Setting the queer agenda: a comprehensive analysis of the events that shaped a movement.

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Setting the queer agenda: a comprehensive analysis of the events that shaped a movement.

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1. Introduction

"Love is love!" has been the prevalent message modern LGBTQ rights activists have pushed in recent years. When gay marriage was legalized in all 50 states, many people believed that this moment in LGBTQ history marked the end of the movement. However, a deeper look into the reality many queer people face every day reveals a very different narrative. While large, formal inequalities have been mostly resolved, queer people face many issues, ranging from unequal access to health care (an issue a majority of trans people face) (Yacka-Bible, 2021) up to systematic discrimination when it comes to starting a family (Quinn, 2020, pp. 733-734). Additionally, homophobia and transphobia are still very large issues in the USA (Transgender Law Center, 2021) best characterised by legislation targeting the existence of queer people, like the "Don't Say Gay" laws. These laws state that "classroom instruction by school personnel or third parties on sexual orientation or gender identity may not occur." Critics of these laws fear that this would unfairly impact queer or trans students, arguing that teachers can no longer give information on topics concerning these identities. Additionally, lessons on same-sex marriage, the AIDS epidemic, or other topics concerning LGBTQ people could not be held (Lavietes, 2022).

All this to say, for the LGBTQ rights movement, the fight is far from over. However, since its informal start in 1969, the movement has come a long way. Movements like the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis started the fight for equality far before 1969, by creating safe spaces for (often middle class and white) gay people to meet (Duberman, 2019, pp. 93-94). However, for years these groups had little success in improving the social rights of queer people. This shifted radically after June 28th, 1969. On that Friday night, the police raided the Stonewall Inn, a notorious gay bar in Greenwich Village, Manhattan. What should have been a routine police raid erupted into a series of riots that spanned several days (Duberman, 2019, pp. 238-240). These riots are recognized today as the start of the gay rights movement. Interestingly, despite its violent start, the gay rights movement was predominantly peaceful from the 70s onward (Duberman, 2019, pp. 265-266).

This proposes an interesting puzzle: why did the movement have such a violent start, and why did this shift happen in such a short period? What events caused this movement to develop in the way it did? Or, put differently, "Why did the goals and tactics of the LGBTQ movement change rapidly between 1965-1970?". This question will be answered by first doing an in-depth literature review into social movement studies, focusing on violence,

tactics and (de-)radicalization. For the analysis, transformative event analysis will be used to discover which events transformed the movement and why they had such a large impact. The findings of transformative event analysis will be supplemented with research on the effect violence has on the support a social movement had, as this plays an important role in movement tactics. While queer rights are a popular topic in the current day and age, much of queer history has been systematically under-researched. Because of this, finding theory on the tactics of the LGBTQ movement has proven difficult. Additionally, the LGBTQ movement has always communicated its own goals clearly through articles, slogans and interviews. These will be evaluated and analysed to understand the perspective of protesters at that time, to see if they answer the question of why their tactics shifted so rapidly.

2. Literature review

2.1 Social movements and violence

The research on social movements is very dense. They are a global phenomenon, and are very diverse by nature; causes differ per movement, and so do the tactics, mobilization structures, and political opportunity structures. A social movement is a conscious and sustained effort by ordinary people, to change their society through extra-institutional means, often with a political motive (Goodwin & Jasper, 2015, pp. 3-4). While most modern social movements are peaceful, this is not a requirement. Throughout history, many movements have used violence as a tactic to achieve their goals. While violence is used as a tactic, it is oftentimes not beneficial to the movement. A social movement needs popular support to be successful; people from outside the movement need to hear the message and agree with it, in order to create the changes a movement is asking for. By relying on violence, social movements run the risk of alienating potential supporters (Munoz & Anduiza, 2019, pp. 487-488). Social movements have a set “repertoire of action” which comprises all the methods and tactics they use. These can be sit-ins and marches, but also riots and occupations (Della Porta & Dani, 2006, p. 168). In essence, a goal of a social movement is to change existing structures by disrupting day to day life in whichever way possible, whether through violent methods or not (Munoz & Anduiza, p. 486).

2.2 Radicalization and deradicalization

A lot of current research on violence in social movements focuses on terrorism and Muslim extremism, to the point that the two terms are seemingly inseparable. However, violence as a

tactic can be used by any form of collective action. Radicalization is understood as any process that leads a movement towards an increased use of (political) violence, while de-radicalization implies a reduction in the use of violence (Della Porta, 2012, p. 5). Similarly to peaceful mobilization, violent social movements occur after a culmination of specific factors. One such factor is state repression and the use of political violence. If a state represses all forms of peaceful protests and uses violence to deter people from mobilizing, this may backfire on the state and further escalate a movement, rather than decreasing the mobilization (Hess & Martin, 2006, pp. 250-251; Della Porta, 2006, pp. 222-223). Another potential factor that can cause radicalization is the political opportunity structures a movement has access to (Della Porta, 2006, pp. 223-224).

