the episode talking about upcoming events (such as a trans monologue performance and a candlelight vigil) and discussing politics and the

²⁶⁴ The episodes have no official title, and therefore are referred to by the date they aired on WORT.

²⁶⁵ *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, November 4, 2015.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

problem that some of straight society has with trans people using the bathroom of the gender with which they identify.²⁷¹

The second episode, aired on November 11, 2015, features an interview with local writer and director, Dan Meyers.²⁷² Meyers has a new play based on the story of a male rape victim who was raped by another man. Because of his history, the victim is assumed to be gay, and Meyers' play is a comment on how homophobia is rooted in misogyny.²⁷³ Society likes to look at things as black or white, or in this case, straight or gay, and because of that, he says, "We have become a society of suppression."²⁷⁴ The hosts also talk about how *Queery* is recruiting volunteers for positions.²⁷⁵ Perhaps the most interesting part of the episode is when the hosts talk about how male-to-female trans people can get voice feminization therapy to help them use their voice in a "safe way."²⁷⁶ The hosts imply a need for trans women to have more feminine voices.

The third episode, aired on November 18, 2015, focuses on trans rights and features an interview with attorney Abbie Churchill.²⁷⁷ Churchill talks about trans legal issues, such as housing discrimination and healthcare, and where to get legal help.²⁷⁸ Churchill also talks about her definition of transgender, which she understands as a person born to one biological sex and based on that, they are assigned a gender identity that they view as inauthentic. Because of that, a transgender person makes steps to make their body match the gender they identify with.²⁷⁹ She also talks about how this doesn't necessarily mean that trans people want gender reassignment

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, November 11, 2015.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, November 18, 2015.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

therapy.²⁸⁰ The episode finishes with a discussion of Wisconsin Assembly Bill 469, which did not pass, and how it would require school boards to designate bathrooms and locker rooms exclusive to one sex, with sex being defined as the “physical condition of being female or male as determined by an individual’s chromosomes at birth.”²⁸¹

The November 25 episode features an interview with a professor who studies the media.²⁸² The professor talks about media bias and how bias is “in the eye of the beholder.”²⁸³ She goes on to say that most people read stories the way that they choose to see the stories from their own bias, and the media’s role is about focusing on the role and importance of language.²⁸⁴ The male host throughout the entire episode refers to the queer community as “GLBT” as opposed to the female professor saying “LGBT,” the more popular, mainstream way of addressing the community.²⁸⁵ At one point, the host says, “GLBTQ... I left out the other letters because I stumble over them. There are so many.”²⁸⁶ The professor reiterates to include the “+” after LGBT.²⁸⁷ The interview concludes with a discussion about outside communities. It is suggested that it is difficult to untangle whether people are leading the media or whether the media lead the people, as seen by the *Modern Family* effect²⁸⁸ and the growth in acceptance of queer relationships.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, November 25, 2015.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ The *Modern Family* effect refers to the idea that gay marriage garnered acceptance after a positive portrayal of a gay couple was featured on a popular, primetime television show. While not specifically noted in any literature, it is commonly referred to in queer culture and this specific episode of *Queery*.

²⁸⁹ *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, November 25, 2015.

The episode airing on December 2, 2015, features the return of The Sisters with guest Dana Crumpton.²⁹⁰ They talk about a community gift program where they ask people to bring in gifts to help underprivileged members of the queer community.²⁹¹ The Sisters call the queer community the “LGBTQ?xyz” and make a lot of overtly sexual references like referring to rock fans as people who like to get their “rocks off.”²⁹² They get off topic and talk about power tools until they refer to themselves as “so butch” and want to reiterate that they are very gay.²⁹³ The episode finishes with talk about AIDS awareness.²⁹⁴

The December 9, 2015, episode features an interview with a local columnist who writes for publications in New York such as *XO Jane*.²⁹⁵ The episode talks about news related to queer trends and topics, as well as the importance of beauty and makeup products.²⁹⁶

The December 16, 2015, episode discusses legal rights that impact the queer community with the relatively new acceptance of same-sex marriage.²⁹⁷ The episode focuses on how same-sex couples got on the “marriage bandwagon” without thinking it through, which resulted in a lot of divorces.²⁹⁸ The hosts also talk about the benefits of marriage (*e.g.*, shared income and social security) and how queer couples want a marriage but don’t want to deal with the “baggage” that comes with it.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁰ *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, December 2, 2015.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁵ *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, December 9, 2015.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁷ *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, December 16, 2015.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

The December 23, 2015, episode discussed news in the beginning of the show and then played queer, Christmas-themed music for the rest of the show.³⁰⁰ This episode marks another time when the hosts referred to the queer community as “LGBTQ?xyz.”³⁰¹

The episode on December 30, 2015, features an interview with Kendra Banxs, a local drag queen.³⁰² The episode first starts with news, and then when Banxs’ interview starts, the hosts talk about *Rupaul’s Drag Race*, stereotypes associated with drag queens, and the bar scene.³⁰³ Banxs often refers to himself out of drag as “normal” and just a regular “dude, and he says they just “want inclusion, not exclusion.”³⁰⁴

The first episode of the new year, airing on January 6, 2016, has The Sisters return as they talk about upcoming events and go into how bisexual people are the underserved group in the queer community.³⁰⁵ The Sisters want there to be bisexual pride.³⁰⁶ They finish the episode with a discussion about gay history.³⁰⁷

The January 13, 2016, episode features talks about the ancestry of gay men, Paganism and witchcraft.³⁰⁸ The episode references the ideas of rebirth in souls and tracking body energies throughout history to find ancestors rather than focusing on familial ties.³⁰⁹ The hosts admittedly have trouble following and understanding the guest and topic.³¹⁰

