

Saliha Shelton

Prof. Veatch

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Effects of Collective Behavior Theory on Stonewall

The gay liberation movement followed a rapid shift in 1969 as New York officers went off to raid the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar. Although there were a series of raids on gay bars, the Stonewall Inn was special for several reasons. Due to its connection with the mafia, not having a liquor license and involvement with go-go boys on a busy Greenwich Village intersection all help the raids to regenerated the gay movement. Most of the customers at Stonewall were young and nonwhite who grew up in ghettos. Therefore, on Friday, June 27, 1969, a crowd of young people from different racial backgrounds gathers on the street starting a riot against police officers and become explosive. It was the first gay riot in history as the cries of “Gay Power” echoed throughout the night. By the end of July, New York formed the Gay Liberation Foundation and word of the Stonewall riot spread all around the nation within a year.

The Stonewall riot inspired young radicals and their participants. Mainly their involvement with political uprisings such as joining rallies in support of Black Panther leaders and protesting the war, allowed their message to travel through the network of activists. People with similar political perspective joined the gay liberation. Because gay liberationists spoke in favor of New Left and against oppression, genocide and imperialist Amerika not just about sexual identity and that attracted many people. Their message was based upon brotherhood,

human love, cooperation and they addressed issues that were mobilizing youth. When the nation realized the structure within the gay culture it started to gain support from oppressed minorities. They were confident in confronting politicians and speak out against the oppression of homosexuals which gave them all of the attention. Additionally, it allowed strong force for feminism as lesbians created their separatist organizations due to uprising. Overall, Stonewall set a base for political rights where gayness and lesbianism were identified as crucial outbreaks for liberation movement towards a permanent social change.

The ethic-like and interest-group politics allows the establishment of political rights for the gay movement to transform the culture by introducing sexual liberation. This was accomplished through the action of identity logic where goal orientation is based on shared characteristics such as race or sex. In which, the strategies are rationally chosen with a narrow frame that called for collective action to build the structure of the movement. Therefore, the role of identity in collective action emphasizes the importance of cultural change in activism. Collective identity calls out to the community for mobilization to demand political action because the individual becomes part of a group and the group interest moves the individual into collective action. In gay liberation, movement identity becomes a goal of collective action. Moreover, the expression of identity is an essential element at the collective level as it emerges from collective behavior.

The collective behavior theory approach influenced the thinking of the gay liberation movement. It's a classical model for social movements and emerges during a period of social disruption. The crowd behavior can be analyzed by studying the psychology behind the

collective gathering. Hence, the psychological state of the participants is major dynamics for collective actions. The collective behavior results from a type of strain or cultural breakdown as it occurred during the Stonewall riots. It leads participants to establish new meaning to guide their behavior such as shouting out gay power during the riot to construct meaning. The main concern of collective behavior is based upon how participants in a social movement like during the gay liberation movement manage to act collectively to create a new culture. The participants of the movement such as gays, lesbians, minorities and oppressed young can share a view of reality that justifies and coordinates collective behavior against a police raid. It is important, social disruption to translate into collective behavior through a particular frame to create feelings of injustice or outrage that motivate action. For example, during the Stonewall riots, the participants were motivated by shared outrage against the police as it was the central target. The interactions between individuals in the gay liberation movement demanded social change and order within the frame of identity logic. The gay liberation movement interacted with preexisting groups, like Black Panther to revise their actions in response to changing opportunities.

Several factors add value to the collective behavior theory to enrich the approach for the movement. The structural conduciveness, structural strain, growth, and spread of a generalized belief, precipitating factors mobilization for action and social control are the key points for the collective behavior to be successful. The police raids created panic and threaten the lives of gays, in result many responded believing in the protection of rights of youth which brought meaning to their actions. Because the target was concrete like police brutality it easily provoked a riot. Furthermore, the leadership for the gay liberation movement was strong enough that it pointed out the actions of police and political leaders. In summarizing, the gay liberation movement was

a structure, in the society, occurred from collective behavior against the injustices during 1970 that impacted a large group of people such as the participants of war, civil rights movement, minorities and oppressed. The movement lead to change creating a strain that grew within throughout history.

The collective behavior theory exemplifies how the gay liberation movement come about and shifted the society in the direction where it demanded change. Participants were strategic enough to speak for the other injustices to bring further support for their cause while sharing their message of peace and love which are a common basis for any individual to join a movement. Hence, as the participants grew the movement was enlarged because of collective behavior that demands immediate action from the press, community leaders and other agents of social control. Ultimately, when there is a high number of people from different backgrounds who are youthful and innocent asking for a change in the society then the movement will come about for the sake of the injustices that a particular group encounters.

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