While it is easy to assume that armed and unarmed groups are operating in different worlds, they share a lot of similarities; both fall under the umbrella of collective action, they are often organized by movements that represent a (repressed) minority, and they are non-institutional - they fall outside of the formal political channels (Dudouet, 2013, p. 402). Additionally, both types of social movements wish to achieve their goals. After all, a social movement wants to change or protest something. Research has shown that violent social movements are less successful than their peaceful counterparts (Stephan & Chenoweth, 2008, pp. 7-8). There are several reasons why this is. Firstly, remaining peaceful could increase the legitimacy of a movement. Peacefulness increases popular support for a movement, broadening the support base and potentially mobilizing new protesters that are not impacted by the issue a movement is protesting (Munoz & Anduiza, 2019, p. 488). Violence, however, decreases this support and alienates these “outsiders”(Munoz & Anduiza, 2019, pp. 488-489). The broader support base, enabled by peacefulness, enhances the pressure that officials feel to change the issue at hand (Stephan & Chenoweth, 2008, p. 402). A second reason is that a peaceful protest does not provide a justification for governments to violently repress a movement. By being violent, movements give officials a “reason” to retaliate with more violence, whereas violent repression against peaceful protests would create martyrs and could increase support for a movement, rather than decrease it (Stephan & Chenoweth, 2008, p. 402).

For social movements, popular support is a very important resource. Especially for groups that represent minorities, it is fundamental to have support from people who are not victims of the systematic injustice a movement is fighting against (Munoz & Anduiza, 2019, p. 488). By using violence, these important supporters may be turned away, effectively harming the

potential success of a social movement (Munoz & Anduiza, 2016, p. 488). While there is a rich theoretical basis for the effect a violent social movement has on policymakers, there is not a lot of attention for this effect on popular support.

2.3 Transformative event analysis

Within social movements theory, there are several different tactics to analyse how and why movements developed in their own way. One such method is transformative event analysis, which will be the main method used for this research. Transformative event analysis assumes that certain events in a movement are impactful enough that they essentially shift the movement in a new direction (Andersen, 2016, p. 442). A social movement consists of the culmination of protests, petitions, boycotts, and so on. All of the separate events taken together get the movement to the result that they are after (if the movement is successful). These are known as "ordinary events". Transformative events do something more; they fundamentally shift a movement by either changing its trajectory, dramatically increasing mobilization, or severely impacting the cultural and political opportunity structure in which the movement operates (Andersen, 2016, pp. 443-445).

3. Theoretical framework

One gap identified in existing research is why movements that cannot be classified as terrorist organizations turn to or turn away from violence. One potential explanation for the shift away from violence is the importance of popular support (Munoz & Anduiza, 2016, pp. 487-488). Should popular support be such a determining factor in the success or failure of a movement, it is important to create more research on this topic. Additionally, it is important to understand what can cause a movement to either shift towards or away from a tactic like violence. While the literature on social movements tactics is very dense, one theory that particularly stands out is transformative event analysis. Transformative event analysis assumes that certain events are so impactful to a movement, they radically impact the movement's structure (Andersen, 2016, p. 442). Most existing research on transformative events is focused on the effect these events have on mobilization, but Andersen (2016) argues that they can impact much more than just that. Therefore, it would be interesting to evaluate all of the effects transformative events can have on a movement, combined with the focus on popular support.

The case of the LGBTQ rights movement during the late 1960s and the early 1970s serves as an excellent candidate for such a research project. Firstly, the topic is under-researched due to a lack of clear primary data and a social taboo on the topic. Secondly, the movement existed for a long time before the late 60s, but only started to gain traction after a short period of rioting. Interestingly enough, after the riots, the movement abandoned all violence and moved on to tactics like the pride marches we know today. By combining the effect of violence on popular support and transformative event analysis, gaining insight into why this shift happened may be possible. Following the theory available on the topic, a working hypothesis could be the following: After some limited success with previous non-violent protests and the understanding that the violence caused tension with not only "society" but also amongst different parts of the queer community (Duberman, 2019, p. 266), the (informal) leaders of the movement decided to abandon violence to increase the chances of the movements' success.

4. Methods

4.1.1 Research design

This paper focuses on the question "Why did the goals and tactics of the LGBTQ movement change rapidly between 1965-1970?". To answer this question, transformative event analysis will be used. For this analysis, three cases have been selected: the 1966 Sip-In, the 1969 Stonewall Riots and the first pride march in 1971. The focus of this paper is admittedly limited, but this is not without reason. By conducting a single case study with a within-case analysis, a very detailed analysis is possible, allowing for a rich contextual base (Halperin & Heath, 2017, p. 217). This rich context will allow for more insight into the impact these three events had on the tactics and goals of the movement, thus allowing for a more thorough answer to this question.