³⁰⁰ *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, December 23, 2015.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

³⁰² *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, December 30, 2015.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁵ *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, January 6, 2016.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁸ *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, January 13, 2016.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ *ibid.*

The January 20, 2016, episode features more talks about the legal rights of gay and lesbian couples and other “nontraditional” couples who choose not to marry.³¹¹ If couples choose to register as domestic partners, then individuals in the relationship have the power of attorney for their partners in health and financial matters.³¹² The episode concludes with a discussion about the differences between marriage and a domestic-partner relationship, suggesting that the main difference is that domestic partners do not have to go through divorce proceedings. They just sign a paper to end the relationship.³¹³

The episode that aired on January 27, 2016 talks about taxes and benefits people get with joint filing for newly recognized same-sex couples.³¹⁴ The main focus is that with the inclusion of same-sex couples, they can finally file jointly instead of separately, opening up the individuals to potential monetary gains.³¹⁵

Megan Randolph is the featured guest on the February 3, 2016 episode.³¹⁶ She talks with the hosts about theatre productions, specifically a revival of *The Birdcage*.³¹⁷ As they talk about more events,³¹⁸ the episode shifts into talks that sexualize male bodies and features a lot of double entendres.³¹⁹ They end the episode by asking for more volunteers for *Queery*.³²⁰

³¹¹ *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, January 20, 2016.

³¹² *Ibid.*

³¹³ *Ibid.*

³¹⁴ *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, January 27, 2016.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

³¹⁶ *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, February 3, 2016.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

³²⁰ *Ibid.*

The February 10, 2016, episode centers on unconventional spirituality with a man named David, whose last name and credentials are not given.³²¹ David refers to the queer community throughout as “GLBT.”³²²

The final episode examined for this study, which aired on February 17, 2016, discussed trans issues such as the bathroom laws.³²³ Amy, a transwoman, performs some songs, which focus primarily on her experiences as a transwomen through life and love.³²⁴ She plays the songs right after one another with minor introductions to each song’s theme and meaning.³²⁵

Of the 16 episodes from *Queery* examined in this chapter, three major themes occurred in topics: legal rights, media representations and sex/social scene. Five episodes fall into the legal category, three in media representations, and five in sex/social scene. Three episodes are uncategorized because they do not fall into one specific category.

Emerging Frames

As described above, *Queery* covers a wide range of topics during each episode. As important as the topics that are discussed is the way that the hosts talk about issues and frames that are adopted to discuss those issues. As in the previous chapter, this analysis looks at this discussion through three frames: the cultured frame, diversity frame, and assimilation frame.

The Cultured Frame

Unlike *Gay Perspective*, whose references to higher culture were more dominant, *Queery*’s programming lacked as many references to cultured experiences and art forms, which makes the cultured frame the least emerging of the three frames specifically within this program.

³²¹ *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, February 10, 2016.

³²² *Ibid.*

³²³ *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, February 17, 2016.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*

³²⁵ *Ibid.*

The only evidence of the cultured frame in *Queery* is the inclusion of queer-related music in the episodes that feature music, such as the December 23, 2015, episode.³²⁶ The hosts and creators likely wanted to help educate listeners on aspects of queer culture that might otherwise go unnoticed because of their lack of mainstream appeal. These few instances are the only fully formed circumstances in which the cultured frame emerges within the show.

The Cultured Frame, in a sense, was replaced by lots of legal talk, regarding discussion on queer rights, legislation, divorce, etc. This is important because it tells us something about how the discourse has changed. Talking about culture in the 1970s attempted to help legitimize the queer rights movement. However, in 2015, more places had been opened to the acceptance of homosexuality as a valid form of sexuality and livelihood. Because of this, the discussion in the modern day moved beyond culture to talking about obtaining legal standing to help further the legitimization of the movement. Social standing was legitimized through culture and the next step became legal—an important development made throughout *Queery*.

The Diversity Frame

With the growing acceptance of queer identities in modern day society, it's clear that society also comes with a much larger acceptance of diversity. Diversity, as explained in the last chapter, refers to the idea that society should celebrate differences instead of recognizing the differences and attempting to assimilate into one larger standard.³²⁷ Because the queer community is juxtaposed against heterosexuality, and perhaps because society prefers dichotomies, it forces the varying types of sexuality (homosexuality, bisexuality, pansexuality, asexuality, etc.) to be grouped into one large category. This, in turn, makes the queer community

³²⁶ *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, December 23, 2015.

³²⁷ Bruce J. Schulman, *The seventies: The great shift in American culture, society, and politics*.

a diverse community. As part of that community, *Queery* reflects that diversity in its programming and discussions.

The Diversity Frame is introduced almost right off the bat during the first episode explored in this chapter featuring The Sisters. Sister Perversela talks about how queer community deals with higher suicide rates and he says we need to “help our brothers and sisters get through these feelings of inadequacies.”³²⁸ While he says “our,” which implies that the queer rights movement should be considered one entity, which it often is, Sister Perversela’s use of brothers and sisters implies a sense of diversity. He recognizes the differences (diversity) among the members of the community, but then wants all members of the queer community to come together to help one another love and accept themselves as different. And this isn’t the first instance The Sisters rely on the Diversity Frame; in fact, they are the main foundation of it.

During their second episode, December 2, 2015, they talk about a community gift program where they ask people to bring in gifts to help the underprivileged members of the queer community.³²⁹ This mention of helping out one another reiterates the idea that we all come from difference backgrounds and different experiences, which makes some of us more fortunate and others less, and it also asks those who are more fortunate to help out and recognize the diversity in the group. During the episode, The Sisters eventually get a bit off topic and talk about stereotypically masculine things until they laugh and refer to themselves as “so butch.”³³⁰ They continue laughing and want to reiterate that they are very gay.³³¹ This is, again, a very important instance showcasing the Diversity Frame. Instead of attempting to assimilate into straight society

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Ibid.

and pass as heterosexual, The Sisters not only play up their queerness, but they also embrace it-- something that wouldn't have happened in a 1970s show like *Gay Perspective*.

The final instance of the Diversity Frame from The Sisters is featured during the first episode of the new year, airing on January 6, 2016. They talk about how bisexual people are the underserved group in the queer community and how they really think there should be a bisexual pride fest.³³² The Sisters' mention of a lack of acceptance of bisexuals reiterates the idea that the queer rights movement has always been primarily about serving gay men and no one else. It also, in turn, shows that it's very important to start recognizing that there are far more members to the queer community than just lesbians and gay men. It allows members of the queer community to criticize certain antics of the community while still making an effort to show the community's diversity and embrace it.

The final episode explored in this section, which aired on February 17, 2016, talks about trans issues such as the bathroom laws.³³³ Amy, a transwoman, performs some songs.³³⁴ Though no mention of diversity generally occurs in this episode, it is still noteworthy because it features a trans guest, something that *Gay Perspective* could have never done. In fact, it was rare at all for *Gay Perspective* to reference trans issues at all. Amy's performances talk a lot about her experience in the world, and it gives a voice to an underserved group within the queer community, the trans community. It also shows that queerness is more than just sexuality; it also features gender identity, which also promotes the idea of diversity within the community. This final episode helps to reiterate that the queer community is diverse and should really focus on embracing that diversity.

³³² *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, January 6, 2016.

³³³ *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, February 17, 2016.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*

While *Gay Perspective*'s use of the Diversity Frame generally came off in a negative light, *Queery*'s use of it showed just how important it is to use diversity to the advantage of a community. It also shows just how important context plays into diversity. Because *Gay Perspective* happened in a society that wasn't close to accepting homosexuality, it couldn't focus on its diversity because it had to focus on gaining traction in an unforgiving society. However, *Queery* exists in a world where same sex marriage is legal; homosexuality is accepted on a large scale in the United States. This gives the program the opportunity to explore diversity within the queer community, and as a result, it shows just how important it is to recognize differences and embrace them at the same time.

The Assimilation Frame

As explained in the previous chapter, the Assimilation Frame exists in opposition to the Diversity Frame, and although *Queery* takes place over 40 years after *Gay Perspective*, the Assimilation Frame is still prevalent throughout. A clear separation exists in the queer community; the queer rights movement to this day notoriously serves gay, white men.³³⁵ Language reiterates this separation, especially within *Queery* in the way in which the queer community is referred to as.

During the November 25, 2016, episode that features an interview with a professor who studies the media, the male host throughout the entire episode refers to the queer community as "GLBT" as opposed to the female professor saying "LGBT," the more popular, mainstream way of addressing the community.³³⁶ In choosing to pronounce the "G" before the "L," it attempts to

³³⁵ Elizabeth Drescher, "GLBT? LGBT? LGBTQIA ? What's in a Name?" Medium, June 17, 2016, Accessed September 14, 2016, <https://medium.com/the-narthex/glb-t-lgbt-lgbtqia-whats-in-a-name-a5608849c9fa#.8zxlg68x>.

³³⁶ *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, November 25, 2015.

rewrite the history of the queer rights movement, which was once rooted in misogyny and sexism.³³⁷ But why is this important? How does this fit into the Assimilation Frame?

The Assimilation Frame, in itself, is based on the idea that a hierarchy of power exists, and you must adhere to the standards of that hierarchy. In *Gay Perspective*, the Assimilation Frame is seen as queer people adhering to heteronormative standards set by straight society. In the 1970s, the assimilation was to the larger, hetero community. Today, it is assimilating into the larger queer rights community. So the idea of the assimilation frame is still taking place, but the community queer people are assimilating to has changed. In *Queery* specifically, the Assimilation Frame is partially seen as all queer identities other than gay men, having to adhere to a social power stance, where the queer rights movement is meant to first serve primarily gay men and then anyone else a part of the community. This notion is explored in *Queery* by referring to the queer community (known as LGBT+ in mainstream media) as GLBT. This reiterates an old-time version of viewing the queer community and recreates this sense of hierarchy because the “L” was moved to the front to show that the queer community wanted to show a sense of comradery and fight for equality of all members in the community.³³⁸ In referring to the group as “GLBT,” the host takes the community back to its old ways. This choice in pronunciation is also seen in the February 10, 2016 episode, where host, David, refers to the queer community throughout as “GLBT.”³³⁹

Another form of hierarchy and assimilation is present in the lack of inclusion in the lettering of LGBT, which is officially known as LGBTQIA+.³⁴⁰ The host in the November 25

³³⁷ Elizabeth Drescher, "GLBT? LGBT? LGBTQIA ? What's in a Name?" Medium.

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, February 10, 2016.

³⁴⁰ Elizabeth Drescher, "GLBT? LGBT? LGBTQIA ? What's in a Name?"

episode continued his mispronunciation of the queer community identity label, saying, “GLBTQ... I left out the other letters because I stumble over them. There are so many.”³⁴¹ The episode airing on December 2, 2015, features the return of The Sisters, who call the queer community the “LGBTQ?xyz.”³⁴² The December 23, 2015 episode marks another occurrence of referring to the queer community as “LGBTQ?xyz.”³⁴³ What all three of these instances have in common is that they not only exclude the “IA+,” but they also make a mockery of it through exclusion. By not including “I” (intersex) or “A” (asexual and ally), these hosts choose to treat the members of the queer community who identify with those letters as second thoughts, or unworthy of inclusion in the community; they essentially expect them to assimilate and identify with the more dominant, more prevalent sectors within the community.