To apply transformative event analysis, appropriate cases need to be selected to start the analysis. Transformative events, according to Andersen (2016, p. 442) cause radical turning points in collective action, and they impact the outcome of social movements to a degree that "normal" events do not. Therefore, transformative events significantly impact the way movements are shaped, similar to a turning point (Morris, 2000, p. 452). Assuming that these events have been happening throughout the history of the movement, there is a possibility that a transformative event impacted the shift from violent riots to a peaceful and organized

social movement. In a similar logic, there may be a similar transformative event that caused the riots to occur.

To determine if an event is transformative, criteria set out by Andersen (2016) will be used. These criteria include “individual-level changes” (p. 446) “group-level changes” (p. 447) and “structural-level changes” (pp. 447-448). Individual-level changes are the “traditional” conception of transformative events. These changes impact mobilization drastically, by either massively increasing or decreasing the number of people mobilized by a movement (Andersen, 2016, p. 446). A group-level change focuses on potential drastic changes to the organizations involved in the movement. This includes the emergence of new leaders, different tactics, or new organizations. Additionally, a group-level change can impact the goals a movement has (Andersen, 2016, p. 447). Lastly, a structural level change affects society as a whole. It can impact a cultural attitude towards the movement and its goals, the political opportunity structure a movement has access to, or the legal framework a movement is operating in (Andersen, 2016, pp. 447-448).

Because transformative event analysis cannot account for every aspect of a complicated case like the LGBTQ rights movement, theory on violence in social movements will also be used. Because a part of the movement was to fight for societal acceptance of queer people, popular support is very relevant to the movement. Therefore, the idea that violence may decrease popular support (Munoz & Anduiza, 2016, p. 488) could be an important factor in explaining the shift in tactics that was observed between the late 60s and early 70s. To this end, this theory will also be applied to the movement to see whether this fear of losing support was a motivation for the leaders of the movement.

4.1.2 Biases

When studying early queer history, certain biases cannot be avoided. One factor that will always play into any research is the blatant homophobia that was always present during the 60s. This not only impacts the way the media frames the actions of the movement, whether peaceful or not, but it also impacts the way that queer people at the time viewed themselves and the “heterosexual” society (Arriola, 1995, pp. 38-39).

Another issue is the lack of research done into the movement shortly after it happened. Research into queer history and queer rights was not a priority shortly after the Stonewall riots, and for quite some time there was no interest in research towards queer history and the

impact the Stonewall riots had on the movement. Priorities were oriented towards topics like understanding whether being queer was a mental disorder or not and promoting social rights for queer people across the United States. Once queer history got popularized, it had been quite some time since the original Stonewall riots. One example of this is the book by Duberman (2019), which is based on interviews with several people who were essential during the early days of the queer rights movement. These interviews were held several decades post-Stonewall, which means that their credibility may have been diminished. To work around this issue, several different eyewitness accounts will be used to get the clearest perspective on what was most likely to have happened. If several eyewitnesses confirm the same story, it strengthens the credibility of that account. Additionally, several retellings of the same story can be compared to one another to see if the story has changed over time.

4.2 Concepts

Radicalization is the shift a movement makes from non-violence to violence, deradicalization functions in the opposite direction (Della Porta 2012, p. 6). This shift towards deradicalization is clear in the case of the Stonewall riots; the riots were a short burst of violent resistance to police brutality, combined with some provocation to get a reaction out of the police.

The queer rights movement (or the LGBTQ-rights movement) is understood as all of the collective action taken to improve the social standing of queer people. To this end, queer is used as an umbrella term that encompasses an individual that is not heterosexual or cisgender (Gamson, 1995, pp. 390-391). It is important to note that this collective action does not need to be planned or organized. A lot of queer society in the late 60's and early 70's was informal, unorganized and oftentimes covert. Queer people existed on the fringes of society, as they were not welcome in "typical" society (Arriola, 1995, pp. 38-39). Therefore, the formal and large-scale organizations that arrange most social movements oftentimes did not, and could not exist for queer people.

Transformative events, as mentioned previously, are events that had an exceptionally large impact on a movement, based on several previously mentioned criteria. These events can be linked to mass mobilization, a new shift in tactics, or a sudden increase in media attention; a transformative event pushes a movement into a new direction, reshaping the movement (Andersen, 2016, p. 442).

4.3 Case selection

As previously mentioned, three core events were selected for this transformative event analysis. The first case will be a "Sip-In" organized by the Mattachine Society. Several of its members declared their homosexuality to a bartender before demanding to be served a drink (Duberman, 2019, pp. 141-142). In New York City in the late 60s, it was illegal for bars to serve openly homosexual customers. By "declaring" their homosexuality before demanding a drink, the organization tried to demonstrate this inequality, and bring attention to the poor social standing LGBTQ people had in New York in the late 1960s (Duberman, 2019, pp. 141-142). The discriminatory law Mattachine was bringing attention to was based upon the assumption that any queer person would be obscene and disorderly; therefore, an important factor in this sip-in was being on one's best behaviour and being polite and calm the entire time (Carter, 2010, p. 38). This case is selected because it is an example of peaceful protest before the Stonewall riots. Additionally, due to the limited success the Mattachine members had with their action, it is a good example of peaceful tactics not being as successful as early queer activists hoped they would be.

The second case is the Stonewall riots, the peak of violence within the LGBTQ rights movement. Infamously shrouded in mystery, "the Stonewall riots" refer to several days of rioting in New York, specifically in the Greenwich Village area. Starting on the 28th of June, 1969 after a police raid went wrong and bar patrons fought back, this case has been selected because it is seen as "the" start of queer rights going mainstream. It is one of the first cases of queer people resisting police harassment on a large scale, and with the riots a new era of fighting for LGBTQ rights started. Many pre-existing organizations saw a rise of younger, militant queers joining their ranks to maintain the momentum that Stonewall created (Duberman, 2019, pp. 265-266). Stonewall is seen as an important turning point in the queer rights movement and therefore remains an important event to analyse further.

A third case that will be analysed is the first-ever pride march held in New York, held exactly one year after the Stonewall riots. As one of the first large-scale, public, and organized protest actions, the first pride march made quite an impact (Duberman, 2019, p. 335). While Stonewall was also a very visible and well-known protest action, it was violent and unplanned, making it the polar opposite of this pride march. The effectiveness of pride marches is evident by the fact that they have become a global phenomenon. Therefore, this case is a likely cause for the seemingly permanent shift from violence to nonviolence.

The goal of most actions organized by queer rights groups was oriented towards the improvement of the social rights of queer people (Duberman, 2019, pp. 331-333); an effective protest action would not only draw attention to the issue at hand, but it would also move towards a solution to these issues. While not all of these protest actions are from within the same organization (the Stonewall riots, for example, were not organized at all), they have the same general aims. All three of the selected cases seem quite different; two were peaceful, one was violent; two were planned, and one was mostly spontaneous. Stonewall seems to be quite different from the other two cases, which could complicate analysis. However, the transformative nature of the Stonewall riots is indisputable. Therefore, despite its unique nature, it is important to include this in this paper.

4.4 Data collection

To do this analysis, insight into the inner workings of the movement is necessary. To this end, magazines published by the Mattachine Society and articles from local papers and larger national newspapers will be analysed. These written sources will provide insight not only into the tactics used by organizations within the movement, but can also provide insight on their views towards violence. Furthermore, articles from (local) newspapers can provide insight into the way "onlookers" (in this case, usually straight people, or queer people afraid to join the movement for various reasons) view the movement, how the violence was portrayed, etc. This type of information is needed to understand how violence was viewed as a tactic. It can also reveal other tactics used by the movement like the usage of humour in the movement. Lastly, these primary sources can reveal other tactics employed by the movement that may have remained constant which could be a factor in the shift from violence to non-violence.

Additionally, books and documentaries on Stonewall provide valuable eyewitness accounts of the early days of the queer rights movement. Two main books will be used to analyse the previously mentioned events. The first is the book "Stonewall: the riots that sparked the gay revolution" by David Carter, which was published in 2010. Combining several primary sources into one book, Carter (2010) presents an extensive overview of not only the Stonewall riots but also the social context of the riots and the people involved in them. Despite the challenges that come along with researching Stonewall, Carter (2010) provides a factual account of what most likely happened, also including the side of the police in his book. Considering the mysteries that come along with Stonewall, this book will be used as a baseline for the analysis on the Stonewall riots.

A second book is “Stonewall” by Martin Duberman. Duberman (2019) conducted interviews with six people who were highly involved in the early days of the LGBTQ rights movement. Amongst the six are eyewitnesses of the actual Stonewall riots, like Sylvia Ray Rivera, but also important figures in organizing queer people in the days after the riots like Foster Gunnison Jr.. Because this book includes accounts of activists that were present in the movement, it provides primary data on why the leaders made certain choices and it gives insight on the inner workings of the movement at the time.