The use of “LGBTQ?xyz” further separates the community by poking fun at the amount of letters represented in the queer community. Adding “xyz” to the end of the acronym seemingly signifies and pokes fun at the idea that the possibilities in sexuality are never ending and none of them are important enough to have their own letter besides the main four. This then forces the divides in sexuality to be viewed as heterosexual and nonheterosexual, thus reestablishing the idea that heterosexuality is the dominant form of sexuality, everything else is considered deviant, and heterosexuality is “normal.” These specific instances bring up an idea posed in the last chapter. Who is the “us” and “them” in the queer community, and who gets to decide that? In these terms, it seems that the group with the most power, or gay men, get to. It’s easy to read this as, “We are the most dominant group in the LGBT community and therefore, you need to recognize that our needs should be met first.” Therefore, in emphasizing diversity,

³⁴¹ *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, November 25, 2015.

³⁴² *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, December 2, 2015.

³⁴³ *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, December 23, 2015.

the group also emphasizes a form of dominance within the group. It essentially says, “We need to recognize the important of G over L over B” and so on. These instances emphasize a form of assimilation found when dominating groups enforce their ideas and important over other, not-as-dominant groups.

The mislabeling of the queer community is one of two very specific instances that show how the Assimilation Frame is present in *Queery*. Although the above instance seems like a small price to pay in comparison to the presence of the Assimilation Frame in *Gay Perspective*, *Queery* is still much more similar to *Gay Perspective* than it might seem. During the episode on December 30, 2015, featuring an interview with local drag queen Kendra Banxs, he refers to himself out of drag as “normal” and just a regular “dude.”³⁴⁴ Banxs’ words not only imply that being effeminate is not “normal,” but it also brings into question the idea of passing, brought up in the previous chapter. Passing, to reiterate, is fitting in with a set, societal norm put in place by a dominant social group, or in this case heterosexuals.³⁴⁵ Passing denies the stereotypical tendencies of gayness in hopes of making homosexuality less threatening to the dominant social group.³⁴⁶ It, in turn, validates the dominant social group and that group’s standard of normal, or the “correct” way to live.³⁴⁷ Banxs’ idea of being just a regular guy out of drag keeps in theme with a separation of gender. In drag, Banx embodies femininity because he is impersonating a woman, but that is just his career. Outside of drag, he is just a regular, passable guy, who shouldn’t be feared by the dominating social groups.

³⁴⁴ *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, December 30, 2015.

³⁴⁵ Ragan Fox, "Gay grows up: An interpretive study on aging metaphors and queer identity," *Journal of Homosexuality*, 52, no. 3-4 (2007): 33-61.

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

Banxs' subliminal mention of passing also reiterates the idea that those who identify within the queer community don't fit in because they deviate from heterosexuality. He says during the interview that he just wants "inclusion, not exclusion." And while this is a common notion likely held by most queer people, to mention it in the same interview as his capability of passing in straight society has serious ramifications. By relating his passable personality with inclusion, he implies that the standard for most queer people is to be excluded. Though that is true, Banxs' words imply that because he can adhere to societal expectations of masculinity, he is able to achieve that inclusion. This, in a sense, reinforces a common held notion that queer people who do not adhere to heteronormative standards of gender can be easily villainized.

Queery's programming is more inclusive of trans people than *Gay Perspective*.

However, with that inclusivity also comes problematic ways of addressing those topics. *Queery's* problems are reflective of *Gay Perspective's* in that they encourage trans people to pass in society as the gender they most identify with because it's the safest way to exist in this society.³⁴⁸ It's unfortunate that they do encourage this, but it's important to note as well. Perhaps the most interesting part of the episode is the beginning, when the hosts talk about how male-to-female trans people can get voice feminization therapy to help them use their voice in a "safe way."³⁴⁹ The hosts imply a need for trans women to have more feminine voices to assimilate into society and pass as "real" women. This again creates two separate divisions from what's "normal" and not, and it then requires the non-normal to take extra, sometimes even drastic, measures to assimilate into an aspect of culture they don't necessarily fit into for various reasons. The show

³⁴⁸ *Queery*, WORT FM Madison, Madison, WI: WORT, November 11, 2015.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

at one point even references passing directly in the program, saying a trans person won't receive discrimination if you pass as much as possible as the gender you identify as.

The Assimilation Frame is not as prevalent in *Queery* as it is in *Gay Perspective*. However, when it is prevalent, both shows are much more similar than they are different. *Queery* presents new ideas about viewing homosexuality, and that's great, but when it presents newer topics to receive attention in the queer community, it reverts to the same dated ideas of heteronormativity relied on by *Gay Perspective*. It reinforces an idea that society must be able to live within a set binary of gender roles of masculine vs. feminine and in a set binary of gay vs. straight.

Queery, though perhaps not intentionally, helps maintain a divide within the queer community by creating a new sense of hierarchy. This encourages less-prevalent members of the queer community to assimilate themselves into parts of the queer community. *Queery* keeps other members of the queer community from feeling a part of the community by forcing them to see themselves as a subculture of queerness, or to see themselves as less than the overall cause. The content shows that while *Queery* fits in with modern day acceptance of the queer rights movement, the inner acceptance within the community still needs some work.

Conclusion

Though *Queery* continues to be broadcast every week, its content is both interesting to observe from an outsider's perspective (as a member of the asexual community) and an insider's perspective (as someone who identifies as a member of the queer community). In listening to the content of *Queery*, I was able to identify the three emerging frames that *Gay Perspective* relied heavily on: Cultured, Diversity, and Assimilation frames. The two dominant frames present in *Queery* were the Diversity Frame and the Assimilation Frame. Both frames demonstrate varying

degrees of issues faced by the queer community in 2016. The Diversity Frame shows how the group embraced parts of its denigrated culture, and the Assimilation Frame demonstrates how the modern day queer community battles misconceptions of themselves and how they also misconceive members of their own community. *Queery's* programming shows that no matter what context, no matter how far the world has come in 40 years, there is always progress to be made.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

If you're still reading this, you're probably my advisor or a very dedicated queer theorist, and either way, you're probably wondering, "Why does this matter?" I'm not sure I can give you a definitive answer as to why it does, but that doesn't change the fact that it does. This thesis was originally supposed to be a historical study on the queer rights movement in one specific radio program during the 1970s, but it has grown into much more than that.

Studying how the queer rights movement has used these frames in two separate radio programs, during two different time periods, helps us understand the struggles facing a social movement. Social movements are constrained not only by their resources, but by the larger culture in which they are embedded. In some ways, how a social movement frames itself is determined by forces it cannot control. In the 1970s, the GPU focused much of its energy on trying to demonstrate the need for rights and attempts to demonstrate how the community's members could be functioning members of mainstream society. By 2015, at least some of those rights had been won, freeing queer-rights advocates to wrestle with definitional problems about membership within the community.

This project attempted to show how the queer community frames itself through the media it uses, specifically in radio. What it found was some differences in presentation of content but more similarities than expected. Three frames emerged throughout this thesis. We first had the Cultured Frame, bound by its adherence to higher forms of culture in hopes of legitimizing queerness through the surrounding culture. This was followed by the Diversity Frame, which was showcased more in 2015-2016 but not as much in the 1970s because of its refusal to meet any one specific standard. The last and most dominant frame throughout this project was the

Assimilation Frame. The Assimilation Frame shows how groups in power set a standard and force those without power to adhere to it.

The Cultured Frame

The Cultured Frame plays a much more significant role in *Gay Perspective* than it does in *Queery*. *Queery*'s hosts only refer to cultural references when it comes to notoriously queer music. *Gay Perspective*, on the other hand, references higher forms of culture in hopes of legitimizing queer identities. It is likely the only form of legitimization they could find at the time when people didn't understand how a "gay lifestyle" could be sustained. *Queery* is produced in a time when same-sex marriage is legal. People find this "lifestyle" more legitimate and sustainable; queerness has essentially become an afterthought. Where *Gay Perspective* struggled, *Queery* flourishes because of an acceleration in time and acceptance, something that didn't exist in a 1970s world. In 2015-2016, *Queery* didn't face the legitimacy issues that *Gay Perspective* did. The queer community is recognized as legitimate by more people in 2015-2016 than it was in the 1970s, and, as such, there is much less of a need to legitimize itself by associating it with forms of culture and powerful institutions, such as straight society. This frees *Queery* to focus on other issues.

The Diversity Frame

The queer community is no doubt one of the more diverse groups of people. It involves people of different sexualities, gender identities, and even includes allies of those involved; a straight person could be a part of the community if they considered themselves an ally to a friend or relative who identified as a member in the community. With that diversity comes a sense of hierarchy within the group. This can be seen in any diverse group; America is one of the most

diverse countries in the world, and it deals with issues of supremacy and hierarchy of cultures to this day.

The Diversity Frame is *Gay Perspective's* least prevalent frame, and that comes as no shock. The queer community during the 1970s was searching for any form of validation that it could get, and unfortunately, the most successful way to do that was to create a common idea about what it meant to be gay. To do so, that meant the queer community couldn't emphasize its individuality like it can in 2015-2016. The only forms of diversity present were the times when hosts could reiterate that all queer people are people; none of them are alike, and they can be as normal as straight people. *Queery*, because it existed in a much more accepting society, is allowed to focus on diversity. Trans people had far more representation in *Queery* than in *Gay Perspective*, and hosts were able to embrace their queerness in ways that no one was allowed to in *Gay Perspective*. *Queery* was also allowed to give queer people outlets for legal advice and how to deal with discrimination in everyday life. *Gay Perspective* fought to establish rights that would allow members of the queer community to be like other Americans, while *Queery* seeks to move beyond those rights in the establishment of difference.

The Assimilation Frame

Gay Perspective focused a lot on encouraging members of the queer community to find ways to assimilate into heteronormative structures in society. Because of the turmoil that queer people dealt with, it was best to try to fit in instead of standing out.

While *Queery* did allow for all queer people to embrace their queerness, it still relied on stereotypical representations of gender, and that's what makes it more similar to *Gay Perspective* than I once thought when first starting this project. *Queery* promoted the idea that trans people should adhere to the gender norms of the gender they identify with. Furthermore, the program

features common trends of promoting “normalcy” that were often established to keep queer people from seeming threatening, as seen throughout *Gay Perspective*. And though this thesis has established a very set idea that *Gay Perspective* and *Queery* are on different sides of a never ending spectrum, it’s clear that they rely on similar tropes relay their messages.