5. Analysis

To answer the question “Why did the goals and tactics of the LGBTQ movement change rapidly between 1965-1970?”, it is important to first understand some of the historical context. While the late 1960s and early 1970s were extremely impactful for a lot of social movements, they were especially turbulent for the gay rights movements. There were a plethora of social actions to choose from, but as previously mentioned, three main ones were selected: the Mattachine Society sip-in, the Stonewall riots, and the first Pride March in New York City. These events will be analysed based on transformative event analysis, to evaluate how these three events impacted the development of the movement. The focus will be on how they impacted the tactics, goals, and level of mobilization of a movement. One such tactic shift is the rapid change from non-violence to violence and back to non-violence again. This means that there will be three main “levels” of effects that the events will be evaluated on: an individual level focused on mobilization, a group level based on organizational leaders and tactics, and a structural level that impacts larger cultural and political structures (Andersen, 2016, pp. 447-448). Before analysing each of these three events, some time will be spent explaining what the event was and why it was organized.

5.1. Historical context

New York City has always had an incredibly large queer population; gay people from across the country flock to the city in hopes of finding community and acceptance. This was already the case back in the late 1950s and 1960s, with queer people finding one another in the “queer neighbourhoods” of the city (Carter, 2010, pp. 32-33). Some of the sense of community could be found in the limited queer organizations that existed, like the Mattachine Society (an organization for gay men) or the Daughters of Bilites (an organization for lesbians) (Carter, 2010, p. 38). Besides the formal organizations, there was also a large

informal community on the streets with (often homeless) queer people forming their own community. The street queens, as they were often called, were usually effeminate gay and trans youth, who usually had run away from home or were simply no longer welcome there (Carter, 2010, pp. 57-58). The gay society was extremely diverse, with people from all walks of life meeting up in the few bars and restaurants that were willing to serve homosexuals.

Despite its large gay population, New York had some extreme anti-gay legislation in place, even when compared to other places in the United States (Carter, 2010, pp. 13-12). The State Liquor Authority or SLA, the organization in charge of distributing liquor licenses, played a large role in formulating legislation regarding the sale and consumption of alcohol. This legislation made it impossible for gay people to congregate at bars, let alone be served a drink; the mere presence of even one homosexual made a bar vulnerable to losing its liquor license (Carter, 2010, pp. 47-48). Because of this, there was no place for gay bars in the regular "straight" nightlife. Instead, queer people looking for places to socialise were forced to go to bars owned and run by the mafia (Carter, 2010, pp. 6-8). Because these bars were operating without a liquor license and served homosexuals (not to mention the plethora of other illegal practices at these places), they were prone to police raids. Police harassment and entrapment were a part of the norm, and even if a restaurant or bar was not mafia owned, the police had to be bribed to avoid additional harassment. Besides the troubles queer people faced when trying to socialize, queer people could not have relationships in the same way their straight counterparts could. Sodomy was illegal, being counted as a misdemeanour, and it was completely legal to fire someone for being gay (Carter, 2010, pp. 44-45). This does not even mention the day-to-day harassment and violence all homosexuals faced. Being outed or even suspected of being a homosexual was, simply put, something that could be life-shattering.

5.2 The Sip-In

One of the most important queer rights organisations of the 60s was the Mattachine Society, a national organization with local chapters in a lot of major U.S. cities. Because being gay was criminalized for a long time, the organization had to make sure it protected the identity of its members while also organizing public-facing activism (Jacobs, 2020, p. 726; pp. 730-731). The organisation, founded in Los Angeles, had chapters across the U.S. with local leaders. One of these chapters was in New York, fostering a safe discussion space for gay adults since 1955 (Carter, 2010, p. 38; Hall, pp. 539-540). The New York chapter of the Mattachine

Society organized protest actions to try and improve the social situation of queer people nationwide. As previously mentioned, the gay people of New York City faced some ruthless laws, making their need for this social resistance even greater. One of the largest projects Mattachine New York worked on was the "annual reminder", a protest march in Washington D.C. near the capitol to "remind" the general society of the lack of rights the queer people in the U.S. had (Hall, 2010, p. 543). Another (and arguably more successful) protest action was the 1966 Sip-In, to directly challenge the laws put into place by the SLA, the State Liquor Authority.

Dick Leitsch, leader of the New York Mattachine chapter, took the concept of a sit-in from the civil rights movement and used it to challenge these liquor laws (Carter, 2010, pp. 48-50). Together with two other prominent Mattachine members, Randy Wicker and Craig Rodwell, he would go to bars with signs that turned away queer patrons, declare his sexuality to a bartender, and ask to be served (Duberman, 2019, pp. 141-140). Once that would happen, he would use it to file a complaint with the SLA. Before their action, Mattachine reached out to several media channels to report on their protest. After the initial target of the protest action had closed after hearing of the sip-in, the three men had gone to two other bars that did serve them, before landing on Julius', a bar that refused them service (Carter, 2010, p. 50).