Media Connection

Because this thesis focuses on media use by social movements, it’s important to explore the media connection more deeply. Why is it that stereotypes exist, and why are these instances of assimilation vs. diversity so present in both programs? One reason may be the idea that stereotypes have just always existed especially when the media are used to communicate a message. Television, film, news, and radio have all, at one point, relied on a stereotype of queer individuals in their storytelling.³⁵⁰ That stereotype almost always relied on effeminate gay men and ridiculing them for their lack of normalcy, which allowed a hierarchy of power to exist.³⁵¹ This forced those with less power, queer individuals, to adhere to norms and standards set by the group in power.³⁵²

Though stereotypes have evolved throughout time into more accepting, good-natured depictions, they still exist. Part of that may be simply because it’s all the world knows about representing queer individuals in the media, but the other part may be due to time constraints. Because the media give such limited time in presenting content to this day, people in power and those trying to make headway in culture have to rely on stereotypes to advance their storytelling

³⁵⁰ Linda Steiner, Fred Fejes, and Kevin Petrich, " Invisibility, Homophobia and Heterosexism: Lesbians, Gays and the Media."

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² Ibid,

as quickly as possible. But are media as limited as they used to be, or are these limitations based on new technology and more outlets diluted varying messages?

The problem with this formula in storytelling is that it keeps stereotypes around, but it also allows social movements to forward their progress. Using the media may force social movements to adopt traditional, dominant frames and stereotypes in an attempt to tell their story, but it also allows them to do so as they try to gain an audience. While this is something that any social movement has to understand and deal with, it also gives them the opportunity to recognize the stereotypes and challenge them. This can be seen throughout time as the media went from negative, comical portrayals of queer identities to more positive portrayals due to activists challenging the stereotype.³⁵³ It also gives social movements the opportunity to embrace the stereotype and their diversity, showing that they should be accepted for their lack of being “normal.” That is very evident throughout *Queery*, and it shows that time and exposure allow social movements to fight for the representations they deserve.

Limitations

This study has some limitations, the first being attributed to space. *Gay Perspective* takes place in Milwaukee and *Queery* takes place in Madison. Though both cities are located in Wisconsin, they exist in locales with varying degrees of queer acceptance. While it would have been ideal to explore two radio programs located in the same city, the debate between *Gay Perspective* and *Queery* was the best option for this thesis despite the difference in location.

Perhaps the most limiting aspect of this project is time. Because *Gay Perspective* didn't last very long, and there is a limited historical record of the show, it's difficult to understand where the show could have gone. And though the show should be considered a cultural artifact,

³⁵³ Ibid.

its existence brings into question a lot of issues associated with the queer community and the queer rights movement during the 1970s. In comparison, *Queery*, which brings a more diverse representation of the queer community, relies too heavily on heteronormative aspects of culture in its reinforcement of specific gender identity. Overall, both programs fail to represent the extent of diversity within the queer community. That may in part be due to the nature of the research done on *Queery*. Because this thesis focuses only on eight hours of the show, there is no telling what future content will look like. It also forces us to adjust our expectations of social movements in the media. *Queery* falls short of my expectations, but could any show live up to an idealized standard without being influenced - or reacting to - dominant culture? It begs the question: Aren't all attempts to tell stories embedded in the culture in which that story is being told? The answer is essentially, "Yes." But to me, that's disappointing.

Conclusion

When I was first approached about this project by a faculty member from my department in early 2015, I was initially taken aback by the project and its historical basis. I assumed that I would find some really negative, degrading things about the queer community in the 1970s, but as I compare it to 2015-2016, I'm even more upset. As a member of the overarching queer community, I was not expecting to see such a large emphasis on assimilation *within* the queer community.

While assimilation is clearly an issue when looking at *Gay Perspective* from a historical context, these issues are certainly present in the modern day reality as well. Modern studies and current representations in media, though not thoroughly explored in this thesis, emphasize a "lens of detection" in which performances of gender are scrutinized when those performances do

not adhere to that specific gender.³⁵⁴ If a male performs stereotypically feminized actions, his masculine actions are discredited because of his refusal to adhere to that one specific norm. Those actions then become signifiers of a performance of gayness. That gayness is emphasized on a larger scale then because gay identity is considered structured as it is juxtaposed against the dominating position that heterosexuality carries within the set sexuality binary. By focusing on the idea that people can “see” sexuality through gendered performances, the “lens of detection” helps to emphasize the binary rather than encourage fluidity.³⁵⁵ In a sense, the “lens of detection” insists that non-normative aspects of expression indicate homosexuality.³⁵⁶ The tensions between overt expression vs. passing, us vs. them, and gay vs. queer become the central focus when analyzing the content of *Gay Perspective* and *Queery* in terms of this project.

The lens of detection takes on a whole new meaning when comparing its use in *Queery*. *Queery*'s shows can by far be considered the more diverse of the two when comparing the two shows. However, the trans issues that were brought up during the episodes explored in this project show that the lens of detection applies to more than just sexuality. *Queery* emphasized the idea that if you're trans, you should try to be as passable as possible. This involves adhering to the gender norms of your gender identity to remain safe and less threatening.

Listeners would likely be disappointed to listen in on a program that gave them no sense of identity in a community they associated themselves with and luckily they didn't have to worry about this with either program. The content from *Gay Perspective*, though flawed, gave users a

³⁵⁴ Jimmy Draper, “Idol Speculation: Queer Identity and a Media-Imposed Lens of Detection,” *Popular Communication*, 2012, 10(3), 201-216.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

sense of what queerness looked like at that time and it did its best to help queer individuals struggling with their identity find ways to live fulfilling lives. *Queery* does the same.

Gay Perspective, from a glance, looks like the more conservative of the two shows because it essentially tells queer people to assimilate into straight society. However, the content of the show provides a more radical perspective by talking about topics that were considered taboo in the 1970s. On the other hand, though it may seem to be the more liberal show, *Queery* encourages queer people to assimilate into the dominating, queer majority of lesbians, gays, and trans people. So in a sense, *Gay Perspective* lives in a world where being queer is unacceptable, and it attempts to change that by assimilation, while *Queery* attempts to live in a post-gay world, where difference is celebrated and sexuality doesn't matter. Though these presentations may expect too much and inadvertently encourage members of the community to feel less about themselves, they do the best they can with the time they're given in the time periods they exist in. You can't expect more than that.

The programs often found themselves competing with their inner voices, and as such, kept the content from always presenting themselves in prideful ways. The GPU and *Gay Perspective* emphasized blending in, passing as heterosexual so that people wouldn't care as long as they weren't rubbing sexuality in their faces. *Gay Perspective* became about gay people encouraging other gay people to hide in hopes of fitting in.³⁵⁷ Meanwhile, *Queery* emphasized diversity in the ways they wanted to and were able to.

Context of time is a major part to consider when analyzing the content of both of these shows, and it's clear that the people behind *Gay Perspective* were not as open and free to explore sexuality in comparison to the people behind *Queery*. The GPU did a great job in allowing a

³⁵⁷ Chris Terry.

minority group to have a voice on a larger scale for a short time, and that's something we should be happy to see. Programs like *Queery* show that the flawed approaches of *Gay Perspective* were not made in vain, but they also show that we have so many more challenges to overcome.

The archives of both of these shows give us an opportunity to see how important it is for society to include gays and lesbians. The GPU was more conservative in its overall approach, but it still incorporated mainstream media tactics to get its message out there. That message may have been flawed in nearly every aspect, but for two years a major gay rights organization was on the radio during a time when it likely shouldn't have been. And while we may never know what led to the ultimate demise of this program, its existence alone validates social movements and how great media can be in society. *Queery* is the perfect example of how social movement can use media to their advantage throughout time. Some might argue that a show like *Queery* couldn't exist without *Gay Perspective*. That may be true, and we may never know, but what these programs have taught me is that speech matters. In the words of Chris Terry:

We should celebrate speech. That's what I see this as. It was really cool that this existed.

Yeah it's production value sucked, it's not that interesting internally, but on a larger scale it represents something that we need more of. We need more diverse voices... That's what speech is supposed to do.³⁵⁸

So in this case, *Gay Perspective* and *Queery* are actually successful after all.

³⁵⁸ Chris Terry.

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APPENDIX:

Gay Perspective Episode Guide

Episode 1

Title: [Gay Liberation](#)

Broadcast Date: February 15, 1971

Synopsis: The episode features the host of the program for the week interpreting gay stereotypes. Some phrases used to describe a gay person were “loveless and pathetic,” “hiding in shadows,” and “such a character that if you were seen with him, you’d be seriously compromised.” The host talks about the goals and history of gay liberation, referencing Stonewall and the idea of decriminalizing gay people and gay sexual acts.

Episode 2

Title: [Why we’re organized](#)

Broadcast Date: March 1971 (undated)

Synopsis: This episode talks about why the GPU organized in the first place and its mission statement. The GPU focuses on individual change through acceptance and emphasizes that liberating homosexuals will, in turn, liberate heterosexuals as well. The GPU also talks about a need for participation to make gay liberation a reality.

Episode 3

Title: [Relationships between Gays and the Straight World](#)

Broadcast Date: March 1971 (undated)

Synopsis: The relationships between Gays and the Straight World are complicated because, as the GPU talks about in this episode, straight people cannot understand effeminacy and butchness in genders supposedly not associated with those adjectives. The GPU tries to reinforce the idea that a gay person “can become a contributing member of society.”

Episode 4

Title: [Sex Laws](#)

Broadcast Date: March 14, 1971

Synopsis: This episode talks about the challenges the gay community faces because of the criminalized nature of gay sex acts. The GPU reports that while it is not a crime to be a homosexual, 48 states prohibit homosexual acts. The episode also references the exact language used in Wisconsin law to prohibit homosexual acts without specifically using “homosexual” in the language.

Episode 5

Title: [Gays and the Military](#)

Broadcast Date: April 4, 1971

Synopsis: This episode talks about what it’s like to be gay in the military through the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” military protocol. This requires gay people serving in the military to not only be quiet about their sexuality, but they must also display “normal, masculine behavior” because, according to the GPU, you “don’t have to be caught in the act [of homosexuality] to be discharged.”

Episode 6

Title: [Casual Sex](#)

Broadcast Date: April 11, 1971

Synopsis: The GPU talks about the conservative nature of sexual acts in this episode, trying to emphasize a more “modern” approach that “sex can be fun.” The group references the common held notion, at the time, that sexual relations were only meant for reproduction.

Episode 7

Title: [Oppression of Homosexuals by Government, Business, Professions and Society at Large](#)

Broadcast Date: May 2, 1971

Synopsis: Gay people are oppressed by “uptight” people in government who do not understand sexuality, and therefore, they are afraid. Because of people’s perception of gayness, it’s hard for gay people to maintain job security. This then requires gay people to first think of others’ reactions as opposed to reaction of their partner or family. In addition, this makes homosexuals believe they’re sick because society makes them feel that way, especially with psychology referring to homosexuality as “abnormal.” The GPU wants to combat this by making education a priority.

Episode 8

Title: [Coming Out Interviews](#)

Broadcast Date: May 16, 1971

Synopsis: This episode features the GPU interviewing three young men named Sam, Roberto, and Ron. Sam talks about his experience being gay and hiding it during the Korean War, Roberto talks about his experience as a minority in skin color and sexuality, and Ron talks about his relief after coming out and begin desiring male companionship. Ron is the only one of the three to blatantly say he is comfortable with his homosexuality.