The Sip-In reached massive media, significantly increasing the awareness the general public had of the disadvantaged position of queer people. Additionally, with the nationwide media coverage, some of the taboos on queer people had been shattered. The New York Times reported on the protest action on its front-page coverage (Johnson, 1966), spreading not only knowledge on the Mattachine Society but also on the social issues queer people faced across the U.S.. The Sip-In was a massive success on the legal side as well. The action forced the chairman of the SLA to announce that state law did not provide a legal basis to deny service to homosexuals (Carter, 2010, pp. 52-53). Additionally, it gave Mattachine the option to sue bars that did refuse them service and eventually the organization won a Supreme Court ruling; while queer people were not yet equal to their straight counterparts, their identity was no longer making it illegal for them to be in bars (Hall, 2010, p. 550). The Sip-In significantly altered the cultural context of the gay rights movement and it opened up a new political opportunity structure for the Mattachine society. Not only were they known nationwide again and had been heard by the Supreme Court within a year, but they had also made it possible for gay people to openly go to bars.

The Sip-In can be classified as a transformative event on several levels. It caused a structural-level change (Andersen, 2016, pp. 447-448), that impacted not only New York but the entirety of the United States. Additionally, this peaceful protest generated popular support for the movement and the Mattachine society. Popular support is a very important resource for social movements, as without this support it is difficult for them to reach their goals (Munoz & Anduiza, 2019, pp. 486-487). The Sip-In impacted the Mattachine society at the group level (Andersen, 2016, p. 447) by impacting its tactics. The success of the open yet peaceful protest action, focusing on presenting queer people as normal, respectable individuals was a tactic that remained heavily favoured by leaders like Leitsch even after the Stonewall riots (Duberman, pp. 268-289). On the individual level (Andersen, 2016, p. 446) the Sip-In did not have as strong of an impact; it did not cause dramatic alterations in mobilization. However, it did impact the structural and group levels on a very large scale. Ending the mafia monopoly on queer nightlife, the Sip-In significantly improved the safety and wellbeing of queer people across the city.

5.3 The Stonewall riots

As mentioned previously, gay bars were prone to regular police raids even if the mafia paid off the police. While the bribes made sure the bars could remain open, raids would still occur; they would just happen during weeknights, or very early in the morning. In 1969, federal authorities assigned a new person to the "clean-up of New York"; Seymore Pine approached these raids very differently than the "regular" police did (Carter, 2010, pp. 134-135). The Stonewall Inn was his main target, as the bar was openly run by the mafia and it was the main hub of queer nightlife. Pine sent in undercover cops to find out who the staff were so they could be arrested. Additionally, he had a warrant to take the bar out of the building so the business could not reopen on the same night (Carter, 2010, p. 134).

This large-scale raid, which aimed to fully shut down the Stonewall Inn, took place on the 28th of June, 1969. Accustomed to these raids, the staff and patrons at the Stonewall Inn had systems in place to immediately deal with these raids. There was a reinforced door to slow the police down upon entry, lights would get turned on, staff would jump over the bar and patrons would stop dancing and change their outfits if needed (Carter, 2010, pp. 68-70). In the late 60s, people were mandated to wear "at least three articles of clothing that matched your gender". If someone did not, they could be arrested, fined or even go to jail (Arriola, 1995, p. 34). Once the police got inside, obvious "crossdressers" were separated from the

other customers to be inspected. Being “inspected” meant that the police would try to figure out what a person's sex was, to see if this matched up to the way they presented themselves.

When the police started to arrest people, the story gets muddy. During a standard raid, people would try to get away from the bar as quickly as they could, fearing arrest or police brutality. On the 28th, instead of leaving, people waited outside for their friends who were still inside. Other people in the community would come by Stonewall, see the crowd, and join them. On top of that, at least one person resisted arrest, which sparked a similar defiant attitude in others outside the bar. There are several theories on who started the violence, but the true identity of this person is unknown (Duberman, 2019, pp. 242-243). The rowdy crowd erupted into a riot late at night. The riots lasted for five days, though protests were minimal on Monday and Tuesdays due to bad weather (Duberman, 2019, pp. 253-255; p. 257). Despite the aggression on both sides, nobody died during the riots. There were instances of police brutality, where protesters would get beaten up badly by the cops (trans women or effeminate men would be targeted disproportionately) (Duberman, 2019, p. 247-248). On the other side, cops would get things thrown at them, the Stonewall Inn almost got set on fire with the police still inside and a lot of property got damaged (Carter, 2010, pp. 163-164).