Episode 9

Title: [Leather and S&M](#)

Broadcast Date: May 23, 1971

Synopsis: This episode talks about stereotypes within the gay community, specifically the stereotype of the “super-male,” who often wears boots and leather clothing. The host says that men who want to attract masculine men have to be masculine themselves. However, the host also says that most masculine, gay men portray this masculine image to convince themselves that they are not effeminate or gay. Leather and S&M play into gendered, sexual fantasies of submissiveness vs. dominance.

Episode 10

Title: [Homosexuality in Prison](#)

Broadcast Date: June 1971 (undated)

Synopsis: Homosexuality in prison is more than just sexual orientation. Sex is used as power in prison life because once you submit, you must always submit. Homosexual acts are committed within virtually all prisons and many suicides in prison are related to sexual coercion.

Episode 11

Title: [Interview with Lloyd Barbee](#)

Broadcast Date: June 13, 1971

Synopsis: Wisconsin State Representative Lloyd Barbee joins the GPU this episode to discuss how the law views and handles sex acts. He argues that if people look at the law, everyone is a sex criminal. He talks about the possibility of legalizing prostitution, and how criminalizing sex acts oppresses everyone.

Episode 12

Title: [Oppression of Lesbians](#)

Broadcast Date: July 9, 1971

Synopsis: The twelfth episode focuses on the oppression of lesbians by focusing on the reality that lesbians face discrimination based on gender and sexuality. The host says that lesbians are rarely accepted in the gay rights movement or the women's rights movement. The gay rights movement oppresses lesbians to take the heat away from gay men and the women's rights movement tries to distance itself from stereotypical man-hating lesbians.

Episode 13

Title: [Gay Marriage](#)

Broadcast Date: October 7, 1971

Synopsis: The Gay Marriage episode predominantly focuses on a lesbian couple trying to obtain a marriage license after they received approval from a priest and a lawyer. The episode talks about heteronormative structures in the relationship, how marriage and sex should be considered personal, and focuses on the issue of who you are vs. what you are. The GPU reveals in this episode that it does not fully support gay marriage.

Episode 14

Title: [Drag & Female Impersonation](#)

Broadcast Date: October 28, 1971

Synopsis: This episode talks about drag culture and female impersonation by first referencing the notion that masculine men dress up in leather. The female impersonator who is interviewed talks about his experiences in drag. He says that drag is about being able to pass as a woman and that he is usually billed as a woman. He views drag as a job; he does not enjoy it. He also says that "transvestitism" is not a gay problem.

Episode 15

Title: [Religion & The Gay](#)

Broadcast Date: December 9, 1971

Synopsis: This episode talks about the relationship between religion and homosexuality. The host says that this relationship is a battle between religion and modern thought. He references the Bible throughout and encourages listeners to do research on religion and its relationship with homosexuality.

Episode 16

Title: [Venereal Disease & STD's](#)

Broadcast Date: 1972 (undated)

Synopsis: This episode gives information about how venereal disease and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are contracted and how to treat them. It offers options to those who do not know about treatment services in the area.

Episode 17

Title: [Lesbian Literature to 1928](#)

Broadcast Date: January 13, 1972

Synopsis: The GPU often discusses higher forms of culture when referencing sexuality. This episode focuses on lesbian literature, which reinforces stereotypes of homosexual relationships, such as unrequited love and the idea that homosexuals can't live fulfilling lives. The literature also touches on the idea that homosexuals are responsible for their "condition."

Episode 18

Title: [Gay Liberation: Who Needs It?](#)

Broadcast Date: February 24, 1972

Synopsis: This episode reiterates the ideas of gay liberation that were touched on in the first episode of *Gay Perspective*. It touches on common notions of passing and combatting negative stereotypes of homosexuals. The GPU says the more distant a person is from the bar scene, the more separated an individual is from the community. The group also tries to reiterate the idea that Gay Liberation is useful to everyone, such as the women's movement.

Episode 19

Title: [Interview with a Lesbian](#)

Broadcast Date: March 30, 1972

Synopsis: Chris is a woman who identifies first as a woman and then as a lesbian. She talks about her experiences with straight women and how they are standoffish at first and then eventually work into acceptance. She talks about how she puts on femininity when interacting with straight society. She also talks about the weak relationship between gay men and lesbians because she believes gay men believe their masculinity is threatened by lesbians.

Episode 20

Title: [Discovering GPU in '72](#)

Broadcast Date: April 13, 1972

Synopsis: This episode has the GPU encouraging people to become a part of the gay rights movement by publicizing the GPU's organizational goals. The GPU covers the most important topics for the gay community, it recognizes and encourages the movement, and it says that it is for everyone!

Episode 21

Title: [Interview with Narcissti](#)

Broadcast Date: April 20, 1972

Synopsis: The GPU interviews a local poet in this episode who reads poems about his own sexual experiences. He also questions the idea of a lover vs. a partner.

Episode 22

Title: [Religion & Homosexuality](#)

Broadcast Date: May 4, 1972

Synopsis: This episode focuses on homosexuality as an ethnicity in hopes of denouncing the negative aspects of being gay, such as cruising in the park due to inherent loneliness.

Episode 23

Title: [Interview with Malu Brubaker](#)

Broadcast Date: May 18, 1972

Synopsis: The final episode of *Gay Perspective* features folk singer Malu Brubaker performs live and talks about issues in the gay community. She performs her song “Gay Liberation is One Thing, but Nobody Likes a Dyke” and talks about how gay men don’t realize that they should be advocating for and helping lesbians.