Stonewall is often seen as “the” start of LGBTQ rights, it “created” the pride movement. However, this is not exactly the case. Stonewall did not make anything happen; it was merely the spark that started a nationwide movement (Andersen, 2016, p. 445). Pride is a riot, and Stonewall was the catalyst that made that possible, not in the least because of the extreme increase in the mobilization that occurred shortly after the riots (Duberman, 2019, pp. 265-266; Andersen, 2016, p. 446). The riots started a massive wave of individual mobilization, classifying it as a transformative event based on the individual level alone (Andersen, 2016, p. 446). Besides the mass mobilization that the riots caused, however, Stonewall also impacted the organization and tactics of the existing movements. This makes it transformative on the group level as well (Andersen, 2016, pp. 446-447). For example, new organizations like the GLF emerged and existing leaders were challenged (Carter, 2010, p. 219-220; Andersen, 2016, p.447).

Lastly, Stonewall opened up new opportunity structures for the movement to take advantage of. With this cultural impact, Stonewall was impactful on the structural level as well (Andersen, 2016, p. 447). New (straight) allies got involved in the movement, there was significantly more media attention (and media willing to portray an accurate description of

the “gay lifestyle”), and even some politicians backed the homophile movement (Carter, 2010, pp. 257-258). While the riots may not have impacted the cultural frame enough to make being a “homosexual” or “transvestite” acceptable at the time, they did provide a cultural shift within the queer society. Before the riots, queer people usually simply accepted the harassment they faced daily. After Stonewall, this was no longer the case. Queer people portrayed a new resilience and militancy when it came to their identity (Duberman, 2019, p. 265). In sum, Stonewall qualifies as a transformative event on all three of the criteria outlined by Andersen (2016, pp. 487-488).

5.4 The first pride march

One year after the Stonewall riots, the first pride march was held on June 28th, 1970. 50 years later, the concept of pride marches is inseparable from the gay rights movement (Kaufman, 2020). Originally known as the Christopher Street Gay Liberation Day March, organized by the Gay Liberation Front (Carter, 2010, p. 230), this first pride march was also a remembrance of the Stonewall riots (NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project, 2022). The tactic of marches was not new for the homophile movement, as an "annual reminder" of their disadvantaged position had been organised for years prior to 1970. However, the first pride march was structured very differently. There was no dress code for the march and no call for "orderly behaviour" like there had been for the annual reminder. Additionally, there was no call for men and women to march in pairs. The movement was open to all, to come as they were. The goal of this march was simple: it served as a reminder of the Stonewall riots and as a signal to the city that being gay is good (Duberman, 2019, pp. 340-341). Despite some minor disagreements with the police, the protest was a larger success than the organizers had hoped. The turnout was much larger than originally planned, with people joining in spontaneously as the march went on.

The event was organized by new leaders of the movement that got mobilized by the Stonewall riots, like Craig Rodwell. While they can be classified as (further) mobilized by Stonewall, they organised the event with a commitment to non-violence. This is because of a fear of losing support from the "straight society", which he believed was an important factor in ending this fight. This intentional deradicalization was motivated by the fear of losing popular support (Munoz & Anduiza, 2016, pp. 487-488).

The riots sparked the momentum that allowed for this revolutionary tactic to be used for the first time, but the march itself also had a ripple effect throughout the larger movement (Kaufman, 2020). After proving to be a successful tactic in New York, other large cities with a high queer population followed suit, some without the necessary legal permits to organize a march in the first place. Additionally, the pride marches present a platform for issues within the gay rights movement, like the H.I.V./AIDS pandemic in the 1980s when a die-in was organized during a pride parade (Kaufman, 2020). This first pride march was transformative because the tactic proved to be so successful it is still frequently used, on a global level. The first pride march proved to be a turning point in the tactics of the movement for at least five decades since it first got used. Therefore, on the group level, its transformative nature is evident. Secondly, the pride marches are a catalyst for mobilization. The first pride march mobilized people across the United States, by sparking similar protests in Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles in the same year (Kaufman, 2020). This group-level mobilization and tactic shift were significant to the core of the movement.

5.5 Discussion

The three events that were previously discussed all impacted the movement on at least one of the three levels specified by Andersen (2016). All three of the events caused a drastic impact on the (social) lives of queer people; the Sip-In pushed the Mattachine Society into the foreground after it successfully changed SLA policy. Stonewall created a new generation of militant, young queer activists. The first pride march did something similar, by spreading the message "gay is good" on an even larger sphere and pulling the queer societies out from the shadows and into the public eye.

On the individual level, the Stonewall Riots were especially impactful by lighting a spark in almost all of the queer youth at the time. This was carried on by the first pride march, which mobilized even more people (both queer people and straight allies). The effect of the Sip-In did not necessarily mobilize people more, but it did make people more aware of the Mattachine Society and the poor social situation of queer people at the time. The three events also impacted the movement a lot at the group level. The massive success sip-in gave justification to the emphasis on "proper" behaviour and assimilating into "straight" society by being peaceful, mild-mannered, respectable homosexuals; it cemented the "conservative" wing of the society that the younger crowd rebelled against. Stonewall, while not part of a formal organization, impacted the movement on the group level by pushing new, often

militant, leaders forward. New organizations emerged, like the house for homeless youth organized by Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson (Duberman, 2019, pp. 308-309). New leaders, like Craig Rodwell and Randy Wicker, utilized the mobilization in ways that the conservatives like Dick Leitsch could not. Lastly, the first pride march provided a tactic so impactful, it became used globally for the next five decades. The pride march effectively shaped the future protest actions organized by the LGBTQ rights movement (Kaufman, 2020).

Lastly, on the structural level, the three events all pushed the movement significantly forward when it comes to the final goal of social acceptance. The sip-in opened a political opportunity structure by allowing access into the legal system and eventually leading to a Supreme Court ruling that improved the social position of gay people (Hall, 2010, p. 550); while Stonewall did not impact "straight" society in a meaningful way, except alienate people by all the violence and destruction of property, it significantly altered the way queer people viewed their social position. This shift in attitude, while it may seem small to some, was in reality very impactful. Stonewall sparked a sense of general militancy that allowed people to stand up for their rights (Duberman, 2019, pp. 332-333). The first pride march also opened up new opportunity structures, by pushing the movement forward into general society and spreading the message that being gay is good and that it is a healthy lifestyle.

These events were very impactful on the movement, effectively shaping the tactics and arguments that made the movement what it is today. These three events explain some important turning points in the movement and why certain tactics are still in play today. They do not, however, fully explain why the movement turned away from the violence that was so present at Stonewall. Returning to social movements theory, one other possible explanation is the effect of violence on the crowd. The theory suggests that violence can be the reason popular support for a movement decreases (Munoz & Anduiza, 2016, p. 488). The leaders of the early queer rights movement feared the same thing; the "conservative" wing of the Mattachine society even went as far as to post signs and adverts denouncing the violence and the rioting at the Stonewall Inn in 1969 (Duberman, 2019, pp. 331-332). This clashed with the opinions of the younger, militant crowd that got mobilized by the riots (Duberman, 2019, pp. 332-333) which caused an internal conflict in the movement. However, some of the new and influential leaders of the movement including Rodwell and Wicker also were against violence (Duberman, 2019, p. 333). While they claimed that militancy and active protesting

were the only way to keep the momentum going, they also argued that more violence would not resolve anything. Rather, it would give the police and the general society an excuse to keep oppressing queer people. When trying to eliminate the criminalisation of queerness, operating from a position of violence would not help resolve their issues (Duberman, 2019, pp. 332-334).

6. Conclusion

To conclude, it is a difficult task to definitively answer the question "Why did the goals and tactics of the LGBTQ movement change rapidly between 1965-1970?" as there are a lot of factors at play. The early days of the LGBTQ rights movement provide a rich base to analyse based on transformative event analysis. The three cases selected for this paper were extremely impactful in nature, but they were only a small sample of all the protest actions that were organized in the name of gay rights. The mythical origins of the Stonewall riots will keep puzzling academics, due to Stonewalls mysterious origins and massive impact on the future of the queer rights movement. However, the events before and after the infamous riots are also worthy of analysis. A movement is not completed in a single day but rather is comprised of many small victories that pile together to form a large societal change.

What is clear, however, is that the three events analysed in this paper all had very significant impacts on the movement that are felt to this day. A likely answer to the question asked in this paper, is that the (informal) leaders of the movement decided to abandon violence to increase the chances of the movement's success. For this movement, successful tactics had proven successful before. Combined with the fear of alienating potential allies, abandoning violence could position itself to be the "safest" option to unite the movement and push it forward (Duberman, 2019, p. 266).

That being said, a lot of the research that this paper is built upon comes with some drastic limitations. A lot of the eyewitness accounts at Stonewall were not taken directly after the events, making their accuracy questionable (not to mention the fact that the eyewitnesses had almost all been drinking and abusing other substances). Additionally, a lot of the movement was done covertly due to the social stigma on being gay (Jacobs, 2020, p. 730). This means that while organizations like the Mattachine kept good records, not all of these records are complete and a lot of the movement was organized informally (Jacobs, 2020, pp. 730-731).

In sum, the early days of the LGBTQ movement provide an interesting case for further research, especially for scholars interested in sudden tactic shifts, political violence and police brutality. Much of the movement is unknown or under-researched, due to a plethora of factors. While the transformative role of the three events analysed in this paper has become more clear, there could be many more impactful events in the LGBTQ-rights movement that are outside the scope of this thesis. Therefore, it is important that further analysis is done on this topic. Pride is a riot, and love has seemingly won, but further understanding of these topics is fundamental to avoid slipping back into old structures of oppression.

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